



The Hungarian Reformed Church in the village of Szurte is pastored by Zsolt Kotiuk and includes the Katko families as congregants. The bells ring at three intervals and during that time the women and children arrive and enter the church but the men form lines outside and as each approaches, he works the entire line shaking hands and greeting each in turn.



This tradition goes back to Soviet times when the pastor had multiple churches and arrived by bicycle. He was often late so the men waited for his arrival. Now Zsolt is already inside but comes back out and makes the final round before all enter and the service starts. The women sit together on one side, the men on two other sides. Young men and women are in the same arrangement in the balcony. At the conclusion the women leave first during the final hymn followed by young girls, young men, and finally the men.





Pastor Zsolt had a full day on August 5. First up was a baptism followed by the regular service in Szurte. Afterwards he performed two additional services at different churches before returning to Szurte to help officiate at a special dedication at 4pm.

On the 15th of March 1848 revolution broke out in Hungary against the ruling Habsburgs and their Austrian Empire. The Hungarians eventually won a degree of autonomy within the empire after fighting forces of the empire bolstered by many other countries. Established European powers were fighting discord in many empires and countries at the time and resisted loosening their grip on subjects. When the call went out to raise a rebel force, 79 volunteers from Szurte signed up on August 6. A new monument was dedicated on the square of the village post office to honor their efforts to fight for freedom and self determination. Among the names were 8 Katko for-bearers.

