

Praying Through the Month

*Mark and Donna McDonnel
Kiev, Ukraine (on home assignment in Katy, Texas)
for January 2008*

UPDATE

How thankful we are to you for praying, dear friends!

We are amazed that half our year here has gone by so fast. It has been a rich time and we are very thankful. We arrived in the U.S. last June and are planning to go back to Kiev this coming summer. It has been a busy time, but very good, very productive.

We end the year with a mixture of blessing and concern. God has blessed us with family and friends, and most of all with the gift of his son. At the same time, we lift up our concern that our support level hasn't changed much. A couple of new people have joined our support team, and we are confident that the the Lord is going to accomplish his will, but we still need to raise almost \$2000 per month in support to be able to return to Ukraine fully supported. Please pray with us about this need.

At Christmas we had the joy of being together with all of Mark's family for the first time in twelve years. The cousins will not soon forget so many days of great memory-making fun. Mary had the privilege of celebrating her birthday with her 'twin', her cousin who was born the same day she was 11 years ago.

Anna and Benjamin were so glad to have finished their mid-terms. Thank you for praying. They have been enjoying some free time. Anna remarked that having time off from school helps her to remember how long days actually are, and that they really aren't "over" at that after-school mark.

We are looking forward to more church visits over the next several weeks, reporting to those who have supported us so faithfully.

May the Lord bless you for your continued prayer on our behalf. The things we mention here are on our hearts and we are thankful that you are willing to lift them up with us, sharing in our ministry in a special way. We are truly blessed.

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FOR PRAYER

1. Pray for us as we head into this new year, that we would keep our focus on the Lord in all that is left to be done during this home assignment.
2. Pray for Donna's father, that we could make the most of every opportunity to be a witness to him. He seems to still be very closed to the gospel and we would so like to see him come to the Lord.
3. Pray for our friend and co-worker Genna Friesen as he goes through the chemotherapy treatment. His body is no longer 'recovering' in between sessions, so he is always in pain, nauseated, as well as having trouble concentrating.
4. Pray for Rita and her husband Ryedel as they shepherd a Spanish-speaking church plant in Kiev. Pray for the Lord to raise up a team of people to help them in weekly activities.
5. Pray for seminary president Anatoly to get rest and for the Lord to give him renewed vision and faith as he leads the seminary.
6. Pray for our pastor in Kiev, Peter Marchenko, as he leads the congregation in this new year. Pray also for the church as they seek to be a witness during this time of celebration of Ukrainian Christmas today and tomorrow.
7. Pray for Ivan Petrovich as he oversees the seminary's construction. He is 80 years old. Pray for his health, and for wisdom and strength as he 'shepherds' this huge project.
8. Pray for the kids as they return to school today. Pray that they will get back into their routines and be ready for all that the Lord has for them this semester.
9. Pray for Donna's brother Darrell. We desire to see him in fellowship with other believers, to grow in his walk with the Lord, and to have a humble, teachable spirit.
10. Pray for Lydia as she ministers to her unbelieving parents. They can be quite antagonistic, even in the midst of being so physically feeble and dependent on Lydia's help.
11. Pray for "Maria" as she seeks to deal seriously with bitterness and resentment so she can love more freely and know the Lord's peace.
12. Pray for Oksana and Vanya to be diligent in seeking the Lord as they work through the difficulties they face. Pray they would have humble hearts willing to submit to whatever the Lord shows them.
13. Pray for Genna Friesen as he has his MRI tomorrow. Pray the Lord would grant a report of substantive – even complete! – healing.
14. Pray for a man in our Kiev church who has a lot of potential for leadership and loves the Scriptures, but who is being divisive because of an issue he believes strongly in; this situation is very serious. Pray for a humble heart.

15. Pray for Luda, who has recently taken on new responsibilities in the Christian Education program at the seminary. We are very thankful for the Lord's provision of another wonderful Ukrainian believer to continue the replacing missionaries process at the seminary.
16. Pray for Donna's father, that we could make the most of every opportunity to be a witness to him. He seems to still be very closed to the gospel and we would so like to see him come to the Lord, even this year!
17. Pray for Sasha as he leads the handicapped ministry at our church in Kiev. Pray for his health, for his family's health, and for the Lord's provision as they await the arrival of a new baby this spring.
18. Please continue to pray for church leaders in Ukraine to develop and communicate a vision for proper family time. It is often considered virtuous in the Ukrainian church to spend a great deal of time in ministry, to the point of having a serious imbalance with ordinary home/parenting responsibilities. It is considered normal to be away from home until after 10 p.m. every night. *Pray for men in ministry to see the need for, plan for, and make daily choices for a good balance between family time and time in ministry.*
19. Pray specifically for Andrei, Ivan, Dima, Vasya, Sasha, and Alexander in light of #11. Many of these families are seriously struggling because of this imbalance.
20. Pray for Mark as he continues his doctoral studies, especially as he writes, that he would be able to think clearly and write clearly.
21. Pray for the start of the semester at the seminary next week. Pray that all of the logistics will fall into place, that the Lord would grant safe travel to the students coming in, and for financial provision for the seminary to operate.
22. Pray for the faculty and staff as they prepare for the beginning of the semester. Pray especially for spiritual protection during this busy time.
23. Pray for the Lord's provision for construction begun at the seminary. Inflation has decimated funds raised to bring this project to even substantial completion.
24. Pray for our support. We are at 76% and will need to be fully supported before we return to Ukraine next summer.
25. Pray for us as we go through the process of researching colleges for Anna to attend a year and a half from now. We need to use this year to do our homework and get things in place. Pray for great wisdom; this is a lot to process!
26. Pray that God would provide funds for increasing the salaries of Ukrainian staff at the seminary in light of the current economic reality in Kiev. We continue to hear how how inflation is rising rapidly.
27. Pray for Mark and Donna as they travel to Denver today. We attend this mission-wide meeting each time we're on home assignment.
28. Pray for Mark's parents as they watch our kids this week while we're gone.
29. Please continue to pray for a godly couple in our Kiev church to take up the ministry of teaching and mentoring young couples with wisdom, grace, and courage. This is a huge need. Pray for those couples who have problems in their marriages, that the Lord would convict and comfort, and give great wisdom to seek and follow biblical counsel to sort out the real issues.
30. Pray for Donna's father, that we could make the most of every opportunity to be a witness to him. He seems to still be very closed to the gospel and we would so like to see him come to the Lord.
31. Pray for wisdom about schooling choices for Mary and Abigail when we return to Ukraine. We are seeking wisdom and vision from the Lord about the best course to take.