



Faith and Hope

a newsletter of the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church

December 2020



Bishop Vsevolod Lytkin

Dear Beloved in Christ;

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on."

"Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"

When the early Christians gathered in the catacombs, they were not necessarily hiding from oppressive authorities, they were gathering around the bones of those who would rise on the Last Day, upon Christ's return. They wanted to be close to their loved ones and the saints who had gone before them. That is why the Sanctus is sung following the Proper Preface to the liturgy of the Holy Sacrament. Every divine liturgy, as well as every Christian funeral, is a testimony of faith in the resurrection of the dead. However, when a beloved priest, pastor, deacon, or father in the faith is taken from us to be with the *"angels and archangels and all the company of heaven,"* we are saddened. We weep for ourselves! Their example of living

by faith; their skill in teaching the faith; their confidence in the forgiveness of sin, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting is put on full display for all to see, as we remain on this side of the resurrection holding onto the promise. Yet, the resurrection promise is not an empty promise! The promise gives us hope and hope gives confidence. *"Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, because the one who made the promises is reliable."* (Hebrews 10:23)

Deacon Vadim Raskin served in the parish of Saint James the Apostle in Novokuznetsk. He died unexpectedly on Thursday, November 12. The Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church issued this statement concerning the death of Deacon Vadim.

Deacon Vadim at Eternal Rest!

This is a terrible time in which we live, it seems that death surrounds us from all sides, invades our life, and constantly accompanies us -- so much so, that we certainly must have gotten used to it by now. But we cannot! We can't get used to death. She catches us by surprise every time. She seems to pick us off one-by-one, seeming to choose only the best people. I do not know why it is so. I have no answer to the question, "Why?"

And so, all I can do is to believe -- to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We all are given to believe, not abstractly, as pagans "believe"; but believe in Jesus Christ as Savior. We can strive to go where He is present to save -- to the church, to the altar.

Father Vadim had a long path to Christ and to the Church, but the grace of God led him and brought him, and he came, and became a pious parishioner, and was ordained into the diaconate. He proclaimed the Gospel to those who were near and who were far, and many through him learned about our Savior, many followed him into the Church.

The Gospel and the Church were the greatest treasure for Father Vadim, himself. And the most important thing that I will remember about him -- and I will remember -- is how he always aspired to



Vadim Raskin

the Church, how he served the Church.

How many Christians in the world are striving to Church with all their might?

How many parishioners do we have in our parishes who are striving to Church with all their might? In other words, for how many is the Gospel, the Liturgy, the Eucharist the main treasure?

If only - Oh, if only! - we all loved the Eucharist as much as Father Vadim loved it!

And the Lord said: *Truly, I say to you... he who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*

This is His word, and He will not deny His words. Amen.



Timothy Quill (Director of Fundraising for the SLMS and General Secretary of the International Lutheran Council) writes concerning Deacon Vadim:

Deacon Vadim was blessed to share in two vocations. As a medical doctor he would have known what it means to tell people, "I'm so very sorry, but there is nothing more I can do." Then, as a deacon he could tell them, "But there is **so much I can do!**" and he proceeds to distribute Christ through his eternal life-giving Word and through the medicine of immortality.

Deacon Vadim was ordained on December 4, 2016. He continued to serve in both his secular

vocation as a doctor and as a deacon in the church until the day his Lord claimed him to join the angels and archangels and all the company of heaven before the throne of the Lamb.

Please pray for the parishioners of St. James the Apostle Parish in Novokuznetsk and Bishop Vsevolod Lytkin who mourn the loss of their beloved deacon, and for the clergy of the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church, as they travel long distances to serve parishes during the approaching winter. ❄️❄️❄️

This "Faith and Hope" newsletter is published by: The Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC). Her bishop, Vsevolod Lytkin, serves St. Andrew congregation in Novosibirsk where the SELC continues to grow and be a place where the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached, and the Holy Sacraments provided for sinners seeking forgiveness and healing of body and soul. This edition of the Faith and Hope newsletter is edited, reformatted and distributed by [The Siberian Lutheran Mission Society \(SLMS\)](#), a Recognized Service Organization (RSO) of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LC-MS).

In this newsletter, the members of the SELC reveal their faith and hopes. They are Siberian Russians seeking an answer to challenges and problems in their lives. They are a people who have been called by Christ in the healing waters of Holy Baptism and fed by the holy precious food of His body and blood. They may speak a different language, but they are all baptized in the name of the same LORD and eat and drink the same Jesus. These are a people who know the mission of the Church – a mission which begins and finds its conclusion in the Word and Sacraments properly administered. We invite you to read this newsletter with a prayer of divine grace for our Lutheran brothers and sisters in Siberia. Their challenges in a land of pagan Buddhism, shamanism, and atheism is great. Your prayers and continuing support is appreciated.

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