

**NW Washington Synod – ELC of European Russia(ELCER)
1998-2018**

1988 - A small ecumenical committee in Seattle explores a possible relationship with churches in then Leningrad, an idea supported by the Church Council of Greater Seattle. A Russian Orthodox delegation from Leningrad, other exchanges follow, and the St. Petersburg-Seattle Sister Churches Program is born. Bishop Knutson and his assistant Paul Bartling visit St. Petersburg. Rather than partner with an Orthodox church, Pastor Wes Howell of Grace L.C. in Bellevue, WA decides to support the Lutheran Church in Russia, which is struggling mightily to reestablish itself after perestroika.

1998 – Grace, Bellevue connects with St. Peter & Paul L.C. in St. Petersburg and a delegation of 16 travels to “St. Petri”.

1999- Seattle Sister Churches Program’s Russia Delegation Visit includes two young people from St. Petri, one of them, Tatjana Wagner, is later hosted by a Grace member to study at Pacific Lutheran Seminary.

2000 – Pastor Howell and Eva Mader speak at NWWA Synod Assembly, encourage congregations to partner with ELCER congregations.

2001 – Bishop Siegfried Springer and Pastor Gottfried Spieth visit from the ELCER office in Moscow, attend the NWWA Synod Assembly, with Bishop Springer giving the opening address. Chris Boerger is elected Bishop. Bishop Springer, Pastor Howell, and Eva Mader meet with reps from many congregations who inquire about partnering with a Lutheran congregation in European Russia. Bishop Springer appoints Eva Mader to be congregation-to-congregation coordinator.

2002 – Pastor Howell and Bishop Boerger lead Synod trip to Russia, Boerger preaches at the Lutheran Peter & Paul Cathedral in Moscow, delegation attends ELCER synod assembly near Moscow, delegates from various NWWA congregations meet delegates from numerous Russian congregations. Those who are partnered accompany their partner to home church. Also in attendance from Tallin is Bishop Maier, the ELCA Global Mission Representative for E. and Central Europe. Eva Mader remains in Russia for four weeks, travels South to congregations in the Caucasus (Krasnodar and outlying regions up to the Black Sea), Kazan in the East, St. Petersburg in the North and Kaliningrad in the West.

2003 – Renate Schweizer from the Moscow office visits NWWA synod. Pastor Alexander Scheiermann (Saratov)Pastor Markus Schoch (Samara)Yana Aisetova (ELCER Youth Director)Pastor Bradn Buerkle (Novgorod)Tamara Tatsenko (St. Petri/St. Petersburg)

2004- From Russia: Pastor Scheiermann, Saratov, two members from Krasnodar to Trinity ,Lynnwood, Renate Schweizer from Moscow. Eva Mader ‘s winter visit : St. Petersburg, then on to Kaliningrad to attend the ELCER Synod Assembly and on to Volgograd and Elista with Renate Schweizer.

2005 – Delegation trip: 7 partnered congregations visit partners in ELCER, Neal and Judy Snider tour the Caucasus doing bible study. Pastor Scheiermann and one intern from Krasnodar (2 months at Trinity,Lynnwood) visit Seattle from Russia.

2006 – Dean Osterwald from Kaliningrad and two partners visit partner congregations in NW. While on a river cruise, Eva Mader meets with Bishop Springer in Moscow and friends at St. Petri in St. Petersburg.

Up to this point, focus has been on congregation to congregation partnerships. The largest number -16 congregations of roughly 100 in the NWWA synod – are partnered . (This number slowly *declines to 6*

by 2018.) **Team Russia** is established as the new synod task force by Bishop Boerger, Pastor Wes Howell serves as chairperson. This is to strengthen Synod-to-Synod relations. The Synod Russia Fund is established to help support ELCER, particularly itinerant pastors.

2007 – Bishop Springer ,Moscow,addresses NWWA Synod Assembly. To Russia: Pastor Howell, Eva Mader and members from 4 partner congregations. Howell & Mader meet with Bishop Springer’s successor, Dr. Edmund Ratz.

2008 – To Russia: four partner congregations are visited. From Russia: Pastor Scheiermann visits partner in Seattle and tours to raise funds for construction of new church in Saratov. Renate Schweizer from Moscow meets with partners. Pastor Tatjana Wagner is keynote speaker at synod auction, two accompany her from St. Petri.

Synod wide auction to support Synod Russia Fund, raises \$20,000.

2009 – Pastor Howell and Eva Mader attend cluster meeting for Russia Companion Synods, held August 5,6 in Minneapolis.

2010 –two members from Russia visit partners. A delegation, including 3 Lutherans, from Church Council of Greater Seattle, attends ecumenical meeting in St. Petersburg.

2011 – Pastor Howell , Eva Mader,staff member from church in Silvana to Russia, Moscow office and St. Petersburg.

2012 – Bishop Dietrich Brauer and Dean Lena Bondarenko from Moscow speak at NWWA Synod Assembly, meet with Bishop Boerger and visit some partner congregations. Pastor Scheiermann comes to Seattle. As Pastor Howell leaves the NWWA Synod, Ken Grigsby from Oak Harbor L.C. assumes chair of Team Russia.

2013 – To Russia: Delegation trip Ken Grigsby, Eva Mader plus 6 partners are joined by Pastor Howell and 5 others from the Eastern Washington/Idaho Synod.

2014 – Pastor Scheiermann visits from Russia, attends a Team Russia meeting.

2015 – Vera Tkach, ELCER Youth Coordinator, attends ELCA Youth Gathering, then comes to visit partner in Monroe, WA, meets with Bishop Kirby.

2016 – Council member from St. Petri visits Grace in Bellevue. Eva Mader takes grandson to St. Petersburg, spends time with partner friends.

2017 –In March a small delegation led by Bishop Unti and Ken Grigsby plus 3 meet with Bishop /Archbishop Brauer and staff in Moscow, visit partners, while Bishop Unti goes to Togliatti to meet Pastor Tatjana Zhivodjorova and the “KIT kids”. In Sept. Eva Mader meets Pastor Tatjana in St. Petersburg to discuss a fund-raising project for the NWWA synod to help support KIT, a project she started and runs to provide aid to youth and kids with mental and physical disabilities.

Eva also meets with Bradn Buerkle to discuss sending a candidate for a pastoral care internship summer 2019.

Additional comments: During 2013/14 Ken Grigsby and Eva Mader become members of the NWWA Synod Global Mission Committee, until it is disbanded. Funds raised during these last 20 years from *partnered congregations for their partners in Russia*: approximately \$350,000 , *synod-wide donations to the Synod Russia fund*: \$40,362.