

2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

we
press
on



READ MINISTRIES

Fueling Faith & Meeting Urgent Needs

readministries.org

A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we navigate through the first quarter of 2025, we reflect with gratitude on the incredible work God accomplished in 2024. We invite you to join us in reviewing some of these highlights in the pages ahead. I am thankful for the READ leadership team that God has brought together. Our unity drives us to *fuel faith and meet urgent needs* in Ukraine and beyond.

Three significant highlights from 2024 truly stand out, showcasing what God achieved through our team and supporters:

- **Support for Chaplain Training:** When we received the request for this initiative, our 2024 budget was already established, but we embraced it in faith. After sharing this vision with a READ supporter, the funds were generously provided for the project's entire startup. What began as a projected 25 volunteer chaplain students unexpectedly grew to 65! With this significant gift, the training was off to a solid start.
- **Uzbek Language Translation:** This new opportunity arose from a request by our brother Shukrat in Almaty, Kazakhstan in the fall of 2023. With theological schools reopening in Uzbekistan, there was and is a great need for support in indigenous theological work. We are currently translating Charles Ryrie's "Basic Theology" into Uzbek, aiming for completion by fall 2025.
- **Ongoing Resourcing:** These initiatives are just a glimpse of our major projects. We continue to focus on ongoing efforts, including trauma kits, textbooks for new students, graduation resources, and pastors' resource libraries. Our commitment to providing quality theological literature remains strong.

Looking Ahead to 2025: We will continue supporting Volunteer Chaplain Training. Also, the development of a Ukrainian Theological Digital Library will be explored this year, assessing interest and seeking funding to potentially begin project planning by late 2025 into 2026. READ's primary 2025 initiative is the translation of the first-ever chaplain textbook into Ukrainian, titled "Chaplaincy: A Comprehensive Introduction." Through collaboration with READ's legacy partners, including the Leadership of the International Evangelical Theological Alliance (IETA) and a newly formed War Trauma Resources Working Group, we have pinpointed essential resources to address the challenges posed by Russia's war against Ukraine. A key trauma resource, "The Murray Method" and a collection of Family Ministry books "My Hero's Home," "My Hero Hurts," and "Helping My Hero," are earmarked for translation or reprinting. These materials will be invaluable in addressing the trauma resulting from the war.

In conclusion, I give praise to God for:

- 30 years of Kremenchuk Evangelical Seminary's impactful ministry in Ukraine (and beyond), and their longstanding partnership with READ.
- For sending Angela to us at just the right time and for Josh's leadership in foreign field coordination and ministry.
- And for HIS abundant and gracious gifts to us through donors and foundations. Our financial health has never been better at READ. We serve a faithful and generous God.

Faith and hope go hand in hand. We need faith to trust in what remains unseen, while hope serves as evidence of our faith. We all long for the end of this war, for new souls to join His Kingdom, and for His love to sustain those we care for.

I am grateful for all that I know God has accomplished and optimistic for all that He will do. I don't know what He will do, but I have faith it will be done through His servants at READ Ministries.



Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.

Hebrews 11:1



Significant Travel Moments **Lt:** Praying w/soldier & former KES student. **Cntr:** KES 30th Celebration. **Rt:** UETS Trauma Summit

WHO WE ARE

The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.

Proverbs 16:9

New Kids on the Block

In September 2024, **Angela Rothwell** moved to Lexington, NC, but not before she was offered and accepted the position of Financial Manager with READ Ministries. We are thankful God directed Angela to READ. With her love for the Lord, enthusiasm to grasp READ's mission, and remarkable skills, she is an ideal addition and quickly became a part of the READ team. Welcome Angela!



Since 2016, Angela and her family have been active members of Life Assembly of God in St. Cloud, where she served as the Administrative Assistant until their recent relocation to North Carolina last fall. She continues to contribute to Life Church by managing its finances, also in an online capacity. Angela and her husband, Ryan, have been married for 26 years and are proud parents to four children: Noah, Zachariah, Ellyanna, and Malachi. She enjoys reading, playing games, expressing her creativity, worship, and hiking along the beach in her leisure time. She looks forward to exploring the scenic mountains and coastline of North Carolina in the future.

God also selected the incoming Foreign Projects Coordinator for READ.

Josh Tokar joined us through a partnership established with WorldVenture. He was appointed as a missionary to Ukraine in 2010, but his journey began in 2002 with his first short-term trip to Ukraine alongside Bill Arvan and Converge North Central's Love Lift for Ukraine initiative. Josh returned to Ukraine for over five summers with Love Lift, where he met and married Svitlana in 2007. They are parents to three boys.

In 2013, the Tokar family relocated to Ukraine, where Josh dedicated more than eight years to theological education at seminaries in Donetsk and Kyiv. Following the outbreak of war in 2022, the Tokars moved to Indiana, where Josh has taken on an adjunct teaching role at Taylor University. However, they maintain a house in Kyiv that is still considered home.



Josh is eager to apply his language and cultural experience, along with his background in theological education, to his role as Foreign Projects Coordinator at READ Ministries. He hopes to enhance and cultivate international partnerships to further READ's strategic objectives in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Katie Rassier, our cherished Financial Manager since 2020, has transitioned back to full-time CPA work. Although we deeply miss her presence on our team, we are thankful for the time we shared. We sincerely appreciate her passion and professionalism in furthering the mission of READ Ministries, and we pray God's blessings upon Katie and her family.



Board Members

In 2023 and 2024, several of our trusted Board Members concluded their terms. With deep appreciation, we extend our gratitude to Rich Schoenert (Chair), Mark Pound (Treasurer) and Dave Melin for their time of devotion to the READ Board. These men imparted godly wisdom and strong support to the mission and vision of READ Ministries. Job well done. Thank you.



During this timeframe, we have welcomed several new Board Members, and we eagerly anticipate a strong partnership as we lead READ Ministries together, guided by God's direction. A warm and heartfelt welcome to Rachel Anderson, Stephanie Yaeger, Kelsey Burns, and Vlad Makheyev.



Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance.

Colossians 3:23-24

WHAT GOD HAS DONE

Seeing a Story Come Full Circle

When reflecting on the presence of God in the work of READ in 2024, Bill Arvan recalled his experiences during the organization's fall travels, particularly valuing the blessing of witnessing God's faithfulness through a pastor from Balakliya, a small city located in northeastern Ukraine's Kharkiv region.

The background: Bill first encountered Pastor Alexander when the Kharkiv region was among the last stops for the READ travel team in the fall of 2021, just before Balakliya was taken over following the onset of war on February 24, 2022. Brother Alexander, who leads the Light of the Gospel Church (with a mission-minded ministry) had previously invited Kremenchuk Evangelical Seminary (KES) to create a satellite branch at his church in Balakliya.

When their city fell under occupation, many buildings, including the church, were severely damaged and repurposed for enemy use. Pastor Alexander was captured and subjected to torture. However, at God's intervention, he managed to escape captivity, and Balakliya was liberated in the late summer of 2022.

My mouth will tell of your righteous acts, of your deeds of salvation all the day.
Psalm 71:15a

Following his recovery, the pastor returned to his community in 2023 and began the journey of rebuilding. Today, the church building is partially repaired, and the congregation is actively engaged in ministering to others. This beloved brother in Christ, viewed as one of God's brave servants (or, as Bill calls them, God's gamblers), has an incredibly impactful testimony.

In March 2024, he enrolled in the Volunteer Chaplain Ministry training supported by READ Ministries at KES. During the fall of 2024, the READ travel team participated in the KES 30-year jubilee, where Pastor Alexander shared his extraordinary story. Bill clearly recalls the profound impact of his testimony as it exemplifies God's steadfast faithfulness.

By God's grace, this trauma survivor has transformed into a trauma care provider! When Pastor Alexander speaks, people listen. His encouragement to seek the God of the Bible for healing resonates with others, who trust his words. Although he holds a certificate signifying his completion of the one-year volunteer chaplain training at KES, it is his scars that genuinely authenticate his message.



Top: Pastor Alexander took a front seat in the first Volunteer Chaplain training class (Mar 2024).
Above: Studying with others.
Left: An emotional embrace after a sobering testimony at the KES 30th Year Celebration.

WHAT GOD HAS DONE

Representing READ

As the Foreign Projects Coordinator for READ, Josh Tokars' inaugural task was representing READ Ministries at the Ukraine Baptist Union National Conference in September 2024. This leadership-focused event marked the first organized conference since 2022, attracting over 350 attendees, each receiving a READ book kit that contained four books related to trauma.

Josh had a highly positive experience, observing many enthusiastic young leaders. The teaching and planning were notably progressive, with an ambitious goal of planting an additional 1,000 churches in the coming years, highlighting the need for more leaders. It was truly inspiring to witness such determination, even amidst the challenges of war.

We pray these books will be a blessing to their ministry.

*And he said to them "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation."
Mark 16:15*

Fall Celebration Highlights

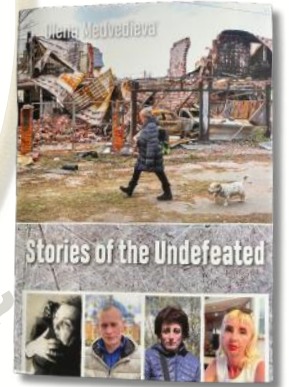
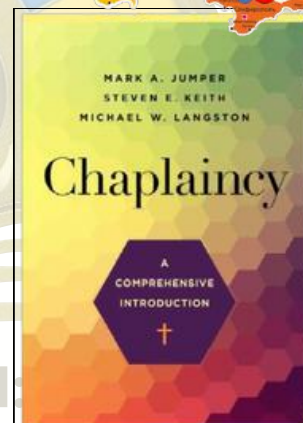
God brought together several hundred READ supporters and new friends to celebrate what He has done and where He is leading READ. We are grateful for the continued showing of support for READ's mission. It was great to gather to refresh friendships and share what God is doing through their faithful support.

New Chaplain Training Initiative Vasyl Povorozyuk, Director of the Chaplain Ministry for the Evangelical Baptist Union of Ukraine, shared a vision of placing one thousand chaplains across Ukraine. The cost to make this happen will be \$1K per chaplain student.

Chaplaincy Textbook Translation Project Introduced during our Fall Events, the project started in January and is nearly complete. Written from an evangelical perspective authors who oversee three of the leading chaplaincy US programs, the goal is to print and distribute 500 copies by this fall. This and other critical resources required to address the challenges presented by Russia's war against Ukraine are marked for translation or reprinting in 2025.

"Stories of the Undeclared" Filled with moving stories and images this book shares "the truth about the Russian-Ukrainian war through the voices of eyewitnesses." These accounts, gathered from those who experienced the conflict firsthand, highlight the bravery of individuals and were documented between March and August 2022. Copies are available for pickup at our St. Cloud office. Book print cost is \$10/book.

Kinder Coffee Drink coffee, make a difference. This special READ Roast was created for an online, ongoing fundraiser. Every bag purchased earns \$7 for READ, whether a single bag or a monthly subscription. This is our new favorite brew. We're sure it will be yours, too!

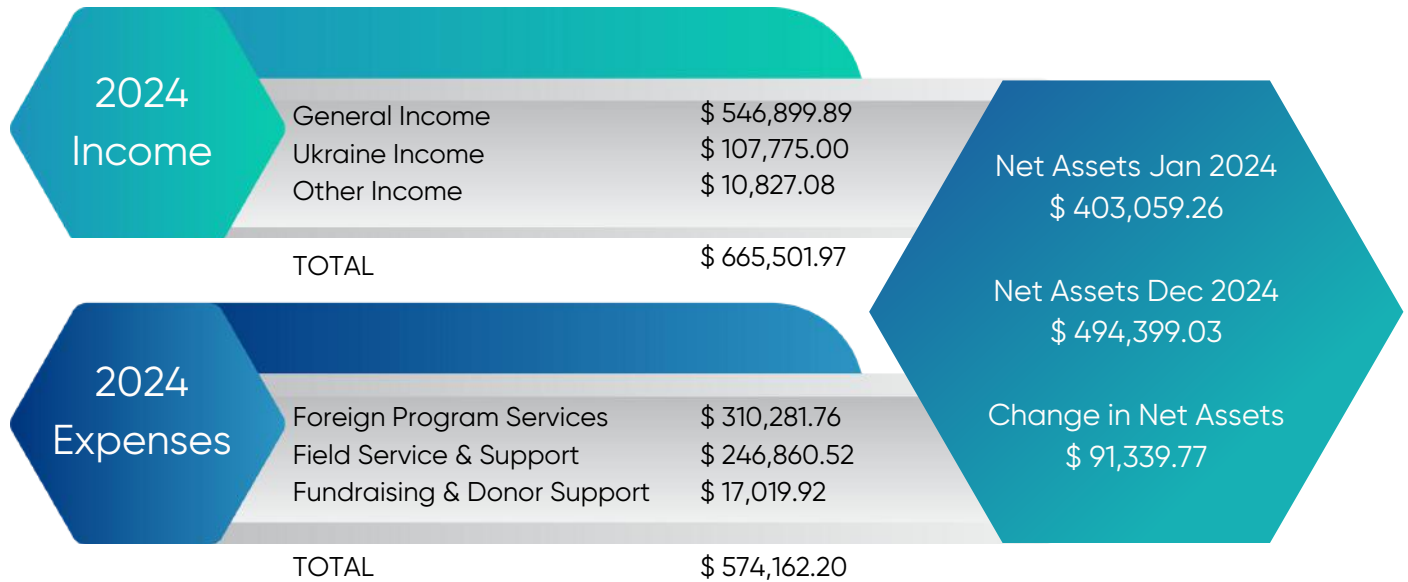


Scan the QR Code or go to kindercoffeelab.com/read

OVERVIEW OF 2024 FINANCIALS

We are so thankful for God's provision through our donors who have allowed God to use their finances to help READ ministries *Fuel Faith and Meet Urgent Needs*. Your 2024 generosity empowered READ Ministries to equip trauma responders, enhance trauma training in churches and seminaries, establish spiritual outreach centers, and facilitate retreats for pastors, chaplains, and ministry leaders who need rest and renewal. Thank you for partnering with READ in furthering the Kingdom of God. Your gifts and prayers are a vital support to our ministry.

*"Then the people rejoiced because they had given willingly, for with a whole heart they had offered freely to the Lord."
1 Chronicles 29:9*



Gifts Given in Memory of

- **Claudia Hardy**
 - Marge Anderson
 - Kermit Ericsson
 - Marlys Fast
 - Ruth Giron
 - Steve & Leanne Hardy
 - Paul Hartwig
 - Raymond Hoheisel
 - Tracy Kenyon
 - Jonathan & Lois Larson
 - Carlotta Lund
 - Rpdney McCann
 - Vicki Ostrom
 - Solveig Winkelman
 - Paul & Gretchen Sanders
 - Nadette Waligora
- **Winston Macdonald**
 - Len & Sandi Carlson
- **Paul Heath**
 - Len & Sandi Carlson
 - Darlene Thiessen
- **Jim Chance**
 - Len & Sandi Carlson
- **Dr. James Anderson**
 - Len & Sandi Carlson
- **Ron & Carol Eckert**
 - John & Barb Anderson
- **Marky Bloomgren**
 - Bruce & Linda Mickelson
- **David Anfonson**
 - Gary & Cindy Anfonson
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- **Allene Rusterholtz**
 - Terry Port
- **Ruth Westlund**
 - Terry Port
- **Bill Kast**
 - William & Sylvia Vavra-Burton
 - Terry Port
- **David Thiessen**
 - Bill & Susan Arvan
 - Mark & Connie Johnson
 - Darlene Thiessen
 - Ardis Hoglelund
- **Dr. John F. Frost**
 - Marjorie Berg
 - Sandra Frost
 - Dr. Scott Erickson

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2024

- We had 243 partners supporting READ
- 36 of those were New Donors
- 29 Individuals and 6 Churches give monthly

“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”

John 15:13

Thank You For Funding Chaplain Training

Vlad Chernyaev studies in the Pastoral and Volunteer Chaplaincy Training programs at Kremenchuk Evangelical Seminary. Since the beginning of the war (2/24/22) Vlad has been part of the support teams for both civilian and military communities. Studying in the seminary’s (READ supported) Volunteer Chaplaincy program has greatly equipped them with the knowledge needed that they immediately apply to their work in the field.

In 2024 they

- Completed 31 trips, serving 3,100 individuals in frontline towns
- Facilitated the evacuation of four families to Central Ukraine
- Towed, repaired, and returned 16 vehicles to the soldiers at the frontline
- Delivered medications and supplies to various stabilization points for the wounded

Last year, they drove 150,000 km (over 93,000 miles), in a project called “The Shield,” which consisted of weekly “flights” that transported fallen heroes to their families. Vlad proclaims, “It is not only the body that needs to be treated, but also the soul. We preach Christ, who died for everyone so that everyone who believes in Him will have eternal life.”

Vlad expresses gratitude for the financial support provided to KES. These dedicated men who are serving God and their communities ask that we not stop praying for peace to come, and for continued support for their ministry to allow them to continue sharing hope through Jesus.

- Continued prayer and financial support are vital for Chaplain Training program.

2025 IN THE FIELD

Foreign Spending Plan

Our 2025 FSP contains 57 proposed initiatives totaling \$338,340. This was whittled down from a mountain of requests totaling \$770,497. READ, at its core, is about providing relevant literature in national languages that are needed to equip the church for fruitful ministry. With the exception of temporary war relief efforts, that often fall outside of this core mission but are critically important in wartime, we are seeking to fund proposals that fit with our core mission:

- Indigenous Language Translation and Publication of Christian Literature
- Distribution of Christian literature in national languages
- Christian Library Development (including training)

It is thrilling and faith-stretching to consider the many new doors of opportunity that have opened to READ with the plea to “come and help us.” We sense there is much remaining that the LORD has planned for READ to equip the Church in Eastern Europe and Central Asia for effective ministry and meeting urgent needs.

2025 Travel Plans

A READ team led by Steve Eckert with a number of READ supporters, will travel to Ukraine May 19 through June 4. This trip will focus on Ukraine, and graduations in Kremenets and Kremenchuk.

Our Goals For Ukraine & Beyond

2024 begins year-two of our Four-Year, One Million Dollar Campaign to include specific Ukraine War-Relief Initiatives. Your continued support will be instrumental in propelling us towards our vision of Fueling Faith & Meeting Urgent Needs in Ukraine and beyond.

- Equipping Trauma Responders
- Establishing Outreach Centers
- Enhancing Church Trauma Training
- Sponsoring Responder Respite



We are grateful for your continued prayers and support.

*"Great and amazing are your deeds,
O LORD God the Almighty!
Just and true are your ways,
O King of the nations!" Rev. 15:3*



READ MINISTRIES

Fueling Faith & Meeting Urgent Needs



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