

APRIL NEWSLETTER: REV. SAMUEL BOBBY – RIGA, LATVIA



Dear Friends in Christ,

The renowned Italian painter Caravaggio painted a scene from John 20 back in 1601. It depicts Jesus after His resurrection confronting Thomas' unbelief. The painting is typically referred to as "The Incredulity of Thomas."

If I could name this painting, however, I wouldn't name it after Thomas' stubborn unbelief. Instead, I would name it after Thomas' wonderful confession. Jesus takes Thomas' hand and places it in His wounded side, and Thomas exclaims, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). And that's what I would title the painting: "My Lord and my God!"

When you look at Caravaggio's painting, part of what is so engaging about it is how it captures Thomas' astonishment. Thomas is astonished that His Lord is alive. Thomas is astonished that God's Word could be trusted. Thomas is astonished that death no longer has the victory. Thomas is astonished that God has accomplished this incredible work through His Son even though nobody deserved it.

Thomas is astonished, and I too am astonished. I am astonished at how gracious our Lord is. He continues to pour out upon us His gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation.

I am astonished at how faithful our Lord is, how consistent He is in renewing us, preserving us, and strengthening us by His Word and Spirit.

I am astonished also at how desperately the world needs to hear this good news of Jesus and how fervently our Lord desires all people to know and experience His grace.

I am astonished that He entrusts this task to sinners like you and me.

I am astonished at you, His faithful saints, and the efforts of those at Mission Central and the Office of International Mission and how God raises up people to support the work of the Gospel here in Latvia and throughout the world.

What can a person say to such an overwhelming salvation but "my Lord and my God!"

We at Luther Academy are busy finishing up this semester and getting ready for in-person intensive classes in Wittenburg this June. We are also preparing our students for their summer vicarages. I will be the person coordinating the activities of the mentor, student, and the congregation in which they will be serving. The first-year students will focus on leading worship. Second-year students will focus on preaching. Third-year students will focus on teaching, while fourth-year students continue to hone their practical skills for life in the congregation. It is a joy to help prepare these young men to serve in their vicarage congregations. They will learn and grow as Christ uses their mentors and congregations to form them into capable, Christ-centered pastors.

My family and I are continually grateful (and astonished!) at your prayers and support. In the summer of 2025, we will be returning to the states to give presentations and updates on the Lord's work here. We look forward to being able to see everyone in person and share with you in the joy of the work Christ has entrusted to us!

In Christ,

Pastor Bobby, Erica, Judah, August, Benjamin, Simon, and Pax