



DALRAIDA CHURCH OF CHRIST

October 9, 2019

Our dear brethren in Ivano-Frankivsk,

We hope and pray that this letter finds you doing well and continuing to grow spiritually as our brethren in Christ. Since we were sending a group from Dalraida, we wanted to send a letter by them with some words of encouragement as we plan for the next year and the future of the work in Ivano-Frankivsk.

At the end of every year, Dalraida thinks about the mission works that we support and think about the plans for the next year. That time is quickly approaching, and we would like to encourage you brethren to begin meeting and discussing the work there in Ivano-Frankivsk and think about the ways that the work can grow and continue to bring glory to God. We have been blessed to oversee the financial support that is sent to you brethren since 2014. In these past five years, we have seen a lot of growth in you – both numerically and spiritually. We are very excited to know that the men of the congregation can work together and provide leadership for worship and study, and that was shown in an excellent way this year when Ivan was gone for several months. The men of the congregation stood up and led the congregation just as God wants, and it was very exciting to see this growth in you. You all have pulled together through times of persecution and have grown from those trials just as God's Word says that we will (James 1:2-4; Rom. 5:3-5). God wants each congregation that meets together to lead themselves. There is no place for one single person to be the head of the church as you see around you in the Orthodox Church; each congregation must rely on the spiritual leadership of the men of the congregation to faithfully follow the Word of God in all you do. Although you do not have elders yet, the men of the congregation can step forward and lead the church as God wants.

We believe it is time for you to take the next steps in your growth and make plans for the coming year for your congregation. This letter is to encourage you to take some action as a congregation in planning for the new year. We are requesting that you discuss these things below and send us your proposed plan of action no later than November 2, 2019.

1. Congregational Budget

The first thing that we would like is for the congregation as a whole to submit a proposed budget for 2020 for the work of the congregation. This needs to be a detailed budget that shows what you expect to use the Lord's money for each month. You need to include all of the regular, ordinary expenses as well as other amounts that you think may

occur. This also should include any salary or payment to those who work full-time for the congregation (like Ivan has been doing for several years). The congregation should meet and discuss whether you have a need for a full-time minister, and if you do how much he should be paid for his salary and other expenses. The past months has shown that the brethren in Ivano-Frankivsk can help share in the preaching duties and leadership during services so we are not going to presume that you need a full-time minister. This needs to be a decision that the local congregation decides and plans for any such commitment. If you decide that you would like to have a full-time minister, we would strongly encourage the congregation to be clear on its expectations and limitations of such of the work. A job description would probably help make this clear to whoever is working in this role.

Dalraida does not want to make these types of decisions for you as you have the better position to make these decisions. It is also important that the entire congregation knows how much money is being used for the various works of the local church. This helps encourage maturity, stewardship, understanding and leadership for the local congregation of the Lord's Church. Please remember that this should be a "proposed" budget. This means that we will have to see what you are requesting and see if we have the resources to help meet these needs financially. Just because you include an item in the budget does not mean that we will cover the expense. We do not have unlimited resources, and, just as you should, we have to be always aware of being good stewards of the Lord's money. We have discussed this with the other congregations that contribute to the work in Ivano-Frankivsk and we all agree that this should be something you should be able to do at this point and have some input in making these important decisions. Once you submit the proposed budget we will have our Mission Committee review it and communicate any questions or concerns regarding the work. John Kachelman III (Johnny) is still our point of contact for this mission work and he can be contacted at jlkkiii@hotmail.com.

2. Change in How Funds Are Disbursed

Also, starting in 2020, Dalraida intends to provide all the funds to the congregation to use as you have budgeted. Dalraida (and John Kachelman Jr.) will not be sending any funds directly into a person's account as we have in the past (for example, we send Ivan's monthly salary directly into his bank account and should the congregation decide to keep him as the minister then the congregation would be responsible for paying him his salary directly). You need to decide as a congregation on a member of the congregation who will receive the funds from Dalraida, help with financial reporting and help with accountability of the funds sent by Dalraida from all of our partners in this work. If possible, it is probably wise that this be someone other than any full-time minister or employee of the congregation (or any family member) so that there are no concerns or questions about how the money is handled. We also would encourage you to have two people sign for each check or amount that is given to a person. This will provide some accountability for the funds and make sure more than one person knows about the expense.

3. Benevolence vs. Evangelism

Many congregations struggle with the difference between benevolence and evangelism. Even in the United States, many churches think that if they are kind and giving (i.e. benevolent) to others that they are fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus. This is simply not true. There is no doubt that Christians should "do good unto all men, especially those in the Household of Faith" (Galatians 6:10). However, this is not evangelism and is not fulfilling our duty to teach and preach the Word of God (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; 1 Timothy 4:2). Benevolence should lead to evangelism. If we only do good to others, we fail in teaching them about Jesus. We must take that extra step and use our benevolence as an opportunity to go and teach others. We want to encourage you as a congregation to build upon your benevolence in the areas around Ivano-Frankivsk. Our trips to Ukraine have shown that you have done a great job in being kind and giving to those around your area, but we are concerned that there is no follow up on the progress you have made. We understand that it is not easy, but you must seek to teach and preach in those areas where God's goodness has been shown. Otherwise, you are wasting a valuable opportunity that the Lord has blessed you with in your country. John Kachelman Jr. has done a lot of good in helping provide shipments of humanitarian aid, and you have done well in distributing them in the area. However, you need to follow up on those shipments and do more to teach others why we do the shipments. In the United States, there is a saying that "people don't care what you know until they know that you care." We think that this likely true in Ukraine as well. Now that you have shown the people that you care, you need to take advantage of that and use your time to teach them God's truth. While you are discussing your plans for next year, please think about the locations and ways that you can do more evangelism in 2020 and not just be satisfied with doing good things for the people. They need to know about Jesus, and you have a ripe opportunity to teach others because they know that you care for them!

4. Monthly Reporting

Because Dalraida receives financial support from several congregations, it is important to us as elders to receive a monthly report about the work being supported in Ivano-Frankivsk. John Kachelman Jr. and Dalraida both use these reports to keep people updated on the work done in Ivano-Frankivsk. You as a congregation need to determine who can do this reporting, but it needs to be consistent and accurate so that all financial supports will be given an account as to how their funds are being used. If you fail to do this, it is likely that some supporters will not support this work. As you plan for the coming year, discuss who can help get this accomplished so that the work will not suffer from lack of reporting. If you want to include a separate report that shows the financial expenses that is perfectly acceptable.

Dalraida is happy to oversee financial support for Ivano-Frankivsk, and we are blessed to be a partner with you in spreading the Word of God in western Ukraine. However, our goal is that in the coming years you will become a fully autonomous congregation that does not rely on the financial support of others to do the Lord's Work in Ukraine. You need to think about all the ways that you can move forward to this goal in the

years ahead. God expects us all to follow his plans for a congregation of the Lord's Church, and having strong, biblical elders and deacons is God's plan for His Church. We realize that Ivano-Frankivsk is not at that point yet, but we want to encourage you to think about these things. In five years you have come a long way, and we believe that with some continued work and support together you can achieve many good things in the years to come. You are God's hands and feet working in the fields of Western Ukraine. We must work while we can to help others know Jesus and what He did for our sins.

Please take advantage of John Kachelman Jr. and others from Dalraida being with you during October to discuss these things. Should you have any questions or concerns, they should be able to assist you in thinking through them. They can always contact us directly should there be something that is unclear or needs addressed.

May God bless and keep you all and we look forward to working together in 2020. We love you and thank God for you.

In His service,

Bob McKee

For the Elders