

Liepāja UMC

Main activities from June 1, 2016 up to this day.

Liepāja UMC participated in the Open Church night for the second straight year. The church was open and filled with varied concerts and events till midnight. All generations participated in organization of this event.

In July, Sunday school children, teens and youth participated in summer camps. Some as participants, others as leaders.

At the beginning of August we finished preparation of fire wood for winter heating season. On August 6 Liepāja UMC choir and musicians participated in the Methodist Song Day at Riga Second UMC. Also in August we held baptism and confirmation classes at church, as well led baptisms and confirmations. Pastors and lay representatives took part in the annual District Conference at Riga First UMC. On August 31, 15 people VIM work team from South Carolina, USA visited us. Till September 12 they completely redecorated the fellowship room and renewed the flooring of the third floor room.

On September 17, pastors along with several members of the church participated in the Apple Festival at Camp Wesley offering a helping hand in tidying the camp site, preparing jam and picking apples for juice.

A new member was accepted on October 23.

On October 29, one couple got married in church.

On November 6, we held a special worship service dedicated to orphans. The offering was conveyed to support orphans.

On November 21, Jim Reid (USA) visited with our youth.

Thanks to Danish friends, humanitarian aid for the whole UMC in Latvia was delivered to Liepāja church at the beginning of December. It was sorted and distributed to other congregations.

During Advent season we visited a day care center for people suffering from Down syndrome and other illnesses. We led a devotion and two craft workshops. Everyone was very happy and wanted to see us again some other time. Confirmation classes were held at church during December. Before Christmas the congregation and several of the members participated in Oriental Star mission project preparing gift boxes for Syrian and other countries' refugee children who have suffered from war disasters.

We held a seminar on love (based on Rick Warren's book) where church people could learn how to strengthen interpersonal relationships and what loving meant.

Christmas day worship was very blessed, church members participated with musical performances. It was very well attended. After the worship, for the eighth time, we organized an event for Liepāja homeless people. 37 people attended. We delighted them with a set table, music, God's Word, prayers and presents.

At the beginning of January we held an event for the most active members of church who had helped the common church ministry in their own ways. There are around 50 such people.

On January 11, thanks to support of organization Youth With a Mission, an event for couples was held at church, several couples from the congregation attended.

On January 14, UMC in Latvia Sunday school teachers meeting was held at our church. It included teaching, planning of the summer camps, as well an opportunity to acquire varied useful materials.

Several pastors and servants meetings for Kurzeme region have been held at Liepāja church where we have prayed for one another and planned some joint events.

Several times we have visited with Holy Communion the elderly members who are not able to attend church anymore.

We have visited the old people's department at the local hospital and delighted those people with songs, God's Word, prayers, presents and greeting cards.

Pastors Edgars Šneiders and Gunta Grīna-Sologuba have actively participated in varied ecumenical events.

Beside other activities and Sunday worship services we have weekly prayer mornings followed by common breakfast in fellowship, afterschool programs, youth meetings and small group gatherings.

Thanks to all who have offered their assistance in Liepāja church ministries and growth, as well our supporters in USA and Europe.

Pastor Edgars Šneiders

Liepāja church' plans for 2017:

Our church's plans can be divided in two parts: discipleship and maintenance plans.

Discipleship:

- 1) Continue teaching in the baptism and confirmation classes, participants are youth and two adults who want to affirm their faith.
- 2) Preparing for the Open Church Night (first Friday of June the doors of the church are open from 6PM till midnight with a planned evening program for visitors), the goal is not to disciple people as Christ's followers, but to get the nearby society acquainted with our congregation and to change the stereotypes people have.
- 3) In June we plan to gather for a church camp to work, strengthen our body and soul and be in fellowship. It will be first such unifying event for our congregation.
- 4) Motivate and invite youth and adults to volunteer at Camp Wesley as member of the practical staff, shepherding the children at camp, attend common maintenance work weekends at camp etc.
- 5) Alpha course for homeless people is one of the planned ministries. We are still in prayers whether it is the right way to serve these people and when to start doing it, because we have understood that it is not enough to organize a Christmas event once a year or them, we need to do something more. Please keep praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Maintenance tasks:

- 1) Spring cleaning of all windows of the church building using a special lift to wash the large windows of the sanctuary.
- 2) Replacing the heating system from wood burning stoves (self-serviced heating and preparing wood for winter) to a centralized city heating system. Most of the heating pipes and heating elements need to be replaced for new ones. Everything needs to be accomplished till September this year.
- 3) Buying a new sound system, because the existing one is what has remained from the Soviet times and it is outdated. It is one of the goals, because we don't know yet how much funds will be left available after heating system replacement.
- 4) During summer we plan to host friends from South Carolina and accomplish sanding and laquering of the parquet floor in sanctuary.
- 5) Continue fundraising to build volleyball field at Camp Wesley, which we have promised to accomplish as a congregation this year. 302 EUR have already been raised.
- 6) Planning and hosting of the UMC in Latvia Annual District Conference in August.