

Ukraine Update April 2009

John & Nadia are doing well. Their health is good, and they are thankful for the many people who were praying for John's leg, it has healed completely—Praise the Lord! As always, they are working tirelessly to minister to the people in and surrounding Nikopol, and that is not without its challenges.



The current economic crisis is particularly difficult for those in Nikopol. Many factories have shut down, putting thousands of people out of work. At the same time, prices are rising. The cost of fuel has increased 74%, and most other services (garbage, phone, water etc) and food costs have increased by about 20%.



As you can imagine, this has made life difficult for so many people and the struggle is evident in increased depression, marriage break ups and many are turning to alcohol for an answer. Young families are being hit the hardest with the job losses and the prevalent alcoholism—and this problem is not only outside the church.

In response to this crisis John has opened his office at the church every Tuesday for anyone to come in for counseling and prayer. Also, John and Nadia together have opened the guest house 2 evenings a week for anyone who wants to talk and be heard, to pray and have fellowship together. Pray for

them, for spiritual strength and wisdom as they seek to lead so many through such a difficult time. Pray that the guest house will be a beacon of hope in their community, and that those who come there will feel encouragement and hope in these complex times.

Rufina

Some of you know the details about Rufina, and some do not. After being married a few years, Rufina and her husband Sergei felt the call of God on their lives to be missionaries in Russia. While serving the Lord in Russia in 2006, Sergei was unjustly accused of a crime and sent to prison. Rufina was left with their 2 children, alone and pregnant with no income and no way to help free her husband. In desperation, she returned to the Ukraine to be with her family. A few months after moving in with them, her family asked her to leave as there were already 5 of them living in a small apartment, and the addition of herself and the now 3 children was simply too much. She was desperate, and came to John & Nadia for help. Through God's grace and the provision of finances from Canada, they were able to move into a new home, and arrange for an earlier release from prison for her husband. The exciting news is that her husband, Sergei, is now at home with his family! Praise

the Lord! Sergei and Rufina came to Nadia to express their heartfelt thanks for the prayers and finances that were instrumental in his release. They are all thrilled to have their family reunited again. As work is scarce, Sergei has not been able to find employment but after being presented a job offer in Russia for 2 months, the family has temporarily relocated to Russia while he is seeking work there. Continue to pray for them, that this job will provide for the needs of their family.



We were not able to get a current picture of Rufina and Sergei, but this is an old picture of them just after they got married!

Just to put a bug in your ear...there are a few people interested in going to the Ukraine in June, and/or possibly the fall...if that sounds interesting to anyone, please contact Chad or Heidi at the HFL office.

A message of thanks

Blessings to all who are helping those in the Ukraine.

This is a note of thanks for the gas debt that was paid for a very sick widow.

Victoria is 40 years old and lives in Krivoy Rog. She has been sick since birth, but did grow up and marry and give birth to a son. During the delivery, she was infected with a disease that she still has today. It has been steadily progressing, and she is still very ill. The family was living with her husbands parents. Some time ago, her husband left her and now has a new family. Since he has left, the family has been very cruel to her and asked her to move out, and her husband now has nothing to do with her or her son. Victoria and her 14 year old son moved in with her mother who was paralyzed and began caring for all her needs. When her mother passed away, she was left with all the debts from the apartment they had been sharing. Because of her illness, Victoria is entitled to a disability pension from the government, but due to the debt she owed, she couldn't receive her pension. She had no idea how she would ever pay the debt she had, and was so very thankful for the help she received, which was enough to lower her debt to a level that will qualify her to receive her disability pension.

We are so thankful for all your work and help that you do for Nikopol's people. May God bless you with His generosity

- Nadya



A new son

For those teams that had the privilege of working with Miranda, an American translator, we wanted to let you know that she is happily married to a Ukrainian pastor, and she has given birth to a son! Nathaniel is doing very well, and she is thrilled to be a mother.



A few words from the Priazovje Orphanage

They are all doing well—happy and healthy! They are very thankful to the Lord that they continue to have sufficient funds for food, as times are so difficult throughout the country. They still have many challenges to face, but they are convinced that the Lord will take them through all that lies before them.



“Religion that God our father accepts as faultless is this, to look after orphans and widows in their distress.”

- James 1:27



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