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## “He is not safe, but he is good.”



### Tēņa diena (Tenis Day)

Another Latvian ancestral tradition: Tēņa diena. This was celebrated on January 17<sup>th</sup> each year, dedicated to Tenis, the guardian of pigs. A pig's head was offered to him on this day, and he is apparently oft-personified in folk songs. The swineherds of the area were shown special honor and dressed in their best clothes, pampered well, and treated to drinks at the pub...all so they could turn out good piglets!

The shepherd must bury the upper part of the pig's snout in the place where the pigs will be grazing next year, because then they will dig there and eat peacefully all next summer.

And, of course, there are a multitude of spring and summer predictions based on the weather on Tenis Day. If fog, then floods were to be expected in the spring. If snow, then snow was expected for the rest of the winter (but snowfall promises a good barley year!). If sunny, big frosts were expected in the future, but with good rye. Finally, if so much rain falls from the roofs that the rooster can drink it, then it will be a good harvest year!

Source: [https://www.delfi.lv/orakuls/laikariti/46953447\\_17-ianvaris-cuku-aizbildna-tena-diena-ka-atzimet-pec-sencu-tradicijam](https://www.delfi.lv/orakuls/laikariti/46953447_17-ianvaris-cuku-aizbildna-tena-diena-ka-atzimet-pec-sencu-tradicijam)



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One of the many changes in our culture over the past few years is an awareness of backgrounds. As Zoom meetings become a part of our lives, we have had to think about what is behind us on screen. Many are the stories of people who have had something embarrassing or humorous behind them. When we got to Latvia, I found this picture that I thought would be perfect for my office as it would make a nice background.

Many teachers and pastors like to use bookcases behind themselves as it helps to give an air of intellect and sophistication. Unfortunately, when one moves overseas, we can't all bring a lot of books with us. Most missionaries have digital libraries, which are great for portability, but poor for looking impressive.

So why the lion? Yes, it is called the “king of the jungle,” and yes, they are beautiful creatures. But I chose this for another reason as well. It is the same reason that C.S. Lewis made Aslan to be a lion: because one of the biblical images of Jesus is as a lion. Revelation 5:5 says, “And one of the elders said to me, ‘Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.’” This is the fulfillment of Jacob's (Israel's) blessing of his son Judah in Genesis 49, “Judah is a lion's cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down; he crouched as a lion and as a lioness; who

dares rouse him? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.”

But even still, why the picture of the lion in the background of Zoom meetings? Because much of my work as a theological educator for Luther Academy is done via Zoom. And while the study of theology is indeed a deeply intellectual pursuit, there is still more to it than just theory and academia. The study of theology is about learning to trail behind this mighty lion. The true aim of studying theology is for all our students to say along with Paul, “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” (1 Corinthians 2:2)

As the Gospel is proclaimed from the lips of our students in over a dozen countries, I ask that you join me in praying that they, too, would know Christ and him crucified for sinners just like us. It is for the sake of the Gospel that mission work is carried out all over the world. Thank you for your support in this work so that we would always know that, while this lion is not safe, he is indeed good.

In Christ's Service,

Pastor Cundiff



#### PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Continued good health.
- The Lord to continue to bring faithful men to Luther Academy.
- Quintin during his upcoming trip and stay in southern India to teach at a sister seminary.
- Those displaced by the war in Ukraine.
- Those affected by violence in Iran and Pakistan.
- People affected by the recent earthquake in Nepal.

#### PRAISE GOD FOR:

- Healing Carter after his brief illness with COVID.
- His work in Eurasia and across the globe to bring the good news to all peoples!
- Our supporters for helping to make this mission possible – we cannot stress our gratefulness enough!

#### A greener option?

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

## A new semester opens



Taken during our recent family photo shoot in Vecrīga (Old Riga).

January was full of hard work preparing for the beginning of the spring semester at Lutera Akadēmija (Luther Academy) in Riga.

Quintin, as the newly-minted Dean of Students, has been compiling information on each of the English stream students, ensuring that they are on-track to graduate. As an instructor, he worked diligently to prepare his lessons for his Foundations in Mental Health course. Returning this term is an introductory class for potential students that are considering the Academy for their studies which Quintin is also teaching. Quintin continues to meet with the Academic Council of the Academy and take turns with the other local missionaries to provide English worship services here in Riga.

Lindsay has taken a bigger role in setting up

the courses within Canvas and assisting instructors and students in working with that program. She continues to compile information from students' feedback evaluations for each course so that adjustments can be made as necessary to those courses. As the semester continues, she will be busy again with monitoring each submitted assignment for plagiarism and conformity with the academic guidelines of the Academy.

Lindsay's birthday was January 22<sup>nd</sup>, though celebrations were placed on hold as Carter tested positive for COVID on January 19<sup>th</sup>. Thanks be to God, though, that Carter made a quick recovery of his relatively mild symptoms and was able to get back to school a week later. Carter continues to do well in school and has joined the boys' middle school basketball team. He will also be assisting the boy's high school basketball team as their manager. Carter also recorded a podcast for KFUO's 5 Minutes With a Missionary, and is featured in season 5, episodes 1 and 2. You can check out that series at <https://www.kfuo.org/category/missionary-podcast/>.

**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!) I hope that God is keeping you well and everything is running smoothly!

I had COVID mid-January, which was not fun, and had to do schoolwork at home. My friend, Roberts, recently became sick, too, and has had to stay home. I would be grateful if you would pray for him.

Have a wonderful day!

- Carter (age 11)



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

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