

Sunset on the Baltic shore (10:40 PM)

BALTIC WANDERING

Connie and I were able to take a few days of "R & R" to explore the Vidzeme region of Latvia. In the 12th century, modern-day Latvia and Estonia were known as "Livonia" and were the object of religious crusades. The crusading knights left behind numerous castles, the oldest dating back to 1138 A.D. We wandered among several such castles; we also explored a Soviet era bunker (an artifact of a "crusade" of an entirely different sort!). The Baltics are an overlooked corner of history and beauty (and home to lots of storks).



Turaida Castle, Soviet bunker, Stork nest



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"Graduation in the Cathedral"

Luther Academy graduation

The Luther Academy of the Ev. Lutheran Church of Latvia (LELB) observed a graduation in a service in the Rīga Dom (cathedral) on June 25. LELB Archbishop Jānis Vanags presided over the service.



Archbishop Vanags

Attendance at the service was limited by COVID restrictions, but the joy and celebration typical of graduations was still evident. As a "visiting professor" I was privileged to attend and watch the graduation of several students who had just completed my course on 1 Corinthians.

After the service, a reception for all was held in the inner garden of the cathedral; in keeping with local custom, flowers were



Flowers for the teacher

given to the graduates... and to professors! (I can't remember ever being given flowers before.)

"English Spoken here"

With the end of the semester, preparation for a new one begins. I will be teaching an introduction to dogmatics course next fall as the Luther Academy begins implementing its revised curriculum. My colleague, Dr. John Bombaro, is working on creating the English-language versions of the first year courses of this curriculum. John is back in the U.S. for a while in order



Melinda and John Bombaro

to make use of LCMS college and seminary resources.

During this time I am serving as liaison with the Luther Academy staff in setting up the parallel Latvian/English versions of these courses. The English version will share the accredited status of the Latvian curriculum and will be used to build an on-line English bachelors program in theology for use in the LELB and in the European Union.

In fall 2020 the new Latvian version will begin; we are looking forward to the start-up of the English version in fall 2021.

**Verbum Dei
Manet in
Aeternum**

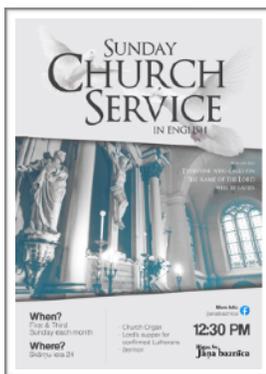


O Lord, I love the habitation of your house and the place where your glory dwells. -Ps 26:8

English spoken here, too!

Pr. Gints Graudiņš of Rīga's *Svētā Jāņa draudze* (St. John's Lutheran Church) sent me this

poster today advertising our English language services at historic St. John's on the first and third



Sundays of each month. Pr. Gints and I will

alternate preaching duties; we will be using the *Lutheran Service Book* thanks to a gift of multiple



St. John's interior

copies of *LSB* given to us by the Eurasia mission office in Prague (*Děkuju!*).

With the relaxation of restrictions due to COVID the services are intended to reach out to English speaking residents and visitors in Rīga. May the Lord bless these services.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Thank God for His continuing blessing of supporters of our mission and work.
- Pray for God's guidance and blessing on the U.S. during the twin crises of COVID and economic recovery.
- Pray for the recovery of churches everywhere and for the return of God's people to regular use of the Means of Grace.
- Pray that our Lord would continue to bless the work of missionaries everywhere.
- Pray God to give consolation and hope to all those isolated because of lockdowns, because of age, or because of distance from family and friends.
- Ask the Lord to use these uncertain times to turn hearts to the certainty of Christ and His love for them.

☩: Lord, in your mercy:

☩: Hear our prayer.

On a personal note...

Usually Connie is able to go to the U.S. to visit her mother, Marion, in Wisconsin about now—COVID has made that impossible this year.



(I understand that Roman did the honors of blowing out both candles.)

We're grateful for the picture of the event that Janet shared with us.

On June 29 Marion turned 92. But even though Connie could not be there, as you can see, Marion was not alone! As it turns out Marion shares her birthday with Roman (now 2), the son of Marion's close friend, Janet. Janet gave the duo a birthday party complete with a special cake.

Happy birthday to Marion and to Roman. May the Lord bless and keep you in your baptismal grace now and forever.

-Chuck and Connie Cortright

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