

Faith in the Midst of War

By David Breidenbach

Wisdom From the Fields, April 2026

Supporting the Church in Ukraine



Map of Ukraine



Global view of Ukraine

It is difficult to believe that we now find ourselves in the fifth year of war in Ukraine since Russia's full-scale invasion on **February 24, 2022**. Yet many know that this conflict actually began twelve years ago, in **2014**, when Russia first invaded Ukrainian territory. The war has never truly waned. In fact, in many ways it is even more intense today than it was in the early days of the invasion.

Russia has deliberately targeted Ukraine's energy infrastructure—electricity, gas, and water systems—in an effort to leave millions of Ukrainians without heat or basic services, particularly during the harsh winter months. Residential areas and civilian infrastructure are also frequently attacked: schools, day cares, hospitals, apartment buildings, theaters, shopping centers, train stations, buses, and homes. Hundreds of missiles and drones are launched toward Ukrainian cities each day.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's Defense Forces continue to fight on the front lines against Russian forces, a conflict that has already taken tens of thousands of lives. In recent months, terrorist-style attacks have also struck city centers such as Lviv, Dnipro, and Mykolaiv, targeting police officers and other first responders.

We are now in the **fifth year of Russia's unjust war against Ukraine**. So how do we respond? What can we do? First and foremost, **we pray**.

Equipping Women in Ministry

Last month, my wife Angela and I, along with SON Board member **Rev. Dr. Brad Miller**, traveled to Ukraine. At the invitation of **DELKU Bishop Pavlo Shvarts** and **Synod President Pastor Aleksandr Gross**, we hosted a leadership conference for women in ministry just outside the city of **Lviv**.

Brad, Angela & David on the night train from L'viv to Krakow



Angela connecting with and teaching ladies at the Women's Conference

The two-and-a-half-day conference took place at a retreat center in **Bryukhovychi**, north of Lviv. It included ten teaching sessions, addressing topics such as personal faith in times of suffering, ministry in difficult circumstances, evangelism, and serving communities throughout Ukraine. Twenty-four women from five different regions participated. One reason this conference was so significant is that gatherings specifically for women in ministry had not previously been a major priority. The war has changed that reality. With most able-bodied men conscripted into military service, many women have stepped into leadership roles—managing church ministries, organizing humanitarian aid, and leading outreach in their communities.



Women's Conference group

Another meaningful aspect of the conference was that, for many participants, this was the **first time they had been taught by another woman in ministry**. Angela led most of the sessions and was able to connect with the women in a deeply personal way.

While both Brad and I contributed, Angela's leadership created a space where the women felt safe to share openly about the challenges they are facing. It was deeply moving to see their response. Many spoke honestly about grief, fear, exhaustion, and loss.



Goodbye hugs for Angela

For several participants, it was the first time they had been guided through a process of grieving in a safe and supportive environment. Together, we explored how our identity in Christ can sustain us—even in the darkest circumstances.

During the first half of the conference, we intentionally addressed the spiritual battles that all people face—both the visible and the hidden struggles. The goal was to help these leaders strengthen their own faith so that they could return to their communities equipped to walk alongside others throughout Ukraine.

Prayer must always come first. But prayer also leads us to action.

The Global Church Responds

By God's grace, much has already been done—and continues to be done—through the global family of Christ.

Through the **SON Ukraine Relief Fund**, more than **\$1 million** has been raised, with over **\$850,000 already distributed** for food, medicines, heaters, generators, transportation, and ongoing pastoral care.

Internally displaced refugee settlements have been established in **Petrodolina** and **Novogradivka**, as well as in additional communities in **Slovakia, Estonia**, and other European host countries. These efforts have been supported in part through the SON Ukraine Relief Fund.

The need, however, remains great. Humanitarian assistance continues to be essential, and significant resources will also be required when the time comes to rebuild Ukraine.

For now, we remain focused on meeting urgent needs—through the hands, feet, and compassionate voices of our ministry partners in Ukraine, supported by churches and believers throughout Central and Western Europe and here in the United States.

This is the global family of Christ in action. To God be the glory!

For more information, visit the [SON website](#), [email us](#), or call (505) 994-3278



Breidenbach, David

Spiritual Orphans' story speaks deeply to Pastor David Breidenbach. Raised in an agnostic household, David heard the Gospel for the first time during a Good Friday service in 1992. Touched by this experience, he quit his broadcasting career to become a Lutheran pastor. He has been Executive Director of SON since 2015.

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Links:

World map: <https://mapswire.com/maps/ukraine/>

Ukraine map:

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war: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russo-Ukrainian_war

Ukraine: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ukraine>

Russia: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russia>

Defense Forces: <https://www.zsu.gov.ua/en>

Lviv: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Lviv-Ukraine>

Dnipro: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Dnipropetrovsk-Ukraine>

Mykolaiv: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mykolayiv-Ukraine>

Bryukhovychi: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Briukhovychi>

SON: <https://sonetwork.org/>

Relief Fund: <https://sonetwork.org/2022/05/21/a-word-about-son-ukraine-fund/>

Petrodolina: <https://sonetwork.org/partner/full-time-missionaries/>

Novogradivka: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novohrodivka>

Slovakia: <https://sonetwork.org/learn/where-we-serve/slovakia/>

Estonia: <https://sonetwork.org/learn/where-we-serve/estonia/>