

MP Ukraine – Report from Fedoruk for 2nd half 2023 (Zolotonosha)

The last six months of the Church's life have been active and rich in many events. We baptized 5 new people. We organized the first overnight summer camp in Zakarpattya for 70 teenagers together with the Reconciliation Church (Uman). We initiated and conducted the first Daddy Weekend with the theme "7 secrets of effective parenting" and plan to start a Dad Club in our city in early December. We held the first 2-day retreat for women and subsequently started a Women's Club based in our Church. In September, we managed to go on a 2-day retreat for physical and spiritual renewal together with the Church.

Over the past six months, there have also been certain difficulties and challenges in both personal life and the life of our church. Starting from February, I was invited to the military draft office three times, and I had to undergo medical examinations each time. The first two times, I was granted a one-month deferment. The last summons to the military draft office and the subsequent medical examination resulted in me being declared completely healthy and fit for military service. When I presented this conclusion to the military draft office and asked what to expect next, I received the following response: "You do your job as a pastor, and we will do our job!" Since July, I have not received any further summons from the military enlistment office.

Also, after Artem and his family moved to Western Ukraine to serve in another Church that remained without a pastor, a lot of ministry and work fell on my shoulders: I preach every Sunday, lead many meetings with the leadership team and people. Much of the work that Artem used to do has now fallen on me, and it is very challenging to continue the ministry. I pray that God bring another leader to our Church who is already formed and ready to immediately engage in ministry and the life of our Church. Currently, there is a tremendous burden and fatigue among the leadership team, who carry so much on their shoulders. Our entire leadership team needs some rest and refreshing. We pray to organize a winter retreat for the leadership team: we must serve those who serve others!

Teens overnight camp

This year, our youth leadership team took a true leap of faith: organize an overnight camp for the youth of our city in Zakarpattya region. Since March, we began dreaming and praying about it: we didn't have enough resources, we didn't have enough people on the team, we didn't have a place to hold camp, but we had a dream and desire. Looking back now, I am amazed how God blessed us and gave us more than we expected and asked for. As a result, 73 participants joined us (37 from our church,



including 25 non-church youth, and 36 from the Church in Uman), a team of 26 people, and an excellent camp facility in Zakarpattya (2 kilometers from the border with Romania), which allowed us safely and peacefully conduct the camp with teenagers without worrying about air sirens and war. It was

unforgettable 7 days of camp (+2 days of travel when we were heading to the campsite: by bus, train, and again by bus), but the greatest joy was the TRANSFORMED LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE.

- 15 teenagers prayed the prayer of repentance for the first time in their life
- 15 teenagers renew their relationship with Jesus Christ.

However, this camp became unforgettable, especially for our family. This story is very special to me. My daughter Emily is 13 years old. Since early childhood, she has been attending church with us, knowing everything about God and understanding many Christian principles. However, every time the topic of repentance and a personal encounter with God came up, she never dared and always said, "I'm not ready." Since the beginning of the war, living with the constant awareness that your life could be cut short tomorrow, this issue troubled and concerned us greatly. Our prayer to God was always the same: "Lord, we want our daughter to be with us in heaven, in case something happens." We talked to our daughter sincerely and openly about it, but never forced her into repentance because we realized it had to be her conscious choice and decision.



On the 5th day of our camp, we held an evening of repentance and invited young people to reconcile with God. I still remember after the sermon, I said, "If anyone feels the desire, you can come to me, and I will pray with you." And I just didn't expect it – my daughter was the very first to run up to me. We couldn't hold back our tears. We just cried together for a few minutes. Friends, these were the best moments of my life and my ministry. My daughter prayed with me and asked for forgiveness from God! It was the most sincere and open prayer I heard from her lips! Friends, this will remain in my heart forever! I'll even say more: three months have passed since her repentance, and during these months, God has incredibly transformed her. We just never cease to marvel at how God is working in her life now!

Immediately after the camp, we held 3 Follow-up meetings because we understood that if we didn't initiate gatherings with the youth during the first week, we might lose them. We are delighted to share the joyful news that almost all teenagers from our town who attended the camp came to our follow-up meetings. Now, 10 teenagers have remained in our church, regularly participating in youth events, and 4 of them are now attending our Sunday services and joining in to assist with the Sunday school.

Daddy Weekend

I am a father of two children, Emily – 13 years old, and Benjamin – 8 years old, and I know how challenging it is to raise children wisely and with love in today's world. In the process of raising our children, we encounter various challenges: modern technologies, excessive busyness, not the best childhood experiences, distorted portrayal of fathers in the media, war, and its consequences, etc. All of this leads to dads, who are playing a very small role in the lives of their children. One piece of statistical information deeply affected me: students in grades 8-11 were asked, "If something happens in your life, who would you turn to for advice?" Only 1% of students responded that they would seek advice from their fathers. I began analyzing my own fatherhood and started talking about

it with men in our church. We came to an agreement: it would be very beneficial to discuss fatherhood and openly talk about it with other dads. This is how the idea of organizing a seminar-retreat for dads was born.

Over several months of prayer and searching for the necessary resources, God arranged everything (He always manages to do that so perfectly). We settled on a 2-day seminar titled "Secrets of Effective Parenting." We invited 12 men and their wives for the first evening of the seminar. It was important for us to spend the first evening together, as couples always play a role in raising kids. However, on the second day, the men conducted the seminar entirely on their own. Oh, what a meeting it was. I don't know if I have ever been in such a community



of men: where there was genuine sincerity, openness, and repentance. We, as dads, sincerely spoke about our childhood, our mistakes, and shortcomings; we encouraged and inspired each other to become better fathers for our children.

What impressed me the most were the 4 non-church men who accepted my invitation to visit retreat with us. The topic deeply resonated with them, and they were the first to say at the end of our 2-day seminar: we need to continue our meetings, and we need to start a Dad Club. That's why, in December, we are launching the Dad Club for men in our city, believing that it can change many families in Zolotonosha.

Women's Club

The role of women in our lives is incredibly significant. Women play a crucial role in the family, church, workplace, parenting kids, and more. We deeply love and appreciate our women, wives, and mothers. We were looking for a leader and a team, who will be ready to serve the women of our church and community. And this summer, God brought together a wonderful team led by the excellent leader, Lyubov Ivanivna, who wholeheartedly took on the ministry to women.

The first step was a short women's retreat, aimed at providing spiritual encouragement, guidance, and relaxation for the women of our church. Starting from October, our Women's Club has been active, meeting monthly at the church. It is designed to inspire and uplift every woman to reflect the image of Christ in this world.

Church retreat

In September, we had a special event - the Church Retreat. The theme of the retreat was called "Living in Suspense." It was three special days of rest and restoration. We had the opportunity to pray together, glorify God, and reflect on how to live today in times of uncertainty. As Christians and as a church, we

discussed how to keep our focus on God and continue to serve those who experience loneliness, despair, and desperation. We invited Pastor Andriy and his wife Olya, whose testimony and preaching inspired and encouraged us greatly. It was a very valuable and much-needed time for our church family.

Home Bible Groups (Small groups)

We've been waiting for this for so long. After the summer break, we've once again started the season of home groups. We firmly believe that the church grows spiritually and is built up through close and friendly relationships, as well as the collective study of the Word of God in home groups. Therefore, we actively encourage and involve people in our home groups. Currently, 75% of our church attends home groups, but our dream is for all 100% to be part of these small church communities.

Sport Kids Zolo

As planned, we were able to organize a children's football camp together with our Sport Kids Zolo. It was a fantastic 5 days of camp filled with children's smiles, sports, and the living Gospel! From September, our children's football club 'Sport Kids Zolo' resumed its activities. Currently, we have 3 age groups of children, 2 main coaches, and 2 assistant coaches, as well as many children and parents who joyfully attend the training sessions and learn important Christian values through the coaches' personal example and biblical lessons during the training.

This summer, we had the opportunity to create a unique sports community together with the church and Sport Kids. Every Sunday evening, parents and children gathered on the sports ground of one of the local schools and played football, volleyball, and simply spent time together: parents and kids. It was so joyful to see non-church parents coming to our sports evenings and spending time with us because they want to be with us, and we can show them a great example of parenting and relationships that should be in a family. I can't wait for the warm spring when we can meet again and build a healthy community in Zolotonosha, where parents and children spend time together and enjoy fellowship in the Christian environment. Because of our sports evenings, three dads went to our Dad's Weekend because, in their words, 'We can trust you, and there is something to learn from you.' I believe that through such meetings and joint projects, we are reaching families and can change our city. These meetings are a wonderful reflection of our church's vision, as we see the 'Open Heart' Church ready to change every life and the life of every family to have a real impact on our city and the whole country.

Volleyball Club «ACE»

Another blessing awaited us this September. A year before the war, a part of our church was Petya Kozak, who was involved with youth in our church and city. When the war started, he had to return home to Western Ukraine. And now, after 1.5 years, God called him back. The goal was clear and understood he wanted to resume volleyball training for teenagers and serve them in this way. We, as a church, helped him as much as we could (arranged for a sports hall with the school director, bought balls and uniforms) and simply blessed our Petya for this ministry. We rejoice in how he invests and

devotedly serves the youth of our city through volleyball. We believe that in time, God will show the fruits of his ministry.

Other news and updates.

In September, we had another baptism in our church, and 5 more people joined the church. Today, our church has 39 church members, and approximately 70 people + 15 children attend our services. It is also worth noting that some people who attended our church among the internally displaced persons left our city: some returned home, and some went further to Western Ukraine.

I would like to share the story of Vika, who started attending our church at the beginning of 2023, and in this short period, God has made incredible changes in her life. Vika had never been to church before. However, recent events in her life forced her to seek God. Vika's husband, Sasha, went to defend the country from the first day of the war and has been on the front line ever since. Vika was desperate. She started seeking God and heard about our church from friends. From the first minute of Sunday service until its end, Vika was crying: it was tears of sorrow, tears of pain, tears of despair. When I approached her after the service to talk, her first phrase was: "I'm sorry, but I couldn't control myself, I just cried throughout the whole service. I think I prayed to God for the first time. And I felt some relief." A few weeks later, Vika repented and then our entire church family was crying, but those were tears of joy and happiness. In September, Vika made next step in her journey with God – she was baptized.



M4 Church Planting Movement

During 2 years our leadership team was part of M4 Team Process. During 4 modules in 2 years we had opportunity to work on our vision and mission with team, we were able to process many things that helped us to grow as a team and understand what we need to do and how we need to develop our church. In September, we finished our 2 year study and now we ready to grow with our own.

I was invited to join to National team of M4 in Ukraine and took responsibility Team process of Central Ukraine. In October we started new Team process for new 12 plant church team, that just planted church or planning to do it in next 6-12 months. I'm so blessed to be able to share my little experience of church plant and want to encourage more leaders and team to plant new churches. It will be amazing 2 years of study, learning and God's opening in the lives of these church planters' team.

Also, I'm very excited about M4 Team process, because I can take my people from church, so they can serve and help others, but also, I want them to feel a church plant atmosphere, because it's always full of joy, enthusiasm, new ideas and a feeling of God's work in lives of new people.

I also continue my studies at Lviv Seminary in the master's program and keep reading the books recommended by the professors:

- Create a team of leaders. John Maxwell
- Situational leadership. Blanchard
- Secret of leadership. Billy Graham

All pictures and videos from Update Letter you can see at My Google Disc:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1bNfVDugrXo4UFgHXrWtp2qJPjD7MDugi?usp=sharing>

Blessings, Yura Fedoruk