



Two generations of Lutheran pastors: brothers Markus, Naatan and Siimon and their father Eenok Haamer.

Jesus says: „I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.“

John 14:18

May Jesus Christ be your dearest friend during Christmas season, New Year and throughout your life.

Future is Present—the Fourth Generation

As you read this, you are also sharing a very special moment in the history of Tartu Academy of Theology and Estonia. I'm giving a testimony about God's distinguished and continued blessing that we are chosen to experience.

Three generations of Lutheran pastors have been raised up from our family despite persecution and the very challenging history of living through the 50 years following WW II when Estonia was under aggressive atheistic Soviet occupation. My grandfather, Harri Haamer, was a pastor and my father, at 85 years old, is still serving three Lutheran congregations. My two older brothers and myself are pastors.

When Estonia regained independence in 1992, my father, Eenok, established the Christian college, Tartu Academy of Theology. In 28 years, we have trained hundreds of Christian leaders for Estonia. For 27 of those years we had no permanent home and we worked in very limited renting spaces. But under God's guidance, and with the help of very many donors, a year ago we were able to establish a Christian outreach center, Home of Hope.

The opening of Home of Hope was a major development for us. During the last year we have made preparations to organize and start many new ministries: a Bible School, the Pastoral care center, a 24/7 pastoral care telephone line and Christian youth work events. Today all of that is already up and running. The Bible School is totally sold out with over 90 participants registered (we were hoping to have at least 20). We have about 50 young people

attending our various youth events. The 24/7 pastoral care telephone line that started in June this year will continue through 2021 with 100% financing from the Estonian government.

We, of course, are continuing to offer bachelor and master's degree studies. The joint student body of Tartu Academy of Theology and the Lutheran Church Seminary is 130. This autumn 32 students were admitted. We are hosting a number of seminars and trainings regularly at Home of Hope and are capable and hopeful of hosting many more. This provides extra income. For that we need to advertise Home of Hope renting opportunities.

It's obvious I need some help to take care of all of that.

I worked 15 years side-by-side with my father until 7 years ago when he turned leadership over to me. **Today I share with you that this amazing family story is continuing. The fourth generation has grown up. Mattias, son of my older brother Markus, has joined our team and is working with me as my assistant.** I'm very thankful for the energy and new ideas that he brings.

Mattias is 23 years old and is currently studying marketing. He is a very devoted Christian and Christian youth work is his passion. His skills fit exactly with our needs! We are happy that Mattias is eager to help build up the Christian community in Estonia. We don't know God's future plan for him and I ask you to pray for Mattias. God has called him but he needs God's guidance for his life. On the next page you can read more about him and you are

also welcome to watch videos tatest.org/videos that show the full story.

We want to be His servants and I call you to be our partner on this journey. We are very thankful if you will help us to fully finance the so-called **Fourth Generation Fund** which is meant to cover the salary of Mattias. Currently Mattias is working part time and the monthly need is \$1,000. The one-year budget is \$12,000. If you want to give a donation you may use our regular giving options which are presented on our website tatest.org/give and also on the next page of this newsletter. Just mark the designation "Mattias".

First Timothy chapter 4:10 is written: *For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.*

With our life and work we proclaim the living God who is our only hope.

Siimon Haamer
President of TAT

Siimon and Mattias.



FOURTH GENERATION

TESTIMONY OF MATTIAS Assistant to the President of TAT

Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Luke 18:16

I was born into a strong Christian family. I have had ancestors of pastors for three generations – my father is a pastor, grandfather is a pastor, great-grandfather was a pastor and even my two uncles are pastors. If that's not a strong foundation, I don't know what is.

It is also a privilege that I have had this environment to grow up in, because I was born after the Soviet occupation, which had done a devastating job to the Christian community. There weren't many kids who got to hear about God or Jesus or any religion when they were growing up, and even when they heard something about it, it was rather negative. They were taught not to think about this subject.

At a very young age I came to the startling realization that my peers were reacting negatively to my faith without even knowing what this Christianity means. It started to look to me like there was some kind of brick wall actually stopping them from thinking about faith in their lives. The more I met people, the more I saw it. It became a problem to me, that people

not only have misconceptions about Christians, but that they are not even willing to think about Christianity or religion at all. In my opinion, this way of living and not thinking about existential questions has put many people through rough times. They have had mental issues, broken families or just feel emptiness in their hearts. By not seeing beyond their lives and living without feeling loved, it is easy to get caught up in mixed feelings and emotions. Now it is true there are exceptions on both ends, but the overall view is like previously mentioned.

It has been in my heart to break that brick wall in people's hearts. I try to do that by getting to know them and show that I'm a normal person, and then, after a while, "shocking their world" by saying that actually I'm a Christian. That way they might be more open to discussing repressed topics.

I have always admired my father's and



grandfather's work as pastors and have put a lot of thought into studying theology, but at least for now I don't feel that it is the right time for me. This decision I cannot make without God's push. Right now, I feel that I can help out more with youth work and supporting activities in Christian work. Hopefully, I can bring some young people to know Jesus so that they can break the not-knowing-Jesus pattern that is very common among Estonian families. And they could start the talking-about-Jesus pattern with their children.

YOUTH WORK AT HOME OF HOPE



It has been our dream that Tartu Academy of Theology could offer activities for youth. The first 27 years we worked with very limited space and did not have enough human resources to organize youth work. But Home of Hope has changed basically everything. With this crucial step we have stepped into what looks like a different world. Now everyone in Tartu knows where we are located as we are almost downtown

and next to the main street of Tartu with a big lit-up sign telling about us.

In today's world young people are looking for a welcoming and attractive environment. Home of Hope definitely offers that.

In September and October, we began offering regular youth events. **We currently have about 50 participants** in different youth events with around 10% not yet connected with any church. We are already considering the plan to develop a Bible School specifically for youth next fall.

YOUTH EVENTS

As a starter for our youth activities, August 3-5 we held a **Youth Bible Camp** with 14 participants. The topic was Hope. This year SONetwork short-term missionaries from the US couldn't travel to Estonia because of Corona virus. Therefore, we used the connection via Zoom. An internet bridge was created for three hours each day. The remainder of the time we filled with different interesting activities. There was even a Christian youth song composed during the camp.

Worship Night

Every third Wednesday.

Live music, testimonies, prayer, fellowship, snacks.

Target group is college students.

Currently we have 20 participants.

Social Evening with Board Games and Christian Films

Every second Sunday of the month. Prayer, board games, films, snacks.

Target group is primarily secondary and high school students but might also include college students.

Currently we have 15 participants.

An opportunity for youth to get acquainted with one another. The evening is framed with prayer. This could also be for young people not affiliated with any church who need a good way to connect with Christian youth.

Youth Evening

Every last Sunday of the month. Prayer, singing, introduction of a different topic each month, guest speakers, discussion, snacks, games.

Target group is secondary and high school students.

Currently we have 25 participants.

They are mostly from Lutheran churches. Some haven't connected with any church and some are from other denominations. For most this is the only opportunity to be part of Christian youth work because they don't have youth groups at their local church.

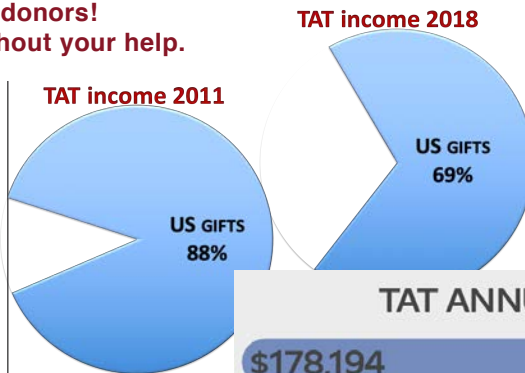
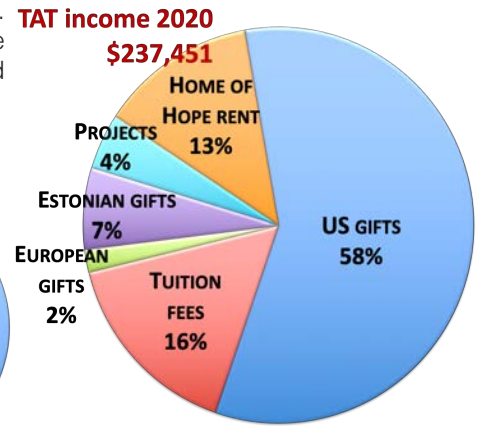
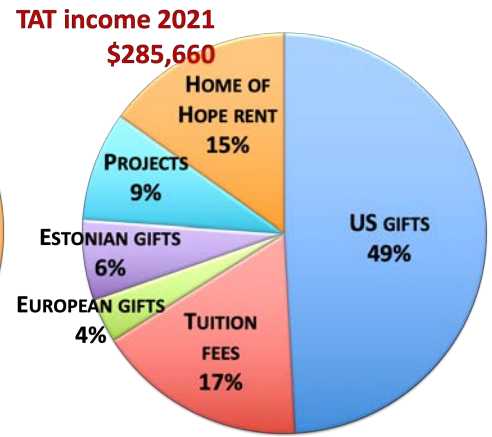
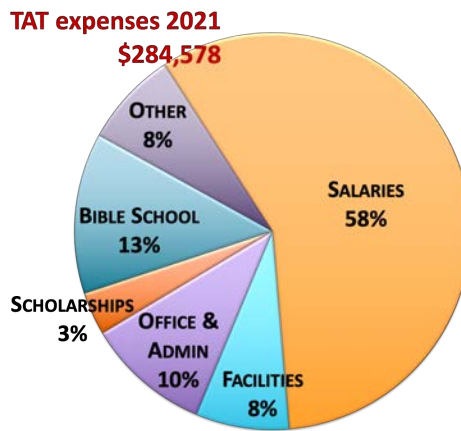
OUR FINANCES

Our income resources have changed quite a lot during the last decade. Ten years ago, approximately 90% of our operating income was from the USA; **now in 2021 the budget includes only 49% gifts from the USA.** Establishing Home of Hope hasn't just brought along many new outreach activities but is helpful as a good source of income: about \$50,000 during 2021. 2020 Home of Hope gives approx. \$30,000 income through 2020 in a situation where most of the year we have been under COVID-19 pressure. **This facility has great potential financially for our work.**

The situation is different with the Home of Hope loan payment where 81% is covered with US gifts. Home of Hope is a very unique project. We were able to start this only because we received great support from US donors at the very beginning of our fundraising campaign. Estonian people still have to learn giving and we want to teach them using Home of Hope as a good example.

We ask you to continue this journey step-by-step with us under God's guidance.

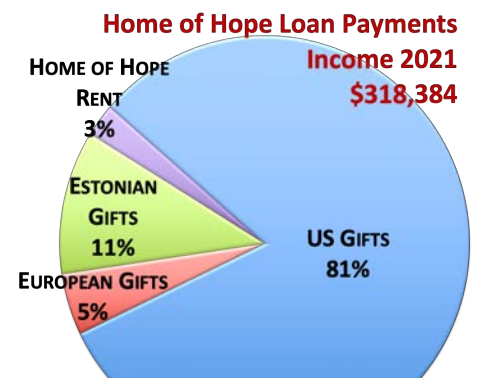
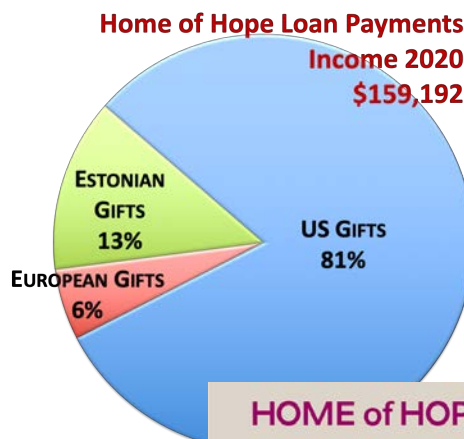
We are so very thankful to our donors!
We couldn't achieve these results without your help.



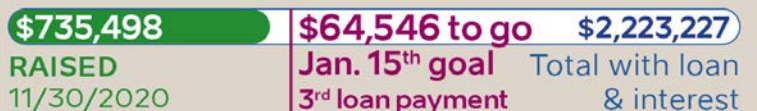
TAT ANNUAL BUDGET of 2020



The last several months the US dollar has been quite a lot weaker than during previous years. This significantly influences the Home of Hope loan payments because the mortgage loan is in Euros. Therefore, the actual Home of Hope price at this time has increased in US dollars.



HOME of HOPE LOAN PAYMENT PROGRESS



GIVING

all giving options are **Tax deductible**

For HOME of HOPE Loan 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
 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.

Bible School of HOME of HOPE

On September 21 we launched Home of Hope Bible School. Interest towards this was unbelievable. We were hoping to have 20 participants but we were really surprised that 80 people registered before the starting date. The Bible school was fully sold out. We are so grateful to God for this great blessing.

After the launch even more people wanted to be part of the school. We were able to let them in as we could see that all people registered would not attend classes every week. All together 90 participants registered.

Additionally, people from different parts of Estonia were interested in our Bible School. We were able to establish campuses and



now **we have three partner congregations where people gather to watch live-streaming** every Monday evening. With such a system the **actual Home of Hope Bible School student body numbers grew closer to 110.**

As fellowship is an important part of this Bible School, we had not planned to offer only web-based lessons but this was an additional option. Thus we have video recorded and live-streamed all lessons since the beginning of the school. If we won't be able to gather in-person because of COVID-19 situation, we still offer web-based participation.

Demand and hunger for the Bible school course in Tartu causes us to be very devoted in finding more ways to reach out to Estonians and share knowledge of the Bible.



Graduation in June and Admission in August

Nine students graduated in June. Four of them from the bachelor program and five from the master program. **Most of them are already working in their chosen speciality:** one is chaplain in prison and one in a hospital, three are pastoral care givers with the pastoral care telephone line and at the pastoral care center. This fall, one of the graduates entered a year of internship in order to become a pastor in the Lutheran Church.

We are also glad to share encouraging news about student admission in August. This is very important for us because our major task is to train pastors, chaplains, pastoral care givers, Christian youth workers, etc. **Together with the Lutheran Seminary we admitted 32 new students:** 15 bachelor and 11 master students and 6 for the church musician one-year program.

During the first half of the fall we were able to have normal study processes but COVID-19 cases increased in Estonia in November and we were forced to continue with distance learning. We won't pause our studies. We hope we are able to gather back into classes again in January.



24/7 Pastoral Care Telephone Line is Continuing Through 2021

In June we shared that the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs had decided to finance a 24/7 pastoral care telephone line and had asked Tartu Academy to initiate and run this operation. Initially financing was offered through December 31, 2020. **We have now received information that the Estonian government will continue to finance the telephone line through 2021. The funding is designated for the program and is not part of our annual budget.**

The first six months of operation the line has been more actively used than the Ministry of Social Affairs expected. People really need our help. 40% of the calls are about anxiety and loneliness. 7% are individuals planning to end their life and we are their last option. Many of them become regular callers.

We are truly thankful for this opportunity and also happy that we are able to offer employment to our alumnus.

