

PASTORS SUPPORT REPORT

The Response Ukraine
Special Taskforce

WEA TRUST



Picture taken by a chaplain who was supported by the program. See his story on the last page.

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE COUNCIL OF
EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT CHURCHES OF UKRAINE

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The Response Ukraine Special Taskforce (TRUST)

in collaboration with the Council
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Churches of Ukraine



People in a line to receive aid from a church led by one of the pastors supported by the program.

In 2023, WEA TRUST, in collaboration with the Council of Evangelical Protestant Churches of Ukraine, launched a special program to provide financial support and recuperation to Ukrainian pastors suffering from Russian aggression.

Hundreds of Ukrainian pastors are—both literally and metaphorically—on the front lines of the war in Ukraine. As the devastating Russian invasion rages, **pastors play a key role in nurturing and supporting their local communities, as well as in helping refugees, internally displaced persons, and soldiers who protect their homes.** This takes a tremendous toll on their lives and well-being. Many Ukrainian pastors lack basic means of sustaining their families, endure serious health issues, and risk their lives daily to remain beacons of hope and faith amid unimaginable terror and destruction.

The program encompasses **13 church unions** and denominations and has impacted **678 pastors**, including those serving on the front lines or in occupied territories, military chaplains, and many pastors who have lost their home or income.

678 PASTORS SUPPORTED

537
WITH
RECUPERATION

51
WITH
PHYSICAL NEEDS

90
WITH BOTH
NEEDS

“ Risking one’s life is a difficult choice. The motivation for doing so was this realization: if unbelievers are standing there knowing that they may die, then how can I, a believer, not stay here, preach to them, and be with them? ”

— a pastor from southern Ukraine who risked his
life to serve soldiers on the front line

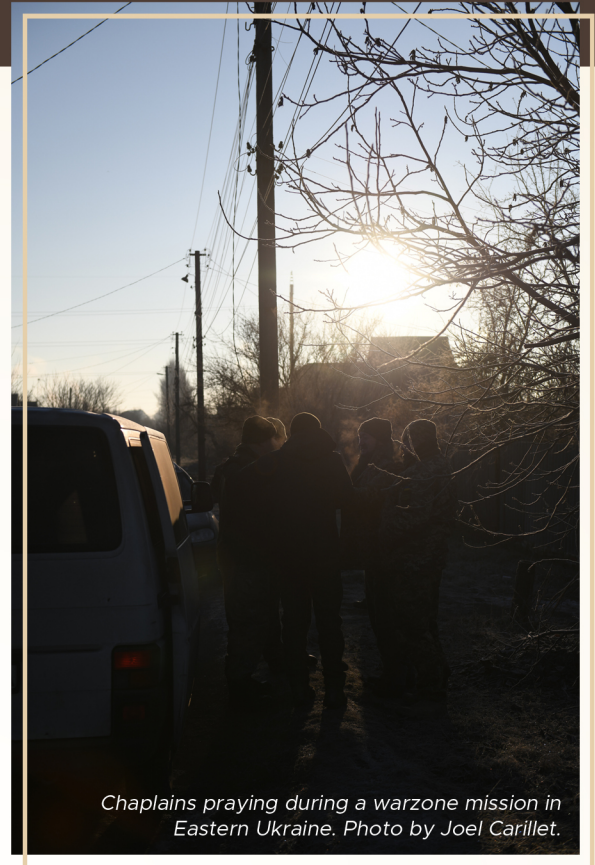
Testimonies

Serhii is a pastor from Eastern Ukraine. When the full-scale Russian invasion began, Serhii and his wife stayed in their city, Kharkiv, to serve their people and minister to Ukrainian soldiers based nearby. He and his volunteer team of six were dining at his house in late March 2022 when a Russian missile hit it directly, ending up in his bedroom just two meters away from them. Miraculously, it failed to detonate, and everyone survived. His church continues to serve the families of the soldiers, many of whom have since been killed in action.



The TRUST program helped Serhii repair his house and prepare for a difficult winter by providing direct financial support.

“This is the Lord!!! All the glory to Him for all eternity!”



Chaplains praying during a warzone mission in Eastern Ukraine. Photo by Joel Carillet.

Olexandr is a pastor from Eastern Ukraine. When the war began in 2014, Olexandr and his wife and daughter were forced to flee their home in a city near Donetsk, where he had led a church for over a decade, to avoid persecution under Russian occupation. They relocated to a village near Avdiivka, where they started a church and purchased a building. When the full-scale invasion began in 2022, Avdiivka became the scene of one of the most violent battles of the war. Olexandr and his family became refugees once again. Olexandr's wife couldn't bear the stress and was hospitalized in critical condition.



The TRUST program enabled Olexandr to afford his wife's treatment, probably saving her life.

“A tremendous thank you to everyone who provided this help.”

Anzhelika, a pastor from Northern Ukraine, is a widow with three adult children. Less than a month after the full-scale invasion began, her church building was totally destroyed by a Russian missile. Less than two months after that, her husband, who founded the church more than 25 years ago, passed away from aggressive cancer. Anzhelika took over the leadership of the church and continued its work, starting from scratch. The congregation rented a new building and resumed holding services. Now, Anzhelika's growing church is distributing 200 food packages a week to people in need and holding baptism services.



The TRUST program has supported Anzhelika and her family.

“Thanks to the Lord, the church is not about the building, it's about the people!”

Paul, Peter, and John (their names have been changed for their safety) are pastors living in Eastern Ukraine with their families. After their cities were occupied by Russia in 2014, these pastors continued to serve their churches under occupation, risking their own and their family members' lives. They care for the physical and spiritual well-being of those suffering from the great hardships that the isolated regions of Donetsk and Luhansk have endured. For example, John regularly visits his church members at their homes and prays with them. They continue to live and serve there under constant threat of imprisonment, torture, and execution.



The TRUST program supported these pastors' families and enabled them to continue their ministries.

“I see it as the hands of the Lord Himself, helping me in this time through your ministry.”

Vadym is a pastor in Central Ukraine.

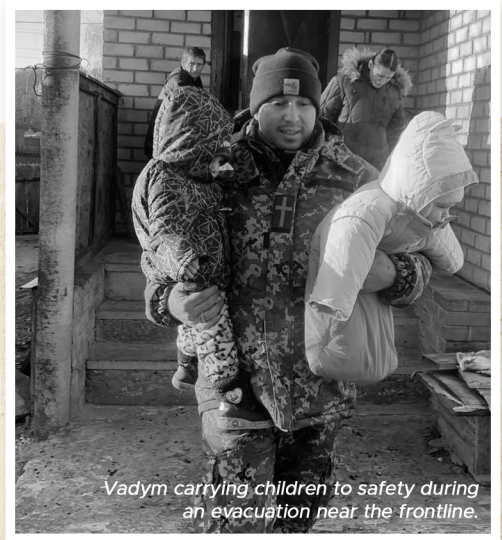
He tells his own story below.

My name is Vadym. I'm 37 years old and live in the city of Vyshneve. I have a wonderful wife, and together we are raising three beautiful daughters. I serve as a pastor and children's ministry leader in the Spasinnya Church.

In the first days of the war, I created a team that evacuated people from areas of military action, primarily women and children. We have conducted multiple infiltrations of the occupied territory to evacuate children and their families from right under the Russian occupiers' noses. Once, when I was evacuating a pastor's family from occupied Bucha, we were taken prisoner by the Russian soldiers, but God provided a miracle, and they let us go.

When enemy forces retreated from Kyiv, our team went to Eastern Ukraine, where military action continued. There, we evacuated people from enemy shellings in Severodonetsk, Lysychansk, Bakhmut, Kupyansk, Kherson, and other cities in the red zone. Since the full-scale invasion began, our team has evacuated over 3,500 people. Once, the city I was heading into to evacuate people was overtaken by Russian soldiers, and the road leading to it was mined. My car struck a landmine and became immobile. Luckily, my friend and I survived the explosion unharmed, but Russian soldiers heard the mine go off and opened fire on us, so we ran. The entire road was covered with mines, and we had to jump over them. When we were nearing Ukrainian positions, we were accidentally targeted by friendly fire, but luckily they missed. Ukrainian soldiers detained us and brought us to the headquarters, where we were identified. We received help and were brought to safety.

After this, my psycho-emotional state was severely damaged; a military medic diagnosed me with shell shock. As I was struggling in this condition, a fellow pastor handed me an envelope with financial assistance from the World Evangelical Alliance. I spent these funds on a trip to my family, whom I had evacuated to Germany at the beginning of the war and had not seen for a long time. Meeting my family reanimated my psychological and moral state. After recovering with my family, I returned to Ukraine, where I now continue to serve people on the front line.



Vadym carrying children to safety during an evacuation near the frontline.