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Minute for Mission

A New Church Development in Belarus



The building that now serves as a ministry center in Novy Dvor, Belarus, is a former store. Photo courtesy of Alan and Ellen Smith

The village of Novy Dvor, Belarus, was created by the Soviets to make that part of the USSR that is now the country of Belarus a model Soviet society. The church had no place in such a community. The village has not fared well since the collapse of the Soviet Union and its inhabitants struggle with poverty and the drug and alcohol problems that accompany despair.

Ten years ago, Father Anatoli and a small group of parishioners from Sts. Peter and Paul parish in nearby Minsk established a church in Novy Dvor to bring the Christ to this former Soviet village. They have transformed an old store building into a church in honor of Archangel Michael and have established a lay sisterhood to care for the building and to carry out diaconal ministry in the community. Despite their limited resources, they have developed creative solutions to community problems. They bought a washing machine for pensioners in the neighborhood to use and have established a soup kitchen in their refectory. Recently, they began a summer camp program for neighborhood children. They are also planning a library to nurture the spiritual growth of the congregation and the community. In their modest way, this congregation has reached out in extraordinary ways with the love of Christ.

Alan and Ellen Smith

PC(USA) mission co-workers

Moscow, Russia