



# The Rue Family

## UKRAINE

March - April 2026

Dear Praying Friends and Family,

Greetings from the Odessa Region of Ukraine. I hope this letter finds you happy in the Lord's will and that you will find it a blessing and encouragement. Before we dive in, I want to thank you all for investing your prayers, time, and support so we can minister here in Ukraine during the war with Russia.

**March's Unexpected Blessing:** With our return tickets already purchased and logistics for border crossing arranged we began to pack our bags for our trip home when we received a call from my son and daughter-in-law who were expecting their first child. We had already accepted from the Lord that we were going to miss her birth due to the time restrictions with our paperwork. Everyone was disappointed, especially Naomi. Just two weeks before our return flight we received a call that the doctors wanted to induce early. This gave us the opportunity to be there for the birth of our granddaughter Eden Rose Rue! Naomi and I are very thankful that the Lord allowed us to enjoy and hold her, even if it was just for a couple days.

**Our Return Trip:** Our thirty-hour journey home began with my daughter, Miriam, being denied check-in for our flight. Her passport was just two weeks shy of the required three-month expiration date. Tearfully, we had to leave her in the US to renew her passport. She will rejoin us after she works to earn the money to replace the lost ticket. We flew from Cincinnati to Chisinau, Moldova where we hired a van to drive the rest of the way. We took a detour around Transnistria where Russia's 14<sup>th</sup> Army is located. Instead of spending the night in Chisinau, I decided to save some money by pushing on through, hoping to arrive before curfew began. Crossing at night was not as easy as the daytime and the military check points we encountered were equally alert. At every check point they were suspicious as to why I was travelling into Ukraine with my family. When we finally made it to our town the soldier in charge sarcastically asked, "So, you *like* living here?" I explained that we were there to help and were going to give it a try under the circumstances. I was thankful that my family heard him answer, "It is quiet here and living is possible. It is not safe in Odessa (40 miles away) because of the bombings, but it is safe here for now." I invited him to my home for coffee. He relaxed and waved us through.

**First Impressions:** Ministry here is going to be challenging but not impossible (Phil. 4:13). The people are weary of this war for many obvious reasons. Daily drone and missile strikes, military curfews, military check points, gas prices around \$7 a gallon to name a few. Fear of being mobilized is on the minds of every member of every family. We rejoice that we still have men in our church with legal, written exemption from service. However, one of our new converts was recently taken off public transportation while on his way to church and is now on his way to the front. Another friend of mine, a good brother in Christ, was in a bank trying to pay for his son's education when the electricity went out. Outside he was surrounded by recruiters and taken for military service. With the funds you all have sent we have helped him in his ministry in the past as he worked to get women and children out of the dangerous occupied territories. We have since given help to his wife who is worried about her husband who is now at the front. Thank you for helping us with means to be a blessing to people here.

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Sending Church  
Bible Baptist Church  
1173 Jo Jo Road  
Pensacola, FL 32534

Field Address  
A/R 60 Glavposhtamp  
65001 Odessa, Ukraine  
Phone: 513-376-1011

Support & Mailing  
Charity Baptist Mission  
P.O. Box 692  
Bristol, TN 37621

Email: [RueMissions@yahoo.com](mailto:RueMissions@yahoo.com)

Website: [www.RueMissions.com](http://www.RueMissions.com)

In the last two months around twenty people have been killed in Odessa and many others wounded. Most drones and missiles hit at night, usually in waves of 400 to 600 at a time. Russia is beginning to strike during the daytime as well. Since our arrival, I've had to travel to Odessa many times for supplies and documents. When the air-raid sirens sound we must leave whatever building we are in immediately. On one occasion Pastor Alexei and I were getting ready to checkout when the alarm sounded requiring us to evacuate the building. We went out to the car to wait. Thirty minutes later we heard an explosion several miles away. When the warning siren ended, we joined the rest of the shoppers and entered the building. As soon as I approached my shopping cart, the sirens sounded and we had to do it all over again. Very frustrating. All I wanted to do was check out and get home. We waited until we heard the explosion then went back in to check out. On another occasion we were talking to a salesman about building materials when the warning sirens began to sound. Somewhat irritated I asked, "Do we have to evacuate?" He said, "It's up to you but let me check to see what this is..." He pulled out his phone and looked it up. He said, "Well, this one is a ballistic missile. Yes, I recommend that you leave. If it hit around here it would not be safe to be in the building. But good news is that it is not a drone. Drones are slow. Ballistic missiles are over quickly." We went outside till we heard the explosion and, when the warning was lifted, we resumed our shopping. This is the new normal for everyday life in Ukraine.

**Document Process Completed:** Thank you for praying for Michael's residency status, which is now completed. We have three months to breathe before we begin the application to extend our permits by October. Please pray we can first obtain ours and then get Michaels renewed before it expires to avoid having to leave the country again to apply for another visa.

**Gold Nuggets of Encouragement:** On two occasions some of the saints here have gone out of their way to thank us for serving the Lord among them. One of the old charter members of the church in Rozdilna came up to me after services and reminded me that it was the anniversary of her sister's death twenty years ago. She asked, "Do you remember coming to my home and leading my sister to Christ?" She reminded me that her sister had just undergone brain surgery. I remembered the local doctors had cut away a square piece of her skull and covered it with a metal plate because of the swelling. I remember trying to avoid looking at the metal plate knowing that that piece of her skull had been removed. I told her of what Christ had done for her and that all she had to do was accept His free gift of salvation. She received Christ that day and went home to Heaven shortly thereafter. Her sister, Valya, thanked me for coming to Ukraine and telling her sister about the Lord Jesus. I told my younger sons what she said so that they could understand why we returned to Ukraine. On another occasion, Pastor Alexei went out of his way to sincerely tell me how he realizes what we have given up returning to Ukraine at this time. While we all labor for the Lord to hear the ultimate "Well done" spoken by Him, it was an encouragement to hear these testimonies that extend to you who prayerfully support us in this work.

**Prayer Requests:** We are praying for God's guidance into the future with our ministry. In the meantime, we are busy helping in the church, completing our paperwork, and making our home safe and functional. We are still living with a lot of construction which makes homeschooling a challenge. There is still a lot to do. Pray for our men who are serving. 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

Phil. 3:10