



For Immediate Release

June 11, 2020

FRIENDS OF ESTONIA TRANSITIONS ANNUAL GATHERING INTO AN 'E-GATHERING'

Due to travel restrictions and health concerns raised by the global COVID-19 pandemic, the annual gathering of the Friends of Estonia organization will take place virtually on June 26th and 27th. The event will transition from two days of in-person reports, meals, and fellowship to a pair of webinar sessions on **June 26th and 27th**, each lasting about two hours. The sessions will feature panelists from various congregations and ministries in Estonia and their connecting congregations and partners in the United States.

The 2020 gathering will be the first of its kind to take place solely on the internet since the organization began work in 1997. The international gathering was planned for May 2020 at Calvary UMC in Nashville, but like many other conferences, was postponed indefinitely. Transitioning to an internet-based solution was the only timely alternative to this collaborative partnership which relies on communicating shared goals and strategies for successful ministry.

"We're not going to let a global health crisis keep us apart," says Friends of Estonia Executive Committee Member, Andy Morris. "Many Volunteer in Mission (VIM) teams are not able to travel to Estonia this summer to help with camps, projects, and enjoy fellowship. However, that doesn't mean that ministry and missional outreach comes to a halt. This is our opportunity to learn about, encourage, and pray for the work for God's Kingdom that is still ongoing in Estonia."

"It will be good to share with our Brothers and Sisters the programs and projects we have ongoing in Estonia," shared Estonia District Superintendent Rev. Robert Tšerenkov, "We are grateful to God for the opportunity to be in ministry together, and as a group, lift up our concerns and blessings to the Lord."

The sessions on are open to the public. Both sessions start at 11:00 AM Central, Noon Eastern, 19:00 Estonia time. Participation over zoom requires registration at friendsofestonia.org/gathering, and a Facebook live stream will also be available at facebook.com/friendsofestonia

Friends of Estonia (FOE) is a United Methodist Church (UMC) related organization that coordinates support with individuals and congregations in the United States for the growth and renewal of the church in Estonia.

Working with various UMC boards and agencies as well as World Methodist Council affiliates, FOE provides a forum where Estonian and U.S. congregations can work together to create, renew and sustain ministries in Estonia.

For more information visit friendsofestonia.org or contact: admin@friendsofestonia.org

