

IVANO-FRANKIVSK CONSTRUCTION UP-DATE SEPTEMBER 2021



Photo: Ivan sent a photo of multiple Storks choosing the apex of the Ivano-Frankivsk church building's roof for resting. This may be only interesting to you but it communicates a strong cultural message to the community.

National folklore is intriguing. Each nation has its own unique stories that highlight the national ethnos. The older a nation, the more folklore is discovered. Ukrainian folklore explains why this bird is a revered "amulet" to the Ukrainian people. Ukrainians believe that family affection, well-being and prosperity would always reign in a house where the stork is settled and bridled its nest. Also, it was believed that this bird could bring babies to the house (a folklore that seems to be universal). Ukrainians are devoted to stork songs and fairy tales. Many believe this to be a "sacred bird." Ukrainians believe that if the stork leaves the nest – the family will be in disaster. And if you destroy his nest, he may even take a revenge. It is an old belief that in the spring, these birds do not come from the warm countries, but they come from paradise, and therefore have such sacred properties. Thus, the terrain where the stork is found is thought to be greatly blessed.

Now, Christians operate from facts and reasoned intelligence. So, while we find the folklore of various nations interesting, our compass for belief and behavior is the Bible. Consequently, we do not "pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to useless speculation." And we "stay away from worthless stories that are typical of old women." And, we do not "follow cleverly devised tales" (1 Timothy 4:4, 7; 2 Peter 1:16).

But, do not miss the impact that national folklore has on culture and how that influences community beliefs (Remember Paul at Malta? Acts 28:1-6). Thus, the above photo communicates an amazing positive cultural message to the community regarding our presence and project.

I send you WONDERFUL NEWS regarding the construction project in Ivano-Frankivsk—we have reached the financial goal needed for the congregation to complete construction so as to receive the required certificate of occupancy before the harsh winter weather strikes! I received a telephone call this week saying the remaining amount was in the mail!

The Church in Ivano-Frankivsk continues work to be meeting inside the construction by winter. All members are involved. Each is doing whatever they can to accomplish the objective.

The construction detailed in Nehemiah offers a number of parallel thoughts in this project. There was the *absolute confidence* in the Almighty God's help, "the God of heaven will give us success, therefore we His servants will arise and build" (2:20). There was *individual commitment* "all of us returned to the wall, each one to his own work" (4:15). There was the *challenging scope* of the project, "the work is great and

extensive" (4:19). There was "*side-by-side*" *partnership*—I love the repeated phrase in Nehemiah 3 "and next to him..."

Ivan has sent this report on September 9, 2021:

Our dear brothers and sisters in Christ. Thank you so much for your help and your incessant prayers on our behalf. These things are especially important for us now. Our whole congregation is wound up anticipating the completion of our construction. Everybody is praying to God asking Him to make it possible for us to worship Him in the new place. Our brethren work hard to meet this goal. We, the men, try to do as much as we can on our own. Our timely purchase of materials has allowed us to wire the building. Now we need to run heating into the building, make rest rooms, put tile on the floor and paint. Our project goes back to 2014 and since then many materials have become twice as expensive. Since Ukraine is integrating into Europe some changes have been made in the project design. We worked in the big auditorium today. We prep the floor and install a moisture barrier. Thank you, our dear brethren, for prayers and help. We love you and thank God for you.



Our project in Ivano-Frankivsk parallels Nehemiah's historic narrative—*incredibly good in its potential, amazing impact in its work, and astonishing success in the Lord's plan is occurring*—and, **YOU** have had a significant part in this!

The impact of this project's completion is significant for the Lord's Church in Ivano-Frankivsk as it demonstrates the statement in Nehemiah, "*The wall was completed... this work had been accomplished with the help of our God*" (6:15-16). This encourages both the saints in the Lord's Church and the community that has been carefully watching the construction.

I will be traveling to Ukraine and will be able to send a personal report on how the project is on schedule for occupancy before winter. The brethren should be installing the heating as I write this report. They assure me that when the construction is completed to the required levels, they will be given occupancy.

Thank you for your assistance in this work! Your generosity in giving has brought glory to the Almighty God and has greatly blessed your brothers and sisters in Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine.

"Everyone whose heart stirred him and everyone whose spirit moved him came and brought the LORD's contribution...all whose hearts moved them, both men and women...presented an offering to the LORD...everyone who could make a contribution...brought the LORD's contribution" (Exodus 35:21-29).