

## Growing in Christ !

Our pastor Jogita Mingina cites Acts 2: 41-42: *“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”(NIV)* and explains there are many examples in the Bible of the ways in which we may grow in Christ.

Looking back at this summer, Rev. Jogita thanks our congregation that she could participate in the “Īkšķīši” camp for 2-7 year olds in the Catskills [Latvian Lutheran Church Camp, NY]. She explains, that though at first passive observers, the children slowly became surer and by the end of camp stuck to the Pastor like thistles. They eagerly made David's harps and little sheep. The part of the program, that was the greatest spiritual gift to her and the children, was the story of Noah's ark, to which the children listened intently without moving and had they had been allowed to do so, they would have gotten in the pool along with Noah's ark and the animals. The Pastor noted how wonderful it is to be friends with Jesus already from early childhood.

Our Pastor brings up a second noteworthy event, that we were able to enjoy at summers' end, which was the Boston Congregational Retreat for Families and Children at Piesauļe. She thanks God, that at the necessary moment, He sends enthusiastic help. At the beginning of summer there was just the thought of organizing this church event. She explains, having no assistants, she entrusted her concerns to the Christian Fellowship group. After listening to the Pastor's wishes, Ināra Suuberg urged, they should start organizing at once, at which point the group's four ladies- rev. Jogita, Ināra Suuberg, Astrīda Ramrath, and Maruta Ieviņa- sat down together and began planning the event with the anticipation of great Christian fellowship and learning. What joy, when, after initially coming up empty, they finally found Helga Coss and Dzidra Knecht, to look after preparation of the delectable meals. Rev. Jogita expressed heartfelt gratitude to Ināra Suuberg and Astrīda Ramrath, who telephoned and organized activity leaders, saw to developing the program and took care that the retreat would be a success.

Rev. Jogita continues by expressing the gratification she felt, when the number of participants exceeded what was expected. She writes that about eighty participants came to the congregational retreat in Piesauļe. Of these twenty were children from the “Pīļēnu” [play group] and from our congregation's families. All, some big, some small, some younger, some older, had their activities- the family hike, building sand castles for the younger children, [an “ice breaker” for the non-latvian speaking participants,] painting, guessing Bible riddles, doll making, sports and games, a talent show by the campfire, a dance, joga, a herbal walk and, in conclusion, a worship service. Most important is that the days passed by with much happiness, warmhearted feeling toward one another, and in friendship. Rev. Jogita gives thanks to all who organized, prepared the meals, lead the activities, and the many helpers in the kitchen, because without your help the retreat would not have happened!

Rev. Jogita explains there are many ways to grow in Christ and finds that a wonderful way to grow in Christ is to experience the LELBA [the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America] Congregational Retreat, this one in early summer 2010 at Kursa [the West Coast Latvian Education Center in Shelton, WA]. Our Pastor writes that the theme for these days was spirituality- for all of the person. All who participated experienced God with all their heart, with all their strength and with all their mind ( Luke 10:27, NIV). The LELBA Congregational Retreat began and ended with a worship service. Rev. Indulis Paičs from the Rīgas Luteran church lead the retreat's participants in a spiritual experience with God, reading lectures on God's creation plan, falling into sin, man's spiritual cleansing, the enlightening of man, and uniting of man's soul with God. The evenings were dedicated to discussions- Dean Anita Vārsberga Pāža lead discussions about spirituality and the Sacraments, Dean Lauma Zušēvica, in turn, told about Creation in God's image and likeness. Saturday all of the participants could enjoy an evening of poetry lead by Inta Wiest. For the duration of the Congregational Retreat, in between lectures, there were various activities. In that way, each person could choose an activity that corresponded to their interests- going through a maze, sacral dances, pottery and singing. The Congregational Retreat culminated Sunday, when after the closing worship service, the pastors grilled trout, which the Seattle Latvian Church had gotten for the participants. It tasted fabulous!!! During the concluding evening program a choir of participants performed, as well as a jazz ensemble composed of pastors and sacral dancers, who, with their angel, captivated the audience. The audience was so thrilled, the dancers had to repeat their presentation. The part of the angel was danced, with delightful tenderness, by a woman, who had reached the age of ninety. "Dear beloved," writes Rev. Jogita, "what wonderful opportunities you are given to grow in Christ! Definitely attend a future [LELBA] Congregational Retreat!"

Jesus said: "For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them." (Matthew 18:20, NIV) and rev. Jogita explains this was the theme for the Eastern District Conference which was held from the 17th to the 19th of September in the Catskills. Rev. Jogita Mingina, Annele Amoliņa, church president and Ināra Suuberg, [church boardmember], attended on behalf of the The Latvian Lutheran Church of Boston. The Eastern District Conference commenced with a worship service with communion which was held on the dining hall [Edamzale] veranda. Everyone witnessed, how following the service, demolition of this building started, as one by one the windows, then the door were removed [in preparation for a planned reconstruction of the facility]. The Conference proceeded at a brisk pace, as the agenda included many reports, a meeting of church presidents and other church workers, a meeting of the clergy, and discussions. At first Archbishop Elmārs Rozītis and the central board of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church greeted Conference attendees by letter, in which the Archbishop invited : that regardless of how changeable the world is- financially, politically, and also in the spiritual sense, nevertheless consider the teaching, that in Christ Jesus we are given a secure position in time and in eternnity, in our personal, social, congregational, and church life. Our duty is to build on this foundation and become a holy place for God.

Our Pastor continues writing about the Conference proceedings, explaining that what followed were the reports of the The Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church and LELBA, where emphasis was placed on faith. Just as we were becoming weary and were ready to give up, doubting that we were functioning members of the body of Christ we heard these statistics- LELBA at present consists of 59 congregations, served by 43 pastors and 10 deacons. [Still,] within the last three years these 5 congregations (groups) have ceased activity- the Madison and Sioux Falls groups, Elisabeth-Newark, Edmonton St. John and London congregations.

In 2010 LELBA sponsored projects consisted of a fundraising campaign for the benefit of the Haiti earthquake victims and a bicycle donation campaign „Lai rit!“ (“Let it roll!”) for the congregations in the Latgale region of Latvia.

LELBA is served by fifteen clergy from Latvia, whose contribution is irreplaceable. These clergy, and their US counterparts, are learning how to more effectively work together and to better communicate with one another and to understand each other’s circumstances.

In the last few months concerns, that have been discussed, include issues in Latvia regarding the ordination of women, Latvian Lutheran Church finances, spiritual office and what it entails, and theologically differing points of view.

In summarizing the report given by the Eastern District Dean Anita Vārsberga Pāža, Rev. Jogita writes that the Dean began with statistics, showing that The Eastern Region [which includes Boston] is comprised of 17 congregations, served by 16 pastors and 3 deacons. Dean Vārsberga Pāža recalled the recently deceased Dean Albert Ozols. She expressed gratitude for her ceremonial induction into the office of Dean, and “for the trust, great support, and heartfelt love shown to her.” Dean Vārsberga Pāža congratulated Rev. Kristīna Sūna-Koro for earning a doctorate degree in May from the *Emory University Laney Graduate School of Arts and Sciences* with the *PhD.* dissertation, (which received honors) : “*Opus Dei: Toward the Sacramental Counterpoint of Liturgy and Ethics in a Diasporic Imaginary.*” Rev. Dr. Sūna-Koro has accepted an offer to be an *Assistant Professor of Theology, Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio*, and as a result with this summer transferred to the LELBA, Central District. Dean Vārsberga Pāža closes with “Who remains in Christ, bears much fruit- God willing!”

Evening programs enriched the conclusion of each day at the Conference, our pastor writes. There was a poetry evening „Vēl debesķīgākām debesīm“ (“A More Divine Sky”) – religious themes in the poetry of Gunars Saliņš, as well as an overview with photographs of Pastors Dace Jansone and Jogita Mingina „Celojums uz Svēto zemi“ (“Journey to the Holy Land”).

On the Conference’s last day, rev. Jogita continues, church presidents and other church workers had the opportunity to meet without the presence of the clergy and to exchange opinions on what the congregation expects from the pastor, and what the pastor expects from the congregation. This meeting’s discussions resulted in the following conclusions:

congregations expect, that the pastor is in "covenant" with its congregation. Churches expect from the LELBA leadership the development of an orientation program by the pastors who have come here from Latvia, and to pay more attention to pastor immigration matters and inform them about changes in the laws regarding visas and green cards. The churches proposed using modern technology options to transmit worship services and draw in young people, who study in institutions of higher education. Regarding recent arrivals and drawing them into our congregations, the suggestion was to "change the environment", so that the newly arrived may also feel at home in the church. It was in this manner that the Eastern District Conference concluded with determination to act. Rev. Jogita expresses many thanks to the New York church for their hospitable reception at the Catskill camp. May God bless the New York church and the camp administration as work begins on the Edamzale major construction project!

Then too, the Latvian Lutheran Church of Boston's fall season has started with its own activity, our Pastor concludes. All are cordially invited to grow in Jesus Christ- to attend worship services, Bible studies, Discussion and Christian fellowship evenings, to sing in the church choir, as well as support the church with donations of time and money, because as rev. Jogita notes, "...God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." (2 Corinthians 9: 7-8, NIV).

## Some news highlights in English:

Dear donors!

Many, many thanks for greatly supporting our [Kilimanjaro] fundraising project. Together we contributed more than \$12,000 for the church roof repairs, and all donations will go towards the renovation. Dagnija and Egons Kubuliņi.

Those who attended Dagnijas and Egona Kubuliņa program about their hike up the Kilimanjaro [mountain in Tanzania, Africa] experienced a pleasant, at times funny, and definitely informative afternoon- including the presentation itself, refreshments, wine, and a raffle....

Ivars Galins writes that summer 2010 has not been without its capricious weather, but during the time of the Congregational Retreat in Piesaulē this summer granted us two exceptional days....

Dagnija Kubuliņa (Ladies Committee chair) reports that Ludmīla Kupriš is resigning as the altar flower arrangement coordinator. Many, many thanks to Ludmīla. Astra Grīnberga and Maija Galiņa will continue to assist in this task. If you would like to help please contact Dagnija at: [dkubulins@comcast.net](mailto:dkubulins@comcast.net) / 781-749-4493.

Ludmīla Kupriš, in her final report as Altar flower arrangement coordinator

thanks the Church for the opportunity she was given to serve.

On October 3 we celebrated harvest. The church hall was beautifully decorated and the meal was formidable. Much gratitude is expressed to those ladies and gentlemen who assisted.

We congratulate and welcome a new member to our Church: Ivars Laviņš. Those members of our congregation recently laid to rest are: Daina Baumanē (1944-2010), and Valentīna Lambergā (1929- 2010). Jesus says: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies." (John 11:25, NIV)

Thanks go to the volunteers who have organized coffees after worship service. We encourage all women in our congregation to take a turn at providing a coffee. To volunteer, call Dagnija Kubuliņa- 781-749-4493

The Garden Committee, is headed by Edīte Gudrais, who writes about a second spring garden clean-up and planting on June 5. Though participants were not many, they tidied up the Church yard and planted a number of perennials. Edīte thanks those who provided plants and those who took upon themselves to weed, plant, and water. She invites all to come help with the Fall clean up to be held October 30 starting at 9 a.m.

Gunta Voldiņa, Church office secretary, thanks those who helped her with the mailing of the May Newsletter.

Take a look at our Church homepage-[www.bostonastrimdasdraudze.org](http://www.bostonastrimdasdraudze.org) for the calendar, news, ... Thank you, Dzintra Lācis, who is now in charge! We are likewise grateful to Krista Kubuliņa, formerly in charge.

A Latvian Independence Day Celebration will be held Thursday, November 18 in the Church Hall at 7 p.m.

Astrīda Ramrath reports on the activity of a committee of Church members that support the pastor in her duties, in matters of faith. She describes the various studies lead by our Pastor; in particular Rev. Jogita Mingina invites us all to come to Bible Study, where she will be teaching on the nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit, described in Galatians 5: 22-23: that we may better understand what characterizes love, the fruit of the Holy Spirit that is listed first.

Note: Bible Study is presented in Latvian. If you would like to participate in Bible study in English, please talk to Rev. Jogita Mingina. If there is enough interest, we will start a group.

[The annual] Christmas Bazaar is slated for December 12 after worship service, from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. For more information or to register for a

table [from which you may sell your crafts], contact Katrīna Veidiņa: 978-697-0160 / [veidins.k@neu.edu](mailto:veidins.k@neu.edu)

In the Relief for Latvia Committee report, written by both Rūta Straumanis and Astrīda Ramrath, they encourage us to continue to support their ongoing projects- children's homes, children's camps, soup kitchens, community provisions for those who have fallen on hard times, and the financing of education in Latvia.

Future plans: October 24- Art in Bloom. This is the first in a series on a survey of the art collection at the Latvian Lutheran Church of Boston. After worship service, an interpretation in flowers will be made of an Augusts Annus painting. Sarma Muižniece Liepiņa will present a talk about A. Annus. Donations received for the program and coffee will benefit the committee and fund their participation in the Christmas Bazaar.

Have you notified the Church Office of your email address? If you wish to receive news about what is happening at Church, send your email address to the Church office: [trimdasdraudze@aol.com](mailto:trimdasdraudze@aol.com)