



## NEWSLETTER FROM RIGA AGENSKALNS CHURCH

2011/2

**Dear brothers and sisters!  
Friends and supporters of our congregation!  
Sincere greetings to you from Agenskalns Church.  
We are excited to see what God is doing in our church  
and would like to share it with you through this second  
issue of our church's newsletter.**

Spring has been a busy time in the life of our congregation.

In February our new leadership team was elected. Marcis Rozkalns became the new chairman of the Board and three new Board members were also elected. The new Board has been meeting once a month and continues to lead the activities of our church. The main tasks the Board has been focusing on developing a budget for the second half of 2011 and preparing for our summer camps. This year we will have both a children's camp and a church-wide camp during the last week of July.

It has also been a great joy to see how our gym has filled with young people each week. They have not only come to train their bodies but also to spend time sitting on the couches talking about God. We continue to be involved in life of our society through the TV services and other community events. This spring our congregation joined together with the Lutheran and Catholic congregations in our community to participate in the community festival "Pardaugavas Svetki."

We are thankful to God for many open doors to share the Gospel in various ways. Thanks for your financial support and prayers for us! We are so thankful to God for this time in the life of our church!

As His followers we want to be **open to the society around us** and **to share the Good News in a way people can understand.**

# 4 SMALL GROUPS

God has called us to be in relationship with one another so that we can grow deeper in Him and so that His Kingdom will grow on the earth. One of the opportunities for such relationships in the church is found in small groups. There are already some small groups active in our church, like Alpha and others. However, we have started active planning for new small groups that will involve a maximum number of our church members and that will implement the principle of discipleship. To be a disciple and to make disciples of others is one of the primary tasks Jesus has left us to do.

One of the first steps we have taken this spring to help us realize this goal of a new small group ministry is the training of small group leaders.

We have also decided on two directions in developing a small group network:

- to start new groups that study Bible together according to a certain plan.
- to utilize target groups, like prayer groups and other groups related to certain ministries of our church.

We have come to the understanding that the work of small groups should be integrated into the total life of the church. In this way, the members of the church can be united and moving in the same direction. We should also take special care about our leaders and their continued spiritual growth. Therefore, we will organize seminars and other meetings for the leaders where we can pray one for another, as well as, discuss the issues we face and strengthen each other through sharing our testimonies.

We are trying to move forward by listening to God and discovering where He leads us. We believe that God has a wonderful plan for our church.



# 4 PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise and worship, in its musical expression, has become an integral part of our church's spiritual life although its beginning was not so straightforward. About fifteen years ago our church council decided to stop the participation of the praise and worship group at our church. But God had a different plan.

Since that time He has answered the prayers of worship group members for their own drummer and singers. We have also been richly blessed with many devoted musicians whose heart's desire is to use the talents God has given them to praise and worship Him, our Creator and Saviour.

The Praise and Worship group, using different combinations of musicians and singers serves in the Sunday services and in the youth services which take place on Thursdays. It also participates in other activities organized by our church, such as, Prayer evenings, Alpha course, church camps, etc.

Nearly four years ago God gave us a vision to help energize praise and worship in our church by organizing special worship nights. These nights bring together Christians from different denominations. Worship is led by one of the Praise & Worship group's members from our church, as well as, a guest Worship group or Praise choir. In one of the Worship nights in 2009 an audio recording and CD entitled „Time to Worship 3” was made. The last Praise & Worship night took place on May 28th. The guest group was from our neighboring congregation – Luther's Church. God's presence and His love permeated the church that night and it was a time anointed by God for each one present – to serve and experience His presence. People have shared they left this worship night longing for the next one to come.

Another dream God has given us is to start a special small group involving the participants of the Praise & Worship ministry. The focus of this group would be to help us grow deeper in our relationship with God, as well as, to strengthen our relationships with one another. It is our desire to become a spiritual support one to another.



# 4 WORK WITH TEENAGERS

This spring our church started a new ministry for teens called V12Z16 (for teenagers over the age of 12 and up to the age of 16).

For a long time we had no work with these teenagers. At the age of thirteen they could no longer attend Sunday School, but the youth ministry was not attractive to them yet. At this age they met so many temptations and it was so easy for them to turn from God.

Now every other Saturday of the month about twenty teenagers meet at the Tower hall of our church to spend the afternoon together. The central element of the meeting is the Bible study. But there is also a time of fellowship with refreshments, different games, and a chance to build very important relationships each with other.

For many of teenagers the most fascinating part of the ministry is the practical courses that are offered each time. They have an opportunity to study drawing; to play different musical instruments, like guitar and drums; and also to acquire technical skills such as working with the sound system. These are offered free of charge and this is very important, especially for those teenagers who do not have the financial resources to receive this education. In this way they can also discover and develop the talents God has given them.

One of the aims of this ministry is to disciple the teenagers and equip them for further service in the church. The other very important aim is to evangelize. One of the leaders and initiators of this ministry, Ansis, has a heart for teaching these teenagers. He has noticed that often the leaders of this ministry become an authority figure for the teenagers and can witness to them by their personal example and inspire them to turn to God.

The team serving in this youth ministry consists of eight people. Currently these afternoons for teenagers are being promoted in the church but in the near future they intend to expand this ministry to the teenagers at the nearest schools.



# 4 SUNDAY SCHOOL

The spring in Latvia was cold. But there were some things that warmed up our hearts as we have looked back on the Sunday school teaching year and also look forward to the summer plans.

This was the first year our Sunday school had seven groups and most of them were growing throughout the school year. We had a chance to meet David, Samuel, Jonah, Ruth to see how Jesus uses different people to fulfill His plans; to read letters and poems in the Bible; and do research to show that God fulfills His promises. Our prayer is that in the right time the seed that has been sown will grow and bear fruit.

This was the second year when the babies and their families were invited for an Angels' breakfast. The school age children also had a chance to spend a night at the church. Christmas and Easter celebrations, many encouraging teachers' meetings and heartfelt evenings at the Parents' prayer group – all this has been part of this Sunday school year.

The summer has come with a warm sun. The children are excited about the upcoming children's camp that will take place on July 25-29 in Biksti and will be followed by the church camp on July 29-31. We expect at least 60 children from grades 1-6. We will learn about the Good Shepherd who leads us into green pastures, who goes to find the lost sheep and becomes the gate himself for us to get into His flock. We have witnessed His mercy and goodness during the preparation time and believe it will follow us through the camp and also after it.



Angels' breakfast



Jonah experience



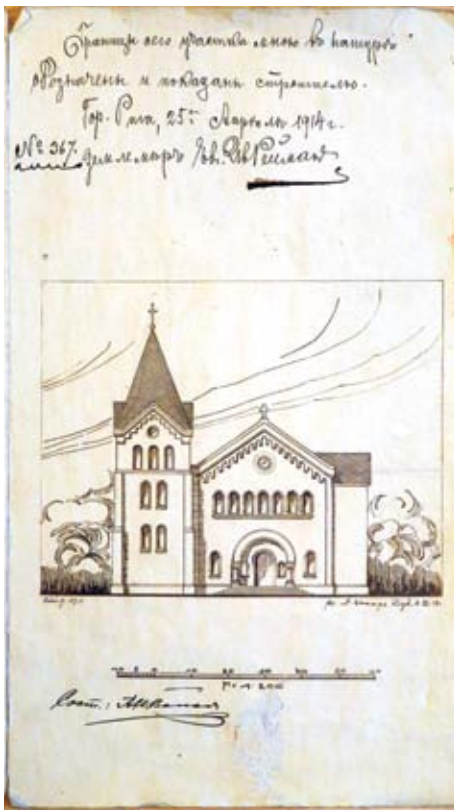
"Niedras" - the summer camp place

# 4 A TESTIMONY ABOUT HEAVEN

A church building is not the place where God dwells. But it is the place which testifies about one of the ways of Christ is present in the world - through His church. The history of our church tells about the power of God; the victories and the seeming times of defeat of the church; and the way God has worked throughout the history of our country and its people.

Our church building was built in 1914-1916, the years that partially coincide with the time known in the history of Latvia as the First World War. During a time when war was all around and destroyed many buildings and lives, a new church was built to testify about the God of Peace and to bring hope to those who had lost it.

The steeple on the church's tower was built several years later in 1936. After many years of inner struggles within the church, the congregation joined together in their effort to build the steeple. Agenskalns Church's building was considered to be one of the finest churches in Riga. The church was growing in their love for God and their service to the community. But the future for which the church had planned for did not become a reality. The Second World War resulted in negative changes in both the membership and leadership of the church.



First project - 1914



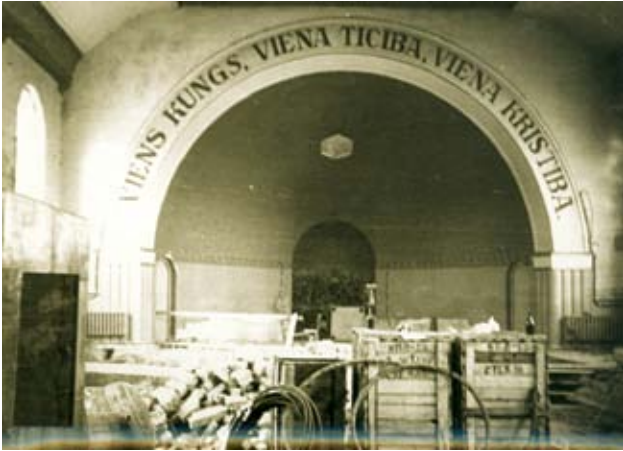
1916



Church steeple is built in 1936

# 4 A TESTIMONY ABOUT HEAVEN

In 1961 the congregation lost the church building which was turned into a television studio. The first thing the new owners did was remodeling the sanctuary and closing the windows. This was followed by removing the steeple. For most of the next thirty years the congregation was forced to gather in the building of another church.



Remodeling the sanctuary into a TV studio - 1961



Remodeling the sanctuary into a TV studio - 1961



Removing the steeple -1965



Removing the steeple -1965

Then God brought about another turn in the history of our nation. He surprised us by His marvelous work during the years of awakening and perestroika. During that time the church building was given back to the congregation and is again being used for His glory. The television studio was turned back into a sanctuary and the windows were opened again. However, the steeple is still missing.



Church turned into a TV studio 1961 - 1988



Church with a dream about steeple - 2011

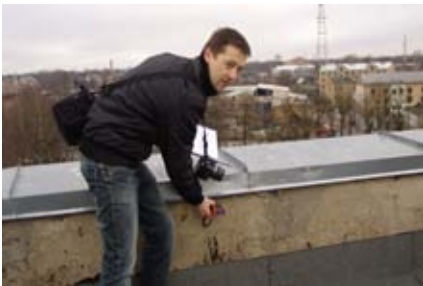


# A TESTIMONY ABOUT HEAVEN

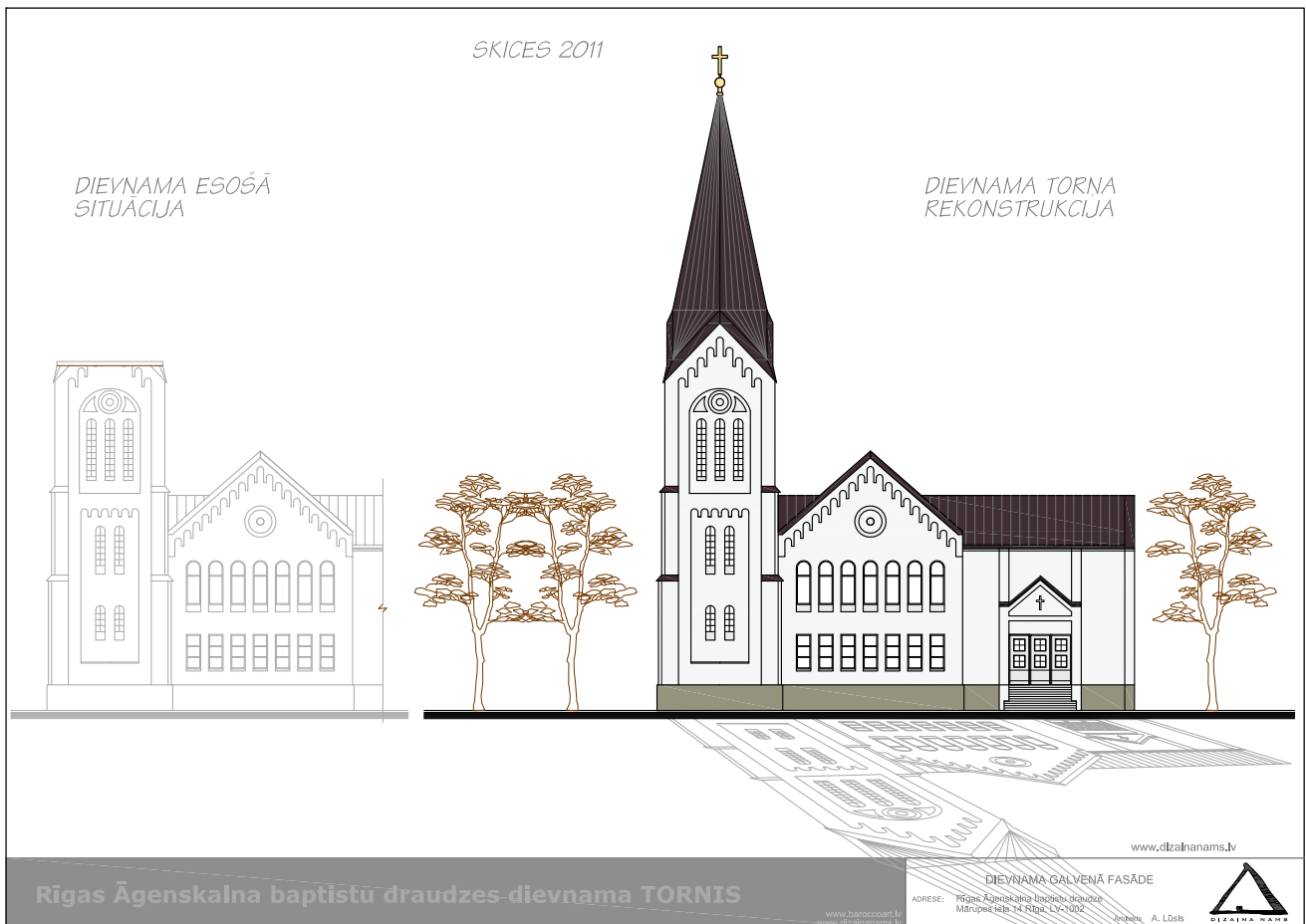
During the last months we have discovered some ways God has been working towards putting a steeple again on the tower of Agenskalns church. He has spoken to architect Armands Lūsis who has volunteered his services to design a replica of the former steeple and to work with all the related documentation. God has also given unity among the members of church board to proceed with the project and has provided the finances needed for the first steps of the project.

We are glad to share this exciting news with you - our sister churches and friends of Agenskalns church. Please join us in praying for the next steps of the project. Pray that the steeple does not become to us a tower of Babel which would show only our own human strengths and possibilities. Pray that in every step of this project we will acknowledge God's leadership and power.

We know that we do not get closer to God by building a steeple. But we believe that a church steeple continuously pointing towards the sky can give a powerful testimony about the Heaven.



Architect Armands Lūsis - 2011



project draft, 2011 - architect Armands Lūsis



# KEEPING IN TOUCH ■

If you want  
to know more about  
the work of our church,  
or connect with us

► **YOU CAN WRITE** to e-mail address:  
[draudze@agenskalns.org](mailto:draudze@agenskalns.org)

► **YOU CAN JOIN** with us in praying for  
these needs:

- A network of small groups in our congregation
- The work of Sunday School, teenagers and youth
- God's blessing on the new chairman and church council
- God's blessing on the church steeple renovation

► **YOU CAN CONTACT** us  
by mobile phone:  
**+37122339118**

► **YOU CAN SUPPORT**  
the ministries of our church  
in a practical way  
with your donation to:

Rīgas Āgenskalna baptistu draudze

Reg.No. 90000066251

Address: Mārupes iela 14, Rīga, LV-1002

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► **YOU ARE INVITED** to visit  
our web page:

[www.agenskalns.org](http://www.agenskalns.org)

