

the Gazette



**Widows Find Hope Amid
COVID-19 Quarantine**

PAGE 4

HOLDING TOGETHER

Holding Together

A WORD FROM THE CEO

How has your life been lately? Anything unusual going on in your daily life? Are there any new adventures you have to share?

Yes, those questions are said tongue-in-cheek since most of the world has been experiencing the exact same repetition day after day. While separated, we are globally connected now more than ever—through staying at home and our unifying prayers for protection and healing. Who would have thought video chats would become normal for gatherings everywhere? These may be some of the greatest examples of global unity I can remember.

The book of Nehemiah is a great parallel to what we have all been facing. In this story, the people must unite in solidarity to accomplish God's plan to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem.

They faced challenges within their own community and were besieged by formidable foes outside their area—including famine and financial troubles. They had to provide for their families, stand guard against new threats, and continue to work together regardless of the bureaucratic red tape they faced.

Sound familiar? Of course, it does. However, we know the people of Jerusalem accomplished great things by staying the course through the challenges. This too is what we have been experiencing with our people and mission in Kyiv. Our team has been calling all the widows to check on their wellbeing and provide help when needed. In this edition, you will read about widows joining together to sew and make masks to be worn in the ongoing conflict areas in the east. Our KSOC singers are keeping in touch through their weekly Viber meetings.

In the USA, we continue to do the work and plan for the future. We had a successful #GivingTuesdayNow fundraiser with incredible results.



The faithfulness of all of you, our partners, and family, have been extraordinary in helping us stay the course with the mission. Thankfully, no one has lost their jobs, we are all just doing things a bit different so we can accomplish the mission God has given us in Ukraine.

**“Because of your support,
we are continuing to reach people for
Jesus and discipling them to reach
others for Jesus.”**

I hope you will be inspired and encouraged as you read the rest of the articles. We have all been holding together beautifully and, in many ways, have been writing our own Psalm of praise to God for His goodness and faithfulness through our actions during these days of quarantine.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg K.".

Greg

HOPE

Widows Find Hope Amid COVID-19 Quarantine



These last few months have been difficult on all of us. For our friends in Ukraine, this has been a unique challenge. Kyiv has been in quarantine since March 17 and restrictions are gradually beginning to lift. Our staff is working diligently to keep in touch with all 473 widows we serve—from delivering meal packets, praying with them over the phone, and getting them

connected to our online services and groups.

As you can imagine, this can be a lonely time for widows. Many want to take care of themselves and not burden others. A theme echoed throughout these check-in calls has been scripture reading—this season has made them want to truly study the Bible in a new way. One widow, Margarita, remarked,

“ I am OK. What helps me to survive through this difficult time is the Bible. I literally live with it. I have so many questions now, and I am trying to find answers there.”

MARGARITA



“I am OK. What helps me to survive through this difficult time is the Bible. I literally live with it. I have so many questions now, and I am trying to find answers there.” Another widow, Leonina, called Serhiy Basarab to share her excitement over 1 Corinthians 15:57—referring to the future victory over COVID and other challenges.

***“But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
– 1 Corinthians 15:57 (NIV)***

It has been such a blessing to several widows to hear that Music Mission Kiev hasn't forgotten about them and they are remembered. While many widows remain positive, several are in great financial difficulty. Even through it all, our widows have seen this as an opportunity to trust God and come to Him in prayer. A few widows, including Galyna and Margarita, asked about the Americans specifically and wanted us to know they are praying for us. Our widows know that they can count on Music Mission Kiev if they have a big need and we will do our best to help them.



Our widows in Donbass aren't big fans of masks, but since they are a necessity nowadays, they decided to sew several themselves so they look fashionable. The youth have been passing them out on the streets along with different scripture passages and encouragement. Even during these difficult circumstances, our widows are finding ways to serve God and encourage others.

Please continue to pray for our widows—we are trying to provide as many resources to them as possible during this time, but technical expertise and availability is limited for many of them.



Want to sponsor a widow?

Visit MUSICMISSIONKIEV.ORG/SPONSOR to learn more.





Get to know Vika.

A LITTLE STORY OF ONE TRANSFORMATION

Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of KSOC & Kyiv Office Director Viktoriia (Vika) Konchakovska shares about her journey of spiritual transformation, her history with the KSOC, and her love of Music Mission Kiev.

In August 1993, you became a part of Kyiv Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. How did you get to know Roger McMurrin and what was your first impression of the KSOC?

I had a variety of impressions, but the first thing that I noticed was that the atmosphere inside the KSOC was friendly, open, and without ego. The choir was pretty big with lots of different personalities, but Roger had an ability that I can't explain, he could "embrace" everyone with his spirit. He united people—making them friends. He also amused us all the time. We had a really friendly and cheerful atmosphere thanks to Roger.



Along with his great personality, he opened my eyes and brought a fresh perspective on music and art. When working with Roger we felt musical freedom without boundaries. We enjoyed rehearsals and didn't notice how time would fly by.

Is it true that Roger was a person who helped you to get to know Christ?

I grew up in the Soviet Union and it wasn't accepted to talk about God. When Roger came to Ukraine, he organized Bible studies for musicians at his home where we read the Bible and discussed it. Then Roger invited us to rehearsals, which turned into mini-church services on Sundays. These were the first seeds of what we know now as St. Paul's Church.

Roger never pushed people, he was very delicate. I remember at the end of our rehearsals we prayed. At first, it was difficult for musicians to accept this because most were Orthodox believers and some were atheists. At that time, it was uncommon to pray out loud, but I remember one phrase Roger would use to quiet the group so he could pray. Roger said: "I would like to pray for you. It's not necessary for you to pray with me. But, please, just respect what other people do."

His own example and the sacred music that we performed became my first steps to spiritual transformation. Over time, I felt that my character and attitude towards people had changed. When I started to attend church I felt that I gained more love for people and my insularity was gone. It was then I knew God had transformed me and I accepted him into my heart.



VIKA

For 27 years you have been an integral part of Music Mission Kiev. Over the years, MMK has evolved and changed, and so has your role. Today, God has you in a valuable position at MMK—Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of KSOC & Kyiv Office Director. How do you feel about your current role and the KSOC?

Oh, that's my life (smiling). One day I said that MMK is my life. I have the same feelings towards KSOC. I've been with the choir since 1993 and this group has become a part of me. I don't separate myself and KSOC—we are one. I grew up there as a musician and today I feel the responsibility for every member of KSOC.

Right now I want to save KSOC traditions because our choir is unique. I have discovered fantastic and beautiful sacred music by talented composers from all around the world. My dream is to make KSOC boundless in musical meaning. KSOC is the only choir in Ukraine that performs spiritual music. For all of our 27 years, our purpose remains unchanged. We bring the light, joy, comfort, and love through music and we are also blessed by the unique chance to show people God's power and His love.



What would you wish for young conductors?

I wish for them to love people. It's very important for conductors to put themselves in a musicians' spot. It's not the working process that matters, but the thread connecting the conductor with the group. That matters. It's important to "breathe" and to "live" with the group—do not push, but read people's feelings and emotions. Love, patience, and respect are the ways to gain that spirit.

Please welcome our newest board members.



DOUG & LYDIA COTTRELL

Doug and Lydia have four children, 2 boys and 2 girls. Their oldest son (20) as well as a daughter (also 20) were adopted from Ukraine. Doug is the President of a software company that works with manufacturers. Lydia is a homemaker and home schooled all her children. Missions has been key to the vision for both their lives. Lydia went on her first Helping Hands mission trip in 2017, and returned in May 2019 with her husband Doug.

Parting Word

As you read through the Gazette I hope you are encouraged with the different ways God continues to use our team and mission at MMK. The stories you read demonstrate our unquenchable desire to serve and help others in their time of need. We all are finding new ways to contribute while enduring the unusual time we are living through.

You can read more on our webpage at musicmissionkiev.org or our Facebook page. You may also use the enclosed envelope to send any gifts God stirs your heart to send and aid us in navigating the challenges to serve our widows, orphans, musicians, and families. We are in this together to be victorious in the name of Jesus Christ.

Greg



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