

March Greetings!



Richard Ondicho's Newsletter 2/2026
5.3.2026

The month of February has gone by very quickly, even though winter was at its coldest and most beautiful during this time. I thank God for this season. As I write this second newsletter of the year 2026, I am filled with gratitude to God for His guidance and provision throughout this tenth year of my ministry at Luther Church. Looking back over the past ten years, I thank Him for the opportunity to hold weekly Bible studies every Tuesday and Wednesday at the Luther Church youth hall.

I often call this space my humble office, as I spend much of my time here at Luther-Kirkko. Every Tuesday, we gather together to receive spiritual nourishment. We open the Bible in Arabic, Turkish, Finnish, and English, taking turns reading aloud and then discussing the Word together. These moments of fellowship and reflection have been deeply meaningful. At times, it feels as though I have returned to my five years at the theological seminary in Tanzania in the 1990s—a season of learning, growth, and deep spiritual formation. The Lord has called the singing team in our Church. My wife Kirsi has been leading it and organizing the choir practice. One of our Pianist is from Sri Lanka Mr. Chrishan Fernando who is dedicated with our drummer and some singers from same country.

I thank God for the privilege to serve and to witness the faithfulness of those who are committed to attending the Bible studies. Their dedication has been a great encouragement to me.

Recently, I took time to calculate the number of gatherings we have had from September 1, 2016, to March 3, 2026. The updated count is as follows: Tuesdays: 496; Wednesdays: 495 Thursdays: 496 and Sundays: 496 Grand total: 1,983 gatherings. These numbers may not seem very large at first glance. However, reading and teaching the Bible faithfully through nearly 1,900 occasions is not something I have accomplished by my own strength. It is not my doing — it is the Lord's work. Only God has sustained this ministry, given strength week after week, and brought people together around His Word.

There have been moments when I felt empty and spiritually dry, without energy to do anything. Yet at such a time, someone called and asked me to visit their family and pray with them. In the end, that visit was not only for them — it was meant to strengthen me as well. God knew what I needed. There have also been days when my phone rang from morning until midnight, carrying all kinds of struggles, questions, and burdens from many people. To those who do not see my daily schedule, it may appear that I have little to do, but the truth is quite the opposite. The work of ministry often happens quietly — through listening, praying, visiting, encouraging, and walking alongside others in their joys and sorrows.

At the beginning of February, I was invited to preach at the international Divine Service in Kokkola by Rev. Jiska Grohn. There, I had the joy of meeting our former executive director, Rev. Lasse, the humble servant of God who together with Dr. Pekka Huhtinen recruited me to serve as a missionary in Helsinki, Finland. I was delighted to see what the Lord is doing among the people there. I agree with Dr. Ville Auvinen that we have to create international work unity to encompass towns such as Turku and Tampere. There is huge need of such communities.

I thank God for LEAF, this blessed mission organization that chose to give special attention to immigrants — both Christians and those who are not — so that they may hear the good news of the saving grace of our Lord. Through this mission, many have had the opportunity to encounter the Word of God and experience Christian fellowship.

During these ten years, I have cried and smiled at the same time. I have seen pain and frustration, yet I have not been broken. I have been attacked from every corner. Some of these struggles have been for my growth, while others have taught me what it truly means to serve God, even when it is hard.

As Paul writes in the Bible: *“We are hard pressed on every side but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.”*

I thank all who have prayed for me and supported me faithfully throughout these year and also to our LEAF leaders whom we meet all the time at Luther-Kirkko and elsewhere and chatting here and there without staff.

I write these details to thank you for your support. To show that God has been carrying us here at Luther-Kirkko. To know that this work is a new change of doing mission work even here in sending countries. Continue praying for me and this city ministry so that we continue to reach out to those that the Lord brings to our way.

In Christ I remain His servant and yours.

Riku

Would you like to participate in mission work? If you want to support Richard Ondicho's work, you can choose an amount to Leaf's donation bank account: IBAN: FI13 8000 1500 7791 95 BIC: DABAFIHH.

- Use your personal reference number, so that your support will automatically be shown in your local congregation's mission support total or write into the transaction message field "Richard Ondichon rengas" + your home congregation.
- You can find further information about donating monthly from <https://www.taivaallinenlahja.fi/kuukausilahjoittaminen> or from Leea Gröhn, leea.grohn@sley.fi 044 767 5201.
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**Your support enables to share the Gospel to those who do not know Christ yet.
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