

# Thoughts of Faith

AUGUST 2025

UKRAINE | CZECH REPUBLIC | LATVIA  
Evangelical Lutheran Synod  
Board for World Outreach



GIFT OF  
LIFE —  
UKRAINE

## Mobile Clinics: Bringing Healing and Hope Across Ukraine

*Dmytro Maksymenko, Director of GoL*

**This summer** the Gift of Life Mobile Clinics have continued their mission of bringing free medical and dental care to those most in need, traveling from western Ukraine to the country's heartland.

One of the most moving visits took place at the Ternopil Educational and Rehabilitation Center, where our team provided care to children with special needs. The staff shared how the children felt safe and valued during their checkups—thanks to the gentle, clear communication and kind approach of our medical professionals.

The clinic then visited the villages of Pochapyntsi and Bila in the Ternopil region where many residents lack access to affordable medical services. Thanks to the warm welcome of the local communities, dozens of people received vital health screenings and dental care—a lifeline for families still coping with the economic and emotional toll of war.

In Zakarpattia, our team served internally displaced persons and other vulnerable groups in the Nevyske, Onokivska community—a region that has offered refuge to many fleeing from active combat zones. A Memorandum of Cooperation was signed with local authorities to strengthen long-term response efforts in the region.

More recently, our team has been working in a children's camp in the Ivano-Frankivsk region, offering

*Gift of Life—continued on next page*

### FROM THE ELS

#### Cause for Rejoicing

*Rev. Thomas Heyn Administrator  
Board for World Outreach*

"Rejoice in the Lord always;  
again, I will say, rejoice!" (Phil  
4:4).

The story from **Gift of Life** is a wonderful account of God's people rejoicing in the service they render to God and to his people, even in challenging times of war. These faithful workers maintain the right focus, even in the midst of terrible circumstances.

The stories from **Czechia** and **Latvia** are uplifting stories of God's people celebrating his bountiful blessings as they live for him and dedicate themselves to his service. We hope you enjoy their stories and see that God is always at work in his Church sharing the message of life with a dying world.

We are grateful for your offerings to our Lord that help support this important work. It continues because of God's blessings upon your gifts and prayers. ■

**Thoughts of Faith** is a confessional Lutheran mission society dedicated to spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ to Ukraine, Czech Republic, and Latvia through printed materials and personal ministry. We are a 501(c)3 tax exempt organization. All donations are tax deductible to the extent of applicable law. Please check with your tax consultant on your specific situation. Donations may be sent directly to Thoughts of Faith (6 Browns Ct—Mankato, MN 56001—507-344-7354—theyn@blc.edu—www.tof.org). Please see the enclosed envelope to donate by check or by credit card. You may also donate by going to <http://www.tof.org/donate> or by scanning the QR code.





Gift of Life—Ukraine, continued

medical and emotional support to young evacuees from the frontlines. Each child carries a story marked by trauma and resilience. Here, amid the Carpathians, they are met with compassion, safety, and care—perhaps for the first time in many months.

In September, we plan to resume clinic outreach to central and eastern Ukraine—to regions most deeply impacted by the war. Please keep our team and those we serve in your prayers as we continue this mission of mercy, hope, and healing. ■



▲ medical lab—Ternopil ERC



▲ happy patient—Ternopil ERC



▲ completing reports—Ternopil TRC



▲ mobile clinics—mission of mercy, hope, and healing



▲ dentist at Nevytske, Zakarpattia region



▲ staff at Ivano-Frankivsk region



▲ dental clinic in Ivano-Frankivsk region

LATVIA

Good News From Kekava

Ilars Plume, Pastor

Books: Last month we published Glen L. Thompson’s book on the history of the ancient and medieval church, compiling two books published in English in a Latvian edition. Another book by Glen L. Thompson on the Nicene Creed, dedicated to the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, is currently being translated and is in the stage of layout. “The Gospels” by ELS theologian Joh. Ylvisaker is going through final literary editing.

The second joyful event is the restoration of the facade of the Kekava church building. The church was consecrated in 2002 and its facade had suffered from the weather. The president of the parish found funds and builders, who in a couple of weeks applied new plaster and restored the facade to its original beauty.

Third, but not least in terms of importance, is the first participation of our parish president and theology student Juris Matvejs in a church service as a vicar.

Finally, we have a young boy who is seriously interested in the theology of the cross and that allows us to look to the future with confidence.

In all of these matters, in one way or another, there is also your support, and for that, dear friends, my sincere thanks and God’s blessings. ■



▲ history of The Ancient and Medieval Church



▲ facade renovation nearing completion



▲ Pastor Ilars Plume and Vicar Juris Matvejs



▲ Pastor Ilars Plume with young theologian



## "Nikdo nemá právo zapomenout"— No One Has the Right to Forget

Martin Vrsecky, Pastor

The second week of July, Martin Luther School and St. Paul Lutheran Church held a VBS in Pilsen. The title of this article is the motto of the museum we visited during our VBS week on July 9th. Surely, this theme would be a great one for any Bible class discussion. **We must not forget the great victory that our Savior has won over our worst enemy.**

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forget the  
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This year, the city of Pilsen celebrated the 80th anniversary of the end of WW II in Europe and the liberation of Pilsen by the U.S. Army on May 6, 1945. There are still a few people alive, who remembered, or even participated in the war, for example, Harry Humanson (see photo).

At the museum, we saw a Russian T-34 tank (still capable of driving). A mural includes a painting of an American Sherman tank in the town of Rokycany. Students from Martin Luther School, ages 8-13, participated in the VBS. MLS religion teachers conducted the VBS. They included M. Vrsecky (on the right in the picture) and M. Tibitanci in the middle (the man with the hat).

Some stories really shouldn't be forgotten, but well preserved and kept in our common memories. I would recommend our readers to search for "The last days of the war." Look for stories from April and May of 1945, when the "Nazi Beast" was about to die. The Thirty-Year War ended in Prague, and World War II as well... The Museum, a former military base from Communist times, with various historical military vehicles, helped us understand many things about our history.

Many children are eagerly looking forward to next year's VBS. ■



▲ Harry Humanson, 99 year old WWII veteran



▲ at the museum



▲ VBS children outside the museum

## Something New

► Intriguing images and inspirational stories from *Thoughts of Faith* ministries in Ukraine, Czechia and Latvia among other world mission fields.

► Available now as Bible study lessons - perfect for personal use, family devotions, small-groups and/or congregational classes.

► Download **World Mission Souvenirs** (original format) and "**Let's talk about ... World Mission Souvenirs**" (study material) at the following website:

[www.worldmissionsouvenirs.com](http://www.worldmissionsouvenirs.com)

