

FRESH Start

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE PORT CHARLOTTE SDA CHURCH



PRAYING FOR THE PEOPLE OF UKRAINE

"The Lord's loyal kindness never ceases; his compassions never end. They are fresh every morning..." Lam. 3:22,23 NET



PRAY
FOR UKRAINE

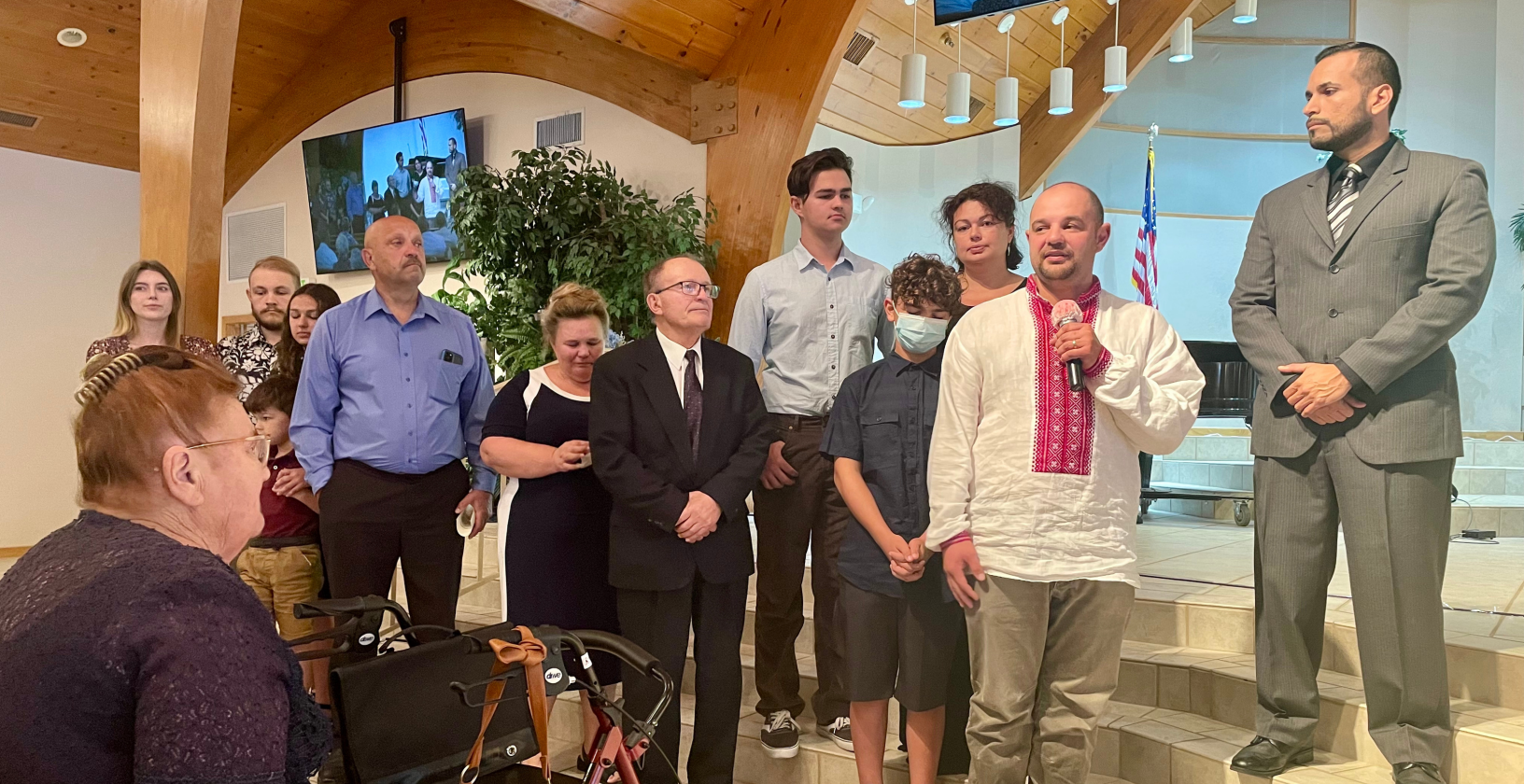
**Special Prayer
Service
Friday, March 4
6:30**

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Last fall, our church was blessed with the addition of several new members transferring from Oregon. Originally, some lived in Ukraine.

They have added much to our church with their musical talent, they started a new Sabbath School class, and have quickly become part of our family. It is only natural, then, that we offer our support and love, and cover their family with prayer at this difficult time.

The following is an interview, conducted on February 26, with Viktor Poperechny. Viktor and his wife, Olga, have four children: Victor 16, Victoria 14, John 12, and James 5. They have family members currently living in Ukraine in some of the hardest hit areas of the war.

Q. What would you like your church family to know about the situation with your family there [in Ukraine]?

A. I'm just asking for as many prayers as possible right now for the peace in Ukraine so people stop dying. That's my main request. If we can be united, God will hear us. I know this for a fact. Specifically for me, I have one uncle, two aunts, and a lot of cousins and their kids in there. The ones that are hardest hit are the ones that live in Kyiv and in Kharkiv, which is eastern Ukraine. They've been holding off for three days there. They live in bomb shelters right now. They just go out and get food whenever shelling stops, then go back in. We pray for them the most. I've been in contact with them. My one cousin is separated from his family. He is an engineer so he is being asked to keep the hydropower working, so he is

*ABOVE: The Poperechny family with Pastor Jaime before the congregation had special prayer for their family in Ukraine.
Photo credit: Laura Dancek*

PRAYING FOR OUR UKRAINIAN FAMILY

BY LAURA DANCEK



ADRA is currently delivering aid to Ukraine. [Click here if you would like to help or want more information through ADRA.](#)

**"We cry with you.
Our hearts are broken
for you."**

**Pastor Dustin Hall
Sermon on February 26**

on that project. But his family, his wife and his son, are in the bomb shelter. So that's the hardest family that we've been praying for right now.

Q. How long have you been in the states?

A. I came here when I was 17, in 2000. I met my wife in 2000. She came here in 2002. We were married in 2004.

Q. Does your wife have family in Ukraine?

A. Yes, she has a cousin and aunt there.

Q. Is there any hope that the family you have there will be able to come to the United States?

A. At this point, everything is closed. He cannot even get to his family -- my cousin that I referred to -- his name is Alex.

All the trains, flights, city transport, especially in the cities that were hit hard, everything is shut down. So right now, it's impossible to get in or out.

Q. What about to Poland?

There are some people escaping to Poland.

A. In Eastern Ukraine, Kyiv, it's very localized where they put in the biggest forces, Russia, I mean, the aggressor. It's impossible to get in or out. No matter that they say it's only during the night that they have a curfew. But in reality, it goes on maybe one or two hours where they have breaks. They quickly run, get something to eat. Because they have water in bomb shelters, but for food they have to get out and get food.

Q. They still have access to food right now?



We want to express our thanks to Viktor for taking the time to share about his family in Ukraine during such a stressful time. Let us unite with all of them in our prayers for the safety of their family, for Ukraine, and for our world.

A. Yes. As far as food, there are organizations that provide it. I know that they do have food, and water is available.

Q. How are you communicating with your family in Ukraine?

A. Wiper on the Internet. They've been texting me, and I've been talking to them. Video does not work but audio and texts do go through.

Q. Did you just now get a text from them? Can you share what it said?

A. Yes. They just shot down a plane in the city where I grew up, full of Russians trying to infiltrate, and there's two more that passed through that, but one was shot down. If not for the Russian Air Force, Ukraine would be in so much better shape. Russia's really dominant in the air. That's been the hardest.

For me it's a huge wake-up call. Never ever expected this to happen. I thought it would take just 24 hrs. I thought Ukraine was so overmatched in military power. Right now my dad just spoke to his sister, and the areas where cities are not hit that hard, there's so many volunteers that they are turning them back. They ran out of guns to hand out just to regular people, so they are turning people away and telling them to be ready should a need come up, they'll call them. That's how everyone is united.



UPDATE ON MARCH 2 - Urgent prayer request:

Viktor's cousin's wife and child are currently stranded in Kharkiv. The bomb shelters are full, and they are hiding in the basement of their building. They are under constant, heavy fire. The mother is in complete shock right now.

Through Facebook, Viktor found someone who is buying and delivering medicine throughout Ukraine, and Viktor asked him to try to find a car to get his family out.

Because she is a mother with a teenage boy, they are allowing them to leave. A car has been arranged to be there in the morning to take them to the train station. A train is scheduled to leave tomorrow. The train will take them to central Ukraine, where they have relatives living in a village. They hope to eventually get to Poland.

The roads are very damaged and it will be a dangerous trip. Viktor is asking for our prayers for safe passage, and for the protection of his other family who must stay.

Adventist Laymen's Services and Industries (ASI) is partnering with Outpost Centers International (OCI) in bringing hope and help to our people there. OCI has four ministries in Ukraine. Their functions right now have transitioned from being lifestyle centers

to assisting refugees in their journey to leave the country. Our Home, an OCI lifestyle ministry, is accommodating a steady flow of refugees. The staff are working night and day to provide food, shelter, and beds where possible.

Click here if you would like to help.



SPRING BRINGS FRESH STARTS

BY DUSTIN HALL, SENIOR PASTOR

Spring is making its big comeback! While this means more for people in the north than it does for us, in a place with eternal summer, it is still wonderful to see the trees, grass and flowers return to their glory. March gets its name from the Roman God Mars. Mars was their god of war. According to the myth, his sons Romulus and Remus are known to be the founders of the Roman Empire. In fact, the name Rome comes from the first son Romulus' name.

In the Roman Empire the month of March was strategically placed in the calendar because, as it brought in the spring, it became the ideal time to march to war. In the ancient world there was a war season. It began with March and ended sometime in October. We find something similar mentioned in 2 Samuel 11:1 where it refers to the time of year when "kings go off to battle". It is fascinating how the winter can bring everything to a stop. In some historical cases wars would be



put on pause, troops would return home for the winter, and then the war would resume in the springtime, right where it left off.

In many ways, we have been shut down in a winter, of sorts, for the last two years. Rather than picking our battles back up where we left off, perhaps it's time to lay down those weapons and refocus our energy in better places. Maybe we should consider this spring a comeback that brings brand new, healthy life to our spiritual and everyday lives. What things should we leave dead in the cold of winter? What things need to come back even stronger? What new life needs to spring up in us? This is in fact what the Gospel is all

about: second chances, new beginnings, fresh starts.

“Come now, let us settle the matter,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”
Isaiah 1:18, New International Version

What a word picture this is! The battle field is covered with blood (a symbol of our sin) but when the winter (Jesus) comes the snow covers it and all that is seen is pure, white freshness. We are in a fresh start. What potential that has for our lives. Let's shake off the winter and our old battles and sins and march our way to a happy life with Jesus.

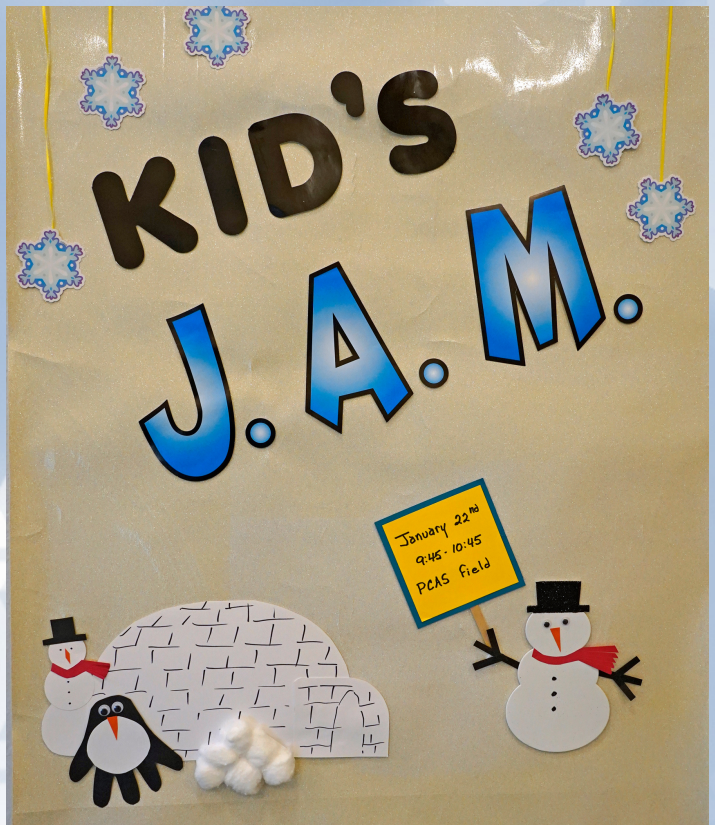


KID'S J.A.M.

JANUARY 22 JESUS AND ME

Photo credits: Barb Goffin





The next KID'S J.A.M. WILL BE ON APRIL 23.



We would like your your feedback about our school. It won't take more than a couple of minutes to complete.

Please [click here](#).



The nominating committee will soon begin their work of placing people into meaningful ministry. Please pray for them and consider how God may be calling you to serve.



Fellow Stitch



A new life group is starting for anyone who wants to enjoy fellowship while having fun knitting, crocheting, sewing, scrapbooking, doing macrame or other types of crafts.

Starting on March 7, we will meet weekly on Mondays from 1-5 pm in the Grand Hall.

Bring your own supplies and be prepared to have fun!



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Sermon Schedule

March 5

Pastor Dustin

March 12

Pastor Dustin

March 19

Pastor Jaime

March 26

Pastor Jaime

