



The World Doesn't Read the Bible – It Reads Us: The Lasting Legacy of a Small Church near the front lines.

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; 1 Peter 2:9

In small war-torn towns in eastern Ukraine... where war emptied streets and bombs shook the ground, and threatened to erase entire communities... one front-line church in Dobropillia, refused to run - determined to be a light in the darkness.

The very name of the church—**The Light of the Gospel**—speaks volumes. In a community of just 35,000 people—ravaged by shelling, power outages, and the steady encroachment of frontline violence—this humble congregation became a source of living hope.

While many fled for safety, the church stayed. And through the courageous faith of a few and the generous partnership of HART and its supporters, the Gospel was not only proclaimed — it was embodied. God used their obedience to transform lives and a town.

A Call to Return

When war erupted in February 2022, Ihor Bondar and his wife Liudmyla evacuated to Germany. But within a week, God stirred their hearts to return. They felt a deep longing for their homeland, and shortly after arriving back in Ukraine, God had them go through a season of serving with HART in western Ukraine's Carpathian Mountains.

Ihor said that it was through this partnership that he realized returning had been the right choice. HART helped them regain their clarity and direction—and soon, they felt a strong desire to return to Dobropillia. ***"We can always go somewhere—but we can't always go home,"*** he says.



Ihor and Liudmyla

Ihor's heart remained with those left behind in his hometown—people whose needs, both physical and spiritual, had grown more urgent than ever. He knew he had to return, despite the risks.

The support they received from HART reassured them that they would not be left to face challenges alone. They witnessed firsthand that HART values its partnerships deeply, walking faithfully alongside them. In many ways, serving with HART reignited their passion and renewed their sense of purpose.

"Jesus went where there was pain," Ihor says. And so, trusting in God's guidance, Ihor and his family came back home.



Pastor Ihor

Faith in Action

With Ihor's relentless energy and steadfast leadership, what happened over the next two years was remarkable.

At first, the church was small—just a few faithful believers. But that number grew to 70 and then to 120 regular churchgoers. With HART's critical support, this small fellowship became not only a spiritual refuge, but also a center of humanitarian aid and practical love.

The church installed the town's only **water purification system**, distributing over **3 million litres** to residents and soldiers.

Ihor tells us that, "One day, a woman named Liudmyla arrived for drinking water, but heard the Good News and left with living water—she gave her life to Christ."



Water purification system



Pure Heart Laundry Complex

Ministry That Washes Feet

One of the most impactful ministries was the **Pure Heart Laundry Complex**, created with HART's financial help. Powerful industrial washing machines and dryers were purchased and installed in a dedicated space within the church.

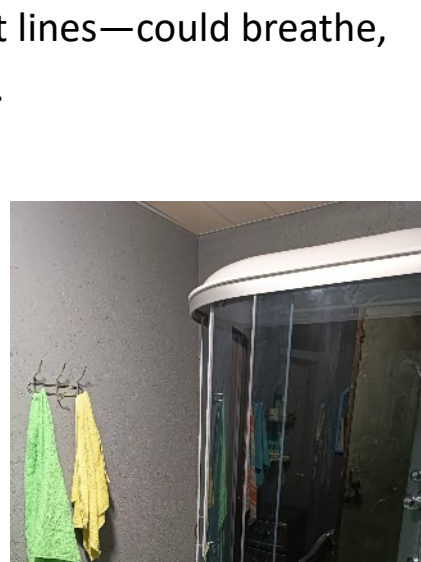
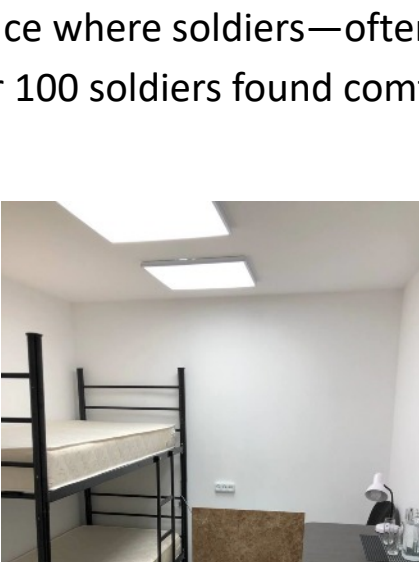
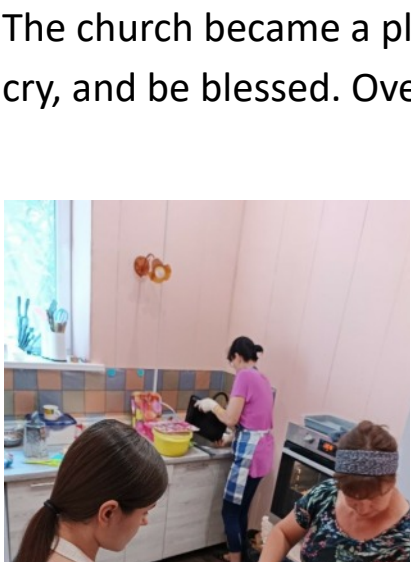
The Pure Heart Laundry Complex completed up to 150 loads per day and served about 800 soldiers each month. In total more than **20,000 soldiers used the laundry services** and—

more importantly—heard the Word of God while they waited.



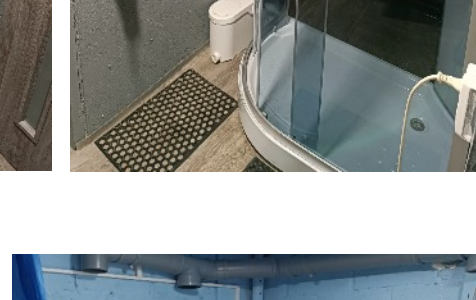
The process was simple but meaningful. Soldiers entered the facility, left their clothes, and provided a phone number. Then they were invited to shower, rest, enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, charge their phones, and talk.

The church became a place where soldiers—often exhausted from the front lines—could breathe, cry, and be blessed. Over 100 soldiers found comfort there every single day.



Civilians — seniors, large families, and the disabled — also found welcome here. Most had no access to water. ***"Christ washed feet,"*** Ihor says. ***"We must do the same."*** Every resource they had was turned outward in service.

Last summer, a mobile dental clinic, operated by a HART church partner in Rivne, set up their facility and provided treatment to more than 500 soldiers at the Light of the Gospel Church.



Changed Lives

From soldiers finding faith to lifelong prodigals returning to Christ, the stories multiply.

- Olena, once imprisoned six times, now repairs military clothing as a ministry. She started repairing and tailoring military clothing in a small sewing workshop at church. **She came to Christ in this church after thirty years of wandering!** Her transformation is one of many.
- Another woman named Olena and her son Kyrylo, once part of the church but long disconnected, returned. Olena was baptized in June. Kyrylo, now 14, is also planning to be baptized.
- Four women—Liudmyla, Lidiia, Liubov, and Liliia—repented during a Sunday service. Two had worked in a kindergarten alongside believers who had prayed for them for 30 years.
- Vlad, a 23-year-old, came to faith through the intercession of his two grandmothers. Baptized, he got involved in youth ministry and summer camps—bringing the same hope to others that he received.

In total, twenty-two people were baptized—five of them soldiers, just in the last six months.



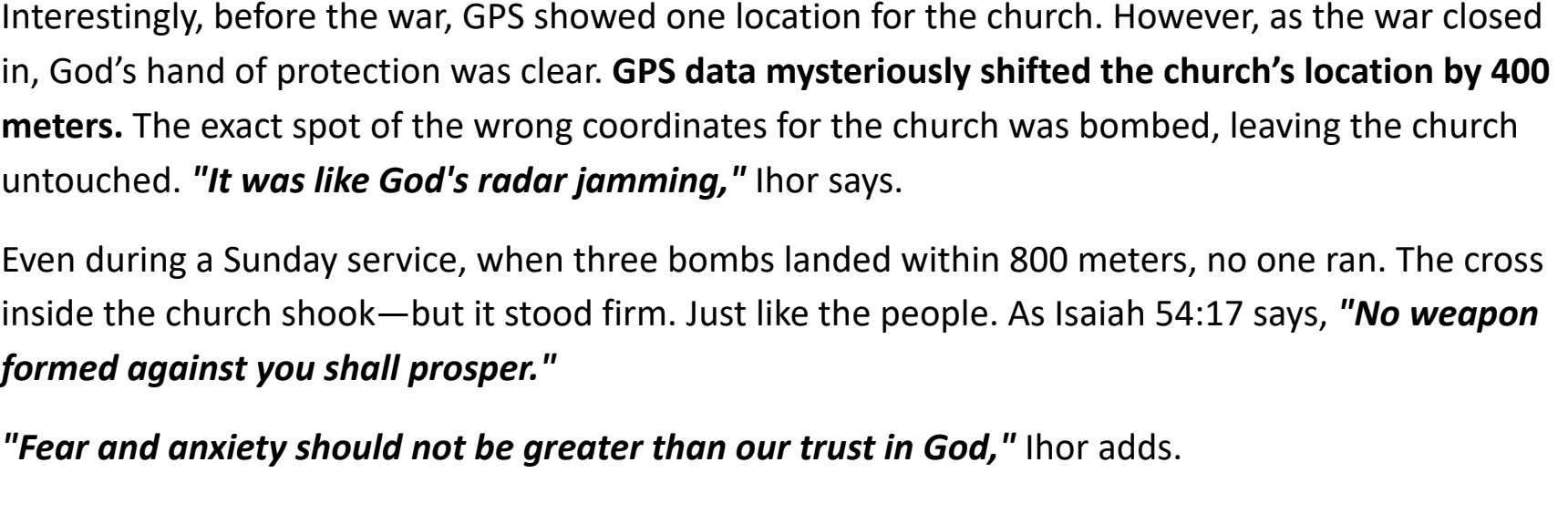
God's Protection and Lasting Legacy

So much was accomplished in just two years. What made this church different was its willingness to stay when others fled. Many who lived near the church evacuated, fearing attacks on the church and surrounding homes. Yet, during this entire time, not a single missile strike hit the church building.

Interestingly, before the war, GPS showed one location for the church. However, as the war closed in, God's hand of protection was clear. **GPS data mysteriously shifted the church's location by 400 meters.** The exact spot of the wrong coordinates for the church was bombed, leaving the church untouched. ***"It was like God's radar jamming,"*** Ihor says.

Even during a Sunday service, when three bombs landed within 800 meters, no one ran. **The cross inside the church shook—but it stood firm.** Just like the people. As Isaiah 54:17 says, ***"No weapon formed against you shall prosper."***

"Fear and anxiety should not be greater than our trust in God," Ihor adds.



Epilogue

Now, two years into this remarkable journey, the war has come dangerously close. With the frontline rapidly approaching, the church has been forced to evacuate once again.

It was a heartbreaking moment. HART's Ukraine Director recounted the tearful conversation he had with Pastor Ihor as he closed and locked the church doors for what may be the final time. Yet even in this sorrow, their story remains a powerful testimony of what God can accomplish through a small church willing to stand firm.

None of this would have been possible without Pastor Ihor's leadership, the courage of local believers—and the faithful support of HART and donors like you. Together, they proved that a church's impact is not measured by its size, but by its obedience, compassion, and willingness to love boldly in the face of fear.

Though the congregation has now evacuated, their legacy lives on - in lives transformed and hope renewed. Through the sacrificial love of this small church, and the empowering partnership of HART, many now know where their true home is: in Christ, in His Church, forever.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." — Psalm 23:6

Friends, as Pastor Ihor says, "the world may not read the Bible—but it reads us." And in Dobropillia, it read the Gospel loud and clear.

Thank you for standing with Ukraine's churches.

Your gifts do more than meet needs—they change lives forever.