

## Ministry stories 2019

### Polikarp Tsiganiuk and his wife, Kremenets, Ternopil region, Ukraine (27)



#### Greetings!

Everything starts from getting to know people. Usually, people invite me over. To Druzhkivka city I was invited by Ludmyla - very active minister of summer camps program. I got to know her at one conference where both of us held seminars. First, I reacted to her invitation unwillingly and with caution, for Druzhkivka is only 30 km away from the frontlines in the East of Ukraine. They suggested me to organize a three-day conference and after some hesitation, I agreed. Thanks to your prayers and support, I was able to make this trip. Let me tell you briefly what I've experienced.

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Druzhkivka is a very depressed city. You can definitely tell that the war keeps leaving its trace on the lives of people and the face of the city itself. Huge Soviet times manufactures are abandoned and destroyed, people do not smile. And you can understand their grief, for some of them lost their beloved ones, homes and families. The only question bothers them: "What's next? What is that post-war life like?" I



would like to tell a little bit more about this region. The level of unemployment here reaches a critical point. Both this situation and the war caused a terrible migration. Half of the population of Druzhkivka left - some abroad and others to the Western part of Ukraine. The Soviet multi-store building stand half-empty. It is truly a terrifying feeling.

For just a second, you give in to this atmosphere of sadness and despair, but later remember that you've arrived to bring eternal hope to this region. The building of the church - is a former kindergarten that every Sunday gathers 150 people that pray to the Lord and ask His

protection on this land. Every day, I would hold one seminar, after-seminar meetings and youth meetings in the evening. I was surprised, how many questions these people had. One sister admitted that the seminar was like fresh water for her thirsty soul and mind. Especially in that area where not many guest pastors come. In the evening, we decided to dedicate our youth meeting to Bible principles of healthy marriage. Lots of married couples of different age came to participate in the seminar.



I was surprised by one couple. They are in their 40s. As I found out, they got divorced recently and now regret about not hearing my seminar earlier. Nevertheless, they are the members of the church and have four kids together. During the conversation, I realized that one of the reasons for their divorce was war. The husband is a very active volunteer at war, who has been helping the soldiers a lot. His wife used to help out, too, but she admitted that it was too stressful for her to live under constant threat of being caught by the Russian soldiers and tortured. Moreover, all their belongings and material goods at home were sold out and the money sent for the soldiers. The family was getting poorer and poorer. On the other side, the wife didn't get enough attention and love from her husband. It went on for several years until one day the wife broke down and committed adultery with another man - a soldier who also served at war. Her husband couldn't forgive her this unfaithfulness. So they broke up and divorced. During three years, they have been living separately. The husband cannot forgive his wife, even though she regrets about what she'd done and asks for forgiveness. But the wound is too deep. I realized that this situation cannot be fixed in an hour or two. It requires prayers and fasting, as well as lots of communication. We had several conversations with the couple and their pastor while I was there and I also promised to keep praying for them.



The seminar went really well. People were so happy to have me there telling them more about different aspects of Christian life. I was leaving Druzhkivka with a pleasant exhaustion. On one hand, it wasn't easy to reach different people and work hard all these days, holding three different events daily. On the other hand, I thanked God for letting me see the life of the people close to the frontlines and be able to help them. These churches in the "grey zone" all need encouragement and special attention. I was blessed to be an instrument in God's hands to bring them hope and just show that they are not abandoned and the churches from the other parts of Ukraine remember them and pray for them.



## PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Please, continue praying for the war in the East of Ukraine to finish;
- Pray for this family to reunite and be healed by God;
- Also pray that I would be able to come back to this church and hopefully visit some other churches in the war zone.



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