



The first divine service for Russian-speaking faithful of the Moscow Patriarchate is celebrated in Kars, Turkey



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On September 24, the divine service for the Russian-speaking faithful of the Moscow Patriarchate was celebrated in the Turkish city of Kars for the first time. Officiating was Rev. Georgy Sergejev, who is responsible for taking pastoral care of the Russian-speaking faithful in the territory of the Republic of Turkey.

At the requiem litany, Rev. Georgy commemorated all Russian soldiers who died at the two battles of Kars.

Kars is a city in northeast Turkey, the Eastern Anatolia region. Following the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, the city of Kars and its environs were transferred to the Russian Empire and remained its province till 1917.

As of 1914, the city with 30.000 residents was home to 25.000 Armenians, about 1.500 Russians and about the same number of Turks. Also, there were Jews, Kurds, Poles and Germans among the local population.

The church of Alexander Nevsky in the center of Kars was designed by the Russian architect Fyodor Verzhbitsky after the fashion typical to military churches and built in 1908. It was the church of the 154th Derbent Infantry Regiment of the Imperial Russian Army.

Russia ceded Kars to the Ottoman Empire under the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918. The Orthodox church was converted to a mosque, but its outlines are clearly visible.

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