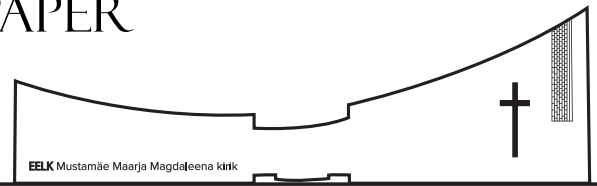


EELC MUSTAMÄE MARY MAGDALENE CHURCH NEWSPAPER

SPECIAL EDITION
DECEMBER 2020



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

The Advent time is almost over and our most beloved Christmas-time is upon us - the time we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ! Instead of the usual card we send you a newsletter, to express our gratitude for supporting the Mustamäe congregation and the building of our church. Moreover, we would like to share some news and updates on what we are doing in Mustamäe and to say you are in our thoughts and prayers.

Advent and Christmas-time is the most special and beautiful time of the year, as it entails so much joy and expectations, hope and love. We start preparing for this holiday long before it arrives by decorating our homes, wrapping presents to those dear to our hearts and it gives us the greatest joy to see how happy they are to receive our gifts.

At Christmas we sing beloved Christmas songs and share a delicious meal with our loved ones. In the Mustamäe congregation we have had a tradition to share a meal on Christmas Eve after the service with the family that is our congregation. A year ago we managed to host almost 30 people into our small but cozy room. It is very important for many people, as this is the only fellowship during the holidays, because they have no-one else to share it with at home. Some families have said sharing the Christmas Eve meal with the other members of the congregation have given them the real Christmas feeling.

This year, the Advent time was obviously a different affair and we cannot predict what Christmas will be like. We are fortunate in Estonia because churches are still open and we are allowed to hold services. Nevertheless, in order to keep the churches open we need to follow the rules strictly - keeping distance and wearing a mask. Having that Christmas-meal in the congregation will be difficult this year, but perhaps more people will stay home this year and we will be able to sit down with fewer people, but still do it.

Yes, the world around is changing, sometimes bringing brighter times and tougher times. Today, the times are indeed quite difficult to say the least. Many people are worried about their loved ones and their future. I myself have pondered about the future of our congregation and church, asking myself how we will manage in a few years, will we be able to finish the building process etc.,

But then I hear God whispering quietly that says "Do not be afraid, I am with you and will bless you!" Indeed, that was God's plan in Christ - to be with us as God Immanuel! In that faith we will move step by step towards fulfilling our spiritual and earthly goals.



One thing is for sure - no matter the situation in the world around us, God and His Grace will never change! Jesus was born into this world during a dark and difficult time to bring people hope - real hope that will prevail no matter the conditions around us. This is the hope He still wants to give us, not only during Christmas, but every day in our lives.

But what is real hope? He was born as a small and fragile baby, so that we would not be afraid of Him, but we would have the courage to accept Him. When we accept the Christmas child, a miracle is born - we ourselves become God's children. And if we are his children indeed, we also become the heirs. Isn't it just amazing news? You can be God's heir, His son or daughter - and that means that one day you have the right to enter God's Kingdom in heaven.

Baby Jesus is the greatest gift of all times for humankind. Through Him God gives us a future and hope, inner joy, peace of mind and a deep understanding that you are always loved and cherished by Him. May Jesus bless your heart so that your joy during this Christmas could be complete!

Finally, I would like to express my endless gratitude for your support to the work we do in our congregation and building the church. Without your help, there would be no church nor a congregation in Mustamäe. We have witnessed miracles how indeed just "two fish" and "five breads" is enough for many. Thank you for letting us experience so much caring and love! Thank you, because we have truly felt like we belong in God's great family!

I wish our heavenly Father's blessings upon you! I wish the love of Jesus Christ in your heart and in your home and that the Holy Spirit would fill your heart with the deepest joy and hope today and every day after that. Blessed Christmas-time to all.

Tiina Klement

10 YEARS OF CONGREGATIONAL WORK IN MUSTAMÄE

The beginning of Mustamäe congregation can be traced back to **September of 2010**, when the cell group met for the first time. Five adults and one child came together to start praying for starting a new congregation. We sat at a lunch table and dreamed of a congregation in Mustamäe. We read Luke 10:1-11 how Jesus himself sent his disciples to spread the gospel and discussed among ourselves how we can do the same in 21st century Estonia. For the next couple of years the cell group met every week. It was an important time of growth, for from these meetings grew the core of the congregation - people who are ready to take the responsibility of building up a brand new congregation.



Tammsaare rd 135 rooms after moving in.

At that time we were looking for rooms we could use in Mustamäe and began with the most vital activities - Sunday services, prayer meetings, children and diaconal work. In 2010 autumn we finally found suitable rooms in the heart of Mustamäe - the basement of Mustamäe Municipality building. For the next 8 years we used this basement as our church, just like the first Christians so long ago.

On **November 23, 2010** Mustamäe congregation was officially admitted as a full member of EELC. We chose Mary Magdalene as our patron saint. The first pastor was **Tiina Klement**, nee Kliiman.



During the next few years we developed several fields of work, a brief description of the most important ones follows:

SUNDAY SERVICES

These were happening even before we were officially founded. In 2009 they took place once a month. After moving into our own rooms in 2010, on every Sunday. In 2011 we started our monthly family services on a regular basis. In addition, we have a mass on the biggest Christian holidays.



Tammsaare rd 135 basement after renovations.

During the first years, the average attendance was ca 10 people, but in recent years it is more like 20-30 people attending. Sunday service is the most vital part of a growing congregation. This is when different people come together to pray and give thanks and praise to the Lord for all the blessings in our lives.

After the Sunday service there is usually a rich table set for people to share a snack and a warm drink to communicate and share ideas or news to get to know people better.

PRAYER MEETINGS

First prayers started in the original cell group and later in all the other groups that started in our congregation. We started holding prayers with Taizé songs on the last Friday of the month in 2011 and they are still ongoing.

As our diaconal work expanded in 2014, we started a prayer group for people in need, today known as "Mealtime with Bible and prayer", where feeding the body and soul go hand in hand.



A moment from a Taizé prayer with the brothers from Taizé.

Prayer fellowship is connected with so many activities and fields of work, that sometimes it is difficult to separate a prayer meeting from a diaconal activity,

they are just so entwined with each other.

Every meeting we have in the church, starts with a prayer to ask for Christ's guidance and presence, as we cannot do anything without Him.



Elina and Ülle distributing tea.

DIACONAL WORK

Diaconal work started already in the cell group, where we noticed people among us who need help and then we helped them. Soon enough we wished to help people outside of our own group. In November 2009, a congregation in Eindhoven, Netherlands sent us a donation as a Christmas present so that we could help children living in poverty. We managed to buy presents for 100 orphanage children from that money. This was the beginning of our annual Christmas parties for children of Mustamäe and cooperation with the Children's Protective Services of Mustmäe Municipality. In the last 10 years we have been able to share the Christmas story and presents with ca 300 children. Some families have sent us a letter of gratitude, for making their child(ren)'s Christmas, because that was their only present that Christmas.

In 2010 we started meetings for the elderly people, which has grown into a group of "positive and active



Enthusiastic and active elderly visiting Harju-Madise congregation.

people", led by emerit deacon **Imbi Arro**. These meetings are truly full of positivity. They are our treasure - always there when help is needed, however they can, being joyful and loyal.

In June 2012 we received half a lorry-full of clothes, furniture and toys from Norway for free, to be distributed to families in need of those things. When we did, many people outside of our church came to us. We had the possibility to introduce our activities and create a positive image for Christianity and the church for many people. Several children attended our children's camps because their parents received help from us.

In 2013 we started cooperation with the Foodbank and supporters from abroad to distribute food and clothes to the people in need. In 2013 Magda Mission Shop also started - their goal is to support the congregation and the building of our church, and help families, especially with children.

Next to the Sunday services, diaconal work alongside with children's work is one of the most important fields of work. The main responsibility falls on our deacon **Ülle Reimann**.

Diaconal work includes visiting the elderly and people who need help, organizing help, prayer meetings and support groups women, elderly and needy. There is a separate group for men.

MAGDA MISSION SHOP

Already in the first few years the congregation received offers from friends both in Estonia and abroad to get used clothes and home gadgets for free distribution. A large shipment arrived from Norway in 2012, organized by

Solveig Bergslund. A lot of it found new owners fast, but there were more goods left for a while.

By 2013 we had so many clothes that we thought it wise to start distributing them on a regular basis outside of our congregation. From February onwards we started giving away clothes for free once a month - to our own members, their friends, people who came to the Foodbank and also through Mustamäe Municipality.

Within the next 6 months it became clear we needed a



better system and organization to handle all the goods and people. Through divine intervention we received a call from a charity shop in Hokksund, Norway who offered their surplus of goods to open a second-hand shop in Mustamäe. Aforementioned Solveig came on board with enthusiasm and started finding partners and finances to open up the shop. God answered our prayers and in October 2013 we opened Magda Mission Shop, named after our patron saint. Two members of our congregation run the shop - **Jaana Maria Unga** and **Reelika Raudsepp**.

The shop is necessary in many ways. First, people can buy clothes they need at very good prices. Those who lack money can get things for free straight from the shop or the box outside of the shop, if they don't want to be seen or heard asking for help directly. It grants their anonymity. Free goods and everything else are available every day and the shelves are stocked on a daily basis. Distribution of free clothes stopped due to our moving to the church.

Second, the Gospel is shared in the shop, plus information about our church, congregation and faith in general. Estonia is a quite secular country, therefore sometimes sharing the Gospel might not be so direct, but yet we do it anyway every day.

Third, it helps collect money for the building of our church. During the first year, we doubled the sum we collected from donations and we try our best every year to keep collecting money. If money is scarce, the more clothes we try to distribute and share the Word of God.

Magda Mission Shop has been blessed with plenty of good supporters and enthusiastic women from Norway and other places who contribute with their hard work, so that we can continue our work of helping people. We are most grateful for all they have done and we keep praying for all of you!

Cooperation with several organizations and institutions (e.g Bethel's Centre of Pastoral Care in Tallinn) has shown us that Magda Mission Shop is a trustworthy and acknowledged partner. Yet, we are still in need of support from our good friends, so that we can continue helping people with clothes, furniture and home electronics. We are grateful for all donations and we accept contributions at the shop as well.



Children playing angels in a nativity play.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH WORK

The start of our children's work dates back to 2009 when we made 100 Christmas presents for orphanage children. We had very few children among the few members of our growing congregation and therefore we decided to reach outwards with these presents.

In the beginning of 2011 we started Sunday school with 3 children and the first camp took place in the summer later that year with 5 participants. In 2012 we started with baby song gatherings.

In September 2012 we welcomed our first volunteers for a year from Norway, which boosted our children and youth work. We started a children's choir and youth gatherings, Sunday school and baby song. Many children are involved in the activities. Summer camps have up to 30 participants and Sunday school has 10-15 regular attendees. Youth gatherings take place 4 times a year.

At the moment, we have regular activities for babies and toddlers and their parents, preschoolers, children's church (Sunday school), girls club and family services.

In 2020 we have a youth confirmation group for the first time and we have gatherings for young people. Children and youth work is coordinated by **Maris Kuldkepp**, youth confirmation group is under pastor **Tiina Klement**'s supervision, babies and toddler's group is run by our deacon **Ülle Reimann**.

Since 2011 we have had annual summer camps for children and youth. The form varies from year to year, based on our current needs and available means. We have had city camps, camps in the countryside, camps abroad and common day trips, and a gathering for families.



Family Fun Day.



Dr Jaan Lahe giving a sermon.

BIBLE LESSONS AND OTHER FIELDS OF WORK IN THE CONGREGATION

Bible lessons started already in the original cell group. The solution for a need for more academic Bible lessons came in 2009 when lectures started with an event called "Seekers' Evenings". It was led by dr.theol **Jaan Lahe**. When we

moved to the basement, we renamed the event as just a theology discussion group. At the moment everyone who is interested, can participate in post-confirmation seminars and Bible classes, where Christian aspects are discussed at a high academic level.

During the first years of our congregation, in addition to home groups and Sunday services+prayers, there were also more practical reasons to gather. In 2009 a handicraft group gathered and they made exquisite handicraft that was sold for charity. It was easy to join a congregation through a common interest and activity. Nevertheless, practicalities were always entwined with fellowship in prayer. Unfortunately, the handicraft group ceased to operate in 2013 and awaits someone to revive it.

In 2018 we started putting together and issuing our congregation monthly newspaper. The idea and necessity was brought to daylight by our pastor Tiina a couple of years ago in front of the council. The role of the newspaper is to keep people updated on what is happening and also be a chronicle in a way. The active editorial includes 8 people, the designer and editor is our board chairwoman **Jaana Maria Unga**.

MUSIC WORK

Music work in the congregation is connected with Sunday services and choirs.

Sunday service music is played by **Kaimo Klement**.

Children's choirs have been dependent on whether we have a leader or not. There was a choir in 2012, led by Lisa Håland, but it declined after the leader went back to Norway. It was revived in 2016-2017, when young and talented Laura Kern led the choir, but she also moved abroad and the activity ceased.



Our Gospel Choir, led by Lisa Håland.

MISSION CHOIR

In 2020 an opportunity presented itself to start hosting the already accomplished and recognized Mission Choir in Mustamäe. Maarja Vardja as our cantor has been playing the piano in our family services for years.

Mission Choir was founded by EELC Mission Centre at the end of 1987 and has been active to this day. Choir members come from different congregations and live all over Estonia. The choir's goal is to share the gospel through music and spoken words. Usually the choir meets once a month on a Saturday to either practise or perform at an event.

Through the past decades, Mission Choir has held events with music and words in different parts of Estonia. Their main goal is to share the gospel through singing, but they also share personal testimonials, a small sermon, lighting candles, praying for people and offering to pray with someone.

The fact that the choir suddenly ended up moving into our church, is a true miracle by God! We did not have a choir simply because we could not afford one. Not that there were many opportunities to start a new choir in the first place, but we have always trusted our financial situation to God Almighty and take it step-by-step as we go.

The Mission Choir wishes to share the life-altering message of Divine Love through their lyrics and music.



Mission Choir recording a video for a song "Önnistegija" in November 2020.

BUILDING A CHURCH IN MUSTAMÄE

In 2008 when the cell group first started meeting, none of us could have dreamt that in 4 years, the congregation would get a lovely piece of land in the heart of Mustamäe free of rent. The congregation had been looking for their own place for years - renting rooms at EELC Theology Institute, Technical University of Tallinn, St John's church and Nõmme Ragu congregation house. In 2010-2019 we rented the basement at Mustamäe Municipality building.

During those first years we could imagine our future church, which would be more than just a church hall. We had heard of congregations who had to wait over 30 years before God answered their prayers of their own church. We were most hopeful that we would not have to wait quite as long as that. At every meeting of the cell group we prayed that we could get a piece of land for free, as we had no money to buy it ourselves. Our constant prayers and good cooperation with Mustamäe Municipality led to a signed contract between EELC and City of Tallinn on July 3, 2012 that granted EELC the ground lease for a church in Mustamäe on Kiili street 9.

In 2103, March 21 to June 21, an architectural competition took place to find the best design. The competition was supported by the Association of Estonian Architects. 31 designs were submitted. On August 28, 2013, the winner was announced - Karisma Architects design "Fiat Lux", approved both by the jury and members of the congregation.

The next few years we collected donations and drew up the designs for the building project. Every early autumn we held an outdoor event on the future church grounds - concerts, performances, fair, lottery and a Sunday service. It was a sign for the people around us that there will be a church in that place in the future.

By March of 2017 we had managed to get as far as starting the building process. On June 8 that same year we laid down the cornerstone!

The building process went fast from there on and by Christmas-time the building was under the roof and we had all windows and doors. Then due to lack of funds the building stopped for about a year.

It continued in early 2019 with installing electricity and ventilations systems, floors on the main floor and the walls. The future office room with a small kitchen was completed fully and on August 25 this room was consecrated to hold Sunday services. This is the same room we are using currently for our services and other activities.



FUNCTIONALITY OF THE CHURCH

We have planned to have rooms in the church to offer **support for children and youth**. During the last 12 years we have met many families whose child(ren) need guidance in studying and learning how to cope with everyday activities.

We would like to offer tutoring help, hobby groups for children or just a warm and safe place to spend time after a school day. We would also like to help their parents by offering spiritual counseling and practical advice on how to handle children. We cannot do that until we have enough and necessary space to offer such services.

There is a planned space in the church for a large **kitchen**, which would give a chance to cater to the children and youth who come to us after school and would not get a warm quality meal at home.

We have planned to have a few **guest rooms** in the basement, mainly meant for youth who wish to continue their studies, but their home environment does not support it. In the short term, it is possible to host guests there as well.

Most of the basement will be taken up by a prominent **conference room**. It is possible to rent it out for bigger events outside of our own congregation, but of course for our own use too. Other smaller rooms will be in the basement as well.

We wish that Mustamäe church would become a sort of **community center** that offers many activities for locals of all ages. That it would become a place for meeting people, educate themselves, receive spiritual counseling and food for their souls.

Many of our plans and activities are hindered by the fact that not all of it is ready and we are limited in the possibilities we can offer to people. One small office is simply not big enough to develop our congregation, but we cannot use any of the other rooms, because they are unfinished. We are still in the process of collecting funds so the building process could continue.



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JAANA MARIA UNGA
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HAPPENING IN THE CONGREGATION:

SUNDAY SERVICES

on Sundays at 3pm

FAMILY SERVICES

on the first Sunday of the month at 12

WEEKLY EVENTS:

- Singing with toddlers and babies
- Active time for preschoolers
- Mealtime with Prayer and Bible

MONTHLY EVENTS:

- Children's Church
- Post-confirmation discussion, followed by a prayer with communion
- Bible seminar
- Fellowship for women
- Fellowship for men
- Taize prayer
- Enthusiastic and active elderly group
- Congregational fellowship in prayer

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION



- * *We always thank God for all of you who have carried our church in your prayer and supported us!*
- * *We thank God that we have not run out, but that we have been able to experience His grace and wonderful keeping for all twelve years.*
- * *We thank the Lord for sending so many wonderful people into our church through whom we have felt the love of God.*

PRAYER REQUESTS

- * *We pray for the construction of our church so that it can be completed soon and that this house will be filled with people.*
- * *We ask for prayer for our church members, especially church workers, volunteers and clergy, so that we can continue to be resilient.*
- * *We ask your prayer for daily bread for the congregation: that we would be faithful volunteers and workers, and the economic resources of the church for everyday work.*

DONATIONS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHURCH:

EELK MUSTAMÄE MAARJA MAGDALEENA KOGUDUS
Luminor Bank, account: EE241700017003221206
SWIFT/BIC: RIKOEE22

DONATIONS FOR THE CONGREGATIONAL WORK:

EELK MUSTAMÄE MAARJA MAGDALEENA KOGUDUS
Luminor Bank, account: EE311700017002962090
SWIFT/BIC: RIKOEE22

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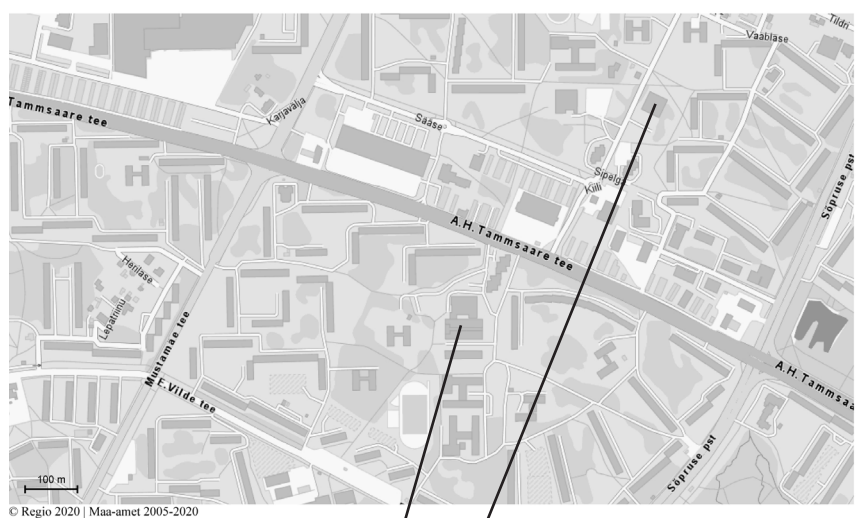
Address: Kiili 9, Tallinn 13423, ESTONIA

MAGDA
MISJONIPOOD

AVATUD:
E-R 10-18.00
L 11-15.00

Asume Tallinnas Tammsaare keskuses
(A.H.Tammsaare tee 89, Tallinn, II korrus)
Leia meid ka Facebook/magdapood

Olete oodatud!



Magda Mission shop
Tammsaare rd 89, Tallinn

EELC Mustamäe
Mary Magdalene church,
Kiili 9, Tallinn

Authors of the photos used in the newspaper: Tuuli Korsar, Ülle Reimann, Tiina Klement and private collection.