



## **The Buyko Family**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Report, 2024**

#### **January, Part 1**



We had a busy period in our church. We had another wonderful winter camp, and we thank God for it. This year we told the children the story of the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. It is interesting that there is always someone who comes to our camp for the first time. The program was very intense. As always, we alternated all the classes. There was a Bible lesson, singing, some outdoor games (because it was cold), various tasks in the form of quests and crafts/workshops. And of course, delicious lunches and snacks. This time we organized not 1 workshop per day, but 4 different workshops in parallel. The children could choose what they wanted or else quickly go through everything in turn, as there was enough time for that. It was very enjoyable. Everyone was happy because everyone chose what they liked best.

I would like to tell you about some adults who brought their children. There were quite a few younger kids in this camp. One grandmother brought her grandson; her name is Vera. The boy is 6 years old. The first time he came to our camp was in the summer, but that was with his other grandmother. This Vera is a neighbor of our sister Tamara Pavlovna and brother Oleksandr. They had invited her to church many times, but she always found different excuses. And since the boy really enjoyed the summer, it was a great opportunity to invite them to church again. She came to church for the sake of her grandson, and at first, she was hesitant, but then it turned out that she was a very open person. Vera was always there all day during the camp. She also listened attentively to everything during the Bible lessons. One day we even came up with a competition for parents (to involve them somehow), and she won it. The essence of the competition was who could peel and eat a tangerine the fastest. It turned out to be quite fun. At the end of each day, when we summarized the results, Misha always asked a question on the topic of the day, and whoever gave the right answer received a gift. It was interesting to see how the parents helped the children to get the gifts. Vera also helped her grandson, which was great, because she listened carefully to what was said in the Bible lessons.



Another mom was there during the camp. She came with 3 children. The eldest is 11 years old, the middle boy is 7 years old, and the youngest son is 3 years old. And we suggested that if the child was interested and willing, she could also attend. She immediately agreed and stayed throughout the camp. All her children loved it, and she listened attentively to all the Bible stories. Several other parents attended with their young children. It turned out that this camp was not only for children but also an evangelization for adults.

And we praise our Lord for that. And of course, everyone received gifts. We sincerely thank the mission and all our American friends for their prayers for financial support of our camp. Thank God that we can all work together for Him.

Please pray for every child and adult who attended the camp and heard that Jesus was born into this world for everyone, and how we just need to invite Him into our hearts.

## January, Part 2

Wonderful and blessed holidays were spent in our church. I want to share a little and thank you, our dear friends.

On Christmas we enjoyed a rich service. There were many songs, music, poems, and most importantly, everyone listened attentively to the Word of God.

One woman lives not far from the church. Her husband is now at the front, protecting our country. They have a son Maxim and a daughter Marina, teenagers (by the way, the daughter came to the church winter camp). She (the wife) has already come to the service several times. She requests prayer for her husband. And she listened carefully to God's Word. It's good that people remember the road to the church, because they use it to bring children to camps. We ask you to pray for her, so that everything she hears will bear fruit.

One family of our church invited their mother, and she came to the holiday service. She listened attentively to everything. Natasha, her daughter, says that she has not seen such a radiant and joyful face on her mother for a long time. Another family brought their mother to the service. This mother had come to them for the winter. She now lives in a village in another region; before that she lived in the east. This was the first time she had been in such a service. We ask you to pray for this woman, too.

After the service, the church hosted a festive dinner for everyone. This is very beneficial, because otherwise many people end up spending holidays alone at home. We designed and printed "church sacks" for both adults and children. They have the address of the church and the time of services, and with these packages we distributed gifts. The church gave everyone a sack of groceries, and it was a manifestation of love for one's neighbor.

There were some gifts in the container. And we decided to draw them as a lottery during lunch (because the number of gifts was less than the number of people). It was incredible, because just about every guest (and there were also people who were invited for the first time) got a winning lottery ticket. Thank you for taking care even of this when sending the container to Ukraine.

Also, sincere thanks to the mission for the children's gifts that the mission helped to purchase. Each child who came received a nice gift, as well as the Sunday school children and all the those who come to our Youth Ministry. Thank you for your concern and prayers.

## February

This winter included an important and very pleasant event for me personally and for our youth. It was the arrival of a young American named Grace to Ukraine for a whole week. She and I had met during our family's visit to America, when we were at a church in Chicago where her father is pastor. It turned out that we have a lot in common, but the most important thing is music. So, we exchanged contact information and stayed in touch and sometimes helped each other with sheet music, information about musical works, and talked about our musical studies. But what a surprise when one day I received a message from Grace asking whether she could stay with our family if she came to Ukraine. I was surprised, but of course I was very happy and said that we would be waiting for her. Sometime after we discussed the way to Ukraine and the dates, Grace confirmed that she would come after Christmas. I asked whether she was afraid to come to Ukraine when we have a war, but Grace is a brave girl. She replied that she is very interested in how the church goes through such difficult times and how we live in such an atmosphere.

We were afraid that this winter there might be repeated attacks on electrical facilities, and we would be without power, so I warned Grace about this and asked her again if she was afraid. To which she replied, "Then I will need to bring along warm clothes and battery rechargers." Since it was still early winter when Grace was preparing for her arrival, she asked what our church needed. We said battery rechargers or candles. And Grace brought not only power banks, but also long-burning candles and postcards for each woman of our church from her church's women—words of support, Bible verses and words of comfort, and how they are praying for us—were written in Ukrainian. It was incredibly touching and many elderly women with tears in their eyes came up and told Grace, "Thank you. God bless you. We are very pleased that you remember us." We also used Grace in church services. She played psalms on the piano, and everyone really enjoyed it. One young woman approached Grace after the service and said she had never heard such incredible and perfect playing in her life, and since the text of the psalms that Grace performed were on the screen, these psalms also touched her heart with their meaning.

In addition to the service and the women's meeting, where Grace was able to give gifts to the women of our church, Grace also managed to visit us on Saturday, the day of our meeting for children (9-13 years) and youth (14 years and older). Thus, we used a "Speaking Club" format for both meetings. And even though someone might say that he did not understand English or did not know how to express something, no one had any problems communicating. At the children's meeting, everyone tried to tell and show something. We played games with colors and Uno (where they had to say the numbers and colors exclusively in English) and listened to the story of Joseph, which Grace told using a flannel graph given to us by the mission.



Then Grace played question games with the children so that everyone could talk about themselves in simple words. The children really liked the openness and sincerity, and no one was embarrassed. At the end of the meeting everyone hugged Grace and asked, "When will you come to us again?"



At the meeting with the youth, we did more communicating, asked questions, and learned new phrases and words. Everyone could ask a question, and Grace always suggested what and how best to say things. It was an open conversation, after which Grace taught us to play several board games. We enjoyed not only a pleasant time, but also a useful one—because we learned to overcome the language barrier and talk with a native speaker.

Angelica Buyko

### March



A joyful event took place in our church. Another soul invited the Lord into his heart. His mother started coming to us after the women's service. Sergei (the name of this man) is 37 years old. He came for the first time, and after the final "Amen" walked up to Pastor Zhenya and said that he would like to accept Christ into his heart but did not know how to pray properly. Zhenya suggested that in his own words, in a simple way, he should ask the Lord for forgiveness for his sins and invite Jesus Christ to dwell in his heart. All of our hearts were overwhelmed with joy, and we praised God for another saved soul. Then the whole church sang a song of greeting, "I Have Found Joy in Christ".) This Sunday, Sergei came to worship for the second time. Please pray for him, that he would stand firm on his new path and come to

know the Savior even more deeply.

Earlier this month, our church hosted the senior choir from the Salvation Church. It was the first time in 2 years of war that they have come to visit us, as all this time they had been singing only at funerals... It was an encouragement to both the guests and us. They testified of God's love and mercy to us all with their wonderful singing and the Word.

One sister from our church (Sister Sasha) recalled how 40 years ago this choir (although the composition has changed a bit now for obvious reasons) sang at her wedding and even signed a souvenir and gave her a samovar, which she still has.

Please continue to pray for peace in our country and for churches to be filled with saved people.

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