

Mariupol Baptist church basement serves as bomb shelter

March 11, 2022

As Russian forces intensify their bombardment of Mariupol, hundreds of citizens have sought shelter in the basement of a Ukrainian Baptist church.

“In the port city of Mariupol, the coordination center of the Ukrainian Baptists reports that 300 people are taking shelter in the basement of Mariupol central church, with another 300 people in another city center church,” a March 11 update from the [European Baptist Federation](#) stated.

The EBF report quoted a Baptist in Mariupol as writing: “There are terrible ruins in our city; factories are on fire; stores are closed. Russian forces are destroying houses, apartment buildings and complexes. There are lots of tanks; they are ruining everything. You can’t get out of the city; they surrounded it with tanks. Many people lost their loved ones and relatives. There is no connection, no roads; the disaster is everywhere”

EBF also reported a church in Chernigiv was struck by a Russian shell earlier in the week.

Baptist volunteers in Lviv have helped erect two mobile hospitals, EBF reported.

Local Baptist pastors will serve in the hospital, “providing spiritual and psychological support to patients and staff, as well as offering training to others to provide such support,” the situation report stated.

Ukrainian Baptists also are using the coordination center in Lviv to

establish aid distribution warehouses in eastern and central Ukraine, EBF reported.

Baptisms and conversions in midst of conflict

More than 600 Baptist churches in every region of Ukraine are operating centers of refuge for people displaced by the war. One small church in Yaltushkiv is feeding 800 people every day, EBF reported.

Even so, Pastor Igor Kocher reported baptizing six people at his church in Odesa this week. Churches continue to meet for prayer and worship.

“In Zaporizhzhia, church youth groups attempted to spread joy among the streets as they went from place to place handing out flowers and using the opportunity to share the gospel at the same time,” EBF reported.

In Kyiv, EBF learned about three people who were seeking shelter in a church basement made faith commitments to Christ.

To date, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports more than 2.5 million people have left Ukraine in the past two weeks. That includes more than 1.5 million in Poland, where Texas Baptist Men is supporting local Baptist churches in their ministries to refugees.

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