

Kuldīga UMC

Looking back on the time since FOL gathering at Riga First UMC, it is clear that God has been faithful and He has blessed the Kuldīga congregation abundantly. We continue the time proofed traditions, and have also begun several new ministries that have brought and continue to bring lots of blessings not only to us, but also to our neighboring society. Maybe it has not always been easy, but always – a blessing.

Each Sunday we meet in worship services to jointly say thanks to God, to praise Him and enjoy fellowship with Him and between us. On Sundays we hold also Sunday school classes. We meet weekly for prayer breakfast, Bible classes and Worship nights. On Thursday afternoons all those who want to learn and improve their English meet at the church for cordial conversations in English.

This time has been rich with varied events. In August, the Faithful Men choir visited us from the US. We participated in the UMC in Latvia's Song Day festival at Riga Second UMC with a performance, also visited Mātras church to participate in the special worship service celebrating the new Superintendent. In September we were active helpers at Apple Festival at Camp Wesley.

October was particularly blessed, because we visited our connecting church in Liepa with praise songs, celebrated Harvest Festival and accepted a new member in the church. At the end of October, we started a couple of new ministries: we offer a chance to use shower, do laundry and dry the clothes three days a week to those people of Kuldīga who don't have such opportunities at home. At the same time it is a wonderful opportunity to show these people Christian love, listen and share about Jesus Christ. Thanks to Anitra who has taken on this ministry, and also to Cynthia and Steve Mosses for their donation to buy washing machine and dryer.

At the beginning of Advent, we participated in the Oriental Star project to prepare gifts for children of Syrian refugees. We baked gingerbread cookies, prepared candle lamps and brought Christmas songs to elderly and lonely people in Kuldīga and its nearby parishes. We also visited the needy families at several social homes bringing them gifts. Although Christmas time has passed, we still continue finding out contacts of elderly and lonely people and to visit them at home, praying and worshipping together.

At the end of the year we received boxes with clothes and other useful household items which we shared at the church, part was given to other residents of Kuldīga and part was brought to several social homes in Īvande. We are grateful to our friends in Denmark for this opportunity to serve our neighbors.

The new year also started with wonderful events. Camp Wesley director Anita Ercuma visited us in worship and told us about the newest plans. We offered a friendly donation for Camp Wesley. Sunday School children gathered for a special pizza afternoon where they prepared and enjoyed the self-prepared pizzas together. Children also prepared and led one Sunday worship.

To acquire new knowledge and experience we participated also at varied seminars and conferences. Several members attended the Global Leadership Summit in Riga.

We are taking active part in ecumenical events. A good collaboration has formed with other congregations in Kuldīga. I am attending meetings and gatherings of pastors of Kuldīga's churches. I participate in meetings of Religious Affairs Committee that are held at Kuldīga municipality. We take part in planning of joint events organized by churches in Kuldīga – Prayer Breakfast for Kuldīga region and Family Festival. Our Sunday School children participated at a charity concert at Kuldīga Baptist congregation.

Varied remodeling works continue at our church, but we have already accomplished a lot. The kitchen is functioning! We have bought a fridge, a stove, set up the washing sink and table tops. We are grateful to Edgars for his diligent work and to our friends in Tennessee for prayers and financial support. The work may not totally be finished yet, because it turned out that the floor of the room had problems and it would soon need to be replaced.

Soon we plan to participate at the Prayer Breakfast of Kuldīga region, UMC in Latvia Song Day festivities in Cēsis and organize an event for children – the Greatest Gift – at our church. We plan to begin Bible studies for children “The wonderful journey”, where we will invite kids that are not attending Sunday school.

Looking in the future, we believe that God will speak to someone who will have a calling to lead After school program for children in our church, because we see that such ministry is very needed.

In Spring we plan to host the UMC in Latvia Church camp and varied planning and preparation work is already ongoing. This year the large cost of Sunday school camp is a great pain for us. Therefore we will try to put aside one tenth of each offering in worship to support our children's participation at least partly.

We are grateful to all our friends for support, prayers and encouragement. May God continue to lead and bless Kuldīga church, for us to more and more grow in mutual love and fellowship. May the Holy Spirit fill us with courage, strength and wisdom staying faithful God's servants and facing continued new challenges.

Pastor Zinta Dzintara