

Thank you
for supporting us
for reading this newsletter
for encouraging us with messages
for all the things you do, that makes this work possible

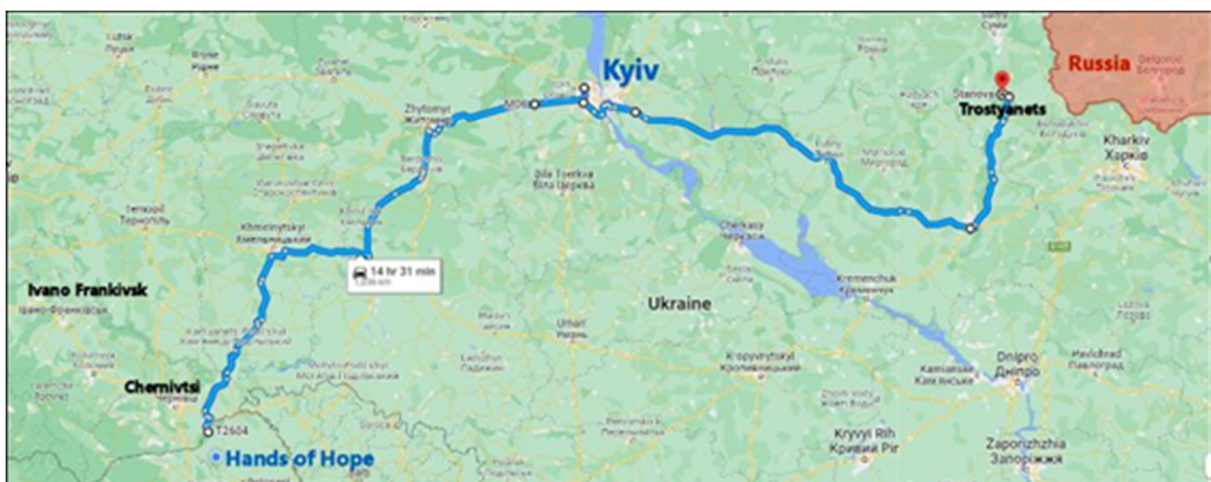


Hands of Hope June 2023 Newsletter

We often coordinate our drives into Ukraine around a weekend to enable us to visit the Assembly of God church in Chernivste. This time, Pastor Eugene asked us to accompany him to deliver aid to the Sumy region of Ukraine as he has contact with a pastor there in a village under occupation in March 2022. The decision to accompany him was not taken lightly, but we felt peace about our journey.

We planned the trip carefully, knowing that there would be many checkpoints along the way and created leaflets in Ukrainian, Romanian, and English, explaining who we were and why we were there. This also included a map showing our home in Romania and the Isle of Man.

With everything in place, we set off early on Monday morning, heading towards Kyiv with an overnight stop in a motel just outside the city.



A visit to Kyiv

On Tuesday, we spent the day in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine. We visited a family that had stayed in one of the charity houses in Romania for 10 weeks in the Spring of 2022. We walked with them to the beautiful park next to their home. Life continues as usual on the surface but you can see the impact of the invasion on the city, with bullet holes in trees and lampposts and residents are often woken in the night by the sound of missiles or drones. Despite the devastation, the family was grateful for the support they had received and for the opportunity to share their story with us.

The afternoon was spent with Eugene and his wife Irina, praying over their beautiful city that showed so many scars from the invasion.

We left Kyiv on Wednesday at 5 am, with 2 cars and a trailer full of aid, bibles and Christian books, thankful for a good night's sleep and no air raid warnings overnight.



Delivering aid to Sadova

It was a five-hour drive to Poltava, where we collected Henadiy, our guide, and then 120 km to Trostyanets. The journey was long and treacherous, with many army checkpoints and missile holes along the way. But our purpose was clear, and we were determined to deliver aid and hope to those in need.

At one point, we used a pontoon bridge; explosives had destroyed the main bridge. We saw many shells of houses and evidence of the occupation along the way.



Our next stop was in Sadova village, where around 150 adults (mainly women) and children were waiting for us. We shared the gospel message and led a time of worship. We also explained to the children about the Isle of Man and how God's love had prompted us to travel so far. The people of Sadova were grateful for the aid and for our willingness to come and share the love of God with them.

A Time of Worship in Trostyanets

After leaving Sadova, we travelled to Trostyanets village, where we shared a meal at pastor Yuriy's house before attending the 5 pm service at their church. Before the invasion, the congregation was small, with only around 15 members. But now, it has grown to over 150, mostly women. We listened as they shared their prayer requests, many of them for sons, husbands, and fathers who were either soldiers on the front line or prisoners in Russia.

It was an emotional time and we were moved by the faith and resilience of the people. We left the village late that night, driving back through the checkpoints and wrecked roads.

By 11 pm, we were back in Poltava and had a guest room in a church in the town.



A Soldier's Story

On our way back to Romania on Friday, we stopped at a roadside café - it was tiny, with only 4 tables, however, the food was made on-site and very tasty. As we turned to leave, a soldier on another table said hello. We went to chat with him, thankful as always for "google translate" and our leaflet.

He explained that he was returning to the front line with his truckload of supplies. We prayed with him and told him that people worldwide were praying for Ukraine. The soldier and Ruth were in tears as they hugged and said goodbye.



As we left Ukraine, we knew that we would continue to pray for this resilient nation and for the people we had met. We will continue to support those who are suffering and share the hope of Christ with those who need it most.

Thank you to everyone who is supporting the Ukrainian side of our work. Children in Romania will soon start their 12-week summer holiday. Our team will continue to help with one-to-one teaching sessions and we also hope to plan some excursions and fun events.

Donations

Donations towards the work are essential and regular monthly donations are particularly welcome as it helps us budget for the year ahead. Bank details, if you wish to set up a standing order or make a BACS payment, are:

Hands of Hope
Account no: 12629251
Sort Code: 55 91 00

Cheques can be sent to "Hands of Hope",

c/o C & R Baker, 14 Hawarden Avenue, Douglas, Isle of Man IM1 4BS or donations can be made via the Pay Pal link on our website