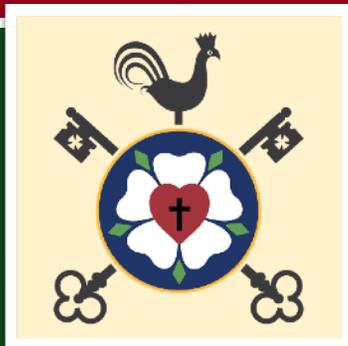




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The Luther Academy Logo

The logo for the Rīga Academy was designed by Mr. Joseph Krikava of Boston, MA, a graphic artist and son of the Eurasia mission region, Rev. James Krikava. The logo combines the familiar Luther Rose (and all its symbolism) with the crossed keys of the Holy Ministry in token of the Academy's purpose of preparing church workers and pastors.

Why a rooster?!

The rooster is a symbol of Rīga, Latvia, whose main churches are all topped by one. While various meanings are attached to them, they are a distinctive part of Rīga's skyline.



To be added to or removed from this mailing list, send an email message to charles.cortright@lcms.org with the word ADD or REMOVE in the subject line.

First Report Card



Students respond to questions at the Intensive Class in November

And that is that! Our first “official” semester of the English Studies Program of the Luther Academy ended this week (Dec. 13) with the usual flurry of end-of-the-semester activities: due dates, final examinations, etc. What is still unusual to me is that it is all done across numerous time zones with students who are studying theology in English as their 2nd (or 3rd!) language.

Time for a report card.

The first thing to note is how far we have come from a year ago. It has been just a year since we completed our *Introduction to Theology* “beta” course. This was a not-for-credit course introducing what Lutheran theological studies are all about. There were no tests and no obligations. As instructors we were learning too about how to construct a course for an on-line, live environment taught over Zoom.

In January 2021, we launched our first for-credit course, *Early Church History*, to which we added short student papers and a written final exam. We added the use of Canvas, a learning management system (LMS) that serves as the means for making assignments, doing tests, posting lectures, etc. Moving to an actual academic course vs. a series of free lectures meant a new level of commitment on the part of the students. Our overall numbers were smaller, but by the end of

the semester, we had formed a solid cohort of students desiring to enroll in an actual Bachelor of Theology (B.Th.) program and study for ministry.

Over the summer of 2021, a great deal of administrative detail and improvements were made. Students were formally interviewed and enrolled, a first-edition of

It is the love of God in Christ that compels and propels it all.

a student handbook was created along with beginning module courses on academic writing and research (TH100), and theology as a discipline of the church.

The courses and work just completed show places where we need to improve or create some different way of doing things, but the English Studies Program has posted a huge milestone with this first official semester.

All of this is truly to God's glory alone! From the extraordinary commitment of our students, to that of a small, but dedicated group of teachers and staff, it is the love of God in Christ that compels and propels it all.

Soli Deo Gloria



**BLESSED
CHRISTMAS
TO
YOU**

O Jesus Christ,
Thy manger is
My paradise at which my
soul reclineth.

For there, O Lord,
Doth lie the Word
Made flesh of us; herein
Thy grace forth shineth.

LSB 372:1

May the grace of Christ born for
you bless and keep you
throughout the year in faith,
hope, and love.

-Charles & Connie Cortright

In the "Passing Lane"

Our TH400- *Introduction to Dogmatics* students finished their course work with a final exam. Nothing unusual there! What was unusual was that this was an *oral* exam conducted over Zoom in "Zoom rooms." We had used an oral mid-term exam at the Wittenberg intensive in November. But that was live. This time the students were divided into 3 groups that met at the same time but in different "rooms" with their examiners: myself, Rev. Dr. John Bombaro, and Rev. Gints Graudins of Rīga. (Pr. Gints is a new dogmatics teacher at the Academy for the Latvian language students; he speaks very good English.) The students were given questions individually to answer in the hearing of the rest of their group.



In my Zoom Room

In practice, the oral exam was something like an old-fashioned confirmation examination, but with advanced questions. The format was very efficient as it did not require writing, which takes a great deal of time for the students to write and for us to assess. The students were able to be assessed immediately, and they also benefitted from hearing the answers of each other. Like a confirmation examination, the final exam also served as a forum for each student to make the "good confession" of what they believe and understand about the doctrines they have been taught.

Still, it is unusual! I met and examined my group at 10:30 A.M. (CDT) my time in Wisconsin. For them, it was evening after their workday. High marks for all for their commitment and desire to learn out of love for their Savior.

A Luther Academy Thank-you (and Who's Who)

At the end of the year it's always appropriate to say thank you to those with whom one is closely associated in life and work. So, **THANK YOU** first to **all of you** who have supported and prayed for me, for my work, and for the students of the English Studies B.Th. program.

Let me also introduce you to others I'd like to thank...

Rev. Dr. John Bombaro - John serves as a colleague in the Academy, but especially as our liaison with the Eurasia Region and various agencies of the LCMS.

Mr. Jēkabs Jurdzs (Rīga) - Jēkabs is our program manager, our liaison with the Latvian side of the Academy, and the "man-behind-the-scenes" in making Zoom, Canvas, and all other things work for us.

Rev. Christian and Lula Tiews (Berlin, Germany) - Pr. Chris served this semester as our chaplain each Monday; Lula, his wife, is our "techie" who helps solve problems and manages the Canvas platform for us. The Tiews are LCMS mission workers in Germany.

Rachel Krause (Leipzig, Germany) - Rachel helped us co-ordinate travel and visa needs to bring the students to the intensive class in Wittenberg. Rachel is a LCMS mission worker in Leipzig helping with refugees with our partner church in Germany.

Rev. Dr. Corey Rajek (soon to be in Rīga) - Dr. Rajek, Jennifer, and family will soon be in Rīga to live. He will be teaching in the future; even before deployment he has been helping assess student written work.

-Charles Cortright

To support the
LCMS through the work of Charles and Connie Cortright, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

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