

From Rev. John Calhoun, United Methodist missionary in Kyiv, Ukraine

October 31, 2018

Dearest friends in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! I pray that you and your loved ones are well and blessed.

Like many missionaries sent out by Global Ministries, the mission agency of the United Methodist Church, I am the only missionary from our church serving in Ukraine. Although I enjoy the support of many in my community—my family, good friends, colleagues in local ministry—I miss the companionship of fellow missionaries who are similarly called and sent by our church into mission.

Thus it was a great blessing for me to travel to Berlin earlier this month and participate in a gathering of Global Ministries missionaries serving in Europe, Eurasia, and the Middle East. Twenty missionaries, from Northern Ireland to Kazakhstan, from Oslo to Bethlehem, met in the German capital for a week of fellowship, worship, refreshment, and revitalization. Throughout each day, missionaries and their family members gathered for Bible study and prayer, presentations on mission, small group discussion on a variety of topics, and warm fellowship over shared meals. We also celebrated worship with a local United Methodist congregation, and explored important historical and cultural landmarks of the city, such as the Berlin Wall and the Holocaust Memorial. I was honored to be part of the leadership team of this event, and also to lead a discussion group on the importance of embracing migrants to our local communities.



This week of fellowship reminded me of what a privilege it is to serve as a missionary, and inspired within me a renewed commitment to mission service. As I shared my own struggles and frustrations, I took comfort and strength from the prayerful support I received from my mission colleagues. What a blessing it is to gather with those who share my vocation.

Coincidentally, while I was in Berlin, several African students from our international ministry in Kyiv enjoyed a similar blessing of inspired fellowship with their peers. These students traveled to the nearby city of Vinnitsa to take part in the International Christian Medical Conference. This annual event brings Christian medical students from across Ukraine together for several days of lectures, workshops, and devotional events, creating a network of support and care for Ukrainian and international students who see their medical studies as a part of their Christian vocation.

During our weekly Bible study last Sunday, our young adults shared their appreciation for the opportunity to gather with other Christian medical students, and to be strengthened by the faith witness of their new friends. They also expressed their gratitude to the many supporters of our international ministry in Kyiv; thanks to financial donations to the ministry, we were able to cover the cost of our students to travel to and participate in this powerful event. So, on behalf of the students of the international ministry of the UMC in Kyiv, I thank you for your support!



Over the past few years, many of you have partnered with the mission of Global Ministries through Giving Tuesday, held each year on the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving. On this day, United Methodist congregations and members around the world are invited to make a financial donation towards a mission project supported and approved by our denomination. Each year, thousands of donors from United Methodist communities worldwide share their financial gifts in support of mission service. More information about Giving Tuesday 2018 can be found by following this link:

<http://www.umcmmission.org/giving-tuesday/givingtuesday>.

This year, Giving Tuesday will be celebrated on November 27. I encourage you to make a donation in support of the UMC in Ukraine's ministry with international students and others who live on the margins of our society. Here's how to make a quick, easy, and safe donation online:

- Go to Global Ministries' dedicated webpage for donating to the ministry of the UMC in Ukraine (Eurasia Mission Initiative: Ukraine and Moldova #14053A)
https://secure3.convio.net/gbgm/site/SPageNavigator/gbgm_donate.html?type=1001&project=14053A
- In the box requesting how the gift should be designated, write "International Ministries Kyiv."
- Provide the requested gift, billing, and payment information, and click "Submit." It's that easy!

If you prefer to make your donation by check, please make the check payable to "Advance GCFA." On the memo line, write "#14053A, International Ministries Kyiv." Mail the check to:

Advance GCFA
PO Box 9068 GPO
New York, NY 10087-9068

Once again, I thank you for offering your prayerful and financial support for my ministry as a United Methodist missionary. I am grateful for your partnership in mission. May God bless you and your loved ones in this season of thanksgiving.

Yours in Christ, John

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