

He Who Has Begun A Good Work

I met Sasha A. in 1991. She was in her early 20s and translated for me. I recently reunited with her in Dnipro, where she serves as a female chaplain in the Ukrainian Army. Sasha loves kids and was our EEO camp director for many years.

They Lost their home, their son, and adopted a new family

"Jeff, thank you for coming to Dnipro," began Sasha. Please meet Oleksiy and Oksana Karptsov."

We stood on the steps of a small building where families meet together who have lost loved ones in the war. They meet, have fellowship, seminars, and support each other. I was privileged to be asked to speak, but felt at a loss for words. Of course, these families who have suffered significant losses wanted to know what the American government thinks about Ukraine.

The Karptsov family, however, came in late with their four children. Oleksiy and Oksana are refugees from a small town in the Luhansk region of Ukraine. Russia occupied Luhansk and now calls the territory "Russia." Russian settlers now live in their home.

Their 21-year-old son, Yegor immediately volunteered when the full-scale invasion happened in February 2022. He lost his life in the war. After their son's death, they decided to adopt little 4-year-old Nastia from an orphanage. When they learned that Nastia had three siblings, there was no doubt what had to be done. Today, the Karptsovs have four amazing adopted children, Nastia, Anya, Bogdan, and Kira, along with their older son, Matviy.



The Karptsov family needs sponsorship. They lost their son and their home, and now rescue young orphans.

He Who Has Begun A Good Work Will Complete It

On that Sunday, I spoke at the Baptist church, encouraging them to keep their eyes on Jesus. They love America and wonder why our officials make positive statements about V. Putin while drones and missiles strike their cities every day.

"Our friends, families, and churches at home have not forgotten you," I shared. "We pray for you to be strong during this time of suffering. And please pray for our country as well. We need it."

Privately, in a pastors' meeting, they asked what American Christians thought about them. Each pastor tried to keep a hopeful perspective, but they are clearly worried. Russian attacks have increased in recent weeks, coinciding with the ongoing negotiations. They do not believe that Putin will keep the peace. We prayed fervently together for a miracle.



The packed church listened attentively.

Sasha's Story

Q: Sasha, when did you join the Ukrainian Army?

"It was November, 2022 when I became an officer and the first female chaplain in the Ukrainian Army. There were so many things I had to learn. But I prayed with friends, and the local church helped me a lot. I lived in their basement and not on base. I help in the women's ministry at church, and I offer biblical counseling and teaching to my men."

Q: Tell us about your Christmas project for orphans.

"Last November, some of the guys in my battalion found out that there was an orphanage nearby. 'Can we take some fruits and cookies there?'" They asked.

"I didn't know about this orphanage; they did. And it was their idea to go visit and play with the kids. It was so cool. They felt that if they would go, they must go with me. I loved it!

"There are 22 kids there who are 6 to 14 years of age. They needed things like bath towels and soap, and the building had two broken windows. We returned after that to bring aid, fix their windows, and decided, since it was almost Christmas, to buy some presents for them.

Some of my commanders came along to see what's going on. We brought toys, coloring books, calendars, puzzles, and small things. My friends and supporters like you helped me to buy everything, but the guys paid for fruit, bananas, and candy. I never want the guys to spend money if possible."

Sasha Asks For Prayer for Ukraine

Q: Sasha, how can our American sponsors pray and support?

"Well, please pray for salvation of the souls of our military guys. That's the main thing. They need to know Christ. And second, of course, pray for their physical safety. Ask God to spare their lives. And pray for peace in our land. We don't want to fight.

"We are protecting our families and cities from foreign occupation. Our enemy tries to kill and terrorize us with drones and rockets. We just want to live our lives. We do have a history that is different from Russia's. We live in a Russian-speaking area, but everyone speaks Ukrainian. We love your kind of freedom in America, and we want the same thing. We desperately need your prayers."



Sasha with her fellow chaplains.



Jeff and Marty visit kids needing help.



Jeff also spoke in this village church. Ukraine enjoys religious freedom and they don't want to lose it.