

Tartu Academy of Theology

Tartu, Estonia

Newsletter, June 2020

www.tatest.org



PARTNERING WITH



formerly EEMN
SONetwork.org



Pastor Siimon Haamer is giving and interview to the main Estonian TV news program about pastoral care telephone line launch. June 17th, 2020.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Philippians 4:6

*Dear donor,
We are very thankful for your dedicated partnership with us! We pray God's blessings upon you daily.*

Names of all donors are presented on our website tatest.org/donors.

24/7 Pastoral Care Telephone Line Launched

This Corona virus crisis, while causing many hardships, is also providing new opportunities.

The Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs decided to finance and launch 24/7 pastoral care via telephone. Because the Academy has trained pastoral care givers for approximately 30 years, the Ministry asked us to initiate and run this operation. Initially, financing is offered through December 31, 2020.

Siimon Haamer is the coordinator of this helpline project which has increased his working hours to 16 a day for the last few weeks. **The pastoral care telephone line started June 17 at noon.** The information was very well presented through many Estonian media channels and in the evening on the main Estonian TV news program. We began receiving calls immediately after the public announcement and the line has been occupied most of the time.

We are now able to offer jobs for 10 pastoral care givers, and this is certainly building up more interest in our study program and pastoral care giving specialty. It is amazing how we are experiencing God's blessing through this.

The money we received from the government won't help us in any way to meet the needs of our annual budget. This funding is designated for the program and is not part of our annual budget.

We Are Rejoicing About God's Work in Estonia

In 2006 Bob had his first experience in Estonia when he (along with Karen, his first wife) came to teach at Tartu Academy. While it may be said that those weeks teaching were life-changing, it was of much greater significance that we could be introduced to Eenok Haamer and his wife, Eha! And, of course, it began a fifteen-year friendship with Siimon and his family! **Over the years it has been such a joy and inspiration to see how TAT has grown**, and now in its own place, Home of Hope.

When we read the news letters we are encouraged and challenged in our own faith. In this letter, Pastor Marek shares his testimony and a vision he has also had for several years related to TAT. Now we see new fruit born from that cooperative work between Marek and Siimon, and a new Bible school being established for people wanting to grow in God's Word. What an open door this is for the expansion of Christian education at the family level!

Our hearts are bursting with joy right not! Recently we received word that **one of our former Estonia Mission Team members feels led to bring forth a gift of \$10,000 for TAT**, and was wondering if it could be established **as a Match Fund** helping balance TAT's annual budget.

While it would be open to anyone wishing to participate, the thought was that we might reach out specifically to those of you who have also served in Estonia. Thank you to all English Camp Team members who have so generously contributed to Tartu Academy General Fund and the Facility Fund. Patti and I want to join with this inviting other former team members to pray about it and consider providing a matching gift. There is some boldness as we ask you to pray about how you might use one of your Stimulus checks for the glory of Christ!

Eenok's original vision for TAT was greatly inspired of the Lord. Siimon carries forth

prayerfully, creatively and hopefully! Let us stay the course with them and with TAT, even in these very testing times of Covid19! God is always greater than any challenge we may face.

Pastor Bob & Patti Nordvall



HOME of HOPE BIBLE SCHOOL

TESTIMONY: God Had Not Forgotten Us

Pastor Marek Roots: Coordinator of the Bible School

I was born in 1976 on the day of Epiphany in southern Estonia. It is said that the seventies were the most miserable period of the Soviet time in the Estonian Lutheran Church. A large part of the society was estranged from the church. **My family and I lived near the church building, but it was closed most of the time. That was no life for me there. My parents were not atheists, but they did not consider it necessary to baptize their children. It was only later that I learned that one of my grandmothers was praying for us. Another grandmother taught me the Lord's Prayer. God worked in spite of everything, HE HAD NOT FORGOTTEN US.**

In the early 1990s, a lot changed in Estonia. Suddenly one could go freely to the church and buy a Bible. One of my older brothers became a Christian and told me about Jesus. At first I argued against him. Oriental religions seemed more interesting and better to me. At the beginning of 1995, on the evening of my birthday, I again talked with my brother. I felt that I had to decide something, life couldn't continue the old way. My brother gave me one prayer text – a sinner's prayer to God. I read it alone in my room. When I woke up in the morning, I felt even physically that I had become internally

Launching in September

The Opening of Home of Hope has provided new opportunities and perspectives. In January, we began making preparations to launch a Bible School at the end of September, 2020. **The originator of the idea and coordinator of the Bible School is Pastor Marek Roots.** He is one of our alumni and has been pastoring in the Lutheran Church for 17 years.

The Bible School will have about 15 participating lecturers. They're mainly Lutheran pastors, but some are also from other denominations. The Archbishop of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church will also be one of the lecturers.

Our goal is to teach just the Bible. We won't be dealing with different theological disciplines. As some of the participants may not know anything about Bible we can't be too complicated in our teaching.

new. That same summer, I told God I wanted to dedicate my life to the work of His kingdom. At that time I didn't know exactly what that meant. In autumn, I started studying at the Tartu Academy of Theology. From there I found my first Christian friends and also a great spiritual example: Eenok Haamer. He baptized and confirmed me in Mustvee just before Christmas 1995.

In 2003, I was ordained as a pastor of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church.

A couple of years before I had married Pirjo, whom I met at the Tartu Academy of Theology. Today we have 3 children growing in our family. Together we have served several congregations, the longest in Keila near Tallinn. Since 2018, we have been living in Tartu and working at the St Paul congregation.

Already in Keila, I dreamed of a Bible school that would focus on teaching the whole Bible. Unfortunately, there is no such Bible school in the Estonian Lutheran Church today. At the same time, there would be a great need for it, because there are many Christians who know God's Word very little. But the Apostle Paul says: *Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.* (Romans

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. Romans 10:17



Pastor Marek Roots with his wife Pirjo and three children. Baptism of their youngest child June 20, 2020.

10:17). Without knowing God's Word, it is not possible to grow and become spiritually strong nor to share the Gospel with others.

When I moved to Tartu and heard about the Pastorate, I immediately got an idea: this is a great environment for starting a Bible school! Hoping for help from God and friends, we began preparing for Bible school. Today, Archbishop Urmas Viilma has also joined this work. Looking to the future, we are hopeful!

My grandmother once prayed for me because she knew God's Word: *Ask and it will be given to you!* (Matthew 7:7). **Now I would like to do something myself for those to whom the Bible is still unfamiliar. That they may pray for their loved ones,** our land and our people, and firmly believe that God can help.

The Program

The Bible School will be held every Monday evening from 6:00-8:30 pm beginning September 21 until June 1. The planned evening program is as follows:

- An introduction of a book of the Bible (60 minutes)
- Breaktime (30 minutes)
- A deeper teaching based on Luke and Acts, chapter by chapter (60 minutes).

We will be recording all lessons and are planning to put together study materials during this first year.

Participants

Our goal is to have a minimum of 20 students but we could host as many as 80.

We are expecting Christians who would like to know more about Bible and people who are not affiliated with any church. We will use the 30-minute break time for communication with participants. Thus, we would be able to build up personal relationships with them. Every evening, in addition to the lecturer, several other team members will be present to interact with participants.

Funding

Students of the Bible School will pay a participation fee but this won't cover all expenses. **That's why we are asking for special funding for the Bible School.** On the next page you will see the budget and our need.

OUR FINANCES

Bible School Budget

INCOME

Participation fees (\$400 per pers.)	\$12,000
Donations & grant requests	\$16,945
TOTAL	\$28,945

EXPENSES

Advertisement	\$1,200
Bible Commentary for lecturers (full set New & Old Test.)	\$3,200
Study materials for students	\$2,700
Coffee breaks	\$2,520
Lecturers' compensation	\$5,400
Lecturers' travel expenses	\$1,125
Home of Hope room usage expenses	\$1,800
Organizing team expenses	\$1,000
Bible School coordinator salary (\$1,000 per month)	\$10,000
TOTAL	\$28,945

We are looking for additional funding of **\$16,945** for Bible School through private donations and grant requests.

We are very thankful for every donation.

You can use **all** giving options presented below. Please mark designation **"TAT Bible School"**.

Home of Hope Loan Payment Postponed Until October 15, 2020

Because of the Corona crisis we were not able to raise enough funds for the May 15 loan payment. We asked our creditor to postpone the payment for five more months. We are thankful our application

was approved. The next payment is due October 15th, 2020.

At the same time, we got a very clear message from the creditor that this is the last opportunity for us to postpone payments because

the creditor is also in difficulties because of the Corona crisis.

We pray and hope the funds that give us the opportunity to continue are somewhere and that we can continue to achieve what the Lord wills.

HOME of HOPE FUNDRAISING PROGRESS

\$674,357	\$42,091 to go	\$2,029,175
RAISED	Oct. 15 th goal	Total with loan
06/26/2020	2 nd loan payment	& interest
\$6,000 of matching funds are available		

TAT Annual Budget is Unbalanced

We have a big deficit in our annual budget. We have some extra time to raise funds for the next loan payment but we have to continue our daily work. We can't postpone our daily activities. Our work never stopped also during the Corona virus lockdown.

The Corona crisis is causing big changes in different ways but our work is becoming more and more important in the midst of this crisis and uncertainty. We want and we have to support our fellow citizens in the midst of their spiritual quests.

We are thankful that **\$10,000 of matching fund** is set up.

TAT ANNUAL BUDGET of 2020

\$65,134	\$237,451
RAISED	Annual total
06/26/2020	
\$60,229 to go	
July 31 st goal	
\$10,000 of matching funds are available	

GIVING

all giving options are **Tax deductible**

For HOME of HOPE

CHECKS

Charity Lutheran Church
120 Aspen Ave.
Bismarck, ND 58503

Designate **"Home of Hope"**
in the memo portion.

ELECTRONICAL

Go to www.charitylutheran.org/give follow the steps and choose first **"Tartu Academy of Theology"** fund. Then you can choose also **"Home of Hope"** sub fund.

For TARTU ACADEMY

CHECKS

Charity Lutheran Church
120 Aspen Ave.
Bismarck, ND 58503

OR

Spiritual Orphans Network (SON Network)

8210 Louisiana Blvd., NE - Suite B
Albuquerque, NM 87113

Designate **"TAT"**
in the memo portion.

ELECTRONICAL

Go to www.charitylutheran.org/give follow the steps and choose **"Tartu Academy of Theology"** fund.

OR

Go to sonetwork.org/give/ and choose **"Tartu Academy of Theology"** fund.

Join a Special Prayer, please

I share with you my prayer and I ask you to join with me in this prayer.

whole loan money as a matching fund. **This would be a \$750,000 gift.**

Since Home of Hope dedication in December last year I have been praying for a large gift that would cover half of the

Yes, this is very much, humanly unbelievable and maybe even crazy but I have experienced that God is even more

crazy than we could ever think of. He gives solutions in hopeless situations, and He is making what seems like unreal plans become real. Please, join with me in this prayer!

Pastor Siimon Haamer

HOME of HOPE: THERE IS LIFE

First Six Months of HOME of HOPE!

Home of Hope was actively in use until the Corona crisis started. We'd hosted various seminars and other events, we had visitors in the guest apartment, and many people found their way into our rooms. Until crisis, we received enough income to cover all monthly utility operating expenses of the facility and also more.

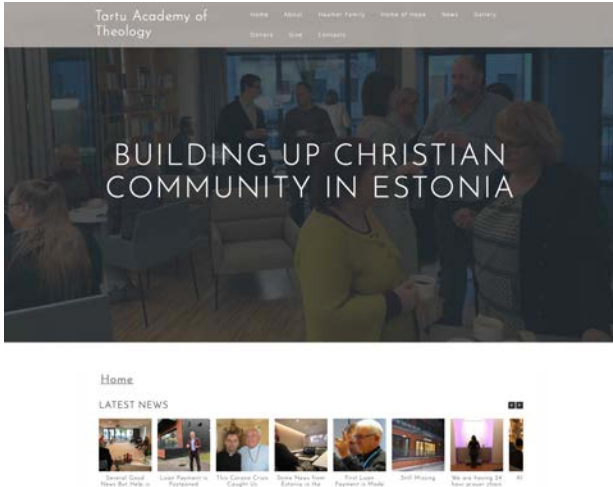
This income was stopped the middle of March until the end of May. Recently we have had some seminars here but it's still very little income.

We are happy that the Christian Radio is set up and working in full mode at Home of Hope. They pay monthly rent and this is one source of regular income.

The Pastoral Care Center launch was initially planned for May but the Corona crisis interrupted preparations. Now we hope to open this center to the public in August.

The end of September the Bible School will begin.

We are so thankful to all our donors and prayerful friends who have made Home of Hope real and are helping us continue this journey.



We have a new website design tatest.org. You'll find lots of pictures, video and much new and interesting information.



Chapel service before COVID-19.



Program recording at radio studio.



Christian radio office at Home of Hope.



Distance learning in the classroom which is equipped with video conference system.



Archbishop of Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church is speaking at the conference at Home of Hope on February 19, 2020