



Ivano-Frankivsk Church of Christ Update – November 2024

Hello there!

The past few months have been quite a whirlwind full of visits to government offices, doing paperwork, re-doing paperwork, translating that paperwork, doing more paperwork, and visiting more offices. If I never shake hands with another politician, it won't be soon enough. All of this was done for two purposes: first, so that I could *finally* receive my residency card that allows me to legally stay beyond 90 days. All of the work for that is complete at last, and now we just wait for the physical card to come in from Kyiv (which will then involve yet another visit to a government office). Second, after being run around and seemingly being sent through every possible route in the book, we have officially after 11 months received the authority to sign documents for the church. What that means is that now we can officially and legally distribute the humanitarian aid that has been sent! We are working on organizing how to do that now and making sure we understand all of the paperwork that must be completed at each distribution, with a plan to begin emptying the warehouse here at the first of the year.

The church has experienced some good things with the major biblical foci being on how we worship and why we worship as well as working through the Sermon on the Mount in our Wednesday classes. Our Sunday lessons on



One of our members, Vitaly, is a soldier, and we helped his unit with some items they needed.



Teaching at King Daniel University.

worship are intended to give the members here some easy notes they can reference as they talk to their friends about why the church of Christ is so different. In middle of all this, Vova has also taken turns preaching, with his lessons focusing on the meaning of salvation and how to attain it. He and his wife, Natalie, are very evangelistically minded, and they want to reach and teach as many people as they can, which is obvious through their participation as well! Though many of members might still be considered new in the faith, you can really see their growth and their interest, especially in the Wednesday lessons. As we have gone in-depth in Matthew 5–7 the discussion, questions, and comments have caused us to take a lot longer than originally planned. That’s a good thing, because we can now see people critically thinking through these important passages and coming to a fuller understanding.

The main thing people in the church (and in a lot of the community) keep asking: “When will Perry be here???” He is just as vital a part of the work here and we can’t wait for him to return in January.



Vova preaching on Sunday, November 24th.

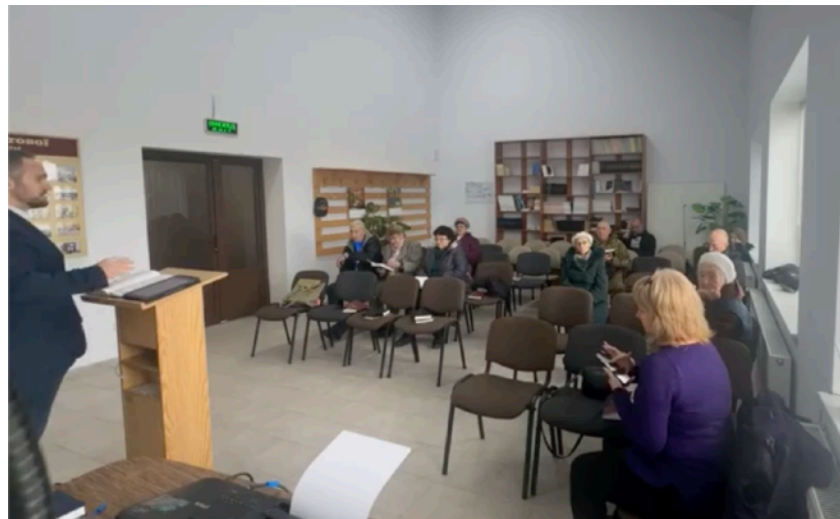


Working with Svetlana, the director of the rehab center.

As far as day-to-day evangelism goes, our visits to the rehab clinic continued once we reestablished a schedule after I returned from my exile in Poland over the summer. Every three weeks they rotate patients, so once a week we go to offer encouragement, pray, and have Bible discussions with those who are interested. One thing to note though is that one of the doctors at the clinic has not missed a meeting – he is quiet and doesn't often contribute to the discussion, but if he sees that we are there, he always comes into the room. Clearly, there is something he finds important there and we are glad to interact with him.

I've also been invited to King Daniel University on a regular basis to be involved with their teachers and students in the English department so that they have a native speaker with whom they can practice. They told me they don't want to abuse my time, but any time I have a day without an interpreter available, I arrange to go to the university because there are endless possibilities there. The time there has already produced two separate Bible studies as well as an opportunity to tell Bible stories to students in the classes, and several different conversations about who we are as the church and why we are different. Two weeks ago, I was even allowed to tell the story of Jesus on the road to Emmaus after his resurrection! This has been my favorite thing to do so far and it seems to be fairly productive. Plus, every teacher who invites me to their class buys me multiple cups of coffee when I arrive. How could I say no?

-Gif



Here is one of the weekly rehab center Bible classes. The number of people changes every week based on the number of patients. The average is about ten people.

A normal Sunday morning crowd