

# Baptists in Poland provide Ukrainian refugees warm welcome

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WARSAW—Tetyana had a job. A home. Friends. A life. And a grown daughter who was just starting hers. Then the explosions started near Kyiv, Ukraine.



Refugee children from Ukraine find a warm welcome and sense of security as the Baptist seminary in Warsaw, Poland, opens its doors to them. (TBM Photo / Rand Jenkins)

“For 48 hours, me and my daughter were lying on the floor waiting for death,” she said. “In the last moment, we decided to pack quickly, our most needed things, and just flee Kyiv.”

The war started on Feb. 24, and Tetyana left Kyiv with her daughter at 1 p.m. the next day.

They drove until they encountered a 31-mile-long line of cars waiting to get into Poland. There, they abandoned their car and boarded a bus.

“At 2 a.m., on Feb. 27, we finally crossed the border,” she said.

Poland welcomed them as they have hundreds of thousands of others. By God’s direction through Polish Baptist volunteers, Tetyana and her daughter ended up at the Baptist seminary in Warsaw.

## ‘Thankful to God he provided a place’

Marek Glodek, president of the Baptist Union of Poland, and Mateusz Wichary, vice president of the union, work at the seminary and have been crucial in leading the efforts to welcome people from Ukraine to the seminary and Polish Baptist churches.



Supplies provided by TBM continue to roll into the region along the Poland-Ukraine border. In Polish churches, Ukrainian refugees are finding safety

and security as everything in the world around them is uncertain. (TBM Photo/Rand Jenkins)

“God has placed Ukrainians in our churches over the past 10 years, and they are instrumental in this effort,” Wichary said. “When the fleeing Ukrainians arrive in our churches and can talk with, relate to and begin to process what happened with people who know their language, culture and customs, it helps them switch from fear toward comfort.”

After a long pause, Tetyana added: “I’m thankful to God because I’m Orthodox. I pray every day. And yesterday we had Baptist church service here, and I cried all the time when we prayed and worshipped God. People are so good to us. I’m thankful to God that he provided a place for us here, because me and my daughter thought that we would sleep on the streets when we arrived in Warsaw.”

In many ways, Baptists in the region are the face of the faith in the crisis as Christians connected to the Baptist World Alliance support ministry to those impacted by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

One group—Texas Baptist Men—is providing significant funding to support four shelters in churches in Poland and Ukraine. A TBM team currently is on the field meeting specialized needs and providing logistical support to the Poles.

“The eyes of the world are on Ukraine,” said Mickey Lenamon, TBM executive director and CEO. “In the middle of everything that’s going on, Baptists from around the globe have come together to meet needs and share the love of Christ to people during their most difficult days.

“We are honored to be part of that. The Polish are incredible. Their faith is

inspiring. They serve around the clock and never seem to tire. God is truly working through Polish Baptist churches.”

## **Ukrainian Baptists care for 45,000-plus**

Ukrainian Baptists have cared for more than 45,000 people through shelters and aid stations. Hungarian Baptist Aid also is serving in the region. Polish Baptists have served thousands more.

Many of the refugees, like Tetyana and her daughter, aren't sure where they will go next. Through a texting group of their friends, they understand their old neighborhood is filled with landmines. Returning is becoming less likely as the Russian onslaught continues.

But they have a safe place to stay with people who care about them. And a God who has a plan for their lives.

“We have been here for three days now,” Tetyana said. “Now, we are trying to calm down and think about the future.”

To contribute to TBM relief for Ukrainian refugees and displaced people, [click here](#). To donate directly to BWA, [click here](#).