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Boat-church sets off for annual Siberian missionary trip - (VIDEO)



Priests, doctors, and social workers have teamed up again for a unique mission trip along the Ob River in central Russia.

The missionaries plan to visit 45 remote settlements in this 23rd annual voyage of the Apostle Andrew the First- Called missionary ship, reports [Vesti Novosibirsk](#).

The clergy meet with Orthodox faithful in the lightly-populated areas who are in need of spiritual support and Church Sacraments. The initiative for organizing the missionary voyages belongs to the Church.

“This is very important and joyful, because it is a definite symbol of how we can do good works together,” commented His Eminence Metropolitan Nikodim of Novosibirsk and Berdsk at the send-off after serving a moleben.

“We are sending the missionary ship on another trip, which is called not only to bear the Word of God, but also to work mercy—to provide medical care and social support to the population. God is love, says the apostle John the Theologian. And these labors are a symbol of our love,” the hierarch said, reports the press service of the [Metropolia of Novosibirsk](#).

The metropolitan also reminded that there are still many settlements in the region where there is no church, where people do not see an Orthodox priest for years. The mission allows these simple believers to participate in the life of the Church, in the Church of St. Andrew on the ship, to confess, and to commune.

The priests also typically bless the villagers’ homes.

The medical team onboard includes cardiologists, diagnosticians, ophthalmologists, therapists, oncologists, and other specialists, who take up to 200 patients a day. Some they are able to help on the spot, and some they advise how to seek further help.

According to Olga Gusarevich, the head of the medical team: “Last year, we identified 6 cases of cancer in the early stages. We sent them to the regional hospital; all the diagnoses were confirmed and they all found help.

More than 100,000 people have received medical and social assistance over the course of the ships’ 23 years. Last year alone, 7,000 people received support, and 500 were baptized.

/ Source: orthochristian.com