



RZHEV MEMORIAL

A memorial was unveiled this year as part the 75th anniversary celebrations to mark the end of World War II, called the Great Patriotic War in Russia. The 85-foot bronze statue of a soldier that stands on a 32-foot mound commemorates a series of conflicts near the city of Rzhev west of Moscow along the Volga river.

The conflicts in this area are considered some of costliest during the war and were a pivotal turning point during the war.



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On the Road: meeting and teaching



Left: Rev. Jerry Lawson presents at the outreach conference held at Yoshkar-Ola, Russia.

Above: On the road in Russia

COVID had limited my ability these past few months. Teaching at the Theological Institute, interacting with churches in the St. Petersburg area, and interacting with visiting pastors has been much of my knowledge base about the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia (ELCIR) Recently though, travel restrictions in Russia were lifted internally and this enabled me to travel last month through the Volga River Valley region with the ELCIR Bishop Ivan Laptev and other ELCIR members to visit Lutheran churches, meet pastors and church members, and participate in the worship of these Volga communities. It was a trip of more than 2,400 miles over nine days.

The Volga River, the longest river in Europe, flows through Central Russia into the Caspian Sea. Historically this river was important

in moving people from all directions of the compass. And, because of this movement many different people and religions settled along the Volga's shore in cities established nearly 1,000 years ago.

Among the people on this journey I met a young man who is a Chuvash, who shared with me his conversion to Christianity and his excitement about starting theological training this fall. I also met a farmer who is a Mari who asked me about farming in America. Thankfully, I had farmland photos on my phone of places I had traveled through when sharing this ministry with churches.

I stayed at a farm for people who had nowhere to go, because of using drugs, or alcohol, or were released from prison. This farm provided a Christian home for them. They gathered each morning in devotion and prayer.

Continued on the back



Stained-glass window, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Kazan, Russia

PLEASE PRAY:

For the new and returning students who begin classes next month at the Lutheran Theological Institute in Russia

For those who are struggling physically, financially, and emotionally right now that God's blessing be upon them during their trials.

For the Lutheran Theological Institute in Russia that their efforts to train church workers bear plentiful workers to harvest in the Lord's fields.

GIVE THANKS FOR:

the opportunities our Savior gives us to share His love with all those we interact with each day

On the Road



Above: Aleksander Malischev is blessed as a catechist before he begins his theological studies.



Right: Dinner at the family camp held at St. Luke's Lutheran Church Rzhev, Russia.

continued

I was able to be part of these Volga churches' life in worship and celebration. I saw the blessing of a congregation's new place of worship. I went to a camp where families gathered to learn about God's Word together. And I studied with another group of people at a church retreat that met to learn on how to reach their neighbors with the Gospel.

And with them I shared how our Lutheran confessions can help.

The journey opened my eyes to the ministry needs of the churches in Russia. It helped put into perspective better why I serve our Lord here. And I'm truly thankful for your prayers and support have enabled me to serve Him.



Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:13



Rev. Jerry Lawson



There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at lcms.org/service. Click on "Service Opportunities."

To support the LCMS through the work of *Jerry Lawson*, you may send a tax-deductible gift to: Mission Central 40718 Highway E-16 Mapleton, IA 51034 or The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod P.O. Box 66861 St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

Make checks payable to Mission Central or The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Mark checks "Support of Jerrald Lawson/Russia."

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