



Greetings from the Christians in Nikopol. For the last three months, the church in Nikopol has persevered through the harshest part of winter. The nuclear power plant continues to be unstable, but the weather has finally turned to spring and they are through the worst of the weather. God has blessed their courage. We would do well to observe their example of unwavering faith in the face of such extreme adversity. They have not merely survived winter, but our Ukrainian brothers and sisters are thriving!

Prior to the war the congregation in Nikopol was around 50-60. Almost two thirds of that original group left the town, yet the church maintains meetings on Sunday morning and have around 40 in attendance regularly. This means that during this time they have been adding to their number



### Street evangelism,



In the beginning of March, Slavik and others resumed public distribution of literature. This ministry was previously one of our biggest evangelistic efforts. In addition to the literature, they bring tea and sandwiches and give away packets of food, they have done this twice so far. The first Sunday they had 17 visitors in services. Slavik said one participant wanted to be very clear that she was coming not for the food packages, but for spiritual food. Grocery stores and the market have remained open, but it is difficult to find work. The marketplaces have been bombed as well as grocery stores. They board them up and keep them open.

### Pokrovskoe

hosting ladies' class on Tuesday and Club Smile (youth group) on Saturday.

On March 12, they held their first church service at this location. And at the time of this newsletter, they have met 4 times at the new location now. They have about 30 people coming, some are completely new, some are church members from Nikopol who now live in the village. The men from the alcohol rehab are coming as well, so between the two locations there are now 70 people.

As the weather turns nice, they are preparing for planting season.



## Alcohol rehab ministry

Our alcohol rehab currently has 14 men living in it, some men have completed the program, while others are still overcoming addiction. Due to the war, and the difficulty of finding a job, some of the men that completed the program have stayed on. Slavik is hoping to rent an additional house, to provide housing for those no longer requiring the program as they look for work. The alcohol rehab is still a very needed ministry, but quarters are tight while it is dangerous for these men to live in Nikopol.

The program itself is for a year. The men have regular studies they attend and have 'assignments' that must be completed as well as spending a set amount of time in personal prayer and study. At the beginning of the war, alcohol sales were restricted, as Ukrainian citizenry suddenly had access to firearms. Alcohol sales have resumed, and addiction is back and as strong as ever.



The women's facility closed as many of the women have fled the country. Slavik and family are currently staying there, as well as Nastya and Vlada. Nastya became a Christian in summer of last year. When Nastya was very young, she and our daughter played in the courtyard outside our apartment together. We brought her and her brother to church with us for a few months until their mother's drinking habits forced them to move. That was about eleven years ago now. Nastya has become like a daughter to Slavik and Katya, our Ukrainian minister's family. Her own mother still lives in Nikopol and drinks heavily. She was not able to provide any kind of stability for Nastya and her brother Yan. Yan was baptized in December. Their little sister Sveta has recently moved to the rehab facility as well.

## Club Smile

I had the treat of talking with Nastya on the phone. She has become a very mature young lady and even participates in teaching the Bible lessons for a Friday group composed of younger students. She chose to talk about the promise God made to Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky. She and Vlada organized games and crafts for the children as well. It is an encouragement to me as she was a young lady that I thought we would never see again.

On average, about 20 kids come for Club Smile. It's not as many as they had around Christmas time, but they are encouraged that the ones that come have been coming consistently.



## Yura and Anya

Anya shared her testimony of how life goes in a war zone (below) First I'll provide their back story. Anya gave birth to the youngest member of our congregation in January. Hospital staff erected a makeshift bomb shelter in the hall with mattresses on the wall in case the hospital was bombed during her stay.



Yura came to the Nikopol congregation through Viktor Shuka's 'prison pipeline', a prison ministry on the outskirts of Kyiv. Viktor often encourages young men to go through the rehab program though it is located quite a way from Kyiv.

Many others have come through this pipeline, a number of whom have stayed in Nikopol and become pillars of the work in Nikopol. Yura had been an addict since the time he was 14 years old. His mother had lost hope that she would ever have any kind of relationship with her son. Now he has a family, and she is even a grandmother. She is a Christian in the church where Viktor serves. Now there are always tears of joy in her eyes. The war has been hard for her as it has so many, and a bomb even came very close to her house.

Shortly after becoming a Christian and completing the rehab program, Yura was married to Anya, who has been serving the Lord faithfully through several ministries in the church. Throughout the course of the war, he has been blessed to have continued stable employment as a welder. He also used his skills to weld the window covers for our new church building. Anya has been free of her own addictions for 6 years now.



### **Anya's Testimony Life at War**

"I am constantly reminded of how much I have to be thankful for. People are so much more open to the gospel since the start of the war. The church is a living organism and not only is surviving, but it has nearly doubled in size since the war began. It is only because of the violence that the congregation in the village of Pokrovskoe was even born. Certainly, we do not rejoice over the war and death, but we do thank God for the lives that now consider spiritual matters as important. It is an encouragement for the people in Nikopol and in the village. This shows the hand of God. We never dreamed we could be so richly blessed.

I am reminded of my responsibility before God. When I hear the warnings of air raids I lie quietly and listen. I know anything can happen, but I know God's plan is sovereign. The brothers from Kyiv come and bring us sleeping bags, coats and now they have brought us stoves to heat our homes with. They come and we hold conferences, and that is encouraging. Christian brothers and sisters from all over Ukraine have drawn closer together. We have a beautiful relationship now.

There are, of course, downsides. Kids used to play outside all the time, now they are always home. Because of this, we are thankful for Club Smile. The kids are thankful as well. It is sad when the children are afraid. My son lives in Nikopol with his grandmother. She has to have medicine for anxiety. Many of our elderly people are taking medicine so they can sleep at night. Amazing people continue to keep our marketplaces open despite the dangers, but they must provide for their families too.

I grew up in an orphanage. My adopted mother took me in when I was nine, but she later died from the flu so I have no family of my own. The church is my family."

Sergei still lives at the church building in Nikopol. He keeps our grounds and is indispensable as we have needed someone to live at the building. He said a neighbor shot a drone out of the sky. Staying in town comes with some risks.

## Visitors from Kyiv

Brothers from the church in Chernivtsi and Kyiv have brought supplies to the church in Nikopol several times. As Anya mentioned in her testimony, this is an encouragement to them.

The picture at right shows how close these Christians are to occupied Russian territory. As you can see the nuclear power plant is under Russian control, although Ukrainians are manning it. This is the largest nuclear power plant in Europe.



Christians across Ukraine admire Slavik's courage to stay put in the face of such adversity. His example gives Christians everywhere courage to remain, and provide leadership while it is so needed.

*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens. For this reason, take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day and having prepared everything, to take your stand. - Ephesians 6:12, 13*

The Greens,  
on behalf of the churches in Nikopol and Pokrovskoe

Our website [www.nikopolchurch.com](http://www.nikopolchurch.com) is currently being updated (This process has been slower as we were forced to switch web hosts. Donations can be made by check or Paypal, found on the website.