



**The Petrenkos in Ukraine**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Report, 2021**

**January**

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

We'd like to share with you the blessings that we have experienced during this past month.

Allow me to start by thanking the BIEM mission for the material aid the mission provided for Christmas gifts. We had the opportunity to give Christmas gifts to kids, for which they were very glad and thankful.

Also, for Christmas we did a special evangelistic project. We purchased various gifts to make packages of foods and sweets and vitamins then set out for poor families living in Smolin and Zhevedy in order to give them these gifts along with Bibles. We also wanted to tell about the miraculous birth of the Savior Jesus Christ and to invite them to a church service.

In these villages, people really live quite poorly.



The majority of them drink out of despair. This is a very sad picture, when you look upon these people who dwell in such horrible conditions and see how their children are growing up. In one family we arrived in a time of sorrow, which we learned about through talking with the father. He told how that very day his daughter from his first marriage had hung herself. She was only 21. She had hung herself from a birch tree near the kindergarten. He cried bitterly. And there are a lot of such crippled destinies. We gave Bibles to all the families and shared the Gospel.



After this project, the family came to a Sunday service—Tolya, Valya, and their son Nazar. After the service, we sat and ate lunch together. For a long while Tolya studied us and behaved in a humble, quiet manner. Then he began to talk about his life. It seems that his youth affected his life. Specifically, in his youth he had served in Afghanistan and fought there. He'd been a sniper. And it was evident how what had happened earlier affected him. They also came to the worship service this past Sunday.

We are praying and planning to do a similar project for Easter, when we will be able to talk again about Christ and to show the love of God to people.

This Sunday was particularly cold. I was concerned how we would be able to hold a service. Would people come, or would they stay home? But—praise God! It was a remarkable service, and the cold didn't interfere. Afterward, nobody hurried home. As we normally do, we talked and ate together.



Praise God, the construction work on the prayer house in Smolin is going forward, and each day the church building is taking shape. Please continue to pray and to participate in this important project.



So, that is the kind of month we've had. Here are our prayer requests:

1. For the new family that has begun to visit the church.
2. For those people who are hearing about Christ through us.
3. For the ongoing construction of the church building in Smolin.
4. For favorable weather.
5. For our health.

Thank you for being with us in the Lord's praise-worthy ministry!

## February

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

God is good and merciful and knows how to make His children rejoice.

We'd like to share with you that after the Christmas project, in addition to Tolik, a grandmother named Galina Vasilievna has begun to come to services along with her granddaughter. For this whole past month, she has attended services and continues to come. This past Sunday, after the meal she said that some people had judged her and told her that she only comes to the church in order to eat. ☹️ But she countered and said that she comes here in order to receive spiritual food! I see how the Holy Spirit works in her heart, and my own heart rejoices that the new church building is still under construction, but God is already filling it with people. Praise be to Him for that!

I also wanted to share a little about Tolik. His wife, who turns out is actually simply a woman with whom he lives outside of marriage, has problems with alcohol and sometimes goes on binges. Now Tolik is attending services without Valya but with his son Nazar. The son really likes coming to church and doesn't want to go home when a drunken stepmother is there.

Recently Ira was feeling poorly, and we called for an ambulance. They gave her an injection and said that this was most probably her stomach. But on Monday we took her to a doctor, and they gave Ira injections for 5 days, but her condition did not change much, so we went to have her stomach examined. The doctor said that there is a lot of bile in the stomach and an ultrasound of the gallbladder should be done. We went for an ultrasound, and it showed that there are many stones in the gallbladder and that it must be removed. This week we will go to the hospital, and Ira will be operated on.

Please pray for these needs:

- 1) That God will work with those who come to the meetings.
- 2) That God will draw new saved ones to the church.
- 3) That God bless Ira's operation, if it is needed.
- 4) For the weather, so that everything will dry and can continue construction of the prayer

house.

This is how our month was for us. Thank you for your participation in our joint ministry for the Lord!

## March

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

So, one more month is behind us. In this month we never stopped feeling the care and love of God upon us. In my previous letter I wrote to you about how Ira needed an operation, and we indeed did end up traveling for that. We went to Chernigiv to check her in for the surgery. The head surgeon came with other surgeons and examined the results of her examination and said that they needed to operate at the earliest opportunity. In such moments, when you're lying in a hospital, you don't feel a particular joy, but you understand that God can use us in any place. In the same ward as Ira was our neighbor from Goncharovsk, and Ira had a lot of time to share with her about her faith

in Jesus Christ. This woman heard the Gospel and about the love of God toward her, and she was also invited to the church services in Smolin. Pray that God will work in her heart.

I can also share that the operation Ira had cost much money, and God worked in a marvelous way so that we had no financial need. I want to thank the BIEM mission for the financial help for Ira's surgery. Ending up in a hospital is already trauma enough, but when you consider that you've got to find the money for it someplace, that's a double trauma. But our God is good, and He took care of everything. Praise Him for that! The operation went smoothly, and they removed Ira's gall bladder and gall stones. Now she is recovering and on a special diet.

Also, every day we see how God blesses in the construction of the church building in Smolin. The guys have already finished enclosing the roof. Nothing drips on our heads anymore. They've also installed windows. The building is very pretty, and the local residents in the Smolin group write their impressions of the church building, saying how attractive it is, even better looking than the Orthodox church in Smolin. ☺

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

Please pray for these prayer requests:

1. For Ira's health to stabilize.
2. For those who have heard about the Lord, that God will work in their lives.
3. For the future stages of church construction.
4. Thank God for the financial sacrifices.

Sasha Petrenko