

From the Missions Committee

2022 Annual Report to the Members of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh

'I will serve these people.' –Pastor Bogdan Kulitskiy, Ukraine

The year 2022 was cast in the colors of the Ukrainian flag – blue for the sky and gold for the wheat fields of a beautiful country ravaged by Russian aggression. FPCP responded quickly and wholeheartedly to what has continued to be humanitarian and moral crisis for millions of Ukrainians and their neighbors. Since 2018, FPCP has been connected to the ministry of Pastor Bogdan Kulitskiy, his wife Inna, and the ministry team of 6-year-old Bread of Life Church in Kozelets, Ukraine. Through that relationship, FPCP was already positioned to help when Putin's army crossed the border on February 24. By way of text messages and photos, FPCP was able to accompany them almost daily through assurances of prayer and financial help.

FPCP became a witness for Bread of Life's ministry. In the early days of the war, they organized harrowing round trips of evacuations from dangerous areas followed by returns with food and supplies. In later weeks, they went back to Kozelets to take up new responsibilities. They baked bread for the army and sourced food and other necessities to serve hundreds of people a day. They began going out the previously occupied villages to give them food and the gospel. For some villagers, Bread of Life repaired roofs and windows that had been damaged by gunfire and missiles. In summer, Bread of Life organized ministries and events for families and children. In winter, the Bread of Life worship center became a place of respite. They provided coffee, warmth and a generator to recharge phones. They continued to distribute food and medicine and added firewood as a new commodity. Bread of Life began meeting with villagers for Bible study. By the end of 2022, Bread of Life was planting 2 new churches.

Pastor Bogdan said at the beginning of the invasion that he would not go to the military but would serve the people. Through planned budgetary support and special offerings and gifts, including the FPCP Missions Sunday offering on October 2, FPCP gave approximately \$30,000 in direct support to help Bread of Life do what Pastor Bogdan pledged. FPCP can always be grateful for stepping in as an integral part of ministering to the people of Ukraine during their time of suffering.

In 2022, the Missions Committee continued to focus on ways of deepening relationships with mission coworkers. The committee also served the congregation as a catalyst for discipleship and mission engagement. With 250 years of gospel sharing purpose, the committee has been blessed to serve in these ways:

- The committee met as a whole or in part with most of the coworkers who receive support from the missions budget. Meaningful conversations were shared with: Erik Burklin, China Partner; De'Netta Benjamin-Miller, Sojourner House; Emily Shrader, Serge; Sharlene Dominick, Garden Home Ministries; Shawn Harmon, The Antioch Partners; Theresa Golden and Judy Findlay, Refuge for Women; Lisa Anderson-Umana, Christian Camping International; Rich Correll, CPTI; Paul Roberts, East Liberty Family Health Care

Center; Kate Kuzko and James Stephens, CEED; and Bogdan Kulitskiy, Bread of Life Church.

- Susan Perkins, serving as a board member of PRISM, has continued to foster lively communication and engagement between PRISM and the Missions Committee. Rev. Dan Turis agreed in 2022 to serve on the PRISM board. FPCP looks forward to sustaining a strong connection with PRISM, sharing in their ministry to international students.
- In February, Susan Quam and Judy Shipley began a series of monthly visits to Garden Home Ministries' Sunflower House. Bringing refreshments and the word of God, they met with the women residents and got to know them. Susan organized 2 outdoor clean up days, including seasonal plantings of flowers and herbs. Kate Williams has also visited Sunflower House.
- In March, Judy Shipley was contacted by Mike Givler, Communications Coordinator for the Trinity Synod, to do an interview on FPCP's response to the war in Ukraine. It appeared in the Synod's publication on March 14.
- Beginning in April, the committee sponsored a series of Sunday morning gatherings called 'Missional Conversations.' The series included three videos and discussion guides prepared by Shawn Harmon, a Zoom conversation with Rich Correll, photos and videos from Bread of Life Church, an in person meeting with Sharlene Dominick, and a multi-week PowerPoint and discussion on Missiology.
- On October 2, the committee sponsored FPCP's annual Missions Sunday and invited Rich Correll to speak. The memorable service featured special music, new choir stoles and a special offering in support of Ukraine.
- On October 26, Judy Shipley met via Zoom with the people of Bread of Life to offer a 3-hour teaching session on various topics.
- In November, FPCP volunteered to work at a table sponsored by Refuge for Women during a mission conference hosted by Northway Christian Community.

With gratitude for another Spirit-empowered year of service,
Judith Shipley
Chair, FPCP Missions Committee