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Language progression



Vispārējie Latviešu Dziesmu un Deju Svētki

Riga is full of activities in the summer. This summer, in particular, brought the *Vispārējie Latviešu Dziesmu un Deju Svētki* (Nationwide Song and Dance Festival), a huge ten-day affair that only comes around once every five years beginning in 1873. Over 40,000 participants from all over the country convene in multiple locations around Latvia for more than 60 events: choir, dance, wind band, *kokle* (a zither-like instrument, originating in the 13th century, with strings plucked by fingers), folk music, vocal ensembles, folklore, and other concerts. Other events include a Latvian folk costume exhibition, a folk craft art exhibition, and amateur theater productions.

This festival and its lengthy five-year preparation by the participants serves to maintain and develop Latvian traditions. It draws half a million visitors to this small country, whose population is around 1.96 million. Huge screens are erected and special landscaping is cultivated throughout Riga in many of the large squares to enhance the experience.

These performances are simply breathtaking in their painstaking attention to detail and their quest to unite Latvians and the visitors from all over the world into one large beautiful family.

<https://www.dziesmusvetki.lv/en/about-the-celebration/the-song-and-dance-celebration/>



THE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
MISSOURI SYNOD

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Quintin (in the green chasuble) saying the Words of Institution in Latvian at Old St. Gertrude Lutheran Church in Riga.

Dear friends in Christ,

What a month July was! Two very big things were accomplished this month, for which I am grateful. The first was the result of almost a year of Latvian language learning. For many missionaries arriving on the field, the first few months are spent simply working on learning the language. That's because, for an adult, learning a new language to a level where you can actually use it is quite difficult.

Our story is a bit different; we got to work right away on different projects for Luterā Akadēmija (Luther Academy), and the Latvian language classes were added a bit later. We also did not have daily classes where we went over a single concept for a whole day. We had classes twice a week for one hour each. That meant that we had to do a lot of language learning on our own. We have done that, but it has been difficult to dedicate the time necessary to it. Additionally, most of my work is actually still done in English, so the Latvian is nice to have but not mission critical for me.

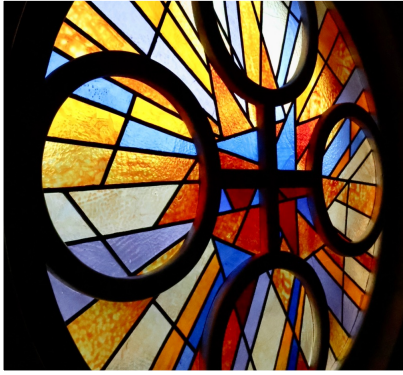
Nonetheless, this spring, I was talking with one of my Latvian coworkers at the Akadēmija, and he told me that there is a

shortage of pastors around Riga. I spoke with the bishop and volunteered to help should it be needed. In July, the Latvian church took me up on it. I have led the liturgy now in Latvian three times over the course of the month.

This has made me feel more confident with the language as well as the liturgy here. Another major blessing from this has been more interaction with people from the Latvian church, where we worship on Sundays with no English services. It even led to me reaching another major goal: holding my first conversation in Latvian! I was able to talk with one of the church members for a while in Latvian. It was a huge moment for me, and I think it is worth sharing with all of you.

This may seem a bit trivial, but to have learned enough of the language in less than a year to not only lead the service but also to hold a conversation opens up another potential avenue for work and service here among our Latvian hosts!

In Christ's Service,
Pastor Cundiff



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Continued and successful recruitment of new students for *Lutera Akadēmija* in the fall.
- All the Eurasia Region's staff (missionaries and managers), as we anticipate our Retreat in August.

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- Our language development over the past year.
- The opportunities to further enhance relationships with Latvians and other Europeans.
- The well-deserved rest of the *Lutera Akadēmija* instructors, students, and administrators over this summer.
- Our generous donors and prayer warriors, along with 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!

Other July happenings...



Corpus Christi attendees bussing to Liepaja, Latvia.

During the last week of July, Quintin and Carter attended the Corpus Christi Conference. (Think *Higher Things* but for young Europeans.) This week-long conference, in recent years, has taken place in Sweden and Germany, but this year, it was located in Liepaja, Latvia, only a four-hour bus ride from Riga on the coast of the Baltic Sea. They were able to worship and listen to lectures with other confessional Lutherans from all over the world. Carter was very excited to hear one such talk about how to talk about the Christian faith with nonbelieving peers. Both Quintin and Carter made it onto Latvian TV while at this event!

Our family was able to see part of the Latvijas Kara Muzejs (Latvian War Museum) in Riga recently, too. (Only part of it, because we are *serious* museum-goers who take hours to comb through information, but the weather was quite rainy, and we had forgotten our umbrellas!) It is a well-done museum, and it was intriguing to see the medieval weapons and more modern field medicine exhibits. We look forward to going back and finishing the museum tour in the near future.

Lindsay has begun the process of stateside endorsement of her nursing license and is considering continuing her quest for a bachelor degree in nursing. Prayers are requested, as this is a tricky path to navigate while living overseas.

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

Hi! Thank you for all your support in the mission. My dad and I recently went to Corpus Christi, a Lutheran conference with lecturers, etc, in Liepaja, which is on the Baltic Sea coast in Latvia. I got to meet some of the other missionary kids, and I’m excited to see them again at the Eurasia Missionary Retreat.

Otherwise, I have spent some time with my parents. To be completely honest, this summer has been relatively boring. That’s okay, though...I’m excited to get back to school with my friends at my international school in the middle of August!

- 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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