

Assisting Ukrainian Refugees

Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the attack on the civilian population has resulted in Ukrainians leaving their homes and fleeing from shelling and rocket attacks. Ukrainians are being displaced from their homes and forced to seek safety. Many are going into shelters near their homes, while others are fleeing to areas in Western Ukraine, countries bordering Ukraine, and other countries in Europe. As a result of this war, Ukrainians are finding themselves homeless, separated from family and having lost loved ones. They are in desperate need of help, and those who are stepping up to open shelters throughout Ukraine as well as those who are welcoming Ukrainians in other countries and providing food, medical assistance, clothing, and housing as well as moral and emotional support also need help now.

While we prepare and wait for Ukrainian refugees who may come to our community, Blacksburg United Methodist Church (BUMC) is helping to care for Ukrainian refugees on a much broader scale by providing financial support through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Our donations, along with donations from people around the globe are supporting the work of those operating shelters throughout Ukraine and those who are receiving and caring for refugees in other countries. In other words, as members of the connectional system of the United Methodist Church, we are part of a network of individuals supporting Ukrainian refugees. UMCOR is distributing 100% of the donations to support the individuals and families who are remaining in Ukraine and those who have dispersed.

Our involvement with and support for refugees who are in Ukraine and the bordering countries is even more direct because of mission work by members of BUMC. One member of BUMC has been engaged in mission work over the years in building connections between United Methodist Churches in the United States with churches in the former communist countries of Europe, the Balkans, and the Baltic States through the In Mission Together Program. Another member of BUMC has led an effort to buildup theological educational focused on preparing pastors and church leaders to be trusted community leaders.

The result of the work of these two individuals is evident today in the response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis. An example: The leaders of the United Methodist Church in Romania who received and are caring for the orphan children from Kyiv are graduates of the Leadership Development Program and/or the Methodist e-Academy conceptualized and developed through the efforts of a member of our congregation.

BUMC has a history of being in ministry in Ukraine. Our challenge is to continue to follow the teaching of Jesus and to care for those in need among us. We need your continued commitment and support to help the people of Ukraine in need as we seek to respond and serve Ukrainian refugees in Ukraine and throughout Europe, and as we plan and prepare to serve those who may come to Blacksburg.