

December 2023 Latvia, Ukraine, UK, USA

At this Christmas time we ask we all remember those for whom this is a very hard time. Be motivated by this photo of south London kids in a WW2 bomb shelter being surprised by a visit from a kind man dressed as father Christmas. God bless that kind bloke, whoever he was. We can all send a message or make a phone call or do at least something to reach out into the darkness of others' lives at this dark time for many. Our *Winter Welfare* project in Latvia over Christmas is seeking to do this:



LATVIA

We have begun intensive distribution of firewood and winter welfare to brethren and contacts in Latvia. Latvia has suffered some of the worst inflation anywhere in Europe, food prices are at least double those in UK, and the cost of firewood has doubled since we were buying it last winter. Many shops have closed, shopping malls are almost deserted or have closed down. Many Russian Latvians have moved to Latvia as the discrimination is terrible, Russophobia is everywhere, even speaking Latvian with a Russian accent lead to a sister's husband being racially abused. Those who have gone to Latvia include some who were big spenders, so the economy is even more damaged. And the new, no-excuses military call up legislation is driving yet more young Latvian men to leave the country for western Europe. So into this sad situation we are trying to bring the grace and love of the Father and Son. We've already met several brothers and sisters, and spent Christmas Eve taking firewood and other welfare to those in most need. Temperatures are below zero and the gift of warmth is the least we can do. David found his old toboggan and put it to good use carting the firewood... and having plenty fun with it afterwards, as you can see at the end of the video showing some of Christmas Eve's work at <https://youtu.be/1KaBMkQNN DY>



Some of the homes are hopeless for insulation, with very damp masonry and draughty decaying wooden windows, so the whole struggle to keep warm is endless really



But our work as ever was gratefully received



UKRAINE

Russian advances and bombing have increased markedly over the holiday period, although western news outlets have little to say about them. Do pray for our brethren and sisters there.

So many families are broken up. We're delighted to hear that sister Elena has managed to come from Ukraine to Poland to meet with her brother, brother Maxim- this is the first time they've seen each other for 2 years. Please also pray for the more intense military call up plans in Ukraine as they potentially affect many of our brothers. Here are Max and Elena safely together in Wroclaw, Poland:



UK

There was a great ambience in our group after the amazing alcohol free Christmas party. Last Sunday we were delighted to baptize JAMES, Nicole's young man, FARHAD, Mohammadreza's friend, and TAMMY, Dave's young lady. It's great to see friendships forming amongst those who attend pub church and lunchtime church, hanging out with each other outside of church functions. Here's Tammy and Gemma enjoying a laugh after pub church:



And then Tammy was baptized- along with James and Farhad, all on a lovely get together after church at the Heaster home that Sunday afternoon:



A brief video is at <https://youtu.be/yC35cqbK-Zo>

We just praise the Lord for His work amongst us here in South London. It's no fun being homeless or an asylum seeker when your health isn't good- here's Cindy advising brother Mohammadreza on a skin problem that is getting out of control on his legs:



We do give cash support in some of these cases, thanks to your generosity.

Meetings at the *Venue* will continue this week, Lord willing, but will then take a break until Monday January 8th, God willing. But Sunday meetings at the pub will continue, although Duncan and Cindy will be away for 2 weeks in Latvia. Brother Daniel Aldersley from New Zealand will be running the meetings so do come along all the same.

USA

Delighted to report the self baptism of BRAD this week, he's in touch with brother Jim Barton

PRAYER POINTS

- For those recently baptized
- For our welfare work in Latvia this Winter
- For brother Daniel as he runs our activities in London UK in Duncan's absence in Latvia

- For all those cold and lonely this holiday season
- For our brethren in Ukraine, especially the brothers and families affected by military call up and the increased need for men on the front line

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks