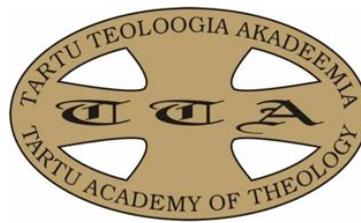


Tartu Academy of Theology

Tartu, Estonia
Newsletter, June 2015



Partnering
with
East
European
Missions
Network



Graduation of 2015.
17 graduates and their
professors on June 19th.

*"You will seek me and
find me when you seek
me with all your heart. I
will be found by you,"
declares the Lord.*

Jeremiah 29:13-14

Visiting Estonians Living on the East Coast

From April 24th until May 6th, 2015, I visited the East Coast of the United States. Estonians living in and near Baltimore invited me to serve Estonian congregations there and also financed my trip. The membership of those congregations consists mainly of the Second World War refugees and their descendants. As there are not enough pastors in the US who would serve them in their native language, twice a year they invite a pastor from Estonia. I am very grateful to St. Mark's congregation in Baltimore who gave me the opportunity to link our homeland church

with Estonian congregations abroad.

In addition to St Mark's, I also preached at Lakewood (NJ) and Schenectady (NY). I also had the chance to share about Tartu Academy of Theology and our good developments over the last few years, along with our future plans.

At the end of the trip, I flew to Columbus (OH) to take part in the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) Leadership Conference. This year's theme was "Life Together in the Way of Jesus." The presentations were very relevant and highlighted Christian living as a means for

evangelism. As several of LCMC congregations support the work of our school, it was good to meet old friends and also form new connections and feel that we are brothers and sisters in Christ.

I am deeply grateful also to Barbara Felt who financed my return ticket from Washington to Columbus, and to Grace Lutheran Church in Destin, who covered the costs of taking part in the conference.

Siimon Haamer
Dean



CURRENT FINANCIAL SITUATION

On July 3rd was our balance of 2015 **-\$33,091 USD**. First half of the current year has not been financially the best, but we hope that TAT Matching Funds Program (find it on the 2nd page of the newsletter) will help to stabilize our financial difficulties.

Quick financial update of TAT

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Balance in the end of 2014 | \$ -19,624 |
| Total budget of 2015 (according to current exchange rate) | \$ 175,880 |
| Income January-June of 2015 | \$ 74,515 |
| Budget of January-June of 2015 | \$ 87,982 |
| Balance on June 30th of 2015 | \$ -33,091 |

May God reward according to His mercy all those who donate to us! Thank you, as always, for your kind support, encouragement, and faithful prayers.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND PROJECTS

We are very grateful that thanks to kind sponsors, we could use some scholarships in 2015/2016 academic year:

Dawn Reynolds (Bismarck, North Dakota) – one student scholarship covering tuition fee of 2 semesters.

Barbara and Brian Felt (Aurora, Colorado) – one student scholarship to participate special training course of pastoral care and counseling.

Grace Foundation (Destin, Florida) – one scholarship for pastor from Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church to attend 6 week internship in Grace Lutheran Church in Destin during May-June 2015.

Recently we received positive decision from **Mount Calvary Foundation** (Excelsior, Minnesota) to finance with \$6,860 USD to publish Harri Haamer's Christian Children's books in Estonian. The books will be printed and published also as e-books.

As salaries on the specialities that we teach are very small, we cannot ask the tuition fee from our students that would cover the actual costs of their studies.

If congregations or individuals are considering scholarship funding, there are 2 options:

- 1) either giving based on students official tuition fee of \$2,100 USD or
- 2) giving based on the actual cost per student, which is \$5,300 USD.

East European Missions Network

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Phone: 505-990-1639
Web: www.eemn.org Email: TAT@eemn.org

Donate

Mail a check to EEMN office, specifying in the memo portion or on an attached sheet of paper the designation of your donation to Tartu Academy of Theology. All contributions are tax deductible.

STUDENT VOICES: KAI

In my childhood, my grandmother was the most important person to me. She told me about God and how to respect and love other people. I believe those long conversations with my grandmother were the reason I went to study Social Work and have worked over 20 years with elderly and disabled people. Starting studies at TAT was a natural decision for me.

But why TAT? It is the only higher education institute in Estonia that teaches pastoral care and counseling. In addition I felt that I need to have more theological knowledge, as well. I felt drawn to TAT and I didn't even consider other possibilities. I believe it was God's calling. I can recall how happy I was at the end of August 2012, when I heard that I was admitted into the school!

These three years at TAT have been the best time of my life. I haven't felt that sense of family in any other educational or work environment. I didn't see myself as a student, but rather as a family member. The sense of belonging and fellowship developed very quickly, and morning prayers and Eenok's warm and heartfelt fatherly character increased that feeling even more. While listening to Eenok, I always felt strongly the presence of God. It's difficult to put into words.

I have finished my studies and with this fulfilled my great dream – I am a pastoral care giver and counselor. My time at TAT have only strengthened my desire to work with people. Thanks to my studies, I feel that God has blessed me and I can share it with others.

As a pastoral counselor, one has to constantly grow and develop oneself. Thus I have made a firm decision to continue my studies at the Masters level. With the help of God, I can see myself working as a pastoral care giver and counselor at hospital. Doing this, I always remember the wise words from Eenok. I thank God every day for this opportunity to study at TAT. It has been a quality time with God.



Eenok Haamer turns 80

On May 17th, Eenok Haamer celebrated his 80th Birthday. There was a thanksgiving service at Mustvee church, where about 20 pastors took part and many friends from all over Estonia and even from Finland had gathered.

This spring has been difficult for Eenok. At the beginning of April, his back problems made him unable to move. Thankfully, since his back surgery, he has recovered and now needs only one cane to move. Hopefully he can soon leave the cane at home. Eenok continues with the help of his son Siimon to serve congregations and fulfills his teaching tasks at TAT.

Eenok is very grateful for all your prayers! Thanks to those, he is able to experience God's grace every day the Lord gives him.



Graduation of 2015

Finishing the academic year, we were glad to give out diplomas to seventeen graduates — six for undergraduate studies and eleven for graduate studies. Three of them have already been ordained as pastors during their tenure here and are serving congregations. Two will continue their studies at a graduate level, to become a pastor in the future. Two work as teachers at schools, and thanks to the education they received from TAT can also give religion classes at school. Two will start work as pastoral care givers and counselors in hospitals. Four use their knowledge and skills as volunteers in congregations. Thank God for this fruitful result!

In Autumn, we will open Diakonia and Pastoral Care and Counseling speciality at the Masters level, which will give us even more possibilities to contribute to the serving of society as Christians.

TAT Matching Funds Program

FOUNDING & SPONSORING PARTNERS: individuals, organizations, church groups and/or churches can become founders or sponsors that provide matching dollars for contributions from matching partners.

The goal is to have 2 or more **TAT FOUNDERS** who will each provide a \$6000 gift with a commitment for 1, 2 or 3 years to supply matching funds.

The goal is to have 7 or more **TAT SPONSORS** who will each provide a \$3000 gift with a commitment for 1, 2 or 3 years to supply matching funds.

Note: To date, there is one **FOUNDER**, Curt Levang, with a gift of \$6000 for each of 3 years and there are three **SPONSOR** partners, both anonymous, with a gift of \$3000 for each of 3 years.

MATCHING PARTNERS: individuals, organizations, church groups and/or churches can become a **MATCHING PARTNER** by making any donation which will be matched by the founders and sponsors.

The goal is to have a large group of partners committing for 1, 2 or 3 years to be able to utilize all the matching funds.

Note: To date there are several **MATCHING PARTNERS** making gifts.

For more information contact:

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Matching Development Coordinator
St. John's Lutheran Church, Howard Lake, MN

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Make any check payable to:

Charity Lutheran Church TAT Fund, 120 Aspen Ave., Bismarck, ND 55423

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