

# Romanian Gypsies depend on God for daily bread

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SIGHISOARA, Romania—At the end of each Baptist service in Transylvania, congregations of Roma Gypsies pray the Lord's prayer. And they mean it, particularly this time of year.

Petitioning God for daily bread isn't simply lip service; it's a heartfelt desire that rings true for the Gypsies. More than 90 percent are unemployed. The work they can get is day-to-day agriculture labor in the spring and summer, leaving no way to provide food for their families much of the year.

"Everything they have, everything they need is dependent upon the Lord," said Doug Powell, associate pastor and minister of education at [First Baptist Church in Garland](#), which has a partnership with the Romanian churches. "There's obviously a very close relationship with the Lord."

With help from the [Texas Baptist Hunger Offering](#), Baptist churches in five villages stand between Gypsies and starvation. Twice a week, they purchase flour with hunger offering funds, make fresh bread out of it and distribute it freely.

"Families that have no other subsistence are receiving the bread with open arms," Powell said. "We've seen children and their parents come out and gladly receive these loaves that will feed them for more than two weeks as a family. They may not have anything else."

Initially, the congregations bought bread and distributed it. Then they built large wood-fired ovens and started to bake bread and give it away to church members. With the help of the Texas Baptist Hunger Offering, the churches can bake more bread, empowering members to use the bread as

an evangelistic tool.

“I knew God was doing something,” said Pastor Florin Boruga. “He was doing something for a spiritual purpose. We moved from giving bread to building an oven at every church to give them flour. It’s a step of responsibility. They are baking their own bread. This was another request which they embraced with joy—to bake their own bread and bake some bread for others who are not believers to speak about Jesus the bread of life.”

The five-hour baking sessions draw people from the community, including neighbors not connected to the churches. They sing, read Scripture, pray together and enjoy fellowship as they work.

The events allow people to hear the gospel and experience Christian community, Boruga said. The baking sessions have become entry points into the faith. Church members go into their communities to minister to neighbors who don’t join in the baking events.

The hunger need is vast, Boruga noted, but thanks to partners through the Texas Baptist Hunger Offering, Romanian churches are ministering to as many people as possible. Because Texas Baptists have blessed the Romanian Baptist network with financial assistance, the Romanians are able to bless more people through the bread project.

“Our church is so happy to know we can help others,” Boruga said. “I believe it is a great blessing to be able to help others. But also to be able to go somewhere with our testimony and through what we do we see lives changed by Jesus Christ, for us it’s an honor to serve God in our area.”