

Our January 2018 Prayer Letter

Greetings Brethren,

We give God the glory for your financial help and prayers, and pray he will generously compensate for the sacrifices made in behalf of the souls and edification of the saints here in Ukraine. As a family we support two missionaries and as part of the church here, we contribute to the support of five national missionaries and their families. We are sincerely thankful for your help!

We had a good New Year's celebration with a special service at church. We had a dinner on the grounds inside, with picnic tables and special music and regular singing. We had a full house with everyone showing up and even some visitors. The men of the church were given an opportunity to preach and all of it was good.

We had a Christmas service in the village. Brother Ed and I traveled out again to one of the places we frequent. With the saints there we sang Christmas songs, and then we gave gifts to the children that have been coming. We will bring children's Bibles the next time we go, which will be soon.

Joanna went back to the States for a few days; her siblings had all chipped in to buy her a ticket. They had secretly planned a very special birthday party for her Mom's sixtieth birthday. She *was so* surprised and shed joyful tears, seeing her daughter who came from so far away, after seeing Joanna's brother Jeremy (who had just arrived back from deployment and was also a surprise) and still before that, one of Joanna's younger sisters, who flew in with her husband and five kids from Arizona (to Michigan) to surprise her too! Already there and preparing for the big event were her two older sisters and her youngest sister. It was good for the whole family.

While she was gone I realized a little what it must be like for the Lord to have to wait on his bride—how much patience and rich adoration to wait and wait. My Joanna was only gone ten days and that was enough. However, it was good for her and her family. The boys and I had some time just to ourselves when Ed's boys weren't also hanging out with us. Vova came over frequently too, to talk about what he is going through and pray together.

While passing out tracts yesterday near the metro station, a middle-aged man named Gregory (Gree'-gor), stopped and talked with me a little bit. He asked about the tracts, and after I gave him some answers, he said that he had two degrees in Iconology and a sixth level in the field of icons. Icons are the various pictures and depictions of different saints, as well as Mary and Jesus—authorized as religious symbols by the Orthodox Church here. The icons are held in such reverence by some here that they are deemed to have magical-like properties that will ward off evil spirits and provide peace and harmony at home. I asked him had he repented of his sins and he told me again about his credentials and his achievements, but also that he was a "super sinner". He agreed that Jesus came to save all, but didn't receive the Lord on the spot. I was glad he stopped to talk, took the tract, and seemed like he may read it.

Thank you and God bless,

The Wiles Family

