

ANNUAL REPORT

2022

Surrounded by such true and gentle powers

Surrounded by such true and gentle powers. So wondrously consoled and without fear, Thus will I spend with you these final hours and then together enter a new year.

By gentle powers lovingly surrounded, with patience we'll endure, let come what may. God is with us at night and in the morning and certainly on every future day.

The worries of the old year still torment us. We're troubled still by long and wicked days. Oh Lord, give our frightened souls the healing for which You've chastened us in many ways.

And though You offer us the cup so heavy. So painful, it's the most that we can stand. Not faltering, with thanks we will accept it and take it as a gift from your good hand.

And should it be Your will once more to grant us. To see the world and to enjoy the sun, then we will all the past events remember and finally our life with you is one.

D. Bonhoeffer. Dec 1944
(transl. by Ulrich Schaffer)



Waiting with Living Hope ...

Advent has always been a time of waiting for all of us. Even last year, in each of our three day centres, we lit one candle after another in excited anticipation, the children eagerly opened the Advent calendars every day, and looked forward to our common Christmas celebrations.

No one - really no one - would have thought that the year 2022 would bring so much change, so much suffering, pain and hopelessness. What we are experiencing together with all Ukrainians in the past 10 months is hard to put into words.

The waiting has become a very different one this year. We are waiting for the horrible war of aggression to end. We are waiting to see loved ones again. We are waiting to get our "old life" back in some form. Which, of course, is an unfulfillable wish. Things will never be the same as they were before the war. That, unfortunately, is certain.

As we go through this roller coaster of emotions, disappointed expectations, and inability to plan the future together as so little depends on us, we still feel the presence of the good powers that Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes about in his poem. The comforting presence of God, which continues to give us living hope and has also guided us through this year.

Therefore, in spite of everything, we can share that we have continued to sow seeds of hope and have been able to support families, children and young people.

At the moment, we see our main task in trying to make the "waiting time" for the Ukrainians more bearable and manageable, regardless of whether they are among the millions of people who have been displaced or whether they continue to stay in the embattled areas.

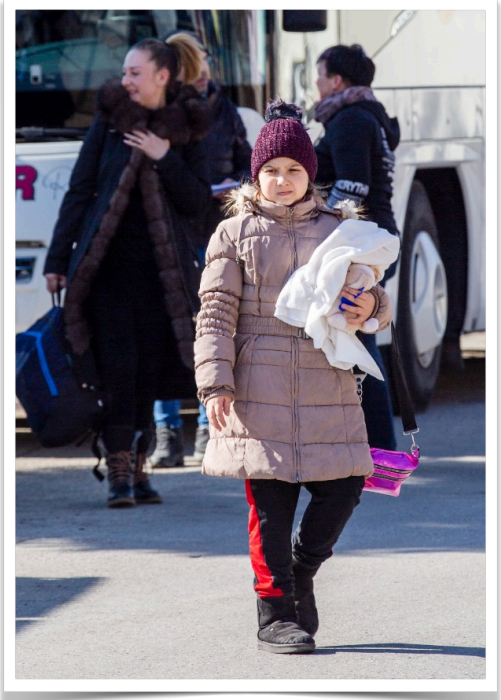
In the following few lines, we would like to look back once again at the most important events of the year now coming to an end. In doing so, we are filled with gratitude for all the support and love we have received from so many people from different parts of the world. Thank you!

February 24, 2022 - The day that changed everything

That night we woke up with the sound of missiles hitting our city. A moment you can't imagine. I can't remember ever feeling such fear. Then, very quickly, important decisions had to be made. In our case, we decided that I (Nicole) would flee to Germany with women and children to help arriving Ukrainians and that Slavik would stay in Ukraine and continue to take care of people and concerns on the spot. This decision was made more than 10 months ago. Unfortunately, we have not met again since then.

After a nerve-racking three-day journey via Moldova, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, I arrived in the Ore Mountains with the first 20 people on February 28. Soon many more followed. Even a tour bus took a large group to Hermannsdorf on 03.03.2022. About 20 Ukrainians were lovingly received by a befriended Christian community in Luxembourg. Thank you ANCL!

Now the church house where I had spent my childhood and youth became the new home to 37 Ukrainian women and children.



The help on site was overwhelming and diverse. It is impossible to thank everyone by name in this annual review.

Therefore, our thanks are directed to all who have stood by us this year through practical help, financial and material support, empathy and prayers. We say "thank you" from the depths of our hearts.

This year, we were able to accompany far more than 100 refugees in finding their way in a new environment, including visits to the doctor, filling out countless applications and forms, doing homework, setting up apartments and rooms, applying for jobs, going to the authorities, and much more.

Many families now have a fixed daily routine. All the children have been very kindly received by the schools, the trainees have great employers and most of the women are diligently learning German.

However, with all these positive moments, a deep sadness swings along most of the time. The longing for life before the war, for loved ones we left behind is always there. A nine-year-old girl that I asked some time ago about her birthday wish answered me that she would wish for nothing except a ticket to her dad who is still in Ukraine.

Due to the increased attacks on Ukraine's infrastructure, survival there is becoming increasingly challenging. Slavik often reports about difficulties in everyday life that we here in the West cannot even imagine. Some people are given help in the form of medicines, warm clothes, assistance payments to cover utility costs, and more. Others he helps to find work.



We have also been involved in some humanitarian aid missions. So we were able to send many canned food, warm socks and underwear, powerbanks and flashlights, generators and medical materials during the past months. We cooperate with small local organisations, some of which bring the relief supplies to the front lines. Before Christmas, we were able to send 300 beautiful Christmas gifts to Kharkiv and Luzk. This year, these packages are intended to make the holidays a little brighter for children with disabilities and children who have lost their parents in the war.

What does the future hold?

I am asked this question almost daily and I have no answer. If the past year has taught us one thing, it is that our plans can be shattered from one day to the next and that there are many things that are out of our control as human beings.

Without the strength and confidence given to us in these months through our faith, we would have no strength for the future. But because we know that we are wonderfully protected by good powers, we confidently await what may come.

Since our arrival in the Erzgebirge, we have been meeting every Sunday evening with the Ukrainians who live in the church house for Bible study. We experience that these regular meetings and the common prayer give us strength for the future.

We wish this confidence and hope also to everyone who reads these lines.

With God's help, we want to continue to accompany people through difficult situations in life and spread hope in the New Year.

We wish you all God's protection and blessing in the 2023

Nicole & Slavik Borisuk

Voices of Ukrainians in our German village

"I am grateful that my children are well cared for here. They have a place in a good school and a training place. That makes me happy."
Mother 38



"I can't find the words to express my gratitude to everyone who has welcomed us here so kindly. We are staying in a warm place and we have everything we need to live. The children are in school or in vocational training. God bless you all for your help and hospitality."
Grandmother 59



"We would like to thank everyone who supports our families."
Teenager 17



"Thank you for all your heartfelt warmth. For supporting us for such a long time. Thank you for helping my daughter to study in a great place."
Mother 53

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