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Lent – a bit different this year...



“Quiet Week” in Latvia

Holy Week is known as “Kluso nedēļu”, or “Quiet Week”. Of course, it begins with Palm Sunday (Pūpolsvētdiena) but, since Latvia does not have palm trees, they use pussy willow branches (above).

Maundy Thursday is called Zaļā ceturtdiena (literally: Green Thursday). This day is associated with tidiness, luck, and good health.

Lielā piektdiena is Latvian for “Great Friday” and is the equivalent of our Good Friday. It is considered a holiday, and many businesses and schools are closed.

Easter (Liieldienas) itself is celebrated over two days: Easter Sunday and Easter Monday. Again, many schools and businesses are closed on Easter Monday.

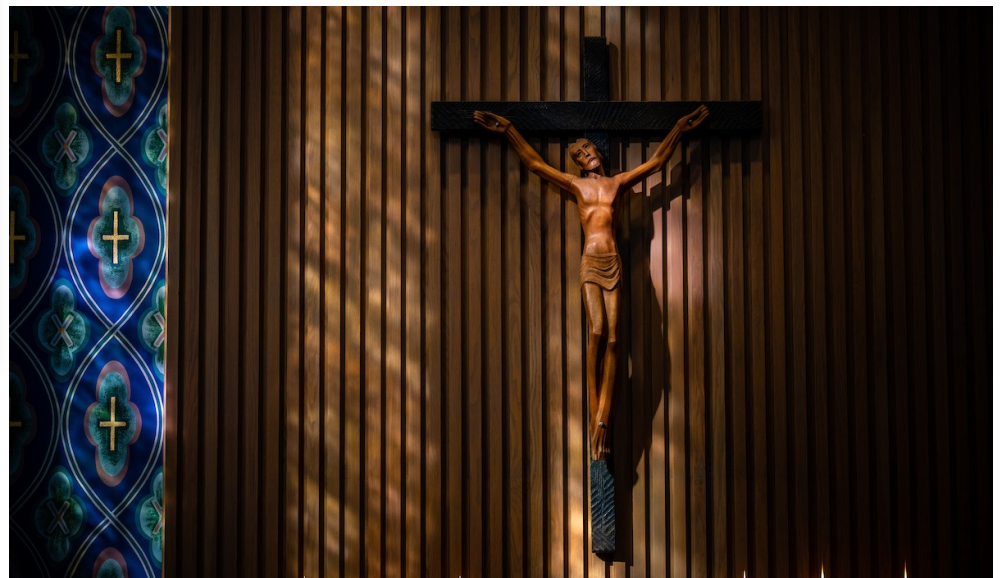
Egg dyeing is well-known in the United States, but, in Latvia, people use onion skins, leaves, flowers, and twine to dye their eggs a beautiful yellow-orange color with different designs.

The entire week is full of pagan traditions (some of which are still observed) and superstitions about weather, beauty, and wealth.

<https://thenorthernvox.com/easter-in-latvia/>



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Dear friends in Christ,

A blessed Holy Week to all of you! Those of you who receive these digitally will get our newsletter before Easter. For those of you who receive this via regular mail, it will be after Easter. The season of Lent here in Latvia has been unlike other Lent observances we have experienced in the US.

The Latvian Lutherans observe Lent with a kind of vigor that we do not often find in the States. Many of them actually practice the historic Lenten fast rather than the modernized version of “giving up” something small. Midweek Lenten services also happen in many of the congregations here, but we personally, as a family, have not been able to avail ourselves of those services.

We are able to have worship in English twice a month, and on the “off Sundays,” we attend church at a Latvian congregation near our apartment. It is a wonderful congregation and a beautiful church, but the language barrier makes it difficult. Nonetheless, we can receive the Lord’s Body and Blood in the Sacrament every week, which is incredible.

Additionally, there is chapel for Luther

Academy every week on Monday evenings, so there is an opportunity to hear preaching in English. But for Lent, hearing English preaching was not an option.

I have long said that, without the long journey of Lent, Easter loses some of its luster. As we are in Holy Week, I can acutely feel that truth. Nonetheless, Easter is coming, and we rejoice that we will be able to have an English Easter celebration as well.

Understand that I do not share this to be a bummer or to elicit sympathy. Instead, I hope you take this message as an opportunity to not take what you have for granted. Rejoice if you can worship in your native language (or at least a language you know well enough to get something out of the preaching). For, if and when you don’t have the chance, it is something that is missed. But also, I encourage you to join me in rejoicing in the unity and continuity of the Church. We can gather together with fellow Lutherans to receive the Sacrament of the Altar. While we do not enjoy the level of fellowship that we would have with others in a congregation that we know, we all speak the same language of faith.

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PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Continued good health.
- The almost dozen applicants for study with Luther Academy that are desiring to begin studies in the fall.
- Visa approvals for all our students outside the EU in preparation for the Intensive Study Weeks in Latvia in June.
- Our missionaries in the field who are celebrating many milestones and events away from family and friends in the US.

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- The unity that he brings to his people through faith, regardless of language.
- Our supporters for helping to make this mission possible – we cannot stress our gratefulness enough!

A greener option?

If you would like to help us save on paper and postage by getting our newsletters in digital form, please email Lindsay at Lindsay.Cundiff@lcmsintl.org. We would be happy to make that quick and simple change for you. Thank you!



There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at [lcms.org/service](https://www.lcms.org/service). Click on "Service Opportunities."

Continued...and more!



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The joy of faith and the gift of the Church is that when we gather around the altar, all divisions cease. It doesn't matter where someone is from, what language they speak, or who they are. We all kneel as beggars before our Lord, who graciously feeds and strengthens us. He does this out of his divine love and mercy for his people. We rejoice at being able to receive these gifts. May the Lord bless your Easter season as you gather together with others to celebrate his victory over death – a victory that he shares with us!

Pastor Cundiff

Family Update

Quintin continues his work as the Academic Dean while he teaches classes at Luther Academy in Riga. He helps ensure that students are keeping up with their coursework while keeping up with their jobs, families, and ministries.

In addition to her regular volunteer duties at the Academy (registrar, academic integrity reviewer, etc), Lindsay has been working extensively with the region's short-term mission coordinator to arrange the trip for nine students at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne to come to Riga for a study tour. She also continues to edit and proofread the newsletters of all the missionaries in the Region – from Germany to Central Asia!

Carter continues Grade 6 at his international school and is growing like a weed – he is now taller than Lindsay! His parents are very proud of how well he is doing in school and with his classmates and friends. You can read more about Carter down below!

Be sure to follow our Facebook page, "The Cundiffs in Latvia", for even more photos and stories of the Lord's work in this beautiful country!

Carter's Corner

Sveiki! I hope you are all having a wonderful season. It is still chilly here in Latvia. I rode the train to spend the night with my friend, Roberts, who lives about 1.5 hours west of Riga. It was great to spend time with my friend, exciting to see a bit more of Latvia, and even more thrilling to ride the train back to Riga on my own!

This picture was taken shortly after I finished that ride!

- Carter (age 11)



Prayerfully consider partnering with the LCMS to support the work of Quintin Cundiff and his family. Make checks payable to:

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OR

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