



# Port Orchard Church of Christ

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Jesus is Lord · Jesus is Lifted · Jesus is Lived

## Zagreb, Croatia

**A little historical background:** Most people in the US had never heard of Croatia until the Balkan wars of the 1990s. Croatia had been a part of Communist Yugoslavia, which emerged shortly after the end of WW II, and was made up of six republics: Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, Montenegro and Macedonia. After the death of its autocratic leader Tito in 1980 the Yugoslav federation found itself in crisis, with bickering between ethnic groups and surging nationalist sentiments. In 1991 Croatia and Slovenia (the two northern-most and most “Western-leaning” republics) broke away and declared independence. Thus began a four-year war between Croatia and the Serbian-controlled Yugoslav army, which sided with ethnic Serb rebels living in Croatia who opposed independence. Croatia eventually prevailed, but only after much destruction and suffering. (In 2013 Croatia was admitted to the European Union.) However, conflict in the other parts of the former Yugoslavia would continue for several more years.

**Biblical Institute, Zagreb:** For the last few years our congregation has had the privilege of supporting the Bibli-

cal Institute (Biblijski institut) in Zagreb, Croatia. In 1990 the Zagreb Church of Christ started a Bible School as one of its ministries, focused primarily on classes for members and friends of the church. For several years the school offered courses in Bible, Theology, and Church History. In 1999 the church invited Tom and Sandra Sibley to move to Zagreb with the purpose of developing the school to prepare Croats as ministers, church planters, and leaders for other Christian ministries. For the last 18 years Tom, with Sandra’s support, has worked tirelessly to grow the school, which now ministers to not only the churches of Christ in Croatia but to other Eastern Europe countries as well. Courses are offered in the areas of Preaching, Ministry, Biblical Studies, Church History, as well as in Greek and Hebrew. Undergraduate degrees are offered and, in partnership with Abilene Christian University and Lipscomb University in the U.S., the Institute is now able to offer graduate programs to its graduates (these schools also generously supply visiting faculty for the Institute).

*(Continued on back page.)*

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### Church Staff:

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## Delano Bay Christian Summer Camp Registration

Registration for camp sessions is occurring now for grades 1-12. If you are in 11th or 12th Grades or are a 2018 Graduate, your camp session is coming up soon: June 23-30. See the Youth board in the foyer for information on camp dates, discount cut-off dates, and fees. Print a registration form at [www.delanobay.org](http://www.delanobay.org). Send registration forms and payments to DBCC, PO Box 44347, Tacoma, WA 98448 (this address is also listed on the registration form).

*"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"*

*Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.'" Matthew 22:36-40 New International Version (NIV)*

### Ways To Help The Homeless

- ◇ Donate your gently used clothing and household items to Abraham's House which provides them to families in need. 360-405-0488
- ◇ St Vincent's Shelter needs cleaning supplies, laundry soap, gas cards, etc. The assistance office needs toilet paper, travel sized soap and conditions and food items.
- ◇ Purchase toothbrush/paste, deodorant, tampons/pads, shampoo/conditioner and donate to Agape Unlimited for residents transitioning out of homelessness. 360-373-1529
- ◇ Kitsap Rescue Mission needs grocery store gift cards to purchase food to feed the homeless
- ◇ Contact Helpline and ask what items of food are needed the most for the homeless or plant a row for the hungry in your garden and donate it to your local food bank.
- ◇ Every school district has a "Homeless Liaison" who works with their kids. Call your district's administration office to connect with them and ask them what they need to help their students stay in and succeed in school.

*These are just a few suggestions. There are brochures on the table in the foyer with other suggestions. We may not be able to wipe out homelessness, but we can at the very least do our best to help alleviate it in some small way.*

## Our Prayer List

### Healing:

Charlotte Hahn

Delores Brun

Runell Mason

David Latham

All Those Friends & Relatives Undergoing Treatments for Cancer

### Encouragement:

Dave & Julie Snypp

Our Number who Cannot Attend Services

Tiny Cabin Fact-Finding Team

### Travelling:

Greers, Sneads, Frys, Snypps

Don Jordan

### Other:

2018 Graduates

Our children, church, nation, President Trump and ministries.

That God will bless our deacons with wisdom in reaching the many decisions they are entrusted with.

Direction of our congregation.

**May 27, 2018**

Worship: 77

Class: --

Offering: \$2,806.00

**(Continued from front page.)**

The school's reach and influence is hard to overstate, not just to the churches of Christ, but to the broader evangelical community. To mention just a few important things BI is involved in:

- ◇ Basic Bible Knowledge Certificate extension program is now being offered in the Adriatic coastal cities of Split and Rijeka.
- ◇ All over Croatia and Slovenia churches are being led by BI graduates.
- ◇ The Institute has sponsored numerous biblical seminars and programs open to the public.
- ◇ It continues to translate and publish books on theology, including (recently) Christianity on Trial, by Mark Lanier (IVP Press).
- ◇ BI students helped hold "Week of the Bible," which included giving away 1000 New Testaments to University of Zagreb students and included the first public reading of Scripture in the center of Zagreb. Readers read aloud the Gospel according to Luke in the Franciscan chapel.

- ◇ The Institute has the largest and best theological library in Zagreb (due in part to a large donation of books from Cascade College in Portland when it closed its doors in 2009, as well as the donation of several libraries of private individuals).
- ◇ Since 2011 BI has sponsored an annual summer "Champs Camp" drawing 80+ children from the community (in addition to a long waiting list!). Bible teaching and fun activities are directed by local staff and supported by visiting youth from the U.S.

God has richly blessed this work. From its humble beginnings until now the aim of the school has been to not just be an academic institution (although it has established an excellent reputation in this regard), but to support spiritual growth and training for those who would be leaders in the church, as well as individuals who simply want to deepen their own Bible knowledge and relationship to Christ. To this end individuals can audit courses or enroll in one of several certificate programs.

**Tom and Sandra Sibley:** When Tom and

Sandra in 1996 left their jobs and sold their home in Kentucky and moved to Croatia they made a long-term commitment: They built a home near Zagreb, and plan to stay there for the rest of their lives. Their home has always been and continues to be a welcoming place for missionaries from other countries, visitors from the U.S., as well as Croats who need a temporary place to live; they have housed several couples for months at a time. As Sandra says, "this is God's house, not ours." Although Tom last year retired from his official role as director of the Institute, he continues to teach courses, counsel students, and he and Sandra are focusing on building up the local church, where Tom serves as an elder. They have unselfishly ministered to our congregation during numerous visits to Port Orchard, for which we are very grateful, and we hold a very special place in their hearts as well.

(Note: Tom and Sandra's personal financial support is provided by a church in Texas, whereas our support goes directly toward the ministries of the Institute.)

-James & Connie Greer

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