

NMI Central

NAZARENE MISSIONS INTERNATIONAL

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Eurasia Region



Ukraine Update

It has been nearly three years since the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. NMI Central has brought updates from time to time to keep the praying church informed and encouraged to pray for the work and the people in Ukraine. Now, joined with Moldova, the Ukraine-Moldova District is experiencing renewal in the midst of the chaos of war.

Statistics are not currently available in a dependable form, due to the losses experienced over the last three years.

PRAYER



- Pray for the physical safety of our students and churches in what are still uncertain times.
- Pray for more stable electricity for the students to be able to do their studies and participate in courses.
- Pray for the ongoing work in Ukraine, raising more leaders for the churches, and for EuNC future staff as well.

PRAISE



- Praise God for His work in the hearts of many who are becoming interested in formal theological education through EuNC, and for new students who will join in the coming year.
- Praise God for the great opportunity for students to meet in-person with fellow students whom they had only encountered online previously.



The eyes of the church and the world have been on Ukraine for nearly three years now, as the war between Russia and Ukraine has taken a significant toll on society, infrastructures, and the sense of well-being and safety. Learning to live in the ever-changing realities of a war zone has not been easy for anyone. Nazarenes have seen their congregations dispersed, properties damaged, and lives fractured by the unsettling regularity of air raid alarms, and uncertainty of tomorrow. Pastors and members alike have needed to move, leaving the churches with a skeleton congregation trying to serve as long as they can stay.

Yet, while all of this has been true, there has grown a new sense of urgency and responsiveness to God's calling upon this war generation to lead the churches and love the people who remain. Many of these young adults have begun to study for the ministry through the network of European Nazarene College (EuNC) and its Learning Centres, one of which embraces Ukraine and Moldova.

During the war, as the Ukraine-Moldova District faced the loss of all its trained pastors and was left with only one ordained minister, the church remained steadfast in its mission to minister in the midst of unimaginable difficulties. Starting last year with just 9 students, God has blessed abundantly. Today, 22 students are courageously serving the Lord, in the most challenging circumstances, while pursuing their studies at EuNC. They are being shaped as Christlike disciples, ready to minister wherever they are—whatever ministry entails.

In response to this challenging season, the Ukraine-Moldova District reached out to EuNC for partnership. Through prayerful discussions, a bold decision was made to introduce a new language for theological education: Ukrainian. This marked a significant step toward equipping more people for ministry by providing education in their heart language, alongside the already existing language support in the Learning Centre.

Education has always been a key focus of the Church of the Nazarene in Ukraine, as it has been throughout the countries of the former Soviet Union, called the CIS-Commonwealth of Independent States. Despite the many challenges faced in this region: lack of electricity, occasional lack of internet connection, and heavy workloads at their home churches, God is blessing those who are studying His Word together, and learning the 'ins-and-outs' of ministry, through the asynchronous distance learning platforms of EuNC.



The Ukrainian pastors and youth representatives from all the Nazarene churches in Ukraine got together for the first district youth conference since before the pandemic. They talked about what it means to be called by God and how to nurture that calling as well as how to be involved in God’s mission in the Church.

One participant reflected: “Gathering together for worship gains a whole new level of value when things are hard. Standing next to each other, singing praise to God amid war is a feeling that fills one with hope that we’ll get through with His help, despite the air raid alarms that unsettle with a feeling of panic. In the city of Odessa, Ukraine, those eerie sounds can be heard quite often. Yet, here was a place where God met with His people, revealing His work and offering hope to the people.”

“One of the things that warmed my heart personally, as a Learning Centre administrator, was that it was also the first offline gathering of the EuNC students from Ukraine in a long time as well. Out of our 22 current students who have joined in 2023 and 2024, 12 made it to the conference.

And now, to see them all interacting in real life, meeting those they have talked to during the forum times or online via Zoom, is great. Together, we are witnessing God’s provision, His calling, and His faithfulness.” (Zee Gimon, EuNC Learning Centre administrator)

Theological education is of vital importance these days, now that many churches need strong leaders to guide people through this desert of war, and EuNC staff is doing their best to provide the “tools” and “maps” for them.

This is a powerful reminder that even in the darkest moments, God’s light shines through His people.

Could You Serve?

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