



# THE SIBERIAN LUTHERAN MISSION SOCIETY



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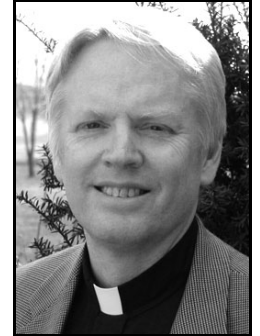
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## Siberian Lutheran Church continues to be 'bright hope for the Gospel'

By Rev. L. Daniel Johnson  
President, SLMS  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Hillsdale, Mich.



Rev. L. Daniel Johnson

THE SIBERIAN LUTHERAN MISSION SOCIETY continues to grow and mature. We have completed proper registration as a non-profit organization and are actively addressing the administrative tasks necessary to accomplish our mission. As we reviewed the many tasks accomplished last year, we were continually thankful to God for the leadership of Rev. John Fiene who did so much to lay the groundwork for us. We hope now to continue to build on that foundation so that THE SIBERIAN LUTHERAN MISSION SOCIETY will

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## 'First parish for a beginning priest is like a first love'

By Rev. Pavel Zayakin  
Pastor, Abakan, Khakassia

The first parish for a beginning priest is like a first love. Later it seems that what we had then was much better and can never be repeated. This is partly true.

Six years ago I was sent with the blessing of our church to serve in Khakassia as a missionary. My lay profession is a school teacher. I always thought I had a calling to work with children, but it turned out that the church needed me in a little different capacity. However, I have never stopped teaching, and have led Sunday school studies at church, meetings for teenagers and summer camps.

In February 1996 I left Novosibirsk to go to Khakassia. I already knew the place well and loved it because I had often gone there with children for camping and expeditions. I found the town of Touim with a population of 10,000 people. The church in Novosibirsk gave me a little money, so I was able to buy a small apartment at a ridiculously low price and moved there with my family.



One of the activities Rev. Pavel Zayakin oversees is the winter camp.

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# The Lutheran confession has deep roots in Russian soil, history

By Olga Litzenberger

Translated by Natalia Ulyanova

As Russia is a multinational state, Lutheranism has been a traditional religion for many centuries. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, 5.2 percent of the Russian population was Lutheran. Russian laws were tolerant of the Lutheran confession, although it was never on an equal status with the official state religion—the Orthodox confession.

Lutherans made great contributions to the development of Russia—the author of the first translation of the Bible was Rev. E. Gluek, the first theater in Russia was established by Rev. I. Gregory, the first insurance company was established by Rev. E. Grot and the first schools for blind and deaf children were established by Bishop G. Dikrof. The number of Lutherans in governmental positions in Russia was 10 to 20 percent. The wives of almost all of the Russian tsars were Lutherans before they adopted the Orthodox confession as a condition of marriage.

Lutherans first came to Russia at the time of Luther as foreign professionals who were invited to come and work in the country. From 1575 to 1576, the first Lutheran church was built in Moscow. After the reforms of Peter the Great, Lutherans began to play a more significant role in Russian science and culture. A united church administration was established and marriages between Lutherans and Orthodox believers were permitted.

During the reign of Catherine the Great, who was a German Lutheran princess, a well-known manifesto was issued that promised a number of privileges to foreigners who settled in Russia. The privileges included a number of religious freedoms. Seventy-four percent of the colonists were Lutherans; others were Roman Catholics. The Lutherans established their colonies all over the country. In the Volga region alone 20,000 Protestants settled in the 1760s.

A decree of 1819 proclaimed the office of Lutheran bishop in Moscow and in 1838, “The Charter of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia” was enacted. It gave the Lutheran church the status of an official religion equal to the Orthodox church. In 1844, Alexander II gave permission for “The Mutual Aid Fund” created to do charitable work.

By 1917, there were 3,674,000 Lutherans in Russia and 1,828 Lutheran churches, many of which were outstanding architectural monuments. Seventy-three percent of the Lutherans were ethnically German. The life of the church changed dramatically after the revolution of 1917. As a result of the anti-religious policy of the Bolshevik regime, the Lutheran church was eliminated over the next 20 years. The church lost more than 1,000 schools, the right to own



**Olga Litzenberger, left, interviews a 92-year-old woman who had saved all handwritten copies of hymns and Scripture she'd written from memory during the years of Soviet repression.**

buildings and the right to be a legal entity. All church valuables were confiscated by the Bolsheviks. There was a split in the church and a “Free Church of Congregation Direction” came into being. It was supported by American Congregationalists. During the first 20 years of the Soviet regime, 130 of 350 Lutheran pastors were arrested and repressed. Fifteen pastors were shot, 22 died in prison and 100 fled the country. The remaining Lutheran churches were closed in 1938 and many of the pastors were sent to the gulags. In 1941, all German Lutherans were deported to Siberia or Kazakhstan.

The revival of Lutheranism began only in the 1990s. At present, the Lutheran church in Russia is confronted with a number of challenges—the amalgamation of existing Lutheran congregations in the country, their legal registration, the restoration of church buildings and the return of those buildings to believers, the education of a new generation of clergymen and ministry to those who are faithful to the Lutheran confessions. Despite these formidable difficulties, the number of Lutherans in Russia is growing through conversion of those who are new to Lutheranism and restoration of an established church for those whose heritage is Lutheran. ✕



**Natalia Ulyanova**

Editor's note: Olga Litzenberger is a member of St. John's Lutheran Church in Saratov. She is completing her doctoral degree at Saratov State University and her thesis, “The Lutheran Church in Russia,” has been published in Russian. Natalia Ulyanova is a professor at Saratov State University.

## THE SIBERIAN LUTHERAN MISSION SOCIETY financial report - 2002

Financial matters are being handled by Elizabeth Meyer, secretary/treasurer of the SLMS. Donations may be sent to her to the order of "THE SIBERIAN LUTHERAN MISSION SOCIETY." A letter of receipt for your records will then be sent to the name and address printed on the check. We thank you for your ongoing support of Lutheranism in Siberia.

THE SIBERIAN LUTHERAN MISSION SOCIETY  
financial statement for fiscal year 2002

Donations and Disbursements Jan. 1 – Dec. 3, 2002

Total donations: \$51,933.26

Disbursements: \$28,000.00 Reserves: \$23,933.26

Donations were made by congregations, individuals and mission organizations. A list of donors will be available in the next newsletter.

Disbursements over a period of months to the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC) were given to support pastors, missions and individual congregations throughout Siberia. A report from SELC on specific expenditures of SLMS donated funds is available from the SLMS secretary/ treasurer upon request.

The SLMS Newsletter is financed and printed

through designated private funds at Redeemer Lutheran Church of Marshalltown, Iowa. The annual meeting of the SLMS board is held at Concordia Theological Seminary campus at Fort Wayne, Ind., in January each year. Expenses are paid through designated private donations and meeting space is provided by the Russian Project at CTS. All SLMS stationery, postage, and operating expenses are paid by designated donations. SLMS business operations are conducted entirely by volunteers. No SLMS donations are used to pay business operation expenses or salaries. A copy of the SLMS constitution and by-laws is available upon request from the SLMS secretary/treasurer. Legal questions pertaining to the operations of the SLMS may be directed to the SLMS Board of Directors.

Kent Burrow, CPA, JD, CFP, is secured as the SLMS financial and legal counsel. Burrow, senior manager, at Clifton Gunderson LLP; may be contacted at 9339 Priority Way West Drive, Suite 200; Indianapolis, Ind., 46240; office telephone 317-569-6266. ✕

### How can you help?

The economic situation in Russia is what one would expect for a nation attempting to crawl out from under 70 years of communist socialism.

By American standards, the standard of living is very low.

Many people are forced to live on \$30 per month. Unemployment throughout the nation approaches 25 percent, with the percentage even higher in rural areas. For the pastors in Siberia to support their families, a minimal income of \$300-\$500 per month is necessary. However, at the present time many are forced to live on much less, while working 16 to 18 hour days.

Dedication is not the issue—food, clothing and rent is. The congregations do not have the financial means to support their pastors.

You can help these congregations by providing a consistent monthly donation. (We suggest \$25 per month.) We can send you monthly envelopes to assist in this effort. Contact Rev. Daniel S. Johnson, [danielsjohnson2@mchsi.com](mailto:danielsjohnson2@mchsi.com) to learn more. ✕



**Rev. Sergei Glushkov, right, pastor at the Lutheran church in Ekaterinenburg, distributes the Lord's Body and Blood to a parishioner on Easter Sunday as Deacon Alexei Trapeznikov waits in the background. Both men are graduates of CTS - Fort Wayne. Unlike the Orthodox churches, the Russian Lutherans follow the same liturgical calendar as western Christendom.**

## Wheaton church gives Russian pastor chance to study in America

The Rev. Pavel Khramov, current director of the Bible School in Siberia, which prepares men for the seminary, will be traveling to the United States this summer for six weeks of independent study.

The Rev. Dr. Scott Bruzek, senior pastor at St. John Lutheran Church in Wheaton, Ill., and board member of the Siberian Lutheran Missionary Society, was instrumental in obtaining a scholarship for Khramov's studies.

The independent study program is made possible by generous donations to the program through Wheaton College. The



Rev. Pavel  
Khramov

scholarship pays for the visa process, airfare, meals, housing and books and is available to a limited number of pastors and seminary professors from Eastern Europe and Russia. It is a six-week study that begins in July.

The students may study whatever they choose, are provided a tutor free of charge and attend daily presentations on topics such as archeology, the Church in Africa and others. This program is a great gift for these men, and a rare opportunity to have six full weeks of focused study.

Praise be to God for this wonderful blessing! ✕

## Russian orphans receive gifts thanks to generosity of church

*Editor's note: The following article is taken from an e-mail newsletter sent out by St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Novosibirsk.*

In the beginning of January, some parishioners of our church in Novosibirsk went to an orphanage in the village of Barishevo in the Novosibirsk region to give presents to the orphans.

This year we received gifts from St. John Lutheran Church and school (Wheaton, Ill.) with basic necessities and toys appropriate for children ages one to 16.

Besides the orphanage in Novosibirsk, children in Khakassia, Ekaterinburg, Irkutsk and Buryatia also received boxes with presents. In Barishevo, there was a holiday program in which the children were told the Christmas story.

This was not our first time in this orphanage, and we were treated as "old friends." It was nice to know that all this time the children remembered us, were waiting for us and many of them remembered stories from the Bible that we have told them.

The younger children, ages three to five, were clapping their hands, and hugged and thanked us for the presents.

While we passed out the presents, three girls from the middle group wrote words of thanks to the people who sent the presents.

Here is what they wrote (translated, of course):

"Hello, dear Americans! This is Nadya, Jennya and Olesya writing to you. Thank you very much for the wonderful gifts. We are very grateful. We would like to invite you to visit our orphanage. We will be waiting for you.

"The Third Group,

"Astakhova Nadya, Makhova Jennya and Chistyakova Olesya."

We are very thankful for the opportunity to help these children. They are interested in learning the Bible. It is a pleasure to know that now they will not only remember the presents and us, but will also study the Bible. During the year we are planning to have Bible studies with the children in this home, and we ask you to pray for this. ✕



**These young Russian orphans open presents on Christmas 2002. The gifts came from the Novosibirsk church, thanks to gifts from St. John Lutheran Church and school in Wheaton, Ill.**

## Siberian mission only the start

Continued from page 1

be a helpful way for people, churches and groups to support the growth of confessional Lutheran churches in Russia.

The confessional Lutheran church in Russia continues to be a bright hope for the Gospel. Dedicated pastors and laity are continuing to share the message of Christ across the vast reaches of Siberia and beyond. It is truly a privilege to be able to share in this work through the prayer and financial support that we can offer.

We hope to develop giving programs including both opportunities for one-time gifts and opportunities for sustained gifts that will allow the pastors and congregations of these new churches to be supported in their work.

The Siberian Lutheran Mission Society has made a good start, but there is also clearly much left to do. Please keep us in your prayers as you consider this important mission field and as the Lord blesses you, remember the Siberian Lutheran Mission Society in your giving plans. May God bless you and keep you in Christ always! ✕

### **Meet St. Andrew, Novosibirsk**

St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Novosibirsk is the oldest of our congregations and missions, yet it is only 11 years old. The first "service" was held Nov. 7, 1991. It is interesting that Nov. 7 in Russia is the anniversary of the October Revolution, the chief holiday of the Soviet Union. From a group of five to seven people it grew into a church with 150 members with two pastors and a deacon serving here: Revs. Vsevolod Lytkin and Daniel Burlakov, and Deacon Alexei Shilin. ✕

## Do you have an old laptop computer that needs new home?

Pastors in Siberia serve many parishes and travel long distances. In order to stay in contact with each other, they use e-mail. In this way, they can share sermons, liturgies and necessary parish news. If you have an old laptop, please consider donating it to the SLMs. You will be sent a receipt for the fair market value of the computer as a charitable donation.

For more information, contact Rev. Daniel S. Johnson, [danielsjohnson2@mchsi.com](mailto:danielsjohnson2@mchsi.com). ✕

## **Estonian Synod grants Siberian Lutheran Church independence**

On the April 29 General Synod of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, the synod approved the initiative of clergymen and congregations of EELC in Siberia to establish the independent Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church.

It's a very important step for us. We believe it will give us a strong impetus to grow. Now we are to decide all church issues—what to do, how to develop and establish relationships and so on.

It gives us a lot of freedom, but also a lot of responsibility. Now we need a lot of wisdom how to develop the structure and policy of our church in order to promote the confessional witness among the Christians and non-Christians in Siberia. We need to be careful in establishing altar and pulpit fellowship with different Lutheran churches to avoid the extremes of sectarianism and of "all-including love" when we establish fellowship with any church called "Lutheran" but not really standing on the teaching of the Holy Scripture as it is explained in the Book of Concord. Please keep praying for us to use this freedom wisely and to the glory of Jesus Christ.

In Christ,

Pastor Pavel Khramov, Novosibirsk, Russia ✕

### **Decree of the General Synod of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church "Congregations served by the clergy of the EELC in Siberia"**

"Considering as necessity to create better possibilities for a clerical serving of the Lutherans living in Siberia, considering that the Bishops of the EELC have ordained clergymen subordinated canonically to the EELC and serving congregations in the towns Novosibirsk, Irkutsk, Angarsk, Tuim, Abakan, Jekaterinburg, Reftinski, Tomsk, Ulan-Ude, Tshitaa ja Petropavlovka since 1993, considering the decisions of the meeting of the representatives of these congregations on December 21, 2002, being based on the § 40 point 17 of the statute of the EELC

"The General Synod of the EELC decrees:

"To approve the initiative of the EELC clergymen in Siberia to establish the independent Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church and empower Dean Vsevolod Lytkin to make all necessary arrangements connected to the preparations and realization of the constituent assembly of the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church."

/signature/ Archbishop of the EELC  
Jaan Kiivit  
In Haapsalu,

# Siberian church grows in the midst of hopelessness and despair

Story continued from page 1

And then began the trials! To earn a living, I was planning to work in a local school as a teacher, and my wife wanted to work as a doctor. But as soon as I began to hold studies on Luther's Catechism at my apartment, I was immediately denied work in the school. And my wife, Nina, was refused work as a pediatrician, although she is well qualified and there are not enough doctors in this area.



**Rev. Pavel Zayakin, left, speaks with a member of his congregation. The fledgling church experienced several difficulties at first, including rumors that children were being sacrificed to the god, Luther.**

I remember very well the enthusiasm of the first month. And then in the course of the next three months we lived on pancakes made from flour that we brought with us from Novosibirsk in a container and half-frozen potatoes. There was no money. The church in Novosibirsk sent us a small sum, but the church itself was very poor and couldn't support us.

Our greatest desire was to pull ourselves together and return to Novosibirsk. Already wild gossip was spreading in the town: "Did you hear, he is a teacher and his wife is a pediatrician. Why do you think that children gather in their apartment? Well, of course, so they can sacrifice them to their god, Luther!" I wanted to return to Novosibirsk, but fortunately, I simply didn't have the money for a train ticket.

Then there was a radical turnaround. In addition to two or three older ladies who came to the church, young people started to visit with their whole family. There wasn't enough room for us anymore. We collected some money and rented a room in a building that is used for various clubs.

Then I was ordained as a deacon in Tallinn (Estonia). Despite all the difficulties, the congregation grew. Many children and adults visited the church. I remember well our first Christmas: lighted candles and singing "Silent Night." It was like assuming a family.

The congregation started to grow. After two years we bought a wooden building. In Soviet times this building was used for city administration and the Communist Party. In a local newspaper there was an article with the title "Where the state emblem hung, there hangs a cross!" How interesting that the birth of the church coincides exactly with the collapse of Touim. The only factory, where most of the population had been working, was closed. People who could leave this place did. Those who stayed became addicted to drugs and alcohol. It was in such hopelessness and despair that our church grew.

But then hard times proceeded. This is normal for the Church of Christ! We were accused of being American spies. And then it all began! The local KGB tried to shut us down. The police came to the apartments of our believers and intimidated them. The public prosecutor tried to force people to give up their faith.

Then the judicial processes began. The whole world came to know about Khakassia because many Christian information agencies wrote about this: that the authorities were trying to close a Lutheran church in Khakassia.

Who knew about Khakassia before this? Thanks to the Lutherans, many now know about Khakassia. Finally the trial reached the Supreme Court of Russia where our church won, and the local authorities have come to respect us.

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**PEOPLE WHO COULD LEAVE THIS PLACE DID. THOSE WHO STAYED BECAME ADDICTED TO DRUGS AND ALCOHOL. IT WAS IN SUCH HOPELESSNESS AND DESPAIR THAT OUR CHURCH GREW**

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And the mission continues. We started a few more congregations. Rev. Andrei Ivolga came to help me (he was a student at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind.). Today, two new congregations have already been formed in Khakassia: St. Luke Lutheran Church in Abakan and a congregation in Sayanogorsk. Many young people and students visit us. The worship services are filled to overflowing.

See how, with God's help, the Gospel has come to Khakassia. ✕

To donate to the SLMS write to Elizabeth Meyer at:  
emSLMS@aol.com or call: 408/286-1771