THE LUTHERAN CHURCH
Missouri Synod

News from the Rajek Family

December 2021

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"To The Ends of The Earth"

Acts 1:8

Jesus said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."



The students, instructors, and guests from the Rīga Luther Academy during intensive week in Wittenberg, Germany. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and government restrictions, many of our students were relegated to joining us online.

Welcome

Greetings in the name of Christ and a very blessed Christmas celebration to you all. Thank you for your continued partnership in this mission to make Christ known "to the ends of the earth."

The Word Does Everything

Recently Jenny and I had the privilege of traveling to Wittenberg, Germany, the birthplace of the Lutheran Reformation. We were visiting for the week-long intensive studies through the Rīga Luther Academy. Having traveled to this historic city back in 1995 for German class, I was interested in seeing all the changes that had taken place. I remembered marveling back then, other than the statue in the town square, there was barley mention of Martin Luther and the Reformation that had taken place in the 16th century. This time around, however, Luther was on full display in almost every shop we

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Prayer Requests

- Continued safe travels as we wrap up our NSM travels and our upcoming deployment.
- For Luther Academy students and instructors as they approach the end of the term.
- For the people of Latvia and the world as we experience an increase in Covid cases.
- For a speedy visa process so nothing will delay our deployment in January.
- Continued prayers for my family as we prepare for our move to Rīga.

visited. It seems this small German town had discovered the former Augustinian monk could generate revenue even 500 years later.

I must admit, while I liked buying my little replica of the Luther statue in Wittenberg's town square, I was a bit saddened by fact that the heart of the Reformation seems lost on most. Luther's Reformation was all about the Word (Sola Scriptura) and not money or social justice. Time and again, not only did Luther highlight the spoken Word but the Word made flesh in the person of Jesus Christ as St. John writes in his Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God." (Jn 1:1-2)

While on this most recent visit, I had the privilege of sharing that Word with my future students at the Rīga Luther Academy at one of our daily chapel services. My text was on Jeremiah 1 where the Word of God comes to the prophet and calls him into service. I ended that sermon with words from Luther in his Second Invocativ Sermon preached on March 10, 1522. Luther proclaimed:

> What is Luther? The teaching is not mine. Nor was I crucified for anyone … How did I, poor stinking bag of maggots that I am, come to the point where people call the children of Christ by my evil name? … I simply taught, preached, wrote God's Word; otherwise, I did nothing. …the Word did everything.

Yes, indeed, the Word does everything!



Martin Luther's grave located under the pulpit of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany.



The statue of Luther in Wittenberg's town square.



Here I am preaching to students at the Rīga Luther Academy during a chapel service in Wittenberg, Germany.

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Fun Fact About Rīga, Latvia



The stone marker in Rīga commemorating the place of the very first community Christmas tree.

With Christmas right around the corner, I thought this fun fact was interesting. Did you know that Rīga, Latvia boasts the birthplace for the very first community Christmas tree? According to documents from 1510, the Brotherhood of Blackheads (a guild of professional merchants and traders) put a fir tree in the town square, adorned it with paper flowers, celebrated with singing and dancing, and then proceeded to light it on fire. To commemorate and celebrate the event, the city of Rīga decorates a Christmas tree every year and places it on this exact spot.

Thank You For Your Support



It has been a real blessing partnering with you in this very important and exciting mission. God is doing wonderful things through the Rīga Luther Academy and I'm so glad you are a part of it.

As I look ahead at continuing to build a support network, I ask you to prayerfully consider sharing this mission with others. Tell them of the good that God is doing at the Rīga Luther Academy and throughout the Eurasia region.

To support the LCMS through the work of Dr. Cory J. Rajek, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
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Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Mark checks "Support of Cory Rajek." Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on my online giving page at *lcms.org/rajek*.

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