



Siberian Lutheran Mission Society

RESTORING THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN RUSSIA

Христос Воскрес, Аллилуйя!

Brothers and Sisters,

AN EASTER
MESSAGE FROM
REV. DANIEL JOHNSON,
PRESIDENT OF
THE SIBERIAN LUTHERAN
MISSION SOCIETY

As I think about the martyrs who have been tortured and killed for confessing Jesus, we enter Lent and Holy Week looking forward to the Feast of the Resurrection. This is what the martyrs of yesterday saw as they endured persecution for Jesus' sake. Stephen, who took on the face of an angel, saw the resurrection. Jesus, while dying on the cross, looked at those who put him there and said, "*Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing!*"



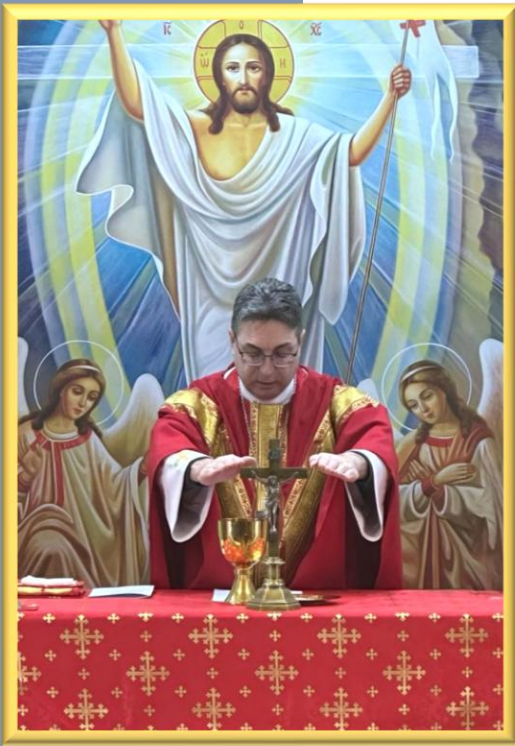
As we send financial and prayer support to our brothers and sisters in Siberia, we remember their faithful ancestors martyred for the faith—people who built churches and received the Word into their ears, the water of washing and renewal upon their heads, and the life-giving body and blood of Jesus on their tongues and over their lips. These pioneers seeking a better life, moving from their European homeland to a new and virgin land in the Siberian wilderness (and many who were war prisoners from the Russian-Swedish wars) faithfully gathered in the churches they had built to pray the liturgies passed down to them from their forefathers.

The first Lutheran church in Russia was founded in Moscow shortly after the Augsburg Confession was delivered, St. Michael's Lutheran Church, in 1576 (an earlier congregation existed in 1559; however, St. Michael's was the first Lutheran congregation recognized by the Tsar). The Lutheran Church continued to grow as the Tsar invited more Lutherans to settle in Russian territory.

By 1900, more Lutherans lived under the authority and protection of the Russian Tsar than in North America. At the turn of the 20th century, the Lutheran Church in Russia was the second largest Christian body in the Russian Empire, after the Russian Orthodox Church, and the third largest Lutheran Church body in the world (after the German and Scandinavian Lutheran Churches). Lutherans lived in peace and religious autonomy under a friendly Tsar.

However, in 1917 everything changed for Russian Lutherans. The Soviet Revolution sought to create a utopian state where the government was to be worshipped as the supreme authority. Christianity and its recognition of Christ as the Messiah was deemed as an enemy of the state and incompatible with the communist philosophy of dialectical materialism. The Russian Orthodox Church capitulated under a desire to preserve its existence. Lutherans refused to capitulate.

FATHER PAVEL KHRAMOV,
A PROFESSOR AT THE
NOVOSIBIRSK SEMINARY,
CELEBRATES THE DIVINE
SERVICE AT THE PARISH
OF THE HOLY TRINITY IN
CHITA, SIBERIA.



Lutherans believed the liturgical confession of the Sanctus, "*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of your glory... .*" They trusted God to be "*Sabaoth!*" They trusted his armies to be undefeatable! They knew, despite torture, persecutions, gulags, and executions, their God would endure and preserve them into eternal life. They stood faithful!

Nearly every church building in Siberia was closed and torn down by the satanic regime. Those church buildings in European Russia which were not destroyed were confiscated and turned into factories, gymnasiums, warehouses, libraries, and other uses, "for the good of the collective." The faithful, who refused to capitulate were executed or sent into gulags.

By 1952, the last Lutheran pastor died in a gulag, forbidden to teach, preach, or carry out his divine call. He, along with millions of the faithful, was a prisoner of the State! Martyred for the faith!

Today, the Lutheran Church has grown out of the smoldering wick of what the Soviets thought was a "dead superstition."

GOD IS "*SABAOTH!*" HIS ARMIES ARE UNDEFEATABLE!

The Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church survives. Its seminary again trains men for service at their altars and pastoral care of the congregations. The Church survives in freedom within Russia to proclaim that God is Sabaoth. He is a God of mercy and forgiveness! He is also a God who has redeemed His people, not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood and innocent suffering and death.

Why? So, we might live with Him and serve Him in His Kingdom, in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.

Easter is His Time! It is His Time to remind us that He has risen, and as He has risen from the dead, so too will His baptized and all the faithful (including the martyrs of yesterday).

He has risen! He has risen, indeed! Alleluia!

Daniel S. Johnson

Rev. Daniel S. Johnson

President, Siberian Lutheran Mission Society

THANK YOU!

"IF YOU ARE ONE OF
THE MORE THAN 3,400
SUPPORTERS OF THIS
IMPORTANT MINISTRY,
THANK YOU FOR YOUR
PRAYERS AND GIFTS.
THEY MATTER —
TODAY AND IN THE
YEARS TO COME.



THE SIBERIAN LUTHERAN
MISSION SOCIETY
8811 ST. JOE ROAD
FORT WAYNE, IN 46835

WEBSITE
SIBERIANLUTHERANMISSIONS.ORG

EMAIL
QUESTIONS@SIBERIANLUTHERAN
MISSIONS.ORG

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Will You Continue to Help Support the Lutheran Church in Siberia?

You may not be able to serve as a missionary, but you can help the Siberian Lutheran Mission Society support the pastoral outreach of the Lutheran Church in Siberia and the pastoral training programs of the Siberian Church's seminary in Novosibirsk.

Now more than ever, your gifts are needed. They can make a real, lasting difference in the lives of people in Russia and other nearby countries who were denied God's Word and Sacrament for so many years. Your monthly or annual pledge, a one-time gift, or remembering the Siberian Church and seminary in your estate will help provide everlasting value—eternal value—for those looking for the Good News of salvation.

Contributions to the Siberian Lutheran Mission Society are safe and will remain so. All gifts to the Society are banked in the United States, and endowment funds are professionally managed by the Lutheran Legacy Foundation and the LCMS Foundation.

The mission of the Siberian Mission Society incorporates two goals:

1. Support Siberian Lutheran pastors as they carry God's Word and sacrament to the many people in Siberia, other parts of Russia, and surrounding countries who need God's saving grace.
2. Underwrite the cost of operating the Novosibirsk Seminary and ensure its long-term survival.

For additional information

about the Siberian Lutheran Mission Society, or the work of the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Novosibirsk, Siberia, please contact:

Rev. Daniel S. Johnson
SLMS President
641 328-4605; danieljohnson356@gmail.com

Rev. Dr. Timothy Quill
Director, SLMS Fundraising
260 580-0812, timothyquill@gmail.com

A Donor's Challenge!

One of our donors is challenging other donors to match his additional donation of **\$20,000** in celebration of the Easter Season.

Will you help meet this challenge?

\$20,000

Use this QR Code to make your donation online. If you write a check, please mark your check notation:

Easter Match Challenge



When you write a check to support the work of the Novosibirsk Seminary, please write Save the Seminary on your check.