



«For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost» (Luke 19:10)

MINISTRY UPDATE: DECEMBER 2023

Dear Praying Friends,

We are approaching the end of this year amid complete uncertainty. After a short ceasefire, the fighting in Gaza and in the north of Israel has been resumed, and the rocket alerts sound daily again in many Israeli cities. We do not know what the next day will bring, let alone the next year. One thing we can be sure of, though: we can trust the Lord and we can and should keep serving Him and those He has sent us to, so that His name will be praised and His light will shine and lift many discouraged and weary hearts.

We appreciate so much that this year you have been with us – our supporters, our friends, our precious spiritual family! It is an honor to work together with you in our Lord’s vineyard.

Our **war relief efforts in Ashkelon** continue. At present, we are in touch with about 800 families. Here are two short stories that we would like to share with you today.

Katya and her three daughters have known Eduard for a while already, since he was helping them settle down in Ashkelon when they immigrated to Israel six years ago. This is how Katya describes her life since the beginning of the war: “I



Food packages ready for distribution

of the war: “I stayed at home with the children, we didn’t go outside at all, we were very scared. I had panic attacks. The children were afraid of sirens and bombings; they would run screaming into the security room, fall to the floor and cover their ears with their hands. I could not sleep at night due to constant explosions.” Eduard and his team had been helping this family with food until they were able to evacuate from Ashkelon for a period of time to restore

their emotional state. Now they are back to their home, and we keep supporting them.

Another **young family, Sofia and Vyacheslav**, are new immigrants too who fled from the war in Ukraine a year and a half ago. That was when they met Eduard and his team for the first time, who assisted the couple and their three young children with various needs and helped them move to their first home in Ashkelon. When the war with Hamas began on the 7 of October, the family experienced a traumatizing “Déjà vu”, and Eduard and his team started supporting them. Sofia says: “They are helping us both with food and with encouraging words, they are not forgetting us and we will not forget their help! Our big family is very grateful for this kind attitude and for being there for us in this difficult time. We don’t know what awaits us in the future, but what we want most is for these wars to end and that there will be peace on earth!»



Food packages distribution at a hostel for the elderly in Ashkelon



Sofia and Vyacheslav’s kids waiting for the siren sound to end, hiding on the staircase of their building

Please pray for all the families Eduard is in touch with, as well as for the people we minister to through the rest of our projects:

Aviv Center

In our soup kitchen in Tel Aviv, we keep feeding the street people, as well as providing them with clothes and first medical aid.

Vadim* was one of the last visitors of Aviv Center on that day. After he had eaten, we asked him about his wounds. There were many of them, and not only on his face: there were wounds on his legs and arms as well. He said that he suffered from epileptic seizures and fell a lot. "That's how I got these festering wounds," – he said. He tried to treat them himself, but there was not much he could do, since he lived on the streets. But on that day, we were glad he could receive proper treatment.



He said he would keep coming to Aviv Center until his wounds were completely healed. Each time he comes we will keep encouraging him to leave the streets and start rehabilitation. Please pray for Vadim* and other visitors of Aviv Center!



In Aviv Center

Beersheva Rehab Center

We praise the Lord that during this year the residents of our rehabilitation center in Beersheva have been making good progress. Please keep praying for **Mike***, **Andrew**, **Anton** and others we wrote about in our previous letters. We are happy to see many of our rehabilitants work, come to church and participate in our soup kitchen and outreach activities in Tel Aviv. We also keep helping other **addicts from Beersheva**, who are not ready to start a rehab program yet, but keep visiting our Shabbat services in the church and Bible studies in the rehab.

Women's Shelter



Celebrating Hanukkah in the Shelter

Last time we asked you to pray for a **new long-term volunteer** our Women's Shelter needed, and today we can tell you that the Lord has answered your prayers and has sent us a very good candidate! Please pray that she will get a long-term visa and will be able to come to Israel soon.

We are also grateful to the Lord for everything He has been doing this year in our ladies' lives! Please keep praying for them to be healed from their traumas and build close relationship with the Lord.

Thank you for all your prayers, and

HAVE A WARM CHRISTMAS AND A PEACEFUL NEW YEAR!

Yours in Him, *Dou and Olga Bikas*



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