

# April Greetings!



**Richard Ondicho's Newsletter 3/2026**  
**28.4.2026**

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**“Sanctify them by your truth; your word is truth.”** (John 17:17). In His High Priestly Prayer, our Lord Jesus Christ prayed not only for His disciples, but also for those who would come to faith through their testimony. He had in view those who were not yet in the faith, knowing that it would be through the witness of His disciples that they would come to believe. This prayer is not only a word from the past, but a living reality among us today. We see it being fulfilled at Luther-Kirkko in Helsinki and in other places, as people continue to come to faith through the witness of the Church. Indeed, it is this very prayer that carries and sustains all of us who are engaged in mission work. In other words, we are fulfilling the mandate given by Jesus Christ to reach out to those who do not yet know Him—especially those in our immediate neighborhoods here in Helsinki, Vantaa, and Espoo.

After Easter week, we have continued to gather as usual. By God’s grace, there are some people who have come to our Divine Service and who need more attention alongside others. It is not right to write in detail about what is happening in the lives of individuals, so it is good that I move to the broader work among us. We continue to meet faithfully, and there is encouragement in the steady rhythm of worship and fellowship. There have been meaningful conversations, quiet moments of prayer, and opportunities to support one another in both small and significant ways. It is clear that God is at work, even in ways that are not always visible.

Yesterday, I was invited by Dr. Martti Arkkila to give the opening sermon at the New International Lutheran Congregation. I felt honoured by this invitation. It also brought back meaningful memories, as I held the first English service at Luther Talo in 2002 together with Dr. Reijo Arkkila. Justus Haverinen and Sonia Hotarinen worked diligently alongside the congregation's pastor to ensure everything was well prepared. The beginning was truly remarkable, and Soili Haverinen served as the lead singer.

It was a joy for me to see so many people gathered, and I sincerely hope that more immigrants will also find their way there. In Tampere, there are many Lutherans from Tanzania and Kenya, and may be from other countries and this presents a wonderful opportunity—a true blessing—for many to find a spiritual home. This growing vision is also strongly supported by our Mission Director, Dr. Ville Auvinen, who has a deep desire to see vibrant international congregations established in several towns. We are already witnessing this development in Helsinki, Kokkola, and Tampere, and, God willing, Turku will be next. This is a significant and encouraging step, as it reflects a commitment to serve people from different nations and backgrounds, offering them not only a place of worship but also a true spiritual family.

I sincerely thank you for your prayers and financial support. I cannot say thank you enough to know that someone is reading these newsletters and remembering me in prayer. It is a great encouragement, and surely one reason why I have the strength and energy to continue with the three Bible studies and to meet people in different areas, especially those who are carrying concerns and burdens.

As we look ahead, we hope to continue nurturing these relationships and providing space for those who are seeking, questioning, or in need of care. Please keep this work in your prayers, that we may be given wisdom, patience, and compassion in all that we do.

In Christ, I remain His servant and yours.

***Richard Ondicho***

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