

Mission support for the ELCIR?

The years of communism decimated the Ingrian Lutheran Church. Half of the members and virtually all pastors were liquidated, many of the remainder dispersed to Siberia and elsewhere. "Saints" kept the faith alive – one was able to get permission to register the church in Petrozavodsk in 1969, the first in the Soviet Union. The good news is that the ELCIR is now being "reborn," from ten congregations in 1993 to 100 today. Ministry is now focused on strengthening the faith of existing congregations with emphasis on stewardship, discipleship and servant-leadership. But, most of the funding to support the ministries of the ELCIR to date has come from churches outside of Russia. The income of most members is simply not adequate to provide self sufficiency (e.g., teachers earn \$4-500/month, yet the cost of living is similar to ours!). There is hope for an improved economy and the ELCIR is emphasizing stewardship, leading to self-support, but this will take much time. Christians like us from outside of Russia can help by walking in ministry with our brothers and sisters in Christ to help that happen—**prayer, exchange visits, mentoring, encouragement, providing much needed interim financial support.**

The partnering initiative described here ("Vision Petrozavodsk") is a response to the fact that the future of ELCIR ministry in Russia is critically dependent on support of youth ministry and young new leaders like Alexei and Nadia at the Petrozavodsk Lutheran church, which serves as the lead ELCIR church in Karelia.

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Youth Ministry— The future of the ELCIR



Budgeted support or contributions designated for "Vision Petrozavodsk" can be sent to:



East European Mission Network
2111 Golf Course Rd SE, Suite C
Rio Rancho, NM 87124

OR

Northeastern Minnesota Synod
1105 East Superior St., Upper Suite
Duluth, MN 55802-2216

OR

The Suomi Conference
2034 Dunedin Ave.
Duluth, MN 55803

Vision Petrozavodsk



**A Christian ministry
partnership with Nadia and
Pastor Alexei Krongolm and
the *Evangelical Lutheran
Church of Ingria in Russia*
(ELCIR) in Petrozavodsk and
Karelia, Russia**

Nadia Krongolm— Nadia, a young public school teacher of English doing youth ministry work at the ELCIR church in Petrozavodsk, was invited by East European Mission Network (EEMN) to help direct the first “Lutheran” Friendship English Language Camp (FELC) in Petrozavodsk, in June, 2004. Those working with her realized that Nadia is gifted and called for youth ministry.



Nadia (center) leading Bible study

A partnering of support (*Vision Petrozavodsk*) has developed so that Nadia is now able to work full time as Director of Youth and Family Ministry at the ELCIR Church in Petrozavodsk. Nadia continues to coordinate the Lutheran FELCs, coordinates a growing spiritually vibrant youth discipleship program, and partners with her husband, Alexei, in youth ministry in Karelia.



Alexei officiating at first Communion service in the new church

Pastor Alexei Krongolm—Alexei, an equally committed and gifted young man called to ministry, graduated from the ELCIR seminary in January, 2007. He served as ELCIR Youth Pastor in Karelia until January 30, 2011, when he was called to serve as Pastor of the ELCIR church in Petrozavodsk (*Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit in Petrozavodsk*). He is supported by the same partnership of churches as Nadia.

Vision Petrozavodsk

What: Intentional ministry partnership of Lutheran congregations, organizations and individuals supporting the ministry of Nadia and Pastor Alexei Krongolm in the ELCIR church in Petrozavodsk and its role as a leading church in Karelia—this accompaniment in ministry has involved exchange ministry visits, youth ministry partnership, financial support. Current “partners” include: Saint James Lutheran Church-Independent (West St. Paul, MN), Trinity Lutheran Church-LCMC (Columbus, NE), First Lutheran Church-ELCA (Duluth, MN), New Life Lutheran Church-LCMC (Duluth, MN), the Suomi (special interest) Conference, and a *Friends of Nadia and Alexei* group— coordinated by:

- EEMN (www.eemn.org) and
- N.E. MN ELCA Synod/ELCIR Companion Synod Task Force (www.nemnsynod.org) by arrangement with the ELCIR.

Vision of Petrozavodsk church: It become a self-sustaining Spirit-filled community of faith and outreach with the Gospel in Word and Deed in Petrozavodsk and Karelia, and, as articulated by the Bishop of the ELCIR, Arri Kuggapi, it become a spiritual leadership “center” for connecting all the churches in Karelia in visioning, programming, training, retreats, etc, with leadership from Alexei and Nadia.

Mission of *Vision Petrozavodsk*:

Accompany Nadia and Pastor Alexei Krongolm and the Petrozavodsk church in their ministry to “rebirth” the congregation as a self-sustaining community of witnessing faith in Petrozavodsk and Karelia.

With new energetic and capable spiritual leadership by Nadia and Pastor Alexei Krongolm and capable lay leaders and a new church building now in place, *the congregation is entering a new period of ministry, uniquely poised at this time for meeting this Goal.*

Invitation to Partnership

Your church, or you as an individual, are invited to consider joining this intentional ministry partnership. Opportunities for accompaniment include:

- ministry funding
- prayer
- exchange visits (e.g., FELCs, youth ministry trips, mentoring, teaching)

Contact Paul Anderson for specifics of opportunities for mission support (see other side).

Immediate financial needs: An attractive and much needed new church building for the Petrozavodsk congregation, funded by churches in Finland and elsewhere, a magnanimous undertaking, was transferred to the congregation October 1, 2011 (at a 400th anniversary celebration of the founding of the ELCIR in Russia!). The building is ideally located near the railroad station and University, surrounded by apartments. **But**, it came with unexpected financial obligations, a seemingly impossible burden. Additional operational resources and salary support for key staff are also needed to provide opportunity for the church to maintain its ministry journey defined by its vision.