



The Latvian National Flag

LATVIA DIGEST

Latvia is in the Baltic region of Northern Europe. It is known for its diverse culture, modern cities and landscapes ranging from wide beaches to dense, sprawling forests.

The official name of the country is the Republic of Latvia.

Latvia borders Estonia in the north, Lithuania in the south, the Baltic Sea with the Gulf of Riga in the west, Russia in the east, and Belarus in the southeast.

The official language is Latvian; English is a second language especially in the cities.

As of 1 January 2016, the population of Latvia was estimated to be 1,956,526 people.

Riga is the capital and the largest city of Latvia. With 641,007 inhabitants (2015), Riga is the largest city of the Baltic states and home to one third of Latvia's population.

Lutheranism came to Latvia in the early 1520s; St. Peter's Lutheran Church dominates the old city center.



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charles.cortright@lcms.org

“Unsung Heroes”



Heli, my Russian “Voice”

Dear friends in Christ,

Today was my last day of teaching at the Theological Institute of the Church of Ingria here in Russia. Connie and I are preparing to move to Riga, Latvia in January where I will begin teaching at the Luther Academy of the Ev. Lutheran Church of Latvia.

But before we make that transition and I start focusing on telling readers of this newsletter about the work in Latvia, I want to acknowledge with sincere thanks a couple of special friends here in Russia I will not forget.

I was introduced to Heli Makarova at the opening service of the school year in 2017. Since then, Heli has been my “voice” in all my classes translating my lectures as I gave them to my students, translating my papers at conferences and my sermons in chapel. Just as important, she has also worked going the other direction—Russian to English—translating student questions and homework, information from the seminary office, and Russian sermons and devotions when we were in chapel. Everything I have accomplished as a

teacher here has only been possible because of her service.

Because we can communicate in English (my Russian remains very rudimentary) she has also been my resource for learning about day-to-day Russian life and culture. What is more, she has done all this with a true servant's heart. Heli's language gifts are significant and she could easily market them: English is becoming more and more important here. But she finds joy in using her gifts in the Savior's service, and I am grateful.

Then there is Larissa, another worker at the Institute. Usually, she is the first person I see on arriving in the early morning

darkness at the Institute as she makes sure everything is ready for the day to begin. Her cheerfulness and kindness show themselves in

little ways, but they unmistakably and unfailingly reflect the love of Christ.



Larissa

Paul had this to say about the “unsung heroes” he knew in Colosse:

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵ because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. (Col 1:3-5 ESV)

It has been a privilege to be here among the saints in Ingria.

- Charles Cortright



*Let the earth now praise the Lord,
Who has truly kept His word
And at last to us did send
Christ, the sinner's help and
friend. LSB 352:1*

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Our transition to Latvia
- The continuing work in St. Petersburg

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- A successful semester at TICl
- Another blessed Advent-tide and Christmas season
- Faithful congregations, pastors and supporters who have sustained us in our work in Jesus' name in Russia
- A New Year of grace in our Savior

Ministry Update



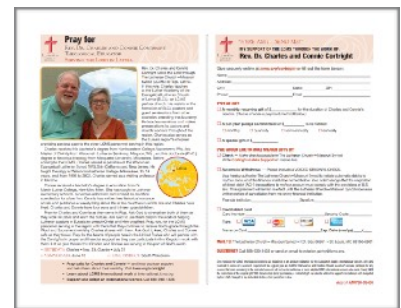
Members of Holy Trinity, Moscow gather outside their church on the 20th Anniversary of the church's restoration and renovation.

January Seminar in Moscow

Just before we move to Riga I will be traveling to Moscow in late January! Since coming to Russia, I have never traveled to Moscow so this will be a new experience. Holy Trinity Lutheran Church is hosting a seminar on the Old Testament that I will present on Saturday, January 25. I will also preach at the Divine Service on Sunday.

In September Holy Trinity celebrated the 20th anniversary of its church building being restored and renovated after the dissolution of the USSR.

New Prayer Card for Latvia



An updated prayer card for our work in Latvia is now available: www.lcms.org/cortright



THANK YOU for your prayers and support in 2019. It was a joy for us to meet many of our supporters during our summer visit to the U.S. May the Lord bless you in the New Year ahead.

-Chuck & Connie Cortright



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