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The newsletter for **THE SIBERIAN LUTHERAN MISSION SOCIETY** is edited by Rev. Daniel S. Johnson, and Mrs. Valerie Kister Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1600 S. Center St., Marshalltown, Iowa 50158 641/753-9565 (fax) 641/753-5516 newsletter@tslms.org

We thank Redeemer Lutheran Church - Marshalltown, IA for financial assistance and to Mrs. Linda Smith for clerical assistance in the printing of this newsletter.

Kirovo - a congregation under siege (an interview of Deacon Vitali Gavrilov)

by Natasha Sheludyakova
translated by Marina Gaskova

As it used to be in the past, preaching the Gospel continues to have its own difficulties and dangers. Neither are these difficulties rare in Khakassia. Deacon Vitali Gavrilov is sharing his story with us:

"Recently Pastor Pavel Khramov from Novosibirsk visited us. He had served the liturgy in our Church in Tuim, and then we went for a service to Kirovo. We don't have our own church building there (it existed at a certain time, but was ransacked by the locals, and since then, we've been holding services at a neighboring school).

"As usual, upon arrival we had prepared everything for the service, and people arrived, including several men. At first I was happy to see men come to the service. As a rule, mainly women and children attend the services. There are only a few men in these places: they drink terribly much, and die young.



Deacon Vitali Gavrilov

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A life under the cross - Valentina Yurganova's story

translated by Marina Gaskova

(Editor's note: Part 1 and 2 may be read from the September and December 2006 newsletter. This is a four-part series.)

Part 3 of 4

When my mother arrived in Siberia, to the town of Cherepanovo, it was already evening time. They were dropped from the car and left on the platform near the railway station. Those who had brought them left right away. And the people to whom they were brought didn't go out to meet them at all because of the rain. In the morning the guards came and asked, "Why didn't you go inside, to the station?" The women were simply very intimidated. They had been accustomed to hearing the command: "Step left or step right and you will be shot".

My mother had to stay in the exile for 5 years. She was sent to the station Posevnaya near Cherepanovo to work as an accountant. Then she was allowed to go and pick me up from the children's shelter.

It took my mother a month to get to Moscow from Siberia. Her money and a ticket were stolen in Moscow... She asked for help from a person on duty at the railway station. The only thing he could do to help was allow her to travel on the footboard of the train. A footboard consisted of a number of steps outside the car, and hand-rails. They were wide, and 2-3 persons could

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In exile in your own country

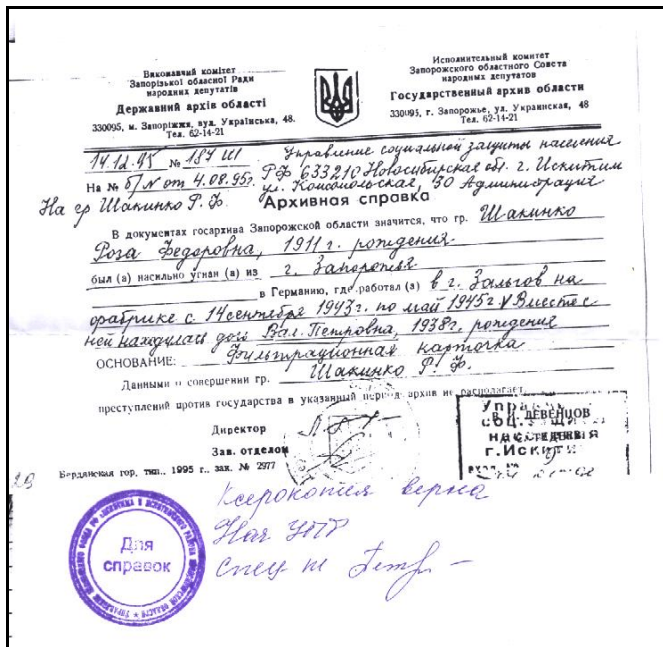
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travel on them. Of course, it was dangerous: if you start dozing, you might fall off the train. But people supported each other. There were people hanging on the footboards, like bunches of grapes, because it was hard to purchase a

THERE WERE PEOPLE HANGING ON THE FOOTBOARDS, LIKE BUNCHES OF GRAPES, BECAUSE IT WAS HARD TO PURCHASE A TICKET. SO MY MOTHER TRAVELED 3 DAYS AND NIGHTS TO ZAPOROZHIE ON THE FOOTBOARD.

ticket. So my mother traveled 3 days and nights to Zaporozhie on the footboard.

In July 1947 my mother picked me up. However, she was trying to convince me to stay one more year in the children's shelter before she could "stand firmly on her feet." But I was afraid to tear myself away from her. We didn't have money to buy tickets. My mother went to Dora and



This is a document validating that my mom was taken captive and was moved to exile in Zaltsburg, Germany, where she worked from 14 September 1943 to May 1945

took some of our possessions from her. We sold them and bought the tickets.

When I was let go from the childrens' shelter, everything was taken from me. I was told that I couldn't have clothes. I was given a small dress, white with **Continued on page 4**

Ekaterinberg Preschool - a parochial education

By Alexy and Svetlana
Trapeznikov



Our preschool began in Ekaterinberg six years ago. We began with five children aged four-to-five-years-old. Our school was free at first. Some poor children came to us and were baptized.

We now have 12 children aged three-to-seven-years-old. We prepare them for school by teaching mathematics, typing, music, art, Russian, and gymnastics. The smaller



Svetlana tells a story

children study Bible stories and the older ones study the Lutheran catechism. Two teachers with pedagogical education are from our local Lutheran church. Fourteen children have finished our kindergarten and are in good schools. They continue to study the catechism.

Most of our children and their parents hear about Jesus for the first time at our school. The parents are interested and ask their children about Jesus. We teachers are glad to spread the Good News to unchristian people.

We are very thankful for all the brothers and sisters who are interested and help our small Lutheran preschool. We are very thankful to St. Paul Lutheran Church, Columbus, Ind., and their pastor, Rev. William Stache, who help keep the school functioning. **Continued on page 5**

A Siberian village

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"Pastor Pavel Khramov began the liturgy, but right after he said the greeting (*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God...*), one of the peasants (who was drunk and destructive) suddenly jumped up, came up to

"PASTOR PAVEL KHRAMOV BEGAN THE LITURGY, BUT RIGHT AFTER HE SAID THE GREETING... ONE OF THE PEASANTS (WHO WAS DRUNK AND DESTRUCTIVE) SUDDENLY JUMPED UP, CAME UP TO THE ALTAR AND SHOUTED TO EVERYBODY: "DON'T LISTEN TO HIM!..."

the altar and shouted to everybody: 'Don't listen to him! He is telling bullshit, why do you sit here and listen? I too can sing such songs.'

"I saw Pastor Pavel Khramov, taken aback and not knowing what to do. The service came to a halt. But I knew what to do with this man. I came up to the peasant,



The old church building in Kirovo. It was destroyed by vandals seeking firewood and supplies for their own houses.

together with his pals. So during the whole service I kept pushing them from the car, while Pastor Khramov was inside serving the liturgy. It's good that at least I'm not a feeble person, or otherwise they could have beaten me up. But as soon as the service finished, the peasants suddenly calmed down, as if Satan had loosened his grip on them.

"Generally, such things happen regularly in Kirovo. Well, there is nothing to be done – there are no police for us to call. The village is too poor to afford police. And the nearest city with police is too far away. In such villages and towns like Kirovo, there is no police, no hospitals, and no shops -- nothing at all. Poverty is horrifying. And these

took him by the collar, and pulled him to the exit; he resisted and shouted: 'Don't listen to them!' and cursed badly.

"I put him out to the street, but he started kicking the wheels of our parish's car, trying to trip the alarm siren. And he stood there laughing,

'scumbags' feel themselves as masters of the world. Everyone is afraid of them. The whole atmosphere there is filled with alcohol and hopelessness. But, despite that, people keep coming to the church, and now a woman is preparing for confirmation. Among the Christians in Kirovo no one drinks alcohol. As a rule; they try to take care of their children and grandchildren, but everyone else around them drinks vodka and fights with others. So, that's the kind of life people in Kirovo live. Sometimes it is necessary to use physical power to restrain the troublemakers. But that's OK, I'm used to that, especially taking into consideration, what a great sin God has taken me out of. [ed.

note: see the May 2005 [SLMS](#)

newsletter on our website at www.tslms.org

"There was another situation in Tuim following the Kirivo incident. It was 5 a.m. I had finished my work in the church, and wanted to go to bed. Suddenly I heard an awful noise outside, someone beating the church car, and the sound of the car alarm siren. I ran to the window and saw two drunk men near the car. I yelled to them: 'Go away!' And they screamed to me in return: 'Hey, man! ...Give us a ride.'

"I told them: 'Go away!' And one of them said, 'If you don't come out, I'll continue kicking your car.' So he ran up and hit it with his leg. Bang!!! And again the alarm



A child plays in the street

I THEN TOOK A LEG OF THE TABLE, RAN OUT AND HIT ONE OF THEM FIRST, AND THEN THE SECOND. AFTER THAT THEY RAN AWAY. AND THEN... TO TELL THE TRUTH, I FELT VERY BAD. I COULDN'T SLEEP... IT'S NOT A CHRISTIAN WAY.

sounded. I then took a leg of the table, ran out and hit one of them first, and then the second. After that they ran away. And then... to tell the truth, I felt very bad. I couldn't sleep. Just imagine, beating people with a stick! It's not a Christian way. **Continued on page 5**

Valentina

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some green flowers. Its lower part had a hole. My underwear was taken away. That's how I traveled through the whole country, being barefoot and covering the hole with my hand, because there were no needles at that time. There was a shortage of needles after the war;



Inhabitants of the barrack on the Posevnaya railroad station. I am the fourth from the left. Mama is standing behind me.

we couldn't find them anywhere to mend the dress.

When we went to Zaporozhie from Siberia, there were only 5 rubles in our pocket. A loaf of bread cost 180 rubles at that time. It took us 3 days and nights to get to Moscow, and we didn't eat anything. We found a relative in Moscow, and she could only give us a bag of caramels; so we traveled to Siberia. It was a long trip, because the railroads were overloaded. Freight trains had a priority over passenger ones. After 10 days we reached Novosibirsk, and then Cherepanovo, station Posevnaya (one kilometer away from Cherepanovo).

In summer my mother worked as a cook, fixing meals for tractor drivers. And we went to the fields, lived in the tents. We could already eat quite well, 3 times a day. It was the first time since the beginning of the war when I could eat enough. My mother fed me only together with the workers. She wouldn't give me a single piece of bread without them. She was afraid that they might suspect her of wasting the products.

Here in Siberia we met a lot of people from the concentration camp. Our government was afraid that they could be spies, and so all of them were exiled here.

In autumn we moved to the barracks. The size of our room was 16-18 square meters, and 4 families lived there, making 10 people altogether. But we lived in peace and friendship. We didn't have fights, and there were never any scandals or theft.

In December 1947 there was a reform. Previously I was given 400 grams of bread, and my mother 250 grams a day. Now food stamps were abolished. There

was freedom to buy as much bread as you wanted! Nevertheless, there wasn't enough bread, and that's why there were huge lines.

A numbering system was used, and children reserved a place in line already in the evening. During the night we slept in the road ditch. Old women also stood in line; they often had insomnia, and they started re-counting each other. We woke up, but they told us, "But we have already counted each other!" As a result, old women were in front, and children behind. They wrote new numbers on their hands.

When the shop opened, there was enough bread for old women, but not for us children. Many times bread ran out right before my turn. This is why even today I cannot bring myself to stand in line. That's why I go to the store which is located far from my house and where beverages are a little more expensive, but it has self-service and no lines.

In 1952 we moved to Cherepanovo. By that time I finished school and entered a pedagogical college. It was my dream to enter the school of radio engineering. But we weren't allowed to leave Cherepanovo area.

On the first of September I went to classes at the pedagogical school, and in the middle of the lesson one person entered the classroom and said, "Those who are the children of special status migrants, stand up." I stood up. He told me to find him after the break, and I did. He started apologizing and said that they had enrolled too many students, and that's why I was being expelled.

I came home and cried till night. My mother came home from work in the evening, and calmed me down. We wrote a letter to Mr. Voroshilov, who was the chairman of the "Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR." We wrote that I was raised in the Soviet kindergartens, in the Soviet school system... In about a month I was allowed to go back to school. ✕



In 1952, in 7th grade, on the "board of fame."

Editor's note: Part 4 is continued in the September 2007 issue of the [SLMS](#) newsletter. We thank Rev. Alan Hafner of St. James Lutheran Church - Victor, IA for editorial help in preparing this series of articles for publication.

Kirovo

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"I suffered all day long. And in the evening before the service, when I was in the church, I heard someone coming. I saw the door opening, and the two men walked in, asking me if they could have a talk. I said, 'Of course.' And they both said, 'Please forgive us, Father, we are very sorry.' ...I also asked them to forgive me.

"So that's how they came to me and asked for



School where the Kirovo congregation now meets

forgiveness. And I'm thinking now, that I did a right thing by hitting them: now they will know that they shouldn't hit other people's cars. Of course, maybe, they just got scared of me. Here in Tuim everybody knows that I was in prison. I also remember the words from the Bible: "*Others save with fear*" (Jude 23). Of course, St. Jude was talking about the other type of fear, but such fear, a primitive one, can also help people behave in a more quiet and calm way.

"But what else is there to do? Unbelievers are left all by themselves. Nobody takes care of them. They are like sheep having no shepherd. I'm so sorry for them. And the only thing one can do is to preach about Jesus to them and to pray for them.

"I would like to live in Kirovo, at least for a short time: to live their lives and to fill them with the hope of the Gospel, to socialize with them. That's my idea. It is so beautiful there with the forest and mountains and river. Maybe, that's what I will do. First, I need to finish some of my work in Tuim."

Life in small Siberian villages is very hard, with high unemployment and little more than alcohol, drugs and crime to occupy people's time. Pray for Pastor Pavel Zayakin and Deacon Vitali Gavrilov and those to whom they minister, as they preach the Gospel to the villages and cities of the Khakassian regions of Siberia. ✘

Preschool

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We can pay rent, buy materials, and pay grants to our teachers. We also use CPH materials Rev. Stache sent.

Our preschool continues to keep the Lutheran foundation. We know many unchristian people need to

MOST OF OUR CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS HEAR ABOUT JESUS FOR THE FIRST TIME AT OUR SCHOOL. THE PARENTS ARE INTERESTED AND ASK THEIR CHILDREN ABOUT JESUS.

hear God's Word. Small children believe in God and then their parents believe.

Now [as this was written] is a wonderful time. Our children hear about Jesus every day and prepare for Christmas. They tell their parents about Advent and try to do more good and kind things.

One of our children, Daniel, is 5 and lives with his mother. He was afraid of all men and liked the color black. His teacher told him about the angel who visited Mary and how the angel is kind and white. Afterward, Daniel made an angel and it's with him in his jacket all the time. Now he isn't afraid of anything because God's angel is with him. Now he draws only with light colors. His mother was baptized with him.

More children want to go to our school, but our flat can hold only seven to eight more children. It is difficult



to have preschool and kindergarten children in one flat.

We ask you to join us in prayer for God's help, that we may some day be able to purchase our own flat and continue to teach these children about Jesus. ✘

A Visit to Buryatia

In July [2005] Pastor Pavel Khramov made a trip to the eastern parishes of the SELC, including those in Angarsk and Petropavlovka (Republic of Buryatia).

Pastor Pavel Khramov said, "I'm glad to have been able to visit our distant parishes. People were able to receive the Holy Communion (in some parishes where there is no permanent pastor, which is the most important thing, of course). Such trips are very important, also because clergymen of our Church have a chance to visit other parishes, to communicate with people, and so to demonstrate the unity of the Church.

"For example, in Petropavlovka (Buryatia) one can notice how difficult it is for parishioners without a



Pr. Pavel Khramov in Angarsk

permanent pastor. There is no regular church life without a pastor. People attending worship lack knowledge. That's why sometimes there is no clear understanding of the essence of the Church and the role of a minister in it. For some, the

Church is only a part of a social structure. Not everyone realizes that a pastor is the one who teaches and gives the Word and the Sacraments; and he shouldn't necessarily be a psychotherapist or a talented leader, able to organize an active life in the parish.

"In my opinion, there is a wonderful layman in Petropavlovka, Subdeacon Andrei Laletin, who is a leader in the parish. But life is not always easy for him, because sometimes he doesn't have enough knowledge; and at times he lacks support of the parishioners, who demand things from him – not trying to make change themselves. In this sense it is hard for him, of course. It is needed for the parishioners to support him, and for the Church to give him a helping hand and actively search for the possibilities to do it."

Natasha Sheludyakova (an organist from the parish of St. Andrew in Novosibirsk), who accompanied Pastor

Khramov in the trip, said, "Generally, life in Buryatia is changing or, I can even say, is improving. Gradually, civilization is getting to that place. For example, they have access to the Internet.

"If previously only canned foods, bread, and cheap candies were sold in the stores, today one can see other products, such as sausage, cheese, and even yogurt there. Another problem is that a majority of the people don't have money to buy food. In some stores people purchase food on credit.

"The majority of people are unemployed; agricultural enterprises are closed down, and everything that could be stolen from them, has already been stolen. Everyone has huge debts to repay for water supply and electricity, because no one is solvent. In the big cities of our country government officials simply evict those, who are unable to pay for the utilities

(electricity, water, etc.). But what could government do in such places as Buryatia, where nobody pays for the utilities? And if evicted, where can so many people be sent?"

Please, pray for the eastern

parishes of the SELC, especially for those that don't yet have a permanent pastor. ✕



Main Street in Petropavlovka



Subdeacon Andrei Laletin with children in Petropavlovka

[editor's note: This article is copied from "Faith & Hope" #133, August 2005, an email newsletter distributed by the SELC. Pr. Andrei Ivolska currently serves in Angarsk and regularly visits the congregations in Buryatia. Deacon Igor Kizyaev serves in Chita.]

From the Editor: The Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC) continues to grow and be a place where the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached and the Holy Sacraments provided for sinners seeking forgiveness and healing of body and soul. In the newsletters of [THE SIBERIAN LUTHERAN MISSION SOCIETY \(SLMS\)](#) the members of the SELC reveal their faith and hopes. They are Russians seeking an answer to challenges and problems in their lives. They are a people who have been called by Christ in the healing waters of Holy Baptism and fed by the holy precious food of His body and blood. They may speak a different language but they are all baptized in the name of the same LORD and eat and drink the same Jesus. These are a people who know the mission of the Church – a mission which begins and finds its conclusion in the Word and Sacraments properly administered. We invite you to read this newsletter with a prayer of divine grace for our Lutheran brothers and sisters in Siberia. Their challenges in a land of pagan Buddhism, shamanism, and atheism is great. Your prayers and continuing support is appreciated.

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