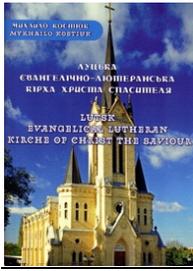


Lutsk Evangelical Lutheran Kirche Of Christ the Saviour, by Mykhailo Kostiuk
Review by Erhard Pinno, HSGPV Volunteer, March 2020



I am humbled to write a brief review of Mr. Kostiuk's excellent research and writing to honour my own father who helped with the 'finishing' work in the building of another Lutheran Church in the area of Zyczynek, also located in Kreis (area) Lutsk. (E. Pinno)

The book was printed in 2019 and is available in the HSGPV library in Ukrainian and translated versions in English and German.

Some copies are available for purchase for \$20 CAN.

Mykhailo Kostiuk dedicated the second edition of his historical and architectural essay of the Lutsk Evangelical Lutheran Church to the blessed memory of his parents.

The history of the construction of this church is also the story of the Volhynian Germans who lived in Lutsk and the surrounding area at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Thanks to their efforts, *"a new unique and beautiful church – a real spot of Lutsk Gothic,"* was consecrated in September, 1907. *"For more than a century the Lutheran Church (Kirche) has been the only unique monument of the old city of Lutsk and one of the brightest historical and architectural pearls."* Except for the years during WW I, Lutsk remained as the centre of spiritual, social, economic and political life for the community until WW II forced most of the Volhynian Germans in Lutsk and the rest of Volhynia to flee their 'homeland' forever.

During the post-WWII years the church badly deteriorated. After the fall of the 'Iron Curtain' in 1989-90, the Baptist community in Lutsk rented the building and did extensive repair and restoration work. Since June 12, 1994, it serves the Evangelical Baptist Community in Lutsk as the *"House of Gospel"*. The author notes that the new church community continues to honour the history of the former owners, the Volhynian German Lutherans. For example, at a *"Germans in the History of Volyn"* conference in 2015, a memorial plaque was placed at this church devoted to the 100th anniversary of the deportation of Volhynian Germans to Siberia in 1915-1916.

Mr. Kostiuk's detailed research regarding the building of the church, its architecture, and history is very interesting. There were over 100 German settlements in the Torcyn-Szczury vicinity. So, why was Lutsk chosen for the 'cathedral' church? Why build the church in Lutsk which was approximately 80% Jewish and only had a few Lutheran families? In the final analysis Lutsk was selected because it was the administrative centre, and most importantly, it had the best train connections. No doubt our ancestors had some lively discussions before finally agreeing to accept the site of the burned down Roman Catholic monastery of the Carmelites in Lutsk. Although the land was donated, the Lutherans had to agree to pave (cobblestone) the adjacent street in 3 years and complete the construction of the church in 6 years. Undamaged bricks from the monastery were used for the internal walls while high quality yellow facing bricks from local brick factories were purchased for the external walls. When local bricklayers (Bundists) went on strike, Russian masons finished the job.

The architect, Christian Beutelspacher, designed the church in typical Gothic style *"with the help of a well-proportioned, high tower above the central entrance, with two smaller ones on its sides....he used the counterfort for the facades, arrow shaped openings for the perspective portal of the main entrance"* and, of course, stained-glass windows. *"The church was also decorated proportionally and harmoniously inside. On the middle window of the altar a picture of Christ from Torvaldsen could be seen."* An organ of 16 registers was installed and for the day of the blessing, a big steel-cast bell from the German city of Bochum was mounted in the central tower. For the church dedication *"a special correspondent for the newspaper, 'Volyn Life', which, at the time, came out in Zhytomyr, was sent to Lutsk to cover these celebrations. He was so impressed by what he*

saw that he decided to write not only a small note about the celebration of the consecration of the new church, but also put an article about the German colonists in Volyn ... in which he tried to analyze the various aspects of their lives and their influence of the region." In addition to the Lutheran clergy, the celebration was attended by the district police officer, the military commander, the mayor and magistrate. The first toast was for the health of the Tsar. By 1913, membership in the church reached 10 thousand people. German families had many children – in 1907 there were 619 newborns, in 1908 - 637, in 1909 – 516, and in 1910 – 585.

(Pastors today could be a little envious of such church growth! I have 12 siblings.) The good times came to a sudden end with the forced eviction of the German colonists to Siberia and other remote regions of Russia.

Beautiful photos of the church and important documents enhance the value of the extensive research of this part of our Volhynian heritage. We should be impressed and inspired by what our ancestors achieved and how interestingly Mr. Kostyuk tells this story. If you have ethnic Volhynian blood in your veins, you must read this story! I conclude this review with the last paragraph of the essay. *"Hopefully, the second century in the biography of Lutsk Kirche will not be obscured by dramatic and tragic events, and it will serve as a religious building and a historical and architectural monument to the present and future generations. As a rare, historical symbol of the Lutheran Church and the German national minority in Volyn, may its preservation inspire architectural appreciation, joyful wonder at its beauty, and provide educational opportunities which raise an interest and respectful attitude towards the past of the native land."*

Lutsk.... Yesterday & Today ...

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lutsk>

Lutsk (**Ukrainian**: Луцьк, **romanized**: Luts'k, IPA: [lutsik]; **Polish**: Łuck [wutsk]; **Yiddish**: לױצק, **romanized**: Lutzk) is a city on the [Styr River](#) in northwestern [Ukraine](#). It is the [administrative center](#) of the [Volyn Oblast \(province\)](#) and the administrative center of the surrounding [Lutsk Raion\(district\)](#) within the oblast, though it is not a part of the raion. Lutsk has the status of a [city of oblast significance](#), equivalent to that of a raion. Population: 217,103 (2015 est.

According to legend, Luchesk dates from the 7th century. The first known documentary reference dates from the year 1085.

As of January 1, 1939 Łuck had 39,000 inhabitants (approximately 17,500 Jews and 13,500 Poles). The powiat formed around the town had 316,970 inhabitants, including 59% Ukrainians, 19.5% Poles, 14% Jews and approximately 23,000 [Czechs](#) and [Germans](#).

The city became an industrial centre in the [Ukrainian SSR](#). The major changes in the city's demographics had the final result that by the end of World War II the city was almost entirely Ukrainian. During the Cold War, the city hosted the [Lutsk air base](#).

As one of the largest cities in Western Ukraine, Lutsk became the seat of a General Consulate of Poland in 2003.

Lutsk is an important centre of industry. Factories producing cars, shoes, bearings, furniture, machines and electronics, as well as weaveries, steel mills and a chemical plant are located in the area. Lutsk Website: <https://www.lutskrada.gov.ua/en>



Lutsk Old Town



Lutsk, Volyn Oblast, Ukraine



Castle Gate