

Our „Sister congregations” in Latvia

St. John’s Latvian Lutheran Church of Toronto supports the ministry of six congregations in Latvia as part of the LELBA (Latvian Evangelical Church in America) “sister congregation” programme.

Our “sister congregations” are

- Umurga
- Mazsalaca
- Rūjiene (Sv. Bērtuļa)
- Lipaiķu
- Skrunda
- Kalnamuiža



St. John’s has nurtured the close relationships between the people of our congregation and our sister congregations. In addition to our regular financial support for the ministries of our sister congregations, we have supported and financed the renewal of church buildings and various social institutions within the parish boundaries of our sister congregations. We have also provided opportunities for several of the pastors from our sister congregations to visit with us here in Toronto and to learn about Latvian life and culture here. Many of our members have also visited one or more of our sister congregations, strengthening the bonds of friendship between us.

Some pictures of our Sister Congregations:



Rev. Dr. F.T. Kristbergs and The Dean of Valmiera district and pastor of Umurga, Rev. Jānis Vaskis (+ 2005) lead worship in Umurga at the Harvest Festival service in October 2004. Rev. Dr. Kristbergs’ father, Rev. Žanis Kristbergs, was the pastor in Umurga from 1939-1944.



Rev. Dr. Kristbergs met many Umurga’s Church members, who fondly remember his father and mother.



The newly restored main donors of the church in Umurga. The church has been designated a national cultural monument.

The congregation at Umurga is currently restoring the parish manse. (the front door of the manse – with visitors!)



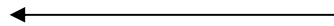
The altar in the church at Umurga.



The St. Ann's church at Mazsalaca in northern Latvia.



The altar in St. Anne's church at Mazsalaca.



Together with the people of St. Bartholomew's congregation in Rūjiena, St. John's has been able to give considerable donations of money, clothing and supplies to the home for physically and emotionally handicapped in Rūjiene.



*St. Bartholomew's Church in Rūjiena:
The altar* →

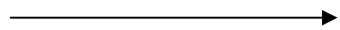


↓ *The pulpit in St. Bartholomew's church.*





Some of the residents in the Rūjiena facility for physically and mentally handicapped.



Our deacon, Aina Avotīnš (standing, second from left) on her most recent visit to Rūjiena in September,

2006.



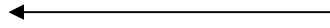
The altar of our sister congregation in Lipaiķi.

The front facade of the church at Lipaiķi.





*The altar of our sister church in
Skrunda, Latvia.*



View from the nave to the rear and organ



*Pastor Martiņš Samms (fourth from left)
and members of the congregation greeted
deacon Aina Avotiņš on her recent visit.*





The altar in our sister church in Tērvete, Latvia.



The church in Tērvete.



The churchyard cemetery and chapel in Tērvete.