



The Petrenkos in Goncharovsk and Smolin, Ukraine

4th Quarter Report, 2022

October 2022

Greetings to you, dear brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ!

By the grace of God, we are still alive and continuing to perform the ministry to which God has appointed us.

I would like to tell you about an opportunity for service that God recently created. Ira was offered a job as the director of the library in Smolin, which is located across the street from the church building in the village council. Many people go there to get information or for consultation and walk through Ira's area. This provides a very good opportunity to talk with children and adults. An interesting event recently happened at her work.

If you remember, when we first started holding a camp in Smolin, there was a history teacher who hindered our activities in Smolin. She said a lot of negative things about us to people, and wherever we wanted to do something in Smolin, she constantly opposed us and agitated people against us. We prayed about her, but then we simply forgot about her. But recently, while Ira was at work, that teacher went to the village council and started inquiring who Ira is. They said she is my wife and that she now works in the library. She chatted and next went to the secretary of the village council and talked to her about something. After some time, the secretary came to Ira and asked, "What did she do to you?"

The history teacher had told the secretary how she was very sorry she had done so much harm to us and what good people we are and how much good we do for people. For us, this is evidence of how God answers prayers. We hope she will not only regret what happened but will also understand she needs God.

I also wanted to tell you about the trip to Donbas, which with God's help I was able to make. We – that is me, Vanya (mayor of Smolin), and Vitaly Nikolayevich (mayor of Goncharovsk) – went not to the civilian population but to the military, who used to serve in Goncharovsk, but after recapturing Chernihiv from the Russians went to defend Donbas. Therefore, we decided to buy what they needed and went to them.



This trip was not safe, but with God's help we remained alive and well. When we arrived at the place, it was already late. We were fed and left for the night. I understood that my trip should not be limited by the fact that we were taking necessary things to the soldiers. I prayed that God would also give me an opportunity to speak about Christ and pray with the soldiers. Our morning started at about 5 am. That's normal there; sleeping while shelling is going on was not very good.

In the morning, I learned that about 150 soldiers were to be sworn in. I asked the commander if he would mind if I said a few words to the soldiers and prayed for them. He gave me permission. When we were going to a certain place, it reminded me of the process of baptism during times of persecution. The location was classified, the number of people was limited, and the event was not observable from outside. When the oath was taken, each of us was given a



chance to say a few words. When it was my turn, I told them about God and that we, as a church, pray for them. And I offered to pray. All those present prayed with me, and Vanya took the New Testaments that we had brought and began to distribute them to those present. I had very little time on this trip, but I am grateful to God for the fact that He gave me such an opportunity. Also, after all this, we were awarded a certificate from the Chernihiv administration, and the commander presented a medal called “Strength and Honor.” We are planning to go back to Donbas in December. We will collect everything necessary for the men and will go.

Please pray for the following needs:

- 1) For God to bless the trip to Donbas and send finances to buy everything necessary.
- 2) That God would bless and use our church for His glory.
- 3) That Ira could share about Christ at work with people who come.
- 4) For the war to end.

That's how this month was for us. Thank you for being with us in this ministry.

Sasha Petrenko

November

I greet you, dear brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ!

With God’s help and your support, we have survived another month. We have a very big problem now with electricity. There is no electricity for 18-20 hours a day. But thank God, we have a generator that we bought, thanks to BIEM. Now we have power, and the church is warm, and we hold various services. True, we spend about \$500-\$700 per month on fuel for the



generator, but thank God there is a generator. Since many people just make fires to cook for themselves and cannot afford to buy a generator, let alone buy fuel for it.

Also, this month Zarina, the girl who came to our church and believed in Christ, was taken to a family where she will stay until she comes of age. Her new mother is already accepting a third girl into the family, and

according to people's stories, she is a good person. We prayed for Zarina, and God answered our common prayers. Before leaving, Zarina wrote a poem that I would like to share with you:

“Jesus Christ will bless,
Jesus will forgive your sins.
The Son of God helps everyone, Jesus Christ heals people.
You just pray to Him,
Calmly, quietly turn to Him.
Our God does not leave us in trouble,
When trouble comes, He consoles.
Not everything is as bad as you think.
God will always smile nearby,
So don't be sad and smile.
Better to look at the sky.
There is God's kingdom, God's house;
There is enough room for everyone.”

We continue to pray for her new family, that she may be a witness there and share the Gospel. We also continue to hold all church services, as long as God gives such an opportunity.

Please pray with us for the following needs:

- 1) For peace in Ukraine.
- 2) For God to strengthen us as a church through these events and help us to fully trust Him.
- 3) That God would continue to use us for His Glory.
- 4) That we can continue helping those in need.

Thank you for your participation in our joint work for the Lord!

Blessings!

Sasha Petrenko

December

Greetings, dear brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ!

In December, God gave some bright events that I would like to share with you.

God blessed me to make another trip to the military in Donbas, thanks to the BIEM mission. It was a blessed trip in which I saw and felt the protection and mercy of God. I could go and distribute New Testaments, also New Testaments recordings on audio players and give the military necessary things so that they can feel as comfortable as possible. We gave them warm clothes, food, gas cylinders on which they can cook their own food in the trenches, drones, etc.

At the time of our movements along the front line, we were stopped at a checkpoint to check documents, and at the time of the check, two rockets flew over us, and then two fighters. We did not immediately understand whose they were, ours or Russians. Also, after the trip, we learned from the news that the place where we'd been passing through was fired upon by the Russians, and about 11 people died. But despite all these moments, it was a blessed trip. Because one man learned about Christ for the first time.

Also, this month we had the opportunity to hold a Christmas service and invite new people to hear the joyful news of the Savior. It was a good time. The children received gifts after the service, and there was a Christmas dinner.

One woman, after the service, said that she had been very afraid to come because she thought that what people were saying and showing on TV was true and that we were dangerous people ☺ . But now she will attend the service if possible. She really liked it, and she realized that everything she had heard was a lie.

This is what this month has been like for us.

This is the last report for this year, and summing up, I see that 2022 was a very difficult year for us. But God and you were with us in all the difficulties. We did a lot of work so that our Heavenly Father would be glorified. And we hope that in 2023 we will be alive and well and will be able to continue to serve the Lord together with you.

I also wanted to thank you for your active participation in the ministry. God bless you and your families and churches.

Please pray for these needs:

- 1) About Christmas projects.
- 2) That we can bring many fruits to God.
- 3) For our physical health.
- 4) That in 2023 we can make repairs in the apartment and return to the apartment in Goncharovsk (which suffered from shelling).
- 5) For the growth of the church.

Sasha Petrenko