



The national flags of Latvia (left) and Lithuania (right).

BALTIC LUTHERANS

The Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are part of northern Europe with Russia and Belorussia bordering them to the east and with the Baltic Sea to their west. The three countries became independent from the former Soviet Union in 1991 and are now part of the European Union.

Lithuania was the last part of Europe to be christianized in the 1300s and remained Roman Catholic during the Reformation. Lutheranism arrived in Riga, Latvia in the early 1520s where the city council adopted the Reformation very early.

Today both countries are home to partner churches of the LCMS. In Latvia, the large Ev. Lutheran Church of Latvia is led by archbishop Jānis Vanags of Riga. The smaller Ev. Lutheran Church of Lithuania is led by bishop Mindaugas Sabutis of Vilnius.



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Law & Gospel in Latvia

Our recent preaching seminar in Saldus

Where Christ is not preached, there is no Holy Ghost who creates, calls, and gathers the Christian Church, without which no one can come to Christ the Lord. (Large Catechism, Art. III, 450.)

“I’ll meet you in Riga, and then we’ll drive out to Saldus for you to speak to the pastors about preaching.” That was the message I saw on my phone from Bishop Hanss Jensens of the Latvian Lutheran Church in mid-September.

Now, since being in Europe I have had the opportunity to present many different topics to our partner church pastors, but I haven’t tried to teach about preaching. After all, how do you do that, if you don’t know the language?

I thought about that a lot from the time I saw Bp. Jensens’ message until we pulled into the car park at St. Gregor



St. Gregor’s center, Saldus

Education Center in Saldus, Latvia. The answer isn’t about styles of speaking or eloquent language or telling engaging stories. The essence of preaching—and teaching about preaching—is to stick to the basics, Law and Gospel. *Tell your people about Jesus.*

So, I told them how a friend of mine, (recently retired) kept a slip of paper in the pulpit where he could see it every time he stood there. The paper said, “*The Gospel Assumed is the Gospel*



The seminar at St. Gregor’s

Denied.”

My friend kept it there to remind himself that the message of the Gospel must be clearly proclaimed in every sermon.

We focused on that at the seminar; we talked about Paul’s presentation of the Gospel in Romans 3; we shared some sermons from around the church year. (And all of it through the work of a translator!)

At the end of our two days, the twenty or so pastors gave feedback about our time together. Over and over they said how important it was to hear this affirmation of the basic work of preaching. Christian preaching proclaims Christ and Him crucified and risen for our salvation. Pastors, *tell your people about Jesus.*





PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Our students in Russia and the pastors whom we serve in our partner churches in Europe.
- Continued health for both Chuck and Connie.
- Our Russia team: Pr. Jerry Lawson and family, Alyssa Anders, Sarah Harms.
- The election of a new bishop for the Ingrian Lutheran Church in Russia (Bp. Arre Kugappi is retiring after many years of leadership).

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- Safe travel during all our many miles.
- The opportunity to speak to pastors about Romans and about preaching.

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- The many congregations and individuals who pray for us, encourage and support us!

WITNESS ALWAYS



A month of travels...



With Pres. Harrison in Lithuania

Last month Connie and I were on the road a bit...

The Saldus preaching retreat (reported on p. 1) was sandwiched between our visits to Odessa, Ukraine and Palanga, Lithuania.

ODESSA ODYSSEY

Connie and I had been anticipating returning to Odessa, Ukraine since last March when we were there to begin an intensive course on the Letter to the Romans with the pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine.

We flew again from St. Petersburg via Minsk (Belorussia) to Odessa on September 18 just in time to be there for a shut-down of city water for 30 hours! Two pumps which supply the water for most of the center city had been in

operation since the 1960s and had to be replaced. The old 60s lyric, “Don’t it always seem to go, that you don’t know what you’ve got til it’s gone...” sums up the experience.

In terms of the course, my presentations started on Monday with Romans 6 and we arrived at Paul’s close in Romans 16 at the end of the Friday session.

PRESENTATION AT PALANGA

We left Odessa for Riga and Saldus, and after the preaching seminar were driven the short distance to Palanga, Lithuania. My presentation in Palanga this time was on the Psalms. Also present were Michael Morizio and Kim Bueltmann of our LCMS Eurasia region who presented to the musicians’ conference.

LCMS President, Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison also arrived in Palanga as part of a visit to LCMS partner churches in the region! It was a privilege to see him again and to have him attend some of the lectures.

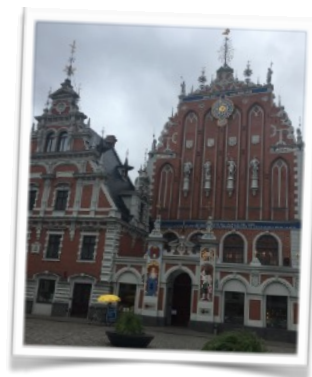
Our educational work continues in the region—in Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine... wherever the Lord allows us to help strengthen Lutheran pastors to preach and teach the Gospel of our Savior. THANK YOU for your prayers and support of our wanderings and teaching!

We say this often, but always mean it...

Your support means SO much to us: your prayers and your offerings given in support are what allow us to be and to serve here. Thank you for all you do for us and for missions around the world. May the LORD bless you and keep you in His gracious care!

Yours in Jesus,

Charles and Connie Cortright



Historic Riga

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