

# The Gazette

OF MUSIC MISSION KIEV

Music/Widows/Orphans and Children/Church/Victims of War

## UNTO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

Ask someone who has visited Eastern Ukraine and seen devastation, poverty, and the hopelessness of civilians who have lived with war on their land for four long years, and they will tell you that it is like “the end of the earth.” Some live in basements, because their homes are destroyed or unlivable. One never knows if a rocket will disturb the fragile sense of normalcy they hope to maintain. Food is difficult to find, and hope for tomorrow is growing dimmer each day.

Orphans, elderly people, those who are sick, blind, or lame are there, along with those who have remained to help their less fortunate fellow citizens.

Such an angel of mercy is Pastor Yuri.

Journalist Yuri Polakiwsky interviewed Pastor Yuri when the Helping Hands group from America came to visit the ministry.

On the morning that Yuri met the MMK Helping Hands team at Kyiv’s main food terminal, he had driven thirteen hours along pot-holed rural roads and had slept only a few hours in his van. He looked weary and unshaven, but wore a smile as he greeted his friends and colleagues. He did not have one word of complaint.

Yuri had driven half the country to fulfill a mission, not to bring arms, but to get food supplies so that he could help feed seniors who had mostly been forgotten and neglected.

For the last four years, Yuri has been a Mission ‘point man’ in the war zone. When the war began, he, like thousands of others, came to Kyiv to escape the hostilities, but soon after meeting the Music Mission staff, the one-time addiction counsellor, felt inspired to return to his native region with a new mandate: it was not to fight against the invading aggressor, but to counter the evils of war by sharing compassion with the most vulnerable and suffering by delivering food to the hungry and ministering to the forgotten.

“When the war began, many, who could, fled,” he begins. “But many had no choice but to remain. Most who stayed, were elderly and infirm, either too old or too frail to move away.

“Many live in villages where food distribution has ceased because of the danger,” he continues to explain. “Food distributors won’t risk it, and many roads have been severely damaged, full of holes from exploded ordinance making it even harder to negotiate the terrain. It’s a major problem.

“But of course, everyone still has to eat. Unfortunately, and I hate to say it, many have been left abandoned. For many, we are their only source for food.



42 members of KSOC are coming to America! Perhaps you know of a church that might host us. See page 4 for OPEN dates.

“My job is to go and look for these people and help them as best as I can. I search through what seem to be abandoned houses to see if there may be someone hiding. I have looked for people in their basements, where many hide during artillery strikes and bring them food.”

Yuri lives with his wife, in Tyrets, a small town not more than eight kilometers from the frontline. And though the surrounding area is being constantly bombarded by shelling, he is not deterred, seemingly tireless in pursuing his humanitarian work and ministering. “I have to go because even if there were consistent sources of supplies, many would be too afraid to go out.

“Of course, I have trouble sleeping because of the noise. The shelling is so loud and doesn’t ever seem to stop,” he says matter of factly and again without complaint. “Even this morning, when I called home, it was the same. Waiting here in Kyiv, and having slept in the van, at least it was quiet.”

When the Helping Hands arrives, he drives his empty van to the loading dock. The food stuffs have been

neatly stacked high on numerous pallets and are already waiting to be loaded. They include fresh vegetables, potatoes, carrots and beets. Next to them are fundamental staples, such as pasta, an assortment of canned goods, things not readily available anywhere near the front and all donated by the generous supporters of MMK.

This time, a group of Helping Hands American visitors have come to help load the van. They have travelled from virtually every corner of the United States. Most are retired, but none refuse to help load the food.

They have come to see for themselves what the Mission is doing. But as was discussed in the bus coming to the food terminal, they said they came to Ukraine to do more. Many expressed knowledge about the grave situation in eastern Ukraine and said they wanted, by their presence, to express their care and concern for those suffering.

Weeks before in Dryzivka, Donbass, 24 members of the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra and Chorus had travelled to put on two concerts for the war weary, including bus loads of people that Yuri brought. Other local organizers brought many orphan children, also from the war zone. Yuri couldn’t contain himself to speak about those from far who cared and

were so burdened about the plight of those suffering because of the war.

“The concerts were amazing,” Yuri added. “When are the musicians coming again?”

So appreciative he was of those who also gave money to aid the humani-



Pastor Yuri brings the gospel and food to the war zone



Pastors Yuri and Irene bring the love of Jesus to victims of war

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# Reaching the Children Nobody Wanted



Oxana and Irene, MMK pastors to children

It is a sad situation when a parent dies, and their children are sent to live at an orphanage. How tragic it is, though, when a child is rejected by a parent, or abused by a mother or father, and the state has to take the children away for their own protection. These children are deeply bruised and desperately need to know the perfect love of Jesus.

Such children are housed at the Stara Basan orphanage

about two hours north of Kyiv. Here, there are 84 orphans from the ages of 6 to 16, and MMK is coming to them every week.

This extraordinary ministry began with Oxana, one of our staff members. Oxana grew up in this little village. Her mother worked as a cook in this orphanage, and when Swedish missionaries came to find poor orphans to help, they also met Oxana's mother who was extremely burdened that her daughter would never walk again without painful crutches. Through help from these missionaries, Oxana had hip replacement surgery and was cured. But the best change in her life was that she received Jesus Christ as her Savior and began a new life with Him.

Now, as a pastor to orphans and children with MMK, Oxana visits the children at the Stara Basan orphanage weekly bringing them God's Word through Bible lessons, singing, and crafts. Most importantly, she

brings them the love that they desperately need, and shows them how Jesus loves them.

For two years we have been serving these Stara Basan orphans, and summer Bible camps are now a highlight for many.

There were sport competitions, tetherball, fencing, floor ball, and swimming in the reservoir. The children jumped on a trampoline and had their first attempt at archery.

Their theatrical groups were tied to the Bible lessons that they did every day, and they memorized Scripture, competitively, for which they received extra points. There were also hand crafts, music, and English lessons.

There were excursions outside the camp and also a camping trip. What fun for children who have never had this experience before!

In the evenings, students performed theatrical skits for the other students and their counselors. A feeling of community and love pervaded the room. The children love the camp's daily schedule, which is full of love and smiles.

Even though a camp must come to an end, it is our prayer that these children will continue to know that Jesus is with them every day, and that He cares about them, and loves them with an everlasting love.

So many orphan children first come to know God through attending a camp. That is why it has become a priority for MMK to sponsor camps for orphans. But continued contact is equally important, and with Oxana's weekly visits to Stara Basan orphanage, we have hope that even the hardest and most damaged hearts will be changed for all eternity.



## Greg Kannon Joins the Leadership of MMK



We welcome Greg Kannon as our new Chief Executive Officer for MMK. Following Randy Johnson's announced retirement after 10 faithful years of service, we were looking for a capable leader who would understand not only our mission but our unique musical emphasis. God brought to us a wonderful man in Greg Kannon who was fully able to fulfill our needs and expectations.

Greg understands our musical goals, as music has always been a part of who he is. A classically trained pianist for six years and a soloist for four years, Greg comes to this position with a love and understanding of the music we present, and the purpose for which it is presented. When Greg heard that the mission statement of MMK was to reach those who do not yet know Jesus through sacred classical music and great hymns of the faith, he was very interested in joining this mission where God is working in an extraordinary way.

Greg comes to us with excellent managerial background and leadership experience. He spent eighteen years in the US Postal Service where he had various roles of supervision and management training. After leaving the Postal Service, he completed his degree at Stetson University in DeLand, Florida, he attended his first year of seminary at Reformed Theological Seminary's Orlando campus and completed his Masters of Divinity degree at Asbury Theological Seminary in Orlando.

Upon graduation he was invited to serve as a minister who was part of the research, development, and implementation of this large church's multi-site strategy. He and his wife Kelly, helped launch and lead three sites/campuses over the next 3 year, located 15 - 30 miles from the home church location.

After those sites were launched, they left to help plant another church in a different area of Orlando, even as Greg joined Asbury Seminary's Advancement/Donor Development team. He served the southeast region in donor development from 2006 through 2009. He also began

# Helping Hands from American Hearts

For 10 years now, MMK has been bringing Americans to Ukraine to see what God is doing through musicians, widows, orphans, and those who are in need, spiritually and economically.

It has been a life-changing experience for many. “One may read about the people of Ukraine,” an American said to me, “but to actually meet them and witness what their lives are like, is a touch from God upon your heart.”

We try to tell in words and pictures how God is changing people in Ukraine, how grateful the widows and orphans are for the help that Americans send to them, and how the Ukrainians who serve with us in music and mission are propagating God’s beauty and splendor.

But nothing can communicate the emotion of a hug from a widow. She reaches out to touch a brother and sister in Christ who lives in a place she’ll never go, and that hug is the consummate expression of her love and gratitude. She wants to say many words, but the embrace says it all.

The 14 people who came on this Helping Hands trip were truly blessed. Now they try to express it to you in words, that they wrote before they left the city where MMK ministers every day.

“This is my second trip to Ukraine. I am impressed in how the mission has expanded to serve **the war zone, displaced people, the military widows**. I can easily see how the funds I contribute are so wisely spent to help people.”— Jennifer

“Perhaps **the people affected by the war** reached me most deeply as I have never experienced anything so moving to my spirit. Thank you so much for the many chances to share and the ability to help. I also enjoyed all the excursions and the wonderful ability to break bread with so many people of various stations in life. I am truly humbled.” — Nancy

“Kim and Wes are to be commended as having the goal to see that the many ministries of MMK are left in the hands of **highly mentored and trained Ukrainians**. The entire staff are so full of love for the people they serve.” — Joan

“It was amazing to see how God has worked in **presenting the gospel message along with providing food to the pensioners** and people in the war zone. And the music from the choir and various singers was glorious. I can hardly wait to hear the KSOC on tour this fall.” — Pat

“So appreciative of the **multi-dimensional strengths and teamwork of the staff**. It genuinely feels like the “family” of Christ caring for one another. And the beauty of Kyiv, the culture and the privilege of our own interaction with the KSOC is almost beyond description – such an unusual experience.”— Chris



Americans enjoy craft time with orphans in Ukraine



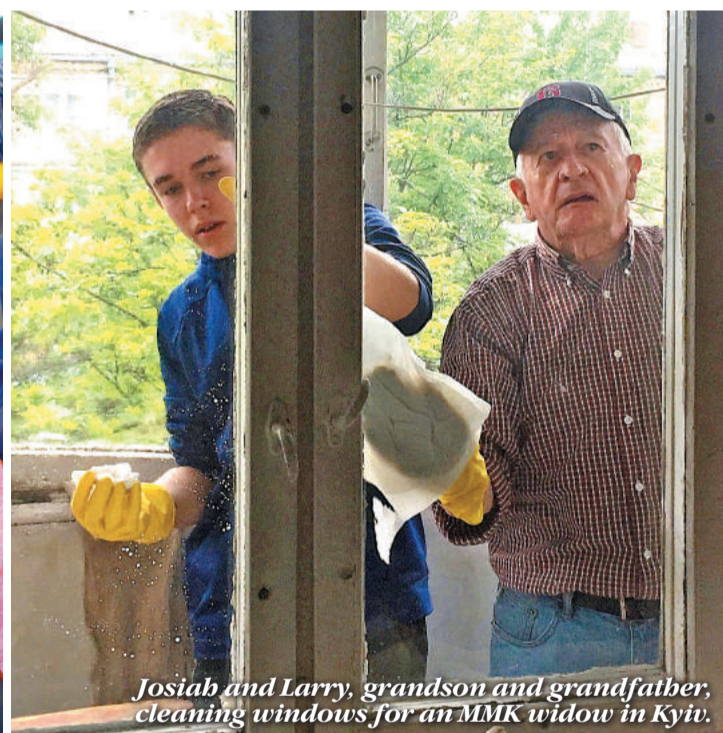
Americans with Ronnie spend precious time with home-bound widow in Kyiv

“It’s wonderful to see **how thankful and happy the widows are** when they speak about how the ministry has helped them in their situations. Their expressions of true happiness are priceless and their example of contentment has impacted me incredibly.” — Josiah

“Reaching out to the **pensioners on home visits** was a real eye-opener. People from all walks of life end up in less than ideal circumstances. Visiting internally displaced people with their stories, people trying to get along, but were just in the wrong place at the wrong time.” — Ralph

“Over the 5 years since I was last here I see such a tremendous growth in your outreach. And I am especially excited how the **Ukrainian believers working with MMK are now owning the ministry**. I love that you have fostered this. I love that you are encouraging Ukrainians to essentially lead worship. All the ministries you are doing are so valuable and were such a blessing to experience.” — Bonnie

We are grateful to Ronnie Santeusanio who continues to organize these groups year after year, and accompanies them on these life-changing trips.



Josiah and Larry, grandson and grandfather, cleaning windows for an MMK widow in Kyiv.

teaching in the Leadership department at Asbury Seminary’s Orlando campus the Fall of 2006, which he continues to do. Most recently he worked in Clinical Trial Enrollment Development for 2 branches of an Alzheimer’s Research Clinic in Central Florida.

Between October 2009 and October 2010 Greg’s wife Kelly, his father, and mother, all died of cancer. It left him alone and experiencing deep grief from 13 months of great loss. Greg and Kelly never had children through their cancer journey. Through this part of his life story, he can relate personally to the journey of loss of widows and widowers and the value of orphans.

When Greg heard of the humanitarian efforts to help widows and orphans, his heart and mind were deeply touched. To combine his years in music, leadership development and teaching/mentoring, and his personal journey through grief from the loss of a spouse and family members, it became clear, as the conversations continued with the Board, that God was calling Greg to this new position. And Greg and his wife Donna agree that this was the step God wanted him to take.

His recent years of mentoring, coaching and consulting as a board member for churches, non-profit groups, alumni boards, and life-coaching for individuals all led to his decision to say “yes” to his role at MMK. He began working in early April, leading and guiding MMK in the present and future areas of ministry.

Recently Greg traveled to Kyiv with the Helping Hands mission trip, and met our missionary leaders, Wes and Kim Janzen with their Ukrainian staff. What a team! He witnessed a Kyiv Symphony Orchestra and Chorus rehearsal, and participated in activities with widows, orphans, and Internally Displaced People of Ukraine. How do you describe it? “God moves in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform.”

Henry Blackaby’s popular study, “*Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*,” is best summed up in this phrase: “Find out where God is at work and join Him there.”

God is moving in Ukraine. Greg has seen it, and he is passionate about the Kingdom building that lies ahead.

# 2018 American Tour with the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra and Chorus



Wes and Kim Janzen

## SEPTEMBER

Sept. 5 – Ukrainians arrive in Chicago and travel to Monticello, IA for housing

Sept. 6 – Monticello, IA – Community Dinner

Sept. 7 – Monticello, IA- Monticello High School

Sept. 8 – Iowa – OPEN

Sept. 9 – Des Moines, IA – Plymouth Church of Christ

Sept. 10 – Sioux City, IA – Morningside Lutheran Church

Sept. 11 – Sioux City, IA – BJ Haan Auditorium – Dordt College

Sept. 12 – Mitchell, SD – Harvest Community Church

Sept. 13 – North or South Dakota – OPEN

Sept. 14 – Bismarck, ND – OPEN

Hosted by the German Russian Historical Society

Sept. 15 – Dickinson, ND – Trinity H.S.

Hosted by the Ukrainian Cultural Institute

Sept. 16 – Rapid City, SD – Calvary Lutheran Church

Hosted by the German Russian Historical Society

Sept. 17 – Day Off with sightseeing to the Black Hills and Mount Rushmore

Sept. 18 – Scottsbluff, NE – First United Methodist Church

Sept. 19 – Colorado – \*Concert & location pending\*

Sept. 20 – Estes Park Colorado – Walter G. Reusch Auditorium

Hosted by the Y.M.C.A. of the Rocky Mountains

Sept. 21 – Denver, CO – Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church

Sept. 22 – Fort Collins, CO – Faith Evangelical Free Church

Sept. 23 – Fort Collins CO – First Presbyterian Church

Sept. 24 – Kansas – OPEN

Sept. 25 – Kansas – OPEN

Sept. 26 – Oklahoma City, OK – OPEN

Sept. 27 – Grandbury, TX – Acton United Methodist Church

Sept. 28 – Dallas or Fort Worth TX – OPEN

Sept. 29 – Dallas or Fort Worth TX – OPEN

Sept. 30 – Southlake, TX – Countryside Bible Church

## OCTOBER

Oct. 1 – Waco or Temple TX – OPEN

Oct. 2 – San Antonio TX – OPEN

Oct. 3 – San Antonio, TX – Village Parkway Baptist Church

Oct. 4 – San Antonio, TX – OPEN

Oct. 5 – Georgetown, TX – The Worship Place

Oct. 6 – Austin, TX – Redeemer Presbyterian Church

Oct. 7 – Round Rock, TX – United Methodist Church

Oct. 8 – Houston, TX – OPEN

Oct. 9 – Longview, TX – Trinity Episcopal Church

Oct. 10 – North East, TX – OPEN

Oct. 11 – North East, TX – OPEN

Oct. 12 – Little Rock, AK – OPEN

Oct. 13 – Memphis, TN – OPEN

Oct. 14 – Memphis, TN – First Evangelical Church

Oct. 15 – Bolivar or Springfield, MO – OPEN

Oct. 16 – Olathe, KS – Belle Cultural Events Center

Oct. 17 – Kansas City, MO – OPEN

Oct. 18 – Saint Louis, MO – OPEN

Oct. 19 – Clayton, MO – OPEN

Oct. 20 – Evanston, or Chicago, IL – OPEN

Oct. 21 – Elgin, IL – OPEN

Oct. 22 – **DEPART for KYIV**

\*Schedule Subject to Change\*

Cities in Bold are confirmed concerts

If you can help in filling out our schedule, contact Bob Stoecker:

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*Continued from page 1*

tarian efforts and support the spiritual efforts of ministering to those severely emotionally traumatized.

“If it weren’t for you,” he said, referring to the efforts of the Mission, “many would go hungry. I couldn’t tell you how the people would make it.”

With tears in his eyes, he tries to explain the effect of providing food, music and a word of hope to the desperate people he sees. “When we give them food, I can see their hope returning, at least for a time. I see transformed faces. In those moments, they realize that they have not been forgotten. They understand that others care for them, by people from so far away.”

As Yuri speaks, it cannot be denied that he is speaking of a special relationship that has been forged between those from far away and those suffering through the war. It is like a family relationship, that when one suffers, others suffer as well. Even though they are separated by a great distance – one living in relative safety and the other in danger, loneliness, suffering and hunger – there is a profound sense of unity brought on by the heightened sense of understanding of human suffering.

“You, by providing food, affect the lives of many.” At his point, he stops speaking, looking expectantly at his interlocutor, waiting to see if this fact is understood. One cannot help but be moved. He doesn’t want, nor expects any compliments from fulfilling his mission, he just wants it to be understood how thankful the people are who receive help from abroad, and for them to understand how their compassion is affecting such a vulnerable part of humanity and the body of Christ.

Seeing that he has been understood, he smiles, puts out his hand and then embraces those who have come from afar.

After almost an hour, the once-empty van has been filled to full capacity by Helping Hands visitors, working shoulder to shoulder with Ukrainians. The doors are tightly shut, to remain unopened until Yuri arrives back home for fear, that if opened, the food might fall out. From the side of the van, one could see the effect of the weight as the van’s shock absorbers are straining laboriously under the weight.

In the next few days, the people trapped by war will receive the blessing of food – an answer to their prayers, provided by His servants from far away who responded to God’s call of compassion, and distributed by a man who puts his own life at risk to feed the hungry.

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS AND SUPPORT!

Our address: **Music Mission Kiev, 286 Wilshire Blvd., Casselberry, Florida 32707**

You may find more information on our new website: [www.musicmissionkiev.org](http://www.musicmissionkiev.org)

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