

PROVISIONAL ITINERARY
PC(USA) Peacemaking Travel Study Seminar to Russia

St. Petersburg, Davydovo, Moscow and Smolensk
May 23 – June 4, 2016

This 13-day trip (including 2 travel days) includes 2 nights in St. Petersburg, 2 nights each in the villages of Davydovo and Smolensk, 4 nights in Moscow and 1 night on an overnight train. Participants will be away for one Sunday.

DAY 0, MONDAY, MAY 23– Travel Day, Depart U.S.

Participants will depart from US locations to St. Petersburg (LED). Flights will be overnight with arrivals into St. Petersburg on Tuesday.

DAY 1, TUESDAY, MAY 24 – Arrive St. Petersburg

Participants will arrive to St. Petersburg and be shuttled to the hotel to settle-in and rest. Depending upon arrival times, there will be optional sightseeing, museum visits and a walking tour of churches on Nevsky Prospect.

DAY 2, WEDNESDAY, MAY 25 – St. Petersburg

We'll spend the morning at [The Hermitage](#), Catherine the Great's winter palace and one of the great museums of the world. Our time there will focus on the masters, including the Rembrandt, Rubens and the Impressionists. In the afternoon we'll visit the offices of the [Christian Interchurch Diaconal Council](#) of St. Petersburg to hear about the challenges of the church during Soviet Times and the witness of the church today through its social ministry. We'll also visit with Bradn Burkle, an American Lutheran pastor serving the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Russia as director of their distance learning program, "Equipping to Serve". We'll learn about their work to build a model for seminary education that fits post Soviet society and meets the needs of the church. We'll have dinner near St. Isaac's cathedral, with an optional climb to the Colonnade for a panoramic view of the city.

DAY 3, THURSDAY, MAY 26 – St. Petersburg

In the morning we'll get an introduction to Russia through artwork at [The Russian Museum](#), which provides glimpses of Russian history and culture through the centuries. Around the corner from the Russian Museum is the [Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood](#). The church, which was constructed on the sight of Alexander II's assassination, is covered with elaborate mosaics. Open for worship for only a short period time, it was closed in 1932 and used for storage. The damage of neglect during the Soviet period and damage during the war required extensive renovations. We'll have some additional time in the afternoon to enjoy the city and finish with dinner before boarding an overnight train from St. Petersburg to Moscow.

DAY 4, FRIDAY, MAY 27 – From Rostov to Davydovo

After an early morning arrival in Moscow we'll transfer to the morning express train to Rostov. The city of Rostov, also known as Velikiy Rostov (or Great Rostov), is one of the oldest cities in Russia, and was an early and important center of Orthodoxy. It is one of the cities of the Golden Ring, a series of ancient towns north and east of Moscow that played a role in the formation of the Russian Orthodox Church. The city was ravaged by the Mongols in the 13th and 14th centuries, and then by the Poles in the 17th century. Following the Polish attack, their great Kremlin was begun. In our tour of Rostov, we will visit the Kremlin, and several monasteries, engaging in conversation with Abbesses and Abbots. We'll stop at Borisoglebsky monastery en route to our next stop, Davydovo.

DAY 5, SATURDAY, MAY 28 – The Village of Davydovo

We'll spend the day in the small village of Davydovo. Its parish church, which closed in 1935 and was used during Soviet times for storage, as a movie theater and even as a dance club, has been revitalized in the past twenty years under the leadership of Father Vladimir Klimzo. Today Father Vladimir, a former guitar builder, leads the parish in their outreach to the village children, troubled youth, and to families with special needs children. New models are developing in this tiny village of 74 people. A folk music society in the village is reclaiming the folk traditions of this region. Come sit at the table in Davydovo, drink tea with the community, and witness how the community is being restored through the church.

DAY 6, SUNDAY, MAY 29 – Davydovo

We'll worship with the Davydovo congregation in the morning and have lunch and afternoon visits with their members. We'll catch the evening train from Rostov to Moscow, our next stop.

DAY 7, MONDAY, MAY 30 – Moscow

We'll start the day with sightseeing, including [Red Square](#), the [Alexander Garden](#), and the [Moscow Kremlin](#). In the afternoon we'll visit The Cathedral of Moscow, the Church of Christ the Savior (<http://www.xxc.ru/english/index.htm>), which was destroyed in 1931 so that Stalin could build a mammoth Palace of the Soviets. The property had a variety of uses in Soviet times but the church regained the site in the 1990s. In the afternoon we'll visit the Gallery of Ilya Glazunov, a Christian artist that lived through the Soviet period, and has captured the suffering of Russia both during the Mongol period and more modern times. We'll end the day with an event boat tour on the Moscow River.

DAY 8, TUESDAY, MAY 31 – Moscow

Today we'll learn about the history and ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Russia. We'll meet with the leadership of St. Peter and Paul Lutheran Church and Archbishop Dietrich Brauer, the first Russian born and educated Archbishop since the collapse of the Soviet Union. We'll visit the refugee center of the Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy, housed in the basement of Saints Peter and Paul Lutheran Church. We'll end the day with an evening prayer service with the congregation, followed by tea and conversation.

DAY 9, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1 – Smolensk

We'll take an early morning train to Smolensk, another ancient city of Russia, situated on the border of Belarus. A guardian of Russia's border through the centuries, Smolensk has seen repeated wars. We'll visit the Central Baptist Church of Smolensk, where the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been in partnership for nearly 20 years. We'll meet with members of the congregation to learn what it meant to be Baptist during Soviet times. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the church had choices to make and challenges to face. How would they respond to those who had persecuted them? How would they reach out to those who suffered? How would they rebuild their educational programs and ministries? We'll also tour Smolensk on this day. Accommodations for the group will be at the church's camp facilities outside the city.

DAY 10, THURSDAY, JUNE 2 – Smolensk

We'll continue our tour of the church's work in Smolensk with a visit to their drug rehabilitation center and their "post-orphanage" ministry. We'll take a trip to see the [Katyn Forest](#), one of the killing fields of the Soviet Union and burial grounds for thousands.

DAY 11, FRIDAY, JUNE 3 – Return to Moscow

We'll leave Smolensk on an early morning train back to Moscow. Our final day will be a relaxed one with time for shopping and additional site seeing. We'll recap our experience and share plans to interpret our experience to our congregations and communities when we return. We'll end our day with a traditional Russian feast.

Day 12, SATURDAY, JUNE 4 – Shuttle to airport

We'll provide shuttle transportation to the airport for departures. You may fly out of (VKO), (SVO) or (DME)