

LUTHERAN ENDOWMENT FOR NOVOSARATOVKA SEMINARY (LENS)



LENS Foundation is a non-profit corporation organized exclusively for charitable, religious and educational tax-exempt purposes.

LENS, the *Lutheran Endowment for Novosaratovka Seminary*, was formed in April 2002 to provide financial support to the fledgling Theological Seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Russian village of Novosaratovka. The Theological Seminary is the official educational institution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Central Asia (ELCROS).

The formation of the non-profit LENS Foundation was inspired by the dedicated work of the late Gerhard Krodel, former Dean and Professor of the Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary, and his wife, Joan, whose many years of fund raising have made the seminary possible. The Krodels raised \$1,432,330 to support the early work of the Holy Spirit throughout Russia and the Newly Independent States.

The Lutheran Church across the vast ELCROS geographic area must have seminary-educated people if it is to survive. Donations through LENS support the inspired work and preparation of local Lutheran pastors, seminarians and congregations, and also support invaluable extension training provided by the Novosaratovka Seminary to lay preachers who participate in theological education through a program of two-week seminars.

Our goals are to provide annual student aid to seminarians and operational support, stipends to graduate pastors, and to establish a long-term endowment fund. This is an opportunity to make a real difference in people's lives and in the life of the Lutheran Church.

MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM PRESIDENT

Today I was reflecting on the Lutheran Seminary in Novosaratovka, Russia. It is now just a little over 13 years since the Seminary was officially dedicated, although classes had been held for a few years prior to that. The graduates, both men and women, have gone into the service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (ELCROS) and are serving in parishes across that vast land.

One of them is the Rector of the Seminary and teaches there as well; another is the youngest serving Bishop in European Russia. The graduates are universally respected for their education, their dedication to the service of the Church, their cooperation with the congregations and Bishops, and their eagerness to preach and teach the Gospel to those who hunger for it.

The situation in Russia is not easy at present. The euphoria that followed the collapse of the former U.S.S.R. has been followed by the sometimes difficult reality that things have changed dramatically in government as well as in daily life. The ELCROS and the Seminary live in that new and much more complicated world and are still finding their way. Although the Lutheran Church has been in Russia for centuries, it is still relatively new in its current form. The ELCROS is becoming more locally directed, with not as much assistance from the Evangelical Church in Germany (the EKD) as in the past. The Seminary has revised its curriculum, with a broader offering of short-term courses designed to attract students who may not currently be thinking of the ministry as a vocation, but who might begin to explore that possibility as they get to know and interact with the Seminary students and faculty. This is an experiment and it will take some time before its consequences can be evaluated.



As with all institutions of higher learning all over the world, money is an ongoing concern. A steady flow of cash is needed to pay the wages of faculty and staff, to supply food and housing for the students, to pay the utility bills, stock and maintain the library and so on and on. We at LENS have committed ourselves to contribute \$40,000 a year to the Seminary. We have been attempting to raise that annual gift to \$50,000, but that goal has so far not been possible.

I remember years ago, when my husband, Gerhard, and I began the project of asking for money to re-establish a Lutheran Seminary in Russia. There was a great deal of excitement as sites were suggested and rejected

and then, at last, the property in Novosaratovka became available. It was purchased and the extensive rebuilding and renovation began in order to make a new home for the Seminary. The contributions came flowing in, with God's rich blessing on our endeavors, and it was possible to build a new building also, the Kaethe Luther House, for faculty apartments and offices. We were thrilled and humbled that the grand total of gifts came to \$1,432,330 (which included some funds for St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Vladivostok, Russia). That excitement came to an end when the Seminary opened and classes began and we were faced with the more mundane challenge of raising money to keep the Seminary in operation. LENS was formed to take over that part of the work. It's not as exciting, but every bit as necessary as the initial fund-raising.



*Christmas 2002.
St. Nikolai Lutheran, Novgorod*

All of you who are receiving and reading this issue of the newsletter are doing so because you have demonstrated an interest in our work. Perhaps you were one of the first contributors when the project was new, perhaps you heard about it later and wanted to be of help. Whatever the case, I hope that you will continue to support the Seminary and its vital work for the ELCROS. Please share this newsletter with at least one friend or relative and ask that he or she join us. We will happily send you more copies if you wish to circulate them among a larger group. If I can be of any help, if you have any questions that I might be able to answer, please feel free to contact me at the following address: Joan Krodel, 2135 Mummasburg Road, Gettysburg, PA 17325; Email address is: jkrodel@comcast.net.

Without your help, there would be no Lutheran Seminary re-established in Russia.

Without your help, there may no longer be a Lutheran Seminary in Russia.

Thank you very much for your kind attention, Yours in Christ,

Joan Krodel,
Interim President LENS Foundation

I was filled with optimism and excitement as I got off the plane. It was on the 1st of September 2001, and I had arrived in St. Petersburg to begin my internship as a part of the ELCA Horizon Internship Program. While there was no one to meet me at the airport (or even at the church when I arrived), it didn't matter - I was returning to the country I had fallen in love with while a student at St. Olaf, and I would be contributing to the development of the Lutheran church as it re-emerged after 70 years of repression. It would be just one year, but I was aiming to make the most of it. I planned to learn about the church, develop good relationships with fellow seminarians and with my supervisors (one from the ELCA and another from Germany), and to be of use in the congregations (first in St. Petersburg and then in Novgorod).

That single year commitment to the church in Russia has now stretched into its second decade. Both in the congregation and at the seminary in Novosaratovka there were many moments that inspired and many others that brought disappointment. And now I begin a new ministry in that harsh and beautiful land that is Siberia. While my optimism and excitement have been tempered a bit by a more realistic picture of life here, I still feel very grateful to have the opportunity to serve in the country that has become my second home.

- Bradn Burkle

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Alexander Gross is a graduate of the first years of the seminary's existence. He is now a pastor serving in the Ukraine. He lives in Odessa on the Black Sea, but plans to move to the village of Petrodolina (village close to Odessa) once the building is completed. He is a Pastor of two small congregations, and also works for a youth center, which was created from youth initiative in 2002. He has worked very hard to create a Bible school in the youth center. And he is also the President of the Synod too. Alexander happily states, "It makes my life very busy."



Vladimir Povorov is a Pastor in Uljanovsk and President of General Synod in Russia. Alexander Gross and Vladimir cooperate and provide support for youth col-workers through the youth center.

Eugenij Lukinov was a pastor for 10 years in Omsk, Sibiria, and will now serve another congregation.

Ruslan Semenjukov is in the Kaliningrad area, serving as a Pastor in Chernjachovsk.

Anton Tikhomirov is the Seminary President and Rector.

Alexander Gross concludes the updates with "Mostly of us really serve God in church".

2012 SEMINARY MODULAR CLASSES

2012

February 1st -11th

The Lutheran Pastor – Father? Priest? Professional? (Pastoral Theology and Ethics). pastor G. Hechler,

February 15th -25th

Who's afraid of Global Warming in the Coldest Country on Earth Ecological Ethics Pastor M. Haasler, Professor A. Kull

February 29th – March 10th

The Church Law and Relationships With Russian and Foreign Partners of Our Churches. Pastor E. Zheids, Pastor PhD R. Stahl, PhD L. Pankrarova

March 14th -28th

"Justice and Transformation" Prophets. Apocalyptic Literature. PhD B. Tikhomirov, Pastor PhD E. Albrecht

April 2nd -14th

"The Sower Soweth The Word" (Mk 4:14) Social World of the Bible, and Methods of Exegesis. Exegesis of Mark Pastor PhD Y. Bondarenko,

April 18th -28th

Tones of the Primordial Harmony. History of Church Music and Hymns. Pastor N. Hintz, lecturer G. Varshavskiy, Pastor PhD A. Tikhomirov

May 2nd -16th

Are we in communion with one another? Lutheranism in the ecumenical perspective Pastor PhD A. Tikhomirov, Pastor N. Hintz,

May 21st -June 1st

Gospel and Ritual. History, Theology and Practice of Evangelical-Lutheran Worship II. Pastor G. von Bremen, Pastor PhD A. Tikhomirov

June 4th -16th

Ecumenism yesterday and today Pastor PhD W. Fleischmann,

June 18th -30th

Place, Which Does Not Exist. Time, Which Does Not Exist. Utopia, Anti-utopia and the Kingdom of God. Pastor PhD A. Tikhomirov, Pastor PhD W. Slenczka

The following courses need additional teachers:

"I Will Cast a Net According to Your Word."

The Lutheran Pastor--Father? Priest? Professional?

"The Sower Soweth the Word" (Mark 4:14)

Ecumenism Yesterday and Today

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