

## News from Larry & Becky Stanton

# Serbia Update/Ukraine Plans

March 4, 2022



We'd like to share our latest update from Serbia and ask for your prayers for our future plans to help in Ukraine.

Last week, when the war in Ukraine began in earnest, Larry already had scheduled a trip to Serbia, to visit Zoltán's church. I was a bit nervous about him leaving, but he felt he needed to go. So, last Sunday, he loaded up in his little Russian (!) car and went south. He said Rose the Lada (that's what he calls his car) was on a mission of peace. He had three tasks: deliver firewood, take money for painting the church, and buy supplies for the "old" refugees, those who are not so welcome in Europe.

He and Zoltán delivered firewood to 14 families, and he noticed a very interesting thing this time: two families' lives have actually improved! Larry has been delivering firewood in these communities for seven years now. Usually there's not much hope for upward development for these folks; Larry just provides comfort and love to those who are sick, old, and lonely.

You remember Alex, the boy who had heart surgery a couple years ago? Well, for the first time, his mother Monika said, no, thank you, she did not need firewood this time. What a joy!

She even apologized, worried that she hurt their feelings by rejecting the offer. Larry and Zoltán assured her that this was great to see her better off and more secure. Larry said her yard and garden were neat and organized, and their horse, who gave Ruth and Larry a wagon ride back in October, is pregnant. Larry was in tears to see how much better they are doing. Alex is strong and healthy, and is even starting to grow a few mustache hairs! Rejoice with us that this family has come through their hard times under Zoltán's and Larry's—and YOUR care!



Another family they've visited in the past also showed vast improvement. This fellow has worked for Zoli and the church on different projects, and Larry says he's an incredibly hard worker. The first time Larry met him, his head was bandaged, and when he invited Larry and Zoli into his home, Larry said house was in such disrepair that the kitchen ceiling was literally falling in. Many of the homes Larry visits are like this. The man's wife and son both have disabilities. Larry said it was a mess. But this time it was different. The man brought Larry in and showed him how he had renovated the house. He has been working on a project where he was able to recycle old roof tiles, and has replaced the roof on his own house! He has cleaned up his garden and planted fruit trees. Larry said they saw him later, on his way home with garden supplies strapped to the back of his bicycle.

When Larry and Zoli help, sometimes there isn't a happy recovery. Roland, the fellow who was paralyzed from a fall in a barn, died. Some of the old ladies he visits year after year are still sad and lonely. We don't check off a chart with how

*continued on back*

many people got saved because of this firewood delivery. Larry said, If there was a coming to Jesus in this story it would be great—the guy doesn't drink, doesn't beat his wife or son. He gets up every morning and goes to work, makes a little money and is working hard to make their lives better. Maybe the Lord will work in his heart. This is the Lord's work, not ours. Ours is to care.

And that's what Larry hopes to do at the Ukrainian border. Tomorrow, Larry will drive Rosie the Lada north. We are 60 miles from the western border of Ukraine, and more than 100,000 people fleeing the war have crossed into Hungary this week. Our partners, Hungarian Baptist Aid, are there distributing food and supplies and arranging lodging for those who don't have loved ones greeting them nor a plan to continue moving westward to Germany or Austria.

Tomorrow's trip will be mostly a discovery visit, to see how he can help and what the situation is. Please pray for Larry, for wisdom and opportunity. As he learned from his experiences working with refugees in the past, he knows this is likely to be a very long-term problem. As a friend from another humanitarian agency said, "Working with refugees isn't a sprint, it's a marathon." The people with means and/or family in Western Europe will likely move on, but those who do not have these support systems will suffer. This is who we hope to help.

If you'd like to join us in helping Ukrainian refugees, please consider making a donation to International Ministries marked, "Stanton Undesignated Specifics."

PS! Oh, dear! Zoltán wrote to us last night—he has kidney stones! Please pray for Pastor Zoltán, who was planning to go to the Ukraine border with some of his grown children this weekend.



*You can support this missionary work through our church. Simply make check payable to First Baptist Church and write "**Stanton Missionaries**" on the memo line.*