



# LATVIA

## NEWS FROM CHUCK & CONNIE CORTRIGHT

April 2020



### “PUSSY WILLOW” SUNDAY?

For Palm Sunday in northern Europe and Russia it's pretty hard to obtain palm leaves or palm fronds for Palm Sunday. So it's not uncommon to see pussy-willows as stand-ins for palms.

The Bombaro family found a cache of them near their home and brought them to our home for our Palm Sunday service. Like the palms from Palm Sunday, the pussy-willows are often kept. Many Christians in these parts of the world will put them in a vase in front of a religious icon or picture.



1902 Easter card from Germany



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## “But the Word of God is not bound!”

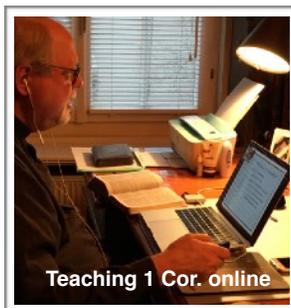
-2 Tim 2:9

Dear friends and partners in mission,  
*So, what's new?*

Our experiences here in Latvia are very similar to what we have heard from friends and family in the U.S. since mid-March. Like you, Connie and I have been mostly homebound. “Social distancing” has been the rule when at the store or other public areas. Anything normally involving people congregating together has been closed, cancelled, or cut. Like you, we are praying and waiting for life to return to “normal,” or whatever the “new normal” will turn out to be.

Whatever else is on the horizon, the one thing that remains absolutely clear is what Paul told Timothy. Sitting in prison awaiting execution, Paul reminded his young colleague: “But the Word of God is not bound!” And that is our news, too.

Face-to-face classes at the Luther Academy here in Rīga have been halted, but we are gathering as a class on-line and moving forward in our study of 1 Corinthians (we're in chapter 9).



Teaching 1 Cor. online

Like you, our treasured observance of Holy Week could not go on as usual. All churches are closed to normal congregating for worship, but local pastors are serving their members with the Lord's Supper and taping and making worship available. Since we cannot speak Latvian, the Cortrights (2) and the Bombaros (6) have been

gathering for English-language worship in our homes. For Palm



Palm Sunday

(Passion) Sunday our congregation of eight met at our home in Rīga. We gathered in our little front parlor for the start of the Divine Service and processed

waving pussy-willows (!) up the stairs to our upper floor for the rest of the liturgy. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday we had to meet separately, but for Easter we were together at the Bombaros in Pinki where we celebrated the Lord's resurrection.

No, the Word of God is not bound.

We know that the future is uncertain and we pray for a full return to our work here in Latvia and in Eurasia, but we know our risen and living Lord is with us.

Alleluia! He is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! -Chuck & Connie



At Bombaro's



# God's Hand o'er Us

Last month while Chuck was teaching over in St. Petersburg, Russia, the Latvian government announced that it was going to close its borders in forty-eight hours because of the coronavirus threat. When Chuck had left here the week before, Russia wasn't even on the Latvian's quarantined list, so we assumed it was safe for him to go.

God is good: when our landlady here in Rīga found out that the borders were closing she texted me the news on Saturday evening. We were able to book a flight for Chuck the next day

(Sunday) that flew just hours before they were closed. Chuck didn't quite finish teaching his class in Russia, but he wasn't marooned there, either.

The strange thing was this: our landlady didn't even know Chuck was in Russia, and she had never texted me before. I was so glad to see him the next day. He would still be there if she had not texted me: that was God's message to get us back together. Thanks be to God!

- Connie

*O sons and daughters of the King,  
Whom heav'nly hosts in glory sing,  
Today the grave has lost its sting!  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

*That Easter morn, at break of day,  
The faithful women went their way  
To seek the tomb where Jesus lay,  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

*An angel clad in white they see,  
Who sits and speaks unto the three,  
"Your Lord will go to Galilee."  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

*On this most holy day of days  
Be laud and jubilee and praise:  
To God your hearts and voices  
raise.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

-LSB 470: 1,2,3,9

## DEAR FRIEND AND SUPPORTER,

As a child of the 50s, I have to say I have never lived in such "interesting times." And I would not be honest if I were to say that we do not think about the "What ifs" that swirl around us now because of uncertainty.

No one can say what is ahead. But we can be certain that we have our Lord Jesus with us, yes, "to the very end of the age" (Matt 28:20).

Connie and I are very grateful to God for allowing us to serve here, and it is our desire and prayer that we will be able to continue to do so. Again, God alone knows; we place our trust in Him. And in that trust, we also want to say thank-you to Him *for you*, our friends and supporters and partners. We do not take your partnership for granted. Please know our thanks to God for you, and know, too, that you are in our prayers for His blessing on you and yours.

**Heavenly Father**, in whom we live and move and have our being, we humbly pray You so to guide and govern us by Your Word and Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget You but remember that we are ever walking in Your sights through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen -LSB 284

## IN OUR PRAYERS

We are thankful that the Lord has preserved us in good health and continues to give us all that we need for "body and life."

We are especially thankful that our colleagues the Bombaros have arrived. It is a great blessing to be able to share (in English!) our faith together, particularly in terms of worship this past Holy Week.

We pray for all leaders, for all health providers, and for first-responders in the current crisis. We pray for those who have lost family or friends to the virus. We pray for those whose livelihoods have been hurt or lost. We ask that God would use each of us where and when we can to show His love to those in need.

We pray for our church and its leaders, Pres. Harrison and all the various district presidents. May the Lord give wisdom and vision in leading us through these difficult times.

We pray for our partner-churches that they, too, will be kept from harm and loss, and will be able to serve as light and messengers of hope by the Gospel. **Lord, hear our prayers.**

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