

Episode 3 - FULL TEXT

Hello and welcome to the third of our films for this year's Self-Denial Appeal.

One, two, three. Wheee.

In the North East of the country is the city of Narva and this morning, Cadet Olga is running her weekly group with mothers and children.

The group for mothers and children began, first of all, because I am a mother and I understand what mothers go through. I also see that women need fellowship, a sense of community.

We can read the Bible together, reflect on parenting as well as share practical advice, and pray for our children.

Narva is Estonia's third largest city with a population just over 50,000.

It's the country's easternmost point. On the other side of

the river Narva is Russia connected by the so-called Friendship Bridge.

Its name is a reminder of a time when relations between these neighbours were less frosty.

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the bridge has all but closed.

Anti-tank security barriers are where the lorries and cars once were.

These days there's only a trickle of pedestrians for the border guards to worry about.

The atmosphere has taken its toll on the city. Factories have shut down, the population is falling and unemployment is rising.

The Salvation Army has been in the city since 2005, serving the people of Narva from young to old.

Dear Lord, we thank and praise you for this day for the time we can spend with you.

At the women's meetings, women come together, they talk, share their needs and life situations.

Glory to you, O Lord, for everything. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

They enjoy refreshments, drink tea, pray, sing, and receive lessons or insights for themselves.

During the Soviet era it was women, who made up most of the workforce in the garment factories that have now closed.

Many of these women are now retired and are struggling to make ends meet.

The Salvation Army is doing what it can to help.

Next door, Liudmila is preparing food packs ready to hand out to the ladies.

She first came here seven years ago when she needed help herself.

I live alone because my children live in Tallinn.

I cannot go there. It is far away and my husband died and when I come

here I feel at home. I feel good here I am motivated by the faith in God this motivates me.

The weekly support we offer like distributing bread sometimes larger food packages and products

it really helps them a lot because many people don't live very comfortably

and they have to stretch their pension from the beginning to the end of the month.

They have to look for extra support from elsewhere.

Before they head home, the women also get to pick up some bargains from the clothes store.

As well as the mothers and children's group, Olga runs regular outdoor sessions in the local park.

It's part of a plan to make a stronger connection with people in the city.

We want to be open to the community. We want the Church to be visible, not only within its walls, but also to the outside. We serve people out there so they know us and see us but also so they feel they can come to

church and be part of the community.

And through all of this, we share love. God's love for us and our love for him.

The results have been remarkable with more young people coming every week.

The most important thing that I want to focus on is children, teenagers, young people

so that the Church has a future.

Next week we're off to the seaside for Loksa kids camp. That's all for this week, see you next time.