



In Loving Partnership—Lithuania Link

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Lithuania United Methodist Church

Lithuania UMC Begins Newsletter for Partner Churches

This is the first issue of a new Newsletter that the Lithuania United Methodist Church has launched to better connect to our supporting churches around the globe. Our hope is to publish the Newsletter quarterly with updates on the work of the LUMC and our local churches. For many of you your interest will be with a specific church or ministry that you are supporting. Our hope is that the other information in the newsletter will be valuable to you as well and help you better understand the larger ministry of the Lithuania United Methodist Church. The Newsletter will be available in an electronic format and we would be happy to add to the email list any interested person. We have gathered as many emails as possible from supporting churches and other individuals but we know that there may be

many other persons interested in receiving this newsletter. If you know of persons who you would like to add to the list to receive this Newsletter please send us their name and email address and we will be happy to include them. At present all correspondence will be handled through the District Office and so you may send information, questions, or email addresses to the District Superintendent, John Campbell at:

revjohncampbell@gmail.com or ds@lithuaniaumc.org.

If you have suggestions about what would be helpful for you or maybe a story to share of your experience with our Lithuania ministry please send them to John Campbell and we will try to include them in our next issue. Welcome to this new adventure for the Lithuania United Methodist Church.



Šiauliai Church Consecrates New Worship Space

On December 9, 2007 the Šiauliai Church consecrated it's newlyh built worship space almost doubling the size of the church. The consecration was presided over by Bishop Oystein Olsen, Bishop of the Northern Europe Central Conference, and District Superintendent John Campbell, and Pastor Kingsley Halden. The project was a culmination of cooperation and support between the Šiauliai Church and it's primary partner church Davidson UMC as well as support from a number of other

churches. The new worship space is not only beautiful with two stain glass windows copied from their partner congregation, but it is also functional and energy efficient so that the church will not be burdened with enourous utility increases. The new space with folding doors to the previous worship space was filled to capacity with representatives from other Lithuanian United Methodist Churches as well as other churches in the community. It

was an illustration of the good ecumenical work that Pastor Kingsley has done in Šiauliai. A part of the consecration was the renaming of the chuch to St. Luke's United Methodist Church. This is the first of our Lithuanian Churches to have a name other than the community where it resides. Pastor Kinsley was honored and celebrated for his work in seeing the project to completion.

Šiauliai Church Consecrates New Worship Space



Superintendent John Campbell and Bishop Oystein Olsen join with Pastor Kingsley Halden in consecrating the new worship space.



Stain Glass window modeled after Partner Church in North Carolina

Photos from Šiauliai Consecration and Vilnius Consecration



Left: The new worship space at Vilnius church. Two sides of the building have these large windows which allows outsiders to “look in” and see what is going on.

Above Left: The church Praise Band—a joint effort with the Baptist congregation, played for the consecration service.

Above right: Adult Bible Study is a part of every Sunday morning at Vilnius Church.

New District Superintendent Appointed to Lithuania

Beginning in July of 2007, the Rev. John Campbell was appointed as the new District Superintendent for the Lithuania United Methodist Church.

Rev. John Campbell is a missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries currently serving as the District Superintendent for the Lithuania United Methodist Church which is a part of the Northern European Central Conference. Prior to this assignment, which began in July of 2007, John was a missionary in the Alaska Missionary Conference. He was first commissioned as a missionary in 1986. He served two times in Alaska, from 1986-1995 when he was the founding pastor of two congregations, Aldersgate in Juneau, Alaska and the United Methodist Church of Unalaska, on an island in the Aleutians. John then returned to the Baltimore Washington

Conference, which is his home conference and served for six years. He went back to Alaska in 2001 where he and his wife Bonnie co-pastored churches in Fairbanks and then in Anchorage.

John was born in Baltimore, Maryland and was ordained a deacon in 1972 in the Baltimore Conference and then and Elder in 1975. He is a graduate of West Virginia Wesleyan College with a B.A. in Religion and also a graduate of the Methodist Theological School in Ohio with an M.Div degree and also a Master of Arts in Christian Education. He has served churches in West Virginia and Ohio as a student and several churches in the Baltimore Washington Conference.

John has held numerous positions within the annual conference where he has served. From 1980-83 he served as the chair of the Baltimore Conference Board of Church and Society. In the

Alaska Missionary Conference he has served as chair of the Administrative Unit, the New Ministries Committee and on the Conference Professional Ministries Committee. He served from 1992-1996 as a director and Secretary for the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women. He was a monitor at General Conference for the General Commission for two quadrennium. In 2004 he was the first alternate delegate to General Conference from the Alaska Missionary Conference and a delegate to the Western Jurisdictional Conference. Rev. Campbell and his wife Bonnie, who is also a pastor and missionary in Lithuania, are parents of 4 adult children and are grandparents of 6 grandchildren all of whom live on the east coast of the US. John Campbell is available for Covenant Relationship support. The website for the Lithuania United Methodist Church is: www.lithuaniaumc.org.



**The Rev. John Campbell,
District Superintendent**

New rental space opportunity for ministry in Vilnius

The good news is that we were recently relocated into our new church space. The rent is high but, thanks to a very generous commitment by the folks in Michigan, and our ongoing support from our West End UMC in Nashville we were able to start a whole new life for us. I say a new life ... because we now are in a terrific location for attracting folks from the many high rise apartments that surround us. Additionally ... our new church is located just across the sidewalk from a two large schools ... one for younger children and one for youth. We have been asked ... what is one dream that we have for our church for 2008. And that dream is already becoming a reality. The neighborhood folks are dropping by during the week and asking lots of questions about who we are

and when will our services be offered. One woman, who attended on our Consecration Sunday on November 18th said, "Thank you ... oh thank you so much for coming into our neighborhood ... we really need you here." Other folks gathered on the pavement below and talked among themselves and were pointing to the sign we had put in the window inviting people to join us for worship that day. And just during our first week ... Pastor Herb and one of our members constructed two rooms ... one for the smaller kids and one for the youth ... in the large L-shaped room. And meanwhile, the owner agreed to have the place painted, hung electrical lights in the ceiling and installed a sink for our new kitchen. Our dream now ... is to really reach out into this new

community. A number of possibilities have been discussed ... we may be able to add another staff person to coordinate an after-school program for all of the children who attend school ... right next door. We could also serve as a humanitarian center and provide food, clothing and nursing support to the families who live there. The possibilities are endless ... and with God's help ... and lots of prayer ... I believe we will grow to become a place for people to become a community of faith, to get their physical needs met ... and to grow in Christ in their spiritual lives. And as Mark 10:27 puts it ... "With God, all things are possible."

**Bonnie M. Campbell,
pastor**

*"Our dream now ...
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out into this new
community."*

For some time the church has outgrown its present rental space.

Kybartai Church steps up fundraising for new building

Kybartai is a community of about 10,000 people in the south of Lithuania, a border town to the Russian province of Kaliningrad. In the early 1900's Methodists began meeting in the Little Red School House. During WWII the church was closed and remained closed during the whole of Soviet occupation of Lithuania. In 1996, with the help of the General Board of Global Ministries a small group of United Methodists began to meet in Kybartai again. The church was not able to reclaim the Red School House property and have been renting space from the city, a small one room building with a bathroom and storage room. Several years ago they bought a piece of property in the town park for a future building. The property has an old stone and cement shelter which is crumbling from erosion.

For some time the church has outgrown its present rental space. There are now more than 75 members of church with 15 children and 14 youth participating on a regular basis. The small space now used for worship and Bible study is overflowing each Sunday. The pastor, Remigijus, is a commissioned probationary member of Lithuania and is serving his third year as pastor of the Kybartai Church. Remigijus, with his passionate heart for God and God's people has helped the church to grow in numbers and spirit. He is creative in his worship style and ability to reach the young people. He has also helped the church expand its humanitarian work and recently the local orphanage provided two rooms for the church to use for a feeding program, counseling program and health

care program.

About a month ago, the pastor, in conversation with the city Mayor discovered that the property that they now rent will be made into a public library and that the city will want the property back from the church by next fall. This became the impetus for us to push ahead with trying to get a new church built. Architectural plans have been developed and the early stages of permitting have now completed. The plan is to now demolish the building on the new church property and continue to work at raising the funds needed to build a new structure. Kybartai has an **Advance Special Number for the building project which is new is: 15178N**

Biržai Church to complete new facilities this year

Shortly, the congregation in Bižai will move into its new renovated building with a worship center on the first floor, classrooms and fellowship area on the second floor and an apartment on the third floor for nurses in training who will come to Bižai to do humanitarian work. We know however, that ministry isn't about buildings but changed lives. This story from Pastor Raimondas reminds us of that.

One day during worship the woman who doesn't visit us opened the door, and I thought that maybe we'll have a new person in our congregation. When the worship was over, she was the first who came to me and explained that she is the mother of two girls (who attend our children and youth's meetings). When we were talking, the mother confessed that neither girl is baptized and

asked if the girls could be baptized in our congregation, because they attend our church, and of course I agreed. During several meetings we talked what Baptism is, we read and explained the text of the Worship of Baptism, which is in our Hymnals, and after that the mother of two girls surprised me amiably one more time, when she confessed that her parents were not religious and didn't belong to any church, and she isn't baptized also, so she asked if she could be baptized with her girls. So one Sunday we celebrated wonderful Worship of Baptism, and that was a perfect reminder how wonderfully the God's Spirit works in human life.

I hope, that next year with the help of God and all our brothers and sisters in Christ we can move completely to the renewed building and celebrate

our Worship in a spacious and nice hall. With the opening of the new building our congregation connects a lot of hopes and new projects and activities (shower, washing; meetings of lonely mothers and young families; computer and English language courses; charity canteen; the Christian music evenings and so on), which, we hope, will help us, as Christ's congregation, to carry out the most important task of the church (Mathew 28, 19) and grow ourselves in faith and Christ's love also.

Raimondas Piecia, Pastor

Kaunas Churches celebrate joys and plan for the future

For both churches the most important thing for them is to preach the Gospel. So sharing the Gospel with others is the obligation of everyone of us and when we share it, wonderful works are done.

There was a great joy in Kaunas UMC, when in August of this year the music group from Alabama (USA) arrived. The Dixieland group and other music group played. It was a blessed time not only for young people, but for elderly also. The concert was begun playing the Lithuanian hymn, and all people were surprised because of that, but later they caught on and began singing. It was very wonderful not only listening to hymns, but useful to hear about the history of creation of every work also. Both for us and both for guests it was the evening, filled with joy and bliss. While having a lot of services,

we would like to revive former services in all congregation's of Kaunas UMC plans. Kaunas UMC will seek to revive the service of Everyday Bread. Most important is to find some people, who could carry out this service.

Several weeks ago the congregation of Eiguliai UMC was invited to go to the cinema. It was a joyful trip, because the congregation didn't go together anywhere quite for a long time. After the trip everyone understood that it is very important to be a congregation always, not only on Sundays.

There is one purpose in the plans of Eiguliai UMC – to revive the women's groups' activity completely. With the Lord's help they have their planned tasks. These tasks are: visiting sick people,

congratulations on the occasion of birth, gathering for pie evening and others. If they fulfill at least some of these tasks, it will be a perfect service in Eiguliai UMC.

Faithfully,

Rev. Giedrius Jablonskis



Kazlų Rūda and Pilviškiai Churches continue community outreach

I am very glad to serve in those churches: Kazlų Rūda and Pilviškiai. Both of these churches continue to fulfill their Christian task – to make all people as Christ's disciples through the proclamation of Good News. Pilviskiai and Kazlu Ruda UMCs have a lot of good programs that help not only church people but also the town community.

The trip to Kaunas musical theatre was a very pleasant event for Kazlu Ruda people. We all understood that fellowship and caring of each other is a blessing not only being in the church on Sundays, but also while traveling and having a fellowship outside the church. We have had an evening full of spiritual blessing; we have brought a lot of good memories. Everyone was happy both youth and elderly. At the present time we

have a new concern: we need to look for new premises for the congregation in Kazlu Ruda. So we sincerely pray so we could maintain the same programs that we have after the place for meetings changes. Also, we have plans for the next year: to cooperate with the social department workers and to distribute food bags to socially supported people in Kazlu Ruda.

For the first time we have had a wedding in Pilviskiai UMC. That was the greatest and the most essential event of the year. Also, we have had a joyful day when two girls were baptized in the church. The trip to USA was also a memorable event for church members. Thanks to this trip we were able to know better people of our partner church there, and also able to continue to be supported by the prayer and offerings.

Pilviskiai people have a great dream for the next year. They are sincerely thankful to their partner churches, and with their support they want to continue to fulfill current ministries, and especially the feeding program.

Respectfully,

Viktorija Jablonskiene

Kazlų Rūda has been given notice that they will have to vacate their current property that is next to the Post Office. They haven't been given a specific date but it could happen with very short notice. They are looking for alternative rental space (which is very difficult to find in town) and also exploring possible property purchase for a future church building. Please keep this small congregation in prayer.

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Tauragė Church Sets Pace for Technology

The Methodist roots in Tauragė date back to its beginning in 1922 with the first building built in 1925. During the Soviet occupation, after the second world war, the properties were confiscated. The Church now has a new piece of land where they hope to build a church facility in the future. Even though the Methodist presence in Tauragė is older than many other places it has not stopped this small congregation from moving into the 21st Century. With the help of Pastor Vidas, and his whole family, the church now has its own website (www.jmbvidas.puslapiai.lt),

offers computer classes for folks and is now printing a Newsletter for members of the congregation. Vidas also serves as webmaster for the Lithuanian version of our District website(www.jmb.lt). Members of the computer class have helped to type the material for the printed newsletter so they are learning skills and accomplishing a task at the same time. Many programs continue in Tauragė and a new program for this year will be visitation in the local Nursing Home. The Advance Special number for the **Tauragė building project is: 14716N.**



Computer Class appeals to all ages

Whole family of children baptized at Panevėžys

June 3 we had a wonderful and blessed worship service in Panevezys. One alone mother with seven children were standing in front of the cross and answered the questions for baptism. All the seven children were baptized, from one year up to thirteen. It was amazing to see the boys and girls so patient, humble and sweet. I really want that everyone of you could have seen their eyes and faces - you could see and feel the love from Jesus Christ. So please continue to pray for this family. For me as the pastor - it was the first time in

my life I baptized seven children in one time. I was so happy than the mother Ingrida asked for baptism of her children and we in the congregation said yes. God is love and we are His servants.

In August, 2 families from the congregation went to the Methodist festival in Bratislava, Slovakia. It was good for me to have them there. They were in Bible groups and Wesley groups and met people from different countries. They also shared the music in the big tent. After Bratislava we

went to Sweden to enjoy one big festival with song and music. They were sharing the christian life in the Methodist Church, Salvation Army, Old peoples home, help centers and so on.

In December we had our Christmas celebration together with mothers and children from Family house and our congregation. It was wonderful and amazing. The Lord are great.

Walla Carlson, Pastor

Lithuania United Methodist Church

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**"Open Hearts, Open Minds,
Open Doors"**

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