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## The blessing of meeting face-to-face



### Venta Waterfall

Ninety-three miles (150 km) due west of Rīga is a beautiful town of 13,500 people called Kuldīga. It was first mentioned in 1242, but, by the 17<sup>th</sup> century, became one of the capitals of the region of Courland in west Latvia.

The oldest church in Kuldīga is St. Catherine's, the foundation of which was laid as early as 1252. Though many additions have been added, the church is still standing!

Another major feature of this town is the Venta Waterfall, a 820-foot wide natural rapid – the widest waterfall in Europe. As you can see from the above photo, though, the height of the waterfall is only around 6 feet!

We have heard it said that one simply cannot visit Kuldīga without wading in the 2-12-inch-deep pool above the waterfall. The ISW participants braved the cold water to do just that! (Many people also swim in the deeper pool at the foot of the waterfall.)

In the spring, the falls are famous for salmon jumping UP the waterfall. In fact, in the 1700s, the Duke of Courland invented a way to catch the fish with baskets...Kuldīga became (and still is!) the town where you catch salmon out of the air!

<https://www.latvia.travel/en/sight/venta-waterfall>  
<https://visitkuldiga.com/daba/udenskritumi/ventas-rumba/>



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A bit of a change of pace, but the main article for this edition comes from Lindsay, who was asked to write an article about the recent Intensive Study Weeks for the Luther Academy website:

*On 17 June 2023, seminarians from across the globe (including Italy, Turkey, Romania, Sweden, Malawi, and South Sudan) descended upon Rīga to begin the annual two-week intensive consisting of in-person instruction, worship, and fellowship – aspects that are lacking during their usual online study. Since much of Luther Academy's instruction is online, this type of gathering is crucial for educational and professional development.*

*Our instructors were Rev. Dr. Quintin Cundiff (Congregational Catechesis) and Rev. Jerry Lawson (Lutheran Apologetics), with additional Apologetics lecturers including Rev. Dr. John J. Bombaro and Rev. Dr. Simon David Berry.*

*The Intensive Study Weeks (ISW) began with a walking tour of Vecrīga (Old Rīga) and worship with the English-speaking congregation at the historic St. John Lutheran Church, which houses a bit of the city wall built in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century during the founding of Rīga.*

*Later that day, the attendees left for Mazirbe Recollection Center, a retreat about 170 km northwest of Rīga near the beautiful Baltic Sea. Each day there began with Divine Service with Holy Communion (in English) and ended with Compline (in Latvian). Approximately six hours of instruction filled the rest of the days with plenty of free time for fellowship, exploration, and study.*

*The second week of ISW saw the participants relocate to St. Gregory School in Saldus, another 130 km south of Mazirbe, with a quick stop in Kuldīga to wade next to the widest waterfall in Europe. Each day began with Matins in the chapel, followed by another six hours of classwork and free time, and ended with Compline.*

*After completing these classes, the attendees all returned to Rīga for a final meal together before returning to their respective homes. The students will resume online studies on 21 August but will reconvene for ISW in June 2024.*

*Praise be to God for this time together and for safe travels to and from Latvia!*



**PLEASE PRAY FOR:**

- Continued good health.
- The Luther Academy students, that they make use of what they have learned over the past two weeks in their current and future ministries.
- Sufficient rest for our Academy students, instructors, and staff over this summer.
- Continued and successful recruitment of new students for Luther Academy in the fall.
- All the Eurasia Region’s staff (missionaries and managers), as we prepare to gather for our Retreat in August.

**PRAISE GOD FOR:**

- The safe travels and studies of our Luther Academy students and instructors.
- Our supporters for helping to make this mission possible.

**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@lcsintl.org](mailto:Lindsay.Cundiff@lcsintl.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://lcms.org/service). Click on "Service Opportunities."

**From the student’s perspective**



Quintin converses with Rev. Davis Wowa (middle) and Rev. John Riay (right – of South Sudan) during a group excursion in Kuldīga, Latvia.

The following is a note from Rev. Davis Wowa, a current student of Luther Academy and a pastor in Malawi in southern Africa. (Used with permission.)

*I just want to express my humble thanks to the administration of Luther Academy for organizing such a wonderful and persuasive Intensive study week which brings all, students, lecturers to a one focal point something that deserves praise from both corners of space. Such type of wisdom is at large to many but present to our dear lecturers, administration and supporting staff of this admirable Theological institution. There is a reason for all student to bow down, kneeling before our Triune God*

*expressing our total thanks to God for giving this Institution, lecturers who are there to serve not to be served, administrative officers and all those who offer their hands in monetary support and praying for the smooth running of the Institution.*

*May God bless Rev. Cortright and his family, Rev. John Bombaro and his family, Rev. Christian Tiews and his family, Rev. Jerry Lawson and his family, Rev. Quintin Cundiff and his family and lastly, our anchor, Jēkabs, the Director of English Studies. You have made us feel recognized. May God keep blessing you richly! I am returning home with a full smile for everything. If anyone supports this, let him/her say Amen!*

The Cundiffs also thank everyone who made the Intensive Study Weeks such a success. It was truly a blessing to be able to bring all the students and faculty in one place for learning and fellowship!

**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**

Hello! It has definitely been a few weeks for the books! The Luther Academy students visited and saw Riga. We went to the countryside, and they had classes. After we spent a week there, we went to a new place to do classes. Where was I in all of this? I was reading a Warhammer book, listening to audiobooks and music, watching movies, taking pictures, and listening to some of the lectures. The students are really good people, and I am excited to see them graduate into the field!

Have a blessed day (and week)!

- Carter (age 12)



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