

I witnessed a miracle

As war rages between Ukraine and Russia, there is a place of peace - for both Ukrainians and Russians. In Prague's United Methodist church complex, they pray together under the watchful eye of their Russian UMC pastor, Lev Shults. Prague is filled with many Ukrainians and Russians. Some Russians in Prague support the war; others do not. The conflict is not far from the Czech Republic. Prague is only a 10 hour drive from the Ukraine border. The emotions between Ukrainians and Russians are evident in restaurants, grocery stores, even on the street. Nonetheless, on Sunday afternoons at 4 pm (16:00) both nationalities gather to worship God in a church hall, only footsteps from my Methodist church apartment. On Sunday, my Czech Methodist pastor, Jana Krizova, and I attended their church service. My first impression was how similar United Methodist services are in any language and culture. I was able to follow in English the church service. Pastor Lev's son translated. The scripture readings and the sermon were in Russian. The prayers were in Ukrainian, and the praise songs were in both languages.



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Worshipping together

In his sermon, Pastor Lev is careful - very careful - not to favor any political point of view. His is a Godly message, not one of politics. He says he wakes up during the



The drivers

night after experiencing a nightmare, and realizes his nightmare is reality. He speaks of the weekly van of humanitarian goods that the Czech Methodist churches are sending to the Ukraine border consisting of nonperishable food and hygiene supplies. He mentioned the canned meat, and the soap, and the toilet paper. He recognized the brave members of his congregation that drive the trucks filled with the desperately needed supplies.

He delivered a short sermon. Their key word was "peace." Peace for Ukrainians, Russians, Czechs, Americans, and all of God's children. He spoke of Jesus and



Lev Shults

loving one another as we love ourselves. His prayer was basic and simple. We need to open our hearts to one another in peace. In open prayers, the congregation prayed for common understanding among all peoples and nations.

After the church service, I spoke briefly with Pastor Lev. I asked him how he would sum up his message. He paused and then said: "Peace unites people. War separates them. We pray in Jesus' name."

I answered "Amen."

Sunday afternoon, I witnessed a miracle.

Ray Wilck, a retired Methodist missionary from the USA, now living in Prague

The Diakonia of the United Methodist Church in the Czech Republic, UMC parishes, congregations and Christian Aid Centers help those fleeing the war in Ukraine — thanks to your much-needed financial contribution!

We are preparing a convenient payment option via online payment gateway, it should be available next week.

By the time, you may use the usual way – send your gifts through the Advance of Global Ministries, CZECH REPUBLIC IN MISSION TOGETHER (#00399A).

Go to <https://umcmmission.org/advance-project/00399a/> and click on the red DONATE NOW button.

In the box that reads "Designate Your Gift" enter that it is for Ukraine Refugees.

Thank you very much for your support!