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Mission updates

Dievs, svētī Latviju! Baumaņu Kārlis

Dievs, svē-ti Lat-vi-ju, mūs' dār-go tē-vi-ju, svē-ti jel
 Lat-vi-ju, ak, svē-ti jel to! to! Kur lat-vju
 mei-tas zied, kur lat-vju dē-li dzied, laid mums tur

The National Anthem

The national anthem of the Republic of Latvia is called "Dievs, svētī Latviju!" ("God, Bless Latvia"). The music and lyrics were composed by the Latvian composer Kārlis Baumanis (1835-1905).

The song was first performed at the first Latvian Song Festival on June 16, 1873, but wasn't adopted as the national anthem until June 7, 1920. (The Republic of Latvia was proclaimed in Riga on November 18, 1918, though armies clashed until the Latvian-Soviet Riga Peace Treaty was signed on August 11, 1920.)

During the Soviet occupation (1940-1941 and again in 1944-1990), the national anthem was forbidden. However, on February 15, 1990, the song was reestablished.

Lyrics (translated into English):
 God, bless Latvia,
 Our dearest fatherland,
 Do bless Latvia,
 Oh, do bless it!
 Where Latvian daughters bloom,
 Where Latvian sons sing,
 Let us dance in happiness there,
 In our Latvia!

From:
 Kalns, Guntis. *The Passport of Latvia*. 2nd Ed. Bārbala Simsons (trans.). Rīga, Latvia: Apgādus Zvaigzne ABC, 2019.



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Fellow LCMS missionary, Rev. Dr. David Preus, presents during the Lutheran Symposia conference in November in Braşov, Romania.

Dear friends in Christ,

I hope you enjoyed your Thanksgiving holiday and are looking forward to the season of Advent and then the season of Christmas. For the instructors of Lutheran Academy, we were together on Thanksgiving, not to enjoy a meal together but to work. We typically schedule our faculty meetings during the reading week for students. If you're not familiar with reading week, it is a week wherein there are no classes, but students are encouraged to catch up on any outstanding work and assignments. It is something that is done at some schools in the US as well.

After our faculty meeting, we gathered together with other Confessional Lutherans throughout the Balkans for a conference in Romania. It was a wonderful opportunity to see several of our students in person and connect with other European pastors. I arrived home to Riga to rejoice in some beautiful snow. More snow has been falling this week, and it is piling up. This is good because we look forward to the beginning of the Christmas Market, which will be kicking off in Riga by the time you read this.

Christmas in Latvia is similar to how many in the US celebrate it. It is very much connected to the sentimentality and aesthetics of the holiday, but there is very little connection to the Christian nature of it. In many ways, Christmas has become disconnected from the birth of Christ into a celebration all its own. Nonetheless, the work of the Church is to faithfully and joyfully proclaim the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was incarnate and born for our sake. By taking on our human nature, he redeemed us through the cross. This is a message that many here in Latvia, like in the US, know intellectually but do not truly understand.

Please pray for the work of the Church throughout the world and especially for the endeavors of our missionaries as we seek to preach Christ incarnate and crucified for the life of the world, even those who do not really know him any longer. Our Lord is faithful, and he will create the harvest where and when it pleases him. May our Lord bless your own celebration of his birth, and may we all take the opportunity to speak of him to all who will listen.

In Christ's Service,
 Pastor Cundiff



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- The students, instructors, and staff of Lutera Akadēmija as we make our way to the end of our Fall Semester.
- All the missionaries living and working across the globe, especially through the upcoming holiday season.
- The allied missionaries that we have come to know in Eurasia.

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- The many blessings we encounter in our local friends and fellow missionaries.
- YOU - our generous donors and prayer warriors, and the steadfast workers of Mission Central and Mission Advancement, without whom this mission would be impossible.

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!

A busy November!



Carter's entire student body (K-12) performs onstage for their Independence Day program.

Like everyone back in the States, the Cundiffs enjoyed the celebration of Thanksgiving, if a bit early. We treated our local Latvian colleague and his family (see their daughter, Marija Abigeila, with Carter down below!) in early November to an American Thanksgiving meal of turkey, sweet potatoes, creamed corn, dressing, green bean casserole, and cranberries. All of this was made from scratch by Quintin (assisted by Carter) because boxes of Stove Top stuffing are nonexistent here, as are cans of green beans, cream of mushroom soup, and cranberry sauce! Most European ovens are far smaller than the average American oven, too, so roasting a whole turkey is unheard of – we resorted to a turkey breast and a few thighs. It was ALL so delicious, and our Latvian friends enjoyed it!

We helped Carter's South Korean friend and classmate celebrate his birthday the following week. His family took us and Peter's other friends with them to a Korean

BBQ restaurant for some *incredible* food, cooked right at our table. After that, we all roamed Old Rīga to play Pokémon GO – a favorite at our house and among Carter's buddies.

Carter's international school gave a Latvian Independence Day program at the Large Guild in Old Rīga the following week, so we watched as the K-12 students delivered Latvian songs, dances, and poems. It was excellent to watch!

During all of Thanksgiving week, Quintin was in Romania for the Luther Academy faculty meeting, but Lindsay and Carter were able to join him there on Friday for the conference, where we met with other pastors and missionaries from surrounding countries, as well as our fellow LCMS missionary families living in Braşov.

We were thankful to be back home in Rīga after all this, and, as of this writing, we have had at least twelve inches of snow dumped on us since the last week of November. Luckily, it's only been cold and not windy; otherwise, we would definitely have blizzard conditions! (We are even more thankful that we no longer have to scoop all that snow!)

Blessings to all of you as we head into the Advent season and await the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

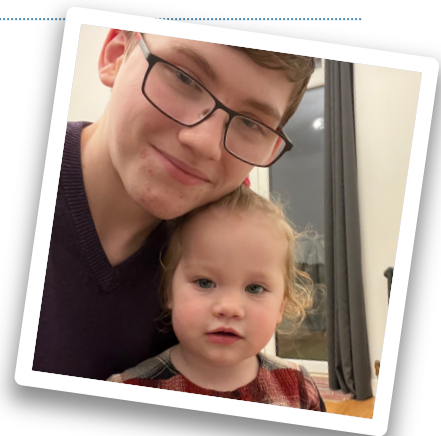
Be sure to follow our Facebook page, "The Cundiffs in Latvia", for even more photos and stories of the Lord's work in this beautiful country!

Carter's Corner

Sveiki (hello)! The month got cold quite fast and there is now lots of snow! We went to Romania and I got to hang out with other missionary kids. It was a lot of fun! Romania was very interesting because it is surrounded by mountains, and the ones you could see were covered in snow. In December, I think it will continue to be quite snowy.

Stay warm, and God bless!

- Carter (age 12)



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."

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

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

OR

Mission Central
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Mapleton, IA 51034

On the memo line include *Cundiff - Latvia*

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