

## Pray for the Persecuted Church: Uzbekistan

Violations Threaten Religious Freedoms

Source: Forum 18 News Service

On November 10th, police in Andijan raided the private flat of Irina Stepanova, a member of a local state-registered church. Police alleged that they were looking for an illegally stored gun but instead concentrated on the confiscation of her Christian books. The five officials who entered Irina's home did so unannounced – without a legally required search warrant and proper identification. She now faces charges for possessing Christian books and other related materials.

A little over a week later, 14 officials from various agencies, including the Extremism and Terrorism Department of the local police station, raided the home of Stanislav Kim in Urgench. Believers visiting the home to participate in a Sunday morning worship gathering were arrested, interrogated, threatened, and had their Christian books confiscated. When one of the participants admitted under interrogation to reading Christian books, their personal collection (including a Bible) was confiscated during a raid that took place shortly thereafter.

In other areas nearing the capital city of Tashkent, police raided the private homes of congregation members affiliated with another state-registered church – confiscating literature such as the United Nations' *Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief*. During the raids and searches, police committed multiple violations of legal procedure. Despite the officials' infractions, three people (including a pastor) were fined for exercising freedom of religion and belief.

In Uzbekistan, only religious communities with state registration are allowed to exist, a restriction that does not comply with international human rights law. In addition, the strict censorship of all religious literature is enforced; and even texts that have passed the state's censorship are routinely confiscated. Officials have also ordered that believers are not permitted to read religious texts – such as The Holy Bible – in their homes. As a result, citizens with beliefs differing to those sanctioned by the government are afraid to keep religious literature in their homes and, with great sadness, some have had to destroy their own religious texts due to the country's stringent regulations.

In the midst of the opposition and resulting restrictions, pray that the Christians in Uzbekistan will remain firmly rooted in their faith. May those affected by the closures and loss of resources be reminded of God's ability to provide daily spiritual manna for their sustenance and continued growth as He brings about restoration (Joel 2:25-27; Zechariah 9:12). Also pray for the officials responsible for enforcing the restrictions, in hopes that their spiritual eyes will be opened to the truth of the Gospel so they can personally behold the "Living Word" and serve as catalysts of revival in their nation. May the Lord indeed pour out His Holy Spirit, turning the hearts of all who bear witness to His transformative love towards Him and His ways which lead to abundant and everlasting life (John 3:16; John 10:10).

## BRANDON VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

400 N. Splitrock, Brandon, SD 57005

Office: 605-582-2248

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## Sunday, January 14, 2018

Accompanist: Dixie Battey and Jan Questad

Greeters: Aaron & Erica Skogen Scripture Reader: Kyle Skogen

Nursery: Dee Olson and Dan Hanson Usher: Gene Preston

Children's Church: Sara Tiffany and Hailey Skogen

9:30 am

Worship Service

Welcome, Announcements, and Christian Greetings

Hymn Medley #509-513.....“My Life, My Joy, My All”

Pastoral Prayer

Ministry of Music - video

Offering/Offertory

Doxology (*Hymn #625*) – please stand

Ministry of Sharing.....Theresa Friesen

Hymn #471.....“The Way of the Cross Leads Home”

Children's Moments with Pastor Randy Battey

Scripture Reading.....I Thessalonians 2:1-16

Children may be excused for Children's Church (3 yrs-2nd grade)

Sermon...“The Work Never Ends”.....Pastor Randy Battey

Main Points:

I. Please the right people (vv.1-8)

II. Bloom where you are planted (vv.9-16)

Closing Hymn #452.....“Make Me a Blessing”

Benediction

Postlude

\*\*\*Nursery is available for children infant thru 3 years old

(Please contact an usher for information and/or direction.)

\*\*\*Hearing Amplifier Available – Please contact an usher

**Please join us after the worship service for coffee and treats in the fellowship room.**

## Sunday School for all ages

- Preschool - 1st Grade in the Nursery with LaDell Hanson
- 2<sup>nd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade in the Cubbies room with 2D Gerdes
- 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade in Pastor's office with Judy Preston or Erica Skogen
- High School study on James in the Youth room with Mike & Stacy Frost
- Adult Bible Study on I Peter in Fellowship Room with Mike Benson
- Adult Video Study in Sanctuary (topic to be announced)

## For Your Information and Prayer

- Wednesday: 6:30 p.m. Awana Clubs
- Thursday: 7:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study at Ginger Nelson home, 208 W. Greenwood St.
- Saturday: 7:00 a.m. Men's Bible Study

### Upcoming Events:

- January Alpha Center World's Largest Baby Shower (bring baby item donations to the church - all month, or take to any Sioux Falls Lewis Drug store)

## Alpha Center – World's Largest Baby Shower

### Baby Boutique Needs List:

- Diapers: Newborn and size 5
- Baby wipes
- Teething toys
- New car seats, cribs and strollers
- Pack 'n Plays
- Jumpers and exercise saucers
- Newborn baby clothing for boys and girls
- Boy blankets
- Enfamil formula
- Pacifiers
- Diaper bags
- Any gender neutral items (clothing, blankets, toys, bibs, etc.)

## Next Sunday: January 21, 2018

- Greeters: Gene & Judy Preston
- Usher: Scott Sittig
- Nursery: Aaron Skogen
- Scripture Reader: Theresa Friesen
- Children's Church: Matt Murphy and Cade Fox

<b>OUR GIVING:</b>	Sunday, January 7, 2018
General Giving	\$ 2,270.00
White Cross Love Offering	\$ 222.25
<u>Building Fund</u>	<u>\$ 100.00</u>
Total	\$ 2,670.00

(Approximately \$2,500 is needed each week to meet expenses)

### Our Prayer Partnership

- Brandon Lutheran
- Immanuel Baptist Church, Wessington Springs, SD

### \*\*\* Praise & Prayer\*\*\*

**Josh Onnen**, deploying for training

**Marv Veldkamp**, for recovery and healing from a recent stroke

**Karen Miller**, mother of Shawna James, for health issues

**Marlene Smith**, pray for healing for broken arm

**Joan Murphy**, cancer has returned, pray for healing and wisdom for decisions, she received word she is not a candidate for the clinical trial in Maryland and the doctor is searching for other alternatives. Thank you for your continued prayers that He be glorified in this.

**Mary Tripp**, sister of Theresa Friesen, undergoing radiation treatment

**Ron Benson**, brother of Mike Benson, for heart health issues

**Amanda Benson**, as her sending church, Amanda has asked that we lift her up in prayer as she is in the mission field.

**Serving Our Country:** Josh Onnen, Air Guard; Chad Carlson, Air Guard (Son-in-law of Carl & Lindy Johnson); Kristina Lee, Air Force (Grandchild of Ray & Dee Olson); Amir Rottluff, Navy (grandson of Charlotte Rottluff)