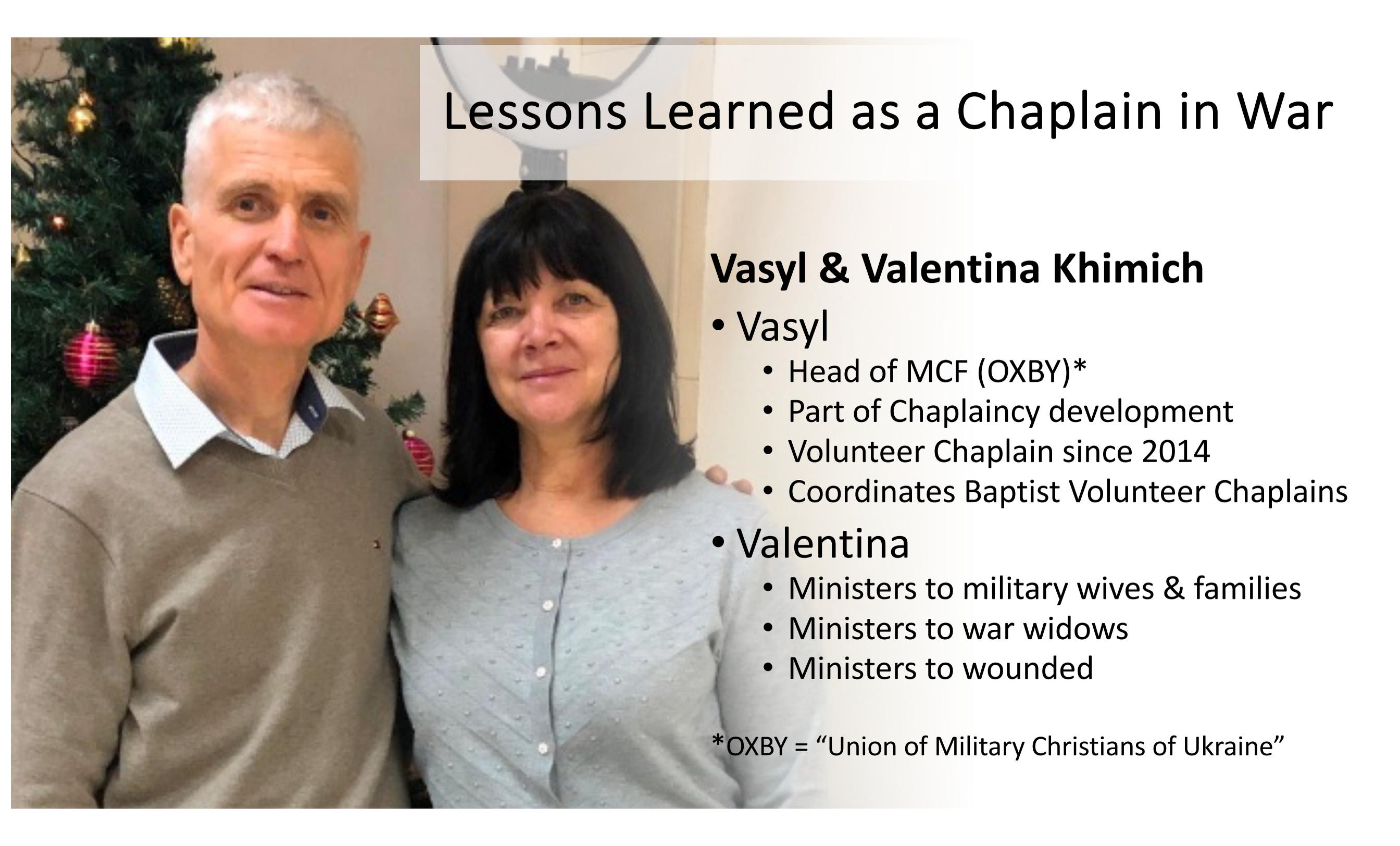


# Lessons Learned as a Chaplain in War

Blessed be the LORD, my rock,  
Who trains my hands for war,  
and my fingers for battle (Psalm 144:1)  
...for such a time as this... (Esther 4:14)





# Lessons Learned as a Chaplain in War

## Vasyl & Valentina Khimich

- Vasyl
  - Head of MCF (OXBY)\*
  - Part of Chaplaincy development
  - Volunteer Chaplain since 2014
  - Coordinates Baptist Volunteer Chaplains
- Valentina
  - Ministers to military wives & families
  - Ministers to war widows
  - Ministers to wounded

\*OXBY = "Union of Military Christians of Ukraine"

# Lessons Learned as a Chaplain in War

- **Lesson 1: God Prepares His People**
- **Lesson 2: God's Timing is Perfect**
- **Lesson 3: God is always building His Kingdom**
- **Lesson 4: God works through relationships**



The United States Government has not recognized the incorporation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the Soviet Union. Other boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative.

# Lesson 1: God Prepares His People

## Atheistic USSR ends-Ukraine becomes independent

### 1991

- 15 New Militaries including Ukraine
- Religious freedom especially Ukraine
- Many "return" to Orthodox Christianity
- Missionaries (including PSOs) very active

- ASSRs and AOs in the Caucasus
1. Kabardino-Balkarskaya ASSR
  2. Severo-Osetinskaya ASSR
  3. Checheno-Ingushskaya ASSR
  4. Adzharskaya ASSR
  5. Nakhichevanskaya ASSR (Azerbaijan SSR)
  6. Adygeyskaya AO
  7. Karachayevo-Cherkesskaya AO
  8. Yugo-Osetinskaya AO
  9. Nagorno-Karabakhskaya AO

KAZAKH Union republic (SSR)

○ Union republic (SSR) capital

— Autonomous republic (ASSR)

- - - Autonomous oblast (AO)

Note: The union republic administrative divisions shown are for oblasts having the same name.

\*Areas with no oblast-level administrative divisions, where ravons are under direct republic jurisdiction

# Lesson 1: God Prepares His People

God set the conditions

- **Military changes + Religious freedom**
  - Allowed PSOs (ACCTS, MSO, MMI) to help
  - Eventual creation of
    - Military Christian Fellowship (MCF)
    - Military Chaplaincy



Meeting ACCTS in Moscow 1993

# Lesson 1: God Prepares His People

## God makes a Ukrainian MCF

- God led me to serve in the Ukrainian Armed Forces
- Formation of OXBY
  - De Facto Started 1992
  - Officially registered in 2000



# Lesson 1: God Prepares His People

## God overcame idea that Christians can't be Military

- Atheist USSR made it hard to accept that Christians could serve as military
- To many, military still represented a country that persecuted Christians
- God used war (started in 2014) to change this attitude

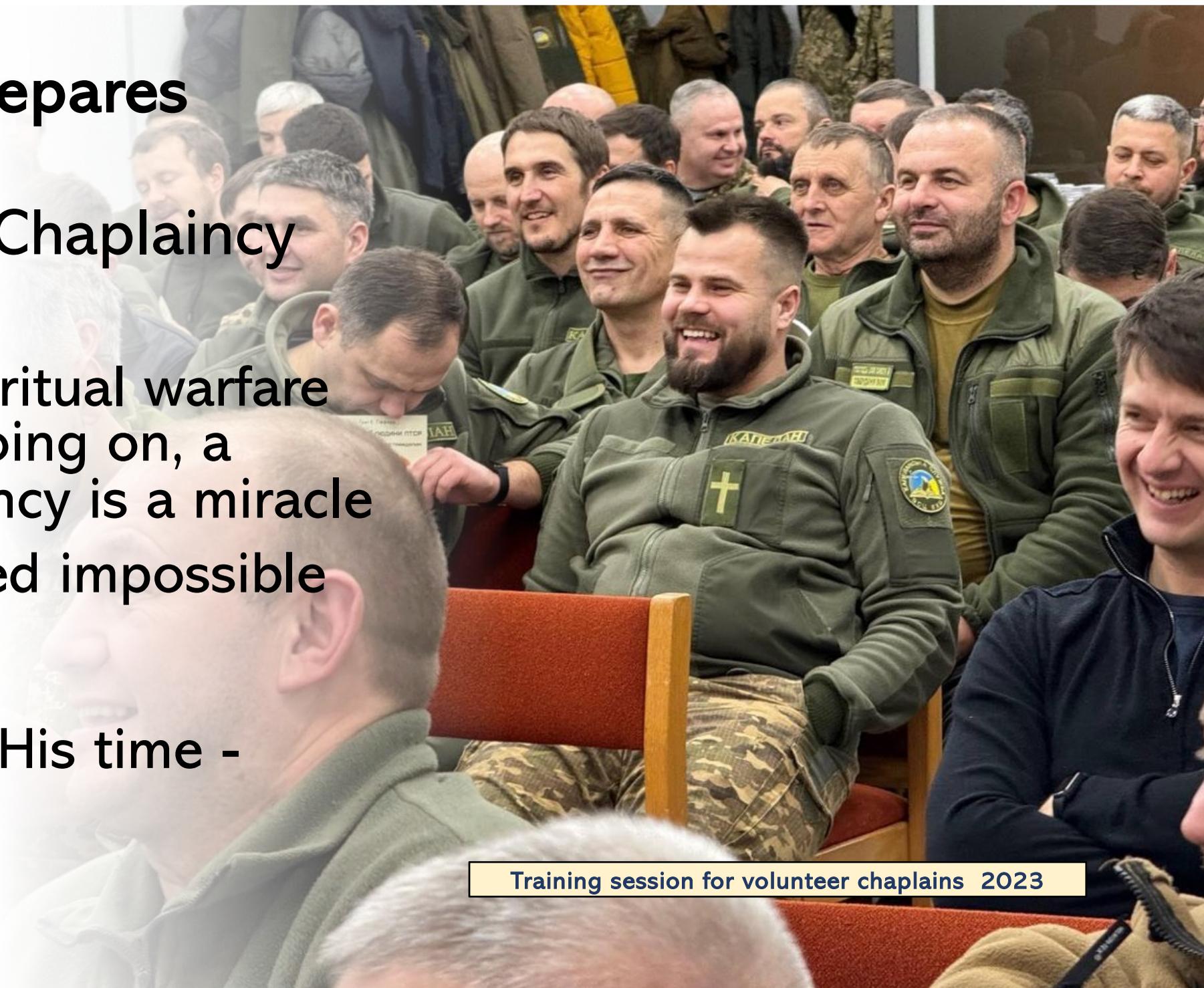


# Lesson 1: God Prepares His People

## The Miracle of a Chaplaincy

- Considering spiritual warfare that's always going on, a healthy chaplaincy is a miracle
- At first it seemed impossible
  - Soviet Past
  - Cultural religion
- God did this in His time - Slowly

Training session for volunteer chaplains 2023



## Lesson 2: God's Timing is Perfect

### Thankfulness for slow progression

- Allowed us to build cooperative relationships with government & other faith leaders
- Kept culturally accepted denominations from crowding out others
- Gave time to study chaplaincy models

Meeting of the Interconfessional Council to the MOD 2010

# Lesson 2: God's Timing is Perfect

## Thankfulness for slow progression

- Time for MSOs to encourage
- God allowed me to play a role
- God provided true religious freedom to set the stage

Meeting the Minister of Defense in 2007



# Lesson 3: God is always building His Kingdom

## God Used War to establish a Chaplaincy

- God used circumstances to mobilize volunteer chaplains
- Churches often supported chaplains



# Lesson 3: God is always building His Kingdom

## God Used War to establish a Chaplaincy

- He caused Ukraine to officially recognize need for chaplains.
- Official Chaplaincy slowly growing



# Lesson 4: God works through relationships

## Chaplains' ministry of presence

- Being present is worth the effort
- Effort demonstrates commitment, care & love
- Builds meaningful relationships
- Platform for Gospel



Funeral for a Ukrainian soldier 2023

# Lesson 4: God works through relationships

## Chaplains must be present

- Presence allows us to help
- Must be ready to help – James 2:16
  - Physical needs
  - Emotional, moral support
  - Platform for Spiritual help – sharing the Good News

At a medical treatment site near the front 2024

# Lesson 4: God works through relationships

## Chaplains must be present

- Allows people to know you
- Trusting the messenger is important
- Can observe the Christian walk
- Gives credibility to our witness
- Avoids damage to Christian witness



At a medical treatment site near the front 2024

# Lessons Learned as a Chaplain in War

- **Lesson 1: God Prepares His People**
  - Atheistic USSR ends-Ukraine independent
  - God set the conditions –others ready to encourage
  - God makes a Ukrainian MCF
  - God overcame idea that Christians can't be Military
  - The Miracle of a Chaplaincy
- **Lesson 2: God's Timing is Perfect**-Thankfulness for slow progression
  - Time for relationships to build
  - Time to understand
  - Time for attitudes to change
- **Lesson 3: God is always building His Kingdom**  
God Used War to establish Chaplaincy
  - "Mobilized" volunteer chaplains
  - County understood need for chaplains
- **Lesson 4: God works through relationships**  
Chaplains must be present
  - Presence builds relationships
  - Presence allows you to live your faith visibly
  - Relationships allow us to share the Gospel

with Ukrainian soldiers at the front in 2022

# Please Pray

- That God would prepare hearts of Ukrainian Servicepeople to receive His Word
- For chaplains to have continued access to Ukrainian Servicepeople
- For stamina for chaplains and others ministering – despite hardships
- For the ability to minister to those suffering severe trauma
- For God's spiritual, emotional and physical protection
- That God would shape Ukraine's chaplaincy to serve His Kingdom

Celebrating the Lord's Supper in 2024

