

*“This I do for the Gospel’s sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.”
(1 Corinthians 9:23)*

REM’s newsletter is a quarterly publication of Russian Evangelistic Ministries, Inc., an independent, fundamental Christian ministry established in 1993 to represent and aid the persecuted church of the International Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists in the former Soviet Union. The ministry supports church-planting efforts in Siberia, the Far East, Central Asia, and the Caucasus through indigenous pastors and evangelists who require a monthly support of \$200. The ministry also helps churches to construct church buildings at the cost of \$3,000 - \$15,000.

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The war zone in Nagorno-Karabakh

The Lord allowed Christians in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh to go through a bloody war. Mothers with children who fled the war zone in Nagorno-Karabakh found a temporary shelter in the church building in Yerevan, Armenia. Some of their husbands stayed back to help the wounded, bury the dead, and, most importantly, share about Christ with the soldiers and those who stayed behind. Now, believers in Armenia are trying to address the housing needs of the refugees by attending to their needs. Please pray for the families impacted by this war.



Prayer Needs:



Church building, Shakhty, Russia

Dear brothers and sisters!

In recent months, we have noticed an uptick in the number of claims from various government agencies in Russia against church properties. We are seeing this trend in Arkhangelsk, Tula, and Shakhty.

The authorities are attempting to challenge the legal status of church properties by looking for the slightest deviations in legal documents to immediately launch legal action and cause injury to the churches. Please pray that the Lord would protect the church property that belongs to His people in Russia. May the Lord protect His elect!

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MERRY CHRISTMAS!

*“And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.”
(Mtt. 2:6)*

Dear friends, brothers and sisters in Christ!

By the grace of our Lord, we once again welcome the beautiful celebration of Christ’s birth. The chaos and

anxieties of the current days must not overshadow the joy of the saved. This holiday is full of bright hope, heavenly consolation and was ushered in by angelic proclamation: «Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!»

Our Savior, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, was born in a small provincial town of Bethlehem. And this is a noteworthy fact. It would have been understandable if the King, Priest and Prophet, was born in the royal chambers of the capital city. However, evil Herod reigned in Jerusalem at that time, heretic Sadducees took over the priesthood and the word of prophecy had grown silent. The capital city had lost its right and even the capacity to welcome the Messiah under its arches.

The role of Bethlehem in the Christmas story shows us that God chooses His own capitals and His own places of importance. And, as a rule, they are very different from what is esteemed highly by men. Power and wealth – the concentration of these basic conditions – make one place or another significant for most people. The only criterion of significance in the spiritual world is the presence of God: this is what makes a place great and significant. Whether it is the steppe where Ja-

cob spent the night, which was called Bethel (the house of God) or the desert where the Lord spoke to Moses.

It was the little town of Bethlehem that became the capital of the world on Christmas Day. It was from Bethlehem that the Light came to give light to the Gentiles. Bethlehem became the frontline that could no longer be overcome by darkness. To the contrary, the power of darkness began to recede and fall back in retreat. The One who was born in Bethlehem will surely complete His victorious march to the end! The only place that is truly important is the place where God is present! The only work that is important is the one that bears the fingerprint of God!

It is a special blessing to recognize that every place where the Gospel is preached today in the world becomes meaningful, it becomes a Bethlehem, because that is where darkness flees and the repentant hears of sinners become manglers in which the Savior is born! Dear friends, we must be mindful not to forget that we are not strangers to Bethlehem, we are partakers of the great and most important mission in this world – to share the Gospel!

May you and your family have a very blessed and joyous Merry Christmas and a Happy 2021 Year!

In Christ,

Rev. Vladimir A. Okhotin
REM’s Founder and President.



Church and visitors, Arkhangelsk, Russia, November 2020

Persecution against the church in Arkhangelsk, Russia



Pastor Aleksey Stepanov
with his Family

Urgent Situation in Arkhangelsk!

The local church is being persecuted by the local authorities!

The pastor of the church, Aleksey Stepanov, moved to Arkhangelsk 20 years ago to preach the Gospel and plant a church. Over the years, a full-fledged church came into being; they built their own church building; the church commissioned three families from its midst to relocate to other parts of the Arkhangelsk region as missionaries. On April 5, 2003, the first church building in Arkhangelsk (made of wood) was set on fire. The church was able to rebuild.

But today, the Arkhangelsk church is being persecuted again. The authorities are demolishing the second church building, which is made of brick.



Appeal to All Christians

«And shall not God avenge his own elect,
which cry day and night...»
Luke 18:7

AN URGENT APPEAL

On behalf of the International Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian
Baptists (IUCECB)

To all Christians redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ!
To all children of God! To all Christians throughout the world!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

We ask you to raise your voices in prayer and to lift up your hands to the Lord of Heaven and Earth for the protection of Pastor Aleksey B. Stepanov, his large family of 8 children, and the church building in Arkhangelsk, Russia.

As we write this, the church and the house in which the pastor's family lives is being demolished. The authorities obtained a court order to demolish part of the house, and they have begun to implement that order. The pastor's family had presented the court with valid documents confirming legal ownership of the building and the land, but the court disregarded the evidence and ruled arbitrarily against Christians to deprive the pastor's family of their building and the land.

Christians in Arkhangelsk are being persecuted for their faith. All government authorities and public institutions in the city of Arkhangelsk, Russia are working in a coordinated and concerted manner against believers to implement this evil plan. The legal rights of the Christian believers and of the Stepanov family are being publicly violated.

However, we, as children of God, are commanded to:

1. Pray to our Heavenly God for protection.
2. Petition those in authority on behalf of our fellow brothers and sisters.

We urge you to exercise these God-given rights! Let us call upon the Lord and bring to the throne of grace the church in Arkhangelsk! He is mighty to defend His elect who cry out to Him day and night!

We also urge you to petition the government officials of the Russian Federation.

Petition Service in Arkhangelsk, Russia

On November 16, Christians representing local churches across Russia and Ukraine gathered at the central city square in Arkhangelsk, Russia, in front of government buildings, to hold a petition service in defense of the church building being demolished by local authorities. The Christian brass orchestra played during this service. All participants of this courageous ministry were filled with a spirit of strength, love and fearlessness.



Evangelism in Belarus

The evangelists in Belarus show great zeal in sharing the Gospel with their countrymen. Believers in the city of Homel have rolled out a great outreach to different groups. This outreach is not a series of one-off services, but rather a consistent and targeted daily outreach to local residents.

These children can still see. However, in a few months, they will lose their eyesight permanently. That's the diagnosis, and it's relentless. These children were urgently placed in this specialized institution to learn how to live as a blind person. Believers take the opportunity to also tell them about Jesus.



Blind children are gathered at this special institution from all over the country.

Believers make sure that these children hear the Gospel. This ministry is conducted on a regular basis.



This year, the church in the city of Homel held three evangelistic services for people with disabilities. The services were attended by up to 500 people at a time, who carefully listened to the presentation of the Gospel. The evangelists do not lose contact with the people and continue to visit and fellowship with them in their homes.



This zealous work produces generous results. Many people have turned to the Lord in repentance and later baptized.

