

SELCU Dnipro Lutheran Church

Pastor Sergey Bevz

For the last six weeks, the doors of **Living Water Lutheran Church in Dnepro** have been widely opened day and night. It is so because Dnipro – a city of more than one and a half million citizens – is located on the crossroad of Eastern Ukraine. The easiest way to escape from Ukrainian cities located in war zone—cities like Kharkiv, Donetsk, Lugansk, Mariupol, and Zaporyzhzhia—goes through Dnipro. This is the reason why the heavy stream of refugees from the Eastern Ukraine to Dnipro never decreases. Dnipro municipality is



doing all possible to cope with the humanitarian load. People are everywhere in the city. They are in the train and bus stations, even on the parking lots. The floors of many city malls, kindergartens, schools, and churches are layered with mattresses. Dnipro is shelled by Russian missiles, but not so often as Kharkiv or Mykolaiv. That is why many Eastern Ukrainians consider Dnipro as a relatively safe place. Some of refugees are trying to find a permanent (rent) housing in Dnipro (which is very expensive and rare) with a tiny hope to go back home as soon as war ends. But the most of refugees

from East Ukraine stay in Dnipro for a day or three and move further to the West.



“We do all possible and use all our resources to respond to the situation and to host and support the people” – said SELCU pastor Sergey Bevz. “Our church building, which is not even fully restored after a winter roof collapse (2019), has become a 24-hour hub for refugees. People can stay here for 1-3 days. They are able to eat and sleep, to do their laundry, and get medicine here. We use every

meter of our church space, including an unfinished (unrepaired) sanctuary and second floor.

We have purchased a washing machine and a dryer; they work almost nonstop now. Now, we are urgently installing a shower and additional toilet in order to meet the basic needs of 20-25 daily guests.

“Our Mission House in Zoria (40 km away from Dnipro) is hosting refugees also. We witness a magnificent effect,” Pastor Sergey continues. “Some people who watch our work on the sly are also open their homes for people and ask us to redirect refugees to them.”

“For the last weeks, Pastor Bevz said, “our church hosted more than 200 people. Now, we have up to 25 people daily. I receive 200-300 phone calls daily from those who search for a shelter. Every night we are fully packed. Unfortunately, we have no space to host more people. We meet people on the train station square and host them for a couple of days. We are searching for permanent housing for those who are able to pay the rent, or making a prepay. We supply those who have nothing at all. Our little church team consists of church members (who sent their families abroad) and volunteers living nearby.”



“Two weeks ago, our team was significantly strengthened when the SELCU sent us Pastor Valera Verba (from Nova Kakhovka). Now, we are able not only care for physical needs of people but also, and most importantly, to respond to spiritual needs and painful inner wounds of refugees. We are doing all possible to bear the burden of our fellow Ukrainians”.

On the weekend of April, 10-11, SELCU Bishop Alexander Yurchenko made a trip from Odesa to Dnepro in order to support and inspire pastors Bevz and Verba and the remnants of the Dnepro congregation as well as to deliver necessary goods and food for people hosted in Living Water Lutheran Church.”



“Listening to our roomers, we hear many terrible stories of war. People are fearful and traumatized. Many of them stayed in dark and cold basements with no electricity or heating for a month. Women are often crying. Men are mostly silent. All of them have a psychical reflex to the loud sounds. All of them are happy for simple things: quietness, hot food, clean linens, electricity, and hot water. Most of them are very curious and open to the Gospel. Thus, we always have time for talks and questions.”

No doubt, all involved in the ministry of Living Water Lutheran church are very tired physically and emotionally. This level of load is considered not normal, but necessary. To be useful for one’s country and community is a deep desire of many in Ukraine. As a Church of Christ, we have a great opportunity to serve the people and to share the Good News about Our Savior in such a darkest and difficult time. We are crying with those who cry. We suffer with those who suffer. We narrate the Gospel to those who would dodge from listening it even a month ago. War has forced all of us to rethink many habitual things. On the background of brutality of Russian soldiers and ruined cities, the news of the crucified and resurrected Jesus sounds different... deeper, stronger, more important.



We are deeply thankful for your prayers about our country and all people. We are thankful for the support. We see it and feel it like never before. We believe that billions of prayers about Ukraine reach the Lord. We are waiting for His response and for end of this terrible war. Until then, we are strengthened in our hope and serve the people.

Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. (Jude 1:2)

Pastor Bezv Sergey,

SELCU, Dnipro.

