

Hallelujah Moment from Lithuania

"From Zero to Six"

By Jodi L. Cataldo

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Gražina on the day of her commissioning. Photo courtesy of Egle Chomyniene.

A huge smile appeared on the face of Gražina Bielousova as she received bouquet after bouquet of flowers in honor of her commissioning as a Probationary Elder. Gražina became the sixth Lithuanian indigenous and the second woman pastor in a country where a short time ago there were none.

The journey began in 1995 when The United Methodist Church in Lithuania reemerged after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. After a few years, Rev. Kristin Markay began the work of church planting in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. Gražina was one of the first youth to become involved in that church plant. Early on she felt the call of God on her life and began studying at the Lithuanian Christian College in Klaipeda with the support and encouragement of her home congregation.

Gražina then went on to graduate from Duke Divinity School with a Master of Divinity. Today she serves the Šv. Luko United Methodist Church in her home country.

The appointment of indigenous pastors and leaders such as Gražina is the culmination of mission efforts in a new initiative. Missionaries like Kristin Markay work to develop new churches and new leadership. It is an indescribable joy to arrive at this place in the journey when gifted indigenous persons assume leadership roles.

What is an even greater joy is when new initiatives, such as Lithuania, begin to explore how they, too, can plant new churches within their own context. From zero to six is only the beginning. Stay tuned.

Ways to Support this Ministry

You can support the ministry of the Lithuanian Mission Initiative by sharing your gifts through The Advance or by designated giving through your local church:

[# 12168A](#) - Lithuanian Mission Initiative

[# 400400](#) - The 400 Fund (for planting 400 new churches)

To learn more about the Lithuania United Methodist Church, go to: www.lithuaniaumc.org .



Hallelujah Moments

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