



Ivano-Frankivsk Church of Christ Update – April 2024

Hello there!

April was an incredibly busy month in Ivano-Frankivsk! We hosted several Americans who all had different purposes and filled our schedules. Most importantly, the church was enriched and our name was spread out into the community with a good reputation attached!

John Kachelman Jr. was the first to arrive and we spent a lot of his time visiting local officials and keeping up our relationships with them. We assured them that the church is here and willing to help with any needs! We also spent time with Svetlana who is running two rehabilitation centers here. As we met, she told us she had been waiting for someone to come and help with the spiritual aspects of rehabilitation and she asked if I would be willing to come host regular Bible studies. The answer: of course! Last week, she asked if I would first come have a study with her husband and mother so that she could see how I conduct myself before letting me talk to patients, which I believe is very wise. I planned a 20–30 minute Bible study, but we were there for over two hours! Our main discussion was how to grow in faith by Bible study and there was a ton of discussion. That laid the groundwork for getting to the rehab center, which now Svetlana has approved!



Jared preaching on a Sunday morning



John preaching on a Sunday morning

In the second week of the month, Jared and Whitney Kelly, and Avery Hackney arrived to work with the local high school, teaching their English classes during the day, and then Jared and Whitney had extra classes with them in the evenings. Since the evening classes were still on the school campus they could not openly discuss the Bible, but they gave lessons that on Bible principles such as being moral and serving others. All of the kids loved it and many returned every night to spend time together. In the meantime, Avery taught 1 Corinthians at the church building to those who might be considered our “normal Wednesday night crowd.” Just about everyone attended the whole week and were very excited to learn from Avery, saying that he is welcome back anytime! Now where was I during all of this? Well unfortunately someone had to drive the bus, so I was back and forth between each place. I’d get about 15 minutes in each location per night before having to pick up more people. BUT, that’s ok, because when you have people you can trust to lead and be good examples for the church, it takes the pressure off of being present.



Avery preaching on a Sunday morning



Even Ruslan got in the preaching fun!

We also had our first ladies' day! Whitney hosted a class in the hotel conference room where she taught for some time and then had a discussion time before they all ate lunch together. The idea was to give the ladies some time alone where they could feel appreciated, and I know Whitney did a fantastic job. I also did not attend this, mainly for lack of fulfilling the necessary qualifications.

In the background, Pasha continued his work and began laying tile in the stairwell. We also cleaned the windows and received window blinds, so now all we lack is the cabinets which should arrive in the next few weeks! We also were blessed to get a sermon from Ruslan last Sunday! It's the first time I've heard him preach and he did an excellent job talking about how we should rely on God and nothing else. I hope he'll volunteer to preach more often!

I had a very brief chance to meet John Durham and Gary Jerkins who have been coming here for many years. They hosted a conference to help doctors understand how to work with children who are affected by the war, and they hope to open a rehab center here towards that purpose in the future. It is obvious that both men care about the future of Ukraine as a whole and also the church in Ivano-Frankivsk.

I'll take a moment here to personally point out our translators this month because they all did an excellent job –

Inna went seamlessly from working with me to working with Avery and showed why she is such a valuable asset to us here. She's not just a translator but a great advisor and makes sure that conversations are totally understood. She put in more work this month than any month so far, and we're grateful that she is here.

Sasha returned to work with us again and really went above and beyond what we asked of her in many ways. She worked mostly with Whitney and Jared and took care of all of us at different points. She had a pretty difficult job as well since she had to work with Whitney's biology classes at school; that takes some real talent! She is a great friend to everyone so we are always glad when she is able to join our ranks.

Tanya of course was with us when John was here. There are many things that could be said in her favor, but perhaps the highest compliment that can be paid is that she made it through another month with John. What an amazing woman!

While things will slow down some in May, we still have a lot of open doors ahead of us and we plan to rush through them as fast as we can! I added some extra picture pages this month because it was too hard to delete any. Check them out!

-Gif

May 2, 2024



Meeting Svetlana at the rehab



Avery almost made it through the entire book of 1 Corinthians in 4 nights!



All these ladies attended our ladies' day!



I might not have preached this month but I couldn't let Inna have all the fun without me

Teaching at the high school



May 2, 2024

Teaching at the high school



Sunday Morning Church Crowd

