



HELPING UKRAINE

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

14th July 2022

Thank you all very much for your support of our efforts to help those fleeing the war in Ukraine. Your funds help those in need here in the Czech Republic and in Ukraine. Thank you for making this possible with your support!

■ Praha – Horní Počernice



Some time ago I wrote that a family – grandmother Tatyana, mother Julie and her son Ivan (11) – are staying with Jiří Procházka (98). Julie has already managed to find a job. She works very intensively, in the morning she goes to Újezd nad Lesy, in the afternoon she works in Horní Počernice.

Recently I wrote to our pastors, looking for a bicycle for Ivan so that he could have some fun and go on trips during the holidays. It worked! I would like to thank Lubos Janeš from Protivín who donated a beautiful new bike. Thanks also to Richard Novák for arranging this donation.

Petr Procházka

■ Praha – Strašnice

A Ukrainian family came to us one evening and we put them up in the basement room like the two previous families. According to the volunteer from the main station, they were supposed to come for 3-4 days. They have been with us for five weeks now and there is still no permanent solution in sight for their housing. They are a young married couple with a 6 year old daughter and a small dog. Nikita and Ana are from the town of Suma and felt the horrors of the war right at the beginning. They heard the planes, the rocket explosions and saw the tanks. They waited one night, but quickly decided to leave the next day in their old Zaz car. They crossed Slovakia to the Czech Republic and are full of gratitude that everywhere they went they met nice people who tried to help them. After spending some time with

friends in Ústí nad Labem, they arrived in Prague, where Nikita will hopefully get a job, in spite of his health problem. After 5 weeks we got to know each other more and got more insight into our lives. The whole family has become involved in church life and is grateful for the relationships. At the same time, a woman from Russia started coming to our services. It's nice to see how people in God's church are together in spite of everything that might divide them. They even got along and are learning Czech together before the service.

Milan Mrázek

■ Jablonné

We managed to find places for Ukrainian children for a week's holiday stay at the nearby YMCA children's camp in Petrovice. The YMCA organization even decided to pay for the cost.

We were happy to take advantage of the offer of an evangelization meeting of the Agape congregation in Prague on Sunday, June 26. A group of 4 grandparents with 4 children took a challenging train and bus trip to Prague with a visit to the Petrin Tower, the Hall of Mirrors, and a walk from Petrin to Charles Bridge. Considering the age of the elderly participants (64-74 years old) in the oppressive heat, it was an admirable achievement. The service appealed to the seniors and they were very thankful for it, but the younger children fell asleep with weariness. Many thanks to Lev Shults and the Agape UMC for this wonderful service.

Zdeněk Brož

■ Litoměřice

Miss Snezhana, whom we had accommodated in our parsonage at the beginning of May, has moved further west. She found work and housing in Pilsen, so our premises were just a transfer station for a few weeks. But already we are hearing from other "applicants/tenants". We are happy to have Viktoria and her daughter Olha coming to church regularly. Even the language barrier is slowly and gracefully being overcome. Viktoria attends Czech classes twice a week. Olha goes to primary school. We are praying and looking for a job for Viktoria. She worked for a few weeks thanks to seasonal jobs, now we are looking for something that would be compatible with her Czech lessons and maybe even a profession (men's hairdresser).

On Sunday afternoon I had a nice opportunity to visit Prague with 3 Ukrainian women. Thanks to the ideal location of our headquarters and the headquarters of the Russian-speaking Agape UMC, we walked for an hour through the historic center of Prague. This was followed by the highlight of our trip in the form of a worship service and subsequent conversations. I can only speak a few words of Russian, but I can read faces quite well, so I can say that the ladies were overjoyed and grateful for their wonderful time in Prague. We are looking forward to the next time.

Filip Jandovský

■ Brno

The Ukrainians came to us in the last week of March. We were happy that our pastor vacated 2 rooms of a 3-room apartment where she had furniture and belongings to move to her next appointment. It was a sacrifice on her part, and we tried to make up for it a little by helping her move her things into one room and clean the whole apartment. The Ukrainians liked the apartment at first sight. We, in turn, liked them, the welcome was very warm, especially with grandmother Irina.

My granddaughter very much wished that the Ukrainians had a little girl her age with them, and surprisingly her wish came true, the Ukrainian Verunka is also seven years old. That is why the girls were and are close even though they communicate mostly practically. We taught Verunka to ride a bike. Although it was quite difficult for her, we appreciated her determination and perseverance, which eventually led to victory. We were just as overjoyed as when our grandchildren learned to ride a bike.

We took Verunka with her mother, brother and grandmother on trips, others were with them on the playground on the trainers. They were also with us at the festival on the Piazzetta in front of the National Theatre, where we watched beautiful examples of ballet performances such as the Nutcracker and a



demonstration of the teaching of children from the ballet school. The Ukrainians told us that Verunka goes to ballet in Dnipro and her wonderful grandmother Irina has made contacts and signed her up for ballet in Brno, where she accompanies her once a week. We were with them at the Garden Festival at the elementary school in Brno-Bystrc, Heyrovského. We spent the whole afternoon watching the children perform, practicing on various tools, playing games for the children, and listening to music. Both young and old had fun. There was an opportunity to enroll children in this school from September, but the Ukrainians did not take advantage of it. They want to - if it is even a little bit possible - to return home. We also took part in two sports afternoons organized by the local town hall and the school. The second one was at the dam lake. The children from the upper

grades prepared various competitions with their teacher - walking on stilts, jumping rope, recognizing details in pictures and many others. In jumping rope Verunka was the champion. After the competition, the children received gifts for their participation and performance.

I am very close to grandmother Irina, she is my age and very warm. She started to learn Czech, her daughter told me how she spent a whole evening at home reciting a sentence about the impossibility of



walking dogs in this area, which she had written down on her own initiative while walking her dog Nicol. She still goes to Czech classes. And she knows how to make delicious "blini", which are very thin delicious pancakes. We also had a good laugh together, I carelessly used an ungrammatical expression in conversation that I normally prefer to avoid - to say something is "terribly" nice. Mrs. Irina immediately used the unwanted phrase "terribly nice" in the next sentence. I corrected her that "terribly nice" was not an appropriate expression, and she pointed out to me what I had forgotten, that I had actually used the expression first. That's how I'm actually learning to speak Czech correctly.

Together with Verunka and Mrs. Katya we celebrated my granddaughter's birthday. It was a very nice



meeting with cake and candles. My 84-year-old husband played table tennis with 13-year-old Kyrilla and declared after a thrilling match that he was 13 years younger.

Both mothers, Katya and Olga, work manually in a company in Rajhrad. It is not an easy job, but they are grateful for it. Especially for having a daily bus ride home. We are happy that they can live here in the church apartment. Most of all, we wish they could go home to their husbands and dads and that this terrible war would end.

Marie Káňová

■ Testimony

We came to the Czech Republic after a month of war in Ukraine. Our hometown Dnipro is located on the border with three frontline areas. We are very grateful to the church for the accommodation provided, very cozy and quiet for us. We came as a family of 6 people: Mrs. Irina, daughters Katya and Olha and their children Kirill (13), Veronika (6), Oliver (3). And a dog, Nicol. The men stayed in Ukraine, Katya's husband serves in the National Guard in Kiev. Our children completed the school year online, doing homework and sending it to the teacher via the internet. Our grandmother Irina started taking Czech classes, where she made friends among her classmates. Katya and Olga got jobs in the Notino warehouse in Rajhrad, where many Ukrainians work. On the work shift we walk with a trolley with goods heavy 14 kg. We really like the nature of Brno, especially the dam. We admire the transport system of the Czech Republic and the municipal services, we like the quality of street cleaning with tow trucks and other equipment, our children love the playgrounds. We are very grateful to Mrs. Marie for her care and help, to Eva and Josef. Everyone, especially the children, really wants to go home. We expect that the situation will improve thanks to the military aid from Europe and the children will be able to go to school and kindergarten in September. The Czech Republic will always leave a mark in our hearts and in the heart of every Ukrainian, because it kindly sheltered us, gave us a break from the sirens, and allowed us to live in peace the spring and summer of this difficult year for all of Ukraine in 2022.

Olga

How we handle funds in the transparent account and donations from abroad:

- Priorities for the use of resources respond to a changing and evolving situation. Given the difficulty of forecasting, the strategy is refined at regular intervals with particular regard to the effectiveness and sustainability of our aid - also in view of the commitment we have made to the specific people in our facilities and the trust they have placed in us.
- The main priority for us now is to secure and maintain the assistance to those who have already entrusted themselves to our Diakonia, parishes and centers, and to extend and continue this assistance. We do not forget about the direct humanitarian aid going to Ukraine, where we consider it important to effectively use the synergies with our Russian-speaking UMC and our direct contacts in Ukraine as well as our knowledge of the local terrain.
- On the basis of the actual operations to date, we are in the process of quantifying the costs of operating the refugee facilities established by Diakonia. For the time being, we expect to operate these facilities for at least the next six months. Even if the war ends immediately, the reconstruction of Ukraine and the need for refugees to stay abroad will take longer.
- With this in mind, we are also transferring a portion of the funds directly to Diakonia UMC - to an operationally earmarked account dedicated to the operation of our refugee facilities, and to enable longer-term planning and organization of this assistance.
- Diakonia UMC also tries to take advantage of all current opportunities for financial support to refugees from the state. Despite the government's media image, not everything is working as declared so far. Diakonia also tries to link our facilities with the respective municipalities and obtain their material and non-material support.
- Our churches and Christian Aid Centers respond selflessly and promptly to the need for help in their places of operation. These are also churches that find it difficult to manage a balanced budget on their own. It will therefore also be necessary to support them in their assistance to those fleeing the war in the medium and long term.
- The specific financial flows and the use of funds are currently approved by the Diakonia UMC Director together with the superintendent and the Head of the District Office. Daniela Hajčiarová (pomahame.ukrajine@umc.cz) is the contact person for collecting any requests from congregations and Christian Aid Centers for financial support within the framework of the transparent collection.
- All funds raised are earmarked for aid to Ukraine. Should an unexpected favorable situation arise and there is no further need to fund aid here in the Czech Republic or humanitarian shipments, any remaining funds would go directly to the rebuilding of Ukraine in cooperation with the Ukrainian Methodist Church.