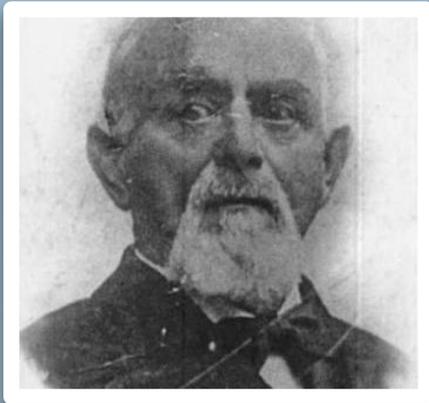




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## Fidelity to God's Word



### Did You Know?

The next time you put on a pair of jeans, you can thank a Latvian-born tailor. Allow me to introduce you to the man pictured above. His name is Jacob Davis. And after emigrating from Latvia to the U.S. as a young man, Davis was asked by one of his customers to make a more durable pair of pants for her husband who was a woodcarver. What resulted was the material today known as denim.

Before long, news of these working man trousers had spread so quickly that Davis could not keep up with demand. That's when Davis joined forces with another tailor and supplier of materials. Perhaps you've heard of their company, the Jacob W. Davis and Levi Strauss and Company.



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The Rajek family at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia's headquarters in Riga. On July 16, 2022, the church celebrated "Church Day" and the consecration of two new bishops.

She was an amazing and beautiful gift from God. Anyone looking at her would notice that Eve was unique and different from her husband, Adam. Yet the two complimented and fit each other perfectly, just as God intended. And through this union, God would bring blessings upon blessings to our world!

That was God's intent when He created them male and female—that He might bring blessings to the world. And that's what God desires of our marriages—husband and wife each complementing the other with the unique gifts He gives even as they bring blessings into this world.

It's interesting how far our world has strayed from what God had intended. Recently, I had the privilege of celebrating the consecration of two bishops in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia. It was quite a celebration with bishops from many of the surrounding Lutheran Churches in attendance. One such bishop has been in the news recently. Perhaps you've heard of him. His name is Rev. Juhana Pohjola, the Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland (ELMDF). As an aside, our Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is in fellowship with the ELMDF.

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## Fidelity to God’s Word, cont.

Bishop Pohjola and one of his members, Dr. Päivi Räsänen (who is also a member of the Finnish Parliament), were charged by Finland’s Prosecutor General in incitement against a group of people for writing and publishing a booklet espousing the biblical view of marriage.

“As a Christian, I do not want to and cannot discriminate against or despise anyone created by God,” said Rev. Dr. Pohjola. “Every human being, created by God and redeemed by Christ, is equally precious.”

In the beginning, Adam and Eve had a perfect marriage. Unfortunately, all of that was lost after they fell into sin. As a result of sin, their familial relationship and their relationship with God was undeniably damaged. And

without intervention, all would have been lost forever.

And that’s why Jesus Christ came. He came to bridge the divide and repair the damage sin caused. When He suffered and died on the cross, He satisfied God’s anger toward our sins. And when He rose to life again on the third day, He brought hope and health to our wearied lives. Even more, He promises to live with us and make our relationships more fulfilling. Finally, when He returns, He will make His world—and each of us—perfect forever. While, in that day, there will be no marriage as we have come to know it, we will once again enjoy a perfect and lasting relationship with each other. Just as God had intended from the beginning.

Thanks be to God, on March 30, 2022, the Helsinki District Court in Finland issued a decision acquitting both Bishop Pohjola and Dr. Päivi Räsänen of their charges. While this decision brings some resolution to the matter, it is not over as the opposition has vowed to appeal.



**Rev. Rinalds Grants and Rev. Uldis Gailītis (now bishops) at their consecration in the Riga Dome on July 16, 2022.**

In the meantime, the church continues to pray for both Bishop Pohjola and Dr. Räsänen that God’s Word would continue to be proclaimed to all, even to those in power as the Psalmist writes, “I will also speak of your testimonies before kings and shall not be put to shame” (Ps 119:46 ESV). As Bishop Pohjola expressed to me in our conversations, he is encouraged and uplifted by all the prayers and words of support he has received from so many within the church.



**Bishop Pohjola and me at a reception following the consecration of bishops on July 16, 2022.**

*Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. (Rom. 12:12 ESV)*

#### PLEASE PRAY:

- That the war between Ukraine and Russia does not expand into other countries.
- For the incoming cohort to Luther Academy in Riga that God would bless their studies.
- For all the students and faculty of Luther Academy as we gear up for the fall semester.
- For my daughter, Emiley, as she adjusts to life back in the states without mom, dad, and sister.

#### GIVE THANKS:

- For the staff of OIM who have incredibly supportive during this time of transition for Emiley.
- For the many congregations and individuals who pray for us, encourage and support us in this important mission.

#### PRAISE GOD:

- For faithful church leaders like Bishop Pahjola, laity like Dr. Räsänen and others who stand up for biblical truth in the face of persecution.

## Ministry and Family Update



L to R: Lexi, Emiley, Jenny and Cory

### Ministry Update

This past month has been continuing my year-end tasks of checking other class assignments for academic integrity and planning for my upcoming fall semester class on dogmatics. Additionally, I have been planning with a local Lutheran pastor setting up English services in Riga. Much of the hard work had been already been done by my predecessors Drs. Bombaro and Cortright. Unfortunately, Covid-19

closed down the English services. Now that tourism in Riga has come back, we are offering services in English once again. Thanks be to God!

### Family Update

As you read this newsletter, my oldest daughter will have already gone back in the U.S. It will most certainly be a time of transition for her and for her parents. Please continue to keep all of us in your prayers as we experience this milestone.



My family and I at lunch after going to church in Old Town, Riga on July 10, 2022.

*I would like to sincerely thank you for your support of the Lord's mission in Eurasia. We could not be touching peoples' lives with the message of Jesus Christ without you. Please prayerfully consider sharing this mission with others. Tell them of the good that God is doing throughout this exciting mission.*

*Once again, from the bottom of my heart, thank you and the Lord be with you.*

~Cory J. Rajek



There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at [lcms.org/service](https://lcms.org/service). Click on "Service Opportunities."

Prayerfully consider partnering with the LCMS to support the work of Rev. Dr. Cory J. Rajek. Make checks payable to:

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