



2020–2022 MISSION GRANT DEVOTION

#9 CHRIST'S MERCY IN RUSSIA — LCMS RSO — \$5,000

Leader: Under the Communist rule in Russia, religion was suppressed for 70 years. But starting in 1992, the LCMS has been working with three other Lutheran groups, **The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia, The Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church, and The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Russia and Other States.** In Novosibirsk, Russia, a **Pregnancy Counseling and Family Support Program** is reaching out to the community and to the unchurched with pastoral care. They are offering the people of Novosibirsk spiritual guidance for marriage, addiction, and general spiritual counsel as well as pregnancy counseling. The need is tremendous. The abortion rate in Russia is 480 abortions for every 1,000 live births. The suppression of Christian values is quite evident in the culture.

R1: *Come unto me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls (Matthew 11:28, 29).*

Leader: The mission of **Hope Center** in St. Petersburg, Russia, is to spread Christian knowledge about salvation, sanctity of human life, marriage, and family. It does this through counseling services, computer training for women, development, and distribution of educational materials, supporting single moms, and organized educational meetings. These activities are aimed at speaking about God's love and expanding human resources. Any person, regardless of gender, confession, or age is welcome at **Hope Center** which is located next to the main church of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia.

R2: *Truly I tell you, whatever you did for the one of the least of these brothers and sister of min, you did or me (Matthew 25:40).*

Leader: The two-fold work of this mission grant is **mercy toward those in desperate need**, both physically and spiritually, and **support for the people looking to improve their lives** through education and a better understanding of how God's Word can help them in their day-to-day living. God alone is the answer to the struggles that we face in this world.

R3: *Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the sojourners, he upholds the widow and the fatherless; but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin (Psalms 146:5-9).*

All: Lord, we lift to You the people of Russia who have endured many generations of spiritual oppression. We pray Your mercy and grace on them and the missionaries who work among them to restore their trust and faith in You. Bless the Hope Center and the Pregnancy Counseling and Family Support Center in Russia. Send your Spirit to touch the hearts of those who hear Your Word to accept it as the truth that will set them free. Encourage the workers when they grow weary; empower them to speak boldly of Your love to all people. Bless the mite offerings that will be sent to support this mission grant. We ask this in Your mighty name, Lord Jesus. Amen.