Story from Ukranian Rabbi
offered at Global Day of Action for Peace in Ukraine, March 6, 2022
by Ellen Stromberg, Congregations Etz Chayim and Beth Am

Today I had the privilege of hearing Rabbi Julia Gris who had just recently escaped from
Ukraine. Her journey with her daughter, 2 pets, and one suitcase trudging 20 miles in bitter cold
was both astounding and heartbreaking. She is now in Warsaw. She is trying to stay in
connection with her congregants to offer them moral and emotional support. And she is
grappling with the fact that she may not be able to go back to Ukraine for a long time. The only
thing she has from her home is her key. What she does have though is her understanding that the
world is also made up of good people, who are kind and caring. Her hope is in the humanity of
everyone reaching out, hope in how people are comforting one another.

Addendum: Click here (or use link below) to read an article in “The Times of Israel” (3/7/22)
about Rabbi Julia Gris in which she says she will be celebrating Purim (upcoming holiday). The
holiday celebrates good over evil.

https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/fight-or-flight-from-odessa/?fbclid=IwAR07m6fuqJLM4aSEUps3Gub0-Q8UbeR7zA2LMyDFJxQc1srrnAXJeCXdCJg

Ellen concluded her words with this prayer from the Chabad Community:

We pray for the safety of our Jewish brethren in Ukraine along with all people in the affected
areas. We pray for a peaceful resolution to this conflict. We pray that the people affected have
the strength and resources to make it through this trying time. And most of all, we pray for the
day when “nations will beat their swords into plowshares … and not learn war anymore.”