

*Prayer is the breathing of the soul. As a wise man once put it. When I think about our new life after February 2022 and what gives us strength and hope, it is most likely the regular breathing of our soul.*

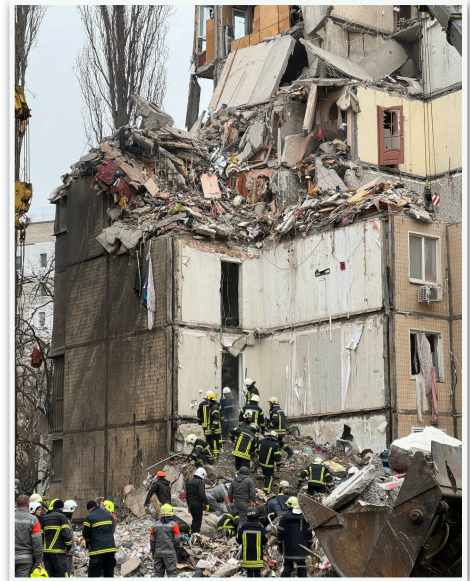
In the following lines, we would like to share with you what we have experienced over the past few months, what our everyday life here in Odesa looks like and what plans we have for the coming season.

It is a matter of fact that we are now experiencing the consequences of the war in all areas of life and that it has changed our everyday routines. Of course, the attacks on civilian infrastructure, homes and places where people go for walks or shopping are the most devastating. This house, for example, was partially destroyed in a night-time drone attack about 400 metres from our day centre. 12 people - including 5 children - lost their lives in this bombing.

Every day, our daily routine is interrupted several times by air raid alarms. At these times, children in schools and kindergartens are quickly taken to bomb shelters, shops close and life comes to a complete halt. We too have taken precautions for this eventuality at our day centre: the windows have been covered with a special foil to prevent them from shattering, as many injuries can be caused by shattered glass. In the case of an alarm, our children stay in a windowless room, which of course limits the number of children we have here every day at the centre down to 20.

However, thanks in part to your support, we are still able to support children and young people in these challenging times and organise at least part of a regular daily routine for them. Last Sunday, we spent a lovely afternoon in our garden with a BBQ, sports & games and lots of fun. Speech therapy, handicrafts and singing under the leadership of a professional singer are now regular weekly activities. We also have lots of interesting things planned for the summer holidays, which start today. The war and the constant threat leaves its mark on the children's souls, obviously. However, we hope that our ministry can make a meaningful contribution to minimising these consequences.

Over the past few months, our focus also has been on providing assistance and support to families of soldiers who have been killed, are missing or injured.



People who have lost their homes as a result of the war, those who are facing financial problems or those who need medical help are also supported by us. We also regularly send humanitarian aid to places close to the war zone, which is then distributed to people in need by our local partners. Thank you so much for all your financial and other material gifts!

Over the next few months, we want to continue to push forward with our plans to create a place of recovery and restoration for traumatised people, with a focus on "helping families". Due to the great planning uncertainty associated with the mobilisation of almost all healthy men between the ages of 18 and 60 and the continuing constant threat to our area as well, we can only take small steps at the moment. However, we hope and pray that, like a jigsaw puzzle, the right pieces will eventually come together. This is what we have experienced in the 25 years that Living Hope NGO has been operating and we trust that this will also be the case in the future.

In closing, I would like to share with you a prayer I came across some time ago by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, which I have partly become my prayer in these days:

*Lord, I do not ask for miracles and visions, but for the strength to face everyday life. Make me inventive, so that I don't get lost in the daily hustle and bustle. Let me organise my time properly and find out what is of primary and secondary importance. Dreams don't really help, neither about the past nor about the future. Help me to do the next thing as best I can. Give me the sober awareness that not everything can go smoothly in life, that difficulties and defeats, failures and setbacks are a natural addition to life, through which we grow and mature. At the right moment, send me someone who has the courage to tell me the truth in love. Many problems are solved by doing nothing. Give me the ability to wait. Give me true friends and let me nurture this friendship like a tender plant. Make of me a person who is like a ship with a draught, so that I can also reach those who are 'below'. Save me from the fear that I might miss out on life. Don't give me what I want, but what I need. Teach me the art of small steps. AMEN.*

We thank you sincerely for all your prayers, donations and friendship and wish you God's protection and blessing with all our hearts.

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with the children and staff of Living Hope in Odesa

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