



The Rue Family

U K R A I N E



July - August 2026

Dear Praying Friends and Family,

Greetings! I pray this letter finds you happier in the Lord than you've ever been! Last year, when returning to Ukraine I knew it would take a few months to begin to understand what Ukrainians have been going through. Some can be sympathetic, fewer are empathetic, and fewer still compassionate "making a difference." To be like the Lord, who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," we are called to "weep with them that weep," and further, "Remember... them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body (Hebrews 13:3)." Otherwise, we are nothing better than Christian psychopaths. Living here provides perspective. When we now sing hymns in church, words like "alarm" jump off the page.

The Odesa Oblast is Hit Hard: During the months of July and August, Russia launched around 5,000 drones and 376 missiles (cruise and ballistic); and has increased its pressure on the Odesa region, with over 30 civilians killed as a result. There are veterans working at the shipyard here who say they felt safer fighting on the frontlines than they do working the cranes. These missiles can reach their targets within one minute of being launched, while it takes the workers three minutes to get to safety. Naomi, Christopher Jr., and I had to visit an office down by the port where we experienced what the locals live with daily. We were in a waiting room, sitting close to a window that had been blown out by a previous attack, when the sirens began, to sound. We were instructed to move into the hallway where all the workers were crowded trying to put at least two walls between ourselves and the outside. Then the explosions started! I've already experienced this before but that was the first time for Naomi who had never been that close. I could see in her eyes that it was unnerving. Christopher's response to the sound of close-by turrets firing interceptor rounds at the drones was, "Popcorn!"

On a more sober note, this war is increasingly affecting infrastructure and life. We no longer ignore air raid sirens as before. We keep our phones charged and our alerts on. I do not stop for gas until I check the air raid status. One young man, who was saved in our church and is currently serving on the front lines, came home for a few days for some rest. On his way back to the front, he stopped at a gas station. That same gas station exploded five minutes after he left. It was one of over 250 hit by the Russians in recent months. The other morning, I planned to stop by Epicenter (Ukraine's version of Lowes) on my way to Odesa, but I changed my mind at the last minute and decided to go the same way home instead (Proverbs 16:3). That morning it was hit with a drone, for the second time this month. Epicenter has since closed all its stores and is now only taking online orders. Could you imagine if all the Home Depots and Lowes stores closed nationwide?

The war hit even closer to home one night when an explosion woke me from sleep at 3:30 A.M. Our train station in Rozdilna was hit. It is located about 150 yards from our church. The explosion caused one of our struggling church member's water to break, leading to an emergency C-section. Please pray the experience gets her back to the Lord and into church!

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Sending Church

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Solar Panel Panic and Banking: It is well known that Russia plans to break Ukraine's will by targeting energy infrastructure this winter. This has caused a rush among the people to prepare by installing solar panel systems. Last winter, the power was out for sixteen to twenty hours every day. They expect the same or worse this year. My current setup cannot handle that kind of load, and solar panels are selling out quickly. I regret not trying to raise all the funds needed to be independent of the power grid last year. I thought it would be less expensive to just purchase the inverter and battery backup system without the panels. Now we are scrambling to get the solar panels and get them installed before winter. The banks are under martial law limiting cash withdrawals and we are running out of cash fast. It takes a whole day and costs about \$75 per trip for me to travel to Odesa to make one withdrawal. I did not have the cash for the panels, but a concerned unsaved friend here insisted that he front us the money to purchase the panels while they are available and before the prices go up when cold weather hits. I reluctantly agreed and took his advice and offer. The experience was humbling. It took three trips to Odesa to withdraw the money to repay him. We continue to work around these obstacles to get cash into the country to cover our ministry and family expenses.

Ministry Update: We've had several church members, who now live abroad, return for short visits and attend our services. Most came for funerals of relatives who were killed in the war. One is named Julia. Over 20 years ago her mother came to me hysterical that she was nearly 40 and pregnant. The doctors were pressuring her to abort because they had no money. I told her that we would cover the costs of the birth and help her raise the child. Today, Julia is married to a man who loves the Lord and they are serving God together in Croatia. We are currently trying to purchase video and sound equipment to broadcast our services to those now located abroad. The church itself is raising half the money, while I provide the other half through the love offerings sent by you. Thank you for helping us reach others who do not have a church due to the war.

Plans to Help Church Close to the Front: We are currently making plans to make a short trip out east into the Michalaev Oblast to take supplies to a church whose pastor was taken for service by military recruiters. Please pray for God to use us and for safety.

Residency Permits and Visa Update: We have already begun the process for Naomi, Miriam, Christopher Jr. and me to extend our residency permits. Everything is fine with our paperwork, but we were informed that Ukrainian law requires my son, Michael, to return to the USA to get his own missionary visa since he is now 18. He must leave by October 5th. I suspected that this would be the case but hoped we would find a way without having to leave. Please pray that we can get all the necessary paperwork before the deadline.

Prayer Requests: Please pray for two people whom I've been trying to lead to Christ. Our neighbor, Maria, is 84 and her health is declining. Please also pray for Gennady who is a good friend but is hesitating. Please pray for another dear brother in Christ who is in Zaporlzhzhia, close to the front. His father is drunk all the time and only creates chaos, and his mother's life is fading slowly before his eyes. He has little to no help and cannot leave his apartment because it is too dangerous. He said that he is reading the book of Job, looking for comfort, but says that he is concerned for his own mental health after almost five years living in these conditions. I want to visit him but cannot because the road goes through Kryvyi Rih and is too dangerous. Pray for our men who are serving. Please, also pray that this war will end soon, with the door for the Gospel remaining open. My family and I would like to thank you all for your friendship, fellowship, prayers, and support of us in this work that God has given us. May the Lord Jesus bless you as you continue to serve Him.

That Ukraine May Know Him,



Christopher Rue