



# Faith and Hope

a newsletter of the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church

November 2018



Peace to you, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

Last week we travelled 500 kilometers for 10 hours (travel is very difficult on Siberian roads – especially in winter with snow-packed roads) to the village of Beryozovka, where ethnic Estonians live.

The first group of Estonian peasants arrived here in 1803, they were sent “to the eternal settlement in Siberia” for participating in protests against the authorities. In 1803 and 1804, the first houses of the village of Kasekula (from Estonian: “Birch”, in Russian it is: “Beryoza”) were built.



At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, many voluntary settlers arrived in Siberia from the north-western parts of the Russian Empire. The government supported people to move to Siberia to colonize it. Peasants could get free land.

From 1906 to 1914, more than 9,000 Estonians moved to Siberia, creating new villages. To Beryozovka, peasants came from the Viljandimaa district of the Tartu province.

Life was difficult, and especially -- later during the Josef Stalin time, when almost 15% of the inhabitants of Estonian villages in Siberia were persecuted and most men of 20-40 years old were shot as "enemies of the state."



At the beginning of the 20th century there were many Lutherans among those who moved, thanks to them our faith spread in Siberia. Often the “new Siberians” settled into such hard-to-reach places, so the pastors had to spend weeks to get to their parishioners. After a hundred years, there are still challenging roads in Siberia, and it is still not easy to travel. But we are accustomed to overcoming long distances and deep snow.

The locals, mainly babushkas and middle-aged women, came to the meeting with Pastor Daniel Burlakov and Deacon Oleg Epp (they were also accompanied by the organizer of the trip Mr. Igor Makarenko).

About 300 people live in Beryozovka, of which 70 speak Estonian. Some of them still read old prayer books with gothic type. They asked a lot of questions, mostly practical, related to the Christian life and death. They talked about Christmas, prayers, icons, and funerals.



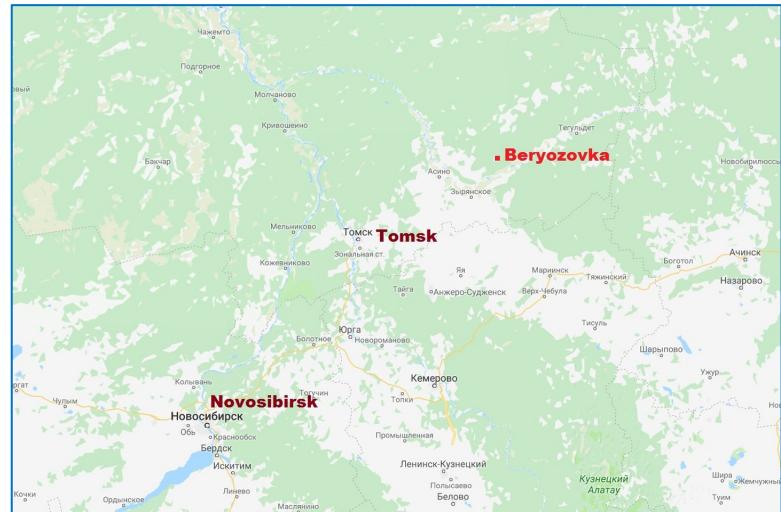
Our clergymen brought copies of “Luther’s Small Catechism” and other Christian books for the local library. They agreed the next visit should be in December.

At the end of the 19th century, in the Tomsk province (to which then, besides Tomsk and the area, the settlements of the future Novosibirsk and Kemerovo regions belonged) most of the Lutherans were of Estonian origin. Our duty is to remember those who came to Siberia and brought the Lutheran confession with

them. It is the descendants of these first Estonians who came to Siberia, whom we visited.

We are Christians because of the efforts of those who first brought the Gospel of Jesus Christ into our cold land. They built churches (all which were destroyed by the Soviets) and raised their children as Lutherans. It is the responsibility of the church to serve such people in remote locations in Siberia.

Please pray for the Lutherans with Estonian background living in Siberia and for the safe and fruitful travels of the SELC priests and laity, as they travel great distances to preach the Gospel and catechize the descendants of these first Lutheran settlers in Siberia. ☩✿ ☩



This “Faith and Hope” newsletter is published by: The Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC). Her bishop, Vsevolod Lytkin, serves St. Andrew congregation in Novosibirsk where the 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. This edition of the Faith and Hope newsletter is edited, reformatted and distributed by [The Siberian Lutheran Mission Society \(SLMS\)](#), a Recognized Service Organization (RSO) of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LC-MS).

In this newsletter, the members of the SELC reveal their faith and hopes. They are Siberian 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.

The reader has the permission of The Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church and [THE SIBERIAN LUTHERAN MISSION SOCIETY](#) to reprint articles and photographs from this newsletter for publicity purposes. When reprinting, please give credit to the “Faith and Hope” newsletter of the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC) and [THE SIBERIAN LUTHERAN MISSION SOCIETY \(SLMS\)](#).

All donations may be sent to:

[THE SIBERIAN LUTHERAN MISSION SOCIETY](#) c/o Ascension Lutheran Church, 8811 St. Joe Road, Ft. Wayne, Indiana 46835-1037.

For more information on how you can become involved in the work of the [SLMS](#), visit our website at [www.siberianlutheranmissions.org](http://www.siberianlutheranmissions.org)