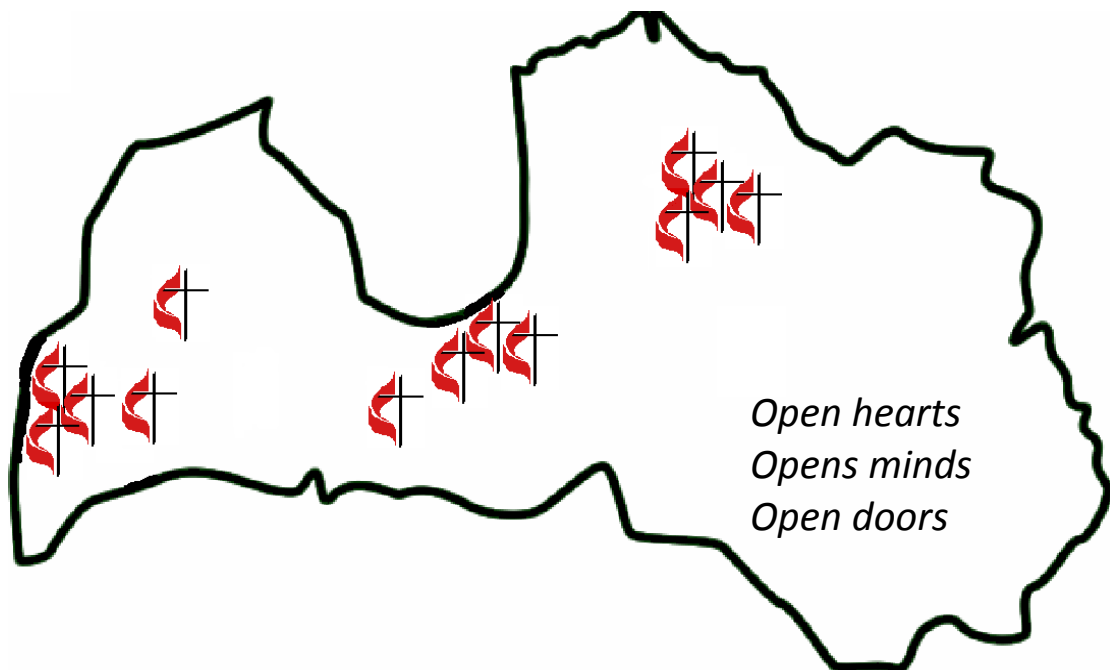


Latvia
United
Methodist
Church



Annual
District
Conference
2014



“Be alert, and strengthen the things that are left, which are about to die. I note that your actions are incomplete before my God” (Rev. 3:2)

Theme: Raise and strengthen those who are still alive.
Being in God, I am changing myself, and the world changes through me.

August 22-24, 2014
Rīga



Annual Conference of Latvia UMC

August 22-24, 2014
Rīga

Friday, August 22, Riga 1st UMC

8.30 Registration of delegates.
 9.00 Worship service with Holy Communion – led by Gita Medne, Astra Dannenfelte preaching
 10.00 Welcome and opening of Conference - Bishop Alsted
 Roll call; Introduction of guests;
 Review and acceptance of the agenda;
 Secretary – Rihards Germans; vote for second secretary;
 Vote for 2 tellers.
 10.30 Devotion/Bible study led by Bishop Alsted
 11.00 Discussion in small groups based on Bible study.
 11.30 Coffee break.
 11.50 WORSHIP
 12.00 Superintendent's report. Discussion about the report.
 12.30 *Let the pastor speak!* 5 minutes for each pastor to share or show what has been successful in their congregation in the past year – an experience worth sharing with others.
 Edgars Šneiders – Liepāja and Mātrās
 Gunta Grīna-Sologuba – Liepāja and Tāši
 Jānis Baumanis – Jelgava
 Ilzīte Ozola – Liepa Latv. and Sarkaņi
 Vera Titoviča – Liepa Russian
 Gita M. and Astra D. – Rīga 1st
 Vivita Kalniņa – Kuldīga
 Inese Budņika – Paplaka
 Andris Vainovskis – Rīga 2nd
 Gundars Ceipe – Cēsis
 13.30 *Lunch*
 14.30 WORSHIP 15 min, PRAYER TIME 40 min.
 15.30 Lay leader's report – Agita Kļaviņa
 15.35 Auditing committee report
 Financial report..... Jolanta B.
 Budget plan for 2015 Jolanta B.
 15.50 Hope Center – pictures and information
 16.00 Vera Titoviča and Afterschool Program in Liepa. Offering for Liepa Afterschool program.
 16.10 Panel discussion according to Conference theme – What does not meet the requirements of my God in my church/self?
 17.15 Discussion in small groups about questions raised by the panel discussion
 17.45 Dinner
 18.45 *Evening program* – Riga's night
 ~21.00 Evening prayer and closure of the day's program

Saturday August 23, Riga 1st UMC

8.30 Registration of delegates.
 9.00 WORSHIP.
 9.10 Devotion/Bible study – led by Bishop Alsted.
 9.40 Discussion in small groups based on Bible study.
 10.10 Opening of session—Bishop Alsted.
 Any adjustments to the agenda?
 10.20 “3 by 5” Three summer camps in 15 minutes – photo and video impressions
 10.40 Coffee break. (Pastors have coffee break in the 3rd floor library and continue with Pastor session)
 11.00 WORSHIP.
 11.10 Work in sessions:
 Pastor session (3rd floor library)
 Lay session (Sanctuary)
 13.10 Report of the Board of Ordained ministry.
 13.20 Lunch.
 14.50 WORSHIP 25 min, Prayer time 30 min.
 15.50 Group picture of the Conference delegates.
 16.05 Agita Kļaviņa – lay session report.
 16.20 Election of the Auditing committee
 16.25 Camp Wesley update – Richard and Inese
 16.45 Other matters
 Time for churches to apply for hosting the next year's Conference
 17.20 Bishop's closing remarks
 17.45 Dinner
 18.45 Evening program led by Gunta and Kristīne. In closing – evening prayer and heading home

Sunday, August 24, Riga 1st UMC

11.00 Closing Worship of the Conference
 led by Superintendent Gita Medne
 Preaching—Bishop C. Alsted
 Bishop's appointments for next year
 (Social outreach recognition.....Gita Medne)

Fellowship table after the service

Latvia UMC Annual District Conference
Rīga, August 22-24, 2014

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LAMB Superintendent's report 2013/2014

Gita Medne

This has been another active year in the life of our church. A year where several congregations initiated new traditions, were more active in evangelizing. Much of my, and the District Office's attention, has been focused on the "business" aspect of preparing the church to no longer be a part of the new initiative program of GBGM as well as identifying ways for each congregation to assume more financial responsibility. Even with the monetary change to the Euro, and the feeling that everything is more expensive, most of our congregations' giving increased.

In visiting all of the congregations and leading their church conferences, I was inspired by the passion I saw and heard in the reports of some. In others, it was evident that an inertia was present. The congregation and pastor seemed overwhelmed with the challenges they were facing and focused on trying to preserve that which they have. At present, we are a small church and as some of our congregations grow in strength and experience, they must reach out more actively to our own smaller churches. The cost of transportation is a major factor, but can not be the deciding factor. One of the special strengths of the Methodist Church is its understanding of Church as being connectional. As pastors, this sense of serving one church has grown and is strongly enforced by our monthly gatherings and bi-annual retreats. Now this must grow to include our congregations.

We experience and are greatly blessed by being a connectional church internationally but also must work on strengthening that here at home. A great step was taken with the first ever Latvian Methodist Song Day in Jelgava.

Each congregation has its joys, its sorrows and its challenges. The most dangerous place to be as Christ's church is to be resigned about or satisfied with our present reality. All of us, those who feel that their church is active and alive, as well as those who are resigned to their state of affairs. We all need to examine ourselves and our congregations. Are we spending all of our passion, energy and time on the right things? We must ferret out those critical places in our ministry that unnoticed, might be on the verge of dying due to lack of attention or complacency.

MOST NOTABLE HAPPENINGS OF THE YEAR:

New administrative board as well as Board of Ordained Ministers began its work.

The pastoral changes which were instituted the previous year began to bear strong fruits.

Alfa course continue to be a strong evangelism tool. Liepaja, Paplaka, Kuldiga, and Riga 1st have done the course. Liepaja has followed up with a Beta course. Riga 1st is considering running another Alfa cycle.

Liepaja and Riga 1st have had courses on Methodism. Riga 1st was based on the Alfa model. It was 4 weeks and now can be seen on YouTube.

Work on the Latvian Methodist hymnal continued with much emphasis on discussing the primary liturgies. All pastors participated in the discussions.

Kuldiga's pastor went on maternity/baby leave in early spring. The Kuldiga congregation decided they were strong enough to wait until the conference for a new full time pastor. In order to ensure Sunday worship, all of the pastors committed to at least one Sunday, our lay leader, youth director as well as youth council and lay board also took a turn.

Kuldiga's partner churches have raised \$15,000 to buy an apartment for the Kuldiga congregation. This will give a pastor the opportunity to live in Kuldiga since there is no housing or housing



LAMB Superintendent's report 2013/2014

Gita Medne

allowance available from LAMB.

Several congregations traveled to share worship and fellowship with other congregations. Riga 2nd established special monthly “dues” to collect the needed gas money.

Camp Wesley continues to grow in importance to the church. The 5 camps each summer are the backbone of our children's and youth work. The staff, shepherds and programming directors are the future teachers and leaders of our church. This summer, the leadership of previous years handed over the running of the camps to the next generation!

A new tradition was begun – the Methodist Song Day. This had been on the hearts of many pastors for many years. The Methodists love and cherish their ability to praise God through music. The first gathering took place in Jelgava and most congregations sent their singers.

We were blessed with another Person in Mission. Michael Barr arrived right as the camp season began and soon became a very important helper to Romiks who volunteered his services at camp. Michael will also work with Holt Cason's team in Liepa in addressing some of the critical issues at the Hope Center building.

“Metode” continues to expand its work, contacts and outreach. It is hoped that this will grow into a good source of income for the mission of the church as well as the individual artisans.

Small groups have been formed, both in Liepaja and Riga 1st and hopefully will multiply and be formed in all of our congregations.

Lay leadership group continues to meet and search ways to help the church. In almost all of the church conferences, I met new interested people.

The Hope Center continues to serve young single mothers and their babies. The Center is full and girls/women waiting.

On the ecumenical front:

The church, together with the Estonian and Lithuanian Methodist delegates actively participated in the special Spring seminar led by Bill Hybels. Together with leaders of other denominations, we were invited to a private luncheon with Bill and his staff. These GLS seminars are a very important continuing education source for our pastors and lay.

I took part in the organizing and attended a special ecumenical breakfast to celebrate women who take an active role in their church's ministries. Women are still struggling to find their place in the other Christian denominations and Methodists have a unique opportunity to encourage them.

I had an opportunity to attend the European World Methodist Women's Gathering in Italy. The official women's group of the Latvian church has been without leadership for some years.

The Methodist Church continues to take part in the official ecumenical worship services in Riga.

GOALS AND CHALLENGES :

Continue to strengthen our mentoring program

Continue to educate our lay using the very successful Alfa course example

Promote the involvement of all generations in our worship services as well as hold more special youth and children's services attended by all generations.



LAMB Superintendent's report 2013/2014
Gita Medne

Courses for lay speakers

Utilize the experience gained at our upcoming Pastors retreat in Texas

Closer communication with our international partners

Encourage all to spend more time with God in prayer and solitude.

As in life, this has been a good as well as challenging year for the church. The majority of leaders are filled with thirst, desire to grow deeper in their faith and enthusiasm for the future of our church, despite the obstacles that exist.

I thank all of our pastors and lay for their dedication. I thank everyone for all of the countless prayers that have been raised for our church. I thank God for using all of us as His instruments in the world. Thanks to the Friends of Latvia, the Kuldiga partnership group that visited and actively donated to the Ervins Fund, thanks to the Grapevine team and congregation as well as all of our friends, partner churches and supporters in US, England, Ireland and Denmark. Thanks to our Bishop for his leadership, thanks to all of you, who have heard God's call to help lay a strong foundation and help build the re-established Methodist church in Latvia. May God continue to guide us, strengthen us and bless us all with His grace.

Gita Medne,

DS Latvia District



Cēsis UMC report 2013/2014
Gundars Ceipe, translated by *K.Rozefelde*

During this time period worship services were held regularly and once a month with Holy Communion. At worship services often were shared testimonies. Resumed are also weekly Bible studies on Wednesdays.

During the year we had one marriage and one funeral, one child was born, but it has not yet been baptized.

Church youth group has been formed, who stage the theatrical performances and they sing.

One of the girls participated in shepherds training.

Also continues work goes on in Sunday school, youth and children participate in camps organized by UMC of Latvia. Church members participated also in UMC of Latvia lay camp.

We went to visit sick church members at home and offered holy sacrament.

Church held general cleanup day, and at the church we have regular members on call. The church supports people with humanitarian aid. Church has inserted three new windows.

The church is in fellowship with the nearest Methodist churches, as well as with sister congregations from United States, with whom we met two times online on internet. We also created a movie about our church.

During the year has gotten more active the laity work, who are more involved in church administration and more and more are showing initiative.

Whenever possible, I tried to stay in the church and through the night, but it is associated with great problems, especially in cold weather.

One of the main priorities for the church development would be creating living conditions so that pastor could spend the night.

In 2015, one of the tasks is to prepare and host our sister congregation's visit in Cesis.

Gundars Ceipe,

Pastor of Cēsis congregation



Jelgava UMC report 2013/2014
Jānis Baumanis, translated by R. Germans

In the passing year Jelgava UMC has been generously blessed with God's grace. First of all, it has to be noted that church life was especially enriched by the opportunity to form our own musical ensemble, because songs and performances refined our gatherings and worship services. It was particularly felt during Christmas time.

In last Fall together with ca. 500 youth from around the world – representing “Youth with a Mission” organization – we served people in Jelgava with God's Word, visited the needy families and were able to help people with clothes and food.

In Spring this year Jelgava UMC had a significant celebration hosting members from all UMC in Latvia congregations willing and able to sing. The first UMC in Latvia song festival was organized in Jelgava.

This year, same as last year, we had invited the 2 level bus from Germany's Zelt Mission specially prepared for street evangelization, where right next to the bus on the street, under a small tent, we were able to put tables and chairs just like in a cafe, drink tea or coffee and talk with by-passers. It was a wonderful opportunity to tell people about the UMC and its ministry. These evangelization events offered a huge blessing to all areas of Jelgava church's activity, ministry and development. Firstly, during the preparation process, the congregation became much closer to one another, becoming a true whole body in planning, organizing, inviting, praying and looking for God's ways and blessing. The congregation was also united in going out in streets, inviting Jelgava's residents to participate in the events, distributing fliers and talking to people.

Immeasurable in words and figures was financial assistance from Middlebrook Pike UMC, Knoxville, TN, which is our connecting congregation. We are grateful to the congregation and especially to Susan Beck for her boundless fervor of heart, prayers and responsiveness organizing receiving of the support.

As an important fact I would like to note that Jelgava UMC has formed a very strong inter-denominational relationship with basically all evangelical church communities in Jelgava (Lutherans, Catholics, Baptists, Adventists, Pentecostal and free evangelical communities). To me as a pastor it is of great value that we have been able to form a tight and personal contact with leaders of other Christian church leaders in Jelgava and we have started regular monthly meetings (on the first Tuesday each month).

With gratitude to God I can also mark that this year we were able to take care of the legal side of the rental property that congregation uses. After our entry into competition at State Real Estate Agency we were able to sign a rental agreement of the premises for the next five years with a possibility to use the premises for meetings and worship services.

As a pastor, I continue practice of forming personal contacts and meeting people that are not our members, but who are interested in Methodism, who are searching for spiritual support in their struggles and problems, or simply are willing to know more about God. Besides, I practice mentoring – consulting people in their personal, everyday and home needs.

All in all, the past year in terms of spiritual growth and practical ministry has been successful for Jelgava congregation, and it has been filled with rich blessings from God.

Now Jelgava UMC has become like a firm team with which a successful continuing congregational growth may continue. Good traditions have been established in the congregation that by fostering growth are strengthening and uniting it.



Jelgava UMC report 2013/2014
Jānis Baumanis, translated by *R. Germans*

Administrative Board of the congregation is active, and we have identified factors that influence growth of the congregation. Therefore I think that the congregation is able to develop successfully now, and I estimate that in the future its growth will be positive.

Jānis Baumanis,
Pastor of Jelgava congregation



Kuldīga UMC report 2013/2014
Vivita Kalniņa, translated by *K. Rozefelde*

"Stop judging and condemning yourself, it is not your responsibility, and above all else, stop to compare yourself with others." – quote from the book "Jesus Calling" by Sarah Young. This quote spoke to me very personally with regarding service not only in the church but also in my everyday life. Every time I am looking for a "flea" in my coat, and then I have a feeling that someone else succeeds much better, in much better quality, much more accurate, much more promising and more thoroughly, but the author of this quote stopped me and allows me to look at myself from another point of view! God has created me in His own image and likeness, therefore also valuable and talented, not in everything I have to see the fruit, and not all fruits I have to harvest, I have to sow with the purest heart and surrendering to God. The further remains in His competence, and if one thing does not work or fail in a way I planned it, then obviously it must be so, but I do want to believe that God has used me and will continue to use me here on earth in His work and also in Kuldigas church. Beginning of this year February 13th I went into maternity leave, so the report from my point of view is from the period of September 1st, 2013 – February 13th, 2014.

The time in UMC of Latvia, Kuldigas' congregation was wonderful, and the church literally has changed – each Sunday I felt the presence of God and fluffiness of Holy Spirit, of course did not stay without challenges and "thorns".

- During the last summer, shortly before the Annual Conference of UMC of Latvia we managed to renovate the church fellowship room, inviting one young lady from Tasi church, youth group and members from our church and also one young men who is not a church member, but who always likes to be involved in renovation work. Finances again we got from Kuldiga's city projects "Let's do it ourselves!" Also, this year is expected to participate in the project by submitting a project for the renovation of the exterior doors and small lobby.

- In August of 2013 we welcomed the Annual Conference of UMC of Latvia in our church. It was a big challenge for the church, but a great team effort and a pleasant feeling that each attendee of the conference went home fulfilled and with a desire to come back!

- In October, we resumed the Bible study, Sunday school, teen club and Alpha courses for young people. Unfortunately, sad to admit that the Bible study attendance was not as active as much as my heart would like, but I am grateful for everyone who wants to study the Bible together. In this year we studied the gospel of Mark.

- Sunday school - the past school year ended with a new challenge - to find new Sunday school teachers during the summer. It succeeded, and starting from October the ministry was launched by two teachers both named Liga, and unfortunately bravely stayed one - Liga Kavanska, young girl who selflessly every Sunday traveled with me to run from the heart the Sunday school. To this girl last year has been a year of great challenge. I cannot stop thanking God for her responsiveness and love for the children and God. At the same time during this year was trained a new Sunday school teacher Amanda Ratniece, a teenager who is active in the church. Sunday school was held till the end of May.

- In our congregation, of course, have also been changes in the number of members. More often we feel that Kuldiga is not a city where young people "remain." By that I mean that it is a city where young people are/were in families, but after the graduation of high school, they travel in the world – I will be honest, have almost lost all young people, but not due to the fact that they walk away from God, but because they flee the city itself. I know that a large proportion of young people are involved in a small group of Christians, in other churches, and if they are not active their Christian life the relationship with God is not lost. Some time ago, creating Kuldiga's list of former young people, found



Kuldīga UMC report 2013/2014
Vivita Kalniņa, translated by *K. Rozefelde*

out that 80% of young people are outside of Latvia, 10% are right here in Latvia, and back in Kuldīga they are very rarely, while the rest of the 10% are the ones that we still have - Raelē, Laine and Madara! Great, great joy and gratitude to God for these three young ladies. However, regardless of how little we have the middle-aged people, I see that there are new young people or development of so-called new teen's group! Year started with three girls, but over the time, joined by three more. Teens give strength, joy and the desire not to give up! They are growing with every moment, their hearts are changing with every moment, and the love in their hearts for God grows as a wonderful seedling. Praise God for new hearts!

- Inevitably we face thorns and challenges - the new Church year begun with desertion of our pianist Zane, due to various circumstances, giving up her place to someone who actually we did not have, so for some time we were singing on our own. But again, God sent His child - Dace, which is now surrounded by our congregation and is one of "ours", and with the greatest joy and responsive heart serves God whenever she can.

- We stopped the English courses, because we cannot find a teacher who would be able to attend during the day time, but the courses will not be stopped, we will try to launch it again in September.

- Last year from us were taken three hearts – Ervins passed away, shortly before the New Year Dzintra passed away and in spring time Emilija passed away. It was a hard time for the church, but at the same time church can be so united in prayers and in spirit only then, when their sister or brother they truly feel as themselves.

- As a stable service for the city of Kuldīga has developed a humanitarian day in winter time, when the church doors are open to everyone - both church members and the people of Kuldīga. It is the day when we are "passing out" clothes, which has been donated to us from humanitarian aid, as well as we bring our own clothes that are no longer useful for us.

- In September, members of the church participated in the Apple Festival at Wesley's camp. Together we peeled apples and we were baking apple pies and boiled jam.

- We welcomed guests from Paplaka's church, led by pastor Inese Budnika.

- Since October has been issued monthly church INFO bulletin or small newspaper, where there is information about both current events in the church and a small sermon from a various pastors. INFO bulletin is made by me and it is formatted and printed out by a church member from Liepāja named Arturs.

- Alpha courses for young people. Even though the advertising and information was given in a timely manner, however, the response from the outside of church practically did not have any, but the courses were not canceled anyway. Every Wednesday we came together to talk about the "as if" already known topics, but at the same time, these evenings not only I, but every one of us was strengthened spiritually and "fed". Total of us were 5 girls.

- Christmas time - rich in activities - celebration in the guest house "Polisi", as well as every Sunday fellowship time after the service ended with the preparations for the celebration.

- Lady's activity in connection with the UMC of Latvia project "Method." Great pride and pleasure is for the lady knits, brooches and other handicrafts, which maybe a little, but still brings some income to the church. We have received so far 50 Lats (71 Euro), but it's better than nothing. Thank you, ladies!

- Contact with sister churches: it is as good as it was before! We try to regularly send messages to



Kuldīga UMC report 2013/2014
Vivita Kalniņa, translated by *K.Rozefelde*

all four sister churches on our church activities and news. On spring time we sent three-page letter with info not only for the pastors, but for the whole church - also added many of our pictures. In October – at Harvest Festival, we had a special Sunday, when we prayed about our sisters and brothers in the United States. We established a United States "table", as well as during the fellowship we enjoyed a traditional American Apple Pie. Now we are getting ready for June, when our sister congregations from US will visit us. In mid-June we were visited by 4 sister-church representatives, who greatly spent time with Kuldīga's church not only studying the Bible together, and going on tour, but also working together at Wesley Camp.

- On November 10th confirmation of Valentine - almost a year diligently we came together at confirmation class, a great time to learn together about God and His love!
- On November 18th we participated in the ecumenical worship service at Katrina's Church.
- Very well attended are the church meetings, which take place once every 3 months (every sixth week, according to the Bible study calendar), but also we hold our meetings if there are any current issues. All meetings are recorded and protocols are in the church document folders.
- In March we participated at prayer breakfast, which was hosted by the city of Kuldīga.

Plans for the future:

- From my part, I will continue to create the INFO bulletins.
- keep in touch with the United States
- buy an apartment for the church needs
- install a heating system

I am again and again grateful to God for the time, trials and challenges in Kuldīga's church. The church is and will be my first "love".

Vivita Kalniņa,
Pastor of Kuldīga congregation



Liepāja UMC report 2013/2014
Gunta Grīna-Sologuba, translated by *K.Rozefelde*

Last year, together with the previous Board and Chairman of the Board Inese Birzniece **was established church vision**. Unfortunately, we concluded that it is too broad and includes almost every possible ministry, so we have already started to think and analyze the church after the SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) and we are in prayers may God to us as the Board makes this vision clear. So when we will have a clear vision it is possible that some ministries may change, but that all is in God's hands.

As of September, we continued prayer breakfast on Tuesday mornings at 9:00AM, we came together, ate breakfast, we shared how each of us are doing and what kind of work needs to be done in the church, prayed for the needs, opportunities, etc. and then we planned the forthcoming week, month, or any other individual event.

In September members of the church participated in the Apple Festival, which for many years has been very well attended, around 100 people.

Periodically I met with Sunday school teachers; at this semester also Pastor Edgar joined us. The goal is to get to know them closer, help them with materials, ideas, and just support. In this year, it was our common idea to lead four children & teens worship services alongside the Sunday worship service. It is an opportunity to get to know the children and teens closer and to be truly creative in creating the worship service using all the latest technologies.

As of September we resumed our Pastoral regional meetings, where came together Edgars Snieders, Vivita Kalnina, Inese Budnika and I. It is a time when not only we share and pray but we productively plan some events, seminars, as well as we work on the Methodist liturgy development.

Youth work this year has been different. Youth lessons started in September and we met every Wednesday evening. Topics were varied: get rooted to grow and grow deep; Good land – soil of heart, Weeding - repentance, Sowing the seed - the seed that you sow determines the harvest which you will reap; Fill up from the spring - to exist in Christ; The five love languages, etc. On October by youth initiative we launched so called “Living Room” nights when we come together at some youth home or at my home. Evenings were chosen in food thematically and we played games. The idea is to continue these kind of nights, because it is easier for the first time to invite your friends. In October our youth participated in the festival “Stop” organized by Christian student Brotherhood. In December together we baked Gingerbread cookies in the evening and decorated with the icing and wrapped them to sell in the charity fair at Advent season; donated money was delivered to African children and widows through the bishop Gerald. On December 13th-15th five young people took part in the youth winter camp "DNS Christ" in Kuldīga, where performed again another drama skit. On December 20th we celebrated the Birth of Christ. In January and all the way to mid-February we continued youth lessons, as well as Living room nights. But with the beginning of the Alpha course, we made a decision that young people will come to Alpha to get to know better their congregation and get the benefit from it themselves. I am glad to see that during this past year our young people are more attending our morning Sunday worship service. And along with Edgars and others we will think how to create intergenerational worship services. From our congregation 4 of our young people during the summer camps will be a part of the camp's practical ministry team, as well as Anna Dobele is one of the new children's camp leaders.

Young people from our church participated in the Youth Council (Dina Freimane, Anna Dobele, Ilze Erode, Kristaps Petrovs), however, faithful participants of the Youth Council remained Anna D. and Ilze E.



Liepāja UMC report 2013/2014
Gunta Grīna-Sologuba, translated by *K.Rozefelde*

In October together with Edgars we created a Thursday evening plan - to attract parishioners to be in fellowship slightly in a different way, because the Bible study was attended mainly by the same people, basically Young Adult Group. Therefore, in October we had a movie Night of John Wesley, anecdote evening, video lectures by Michael Vels and women's / men's evenings.

On October 18th for the first time we both held the promise of marriage restoration Devotion for the parents of Baiba Spera-Spora.

In October 19th we together organized a tour to Bruknas Manor and members from Liepaja attended as well.

In November we held the meeting for the small group leaders in order to start up the small group ministry in our church. Small group leaders are - Anna Dobele, Dzintra Pole, Miervalds Ziemelis, Ilze Erode, Gunta and Edgars Sneideri. Purposefully we developed many thematically sermons to encourage church members to sign up to the group leaders, but the response was very small and we felt that the church is not ready yet. Except by Dzintras Pole's leadership and initiative was started a small group for mothers with children. They gather every Wednesday before noon and study a book named "Purpose Driven Life". Constantly they are a group of four moms. On March, April and June I held mothers and babies fellowship, in June I invited them at my home, also those mothers who are not yet in a small group - gathered together 9 moms.

In November for the Latvian National Holiday we created the billboard with the photographs of historical facts.

We try our best to think about the thematic worship services - both decorations, as well as any ribbons that can be pinned to every church member and candies with Bible verses.

In November after suggestion from Maris at our church we had a concert "Waiting for Wonder" with Ainars Virga and other musicians participating.

On Saturday of first Advent we had short devotion in the church and then with candle lights we went together to the lit up the Advent candle in our city center at Rose Square. The event was organized by the Religious Affairs Committee in collaboration with the City Council.

Third Sunday of Advent was Advent of Mission, when we thought about mission and truly reaching out, not in the context of our own church, and as the result of that I set up an African bishop Gerald billboard stand. On fourth Sunday of Advent in the church we organized a "charity fair" where church members brought in their own-made handicrafts and delicacies and then we purchase our own homemade goods, all the donated money was handed over to the African bishop Gerald project management.

Gunta Grīna-Sologuba,
Pastor of Liepāja congregation



Liepāja UMC report 2013/2014
Edgars Šneiders, translated by K.Rozefelde

Currently Liepāja's Methodist church has 127 congregation members.

- Last year, two members of the church have died.
- We have matriculated one church member. The worship service is attended by few new young people who have not yet joined the church.
- Since last year we have baptized three children.
 - At the moment we having the baptism courses and in July it is planned that there would be baptized two adults and two children.
 - In the near future there are planned several more baptism courses.
- We have held for a first time the promise of marriage restoration Devotion.
- Average attendance at worship services is 51 people.

Regular ministries

- those are Sunday worship services every Sunday at 11:00am. Twice a month is Communion Sunday.
 - Hours of Prayer, which takes place every Tuesday at 11:00am. We already are used to have every Tuesday 9:00am prayer breakfast in which we both pastors are participating, as well as some of the church leaders and after 11:00 others joins us in prayers.
 - Every Sunday, there have been also Sunday school lessons. Children and teachers have participated in the church service at the beginning and then went to the Sunday school. Together with Gunta we also have held several Sunday school worship services. This year we also had a very nice ending of the Sunday school year at Wesley camp, which was attended by about 40 children and adults.
- The regular ministries this year has been also the youth group meetings, after-school program, small group of mothers with children.
- This year, the church members had the opportunity to learn English language once a week on two levels.

About other ministries and activities.

- Church services. This year we have tried to diversify worship services by form and its substance. At the worship service, without a local church choir and musicians have performed also: the bell choir, Grobina's Lutheran church choir, Tasi church ensemble, as well as other musicians.
 - This year at the White Sunday after Easter, we held worship service with baptism renewal devotion, as well as special church services on Good Friday and Easter. At the Holy Week we held each morning devotionals with Holy Communion.
 - After worship we have fellowship with coffee and biscuits. We sing, pray, say poetry, witness, ask questions, and share useful advice and spiritual reflection.
 - This year the church has held a series of Courland Methodist pastor regional meetings. These



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Edgars Šneiders, translated by K. Rozefelde

are going to be held in future.

- Earlier this year, we finally rented premises on the Tirgus Street side. They stood empty for a long time, because we could not find tenants. These rooms are rented out now for the work wear shop “Help and Co”.
- This year we have twice visited the elderly at “Metalurga” hospital, we have given their musical performances, shared the word of God, and prepared a packet of sweets and beautiful homemade cards.
- Thanks to the Danish friends, the church once again was able to get humanitarian aid.
- On January 18th Courland region pastor Committee organized a seminar on Methodism, which was attended by representatives from all the churches in Courland region.
- On February 20th we started Alpha course. It was attended by around 30 people. I think this course was successful and succeeded, because after the completion we continued with Beta course. In this course, lectures attended by both our own Latvian Methodist Church pastors, as well as delegates from other denominations - the Lutheran, Catholic and Baptist churches.
- We have organized a number of clean-up, and the big window cleaning day, when we cleaned all the windows at the church.
- This year we have also collected donations for the African missionary Gerald and sent his ministry and project for the orphans around 200 EUR.
- Some members of the church who were in difficulties, we have helped them by collecting a special offering just for them.
- On February 23rd the church held an ecumenical Christian gathering of poets and we organized a Christian poetry afternoon.
- On March 22nd Liepaja’s church choir and musicians traveled to Jelgava, to participate in the first Latvian Methodist singing festival.
- In early April an online meeting was held in the church through the Internet with American friends. It was an opportunity for us to see them, and they could see us too, at least a small percentage of us.
- This year many of Liepaja’s church members have participated in joint work at Wesley camp, as well as at Holy Week’s event.
- To our Church congregations or laity camp from our congregation went Dzintra Pole.

Church, and I as a pastor, we have participated in several Ecumenical events:

- 1) Last year in our church on November 16th took place Ainars Virga’s and other Christian musician concert. It was also attended by Christians of other denominations as well as non-Christians.
- 2) Last year during Advent Liepaja’s Methodist congregation actively participated at the inter-confessional Advent event, which was organized in the center of Liepaja. Last year we started this event from our own church with candles and then went to the city center. So did the other Liepaja’s Christian denominations.
- 3) I have worked in Liepaja City Council on Religious Affairs Committee. Along with other pastors in Liepaja we have organized a conference for teachers, helped to organize Advent activities,



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Christ's cross walk on Good Friday, and we are together doing other things, which promotes ecumenism and spiritual growth.

4) About once a month I have participated in the ecumenical prayer breakfast with Lutheran bishop Pavils Bruveris. The previous year, we jointly organized a prayer breakfast for the Liepāja's business men and other responsible officials. The attendance was around 100 people. Also in this fall we plan to include prayer breakfast and I will have to share the key message this year.

5) I have participated on Good Friday ecumenical Cross walk that went through the city of Liepāja.

6) We held a prayer network events.

7) I helped the first ecumenical Taizé prayer evening with the organization, which took place in the Cross Lutheran Church. The second such prayer evening was held in Liepāja's Methodist church. Next is intended during the Wesley days on July 4th. At the end of August it will be held in one of the Liepāja's Catholic Churches.

8) This year I have also participated and preached in the ecumenical worship service in Jurmalciems.

Planned works and visions of the future

- To continue to develop ministries in the church that we already have.
- To extend the contract with the work wear store and "Balex metal".
- Purchase of firewood before the heating season begins. Last year we bought the wood for about 3,000 Lats.
- New sign's or plate's attachment to the main entrance of church. Earlier this year, thanks to the donations of individuals, was added to the upper sign, which glows in dark. In July it is planned to make the sign for the bottom part.
- If everything will work as expected, then this fall we are going to change windows in the second floor small sanctuary from as well as for the pastor's rooms.
- It is the intention to replace the front door because the old is not in good condition.
- One of the future plans is the replacement of electrical wiring, as many wires are old and worn.
- When it comes to spiritual work, we plan to launch in the autumn the Spiritual growth courses, which will be similar to the Alpha course and which will talk about the Christian life different, common themes. We for sure will invite to those evenings any guest pastors from both our own Church and other Christian denominations.
- Develop small groups.
- In the future, definitely we plan to start marriage courses, which will be open to both those who are soon going to get married, as well as to those who are already in marriage for many years.
- Together with the Courland region pastors we will think and plan lay-preacher courses.

Edgars Šneiders,

Pastor of Liepāja congregation



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Sniedze Više, translated by K.Rozefelde

Charity event for the homeless "Let's join hands" on Christmas Eve, December 24th.

While this year was not planned to celebrate Christmas night with homeless people, meeting with young people and talking to young people how they plan to spend Christmas time, many remembered the Christmas at church from other years and felt the call to serve just like other years. About in a week we managed with young people and congregation's support packets of sweets, planned out a program, provide the groceries and to cook a hot meal. The event was blessed to both - people who came in, and the whole team who helped to manage the program and cooking. Total number who came was 17 homeless people. This year there were also three women. Some had already been in previous years, but many were for the first time. We shared the gospel message. Some shared with their life story and how God has helped them. Later together we sang, participated in the activity, we shared with the wishes and enjoyed fellowship and a shared meal.

The after-school program. After-school program was started in October of 2013, twice a week from 3:30PM to 6:00PM. After-school children had the opportunity to perform their homework, listen to Bible stories, make crafts, play games, participate in cooking, and get a meal. Mostly children came from a nearby neighborhood of the church and who do not have a direct relationship with the church. Each meeting has been a great blessing and a challenge at the same time and we hope that this ministry will be able to continue. During the school year "through the project" went about 15 children. Regularly was attended by about 7 to 9 children. In this ministry participated four teachers and two cooks, where in each class had one teacher and one cook.

Sniedze Više,

Lay leader of Liepāja congregation



Liepa Russian UMC report 2013/2014

Vera Titoviča, translated by R. Germans

“ But let us who live in the light be clearheaded, protected by the armor of faith and love, and wearing as our helmet the confidence of our salvation. For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us. Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we can live with him forever. So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.” (1 Thes. 5:8-11)

With God's help congregation continues its ministry.

Our vision for the future is to reach people of all generations and to reach unity in faith in Jesus Christ. We have moved toward our vision in this last year and we actually do have people of all generations and varied nationalities in our worship. Our God and Savior says it well in His Scripture John 15-16 – He does this job not we, we can only see the fruit.

Every Sunday we have worship at 14.00, the Sunday school children also gather, then later go to classes. People from other denominations also participate in the service, usually around 15-17 people gather, on holidays 45-50.

Bible study is held each Tuesday at 12 at the After-school program's premises, on Wednesdays mothers are meeting, but in the evening the men come together at the After school premises. On Thursdays at 13 we have prayer meeting.

The period from August 2013 to June 2014 has been good and challenging for us, but with God's help we serve and grow spiritually, slowly also in number.

Past year, August 26-31, children from After-school program and Sunday school organized a children's camp for the kids from our village, it was called “Let us believe more in God”. 25 children participated. The camp was organized and led by children aged 9 to 12. We are very proud of them that they are so smart and talented, may God bless them and keep them.

On September 1 Sunday school and After-school program kids with their parents were invited to a service dedicated to the first day of school. We prayed that God would give them wisdom and keep them safe all year, we also prayed about the parents. After the service we congratulated the kids and offered blessings on their school year.

This year we continued the tradition to celebrate Father's day on the second Sunday of September. Children prepared greeting cards that were handed to the men attending the worship and also to their fathers.

On September 15 we had a common worship service with Latvian congregation where youth and our congregations said good bye to youth leader Nick Fletcher who's ministry in Latvia discontinued and he went back home to the US.

On October 6 we had a worship service on the Holy Communion Sunday for the first time, 12 people attended.

On October 13 we celebrated the Harvest Festival and the congregation decorated the altar with the gifts from their gardens which were afterward given to After-school program. 35 people participated in the worship, children performed and their parents were in attendance.

On November 18 we had a worship service dedicated to the day Latvia was proclaimed as a country. 15 people attended. We started in the sanctuary, prayed for the country of Latvia and its nation, read Bible, afterward we went out of the church, sang hymns, prayed, lit candles and sang the anthem.



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Vera Titoviča, translated by R. Germans

On Nov. 30 - "The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine." (Isaiah 9:1) We continued the tradition of having a walk with torches. This year Liepa Russian, Latvian, youth and children began with a worship at church, after that we went on a walk with candles and torches through the village, stopping at several places, reading the Bible and praying – so we entered the Advent season.

On December 1, the First Advent, a period of reflection began, when people were able to reflect on their lives, their relationship with God, the birth of Jesus and His mission for each of us, the relationship between people. Every Sunday in Advent, the children and members lit candles on the wreath, spending time in prayer.

On December 24 at 16.00 we had the Christmas worship when we celebrated birth of Jesus Christ, 45 people participated. After the service children performed and we had fellowship. Children led the fellowship, we had a drama with Santa Claus, a snow-white, a reindeer, a snowman, sports activities and clowns. Afterward all children and adults received presents. We spent a great time together.

On January 1 we had the covenant renewal service practiced by John Wesley, 9 people attended.

On Jan. 5 we celebrated the Ascension Sunday service, 10 attended.

On Jan. 12 we had a service remembering God's baptism, 12 participated.

On Feb. 2 we remembered the time when Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple.

On Feb. 16 the theme of the service was Valentine's Day, when we talked about God's love. Youth awaited all incomers at the entrance and gave them candies. After the service children performed, 30 people attended.

On March 2 we had the Ash Sunday worship service including personal confession of sin, and drawing a cross with ashes on everyone's forehead. The Lent season began.

On March 9 the theme was International Women's Day, youth greeted all women with flowers. As in all celebrations – children performed, we had a fellowship, 32 people attended. Children presented their self-made gifts to women.

March 22 we participated in the Song Day festivities in Jelgava, organized by Jelgava UMC. 6 people participated and we had a good time with other congregations.

April 13 we had the Palm Sunday worship service at 14.00, children entered the sanctuary with willow branches with an accompaniment of music. After the service everyone could take one branch with them home as a reminder of Jesus entering Jerusalem. The Passion week began.

April 14-16 we gathered at noon for prayers, reflections on our lives, Jesus' ministry, his passion, their meaning to us personally.

On April 17, on Maundy Thursday we had a service with washing of feet and Holy Communion. Remembering Christ's suffering 14 candles were lit on the altar and one God's candle in the middle. After each Scripture reading one of the candles was blown out. After the last candle being blown the altar was cleaned and covered with a black and red cloth. The congregation went home in silence. 15 people participated.

On the Good Friday we went on the walk of the cross from the church gate to the altar. We had 14 stations where we read Scripture, prayed and remembered suffering of Jesus. 17 members participated.



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Vera Titoviča, translated by R. Germans

On Saturday at 15.00 we watched the movie “Passion of Christ”.

On April 20 we had the Easter service celebrating Jesus' resurrection. Children performed, we had baptism and fellowship. 50 people attended.

Mothers of Sunday school and After-school children were invited to the Mother's day service on May 11 at 14.00. Children performed, fellowship afterward. 27 people attended. Children presented their mothers self-made gifts and paper roses, prepared by one of the mothers.

On May 8, the Pentecost Sunday, we had a blessed worship filled with the presence of Holy Spirit. Children sang and 29 people participated.

On May 25 I led a worship service in Kuldīga, 14 people attended. It was a blessed trip.

June 20-22 a lay camp was held at Liepa church; many churches were represented. We had a wonderful time filled with God's love and holiness.

On June 22 we had a joint service with Liepa Latvian and guests.

On June 29 we had a common service for Latvian, Russian, Sarkanī congregations. After the service we had the annual church conference led by DS Gita Medne.

This year our children are also planning to lead a camp for the village's children called “Jesus Christ – Son of God”. Plan is to have it at the end of August.

Our visions:

Renew the youth ministry.

Start an ALFA course.

Start ministry with young mothers.

Training courses: Who are Methodists, Discipline in Church etc.

Evangelization events for more people to see that there is a church in the village.

We are grateful to God for His presence in our church, without His blessing nothing would be possible. God works in every church goer's life, their relationships, God's love. I am thankful to the congregation for their support, help in ministry and prayers. I am thankful to God for all He does to each one of His children.

Vera Titoviča,

Pastor of Liepa Russian congregation



Liepa (Latvian) report 2013/2014
Ilzīte Ozola, translated by R.Germans

Ps.121:1-2

**„I look up to the mountains—
does my help come from there?
My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth!”**

Worship time in Liepa has not changed during this period, still the Lord serves His congregation on Sundays, as is written in the Bible: “Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body.”(Col. 1:18) All praise, glory and gratitude to Him!

We continue gathering for a prayer time on Tuesdays.

On Saturday afternoons we have Sunday school classes, at night – youth ministry.

During the time period of this report there have been good and not so good things happening in the church.

We are very thankful to God and support of our friends for the opportunity to learn English. Seven people attended the courses; at first, more applied, but due to varied reasons some discontinued, and therefore seven people wrote the final test and we finished good, however, with a wish to continue the course – we will think and talk about it in Autumn.

On September 15 we had a common service with Liepa Russian congregation when we said “thank you” to

Nick Fletcher for his time spent in fellowship with Liepa youth. Youth from Valmiera also came to say good bye because our youth had formed a fellowship with Valmiera youth. Nick flew back to the United States as his ministry in Latvia as a missionary ceased. In October we went once again to Valmiera, but beginning with November 8 Kristaps, a leader from Cesis Pentecostal church, began leading the youth. Sadly, the young guys who came to meetings with Nick discontinued coming to church. Youth still gathered on Saturdays in a pretty large number ages 8 to 18. I was bringing teens to the meetings also from Sarkaņi. Kristaps was a very intent Christian, and God always gave him words to talk about themes that could not leave anyone indifferent. Perhaps, some did not like it, judging by his words written in his report, on February 1: “it was obvious that Liepa youth had started not coming to youth nights.” Kristaps finished his report with words: “42 youth total have attended the youth meetings. The most regularly attended youth from Sarkaņi.” He often seized the opportunity to be “on the streets” with youth. He had on hand a prepared material to distribute to people, called “Love letter from the Father”. In Winter youth went out with a tea and cookies, in Spring they just walked the streets of Liepa, singing praise songs accompanied by a guitar and distributing letters, talking to people and telling about Jesus.

On February 22 a youth council meeting was held with Liepa youth, organized by Youth and Sunday school ministry director Sniedze Više. They also went out in the streets with tea and evangelized residents of Liepa. They poured the tea into paper cups that had words of encouragement written on them. Youth loved it very much, everyone shared what they talked about and how people received them.

On April 5 and 6 a praise camp was held in Liepa church together with youth-worshippers from Latvia UMC. The event was led by Sniedze, worshippers from Riga 1st shared their experience. On



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Ilzīte Ozola, translated by R. Germans

Sunday the worship was together with Liepa Russian congregation, youth leader Kristaps preached.

On June 7 was the last meeting of the youth ministry season and again Kristaps went out with the youth to distribute booklets “From minus to plus” (nationwide evangelization event in Latvia – translator's note) to Liepa people. God turns people's minuses to pluses.

This was the last day for Kristaps leading Liepa youth because in September he is going to serve in Norway as a missionary.

Please help and join in prayers, all who are reading this, for a new youth leader God would give us from September, and for a Sunday school teacher who could lead the classes, because I have Saturdays often filled with other engagements and I have to inform the children that Sunday school is canceled.

Five children will participate at Camp Wesley camps from our church.

Children from our Sunday school also participated in Jelgava Methodist Song Festival on February 22.

On June 20-22 lay camp was held in Liepa. We are grateful to UMC in Latvia lay leader Agita for the interesting program, to our church member Māra for the chance to stay overnight at school, to all speakers present and through video messages, and, of course, for the opportunity to be together again, walk through Liepa, stopping at the strategically important places, and pray for them.

We did the same together with people from Liepa Russian congregation, Sunday school children and youth on the night before first Advent, when learning from the example set by pastor Gundars last year we came out of the church with lit candles, prayed about residents in Liepa, its leaders, kindergarten and school, and talked to people we met on the way about Gospel.

Also, on November 6 we walked together with the youth leader and one other Christian in the streets to evangelize. We served people praying for them.

Now I want to touch the issue that has been not as good.

On March 8 pastor had a conflict with the twin sisters in our congregation.

Luke 6:45: “A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart.”

The sisters often talked behind people's back, but, when they faced the person – everything was just fine. The previous pastors Ilze and Ēriks Westerlunds noted this to them, also. They were preparing to leave the church, but changed their mind. Unfortunately, nothing had changed till now. They were admonished. On that mentioned day they also talked bad about one sister in Christ, but when the woman came, they pretended that everything was fine. Then pastor told them what she thought about it. After the worship service the twin sisters told the pastor that they are not going to come to the church anymore this year. They have not attended since. The bad thing is that they continue to use their mouth talking bad about the church and its pastor, and there are people who believe them and have left, also. Thus, we are just some 10 people left in the church now.

It is a joy that since the time when pastor Ilze Westerlund served in Valmiera, one woman is a frequent attendee at our worship services to this day, but sometimes she is joined by two more women with their children.

As always, I would like to remind that I am grateful to God for each time when I get to lead a



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funeral service, because it is the place where people need to hear about Gospel the most, to hear and reflect upon the fact that death is not an end, but actually a beginning. Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.”

I had an opportunity to announce this message at 3 funerals. Praise to God!

We have had 3 child and 3 adult baptisms.

I am very happy for the chance this year to attend Wesley Days for the first time. The spiritual theme of the week was about prayer, based on Mother Teresa's words: “The path is simple: silence is prayer, prayer is faith, faith is love, love is service, the fruit of service is peace...”

Each night was very special. Each night I received some new revelations for my prayer life. How to pray and listen, taught by DS Gita, then both men who shared their personal experience in prayer. I can just praise God and be thankful to Him for having me rethink my prayer life. God also gave me a homework to read a sermon by Welsh pastor Fred Clark “Serving God behind closed doors”. I have read it at least 5 times and it finally made me change my faith in the power of prayer. I praise, praise the Lord, for He never is late and teaches in the right time, His time.

Ilzīte Ozola,

Pastor of Liepa congregation



Mātras UMC report 2013/2014
Edgars Šneiders, translated by K.Rozefelde

Matras congregation in numbers is not a large church. In church member's register are fixed 55 members. Two of them during the last year have moved to Liepaja and now are attending Liepaja's Methodist church - Dzintra Pulke and Astra Erode.

The average worship attendance is much lower. Of course, with the exception of holiday times when the church has its large hall full of people, and sometimes their number exceeds 100.

Church services are held every Sunday in the church at 2:00PM. During the same time also are held Sunday school activities, which are led by two teachers who are switching in this ministry - Tatjana Deglava and Silva Lanka. Sunday school is attended by eight children.

Children attend also the camps that are organized by the UMC of Latvia. Local children are invited to participate in evangelistic camps.

During the summer time, the church worship services are held at 8:30 in the morning.

From Liepaja's Methodist church to Matras also drove a young man named Karlis, who led the teen group sessions. Total of teens are five.

Bible studies at church are held every other week. However, church members are available to attend every week, visiting Tasi church. Normally, when the Bible study is at Matras's church, then also church members from Tasi come to those, and vice versa, when the Bible study is at Tasi, then church members from Matras come to those studies.

On February 18th we conducted a funeral service for a longtime church member Emilja Veisa.

On June 21st in Matras church were married 2 members from Tasi church - Baiba and Gatis.

During the summer, as every year, the local cemetery held six memorial service of the graveyard. At the request of people from Gavieze five memorial services will be held at the end of August in Gavieze.

I and a number of church members have participated in ecumenical worship services, which took place Grobina's Lutheran Church.

We also have good communications with the local government. We Grobina's district pastors and representatives of churches, occasionally meet with representatives of the municipality, to pray together and think of a better cooperation and support.

On September 1st beginning of the new school year, I was again invited to a local school in Kapsede to hold a devotion.

In November 11th at the church was held the traditional National day service, which was attended by more than 100 people, including many local school children and teachers.

A well-attended service was also at Christmas. The main sanctuary was full of people.

At Christmas time and also afterwards we collect donations for one missionary from Africa to support his ministry, especially the work with orphans.

At the beginning year on January 6th Matras church was visited by the bell choir from Liepaja. Also this service was well attended.

Last summer the children and young people from the church of Matras participated in various camps at Wesley Camp, and the church had donated more than 100 lats for their support.

In June this year in collaboration with Tasi church at Tasi we held family holidays and it was



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combined with the ending of Matra's church Sunday school year.

Church laity actively participate in all meetings that take place within our Church, as well as lay leader Inara Avotina attended the church camp organized by laity in Liepa.

Several church members have actively participated in various ecumenical conferences and seminars.

Matras church member Inara Avotina during last autumn in Vainodes city held the Light festival, within which were also the ecumenical worship service, panel discussions and other activities.

In the fall member from Matras also attended the Apple Festival, which took place in Wesley camp.

On December 15th we in collaboration with the church in Tasi for the first time held a special event for large families. It took place in Matras church. We gathered together for families various gifts, clothes and soft toys for children.

In this year, thanks to the support from abroad, several senior members of the church and the children were able to receive multivitamins. Reality is that this year vitamins were less, so we tried to distribute them to those who truly had the greatest need.

Last autumn, thanks to the support of the UMC of Latvia, we were able to hold English language classes. Starting from March, they were resumed this year as well.

Matras church ensemble was also attending in Latvian Methodist singing festival in Jelgava.

In spring, the church organized cleanup day in the area of Matras church.

Lay leader Inara Avotina throughout the year has been carefully working on recording down all the information about what is happening in the church and during the worship time.

In the church also the diaconal work is done. At Christmas we had prepared greetings for the elderly. Those who could not come to church were visited at home. There was handed out a humanitarian aid, vitamins for adults and children. On September 1st at the beginning of the school year, we also gathered some gifts for the local school of Kapsede. What was left of humanitarian aid we gave to the social worker of our parish, to be distributed to those who are in greater need.

Church also carried out various household works.

Church treasurer Elita Pavila has worked very well so that the financial affairs would be organized well and transparent. Despite the fact that the congregation is not large in numbers, the church members have donated a lot from themselves for the work of God. Therefore, all the major expenses were covered from our own church members donated funds.

A great thanks to the chair person Silva Lanka from our church Board, who not only at times led the Sunday school and dealt with the decoration work for the special church services, but also throughout the year cleaned and heated up the sanctuary so that people would feel good and comfortable.

Thanks to God, who has led the church and strengthened it over the past years. Recently we are less in numbers, but we believe, hope and pray for the church to grow both spiritually and in numbers.

If everything will work as expected, then at the end of this year or in early next year, is the idea that in the local culture hall we could hold the Alpha courses. It would be a good opportunity to reach out to local community. We plan also more actively work on our passive congregation members who rarely attend church services.

Edgars Šneiders,
Pastor of Mātras congregation



Paplaka UMC report 2013/2014
Inese Budņika, translated by *K. Rozefelde*

Previous year in Paplaka's church was blessed and fulfilled, and for that all thanks to God for He never leaves His church and creates new all over again. This created overview is only a brief and informative reflection on what has happened, but all of these events fundamentally are based on people and their responsiveness - to participate, to sacrifice and to grow in Christ.

Worship services in Paplaka's church take place each month on the second and fourth Sundays, as well as several times during the year, every first Sunday of the month was held church services for all generations (idea based on Great Britain project "Messy Church"), which created the opportunity to visit our church to those who don't attend the traditional church service.

During the winter and spring period we had the Alpha course in our church, which attracted both existing church members as well as interested parties from the neighborhood. Alpha training was as a Christian improvement (spiritual formation) school, which was held in both lecture and discussion form.

Sunday school year was a successful year, therefore we can say that one of the previous year's prayers were answered and fulfilled. Overall, the Sunday school was attended by former children as well as new children joined the Sunday school. Number of children exceeds 20. I must say also that the new type of church service for children and young people is compelling and that increased church attendance and involvement in ministry. At this year's Wesley camp three girls are going as the shepherds for the children's camp, as well as 15 children and young people actively will be involved as participants in the children and youth camps. The following year in Sunday school ministry in an active ministry will be involved new servants, who continually need to be kept in prayers. In autumn were initiated youth classes at Virga's school, but because of the occurrence of cold weather those were discontinued. Some of these young people continued to attend the church and worship services for all ages, but it is clear that the next year would require resuming of the youth classes. In order to fully accomplish this, we need new leaders, for what we need to pray – may God calls and gives a responsive heart.

Great pleasure was to have an opportunity to start a new church tradition – Congregational Camp (June 4-5), where Wesley camp served as a great place. It was attended by most part of the congregation, together praising, praying, resting, and actively participating in relay races.

In this year we also visited other churches in our region, for example, Kuldīga's and Tasi church, where we were warmly welcomed. At the same time it was a great opportunity as a church to spend the day together in conversations, in a tour and join in the fellowship table.

Paplaka's church "green thumbs" have worked diligently at Wesley camp in the garden, where now already second year in the professional proper way are felled the old branches and cleaned up berry bushes. Clean-up at camp was twice - in late fall and early spring. There is a thought to continue this work in fall of 2014.

In this year, the church has had a number of baptisms, of which one candidate also joined the church.

In spring, for the first time in discussion together were invited regional religious organizations and Priekule's municipality representatives. This gave the opportunity to share about events at congregations, as well as to establish contacts with other church leaders. The municipality has an interest in church work, and recommends for greater interest in EU financial possibilities of using funds in the regions.



Paplaka UMC report 2013/2014
Inese Budņika, translated by *K.Rozefelde*

The current church aspects of care and prayer requests -

1. to overcome the financial difficulties of the change of LVL to the EURO.
2. to establish a long-term fellowship with sister church in the United States.
3. to reach out to those in Paplaka who does not want to hear or is has not heard about God.
4. children's and youth ministry in the church and village.

Sincere gratitude to the church Board - Svetlana G., Elvira G., Vija U., Arija K., and Edite S.

For the Sunday school work of nourishment and development thanks to the teacher Iveta.

The church as a whole continues to be grateful to the Chair of Priekule's municipality Ruta Balode for financial support and cooperative attitude towards church development.

My, as pastors wish to the Paplaka's church - for the love of God unites all in unselfish desire to serve God and each other with everything that we have and who we are!

Inese Budņika

Pastor of Paplaka congregation



Riga 1st UMC report 2013/2014
Astra Dannenfelte, translated by *R. Germans*

Autumn was started with a two day retreat at Rāmava Manor where church leaders and both pastors participated. We got to know each other more and strengthened each other, talked about needs of our congregation and possible future events. Atmosphere in these discussions was much different than usual, more peaceful and enlightened.

In autumn we also resumed the leader meetings, where we talk and pray about our experiences in areas of ministry and challenges of our personal life.

We resumed youth meetings in September, gathering on Wednesday nights. This year we turned to spiritual themes and issues important to youth and society, for example, why is evil present in the world, what is our attitude towards homosexuality etc. We also visited one another once in a while. From September till December youth visited children at Riga orphanage “Ziemeļi” once in every three weeks. We prepared games, crafts and a small film each time. For Christmas with a great help from the congregation we prepared a personal gift for each kid. The ideological idea behind these visits was youth’s desire to help somebody who was not doing as well as they were. I think these visits were very valuable, and not just as a kind of ministry, they also got our youth to get to know other children from different situations, with different life experiences. We had a lot of in-depth talks about what we had experienced and seen, how important was childhood experience in every person’s life, as well as the great responsibility of parents. Unfortunately, the visits to orphanage ceased in January, because of our easy giving up due to excessive documentation needs.

Some of the youth were actively participating in children ministry: Sunday school and summer camp planning and execution. Three of the youth were confirmed and accepted into congregation, one youth was baptized on Easter. Praiseful is youth’s willingness for further education and attending courses, attending youth council meetings etc.

Sunday school resumed its ministry on October 6, and continued till May 25. Number of children has grown this year, and in February we had already 3 age groups. There were 36 children total, but the attendance varied each Sunday and it was a problem, because approx. half of the kids attended regularly, creating difficulties preparing themes and materials.

With God’s help 11 teachers have served this year, me being as coordinator and substitute teacher. It is a joy that the number of Sunday teachers has grown and that 3 of our youth have become teachers, which has definitely been a challenge for them, as well as a chance to experience blessed moments and deepen their knowledge in particular themes. We kept last year’s practice that each teacher led classes only once a month. This model turned out to be successful this year also, therefore we think it will stay the same next year, too.

Gratitude to all teachers: Agita Kļaviņa, Antra Vecaukuma, Evija Plone, Gaida Sēle, Kristīne Bernecka, Inese Saleniece, Iveta Vainauska, Jurvita Liepiņa, Rudīte Bērziņa, Simona Vainovska and Vika Šulca. Also their participation in planning of Camp Wesley summer camps is worth a praise. A special thanks to Youth and Sunday school ministry coordinator Sniedze Više. She visited us regularly and helped and enriched us with well prepared materials and practical ideas. Very useful was material brought and translated from the States, which was used at Christmas time. We would be thankful if we would be able to continue work with this material next year, because its multifaceted approach takes a deep look and fortifies the current theme.



Riga 1st UMC report 2013/2014
Astra Dannenfelte, translated by R. Germans

Thinking about next year we will try to establish an order that the coordination duties would be passed on to one of the teachers.

October 3-24, we held and organized a 4-week course about Methodism. They were held once a week, on Thursday nights. The setting was similar to that of ALPHA course—the night started with fellowship and common dinner, followed by a lecture and discussion in small groups.

Interest and responsiveness of our congregation was excellent again, therefore we definitely plan to organize similar courses for the autumn period of 2014.

A novelty this year was that we recorded the lectures of the course on video, publishing it on the web. Later we have used the material as a source for video lectures. Interestingly soon after appearing on the internet the videos stirred people's interest in Methodism and Methodists, several interested people came to our congregation for worship. I think this is a valuable practice, that should be repeated in the future. For example, posting audio recordings of the Sunday sermons online.

Gratitude to pastors for lectures: Gunta Grīna-Sologuba, Gita Medne, Inese Budņika, and to the congregation and its leaders, who kindly helped the courses to happen: Agita Kļaviņa, Daina Zamberga, Gita Bināne, Rihards Germans, Oskars Vainausks and our worship group.

Several charity events-concerts have been held at church this year: 2 in Advent season of 2013, and 1 on Palm Sunday. Guest artists as well as our own performed in these concerts. During the Advent concert our charity sale helped raise money to support youth ministry at orphanage "Ziemeļi", but at the other two concerts congregation prepared a fellowship table and small gifts to invited families that were taken care of by state social services.

It was especially joyful that all initiative for these events came from lay of our congregation, and they put in a great organizational work. Congregation was responsive and willing to work along. Gratitude to everyone who supported these concerts, but especially to Agita Kļaviņa and Gita Bināne for their organizational duties.

Together with pastor Gita Medne we organized the Holy Week's spiritual activities: early morning devotions, Thursday night service, Passover dinner, three hour devotion on Good Friday. It was nice that these events were well attended and I felt that part of the congregation truly experienced the week as spiritually meaningful. For a change we did not hold the night Vigil, but in place of that we specially commemorated the Good Friday events. Thanks to all for inspired ideas and support in their execution.

With great help of our congregation we organized an interdenominational project "Night of the Churches 2014" that was included in the "Riga—the cultural capital of 2014" event program. I see it as a successful, filled with Holy Spirit, moment, because people attending, as well as our members, were enlightened. We put in a lot of quality work in preparation time, which paid off at the event, because it went by very nicely and peacefully. Our ideas for the night program turned out to be fantastic and varied: music program in the sanctuary for many hours, as well as discussions and talking to people. Besides that—art exposition organized by society "Metode", creation of tile mosaic, creative activities for children, feeding of guests after John 6:1-14, prayers, a chance to enjoy snacks and drinks, excursions to get to know church history, traditions and premises.

Heartfelt thanks to all leaders who took responsibility for the event: Agita Kļaviņa, Daina Zamberga, Ērika Simšone, Gita Bināne, Ilze Žurgina, Rihards Germans, Vika Šulca, Zigmārs Ronis, Zinta Dzin-tara, pastors Gundars Ceipe, Jānis Baumanis, Gita Medne, as well as all the other kind helpers.



Riga 1st UMC report 2013/2014
Astra Dannenfelte, translated by R. Germans

We had thought a lot previously about forming small groups in the congregation, but this year we have finally taken the first steps. We started 4 small groups, however one of them ceased gathering due to health problems of its leader. Now three groups are still meeting. Thanks to Agita Kļaviņa, Gints Berneckis, and Gita Medne who we brave to start leading one of the respective groups together with me. For me personally, I feel that having people from different age groups and interesting personalities in our group has been a successful example. I experience that we complete each other and can be a some sort of support to each other. This far we have been using a “touch and feel” strategy with themes, Bible stories, topical issues we discussed each time. Maybe in the future we have to think and decide on one particular form of our gatherings.

This year we tried to write down and understand areas and needs that are significant for the congregation’s everyday life, and we also tried to find somebody from our members who would take on responsibility for each area. Unfortunately, this idea has not yet been realized, therefore I hope these questions will become our priorities next year so that these administrative maintenance issues would not become an impediment for our church activities.

I led Sunday worship services together with pastor Gita Medne and preached on regular basis, and also led two funeral services. I am thankful that in this time period lay helped and preached also besides the pastors: Agita Kļaviņa, Aigars Velvičs, Daina Zamberga, Gints Berneckis and Rita Lapsiņa. Also, I am thankful for helping with worship preparation to Rihards Germans, Rūdolfis Vainovskis and the worship group, as well as all those who help clean the church premises: Daina Zamberga, Regīna Velviča, Ruta Simsone and others.

I have continued practicing pastoral counseling and I have come to a conclusion that this area in particular is a strong calling for me. God has provided me with ability and joy to serve in this area. Thus, I have planned to start a one year intensive course (or a two year less intensive course) on pastoral counseling.

Besides the daily job at church I also participate in UMC in Latvia Board meetings, Regional Pastor meetings, planning of youth and Sundayschool camps and participate in them, as well as co-organize CinA 2014 camp with German representatives visiting Riga for one week.

I am thankful to God for other significant activities in congregation where my participation is conditional:

- Church ensemble resumed practices in Autumn of 2013, where 8 singers are directed by Signe Prauliņa. Ensemble participated in worship services, charity concerts and UMC in Latvia Song festival in Jelgava. Thanks to Sniedze, girls and may God help them!
- Worship group was active in this period also. Thanks to them, and may God bless their leader Zinta Dzintara and others!
- Since November our monthly newsletter “Life of Riga 1st” has been issued regularly. It includes information about church and its activities, sermons of both pastors, reflections. Thanks to Vika Šulca, Laura Krūmiņa and may God provide creativity!
- Starting this year social outreach has been led by Ērika Simsone. She has arranged one room where people may come and receive the needed used clothing and shoes etc. Thank you for her service and may God strengthen her to form a social outreach team in our church!



Riga 1st UMC report 2013/2014
Astra Dannenfelte, translated by R. Germans

- Zigmārs Ronis and Rihards Germans are working on improving and designing a new, more appealing website for the congregation. Thanks to them and may all work out with God's help!

Astra Dannenfelte,
Pastor of Rīga 1st congregation



Riga 1st UMC report 2013/2014

Gita Medne

This year has been a fantastically busy and fruitful year for the congregation. Nine people joined the congregation and one left. There were 8 baptisms and 4 weddings. It was a joy to be able to spend many one on one hours with those getting ready to be baptized, married, newly weds or those wishing to join the congregation. I also had the pleasure of spending a lot of time instructing our confirmands as well as a number of seekers who attend worship and wanted a deeper understanding of the Gospel. These discussions continue. It is also a great joy to lead 2 small groups. One with leaders from other denominations and the other with our congregation members.

In addition to our worship services, praise evenings, Bible studies, prayer group, youth group and Sunday school work, many new initiatives were taken to strengthen the work and outreach of our congregation.

We began our work with a weekend planning retreat which was well attended by many of our active lay and the two pastors. We had set certain goals for the congregation at our annual charge conference and we began planning how to realize those. I am happy to report that all were realized except one which is well on its way.

This year, I would like to just concentrate on the new initiatives/ happenings in our congregation.

- Building on the successful model of last year's ALFA course,
- we held a 4 week course on Methodism and posted it on youtube
- Serious work was done on designing a new webpage for both our congregation and LAMB
- Recognizing the talents of some of our congregation's artists,
- We have undertaken to organize art shows to exhibit their talents. 4 art shows have already been held during the year with participation of artists from Riga 1st, 2nd as well as some from the art school.
- We expanded our benefit concerts to three(1 Advent, 1Christmas and 1 Easter)
- Courses for newly weds to supplement pre-marital course
- Added a 3 hour Good Friday service
- The confirmation class organized and led a multi-generational worship service.
- Our new newsletter included a column – “what I heard the pastor preach”
- New small groups were organized and quickly became an important part of its members' faith journey
- The monthly leaders meetings have resulted in a very active lay participation in the various projects of the congregation
- Riga organized an Open Church Door Night, based on the model of museum night. The congregation actively organized and participated in the 6 hour event. Approx. 250 visitors were welcomed and involved in activities.
- A complete list of names, mobile phone numbers and email addresses was compiled of all of our official and nonofficial members and worship participants
- A new women's ensemble was formed



Riga 1st UMC report 2013/2014

Gita Medne

- The praise group as well as the women's ensemble participated in the First Methodist Sing Day in Jelgava
- A new life-size cross was made for our Holy Week observances.
- Our former fellowship room became the children's room and our former children's room now serves as our fellowship room, art gallery and meeting room. An adjacent room was renovated into a kitchenette and a special room was created to house all of the donated clothes and items making it easier for those in need to find what they need.

One of our very special joys this year was the expansion of our Sunday School and number of dedicated teachers.

Goals for the coming year:

- Continue to hold ALFA type courses for our congregation as well as consider running another ALFA course or BETA course.
- Form more small groups
- Work on expanding our diaconal outreach
- Hold more multi-generation led worship services
- Continue to identify the spiritual needs of our congregation and community

CHALLENGES FACING RIGA 1ST

As of August 1, 2014, the wrestling club, which has used the lower floor since Soviet times, has moved to other facilities. This has given Riga 1st an opportunity to expand as well as solve several large issues.

- Must find means to compensate the missing portion of the utilities bills that was paid by the sports club. In the winter months, it is an additional 1000 euros/month.
- Must find the money to renovate the lower level. First priority is to install proper ventilation and a new, more efficient heating system so that the heating bills can be reduced.
- Must find a way to utilize the lower level to bring in some income as well as serve the community via expanded outreach programs.

These are huge challenges! God has promised to bless us if we stay true to His word and our calling to be His hands, feet, heart and voice. We are all praying for His guidance and wisdom as we take on these challenges.

We have members who are already doing what they can to get started and we believe that God will bless our efforts and show us the way forward.

Gita Medne,

Pastor of Riga 1st congregation



Riga 2nd UMC report 2013/2014
Andris Vainovskis, translated by K.Rozefelde

Another year of ministry in Riga 2nd congregation has gone by. With the guidance and blessings of God in this past year of ministry we have achieved our goals and plans. Despite of, in numbers, small-sized congregation, large-scale projects have been fulfilled. Very insistent and systematic work must be basic to making decisions on the development of projects. And it is also a challenge from God - are we faithful to the call till the end, what we have undertaken to accomplish. I would like to express my thanks to those church members who took leading position to some of the projects and consistently reminded of the existence of the projects.

And now I will share about those projects, which brought blessings in our congregation, as well as in our community:

- In this past year in our congregations we begun premarital courses. Given the Latvian statistics which reveal to us the amount of divorces, we have decided to continue these courses, which will only contribute in our homeland to promote the family values and stability in it. These courses are led by Kristine Rozefelde, but in the future the plan is to involve those couples that have undergone course to help manage and take ownership.
- Last year we created a “Fuel Fund” and a monthly church members pay is EUR 1.50, which led us to savings so we would be able to afford the fuel. This fund helps us to fulfill the long-standing dream – to visit and experience fellowship with other Methodist churches in Latvia, as well as to reach out in a mission work – if there is a need to cover longer distances. Our first trip with our church members was last year, when we attended the Annual Conference in Kuldīga; then we returned in Kuldīga’s church on March 9th to help serve during pastor’s Vivita Kalnina maternity leave – those who participated were our church members including the Men’s Ensemble, led by Eriks Eglitis. On March 22nd with our Men’s Ensemble we went to Jelgava to take part in first UMC of Latvia singing festival. Upcoming plans for the future are to continue to visit the churches in Vidzeme - Cesis and Liepa, and in fall the dream is to participate in the Apple Festival at Wesley Camp. This honorable and responsible running of the “Fuel Fund”, which is associated with reminders and motivation, is accomplished by Rita Vainovska.
- Our congregation this year also participated in the capital city of Riga's huge project – “Night of the Churches”, which took place in the evening of June 6. This project had the goal to motivate and attract people into the church community to get to know the CHURCH up close and from a different point of view. For our church this was a big event and as a large family by working together we created programs and activities for all ages. Ca. 250 people visited our church during the “Night of the Churches”. Many of them came and went and then came back a second, and even a third time! People were positive and happy to get to know our church. For ourselves, who participated, it was both a pleasure to serve and organize it all, as well as a great eagerness to visit other churches, which, unfortunately, for all of us who serve it is not possible. But we believe that through the “Night of the Churches” for the residents of Riga Church of Christ became more understandable, more accessible and clear! God grant that the “Night of the Churches” Project next year continues to shine in the whole Latvia! We also received guest artists, such as Riga Gospel Choir and the famous guitarist Kaspars Zemitis. In the program we also included our church ministry - Church History Review (led by Kristine Rozefelde); Men's ensemble and instrumental music, led by Eriks Eglitis; art studio for kids (led by Marta Tjarve); Youth musical performances (Madara Kanele with friends Laura and Kristaps); our visitors had the opportunity personally to meditate and pray for themselves, for Latvia, about their relation-



Riga 2nd UMC report 2013/2014
Andris Vainovskis, translated by K.Rozefelde

ship with God at the specially set up prayer stations; and I, as a singing pastor, had the opportunity to be a leader of this evening and to freshen it up with a touch of humor.

Congregation ministries during our past conference year:

- In the church continues to exist and actively serve our men's ensemble, led by Eriks Eglitis. Last year the men's ensemble also took part in UMC of Latvia organized charity concert, which took place in Riga 1st congregation. Future vision is to expand the sound of music in our church with instrumentalists, who would play both on their own and help to enrich the sound of men's ensemble. During the last year their talents were developed and practiced to execute the new worship songs, led by Kristine and Oskars Rozefeldi who will continue this ministry and expand the number of members.
- The church Sunday school ministry continues to be active. As we have mentioned previously in these years God has entrusted children who come from families with serious problems. We are grateful to God that number of Sunday school teachers has grown. Sunday School is led by teachers Tamara Grinberga and Marta Tjarve, music is led by Kristine Rozefelde, and regular responsiveness and assistance is from Mareks Grinbergs. Many members of the church always take great caring for our daily bread and gifts, and therefore, the Sunday School is truly under the care of all our congregation. We are also very thankful to our sister congregation at Fairview UMC, who always bring some school supplies and fulfill other dreams of our children.
- We have prayer meetings; we receive prayer requests; as well as we are active in common prayers, which are both ecumenical and home chain prayers.
- During the school year we have Bible studies and we motivate people to study the Bible at home in various ways.
- Church continues its activities in cooperation with the Latvian Cultural Heritage Development Fund and organizes classical and sacred music concerts in the church. Our church doors are open to all those who want to preach and testify of the living God, and enrich people's souls through the musical and artistic touch.
- We provide active social outreach as well. We visit the sick members of the congregation and give them spiritual and material support. Thanks to supporters in the U.S., we were able to provide vitamins for all age groups also in our congregation, for which we are infinitely grateful. The responsible ministry is performed and managed by Mirdza Erenpreisa.
- We are grateful to our sister congregation at Fairview UMC for financial support, because without them, given the economical situation, it would be difficult or even impossible to exist. We believe that God sees our current situation and supports us through the brothers and sisters in the United States. But, of course, with God's wisdom and leadership in the future we must find the solution to become independent. I wish to emphasize and remind you that Riga 2nd and Matras church buildings are the only buildings in UMC of Latvia that were built by Latvian Methodist founders. Therefore, it is all of our responsibility to maintain the existence of these historical buildings. We must not forget that our ancestors each brought at least one brick to the Riga 2nd congregation to build a church. No matter how much we want to think more about the programs and activities of congregation, we cannot ignore the fact that the ceiling plaster is falling on our heads, the roof has lived its life and windows with every car driven past and wind blow



Riga 2nd UMC report 2013/2014
Andris Vainovskis, translated by K.Rozefelde

are trembling and shaking and only by grace of God they are still standing together. Thank God that there are some members of the church and pastor's family, who donated more than tithes! Now we are standing in line waiting for the European Union funds, when they will reopen the competition for the various cultural and historical monument financial support in renovations!

In our congregation during last year we have baptized three adult persons and one child. Both of these families are a part of our Christian family. A great testimony is that after the baptism course attendance one of the persons expressed a desire to serve the church and to give of herself back to God. On the other family the baptized person together with her groom went also to premarital course and got married in our church. And therefore, we have had also one marriage during the last year.

At the honorable age our dear pastor Milda Vainovska also takes part in the preaching of the Word of God, which depends on God's granted health for her. For that we are thankful to God!

The next conference year of the church, our church expects to continue to serve in all ministries, which are listed above. But there is a hope and plan to continue the after-worship service program started last year, which would continue to educate members and visitors about Methodism, the basics of Christianity, as well as provide various lectures on pressing or timely topics, and also we would learn new worship songs.

My personal goal as a church pastor is to actively search for helpers, or in other words, disciples. If there is clay, then we can develop, if there is no clay, then work needs to be addressed on search of clay. Therefore, if there is a cooperative work together, the volume of work is expanding and the work itself is more effective. Because Jesus also sent out the disciples in ministry two by two – together there is a greater power. I want people to have an understanding of Jesus' words - "*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me!*" These words are the foundation of the Christian faithful life – **there are no other roads, off-road or bypass doesn't exist**, there is only one route and it is through Christ. May God give us power and perseverance through the Holy Spirit to preach the truth of gospel! With these words I would like to strengthen not only our church, but everyone who God will bring on my way!

Our congregation's main goal goes along with the worldwide Methodist mission: to make disciples of Jesus Christ to transform the world. And we believe that our local church is the hope in God's entrusted community to us! I bless all of us with these words – to be persevering in ministry and don't underestimate yourself – “the spark that shines in your heart – don't let it die, don't let it die!” [the lyrics from a popular church song in Latvia] Amen.

May God bless and keep us all!
Pastor of Riga 2nd UMC Andris Vainovskis



1 Thes. 5:25

Dear brothers and sisters, pray for us.

Gratitude to God for everyone in whose heart prayers for Sarkaņi, its residents and Christ's congregation are put. Our hands in prayer need support just like Aaron and Hur held Moses' hands. I trust that such support exists! Because – praise God, a congregation in Sarkaņi exists and God hears prayers.

Worship services are held on Sundays at 15.00. Holy Communion on the first Sundays.

Consistently attend 8-10 people. During this period one woman has joined. Another young lady came to the movie *Passion of Christ* on the Good Friday. She had just recently moved to Sarkaņi. After the movie I talked to her and found out that she had come from an orphanage, where she grew up, and now she got pregnant from a young man living in Sarkaņi. I had an opportunity to tell about faith in Jesus Christ, about His death on the cross for our sins, how valuable a true repentance and a different life with Jesus is. We prayed together. She started to attend the church, but then one day she soon to become father simply dispelled her from there. I am grateful to our Lord for the opportunity to testify about Christ as her Savior!

On Sundays our bread loaf project continues when everyone receives a loaf of white bread after the worship.

Bible studies are held on Tuesdays from Harvest Festival to the Pentecost Sunday. The Bible class ends with having a hot bowl of soup, which gets some of the vegetables from the thanksgiving altar.

On Sundays Sunday school classes are held where practically all Sarkaņi children (ca. 10) are attending. There are 4 from one family – newcomers – that are not coming.

3 children are going to Sunday school camp this summer.

On August 2013 one 10 year old boy was baptized.

I am always thankful to God for the opportunity to preach the Word to the non-believers in Sarkaņi, and funerals are the place and time I definitely take this opportunity. In December we had to bury one person from Sarkaņi, and a lot of Sarkaņi residents were present. It was an opportunity for them to hear about Jesus as everyone's Savior, if one chooses Him, and also that death is not the end, it is just a continuation of the life we have had on earth in the time frame God had allotted.

I had joy in preaching the Gospel during Advent season when society “Save the Children” in Liepa village organized a holiday dinner for Sarkaņi residents and asked me to preach. Our small sanctuary was filled with young and old people – everyone with ears had an opportunity to hear what the Spirit is telling to the churches.

1st Peter 1:3: „All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead.” Amen.

Ilzīte Ozola,
Pastor of Sarkaņi congregation



Tāši UMC report 2013/2014
Gunta Grīna-Sologuba, translated by *K. Rozefelde*

Another year has gone by serving in the congregation of Tasi and in August it will be two years since I was appointed in Tasi Methodist church. On the one hand, very short time, because only now I have gotten to know people closer in both the church and some community areas. Our congregation and Tasi Manor are the only places where social activity takes place, for as the years go by in Tasi everything has been shut down. But people here are enough, for example, if all those people would come to church, there would be a need to build a new church, which has essentially been a dream, because we are located in a residential building where the corridor is to be shared with neighbors who have dogs, cats, and no one else for the most part except the church doesn't clean it.

For almost two years, our vision was: "Our children are our future. Stabilize the Sunday school, to create a child-friendly environment and to reach out to parents!" "Sunday school is already stabilized, and the children are not only our future, but they are our present, therefore, a number of our church activities are focused on them, as well we have put some thought to engage them in worship. Parents are the most difficult to reach, during this period from all the parents we have reached out to one.

We understand that we need to define our vision, but we are still in the process of prayer and the discovery. We hope that our vision will be completely clear to us until the beginning of autumn. On March 2nd we devoted a Sunday worship to SWOT analysis for the church and village of Tasi.

Review on the ministries in the congregation:

- August 1, 2013, we had a great event, 5 children (brother and sisters) were baptized; before baptism we had a separate meeting with their parents and five couples of godparents to discuss the role of godparents and baptism. The baptism took place in Matras church because our church for this size of baptism is too small.

- Bible study and prayer hours in Tasi church are held every other Tuesday and Matras church members join us as well.

- Services are held every Sunday. This summer, the church decided that they want to worship every Sunday, previously in summers the worship was held every other Sunday.

- In October at the beginning of the Youth Council Gatis Sogis took part in it, but as time went by and starting to work independently, he dropped out from attending the meetings.

- On October 19th we organized a joint trip to Bruknas manor, where is also the rehabilitation center for the addicts. We drove together with members from Matras, Paplaka and Liepaja. We also enjoyed lunch in the Manor, which was prepared by the residents themselves.

- On November 24th church members from Tasi came to visit me at home for a "coffee" and fellowship, we were together in great crowd.

- In the first half of year our musician Mirdza Grauduze worked with children, teaching them to sing, and children themselves were responsive and performed at Christmas and Easter.

- On Christmas and Easter church members prepared and sent cards to other congregations and pastors, to bishop and sister churches.

- During the Advent season Daiga P. created for as a beautiful Advent wreath. We hoped that Daiga will come to bring this wreath and will resume coming to church, however it did not happen.

- **Large Families event** – for a while in my heart was a thought and the idea that we should thank and delight in special way families with many children, especially parents, for they give such a large input into their children. I shared the idea with the church and then together with pastor Edgars and Matras church we organized a wonderful Advent event dedicated to large families. I personally called to each



Tāši UMC report 2013/2014
Gunta Grīna-Sologuba, translated by *K.Rozefelde*

large family who lives in Medzes parish and referring to the invitation only few families didn't showed up. There was a small concert, word of God, prayer, a few anecdotes, thank you gifts to families and a number of workshops where children with their parents were able to create angels and necklaces and other things. Before this event for several weeks I invited others to share and I collected children's clothes and toys, families after the event were invited to take whatever is necessary but the kids were excited about the toys. In the fellowship we enjoyed the Latvian traditional large pretzel with coffee. We want to keep this tradition and we will continue to hold during the Advent season similar events for the large families.

- After Christmas worship Santa had arrived from Hawaii in the image of Naura Linde. During the Church service the children and teachers showed a skit with a special message.

- On December 29th we visited the Seniors of Tasi, delighting them with songs, word of God, poetry and package.

- On the morning of December 31st we came together to worship, to thank for the last year and prayed for the blessings of the New Year.

- On January 18th, along with the regional pastors we organized a regional workshop on Methodism in Liepaja's church. Members from Tasi took part and came a great crowd.

- In January, we started a baptism and confirmation class, which was attended by 4 people.

- In January, after initiative of Mirdza Grauduze we started to come together to learn to sing, it is both a time of laughter and fellowship as well as a hard work. We sang in Jelgava's singing festival on March 22nd, we have visited Matras church, in June we sang in the church of Liepaja, and in July we will sing in parish of Medze festive closing worship service and at memorial service at the graveyard in Tasi. Rehearsals are held 1-2 times per week.

- In January Sunday school teachers shared the challenges faced in their ministry. The oldest girls do not listen, they nibble and prevent younger children's attention. I thought and prayed a lot what should we do with those girls on one boy, because the easiest would be to tell them that they are not allowed anymore to come to Sunday school because they do not know how to behave, but God's family doesn't act like that. At night, God gave me the answer that we need to start a Teen's club, and on January 23rd we had our first lesson. I pick them up from the school in Kapsede and then we drive together to the church in Tasi where we are together. Teens are total of 5 (Aivija, Aivita, Ruta, Kristine, Kristaps), but the average attendance is 3 or 4. Teenage time is already difficult in itself, but these kids have good hearts and crave more love and attention. We are together and we learn together. One of the times (on April 10th) we were baking cookies, we put those in packages, added crosses and a verse from the Bible and then these packets we shared with those who were in Tasi - about 30 people. We have also been in North Fort where we started out with a short devotion and then walked through the forts. Teen club will end on June 19th and definitely will resume in September.

- There have been few Sundays, when I wasn't able to be in church due to E-Academy or any of the seminars, and then the worship is usually led by lay leader Anda B. Some else usually then invited to preach. It is joy that Anda feels more comfortable and is able to serve in such way. In a perspective we need to think about which church members we would be able to train for lay preacher role and I see such gifts in Ilga and Anda.

- On March 4th evening we came together for global women's prayer time, which was devoted for Egypt.

- On March 16th the church service was visited by Gideons, who talked about their/our ministry and we donated them the offering of that Sunday.

- On March 30th, together with the church we went to Kuldiga to serve and have a fellowship.



Tāši UMC report 2013/2014
Gunta Grīna-Sologuba, translated by *K. Rozefelde*

- On April 4th we participated in FOL (Friends of Latvia) video conversation.
- On Maundy Thursday for the first time together with pastor Edgars we led the Passover feast, including the washing of the feet. Since it happened at 2:00pm many people were unable to attend; and next year if we want this feast, it should be rendered in the evening, so those who work can take part.
- Good Friday worship was together with Matras church, had reflections of the cross road, Holy Communion, palm branch crosses for each as a reminder.
- At Easter church service for the first time we brought thanksgiving flowers at the cross of Christ, teens showed a skit, for the children after the service first part was prepared some activities in the field, looking for both eggs and “Kinder surprise” eggs.
- On April 27th Paplaka’s congregation visited with us, we had a church service together, pastor Inese B. preached, children sang, we had fellowship together as Methodists drove in past to visit with each other.
- On May 14th we had the “White hours Worship service”, when we were visited by Christian poets who shared their worship poetry and also with some songs, the church did not have any empty seat. After the fellowship the poets had a little opportunity to become acquainted with Tasi including the goats and cheese tasting and visit Tasi Manor. This was a blessed time together, how great that God gives a talent to write poetry.
- On June 1st after a long established tradition we organized a Family Day holidays for people of Tasi and Matras. During the festival we held a devotion and shared God’s word, sang songs, shared stories and prayed, we made team games and ended with a picnic. Attendance was 35 people, this time the festival was held at the Zigrīda’s house, thanks to her for the nice welcome.
- On June 5th together with Edgars we held a pre-marriage course for Gatis and Baiba, who were married on June 21st. We support this new couple with gifts that are given to us.
- Pentecostal church service was held on June 8th in Tasi Manor, we were visited by Liepāja’s Bell choir and sang also the Tasi congregation church ensemble. The most important moment was the baptism of Gatis, Baiba and Anita as well as confirmation for them and Marite. All four have diligently attended classes more than 4 months and said their yes to God. Great joy for them.
- On June 11th I led the funeral of Anna Sogē, she was from Tasi and passed away at age of 87.
- This year, by Alvis (from Tasi) design was made wooden candlestick in the form of sail. It is our sail of gratitude and needs, but it is God’s strength, by which the sail is pulled forward. We are very pleased with the end result.
- In parallel with what has happening this past year, many times I also met separately with people from Tasi or talked over the phone, listening to their problems and being in prayers for them.
- Irish Methodist church district supports us financially, I would like very much if the church could establish a personal contact, which so far has not succeeded. I have written emails on behalf of the church, but have not received any answer yet.

I am grateful to God for this time in ministry, for anyone of you who is actively engaged in ministry to succeed. As each member of the body is important, as well as our church every one of you is important and valid. Thank God for you!

Gunta Grīna-Sologuba,
Pastor of Tāši congregation



Camp Wesley report 2013/2014
Inese Budņika, translated by R. Germans

This summer, when registering camp participants, it was a great joy and blessing to see their happy faces and hear their stories that they are participating for the second, third... year. As the camp is open for nine years already, there are some who have been raised here, who remember the camps as a special place and time during the summer holidays. Camp Wesley during last year has welcomed big and small from Latvia, Lithuania, Denmark and USA.

The main happenings of the 2013/2014 season at camp can be arranged as follows:

- Apple Festival in September 2013 was very well attended this year by UMC in Latvia congregations, as well as Denmark and USA.
- According to the decision of the CW Board in August 2013, in time period from October to January reconstruction works at Holsten house attic took place. It has provided an opportunity to use the building in more ways and according to safety and sanitary norms.
- In October 2013 we held a meeting with camp director and the spiritual program leaders evaluating the camp season of 2013.
- Paplaka UMC cut some apple trees and tidied up the orchard in February and March.
- During spring of 2014 the camp director met with spiritual program leaders of the upcoming camp season to plan and organize the active season.
- We are thankful to Paplaka, Kuldīga, Tāši and Liepāja UMCs who participated in the spring clean-up works at camp. Also, we are thankful to Anita And Tonijs Ercumi for their unselfish work in cleaning up the camp territory.
- We opened the camp season on April 19, on Saturday before Easter. During the event a new cross made out of colorful pebbles was made, which together with the existing wooden cross form important signs of the spiritual area of the Alabama second floor.
- On May 24 we had a practical staff's meeting to get to know each other, pray about summer ministry, play team forming games, create a team T-shirt design, as well as get acquainted with the territory. Similar meeting was held on June 19.
- On June 11 camp director together with program leaders and staff's spiritual mentor gathered to pray for everything that is going to happen, to be strengthened in faith that we are safe and fulfilled in God's hands.
- A group from TN, USA led by Jim Hayes, representing connecting congregation of Kuldīga UMC, visited us June 16-21. The group worked with maintenance projects of the main building, for example, painted the floor on the second floor. It has to be noted that such mission work before Wesley Days is very important and it would be great if some group could come to the camp every year at the beginning of June. Recently this function has been fulfilled by VIM teams led by Jim Hayes, but others are also welcome. This year during their visit particularly one day stood out when volunteers in mission, youth from the staff and Kuldīga members worked together. Working together and being in fellowship of the table we experienced a special atmosphere of the camp and God's love that does not know borders or distance.
- Staff team training was held June 27-30, led by camp director Inese and staff's spiritual mentor Ilze. In the spiritual part we talked about fruits of the Spirit as important qualities of the camp ministry. In the practical part we stressed the principles of a certified summer camp and the importance of team work.
- Gratitude to Niāra Grīna, who took on the responsibility of being the chef of the camp and she did really well. May God bless her and we will welcome her next year, also!
- Ēriks Dziļums from Riga Agenskalns Baptist church systematized and organized the sound system for summer camp usage. This was the first time of such cooperation, but it is clear that such



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- job would have to be done every year. Gratitude to Ēriks!
- The spiritual theme of Wesley days (June 30-July 6) this year was – prayer. They were very well attended. As usual, it is an international camp project with representatives from Latvia, Lithuania and USA. Wesley days have 3 important functions – firstly, it is a time to clean up and organize the camp site before children and youth camps. Secondly, it is the only annual international camp where fellowship with Lithuanian Methodists has a special meaning. Thirdly, it is a time where all generations meet in an ecumenical environment, and also those who are just beginning to search their spiritual path. One of the most important practical projects was preparation of a sand playground area in place of the old building's foundation, following the suggested area plan by landscape architect in 2013. Also, very useful job was done by a Lithuanian craftsman strengthening and restoring window sills of Alabama building. We are also very thankful for all cleaning and organization work done. This year “prayer” was not just a theme, but a practical and real prayer time. Speakers of the evening program talked about aspects of prayer meaning in Christian life, but such events as Taize night, praise concert, prayer workshop etc. became an active and true praise and worship time. Wesley days were the prayer center of all camp summer this year.
 - Children and youth camp season from July 9 to August 2, program leaders are telling more about the camps in their reports.
 - Camp staff's closing and farewell event was held at our neighboring Lenkas on August 3. I have to say that youth this year experienced a noticeable spiritual growth. The most vivid was growth of one of the staff members from denying God and prayer entering camp in June, to ability to pray from the heart at the team's closing event in August. Youth worked a lot practically during camps, as well as participated in camp program as it was possible. Special thanks to staff's spiritual mentor Ilze Erode, who was the spiritual “spine” of the team, praying together, making us reflect on the spiritual aspects of serving, and sharing everyday joys and struggles at Holsten house attic. Heartfelt thanks also to pastor Gunta for the short time replacing Ilze.
 - When the rainy days started it was observed that the roof of the Holsten house has a leak that damages the ceiling of the small extension building. The roof was covered with plastic for the camp season, but after the active season it will get repaired and the roof will be replaced. There is still a necessity for redecoration in the rooms.
 - A mission group from Texas, USA led by Chair of Camp Wesley Board Richard Payne, worked at Sunday school camp. First multifunctional picnic tables were constructed and made, they are an important part of the improvement of the campsite. Richard and other camp leaders hope that others would join in making these tables. Heartfelt thanks to all Payne family for their selfless service and input into camp development and improvement.
 - Camp Board meeting on August 21, 2014.
 - Apple festival on September 20, where we anticipate arrival of a Danish youth group. Everyone from Latvia's churches is also invited to spend this day in fellowship and gratitude to God for the wonderful camp summer of 2014.
 - Special thanks has to be told to volunteer missionary from USA Michael Barr who spent time at camp from July 1 to August 9. Michael was a great help at varied practical camp ministry tasks. Such helper during summer camps is very valuable and thanks to God that this year Michael was one. He himself had this to say about this time –
 - My experience with Wesley Camp as a short-term missionary with the UMC Global Ministries is of extraordinary and unusual blessing. Throughout it, I've felt like both an outsider and an insider. An insider because of the generous love and kindness everyone has shown, and an out-



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sider because I can't communicate with them in Latvian. An insider because I am staff and am treated so well and an outsider because I cannot even read the schedule! An insider because while I've lead craft projects both weeks of children's camp and 4 or 5 of the boys I've worked with most have said they want to return next year (the first year for 3 of them) and an outsider because I have at times felt frustrated like they're not listening to me and then I remember, English isn't their first language! Now, there are some benefits to not knowing Latvian - I experience all the joy and happiness of camp and very little of the pressures and problems and difficulties. But as a missionary, this is the side of camp life I want to be aware of to pray about, at least. The head cook, Niara, and the staff are creative in food preparation and providing meals that are likely healthier than in most American camps; they each work long hours to keep all the facilities clean. Romix, who, seaman humor aside (like 'hunger games') has a huge heart for the camp as an evangelistic ministry - as a way to reach everyone the camp serves from adults to children with the Gospel of Christ - has provided me with excellent guidance on the work I have accomplished. He has a shrewd and experienced sense of economy and resourcefulness and welcomed all input that I had on what needed to be done and how.

The main downside of the language barrier is with forming relationships, being able to observe more than participate in group discussions. But Romix provided me with a couple opportunities to serve outside of the camp setting, the first of which gave me a great deal of perspective. After Wesley Days we had a gap of a couple days. Friends of his who are not Christians needed 1 more person for a canoe expedition. I was apprehensive to go by myself but the question he put that most encouraged me and also gave a rubric by which to decide how to spend my time at camp was this: "are you missionary or handyman?" A version of 'what would Jesus do?' I have sought to answer that question with 'missionary' by prioritizing my time according to the needs of the people I serve with or whom the camp is here to serve. That has meant initiating conversation and asking questions and enjoying camp with a relational focus, first, while going about doing the work that needs to be done. After the last campfire, I contemplated how I had done in this regard and on the last day, God answered this question with a note from one of the shepherds. This person thanked me for my friendship and said, "your being here has proved even more God's love for me." This is perhaps the highest compliment a missionary can receive.

The majority of what I did for the camp would fall under the category of yearly maintenance: organizing the tool shed, cutting wood, mowing fields, clearing winter tarps off the platforms, neatly packing up tents, plastic tarps, and sleeping bags, building camp fires, etc.. A second category would be the activities that I did for the different camps: I lead a wood-craft activity for both children's camps, two afternoons each week, and with the children's help we created 2 birdhouses that now hang on two trees, a box for the camp postage, a hanging frame for the camp schedule, and a sign that says "Wesley Camp" on it. I gathered reeds for the second week of children's camp, built a pyramid structure, and with Romix created a camel of wood and plastic buckets. A 3rd category would be the activities that improved camp infrastructure: weather-proofed the three tent platforms, rebuilt a couple wood bed frames, put a varnish coat on the picnic table, helped build the bench / picnic table and seal them, filled the foundation of an outbuilding with sand to create a giant sand-box, constructed two screens to fit the dining hall windows, and finally designed and built shelving to hold the craft materials for the house, and clear-coated them.

At the end of report – some thoughts from youth of the camp staff –

Rēzija: Being and working here had different emotions, but joy prevailed. These days at camp were



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wonderful and unforgettable. I hope to be here next summer, also. With all the big running and trying to accomplish everything I was not very tired, but I had all I needed. I love you from all my heart!

Kristaps: Although I was in doubt about serving in camp staff, God showed it to me and helped make this decision to come to camp through a special event. Though this was my first year on the team, the feelings I experienced being with these people cannot be described on paper. I got to know new people as well as got to know better those I already knew. Work was hard and tiring, but also joyful, all emotions were mixed together. The hardest part was the morning – getting up early, etc. I don't regret a moment spent at camp and I recommend everyone to experience it themselves. I would like to be here next year also, but we will see how God leads. For now – I will miss this place, people and emotions.

Ilze: Time at Camp Wesley was blessed. A huge challenge was to cross my own comfort zone. Thanks to Inese for encouragement, because the start was not easy, but we managed it after all. I felt that I have matured in my faith through preparing evening encouragement words. This year was different for the staff because several youth did not know God at all before arriving at camp. Maybe that was my biggest challenge, because I had to start with the basics... This is a wonderful way to bring youth to God, through a simple work at a Christian camp where God's Word is heard and His presence is felt.

Dana: This was an exciting summer, of course, it was much different from others, but I am not disappointed. I am very happy for Ilze who, in my opinion, did very well and strengthened us in the faith life. There were those not so likeable moments when I felt lonely and a little misunderstood, but they were few. I think that the reason for many problems was the age difference, that led to disagreements. In whole I evaluate the summer quite positively, because we have to love one another the way we are.

Samanta: This summer was unforgettable – new friends, adventures, work experience, serving God, spiritual program. It all really spoke to me and made me think a lot about God's presence in my life and fulfillment of the Holy Spirit in every heart. Thanks for every Thank You, for the food, for every nice word. Those who know their Creator understand the meaning of this work and the joy of ministry. After going through this time I have a willingness to continue to live my life the way I have not lived it before.

Due to Camp Wesley life is changing, hearts are lit, faith strengthens, and it all in the name of God! Thanks to our lovely Ilze, Inese, Anna and Laine. Thank you also to Romāns B., who brought all things in order and was on our side and helped when one was exhausted. This summer could continue forever! We are all one big and wonderful family.

We are most thankful to everyone who always prays, supports and carries Camp Wesley in their hearts! This is our holy land, our Latvia, our world... May God be praised for every sunrise and sunset that He allows us to experience here!

Inese Budņika,
Director of Camp Wesley



Hope Center report 2013/2014
Gita Bināne, translated by I. Bināne

*They say a person needs just three things to be truly happy in this world:
someone to love, something to do and something to hope for.*
(Tom Bodett)

Association “Hope Center” is a charitable organization established by women from Latvian United Methodist Church whose purpose is to support Latvian families, single-parent families and families who are in a situation of crises. “Hope Center” was founded in May 13, 2004 and we plans to celebrate our 10th birthday. Several years of experience working with the target audience has allowed us to understanding that the elimination of the consequences is not sufficient, it is necessary to perform preventive work, and first of all is necessary to work with the public, it is necessary to draw public attention to problems that normally are not detected.

The situation is worsening because in Latvia are more and more single-parent families, single mothers, who are abandoned by the fathers of their children, women who suffer from domestic violence, addictions, etc. The government is providing insufficient social services and assistance so often women are faced with despair, to which they don't see a solution; these women lack a support person who could help to organize different types of issues.

During the period from August, 2013 to August, 2014 at the center stayed 12 mothers and their babies, and in several cases the assistance has had to be refused due the center at the same time is able to accommodate only seven mothers with children. It is something to think about if in the country is an insufficient number of similar institutions that provide assistance to single mothers, pregnant women. In the solution of individual social cases would be enough with the orderly and adequate social benefit system, but even for a working mother whose income is insufficient, local government does not provide a support, because it is not motivating, because the easiest way is to not work and live on social benefits. In cooperation with the Latvian United Methodist Church First congregation of Riga are implemented several charity projects – children clothing handouts, concerts, fellowship, etc.

During recent years have been an increasing teenage pregnancy tendency; the youngest mom who came to the center was 14 years old. Young women lack family support, their life skills are inadequate and there is no motivation to improve their quality of life, because is another family experience, or on the contrary, there is none experience because women grew up in an orphanage. Orphans Court system in some cases work very smoothly – children are taken away from mothers, children are placed in family care facilities, foster families, but who think about the future of these children. The easiest way how to fight is to take away the child, rather than to work with the family and to help solve the problems, there are cases where no reaction when in the interests of the child is should be terminated parental authority, but sometimes a child from a family is removed improperly. Who bears responsibility for it? No one and that it's sad.

Domestic Violence - increasingly more women suffer from domestic violence, they are placed in crisis centers to learn skills there to cope with the violence. It is absurd, that a woman, who is pregnant and has a child, can be taught to defend themselves against a man who is under intoxicating substances (alcohol, drugs) and there are physically and emotionally affected, usually in the presence of children. The typical advice - run in the street and yell – help!, avoid meetings, etc. How to do it if a man knows where to find you, if he knows your residence place? What to do if the police to your reports is unresponsive? Your requests for change of residence to another district of the city are not respected? What to do if constantly receive calls from child's father and his family, that contains threats



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on a regular basis - I will revenge, where had you been, thanks to you I had to spend time in jail, etc. And what does the social service do - threatens to report to the Orphan Court with child deprivation, because the mother herself does not deal with the situation. Where is the support and inter-institutional co-operation? Why social system is based on the placement of child in institutions and foster care, which is often a business (for maintenance of child the foster family receives 215.00 EUR per child, in orphanages the amount is at least three times more). I think that many families could only dream of such income in the family budget for one person ... This is something to think about... I'm not talking about the families who unselfishly cared for their adopted offspring, but a lot of people make a profit from it, which has nothing to do with true care.

In everyday life each of us is busy with our own problems and concerns; sometimes not seeing and not trying to pay attention what is going on around us. Of course, we can't save all the world's problems, but sometimes it is enough just with an advise and someone's big problem could be solved in a moment. It's easy, if you can close the cabinet doors in evenings and not think about anything, because it is holiday, whether it is a basic principle of social work? It is something to think about ... None of us is perfect, not all are interested about what my heart hurts, but it often seems that there is no fairness in the world!

Despite the fact that we live in the age of technology and communications are available to every one of us, many people lack the experience and skills of elementary practical issues. This kind of issue we help to solve - anyone can get advice.

Main objectives of the Centre activity are:

- help to define basic problems, jointly seek a successful resolution;
- organize educational events, social skills training;
- provide support and assistance in accordance with the Latvian legislation;
- provide support for problem solving - to provide the information necessary for the client's needs, to actively participate in problem-solving;
- provide assistance in solving of social and legal issues, attracting specialists, if necessary;
- individual counseling, restore social functioning capabilities;
- acquiring of education according to the customer's needs (underage mothers obligatory general education and vocational education and training);
- baby-sitting while the child's mother goes to a school or any other institution;
- acquiring social and life skills (cooking, washing, ironing, cleaning, etc., solving of social issues, household management) by an individually developed plan according to their needs;
- acquiring household and self-care skills and abilities;
- educational activities, lessons, acquiring social skills;
- information on a healthy diet and lifestyle;
- support on issues related to raising children, counseling addressing solving of important issues (information on child care and nursing skills and abilities according to age group);
- cooperation with state and local institutions, non-governmental organizations and other active population interests groups, in solving of social issues and improvement of family life quality;



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- organize social career, psychologist, social worker, educator advice;
- planning of personal money spending;
- acquiring shopping and other necessary living skills;
- acquiring spatial and environmental management and improvement skills and abilities.

In the society “Hope Center” young mothers and pregnant women support center “Madaras” new mothers and pregnant women who are a crisis situation, are provided with shelter and counseling:

- psychologist, social worker, educator advice;
- consultation about child care and development;
- social care advice per 24 hours a day;
- educator advice;
- medical and other professional advice, if required

Many of the clients after residing at the center has been successfully started independent life:

- acquired social and life skills;
- learned to plan their income and expenses;
- raised their motivation and recovered their ability to compete in the labor market, acquiring, primary, secondary, vocational education by attending qualification courses;
- established a family, etc.

We are not that “big” to help everyone, but we are very happy, even if one life is changed. Recalling life stories, I can say that we have helped many. Greatest thanks to my team - psychologist Artūrs Švekers and social worker Jogīta Lieleicēna,, social carers Simona Jansone un Silga Austrīņa.

- Assistants - English teacher, PhD student Inguna Bināne, attorney Jana Jankoviča;
- board members - Gita Medne and Jolanta Bandere, we wouldn't have made it without your advice and support.

Sincere thanks to all our sponsors - the United States, Norway, Denmark, Ireland, England and other parts of the world.

And so today, let us thank God that our parents loved us. Thank God.
(Mother Theresa)

Gita Bināne,
Director of the society “Hope Centre”



Youth ministry report 2013/2014 *Sniedze Više, translated by K.Rozefelde*

MINISTRY WITH YOUTH

Serving this past year and visiting various UMC of Latvia congregations it was visible that many young people have grown out from Sunday school and we have developed teen groups. For that great thanks belongs to God to be able to see them grow up, how they join youth groups and also become active and have a desire to come together for both serving and being in fellowship as well as for Bible studies. Young people and teens are in all UMC of Latvia congregations, where they come together for meetings, all generation worship services in Liepa, Liepaja, Riga, Kuldiga, Paplaka, Taši, Matras. Thanks be to God for answered prayers about Liepa youth ministry, because since the last September Kristaps Berzins from Cesis became an active youth leader. Unfortunately, Kristaps is leaving for a year to serve outside of Latvia and there is a need for a new youth group leader. Let's pray, may God continue to take care for this youth group and may there be an opportunity to continue to come together and walk in depth of God's Word.

YOUTH COUNCIL (YC)

During this past year we gathered together 7 times in Riga, Liepaja, Liepa and Kuldiga. In those meetings we planned youth winter camp, praise camp, shared with the information about various youth activities and events, organized website maintenance, planned 24 hour service, and also we prepared and led the whole church service in Kuldiga. It has been a huge blessing those times when we gathered for our meetings in Kuldiga or Liepa, because then we either participated in the church service, or in Liepa we had a fellowship with the Hope Center girls. Youth are longing more of those times where they can be in such fellowship.

This past year in the YC ministry has not been very easy. And for various reasons it wasn't possible to implement a plan that during the YC meetings we as the youth leaders would all participate and be near and support the new representatives for the YC. As well as some of the youth are not yet mature to go out and bear fruit – to be Jesus' hands, eyes, feet, heart.... There were times when you had to ask, what the purpose of our gathering was.

Our youth in the YC are still in the process of growing and they want to receive spiritually and are not ready to give spiritually.

I am grateful for every YC member that I have been able to get to know and build a closer relationship in this past year. Glad to see their devotion to Jesus.

Next year I see differently. I would like to gather people around me, young people, whose heart burns for the youth ministry in our church, and with whom to come together and pray and plan – how to help the youth to grow and strongly take roots in Christ.

CAMPS

- Winter Camp in Kuldiga "My DNA in Christ!" took place in 2013, December 13th -15th.

The camp had about 30 young people from Liepaja, Kuldiga, Matras, Riga, Liepa, Tasi, Paplaka and Cesis. This year we addressed the topic of who we are in Christ, what determines the value of young people and how God is looking at us. This year, for the first time three young people – Ilze Erode, Antra Vecaukuma and Kristaps Petrovs – prepared lectures and shared their life testimonies. It was a great pleasure to see young people sharing the Word of God. And also great thanks to their spiritual mentors – Gunta Grina-Sologuba and Kristine Rozefelde, who led them, supported and



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helped them during their preparation time. My gratitude is also to the Youth Council, who participated in the developing process and organized the whole camp.



1. Image - One of the youth who led the lecture about identity in Christ.



2. Image - Picture of participants



Youth ministry report 2013/2014

Sniedze Više, translated by K.Rozefelde

- Youth Camp „Switch!” July 9-14.

This year youth camp was led by Sniedze and Gunta, there were also 4 ever present leaders (3 from other denominations), as well as speakers from Josiah Venture, Ilze Žaime, and Daina Zamberga who led art projects. 19 youth and staff participated. Youth were from Riga, Paplaka, Liepaja, Jelgava, Liepa, Tasi, Kuldiga UMCs, as well as from Kemeru orphanage. A great joy for those participants who were there for the first time, and especially about participants from Jelgava and Liepa churches who sent youth to youth camp for the first time.

During the camp we turned to the great commandment of Jesus – go and make disciples, and the main theme was – switch from a Christian to a disciple. It was a challenge this year that most of the youth were at the beginning of their faith paths, therefore there were moments when the message, approach, or strategy had to be refocused to what it really meant to be a Christian, what it meant to follow Jesus in one's life. Lectures, group discussions and time spent in projects (drama, music, arts, dance) where the leaders had an opportunity to get to know youth's creative side, testify about personal life and form new disciples and Christians, was a blessed time. A blessed adventure was youth participating in Liepaja downtown market with a performance – a song and dance. God spoke to us very powerfully that all we, the ministry team, do, should glorify our Savior Jesus. And how huge is the responsibility working with youth. What seed are we planting in them and what message do we bring to the world outside. We are thankful to God about the big challenges and equally big blessings in this Summer's youth camp. I am thankful to God for strong leaders, ministry team and my colleague Gunta Grina-Sologuba.



3. Image – Picture of youth camp „Switch!”

- Shepherds training, July 19-22.

Similar to last year there were several new shepherds, but there were several also that came last year for the first time or are serving for many years, and it is joyful news.

There were total 14 youth that served in both camps. Although we are happy for many new youth as shepherds, it is also a new challenge, because the number of kids in Sunday school camp is large, and the age difference between shepherds and participants is small. That was a huge challenge this year because we missed older shepherds who would be more mature in faith life, who could be an example in Christ. We would appreciate a larger support and involvement from church members being shepherds or activity leaders. Shepherds did an amazing job. We are grateful for their wonderful



Youth ministry report 2013/2014
Sniedze Više, translated by K.Rozefelde

ministry, heart, stamina, patience, love and passion towards children.

During the shepherd training youth had a chance to get to know each other better through team building activities, as well as listen to safety instructions, first aid (Inese and Romans Budniks), discipline, how to work with children (Modrite Sture) and about the goal of ministry and team work (Oskars Špickopfs). Thanks to all of them and a huge gratitude to Vivita Kalniņa, who led the shepherd training this year and shared her long experience working with shepherds.



4. Image Being aware of the ministry goal.



5. Image Group presentation.



Youth ministry report 2013/2014
Sniedze Više, translated by K.Rozfelde

TRAINING OF NEW LEADERS

Just like last year and so in this year we are continuing to work with Josiah Venture missionaries, and participate in workshops designed for youth leaders. Youth leader seminars began last year and ended in the fall of 2013. These seminars are very blessed and the kind that gives strength to serve, and the foundation of teaching is based on the Strategy of Christ's Ministry. There is a researched method - how Christ served the disciples and the people, so are our young leaders invited to serve.

FUTURE PLANS AND VISION:

In the fall of 2014 together with the Youth Council we began to think about the 24 hour ministry, which was started by our previous missionary Courtney Randall. By this ministry there are plans to visit many families and older people and support them with the food package and we plan this project for spring of 2015. The goal is also to spend time with them and share God's love. We are planning in various ways to get the finances in order to be able to buy the food packages. We also are in prayers of choosing the city.

We are planning next summer to invite young people to create a group who will go and participate in the European Methodist Youth Festival, which will take place in Ireland in the year of 2015.

Each year at the beginning of December we organize the Youth winter Camp, where usually gather together young people from all the UMC of Latvia churches. In this year it is a great possibility that a group from USA will join us.

I would like to invite UMC of Latvia youth groups from different cities to go and visit one another and build a closer fellowship.

Sniedze Više,

Youth ministry coordinator



Sunday school ministry report 2013/2014

Sniedze Više, translated by K.Rozefelde

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY IN UMC OF LATVIA CONGREGATIONS

This year in the Sunday school ministry has been similar to the last year. We can be thankful that He has given us loving and passionate servants who teach our children the Word of God. God has been faithful, and this year we can see how many of our children from the Sunday school have grown out in a different age group, namely teens. Great joy is about some of the UMC of Latvia churches where these children who grow out of the Sunday school find their place in the family of God and have the teen classes.

Sunday school attendance in some churches during the school year varies, that is to say, the beginning of school is the influx of children, but after the New Year the attendance is gradually decreasing. We should take notice of the reasoning and decide how to create a desire in children, a thirst to come to church or Sunday school throughout the whole year.

Children are active not only in Sunday school, but some UMC of Latvia churches have also the after-school program, music lessons and other activities.

VISITING CONGREGATION SUNDAY SCHOOLS

In the beginning of the semester, I had the opportunity to visit some churches and their Sunday school teachers (Liepaja, Paplaka, Riga 1st, Liepa RUS and Latvian) and in some churches I also participated in the classes (Tasi, Paplaka). Personally I had the pleasure to get to know closer Sunday school teachers and to find out what blessings are they experiencing and what their challenges are. During this meeting we had little training and repetition of what is most important in ministry with children.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER MEETINGS

Overall, we have had 4 Sunday school teacher meetings and seminars in Riga and Liepaja. Meetings have been filled with creative ideas, children's summer camp programming as well as it has been a place where teachers have had the opportunity to meet one another to learn more, share their experiences and talk.

There have been two workshops – for Christmas and Easter. In the seminar on Christmas we had translated one teaching material "Journey to Bethlehem", which was brought to us by Julie Payne from the USA. We greatly appreciate those people who took their time and made use of their knowledge of English to translate this material. As a result, we obtained 5 creative activities. These all 5 weeks children have the opportunity to go through one story, namely, Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem and children have the ability to live through and explore it through stories, art, games, science and cooking lessons. In this seminar, we were able to pass through this material in practice and analyze how it is applicable to our Latvian situation. After Sunday school teacher recommendations we would want also to translate other materials brought by Julie and use it in our Sunday school ministry.

Referring to last year, this year we again organized a workshop on creative activities for the Sunday school classes during Easter. Teachers had previously said that they will don't lack material to tell the Easter message, or any other events from the Bible, but often lack the ideas for crafts, activities, or a game that would make the lesson more understandable and exciting.



Sunday school ministry report 2013/2014

Sniedze Više, translated by K.Rozefelde

SWOP SHOP SEMINAR IN HUNGARY

Thanks to Liepaja's, Riga 1st and UMC of Latvia support I and two other Sunday school teachers - Simona from Riga 1st and Anna from Liepaja's church - had the opportunity to attend a Swop Shop seminar in Hungary. This seminar takes place once every two years, and during other years we also have taken the participation. During this seminar we draw ideas for the ministry with children. It included: a variety of storytelling techniques, crafts, games, activities, seminars on intergenerational worship, human perception and ways of learning, different generations and their needs. The time spent in this seminar was very blessed, where he had the opportunity to relax, meet other servants from the other European Methodist congregations, draw on the ideas and get ignited again.

SUNDAYSCHOOL SUMMER CAMP 2014 "Adventures in Egypt"

Sundayschool camp took place from July 28 till August 2. The name of the camp was shown in decorations, morning sketch and activity "Get to know Egypt".

Story about Joseph in Old Testament was used as the basic theme of the camp. Themes of the day featured – be aware of jealousy, struggle, God's plan, forgiveness. During the whole week children were able to experience and understand the story of Joseph's life.

78 children from UMC in Latvia churches participated, ages 7 to 14. There were 16 shepherds, 4 of them were American youth, several Sundayschool teachers, and Julie and Richard Payne.

An atmosphere was created in which children felt free and shared with joy their personal experiences, how God had worked in their lives. Children were very happy and positively charged by the opportunity to spend time with American shepherds, because of the wonderful chance to practice English. Kids also expressed interest in interest groups (drama, dance).

On negative end – last-minute applications were burdensome. Suggestion for the next year – Sundayschool teachers should get the names of children coming earlier.

(Report by Anna Dobele)

EVANGELIZATION CHILDREN'S CAMP "AFRICA IN LATVIA" 2014

Evangelization camp took place July 22-26. Its title appeared in decorations and morning sketch, and the children were also able to get to know the real situation in Africa using an activity.

Themes of the day were adjusted in such a way that formed an idea about God and God's love while offering a glance at the Gospel story. Themes of the day included – sin, God, Jesus' love, clean again. Each of the themes was noted by a different color, and they as a remainder were represented on children's wristbands.



Sunday school ministry report 2013/2014

Sniedze Više, translated by K.Rozefelde



Evening worship by the campfire

Evangelization camp was attended by 32 children ages 7 to 15 from all around Latvia, 13 shepherds, and teacher Gaida Sēle, as well as Sniedze Više and Vivita Kalniņa.

Interest about God and Jesus was formed in children. They listened with interest how others told stories of how God had worked in their lives. Several kids experienced God's love for the first time. The seed earlier planted in the children was watered and their hearts are filled with hope again.

Suggestion for the next year – a larger initiative to participate in the evangelization camp from Sunday school teachers.

(Report by Anna Dobele)

FUTURE PLANS AND PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Continue to visit the church Sunday schools. Get to know closer children, teachers and ministry in every church, and to identify their needs and what prayer requests there are.
- Continue the seminars like "Creativity in the Sunday school classroom", as well as other seminars that help teachers themselves to grow and help to understand better their children.
- Translate the Sunday school materials from English to Latvian.
- Get to know and develop a variety of creative ways on how to tell the stories from the Bible, using different kinds of methods.
- Let us pray for the churches, where many children come, but unfortunately they lack teachers, and also for the new school year when the Sunday school work will start in UMC of Latvia. May God richly bless Children's ministry in each congregation!

Sniedze Više,

Sunday school ministry coordinator



Lay ministry report 2013/2014
Agita Kļaviņa, translated by K.Rozefelde

To us as followers of Christ is essential community, mutual support, prayers. Therefore, laity of Latvian Methodist Church holds regular meetings between the annual conferences. In November of 2013, lay meeting was devoted to evangelism issues. Great Lay attention and responsiveness achieved spiritual lecture on the topic of "evangelization" led by Jelgava's church pastor Janis Baumanis, as well as we discussed the experience of evangelical bus ministry in Jelgava, Cesis and Liepa. During these discussions I asked a question to the lay members from each congregation, asking what actually are we willing to do in the field of evangelization in our churches and in whole UMC of Latvia. We concluded that we are ready to organize an evangelistic camp, including practical evangelism in the agenda of church camp. We plan to implement this idea in the summer of 2015, and pastor Janis Baumanis has agreed to lead a mixed pastors and laity workshop, who will launch in the autumn of 2014 planning and organization of evangelistic camp. Besides that in the November lay meeting, two representatives of Latvian lay Inara Avotina and Daina Zamberga shared their impressions from the European Methodist lay gathering. We had the idea that maybe in the future we could organize a Baltic lay gathering, in which could participate, not just two, but a larger number of Latvian lay, and to get to know more Estonian and Lithuanian laity. Also in November lay meeting leader of the project "Method" Daina Zamberga provided information on the possibilities how churches can participate in this project.

During the Advent season already a tradition is to have a charity concert and developing a fair, in which we share with our love and faith to people who are not our church members. It's good to see that these events every year get better in quality and larger. In the future, in my opinion, it would be important for these concerts and fairs not to get in a routine, but rather to have every year some fresh ideas, or new content. Valuable would be to make some "evaluation", continuing to keep in touch with people who came to concert for the first time, and continue to support those who received our help.

On our next meeting laity gathered in February of 2014. Together we watched Bill Hybels's video lecture "Leader's courage", and afterwards we had a valuable discussion. Significantly, the week after the meeting in the Baltic church conference we were able to see face to face Bill Hybels, and many spiritual servants know him as a video lecturer from GLS seminars.

The practical part of February meeting was devoted to the Methodists singing festival planning. Methodist singing festival is a new tradition, which this year took place in March in Jelgava and we hope to continue it every year in one of the Latvian Methodist churches. Singing and music is an important ministry of the lay ministry and it is good if the church choirs and ensembles have an opportunity to serve outside of their own church. Latvian Methodist united choir in Jelgava sounded wonderful and inspired both the singers and the listeners.

In May laity gathered in Liepa's church to carry out the organization of church camp. Church Camp this summer took place from 20th to 22nd June in Liepa, and its theme was "God's promises". We thank pastor Gita Mednis, Vera Titovica, and Ilzite Ozola, who shared with us their thoughts and faith, as well as all the pastors who sent for us their video messages. During the camp we had a joint tour of the Cesis and Liepa. Under the guidance of Daina Zamberga we also created something creative with our hands.

May God continue more deeply be rooted in us and find His home in our souls!

Agita Kļaviņa,

Lay Leader



Afterschool program in Liepa report 2013/2014

Vera Titoviča, translated by R. Germans

„So don't be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom.” Luke 12:32

Jesus says very important and good words. Indeed, the Lord wants to save all people – big and small. We are grateful to God and all the supporters of After-school project.

This year the program started in October and continued till May. Children could attend Mondays through Thursdays from 15 to 19 o'clock. Kids were very happy to come to this program. This year, unlike previous years, the daily attendance was 16-18, there were lot of kids from large families. This year several families with 3 or more kids moved to our village and most of them have just one parent – a mother. To most of them a hot soup for dinner is the only meal. Many kids brought their younger siblings along because the village pays for their lunch, but we could offer also a hot soup for dinner.

This year there were many children attending every day, in varied age groups – it was hard, but also a blessing. Children are very talented, they wanted to act in different ways – preparing gifts, handicrafts, drawing, preparing greeting cards. They really wanted to expose their talent, therefore each Thursday we chose a theme. They were very happy to show their talent in art, theater, songs and dancing to their invited friends. On holidays we went in the streets to evangelize people and give them our self-made gifts. First it was on March 8 – on the International Women's Day when children presented greeting cards and flowers, second time was on the 2nd day of Easter when children presented greeting cards and candle eggs. This year the older kids want to organize a camp, just like last year. With God's help it will happen, we believe. The camp will be called “Jesus Christ – Son of God”. The camp is planned at the end of August.

We organized events where children could show their talents, we invited their parents, celebrated birthdays. On holiday worship services children performed and invited their parents, also.

I was very moved that some parents and grand mothers participated in the Holy Communion this year and that with every time they become more and more open. God works with them and it is a blessing.

This year one mother helped a lot in preparation of dresses and props for the performances. She made a lot of paper flowers. We are very thankful for her talent, and may God bless her.

Just like before the first hour at the program was meant for studying and doing homework, after that they played games, drew, did handicrafts, had Bible lessons and a hot soup for dinner. In the last hour we also played games and prepared varied greeting cards and presents for church events and their own usage.

I am very thankful to congregation for help with the ministry and preparing meals. Special thanks to Natalia who prepared a lot of jams and pickled vegetables, to Longina for the vegetables and Jekaterina for very tasty and always fresh soups. May God bless and keep them.

One other mom talked to me about getting baptized herself, afterward she would like her daughter to be baptized. We are still in the process. I know that God would not leave His children, He will lead everyone to Him and will help change lives.

This year we went the Riga Circus, because many kids had not been there. We have gone on trips at the closure of each year's program. This year we did not go, because we had no money for that, but we celebrated the last day at church. The children invited their parents.

This program is a blessing and very needed in our village because it really helps to parents with kids. It is crucial for the children not to wander on streets, to be in one safe place, learn to love one another, do no harm, eat a hot meal. It is very needed in our harsh times.

We really wish that the program would continue next year, because of the blessing and worth to the society. We trust on God's grace to open people's hearts to support this ministry with financial aid.

Pastor Vera Titoviča



Board of Ordained ministry report 2013/2014
Edgars Šneiders, translated by *R. Germans*

- This was the 11th year since formation of the Board of Ordained Ministry in Latvia UMC. We have met several times—separately and after UMC in Latvia Administrative Board meetings to discuss varied important issues.
- We have met with local pastors, candidates, and probationary members. We have tried to help them in their ministry, finding mentors, and we have talked about questions regarding their ministry and growth.
- Mentoring has taken place.

1– Board of Ordained Ministry:

Chair: pastor Edgars Šneiders

Board member: Superintendent – Gita Medne

Board member: pastor – Inese Budņika

Board member: pastor Gunta Grīna-Sologuba

Board member: Rihards Germans

2– Retired pastors:

Milda Vainovska – Officially retired in 2005.

Ārijs Vīksna - Officially retired in 2012.

3– Ordained pastors in active ministry:

Edgars Šneiders (Serves Mātras and Liepāja UMCs)

Inese Budņika (Serves Camp Wesley and Paplaka UMC)

Andris Vainovskis (Serves Riga 2nd UMC part time, because he has a state job)

Gita Medne (Superintendent, serves Riga 1st UMC)

4– Localpastors:

Ilzīte Ozola (Serves Liepa and Sarkaņi UMCs)

Vera Titoviča (Serves Liepa Russian UMC)

Gunta Grīna-Sologuba (Serves Liepāja and Tāši UMCs)

Vivita Kalniņa (Served Kuldīga UMC. Now on maternity leave)

Jānis Baumanis (Serves Jelgava UMC)

Astra Dannenfelte (Part-time pastor of Riga 1st UMC)

Gundars Ceipe (pastor at Cēsis UMC)

Kristīne Rozefelde (Took a year off from pastoral duties. Willing to return to ministry after the Conference)

Jānis Grunte (Took a year off after last Conference. Considers returning to ministry from January, 2015)



Board of Ordained ministry report 2013/2014
Edgars Šneiders, translated by R.Germans

5– On their way to ordination:

Jānis Grunte – accepted as a candidate to the ordained ministry during the Annual Conference in 2005.

Ilze Paukše – accepted as a provisional member during the Annual Conference in 2006. Due to her living abroad this provisional membership has been suspended.

Gunta Grīna-Sologuba - accepted as a candidate to the ordained ministry during the Annual Conference in 2009. During the 2010 Conference was accepted as a provisional member

Vivita Kalniņa – accepted as a candidate to the ordained ministry during the Annual Conference in 2009. During the 2012 Conference was accepted as a provisional member.

Ansis Paukšis – accepted as a candidate to the ordained ministry during the Annual Conference in 2010. Due to him living abroad this candidacy has been suspended.

Kristīne Rozefelde – accepted as a candidate to the ordained ministry during the Annual Conference in 2011.

Astra Dannenfelte – accepted as a candidate to the ordained ministry during the Annual Conference in 2012.

Jānis Baumanis – accepted as a candidate to the ordained ministry during the Annual Conference in 2013.

Recommendations of the Board:

Jānis Grunte – BOM recommends continuing his candidacy after return to active service.

Gunta Grīna-Sologuba – A provisional member for the 5th year. BOM recommends her for ordination during this year's Conference.

Vivita Kalniņa – A provisional member for the 2nd year. This year she is on maternity leave. BOM recommends continuing her provisional membership.

Ilze Paukše – Her provisional membership period has ended. If she decides to return to Latvia to active ministry, she will have to become a candidate to the ordained ministry again.

Future plans:

- ◆ Search for new students in cooperation with pastors.
- ◆ Provide mentors to all local pastors and coordinate the ministry of mentoring.
- ◆ Translate materials that would help in the ministry of mentoring.
- ◆ Training course for local pastors, educational program for local preachers, spiritual self-fulfillment of pastors.
- ◆ Publish a liturgy book including all liturgical services in the church and outside of it.

Edgars Šneiders,
Chair of BOM



Income statement 2012 and 2013
Jolanta Bandere

	2013	2012
	LVL	LVL
Income		
Money transfer from reserve fund and Advance Special	25 001	25 758
Baltic Pastors Salary Fund (BPSF)	7 292	8 099
Scholarships (J.Grunte)	1 225	1 210
Donations to pastors salary fund	26 115	19 088
Congregation's donations into pastors salary fund	9 598	8 901
Individual Congregation donations to support (Advance Special un WME) *	19 575	22 648
Offering - 11%	827	1 159
Donations for afterschool program	3 865	1 757
Donation for children, youth camps and work	1 779	18 853
Donation for Wesley camp (facility)	12 060	4 131
Donations for special purposes and projects, including Hope Center, Metode *	17 130	19 213
Interest income	9	52
Revenue from exchange rate appreciation	168	236
Revenue from property leasing (Liepaja) *	2 976	640
Other income	0	
Income total LVL	127 620	131 745

1. District Expenses

District office expenses

Public utilities *	2 664	2 664
Office supplies	199	254
Telephone, monthly charges	740	948
Household expenses	55	5
Office staff salaries and taxes*	15 452	11 778
Travel expenses (office)*	915	1 267
Transport, fuel	309	573
Other expenses	759	623

Total LVL 21 093 18 112

District expenses

Transport, fuel	497	400
Guest reception, also VIM teams	169	269
Travel expenses (district)		8
Representation expenses	7 533	3 433
Bank charges	391	309
Website, domain	57	101
Devotions at Latvian Christian Radio		510



Income statement 2012 and 2013
Jolanta Bandere

Annual apportionment	1 777	724
Other expenses (variety of one-off costs)	1 167	2 067
Congregations' support money	19 303	22 704
Total LVL	30 894	30 525
2. Personnel expenses		
Pastors salary	46 898	38 904
Taxes	8 552	7 493
Scholarships	1 225	1 210
Pension	3 158	1 500
Insurance	540	540
Royalties	1 740	630
Other taxes	29	30
Total LVL	62 142	50 307
3. Real estate expenses		
Paid by UMC of Latvia (wooden building) - tax	145	166
GBGM building insurance	976	1 245
Maintenance expenditure on buildings (Liepa)	2 240	4 125
Total LVL	3 361	5 536
4. Higher education		
Christian Leadership College (e-college)	141	70
Total LVL	141	70
5. Meetings, Conferences		
Annual District conference	1 180	1 256
Board meetings	410	291
Area seminars, training, other	1 392	2 003
Lay meetings, camp, etc. measures	125	512
Total LVL	3 107	4 062
6. Program		
Youth council, youth work	597	186
Various short-term projects		278
Children's ministry	94	
After-school program Liepa	1 320	1 620
After-school program Liepaja	500	
Wesley camp expenses (Wesley days, Apple Festival, repair)	10 412	6 861
Total LVL	12 923	8 945
7. Camps		
2 Children's Camps (evangelization, Sunday school)	4 143	2 713
Shepherd training	279	274
Youth camp	1 866	2 220
Āraiši camp (Liepa youth)		3 540
CinA camp	1 135	
Total LVL	7 423	8 747



Income statement 2012 and 2013
Jolanta Bandere

8. Projects		
Donation for Hope Center*	7 056	11 610
Vitamin project		1 830
Various donations	150	1 710
English language projects	1 500	
Donation for Metode *	3 500	
	Total LVL	15 150
	Expenses total LVL	141 454
TOTAL INCOME LVL	127 620	131 745
TOTAL EXPENSES LVL	153 290	141 454

* special purpose income and expenses



Balance report 2012 and 2013
Jolanta Bandere

Latvia UMC
BALANCE 2013

ASSETS LVL	2013	2012
1. Long-term investments		
Intangible assets	4,00	19,00
Property and equipment:		
1. Real estate (Cesis)	25 000,00	25 000,00
2. Other fixed assets	1 407,00	2 124,00
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total long-term investments	26 411,00	27 143,00
2. Current assets		
Supplies	85	31
Accounts receivables	7 820	6 642
Investment	3 616	7 907
Cash and bank deposit	9 418	29 258
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total current assets	20 939,00	43 838,00
TOTAL ASSETS LVL	<hr/> 47 350,00	<hr/> 70 981,00

EQUITY AND LIABILITIES LVL	2013	2012
1. Reserve fund		
Capital fund	24 432,00	56 538,00
Designated	17 496,00	10 718,00
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total funds	41 928,00	67 256,00
2. Short-term liabilities		
Taxes and social security contributions	3 016,00	2 942,00
Other creditors (utilities)	2 406,00	783,00
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total current liabilities	5 422,00	3 725,00
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES LVL	<hr/> 47 350,00	<hr/> 70 981,00



Budget 2015 *Jolanta Bandere*

UMC in LATVIA BUDGET 2015

Budget Income	2015	2014	
	Euro	LVL	Euro
1 GBGM fund 2015	0	4 500	6 403
2 Baltic Pastors salary fund (BPSF)	9 976	6 771	9 634
3 Anticipated donation to Pastors Salary Fund	24 036	4 800	6 830
4 Pension fund	4 488	1 800	2 561
5 Partner congregation fund	29 220	36 000	51 223
6 Sunday school, children and Youth ministry fund	350	1 870	2 661
7 11% of offerings	2 840	1 200	1 707
8 Board meeting fund	840	200	285
9 Scholarship fund	2 058	2 008	2 857
10 Leadership training fund	440	150	213
11 Program Development Fund	10 800	5 168	7 353
12 Office and district expenses fund *	30 600	15 939	22 679
13 Payment for insurance	1 680	1 056	1 503
14 Space rent, maintenance of buildings (Liepaja, Liepa, Akas street)**	9 216	4 644	6 608
15 Youth and children camp	3 431	4 847	6 897
16 Gifts from other projects – afterschool	8 414	1 610	2 291
17 Church Development project fund - Metode	0	10 542	15000
18 Other income	720	1 416	2 015
Total income	139 109	104 521	148 720
District Office expenses			
1 Public utilities *	3 792	2664	3 791
2 Office supplies	120	144	205
3 Telephone, monthly charges	504	420	598
4 Household expenses	25	36	51
5 PIM salary + taxes*	21 960	15 240	21 685
Total	26 401	18 504	26 330
District expenses			
1 Transport	696	600	854
2 Guest reception, also VIM teams (gifts, flowers, food, other)	90	150	213
3 Travel expenses*	915	480	683
4 Bank charge	552	300	427
5 Translation expenses	180	150	213
6 Website, domain	70	70	100
7 Ecumenical measure	0	120	171
8 Annual dues (apportionment)	2 216	960	1 366
Total	4 719	2 830	4 027



Budget 2015 Jolanta Bandere

Personnel expenses				
1	Salary (pastors)	56 400	39 816	56 653
2	Taxes	13 308	8 076	11 491
3	Pension + income tax	4 488	3 156	4 491
4	Insurance	2 050	540	768
Total		76 246	51 588	73 403
Buildings				
1	Paid by UMC of Latvia (wooden building) - tax	208	300	427
2	Liepaja building maintenance, insurance**	9 216	2 520	3 586
3	Liepa building, Akas street building insurance	953	920	1 309
4	Other expenses (unplanned expenses - reserve)	840	1 200	1 707
5	Security (Liepa)	204	144	205
Total		11 421	5 084	7 234
Higher education				
1	Christian Leadership College	200	140	199
Total		200	140	199
Meetings, Conferences				
1	Annual District conference	1 680	1 200	1 707
2	Board meetings	588	360	512
3	District - wide education seminars	1 640	425	605
4	Lay meetings	180	200	285
Total		4 088	2 185	3 109
Programs				
1	Youth council	864	180	256
2	Various short-term projects	0	600	854
3	Afterschool program Liepaja	1 060	1 800	2 561
4	Afterschool program Liepa	5 625	1 500	2 134
5	Vitamins project	0	1 400	1 992
6	Sundays school teacher seminar	130	100	142
7	Other support and gifts	80	180	256
Total		7 759	5 760	8 196
Camps				
1	Children' camp	1 700	2 200	3 130
2	Shepherd training	360	300	427
3	Youth camp	860	1 200	1 707
Total		2 920	3 700	5 265
Projects				
1	Church Development project fund - Metode	0	10 536	14 991
Total		0	10 536	14 991
Total EXPENSES		133 754	100 327	142 752
Unforeseen expenses (~4%)		5 355	4 194	5 968

* special purpose income and expenses

** rent, for Liepāja church



LAMB 11% kolektes ieņēmumi 2010-2013

Jolanta Bandere

Income from offerings - 11%

	2010	2011	2012	2013
	LVL	LVL	LVL	LVL
TOTAL Ls:	1091,42	1066,55	1438,67	1991,71

