



1st report 2025

Yura & Nina Fedoryuk

Children: *Emiliya & Benjamin*

Open Heart Church

Ukraine

By God's grace, both my family and our ministry team are doing well. We continue to face challenges, but we also see God's faithfulness every day. Your prayers and support give us strength to move forward with hope and courage. Past 6 months we had many blessings in our personal life: Emiliya (15 years old) is growing spiritually. She loves church and taking on a lot of responsibilities in church. She is helping with kids' ministry, media ministry and will join teens ministry soon. We are so happy to see how she is growing! Its a real blessing.



Benjamin (10 years old) is our best evangelist. He constantly invites his friends and classmates to our church's Kids Club, and it is such a joy to see how he takes initiative in church life: greeting people on Sundays before the service, helping whenever something needs to be done around the church. He has a special charisma and a gift for connecting with people. I truly believe that God will use Ben in a special way for His Kingdom.

My wife and I went through a challenging season this winter. There were many different projects and events in the life of our church, and at some point, we realized we didn't have enough quality time for each other. For us, spending time together, talking, and building our relationship is very important. That is why in March we found an opportunity to take a one-week vacation. God blessed us with friends in Krakow (Poland), who offered us their apartment while they were away. This was truly a blessing for Nina and me. We enjoyed our time together and had a much-needed reset!

Regarding our team: Today our team is going through a challenging season, connected to the war and the difficulties faced by men in particular. Our team consists of 8 people, 3 of them are men. 2 of them were required to take jobs in government institutions in order to receive deferments and avoid being sent to the frontline. These circumstances have significantly affected the rhythms of our team's work and meetings. As a result, I had to take on part of the responsibilities that had previously been assigned to them.

The reality of the ongoing war brings a deep sense of fatigue and emotional weariness. Many people in our church and team carry heavy burdens — concern for family members at the front, constant news of losses, and the instability of daily life. This affects our energy and focus, and sometimes it feels like we are running a marathon without knowing where the finish line is.

We see His faithfulness in small everyday things, and this gives us hope to keep moving forward. This Bible verse is a good reminder: “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” (Galatians 6:9)

Please pray for our team—that God would renew our strength, protect our hearts from discouragement, and give us wisdom to continue leading the church in these difficult times.

We have seen God’s hand at work in many powerful ways. During the challenges of war, God continues to transform lives through our church. We have seen Him bring comfort and healing to women and mothers of fallen heroes, who found hope and strength in Christ after deep grief. We have seen Him restore veterans and their marriages through a special retreat and a full Marriage Course. We have seen Him draw teenagers closer to Himself during our youth retreat, where many said it was a turning point in their faith. And through our Sport Kids football academy, we have witnessed how God uses something as simple as football to open the hearts of children and their families to the Gospel.

Again and again, God is showing us that even in times of crisis, His Kingdom continues to grow, and new people are being reached with His love.

1. We had the opportunity to serve war veterans and their wives by organizing a marriage retreat for them, and afterwards we were able to run the full Marriage Course. You can read more about this in our update at the following link: <https://mailchi.mp/1335ed98219f/update-letter-from-open-heart-church-125>

2. At the beginning of spring, we also held a youth retreat for the teenagers of our church. It was an intense and active three days that we spent together at a camp facility. It was a wonderful time: we prayed together, studied God’s Word, played games, and rested. There was so much laughter, joy, and an atmosphere of love and openness. As Arina (16 years old) said: “This retreat gave me the chance to forget about everything happening around us and simply rest together while focusing on God.”

We are deeply thankful for the opportunity to care for the young people of our city. They need encouragement and inspiration just as much as adults do—maybe even more, as they are forming their identity and worldview during these difficult times. We believe these teenagers are not only the future of the

Church but already an important part of it today. Investing in them means planting seeds of faith, hope, and love that will bear fruit for years to come.

3. Earlier, we also organized a special gathering for women and mothers of fallen heroes who gave their lives in the war. It was a very meaningful and emotional time. Our goal was to create a safe space where these women could share their stories, receive comfort, and experience God's love in the midst of their pain. We prayed together, listened to one another, and reminded them that they are not alone in their grief. As a church, we see it as our calling to walk alongside those who carry the deepest wounds of this war, offering hope, care, and the comfort that only Christ can give.

We had eight women who had experienced the greatest sorrow of their lives: some had lost their sons, others had lost their husbands and were left alone. We felt God's calling to care for these women and show them His love in practical ways. Our first meetings were dedicated to simply getting to know them and showing them special attention and respect. That very first meeting broke the ice—it gave these women the opportunity to speak about their sons and husbands who had died in the war. We cried together, and it became a key moment in building trust. Listening to their pain, crying with them, and then praying while embracing and supporting them opened the door to deeper relationships.

All the following meetings became very special. We built an atmosphere of openness, trust, and sincerity. The women were ready to hear the Gospel, and we shared about Jesus—the One who comforts, sustains, and is near even in the darkest moments of life. We always tried to bring them small gifts, and one time we were able to take them to a spa center where they could rest, relax, and enjoy a moment of peace. We also did crafts together, shared stories, opened our hearts, and yes—cried again many times.

Over just two months, these women became very close to us. We truly believe that God used these gatherings to show His love and care to those who were left to carry their grief alone.

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

4. Sport Kids. For the past three years, our Christian children's football academy Sport Kids Zolo has been actively growing and making an impact. We started with just 18 kids, but over these years we have grown significantly and have now become the largest football club in our city. Our vision is clear: to reach children and teenagers for Christ through football.

That is why our head coach, Oleg, invests so much effort into developing the club, training new coaches, and building strong relationships with both the children and their parents. Today, our club has 80 children and 2 coaches. Sport Kids has an excellent reputation in our city, and many parents are happy to bring their children to our program.

This spring, our younger Sport Kids team won a tournament in Central Ukraine, and our 9-year-olds took 2nd place in the regional championship. We rejoice in the successes of our children and firmly believe that Sport Kids will continue to bear much fruit for God through the ongoing work with children and families.

Challenges:

The ongoing war continues to weigh heavily on families. Many parents are deeply concerned about the future of their children—where they will study, how they will live, and what kind of life awaits them. It is very difficult to plan when we have already been living in this reality for more than three years.

We are also facing financial challenges. Over the last six months, I have noticed a growing financial strain in our church. We pay a very high rent—27,000 UAH per month—while much of our congregation consists of teenagers and young people. Our tithes are not enough to cover all of our expenses, especially as we also want to continue supporting and developing the various ministries of our church.

Another challenge is the need for more servants. We are still praying for someone who can come alongside us and serve with the teenagers and youth of our church.

Prayer requests:

- Pray for the end of the war and for a spiritual awakening among people. In many conversations, we sense that people are tired, exhausted, and even angry at God.
- Pray for our leadership team—that in spite of all circumstances, we may remain faithful and continue to serve God wholeheartedly.
- Pray for our youth and children's ministry, that it would grow stronger and bring lasting fruit.

- Pray for Sport Kids Zolo, which is making a significant impact on the lives of many families in our city.

Throughout the month of June, we want to give our leadership team a time of rest, since the past six months have been very active and busy. We truly need a reset and renewal. For this reason, our home Bible groups, children's ministry, and youth ministry will take a short summer break in order to rest, gain strength, and return with fresh inspiration for the new season of ministry.

July and August will then be fully dedicated to preparing and running our Sport Kids camp in the city, as well as a 7-day youth camp in the Carpathian Mountains. We are praying that God will bless these plans and use them to impact many lives.

We are also waiting for important news from our local authorities regarding land. In March, we received approval to be granted 1.7 hectares of land for the future construction of our church building. We are now eagerly waiting for all the necessary documents to be finalized so that we can officially lease the land and begin planning our next steps.

would like to share the story of Yana (38), who lost her husband (39) and was left alone with two daughters—the same age as my own children. Yana came to the first meeting completely closed off. She did not smile, did not talk, and remained very quiet. However, with each gathering, her heart slowly began to soften and open up. After just a few meetings, Yana looked completely different: she could smile, she was ready to hug others, and she began to share about herself and her life.

At the last meeting, Yana said something that deeply moved us all:

"I want to thank Open Heart Church for bringing me back to life. It has been a year and a half since I lost my husband, and during all this time I was not living—I was merely existing. I couldn't even bring myself to put away his clothes or take care of our yard. After these meetings, I feel like I have begun to live again. I realized how much still needs to be done, that I must keep going, care for my daughters, accept my new reality, and move forward. Your encouragement and the stories from the Bible gave me hope that God has not abandoned me but will help me walk through this loss. He will take care of everything. I am starting to live again."

Her words brought tears to all of us, as she herself wept while speaking. Truly, God is doing something amazing in these women's lives!