



The Buykos in Bilogorodka, Ukraine

2nd Quarter Report, 2020

April

Love in action:

During quarantine, the church in Bilogorodka has distributed 80 food packages.

“My little children, let us love not in word, or in tongue; but in deed and in truth.” 1 John 3:18

As in other countries, Ukraine today is going through complicated times due to the spread of coronavirus. In cities and in villages the quarantine is announced: educational institutions are closed, movement on the streets is limited, many people are out of work or have gone on unpaid time off. Besides the painful conversations about how to overcome the pandemic and not get sick, Ukrainians are extremely worried about whether there will be enough funds to pay for community services and whether they will have a means to feed their families.

And at the time, when the majority are falling into panic, God’s children sense in themselves the mercy and goodness of our Heavenly Father. Our church in the village of Bilogorodka has clear confirmation of this. My heart is overflowing with joy for what I want to share with you.

Our second Baptist church in Bilogorodka numbers about 50 people who attend, including children and teens. Of those, about 15 people are of advanced age, or have disabilities, and are in need of attention and support, especially during the quarantine time.

When we recognized that there would be limits on public movements and that elderly ones are at-risk, some of our members got the idea of buying groceries for those who are especially in need.

By God’s mercy, for this act of care and goodness we were able to gather fairly quickly enough funds to purchase food for 80 parcels. Some of the funds came from our church budget. Brothers and sisters of the church donated more. Also, friends of our church gave, including the BIEM mission, for which we sincerely thank you!

Every package included a variety of things, such as flour, sugar, sunflower oil, tinned fish, meat paté, cookies, chocolate, and tea. Elderly and disabled believers received such blessings of food from the first and second Baptist churches, to the glory of the Creator. Some unbelievers in town also received one.

I personally received the task of delivering a food parcel to a Christian widow. When she opened the door and saw such a large package of food, tears appeared in her eyes. She testified that she had asked God for help. Her supplies were very meager, and she hadn’t been sure she would have enough to eat in the next few days.

A different sister who’s well along in years, and in difficult straits herself, asked whether there might be someone else who needed these groceries more than she. This showed once again

how the quarantine has rallied our church. Each of us was thinking more about someone else rather than about self. Praise be to our loving God for that.

If God's children always have hope despite difficulties, then people who don't know Him indeed have panic and hopelessness.

When a deacon was delivering food parcels to needy ones in town, he saw puzzlement in their eyes. For them, his arrival was like thunder sounding from a clear sky. It was hard for them to believe that others could simply care about them and bless them in such a way.

For us, this act of doing good and caring opened hearts for the Gospel and created an opportunity to fulfill the Word of God, in which it's written that we should love, not in words only, but also in deeds. We thank God that His love and mercy cover us all the days of our lives.

God's blessings to you, dear brothers and sisters! May your families stay healthy!

May

A Mosaic of God's Love

"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." 1 Peter 5:7

When are the Lord's goodness and blessings sweeter to the heart, during days of plenty and abundance, or during days of sorrow and sadness? Now, during the time of quarantine, when all around there are feelings of anxiety and fear, we children of God do not cease to rejoice in the mercy of the Heavenly Father and to lift up prayers for His care about our needs.

Today we'd like to tell about the humanitarian aid from American brothers and sisters for the Ukrainian people. The container traveled a thorny road, burdened by updates in the bureaucratic system in our country: due to many checks and the establishment of various acts, the timeline for opening it stretched into months. While the process of completing the paperwork was still being done, we raised questions: "What's taking so long? Why so many obstacles?" And so it turned out, dear brothers and sisters, that we received your gifts, not before New Year's Day, but during the time of quarantine. Then came full understanding that God has His timing for everything, and He unceasingly cares for our needs. After all, before the New Year, the situation in our country was stable, and humanitarian aid was not perceived to be so valuable as it is now, during the time of isolation, when funding is so limited, yet needs are so many.

How is it possible to describe the receiving of gifts that we have from you by God's mercy? Certainly, humanitarian can be measured according to physical categories—weight, length, height, etc. On the other hand, this is the story of people, like a mosaic that takes shape into a wondrous picture of God's love.

Let me start with an 84-year-old widow, a cancer patient for whom every step is very difficult. What do adult Pampers mean for her? Thanks to them, she can wake up dry after a night of sleep. This is such a valuable blessing and impermissible luxury in Ukrainian reality, that not everyone who hasn't looked after elderly, ill people can understand the joy from such a gift.

Nor the smile on the face of a 16-year-old teen, afflicted from birth with children's cerebral palsy, sitting in a wheelchair, thanks to which he can move comfortably. After all, before this gift, the parents could set their son only in an old children's wheelchair that didn't meet the boy's needs.

In addition, in one boarding school for children in western Ukraine about 50 pillows have been provided. And let us emphasize, that the kids in this establishment have slept for 30 years on the very same pillows. No one ever changed them. You can't help wondering how a child feels in that first moment when he lays his head on a fresh, new pillow?

Furthermore, gifts in the form of clothing, domestic items, (dishware, blankets, pillows, sheets) were received by two rehabilitation centers and a boarding school near Kyiv. The mosaic of God's love covered with blessings residents in Bilogorodka, Chervona Sloboda, Ternopil, Kyiv, Desna, Lutsk...

Many children received terrific toys, such toys as they didn't dare to dream of during the quarantine. After all, the parents' primary concern was how to make enough money to buy them food.

Dear brothers and sisters, we sincerely thank you for caring about our many needs: beginning with children's beds and things for babies, ending with essential items needed by elderly people to maintain a quality of life. Thanks to your gifts, in many homes all over Ukraine prayers of praise are rising!

P.S. While writing this letter, I learned that in one of Kyiv's maternity hospitals a boy was born. His mom dressed him and laid him on the new blanket with gratitude...

June

Despite the fact that the quarantine became an unexpected discomfort for most people, praise God, there was a solution for this. Online services and online Bible studies became great comforts and good opportunities to fellowship. Elderly sisters in the Lord were especially glad. Previously, they had never used such programs, but during the quarantine, thanks to help from their children or grandchildren (sometimes even from unbelievers), they were able to make use of this "modern scientific technology."

Another big plus is that it provided an opportunity to work in the churchyard and to put in order everything that there's not usually time for. During the quarantine, we got rid of all the leftover building materials in the backyard and got rid of the weeds. Now children run around there, and the parents don't have to worry about their safety. We hope that this year we will have a day camp, and then we'll have a separate space for younger children's games. We donated the building material to the church in Smolin, so this cleanup job became a plus for them as well as for us.

Also, for a long time, instead of the gravel, which children often scattered, and which has often resulted in discomfort, we've wanted to put down paving tiles. It turns out that the neighbors do such work and agreed to install tiles for us. Furthermore, observing our church building, our people, and their behavior, they've begun to regard us favorably and gave us a big discount on the job because "after all, this is for a church." Furthermore, after all the work was finished, they also donated money to the work of the church. Thank you to you, too, for your financial help in this. Now, instead of gravel and an unsafe place for children to play, we have tiles and the children safely ride their bikes and scooters there.

In addition, during the quarantine when we were cleaning up the back part of the property, men often gave several hours per day to come and spread dirt from trucks. And the women and elderly sisters offered their help with the lawn, flowers, and flowerbeds. One time, an elderly sister who lives next door and attends our church, Paulina, saw what we were doing, and she walked over to volunteer to weed the flowerbeds. At that time, a strict quarantine was in place, so she did it in her mask.

When the quarantine restrictions eased up and we resumed with our first in-person service in the church, a new family came. One of our older sisters invited them. They have 2 children, who have started to come to our Sunday school. We request prayers for this family.

Praise God, that even in such a situation we can find pluses and serve Him!

Thank you for your prayerful and financial support. We ask that you pray about the camp, that we could hold it despite the situation in the country.

Praise God for everything!

The Buyko family

