

# FELLOWSHIP NEWS



## King's Cross Church Sponsors Ukrainian Family to Move to the US

Millions of Ukrainian refugees fled their country in 2023, with one family finding a safe haven for the next two years in Lyons, Kansas thanks to a sponsorship through King's Cross Church.

This young church plant opened its doors in 2020, seeing God's faithfulness firsthand amidst the uncertainty of the pandemic. Last year, God stirred their hearts toward their first global outreach to Ukraine. Dr. Glenn Butner, a Bible professor at Sterling College and King's Cross attendee, started the conversation with Pastor Caleb Barrows. In a short time, God brought answers. Dr. Butner discovered the national initiative Uniting for Ukraine, launched by President Biden last year. US civilians can sponsor a Ukrainian family for up to two years, pledging \$30,000 for each year the family lives in the US. King's Cross Church was able to pledge \$30,000 and partner with their neighbor, a local church in Sterling, who matched their pledge for the second year.

After finding a family, King's Cross sent in the application, waited, and prayed. "We didn't know how long we would have to wait for a response," says Pastor Caleb, "but within two days we heard back and were approved! A husband, wife, and young son who'd fled Ukraine touched down on US soil in January of 2023. They've plugged into the Sterling, Kansas community, found work, enrolled their son in school, and the husband now has a driver's license.

Numerous members of King's Cross volunteered their time and support to find housing, transportation, language acquisition, etc. As word traveled across this small community, someone not even connected to King's Cross heard about the sponsored family and donated his car. They continue to see seeds like this planted for God to sow in the hearts of this family and the community. Pastor Caleb says this is just the beginning. "We are hoping to sponsor a second family sometime in the coming months and are grateful for how God has brought together incredible local support." In this cross-global event, we celebrate how God is moving.

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Players not only learn a competitive sport through Upward, but league director Brad Habegger says this is where athletes experience "love and care and encouragement that ultimately points them to Jesus." Whether it's weekly devotionals shared at practices or timely email responses received from volunteers, Brad sees each act of service as an opportunity to live out Matthew 5:16, "...let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

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This season, God's glory shone off the basketball court as well. Brad found out one of the players, who is not connected to Grace Church, was in the hospital. That's when his team took action. "His Upward coach and Upward team coordinated a Face Time call during one of the practices...They gathered up groceries and food for this boy's rather large family. That was really encouraging to see the ministry go well beyond the court and into a hospital room."

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The first community of Yalunka believers in southwest Mali, Africa, is growing. Last year, a church began amongst the village of Falea. Since then, they've baptized 14 believers and have over 50 people regularly attending. Steve Nelson, a missionary with the Yalunka people until 2019, recently visited and saw how seeds planted years ago are now blooming. "The believers of Falea have come alive in ways that we could only have hoped and dreamed of."

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Pastor Yaya Bengali and his wife Madina arrived in Falea last year from the neighboring country Burkina Faso to lead the new church. They brought their two youngest children, leaving four behind to attend school. This spring, the Bengalis reunited with their older children after a year apart. Steve Nelson said it was an honor to witness "the beauty of this reunion."

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After spending time with Pastor Yaya's family and the Falea church, Steve left encouraged. "Yaya and Madina are discipling and mentoring many of the believers, and... are experiencing the beauty of life transformation, abundant life, and joy in Christ." They have regular 6:00 am prayer meetings and consistent involvement in their church. "One of the believers wrote their own song for worship," Hal Lehman, Cross-Cultural Church Multiplication Coordinator at FEC says, "expressing their praise in their own language." What started as a few individuals is truly becoming a church body.

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