

Zhenia Bondarenko lives in Chaplynka, Ukraine, with his wife Natasha and his twelve-year old daughter Olga. He is a 2000 graduate of Tavriski Christian Institute in Kherson. He is currently pastoring Chaplynka House of Prayer and overseeing six additional village churches. In addition, Zhenia is a part-time English teacher in the public school.

A typical weekly schedule as a pastor is as follows:

Tuesdays - outreaching ministry in a local hospital and small group Bible study in Chaplynka.

Wednesday - small group Bible study in Baltazarovka.

Thursday - meets with and conducts training for the leaders from the 7 churches in the region.

Sunday - two worship services (one in Chaplynka and the other one in a village church). Small family group for young families.

In addition to the scheduled activities, Zhenia is involved in many other activities in the lives of each of the seven churches.

Recently a schedule was implemented to free Zhenia to more easily visit the other 6 churches.

Sasha Kobzar, a deacon will preach two Sundays a month. This new schedule works to keep the Chaplynka leadership more involved.

Using a van purchased by BCC, Zhenia can now visit more regularly the 6 other churches he leads. The churches are spread over a wide area with one located 80 kilometers from Chaplynka. The visits to the villages serve to encourage the saints in the faith while training leaders and meeting various specific church situations.

Zhenia and the leadership of the church in Chaplynka feel it is God's will to keep their primary focus on children. Typically in the Ukraine it is more effective to minister to the children. This is done through Sunday school classes and puppet ministries given in public schools, kindergartens and orphanages throughout the region. Children are often on their own and will follow the one who wins them. "We want to let them know the One who is worthy to follow", says Zhenia.

Using the puppets has enabled his ministry to reach more children and adults from non-Christian backgrounds. The Lord has placed the Chaplynka church in a unique position to provide a government-required "summer camp" to hundreds of children throughout the region. Summer after summer they hear the Good News about Jesus.

Zhenia feels blessed to be involved in a full time ministry with the church in Chaplynka and the 6 other churches in the region. He considers his part time position as an English teacher an added blessing to his ministry. "To be saved and to pass on this saving message of love is the greatest blessing in my life" he says. "I consider it a great blessing to partner with BCC. The Lord has made us to be one team and it would definitely be impossible to reach where we are without our American family. We are in reverence of our God we serve together."

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