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Check out this article written by Misti Huedepohl which made the Presbyterian News Service....

A friend of the church who's a retired Presbyterian pastor helps FPC to ramp up its giving to Ukraine

by Misti Huedepohl, First Presbyterian Church Near Ely, Iowa | Special to Presbyterian News Service



First Presbyterian Church Near Ely, Iowa (Contributed photo)

The lines of 164 years of Czech history [at First Presbyterian Church Near Ely, Iowa](#) blurred with current day Ukraine and the result was unexpectedly amazing.

How did such a thing happen at a small country church, where traditional mission activities have included monthly collections for the food pantry; “Tractorcade,” an annual group tractor ride across Iowa’s countryside; and instructional “Kolach Kamps,” where the kitchen becomes the classroom and bakers learn to craft the perfect kolach?

The person who linked this rural Iowa church to an active Ukrainian warzone is a retired Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Jan Dus. Although he works as a professional genealogist and lives in Czechia, Dus studied at the [University of Dubuque Theological Seminary](#) and has helped families at First Presbyterian Church Near Ely and beyond with genealogical research. In addition, Dus has visited the historic First Presbyterian Church Near Ely, which is about 10 miles south of Cedar Rapids, the home of the [Czech Village](#) historic neighborhood.

In recent years, Dus helped form a humanitarian nongovernmental organization called [Camino](#), which he serves as CEO. Camino volunteers regularly visit Ukraine to survey the needs of the people living there, using an app to receive live alerts signaling bombing to them safely navigate the violence. With most Ukrainian men fighting on the battlefield, volunteers find that many women and children are left to live in desperate conditions, with many of Ukraine’s elderly population living in bombed care centers.



The Rev. Jan Dus

Dus contacted friends around the world seeking financial support for Camino. Because Dus is a friend of the church, First Presbyterian Church Near Ely’s session considered its 2023 mission plans and decided to pivot by looking beyond the local neighborhood to neighbors around the world. Efforts to benefit Camino were undertaken over a few months. On Mother’s Day, the final collection was totaled and then electronically transferred to Camino as traditional mail service to Ukraine remains unreliable.

The Rev. Dr. Julie Schuett, pastor of First Presbyterian Church Near Ely, said that \$2,300 was transferred to Camino. That's 60% of the church's designated mission budget, Schuett said.

A few days after the electronic transfer, Camino confirmed receipt of the funds. Dus reported that baby formula was purchased and distributed to women and children in Ukraine.

This mission effort is one way an Iowa church bridged international borders to serve the greater world, caring for people in need.

Wonderful!

Have a great day in Christ,

Pastor Julie

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