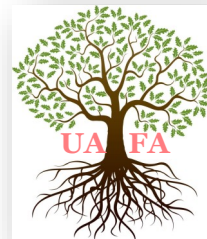


March 15, 2022

# UPCHURCH & ALLIED FAMILIES ASSOC.



UAFA National Home Office | 1130 Kildaire Farm Road, Suite 120 | Cary, NC



## FROM THE EDITOR

Our main story *Pastor Upchurch Recalls Ukraine* is a timely one. Dr. Tom Upchurch let me know that this family descends from the **Harmon Upchurch Clan**. Robert Lee "Bobby" Upchurch is the son of Daniel Mark Upchurch and Lori Jane Shoemaker Upchurch, pictured on page 3.

If you are interested in doing genealogy research at **The Library of Congress** from your home computer take note!

Friday, March 25, 2022  
1:00 pm to 2:00 pm CT  
Online Meeting - Free  
Genealogy Research at the Library of Congress from Your Home Computer hosted by Milwaukee County Genealogical Society (MCGS)

Mark F. Hall and Sheree Budge are Librarians and Collection Specialists in the History and Genealogy Section of the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. They will give an overview of what genealogy resources are available at the LOC and how to find the collections online from home.

Registration: Non-members, please send an email to:

[info@milwaukeekeenealogy.org](mailto:info@milwaukeekeenealogy.org) to be added to the invite list for the online meeting. Members will automatically receive a link.

*Cindy Hale*



## Pastor Upchurch Recalls Ukraine

**Kevin Jenkins — Mar 7, 2022**

The news coming out of the Eastern European country of Ukraine in recent days has been both heartbreaking and alarming as Russian soldiers have invaded the country in an attempt by Russian President Vladimir Putin to forcibly bring the Ukrainian nation back under Russia's authoritarian control.

The world has watched in amazement as the people of Ukraine have bravely fought back against the much larger and powerful armed invaders. And while the conflict is 5,633 miles away from the Parkland, that doesn't mean the conflict has no effect on people living in southeast Missouri. One has only to look at the way gas prices shot up over \$3.50 a gallon overnight to know that it most certainly does.

Bobby Upchurch, the pastor of Providence Baptist Church in Bonne Terre <Missouri> and an English teacher at Farmington High School, spent much of his life growing up in the countries of Belarus and Ukraine as the son of Southern Baptist foreign missionaries,

Dan and Lori Upchurch. His parents, who were recently evacuated from their home in Ukraine, are remaining in the region to help other refugees escape the Russian Army. Upchurch offered his perspective on the violent invasion as someone who has great love and concern for the people of Ukraine.

### On the Ukraine mission field

"My parents have lived in that part of the world for the last 22 years," Upchurch said. "We became international missionaries in 2000 and spent the first part of that time in Kyiv, and so we were in Ukraine for language school. For most of the time I was there — and I was there for all my junior high and high school — we lived in Belarus.

"We served there working as church planters. Essentially what we were doing was helping start new churches all across the lower region of Belarus, which is ironically where all those troops are set up right now — just outside the city where I grew up, so it's crazy even thinking about that.

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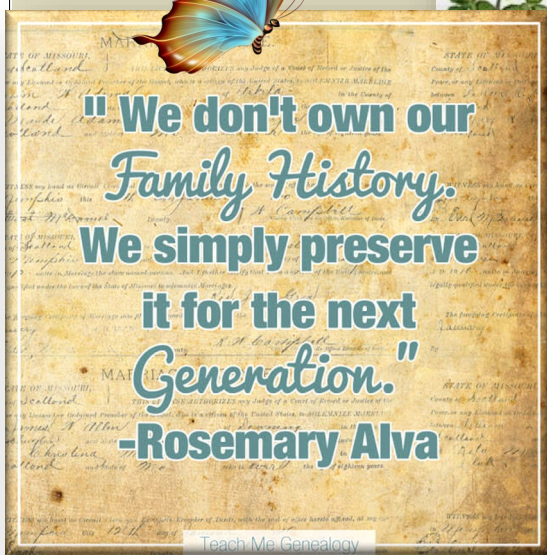
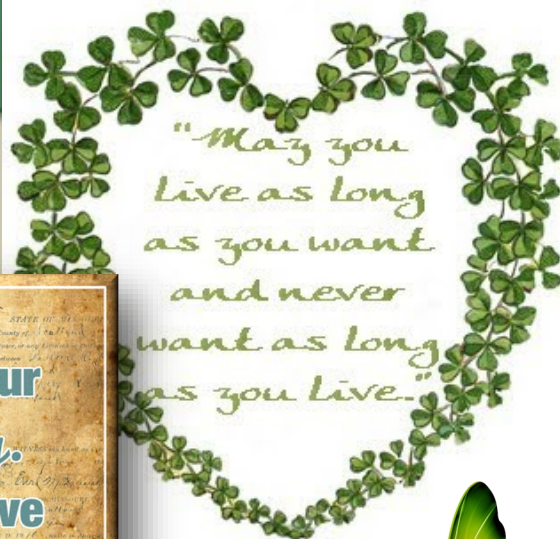
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A Reminder to the  
guy's from Brenda Car-  
bon, [Italia19@aol.com](mailto:Italia19@aol.com),  
UAFA's DNA Project  
Coordinator:

Have you taken the Y  
DNA test? We are in  
need of additional  
Upchurch male testers.  
Thank you for  
considering  
this request.





## Pastor Upchurch Recalls Ukraine

*Continued from Page 1*

According to Upchurch, Mogilyov is the lowest region in Belarus where people can live safely before entering the area that was made uninhabitable after the Chernobyl nuclear power station released massive amounts of radioactive material into the environment in April 1986.

"It was considered the safe zone," Upchurch said. "I guess we were pretty safe — I don't glow in the dark or anything. I guess I turned out OK."

"After I moved back to the states, my two younger brothers moved to Ukraine. My dad took over a seminary program where for the last 12 years or so, he has worked with two seminary programs training pastors to go out all over Eastern Europe and start churches. Because of that, both he and my mom have worked with people all over Ukraine and that whole eastern block."

The city where Upchurch's parents made their home before being evacuated is a hive of activity as Ukrainians make an attempt to get out of the country.

"They're in Belarus sometimes, in Armenia sometimes, but they live in Lviv," he said. "It's become Grand Central Station right now because it's where everybody is evacuating from. They had a stint in Kyiv and then they've been in Lviv for the last six years. They've started churches. The church they just started, the only building that they could find to do this church, they could only get the basement of that building. They've been using the basement for the last little bit."

"They didn't know why that happened. They have a little fellowship room and the only couches that they could find to buy were all pullout

couches. At the time they were asking, 'Why do we have these heavy couches to take down to this place?' And now their church has been converted into a bomb shelter. They are like, 'God obviously knew what he was doing because we were just thinking that it's kind of inconvenient that we have this basement and now it's been a huge blessing that it's there.' So, it's just absolutely wild!"

### Helping other evacuees

Asked where his parents are now,



*International missionaries Dan and Lori Upchurch were evacuated from their home in Lviv, but the couple is continuing to assist people who are trying to escape Russian forces invading the country of Ukraine.*

Upchurch said, "My parents are in Poland right now. Three weeks ago, they were evacuated. The mission board they work for evacuated all of the missionaries from Ukraine. They didn't really have a choice in the matter. Having been there the longest, my dad ended up leading that. They had three days to get everybody out of the country, so they evacuated to Budapest at that point. They are now in Poland helping the refugees."

"When the war broke out, they were in Armenia with some friends trying to help with a church plant there. They just can't sit still! After the war broke out, they were either going to

be sent home or sent to Poland. They were like, 'We know we're called to help these people. They and two other missionaries that also live in Lviv are all working with the Polish pastors and leaders to organize humanitarian aid and provide spiritual help all across Poland.'

Despite being refugees themselves, Upchurch's parents are spending all of their time and energy trying to help others find their way to safety.

"As of this morning, my mom was in the furthest west you can get in Poland, so she was almost in the Czech Republic," he said. "My dad was driving across Poland. They didn't bring anything with them to Poland. They just went to see if they could help, so he had to go back into Budapest and get some clothes, and he's driving across Poland trying to organize with other pastors and leaders so they can have different places for people to go all across the country."

"They're all fleeing into Poland, and they're jammed there right after you cross the border. Once they get across, they're trying to get as far away as they can. They went to the end of the line and now they're working their way back asking, 'How can we get you here and keep you safe?' They're right there on the front lines trying to help."

### Caught by surprise

Upchurch explained that, while the Ukrainian people were always aware that there was the possibility of a Russian invasion, most were very surprised when it actually happened.

"From the perspective of actually being there, it was always one of those things of, 'Yes, he could do this at some point,' but I don't think any-

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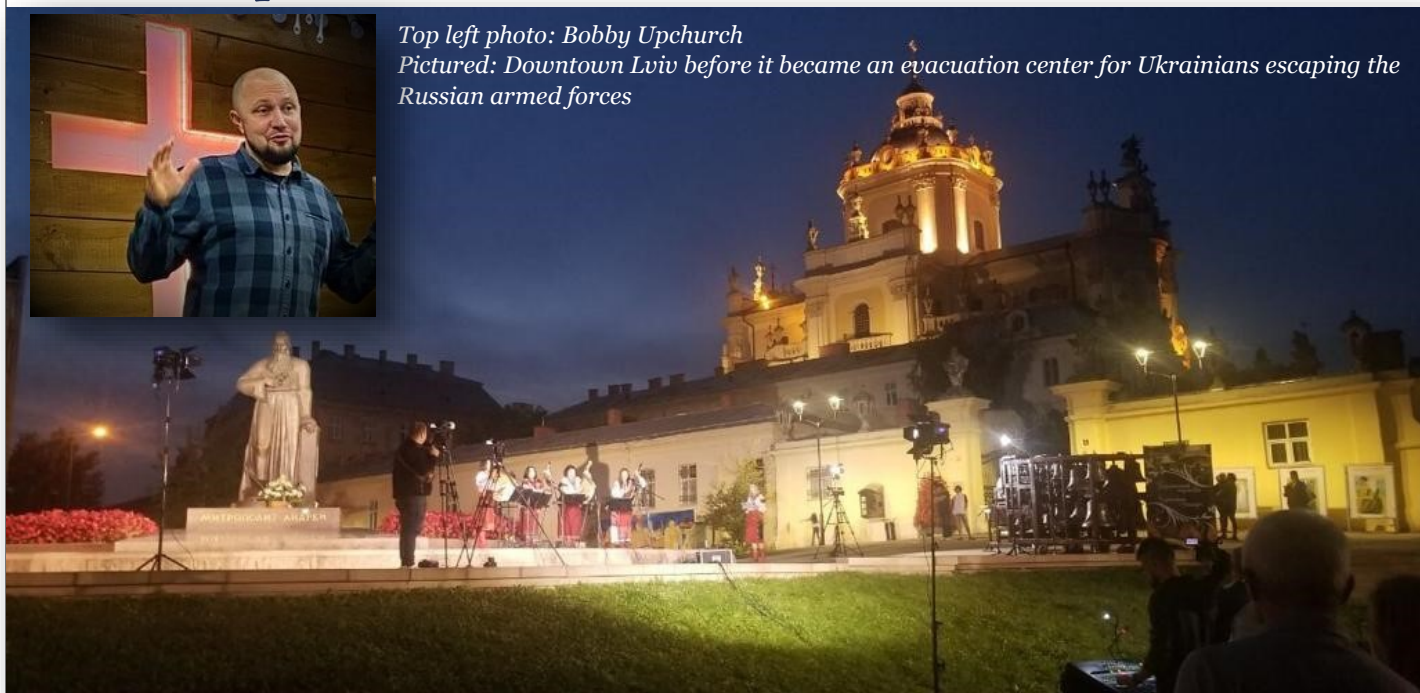
## Pastor Upchurch Recalls Ukraine

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*Top left photo: Bobby Upchurch*

*Pictured: Downtown Lviv before it became an evacuation center for Ukrainians escaping the Russian armed forces*



one actually thought it was going to happen," he said. "Even coming up to the last weeks leading to the war breaking out, I was talking to friends that were in Russia and they all saw it as political maneuvering. No one really thought that he was actually going to attack.

"Even when my parents were first pulled out, my dad was saying, 'I don't think he's going to do anything right now, and if he does, we'll probably be in a safer zone because he's not going to want to come this close to Poland. I don't think many people expected it to happen the way it did happen. They didn't live with that fear.'"

Upchurch was also surprised when Putin announced that Belarusian troops were going to be joining forces with the Russian Army in the invasion of Ukraine.

"Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Russians get along very well," he said. "They have a shared culture and his-

tory. It's heartbreaking to see the role Belarus is playing in this because having lived there, almost everyone that I knew that was in Belarus had family in Ukraine. They would vacation there. It was almost like living in Missouri and having someone in Nebraska or Tennessee.

"You don't think of them as different people, they're just people in a different place. They've always had good relations and it seems like — from the people that I've talked to and the coverage that I follow — a lot of the Russians don't want to do this because there's no animosity between the people."

According to Upchurch, Ukrainians have a unique culture that has survived over many centuries and has left them a very united and unique people.

"Ukraine has been around for so long — it's one of the oldest empires in Europe and the Ukrainian people are incredibly nationalistic and very

proud to be Ukrainians," he said. "In Belarus, every 200 years somebody takes them over so they're kind of 'whoever, whatever, it doesn't matter.'"

"But Ukrainians aren't like that at all. They're incredibly proud people, so I'm not surprised they have taken the stance that they have, but, man, it's heartbreaking to watch. I've been very surprised at how well they have held their own. I definitely see God's grace in that, for sure."

For more information and how you can help—[CLICK HERE](#)

Kevin R. Jenkins is the managing editor of the Farmington Press and can be reached at 573-783-9667 or

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The original title of this story is *Local Pastor Recalls Ukraine*

Quick link to UAFA's Ancestry fact page for this Upchurch Family/Clan: <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/161703491/person/112110784561/facts>