

Friends of the Læstadius Museum

2015 – Powerful personages from the Torne valley

The Læstadius days were held in Pello on July 7. We celebrated Ragnar Lassinantti, born 100 years ago, former head of the Luleå region, important politician, strong supporter of the Torne valley and the life of Læstadius. His son Gunnar Lassinantti, and also Paavo Korteniemi from Pello, remembered Ragnar in their speeches. The former vicar Oskar Haapaniemi, born 110 years ago, was also presented in a speech by Karl-Erik Tjäder.

In the afternoon we made a bus tour around the home surroundings of Lassinantti and Haapaniemi, followed by a visit to the Svanstein church and wreath-laying at Lassinantti's grave. In the evening a sermon was held in the Finnish Pello church.

On July 8 we sat together at Kyrkans Hus in Pajala, planning and discussing the coming years, followed by the FLM annual meeting.

During the summer the Pajala parish has guided visitors to the museum and the old vicarage. Anneli Mäkinen has supported the young guides and guided Finnish visitors. In September the Finnish church journal Kotimaa published a deserving reportage of Læstadius, the museum and the Finnish Læstadius walk.

2016 - On cultivators of word and nature in læstadian countryside

The Læstadius days this year started on July 12, celebrating important cultivators of words and grounds at the Erkheikki village west of Pajala. These men were Walde Lorens Wanhainen and the brothers William and Svante Snell. We visited the local farmyard, the Kamaripirtii cottage and the Snell house. About 50 persons were assembled in the local hall, listening to Birgitta Osterman presenting her father William and her uncle Svante, and also listening to a speech on Walde Wanhainen by Lars Elenius. We also admired an old film presenting the Torne valley 1943.

On the second day July 13 we sat again at Kyrkans Hus, this time with fruitful discussions on the future of the museum and our association FLM. Plans for the next year at Kvikkjokk were presented. In the evening Paavo and Anja Korteniemi held a short sermon in the old vicarage.

On Tuesday July 14 Anneli and Hans met the vicar Kaarlo Kult. He and his family has now moved into the upper store of the yellow vicarage. In the bottom entrance a new museum reception is prepared, including two rooms for exhibitions and information displays. The wooden top roof of the old vicarage is replaced with a new one, to survive many years. Brita Cajsa's garden has been restored and will be maintained and developed. The parish also has plans to restore the old church grounds at Kengis. We congratulate the parish to this face lift.



2017 – 200 years after the death of Carl Eric Læstadius

On July 7 and 8 we spent our Læstadius days at Kvikkjokk, the place where the brothers Lars Levi and Petrus grow up with their brother. He died on July 7, 1817. Our association “Friends of the Læstadius Museum” (FLM) arranged the meeting, together with the parish of Jokkmokk, the Linné foundation “Polar Circle”, and Luleå Stiftshistoriska sällskap.

On Friday July 7 the vicar Gotthard Nilsson held a memorial service outside the church and near Carl Eric's grave, with many attendants. Professor Daniel Lindmark from Umeå then presented the works of Carl Eric and his grandfather Johan III Læstadius, with focus on their missions in Sapmi. After the presentation the Jokkmokk parish invited us to a coffee break with delicious snacks.

In the church we studied an exhibition of photos from the 1860 decennium, originally from the camera of Lotten Düben. The photos presented the vicar Johan VI Læstadius and his family, and also pictures of the landscape and buildings around Kvikkjokk.

The genealogist Hans Læstadius presented the descendants of Carl Eric to about 50 persons in the audience in the church, of which 14 attendants were directly related. Fritx Læstadius, formerly Niemi, told us the story when DNA tests confirmed his close relation to Lars Levi Læstadius. In the evening we all enjoyed a delicious dinner at the ÅrreNjarka mountain village.

After the dinner FLM held its last annual meeting, when we discussed the future of the Læstadius museum. The Pajala parish plans to take care of the museum and guiding visitors, and to extend and renew the area around the old vicarage.

On Saturday July 8 we learnt a lot about the flora at Kvikkjokk, led by the amateur botanist Lars Andersson from Luleå, married to the Læstadius descendant Inger Elenius. In the afternoon Hans Fowelin from Lund presented ideas of the old “priestly way” between Kvikkjokk and Alkavare chapel, illustrated by fantastic pictures. The foundation “Linné Polar Circle” held its annual meeting after a coffee break.

The two brothers and professors Erkki and Esko Alasaarela (from Oulu in Finland) presented during Saturday afternoon their richly illustrated book, entitled “In the footsteps of Læstadius”. A fantastic book which we later handed over to the FLM founders and enthusiasts Anneli Mäkinen, Dan Elenius, Bertil Kero, Hans Læstadius and Lauri Koistinen.

