

# Friends of Latvia

# News!

Friends of Latvia in Covenant Relationship since 1991

To advance to every resident of Latvia the joyful witness of Jesus Christ as the risen Savior...

Volume 8 | Issue 1

May 2016

## Greetings From Gita Mednis

Senior Pastor 1st Riga / District Superintendent



Dear Friends,

Spring seems to be sprouting everywhere! In Riga, as sunlight floods through my window, I am sure that warm air will greet me and I will be set free from the bondage of warm clothes and cold hands. But alas! The temperatures are still hovering around freezing. But the trees are budding and they and we know that Spring is definitely on its way!

I hope you all had a blessed Holy Week and a glorious, joy-filled Easter! For us here in Latvia, we are in the midst of charge conferences and therefore it is a wonderful time for me to visit with our Methodist family all over the country. It is exciting to hear of the new people who have been brought to Christ, new members and the work of each congregation.

This winter, we renewed an old tradition, gathering for a Winter Conference. Lay and pastors from all over Latvia came to Riga First for the day. The topic which most wanted to have more information about was the refugee issue. How, we as Christ's followers, are to sift through all of the sensationalism in the media and understand our position and actions. We had two speakers. One was the former Bishop of the Lutheran Church in England now serving the Anglican Church in Riga. She has vast experience from working with many nationalities in her London congregations. The other speaker who spoke is a professor teaching at the Latvia University Theological School. His specialty is Eastern and Middle Eastern religions. After the question and answer period there were good discussions of possible ways the Methodist church could help the refugees.

We are all excited about the upcoming Friends of Latvia Gathering in Riga. We hope that those of you who have not yet registered will do so soon. This opportunity is truly the fulfillment of a long standing dream. I am so excited that you will be able to meet your brothers and sisters for whom you have prayed and helped be Methodists! We want to show you our hospitality; laugh, fellowship and pray together. It will be an excellent time to not only make new friends but vision how we can work together more successfully. How together we can evolve into a true partnership of spirit and energy in order to share our faith and love with others, especially with those who have no idea that God wants to make them whole, wants to give them an abundant life!

Enjoy the rebirth of the earth, the glorious sunshine and richness of the green and beauty of the flowers!

See you in Riga!  
Many blessings, Gita ♦

### In This Issue

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I know the experience of being in need and of having more than enough; I have learned the secret to being content in any and every circumstance, whether full or hungry or whether having plenty or being poor. I can endure all these things through the power of the one who gives me strength.

Philippians 4:12-13  
*Common English Bible*  
(CEB)

# Notes From the Chair

Greetings friends!

It is now less than two months until our mission weeks and the 2016 FOL gathering in Riga! I know that many of you are finalizing your travel arrangements and the work you plan to do while in Latvia. I am looking forward to this special time in Latvia and meeting with and working along side you in mission, worship and fellowship.



The agenda for the meeting is close to being finalized. Both Friday and Saturday sessions will run from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM. Sunday will be a day of worship and fellowship. Please let me know if there is an area of interest you have been praying about that you would like to see covered and if you would be interested in doing a presentation at the meeting. Please send me your ideas/input by May 31, 2016. Our evening activities for Friday and Saturday of the meeting are now set and will be both fun and educational. I know you will enjoy them!

Also, if you are attending and have not registered for the meeting yet, please do so as soon as possible. You may register using the form at the end of this newsletter, or online at [www.bit.ly/fol2016](http://www.bit.ly/fol2016). The deadline for registration is May 31. We would also like to begin gathering travel and mission work information for all who are coming to Latvia. You may submit this information by emailing me or completing the form on the Friends of Latvia website at [friendsoflatvia.weebly.com/fol-survey.html](http://friendsoflatvia.weebly.com/fol-survey.html).

That is all for now, I will provide another update as we get closer to the gathering. I look forward to seeing all of you soon!

Blessings,

**Mark Croft, Chair**  
markcroft@hotmail.com  
FUMC Grapevine, TX

## A Note to European Friends of Latvia

For those who are planning to attend Friends of Latvia from a European country (whether Latvia itself or England, Denmark, Lithuania, etc.), we ask that you do complete the registration information so that we know how many people to expect. However, you may pay registration fees once you get to Riga. These funds go directly to Riga First Church to cover the costs related to hosting the conference. You may email your registration information to FOL Secretary Melissia Mason at [secretary.fol@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.fol@gmail.com).



## Officers 2015-2017:

**Mark Croft, Chair**  
[markcroft@hotmail.com](mailto:markcroft@hotmail.com)  
First UMC  
Grapevine, TX

**Randy Tolleson, Vice-Chair**  
[rstolleson@att.net](mailto:rstolleson@att.net)  
Smithfield UMC  
North Richland Hills, TX

**Jim Hayes, Treasurer/Projects**  
[jrhayes46@bellsouth.net](mailto:jrhayes46@bellsouth.net)  
Norris UMC  
Norris, TN

**Melissia Mason, Secretary**  
[secretary.fol@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.fol@gmail.com)  
FUMC Grapevine, FUMC Colleyville  
Euless, TX

†

## Standing Committees

**Wesley Camp**  
Richard Payne, Joe Acker, Vivita & Edgars Kalnina

**Hope Center**  
Jim Nance, Holt Cason, Dana McCarty, Kristine Rozefelde, Gita Mednis

**Pastor's Income**  
Randy Tolleson, Mark & Julie Croft, Wayne Richards, Edgars

**Relationship**  
*This is a new committee tasked with creating strategies for developing relationships between churches*  
Lisa Nelsony, Jim Hayes, Daina Zamberga, Dana Nance



## Friends of Latvia National Gathering

July 1-3, 2016

In Riga, Latvia – Riga First Church (LAMB)

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Conference \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_

Local Church \_\_\_\_\_

Latvian Church or Ministry With Whom You Partner \_\_\_\_\_

I/we plan to arrive \_\_\_\_\_ and depart \_\_\_\_\_.

- I would like to stay in a host home if possible.       I'll need transportation to/from the conference.

### Registration

The registration fee of \$100 per person includes meals during the conference, refreshments, conference materials and programs. All participants are responsible for their own lodging and airfare. You may register and get more details about the conference schedule as it becomes available online at <http://friendsoflatvia.weebly.com/events.html> OR return your registration form with fees and a copy of this form to: FUMC Grapevine, Attn: Friends of Latvia, 422 Church Street, Grapevine, TX 76051. Please make CHECKS PAYABLE to FUMC Grapevine with *FOL Registration* in the memo. (Note that all registration fees will be wired to LAMB.) **For proper planning please register by May 31, 2016.**

### Lodging

Our friends in Latvia are currently gathering information about possible lodging locations. We will publish that information as soon as it's available. *Host homes may be available upon request.*

### Transportation

If you need assistance with transportation, please contact the LAMB District Office ([metodistu.birojs@gmail.com](mailto:metodistu.birojs@gmail.com)).

|                        |   |   |   |
|------------------------|---|---|---|
| For questions contact: | MARK CROFT<br>FOL Chair<br><a href="mailto:markcroft@hotmail.com">markcroft@hotmail.com</a> | MELISSIA MASON<br>FOL Secretary<br><a href="mailto:melissiam@fumcg.org">melissiam@fumcg.org</a> | RIHARDS GERMANS<br>LAMB (in Riga)<br><a href="mailto:metodistu.birojs@gmail.com">metodistu.birojs@gmail.com</a> |
|------------------------|---|---|---|

Registrations: FUMC Grapevine - 422 Church Street, Grapevine, TX 76051

Conference Location: LAMB Rīgas 1 Draudze - Akas iela 13, Rīga, LV 1011

Online payments/registrations: [bit.ly/fol2016](http://bit.ly/fol2016)

Friends of Latvia website: [friendsoflatvia.weebly.com](http://friendsoflatvia.weebly.com)

## Visitors From Cēsis

The Texas Friends of Latvia were blessed to welcome the Bell Choir from the Baptist Church in Cēsis, Latvia for worship and a concert on Sunday, April 10. The Baptist Church in Athens, Texas has partnered with Cēsis Baptist for many years, and arranged for the choir to come share with the Methodist Churches in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. The choir played for worship at First United Methodist Church in Grapevine, and then held a concert that evening at Smithfield United Methodist Church in North Richland Hills. Many of the members of Smithfield UMC and the Cēsis and Athens Baptist Churches recognize each other from their times visiting Cēsis at the same time! Audio files from the concert are available at <http://bit.ly/1Xrs5i2>.



## Current Funding Needs

- Salary for the new additional nanny for Hope Center - €500 will cover one month of salary
- Funding for renovations to the wooden building beside Riga First (to be used by Hope Center and other outreach ministries) - €19,000 is the cost for the initial restoration of items related to historical preservation.
- Regular gifts to Wesley Camp to provide for the expenses that are no longer covered by GBGM funding.
- Pastor's Salary Fund gifts are much appreciated and needed.

## Giving to the Advance

Your gifts make a huge difference! Below are the Advance numbers related to giving to Latvia, along with last year's total given and 2015 Year-to-Date giving (according to the Advance tracking feature on the GBGM website). To give online through the Advance, go to... [www.umcmmission.org/advance](http://www.umcmmission.org/advance)

### Hope Center

Project Number: 3020447  
Goal: \$39,500.00  
2015 YTD: \$11,628.33

### Latvia In Mission Together

Project Number: 00235A  
Goal: \$100,000.00  
2015 YTD: \$24,936.30

### Pastors' Income Fund

Advance project: 14706A  
Goal: \$50,000.00  
2015 YTD: \$6,910.00

### Wesley Camp

Project Number: 15160N  
Goal: \$23,000.00  
2015 YTD: \$2,875.00

## Wesley Camp Scholarships



Wesley Camp needs us to be more vigilant about fundraising to continue to support this ministry.

**If churches could together raise enough scholarship funds for 200 campers at \$100 each...**

...that would be enough to pay for both the camper expenses and for the expense of keeping the camp open.

Give your scholarship donations through

[www.umcmmission.org/advance](http://www.umcmmission.org/advance)

**Project Number: 15160N**



# Connect

Don't forget to be in communication with our friends in Latvia...  
to nurture and grow your relationships!

## Cēsis

Pastor: Kristīne Rozefelde | [kristine.rozefelde@gmail.com](mailto:kristine.rozefelde@gmail.com)  
LAMB Cēsu draudze  
Vaļņu iela 12a, Cēsis, LV - 4100

## Jelgava

Pastor: Jānis Baumanis | [janis@galileja.lv](mailto:janis@galileja.lv)  
LAMB Jelgavas draudze  
Zemgales pr. 3, Jelgava, LV-3001

## Kuldīga

Pastor: Vivita Kalniņa | [kalninavivita@gmail.com](mailto:kalninavivita@gmail.com)  
Lay Pastor: Zinta Dzintara | [zinta\\_dz@inbox.lv](mailto:zinta_dz@inbox.lv)  
LAMB Kuldīgas draudze  
Policijas iela 8, Kuldīga, LV - 3301

## Liepa

Latvian Pastor: Ilze Vesterlund | [imarija@inbox.lv](mailto:imarija@inbox.lv)  
Russian Pastor: Vera Titoviča | [vera.titovica@inbox.lv](mailto:vera.titovica@inbox.lv)  
LAMB Liepas draudze  
"Madaras", p.k. 38, Liepa, Liepas pag, Priekuļu novads, LV - 4128

## Liepāja

Pastors: Edgars Šneiders | [esneiders@inbox.lv](mailto:esneiders@inbox.lv)  
Gunta Grīna-Sologuba | [ggrinasologuba@gmail.com](mailto:ggrinasologuba@gmail.com)  
LAMB Liepājas draudze  
Brīvības iela 25, Liepāja, LV - 3400

## Matras

Pastor: Edgars Šneiders | [esneiders@inbox.lv](mailto:esneiders@inbox.lv)  
LAMB Mātrās draudze  
Mātrās, Medzes pag, Grobiņas novads, LV - 3461

## Paplaka

Pastor: Inese Budņika | [b\\_inese@hotmail.com](mailto:b_inese@hotmail.com)  
LAMB Paplakas draudze  
"Atvasaras", Paplaka, Virgas pag, Priekules novads, LV - 3433



## Rīga 1st

Pastor: Gita Mednis | [gitamednis@gmail.com](mailto:gitamednis@gmail.com)  
Astra Dannenfelte | [danne@inbox.lv](mailto:danne@inbox.lv)  
LAMB Rīgas 1. draudze  
Akas iela 13, Rīga, LV 1011

## Rīga 2nd

Pastor: Andris Vainovskis | [Vainovskis.andris@gmail.com](mailto:Vainovskis.andris@gmail.com)  
LAMB Rīgas 2. draudze  
Slokas iela 6, Rīga, LV-1048

## Sarkani

Pastor: Vera Titoviča | [vera.titovica@inbox.lv](mailto:vera.titovica@inbox.lv)  
LAMB Sarkaņu draudze  
Sarkaņi 7 - 3, Sarkaņi, Liepas pag, Priekuļu novads, LV-4128

## Tāši

Pastor: Gunta Grīna-Sologuba | [ggrinasologuba@gmail.com](mailto:ggrinasologuba@gmail.com)  
LAMB Tāšu draudze  
Tāši, Medzes pag, Grobiņas novads, LV-3460

## Youth & Children Ministry Coordinator of UMC in Latvia

Sniedze Više | [sniedzux@inbox.lv](mailto:sniedzux@inbox.lv)

## Lay Leader of UMC in Latvia

Agita Kļaviņa | [klagi@tvnet.lv](mailto:klagi@tvnet.lv)

## Office Manager of UMC in Latvia

Rihards Germans | [metodistu.birojs@gmail.com](mailto:metodistu.birojs@gmail.com)

## Latvia District Superintendent

Gita Mednis | [gitamednis@gmail.com](mailto:gitamednis@gmail.com)

## The Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference

Bishop of the Nordic and Baltic Area: Christian Alsted  
[bishop@umc-ne.org](mailto:bishop@umc-ne.org)

## Connect Online

The Friends of Latvia website contains contact information for each of the churches in Latvia, the latest news, upcoming mission trip dates and events and links to Advance giving. If you have information you'd like to share on the website, please email it to FOL Secretary, Melissia Mason, at [secretary.fol@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.fol@gmail.com).

### Friends of Latvia



[friendsoflatvia.weebly.com](http://friendsoflatvia.weebly.com)