

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia (ELCIR)

A Companion Synod with the Northeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA

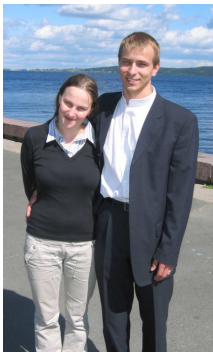
ELCIR Visions for the Future—Where the Northeastern Minnesota Synod ELCA Can Accompany the ELCIR in Ministry in Russia

Helping the Lutheran Church in Russia rebuild and share the Good News of the Gospel and enriching your and your church's faith.

Current Companion Synod Mission Relationships, Involvements and Opportunities:



New Churches—Trained workers is one of the greatest needs in the ELCIR. Our Synod has contributed over \$85,000 to help build an Education Center and New Church Building in Petrozavodsk in the Republic of Karelia, completed Fall, 2011. Other churches in the Synod have partnered to help build a small new church at Birska in the Ural Deanery. Participants on the 2007 Mission Tour helped build a church facility in Läskelä (picture). The Russian government is returning church buildings or land to Lutheran churches, but with the stipulation that they be rebuilt in a fixed period of time—there simply aren't resources to do that. A building is needed for a congregation to avoid being labeled a cult.



Support for Church Worker Salaries, Seminary Scholarships:

There is great need for support for new pastors and increased funding for pastor salaries (some are now as low as \$400/month!), for the ELCIR Youth Committee to support youth ministry workers, and for other church workers—here are terrific and urgent opportunities for accompaniment. Youth Ministry and training of leaders is vital for the future of the ELCIR. The youth ministry work of Nadia and Pastor Alexei Krongolm in the Petrozavodsk congregation and in Karelia is a project of our synod in partnership with EEMN and the Suomi Conference, supported by several partnering Lutheran churches and individuals (*Vision Petrozavodsk* – see web site).



Establishing a Friendship Congregation relationship: Seven churches in our Synod have formal "Friendship Congregation Relationships" with churches in the ELCIR. *This is an excellent way to establish mutually supporting relationships and to personalize support* for Children Summer Camps, Bible Schools, Hunger programs for children and orphanages, Scholarships to attend Educational Centers, Internships of Russian seminary students in Northeastern Minnesota Synod churches, etc. For example, some of the churches partnering to help build the new church in Birska have also supported a "Summer Family and Children's Camp." Bishop Arri Kuggapi has indicated that it would be helpful if more such relationships could be established.



Short-term missions, Ural Deanery: Pastor David and Stephanie Carlson from our Synod are coordinating ministry efforts to the ELCIR churches in Yoshkar-Ola, 500 miles east of Moscow, and other parts of the region, e.g., Birsk, the Ural Deanery. They led 12-person 2-week mission trips in 2005, 2007 and 2011. As a result, churches in our synod give regularly to support priorities identified by the Ural Deanery. These include church building projects in the village of Birsk (complete) and the city of Kazan, and subsidizing the salary of a church workers.



Short term missions—Friendship English Language Camp: The Task Force has partnered with East European Mission Network to participate in **Friendship English Language (Bible) Camps** in Petrozavodsk and Kondopoga (www.eemn.org). Eleven synod members worked with 17 others on the EEMN team May 25-June 14, 2010, interacting with about ≈ 500 youth. Another terrific short-term mission opportunity—consider joining the team in 2012! Contact Paul and Carol Anderson at 218-728-5853, the Synod web site, or www.eemn.org.



Rector Tapio Karjalainen greets guests at the Theological Institute

Mission tours— Pastor Antti and Jane Lepisto led two tours in May and June, 2007, to visit congregations of the Ingrian Lutheran Church. This introduction to the Ingrian Lutheran Church provided an opportunity to visit many of the friendship congregations in Russia and to do some sightseeing in St. Petersburg (contact Lepistos at 218-728-6439).



Visitors from the ELCIR—Exchange visits have led to strong ties of friendship and have deepened our faiths. Nadia and Alex Krongolm visited our Synod April 13-May 6, 2008; Nina Jurttajeva, a Deaconess from Moscow, visited in June, 2006—blessed experiences for everyone. Other visits have included the Bishop of the ELCIR, Arre Kugappi; Tapio and Kaija Karjalainen from the seminary; Pr. Fedor Tulinen and wife Elena, internship at Gethsemane in Virgini

Why ELCIR missions? After years of communism the good news is that that the ELCIR is now being "reborn," from ten congregations in 1993 to ≈ 100 today with a seminary near St. Petersburg. Ministry is focused on strengthening the faith of existing congregations with emphasis on stewardship, discipleship and servant-leadership. But, much of the funding to date has come from churches outside of Russia. The reason is that the income of most members is simply not yet sufficient to provide the needed support. For example, teachers earn about \$400/month, yet the cost of living is similar to ours. There is expectation for an improved economy and the ELCIR is now emphasizing stewardship and self-support, but this will take time. **We can help at this critical time until that happens!**

Many ways to be creatively involved—let the Spirit guide!

Information: Contact the Synod Office at 218-724-4424 and/or see www.nemnsynod.org

"The mission of the Northeastern Minnesota Synod ELCA/Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia Companion Synod Task Force is to facilitate the support and encouragement of the ELCIR and its programs and to foster mutually supporting relationships between ELCIR churches and Lutheran churches in North America."