

Dear brothers and sisters from FBC Cuero, dear pastor Glenn,

We are very grateful that together with you we can be part of His Kingdom's work in Bulgaria. We are amazed day and night by His great mercy, love and care for all of us.

In this newsletter I would like to share with you a little bit of our work since late 2024 through February 2025.

Visiting Gipsy Churches

The north-west of Bulgaria is known to be the poorest area of the whole of the European



Union. There is very little investment by foreign companies, the infrastructure is not as good as in the rest of Bulgaria. Towns that were along the Danube River, who thrived back then, are now diminishing in population rather rapidly mostly due to lack of work and the people leave the country and work abroad. These are some of the areas mostly populated by Roma people.

The Baptist union has many Roma churches there. We had the wonderful opportunity to go and minister there for a long weekend. We served in four churches and met with a lot of people and pastors. We were very happy to see that the Lord is moving strongly in those churches. Most of the time we were encouraged rather than serve for encouragement.





Thank you for your support, in this way we can easily afford this trip and be able to serve among our brothers and sisters from the north-west.

Bulgarian Baptist Youth Organization (BBYO) elections

Every two years the BBYO has an election in which time they give reports of the work done and nominate people for the next two years leadership. We were delighted to hear of the good work the youth have done. Our advice as pastors was to invest more time in the next two years into discipleship with the aim of building up next-gen leaders.

The conference was in the First Baptist Church of Sofia and the main speaker was pastor Oprenov.

The new leadership was elected, and the charge was given based on 1 Timothy 4:15 – that the spiritual growth of the leaders is such that **“all may see your progress.”**



Youth and pastors conference of the Baptist Union



Last year we decided that one of the ways to bridge the gap between pastors and youth leaders was to get them together to share experience and ideas in a place where we would pray and minister to each other. It was a great success.

This year we decided to do it again and it was also a great success. We had over 100 people participate. The topic was “He sends you! Where” and we discussed the possible ways to evangelize in times we live in. We concluded that mass street evangelism is not very successful nowadays. The people are full of prejudices to Christians that do public events. That is why we emphasized on personal evangelism and greater usage of the social media since the

younger generation and 70% of the Bulgarian population is in the digital realm.

The Lord allowed Laura and I to have a wonderful conversation with brothers and sisters of all ages. I closed the conference with a sermon emphasizing that we are captives of Christ based on 2 Corinthians 2:14-17 and as captives we can do nothing else but His will by knowing that we are not our own, we have been defeated and taken captives by His love that bids us to live not for ourselves but for the One that died and rose again.



Christmas in Muglitzh

The Lord provided so that we were able to go to the orphanage in Muglitzh for Christmas. We were able to purchase a lot of diapers, hygiene products as well as meat for the children. Also we were able to provide a package of sweets for the children and the children of the teachers.

I was given a lot of time to share, and I could actually preach for 15 minutes. There was the vice-mayor of Muglitzh as well as professors from the pedagogy department of the Stara Zagora University.



Christmas podcast

For Christmas we were praying of ways to evangelize gen Z or Alpha. Since public evangelism is not very well received in Bulgaria, the Lord gave us the wisdom to go to the young people using the internet platforms. For that reason we created a 25 day devotion for each of the days 1-25 of September with thoughts of 300 words related to non-Christians and the possibility of exploring idea that what they really need is Jesus.

We did research and found out that the generation does not read much, rather it watches or listens of podcasts. That is why we purchased a good microphone and recorded a podcast that we uploaded to Spotify. Then with QR codes on public places we “spread the word”.

It was constantly read by 200 people. That is all we know, but this is more than the size of our church so definitely, non-believers were reading it. We do not know anything beyond this number. However, we see that it is received and listened to, so we will continue exploring options on that.



Soup Kitchen

This year the Lord provided so that we could have the Soup Kitchen from December 1st until March 31. This time we had some new people that were eating, and we managed to share the Gospel with them. Some of them were coming to church all winter and we had good conversations about Jesus with two of them. Thank you for your support and prayers. This is a great outreach ministry and it is allowing us to have chances to share the Gospel with the social department in the mayor office.



Medical Clinic



The medical office towards church is visited very well. We have about 100 different patients come a month. Despite having breast cancer on both sides, the church nurse is very dedicated to this ministry as she sees the need to help and mostly to share the Gospel with the people. The doctor, being 81 is still going there despite some difficulties in health. The photo is of the staff of the medical clinic – the medical personnel and the volunteers who are in the waiting room evangelizing every week.



Legacy

My parents, pastor Hristo and Zdravka are currently the oldest members of our church. They are one of the few that have been believers since 1960s and earlier. My mother is from one of the families that began the Baptist church in Bulgaria in the 1870's.

At some point we realized that few from the church have been Christians since communism and do not know the hardships that their brothers and sisters were undergoing back in the days. That is why we asked Hristo and Zdravka to share their life of faith with the church. It was a 40-minute talk that brought the whole church to tears and thankfulness by reminding us of the great God that we serve. We were able to record their testimonies.



Athletes in Action in Kazanlak

The Lord provided an incredible opportunity for our church and town. We were hosting an evangelistic volleyball tournament organized by Athletes in Action. They told us that this is their largest tournament – 60 people. We were able to have a lot of evangelistic opportunities. On Sunday about 40 of the players attended church – majority for the first time. Afterwards, we were told that there are five professions of faith. We praise God for this great blessed opportunity we had.



Christmas cookies



During the time of Christmas, the Lord provided that we can make cookies with the women from church. This is a great time to talk about God and share problems.

The youth are also invited and there they can get council from the older women.



Christmas celebration of the whole church

For Christmas we managed to gather the whole church for Christmas dinner. Some of the youth were invited to lead a devotional session. Then we had a quiz for the whole church using an app called Kahoot. The quiz was based on Luke 1-13 chapters as we were also reading the whole gospel for the Christmas time with questions for deep reflection. The time was wonderful as it allowed many church members to see each other and to fellowship.



A great testimony of God's faithfulness



I cannot begin to express my gratitude towards our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ. About two months ago I was reading a book where the author was saying that suffering is the only way God strengthens His children. As I was reflecting on that I was thinking that there is really not much suffering in my life – hard moments yes, but nothing shattering.

About three weeks later the church secretary Maria – 81 who has never been to a doctor in her life and never had any medicine taken got very sick. Well, it turned out that she had the flu which got her pneumonia, and it hit her heart, and her lungs, stomach and heart had fluid in them. We had to take her to the hospital, but she refused to go. So, we contacted her daughter who lives in

Sweden and asked her to come. She came and after much convincing she went to the doctor and then for two weeks to the hospital where we were not sure if she would make it or not.

After the hospital her daughter said that she needs to go back to work and Laura and I offered to take Maria with us until she stabilizes. Thank God it took only 10 days for her to get better.

At the same time she was getting sick, my mother had a stomach ulcer bleed where she lost 5 liters of her blood (the human body has about 6 liters). Her hemoglobin was so low that the hospital was not sure if she will make it all – it was 5.7 and the normal one is around 120. The transferred 7 banks of blood and 8 banks of plasma. She stayed in the ICU for a week and then two more weeks in the hospital.

My father was a wreck. I was a wreck. At some point we were told to prepare for a funeral.

Praise be to God – now both are doing well and are back to normal life. Maria is still doing the secretary's work and my mom is in the medical clinic.



At the same time another member of the church council got sick, and they were worried about brain cancer. The test, scans and MRI were all negative.

What I want to say is that for about two weeks my suffering-less life was turned upside down. At one point we were thinking that we would lose three of the five church board members in a matter of a week.

The Lord is so good. This period not only strengthened our prayer life, worship life and humbled us a lot, but it also unified and encouraged the church members.

We praise Him for His great mercy and love towards us.

The church

The church is healthy and suffering. We (the church) are able to personally take care of the brothers and sisters from all ages and the Lord is giving a sense of unity and family despite some significant difficulties. We have started for six months now to have one hour a week prayer time. Since we got it, it is like all hell broke loose on the church, but God used this to make it much stronger. In these six months we have one family leave the faith and go with the Orthodox church (because of the drinking habits of the males in the family), we have several people who were listening to false teachers via the TV and that broke their fellowship with the church members. These teachers teach eastern religions' doctrines mixed with Christianity ... the prosperity is the least of their false teaching. We have many people that got sick of cancer both young (37, 52) and older. However, as I have said, this made the church more united because it is struggling/contending for the faith.

This has been the busiest year for us from the 17-year ministry in Bulgaria. However, the Lord has given us the privilege to witness His might in lives changed and Christians turning their lives around back to Jesus. We witnessed His great power in healing. We praise Him for that. Thank you for lifting us in your prayers before the Lord.



Please pray for:

- Pastors for the churches in Bulgaria – We have leadership crisis. No one wants to become a pastor and we have so many churches that are without pastor. Our church is helping a church in Chirpan for three years now.
- To have someone to substitute for me in preaching. Nothing against my father and the other older pastor, but I would like to see new, younger generation.
- During the difficulties and joys to never lose our focus from Him who loves us.

Thank you again for your financial and prayer support. Without it we would not be able to be as effective in the ministry. Most of all, we thank our Lord who unites us and stirs our hearts towards love for one another.

George and Laura Gardevi

Ps: the blocked faces are due to fact that the parents not wanting the faces of their children to be seen. The parents are Ok with the children coming to church, but they themselves do not come ... yet.