



The Buykos in Bilgorodka, Ukraine

4th Quarter Report, 2021

October



A big, important event has happened in our church, and we want to share this joy with you! On September 26, we had a baptism of 8 people. Praise be to God for this!

Four ministers took part: Sam Slobodian (we are very glad that he could come and join in this significant event!); the church's pastor, Zhenya Buyko; the pastor of the church in Chervona Sloboda, Vitaly Yurchenko; and Roma, the deacon of our church in Bilgorodka. God abundantly blessed us in the various preparations for the baptism, and His hand and help could be felt in everything.

It was the same with the weather. Before the day set for the baptism, the weather was cold, and everyone was concerned and prayed for favorable weather for the baptism. (Two of those to be baptized were elderly women, and one of them was in a wheelchair, so the weather was a very important factor.) But God took care of this problem and our concerns, and He worked everything out for the best. As is written in the Bible, "Ask, and it shall be given unto you" (Matthew 7:7).

Four of the baptized ones are from the family of our sister Pavlina (she's 86, the neighbor of the church who suffered a stroke last winter). Praise God that, through this grandmother, God has worked in the hearts of her family and drew them to God's house. Along with Pavlina, her daughter Galya and son-in-law Vitaly and their daughter Vika were also baptized. Praise God!

Another elderly sister was also baptized. She is Natalya Petrovna, 78 years old. She, too, has a very interesting story of how she came to God. A long time ago, her grandson attended summer camp at the First Baptist Church of Bilgorodka, but she had been opposed to it. Then, many years later, acquaintances told her that there is a church not far from where she lives, and they invited her to our church. She went, and from that time on, she has been attending church and wanted to be baptized. Praise be to the Lord that He is drawing people toward eternal life regardless of their age. It was due

to this sister and sister Pavlina that we had been concerned about the weather. But God worked everything out in a marvelous way.

When the weather turned cold, we began to consider other options for the baptism besides the river. As a last resort, we had thoughts about using a baptistry. But our church has no baptistry. And then a genuine miracle happened, a gift from God. Sister Galya (the daughter of Pavlina) went with her husband Vitaly (who was also to be baptized) to the neighboring village of Boyarka on business

on a Monday. While they were there, she spotted a notice on a bulletin board that said, "Offer: a free swimming pool." In a flash, the husband and wife decided to go and get that pool since they were right there in the same village. When they reached the address, the woman gave them a large swimming pool but said that she didn't have the metal support rods, and she didn't know where those rods were. Galya and her husband gratefully accept the pool then left. They drove down the road to a store on their own business. When they pulled into the store, the woman telephoned and said she had found the support rods.

On Tuesday, when Zhenya Buyko drove past the home of these neighbors on his way to Bible study, he stopped because there stood a swimming pool. Galya and Vitaly said that this was simply a blessing from God, as such a pool would cost quite a lot. Brother Vitaly himself created steps for entering and exiting the pool.

In addition to the family of Pavlina and Natalia Petrovna, our daughter Solomia was also baptized. She had been waiting for that a long time. She is 15, and this is a big blessing that she decided to follow God and give her life to Him at such an age, nothing doubting.

The last person who was baptized is another woman named Galya. She is a mail carrier. What's interesting is that for the past 20 years, people had already been calling her a "Stundist" [a follower of non-Orthodox beliefs]. Everyone figured that she is already a member of the church: she attends regularly, reads and knows the Bible, and constantly prays. While attending Bible study, she heard that we were planning a baptism, and she announced that she, too, wished to be baptized. She said that she had wanted to be baptized for a long time, but before she hadn't been sure she was ready. But now she was definitely sure.

In addition to the 7 people from our church, the church in Chervona Sloboda decided to join us since they had one middle-aged woman who was ready to be baptized. So, 8 souls from two different churches entered the waters of baptism that marvelous day! After the outside portion of the service, we went into the church building for the second half, where we had a prayer for those baptized, a word of congratulations, singing, and a short play by the older Sunday school group. After all of this, a tasty lunch was waiting outside, where we enjoyed marvelous fellowship!



Thanks be to God for working things out even better than we could imagine. Thanks be to Him for miraculous weather, for the health of those to be baptized, for the pool, and for bringing it to the church in such an amazing way. Praise God for these marvelous fruits of His working in people's hearts!



November

Praise God, that His works are bringing fruit that we can see! After summer camp, we began to hold teen-youth fellowships on Saturdays. We had about 15-20 people coming regularly. While it was warm outside, we played volleyball or sat around a fire, but now it's already cold and we drink hot tea together and talk about how our week has gone before studying the Word of God. When we have time left over, we still play some sort of table game or word game.

Two girls had only been in our camp. They hadn't ever been in the church for services. When the camp ended and we invited them to teen fellowships, they came. After that, they began to come weekly, not just for teen fellowships, but also to Sunday services. They joyfully read the Bible and answer questions about whatever topic we're discussing and are quick to offer their assistance. Praise God for this!

While still in the camp, we created a Messenger group of all those in the older group, and we agreed to send a text message whenever there was a youth fellowship, so everyone who was in that group can see when we get together. After two months of holding these youth fellowships, another three girls from camp came for the first time. They, too, had never attended church before; they had simply attended our camps for several summers. We were very glad to see them. For the past 2 weeks, they have been coming to the teen groups but also to Sunday services, for which we praise God!

It makes us rejoice that they are all open to very detailed study of the Word of God, and we could see this when, at the end of the story of Joseph we decided to play "Kahoot." (This is a test in game form, where everyone sees the questions on a big screen and then chooses the answer on their cell phone. There, the correctness of the answer is calculated and the speed, and in this way, they earn a rating.) Many of them prepared in detail by rereading at home the story of Joseph and memorizing the details. There were even questions such as what kind of nuts the brothers brought to Joseph as a gift (almonds), and what did Pharaoh name Joseph (Zaphenath-Paneah), plus other hard questions, and practically everyone answered correctly. One boy even showed initiative and suggested making another Kahoot game on his own, where there would be not just questions about one story but general questions about the Bible and interesting facts, and on his own he prepared prizes for everyone. Praise God, teens are not only coming and listening but are themselves offering help and doing things!

There are two girls who came last year, but not regularly. Now, though, they attend every service and the youth fellowships, too. They are also reading the Bible, not only the passages we read together in the church, but they also regularly read it for themselves for personal edification and study. They are asking serious questions about baptism. One of them gave the other a personal Bible in a pretty cover for her birthday. In this, we see how precious it is for them, that a best friend would give such a gift for such an important holiday. Now that girl always comes and brings her Bible. Their parents are Orthodox, so we ask that you pray for them.

We also thank you for your support, and we ask that you pray for this ministry to teens and for every soul, that the seed that has been sown in them will grow and they will give their lives into God's hands.

Praise God for everything!

The Buyko family



December

On December 21, our church held its annual charitable Christmas concert, with proceeds going to Bilogorodka's charity for children with disabilities, "Your Place in the Sun—You're Not Alone."

One change in this year's concert from the past was that this time we had more than just a choir performing. Several months ago, I ran into a trumpet player with whom I had studied in college. He said that if we hold the Christmas concert again this year, he would like to participate too. So, about a month ago, I contacted him back to see whether he was still interested. He said, "Yes," and that he would also contact a pianist and a saxophone player. Later, he added that a bass guitarist would play with them. To clarify, I asked whether they understood this was a free concert, with all donations going to charity? He confirmed that they understood, saying, "Of course, that is clear. This is charity!"

With the choir this year, it turned out wonderfully. Moreover, along with us we had our regular annual singers, with whom I studied in Glier College. This year we were joined by a guy from the conservatory where I now study. Two weeks before the concert I received a message from a fellow who is finishing his master's this year, and he asked whether he could join us. He had learned about the concert from one of the girls who was already planning to sing with us. I said, "Do you understand this is for free?" (Because I couldn't understand what advantage there would be for a vocalist with such a high level of training who sings with the best collectives in Ukraine to sing with us lower-level students.) He answered, "Of course! It's been a long time since I participated in such altruistic projects. I really want to take part in charity and be involved. Can I?" So, he attended all the remaining rehearsals and sang with us.

In addition, I wanted to bring something to the concert besides a choir and wind instruments, something with string instruments. I wrote a longtime acquaintance who plays on the viola (similar to a violin, but slightly larger with a lower tone) to ask whether she would like to play. She said she would but that she would also invite someone from her group. So we also gained a girl who plays the bandura.

The concert turned out to be very rich. There was a lot of Christmas music. Donations given came to 13,880 Ukrainian UAH plus 220 dollars (which equals 730 dollars), for which we thank God and the givers who were inclined to sacrifice for good causes! Thank you to the mission BIEM for the financial donation and prayerful support!

At the end of the concert, all the performers were invited to the stage, where they received a copy of *The Bible for Youth*. It's great that this event provided not just an opportunity for these performers to gain experience and to do a good deed, but gave us a chance to evangelize them, since many of them are either unbelievers or identify with the Orthodox church even if they rarely attend. We also gifted such Bibles to children with disabilities, for whom we collected donations at this concert. We sincerely thank you for these Bibles and for such an opportunity. May God bless you.

Praise God for everything!

Angelica Buyko

