



**HISTORY
INTEGRITY
TRUTH
SCRIPTURE**

www.wittenbergcomo.com



April/May 2021 Newsletter Easter, and Three More Holidays!

Easter - The Season of Resurrection

The season of Lent is a quiet one. For forty days, plus Sundays, we lay down the singing of the Alleluia, the Gloria, and many of the other celebratory traditions of the Church. Many Christians around the world engage in fasts, often becoming gradually more rigorous as the season progresses.

The culmination of Jesus' ministry for us is remembered on Good Friday, when we realize, yet again, that Jesus really did give his life for us. His words from the cross, "It is finished," tell us that the suffering for our sin is complete. Jesus has atoned for our sin, paid its price, and taken away the cause for offense before God which we brought upon ourselves.

What of our new season, then, the one which began this year on April 4? It is the celebration of Christ's resurrection, his rising from the dead, his demonstrating that death and the grave cannot hold him and, finally, will not hold us. While Lent gave us a time to express our sorrow at our sinful condition, Easter gives us a time to express our joy at the life Jesus gives, eternal life.

We must confess, we knew all along how the story ended. Unlike the apostles Jesus had called, who fled at his arrest, we are not forgetful. Not one of the followers of Jesus expected to see him alive ever again. The women on the morning of the Resurrection were bringing spices to complete his burial rites. They expected to find him dead. In the longer ending of Mark's Gospel, Jesus criticizes his disciples because they didn't believe the witnesses of the resurrection he had sent them earlier in the day.

We know the end of the story. Christ rises from the dead. Death no longer has dominion over him.

This means that death has no dominion over us who believe in Jesus.

The season of Easter is a season of celebration. We call out, "Christ is risen" and respond, "He is risen indeed, Alleluia!"

During the season of Easter we typically have readings from Acts rather than our Old Testament reading. We walk through some of the earliest days of the Christian Church. We recognize that Jesus appeared to his disciples for forty days after his resurrection, before being taken up into heaven. We remember that on the fiftieth day, the Holy Spirit descended on the believers, as described in Acts chapter two. And we prepare for the life that follows in that next season of the Church year, the season of Pentecost.

This brings us back to joyful anticipation. The Christian life, the Easter life, is a life spent looking forward to how Jesus will raise us in the last day, and how he will raise all who believe on him. We call out to him in joy. We invite others to come, listen, and believe. We repeat the refrain. He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

And since, as of the start of May, I have given up on the idea of an April newsletter, we go on to consider the three special celebrations that will happen this year during the month of May.

Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity

The three holidays we have this May, Ascension Day, Pentecost, and Trinity Sunday, are what we call "movable feasts." They are all calculated in relation to the celebration of Easter, which moves based on the lunar calendar.

After Jesus' resurrection, he spent forty days appearing to disciples. We can read a lot about this in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, which is often called "the resurrection chapter." At the end of those forty days, as described at the end of the Gospels and the beginning of Acts, Jesus ascended to heaven. Ascension Day, therefore, is always on a Thursday. Not many churches still celebrate the Ascension. This is probably because it is on a Thursday. Our culture doesn't really deal with weekday celebrations very well. Ascension is important, though, because it is the time we realize that our destination in the resurrection is not to be on this earth. It is to be taken up to the heavenly realms with Christ as our leader. Life in the resurrection will not be simply another version of life here. It will translate us, fully and finally, to the new heavens and new earth, where all is completely right.

After the ascension, the disciples went to Jerusalem to wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit to come to them. We see this described in the first two chapters of Acts. They gathered and prayed. This gathering was not just the eleven remaining apostles, but it included over a hundred people.

The feast of Pentecost was one of God's commanded celebrations in the Old Testament. It was the time when the first of the harvest would be brought in as an offering. The name "pentecost" comes from the Greek word for "fifty" because it happened fifty days after Passover. On the day of Pentecost, as described in Acts, the Holy Spirit fell upon the first Christians. There were miraculous signs. On that day, thanks to the work of the Holy Spirit and Peter's preaching, several thousand people believed on Christ. These people, gathered from all around the Mediterranean world, who had come to Jerusalem to bring gifts to the temple, went home carrying the Gospel with them. They were the firstfruits, offered to God. We often consider Pentecost to be the actual birth of the Christian church, as it is the time when the Gospel was first spread clearly.

The Sunday after Pentecost also falls within May this year. It isn't Memorial Day. It's Trinity Sunday. On Trinity Sunday we recognize and celebrate the fact that only Christianity has the concept of a Triune God. He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God in three persons. This God, the true God, is unique among all world religions.

Christianity is very much its own thing. We are different from the rest of our world. We have a risen and ascended savior. We have been given the Holy Spirit. And God, the Triune God, is absolutely unique.

As we celebrate the unique nature of the Christian faith, we also remember that God, in Christ, calls all people everywhere to come to him for cleansing and forgiveness of sins. He invites all of us, and all of our community, to be adopted into his family. He promises to be with us always. And he has shown himself to keep his promises. For this reason, we want to be inviting our friends, our neighbors, our co-workers, all the people we associate with, to trust in Jesus, the only one who can and does forgive all our sin. Let's invite them to experience that in the context of the church, our local church, where we gather as Christ's people to receive all his gifts.

Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry is here to bring this historic Christian message to our college communities. We always want to be supportive of the local church, where God has placed a variety of gifted people together to live out their Christian life together.

Wittenberg Door Financial Update

Thank you so much for your support! We'd still love to add people to the Wittenberg Door 300 and see growth which will allow WDCM to be staffed full-time in the next few years. There is always plenty of need for face-to-face pastoral care on and around our campuses. I will be

bold, then, and ask if you are not a financial supporter that you would consider making a contribution on a regular basis. Your monthly support of \$30-\$50 can make an eternal difference in the lives of our collegiate communities. Please continue to invite your friends and associates to consider supporting this work.

Though I'm serving a local church, I do have the ability to make a visit to a congregation that is thinking of providing support for this ministry. We can and will work out a visit so your congregation can hear how to be partners with us in providing the face to face pastoral care on campus that is our hallmark.

Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Checks mailed to us are deposited with no commission paid to any intermediary. Most of our contributions are actually received this way, but we can receive funds sent through Paypal or Google Pay as well. Giving is easy! Simply visit our website at www.wittenbergcomo.com and click on "about" and "support us."

Additional Benevolence

Please continue to pray with us, and send us suggestions, as we try to identify an additional benevolence project to engage in. We've built giving into the DNA of Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry. 10% of contributions go to the American Association of Lutheran Churches, our overseeing church body. In the past we have often found needs to which people could contribute. It takes money to support those who take the Gospel around the world.

While we seek to identify another project, please join with us in praying that the Lord would continue to raise up workers in His kingdom, particularly those who have a desire to serve as pastors to areas that would otherwise be underserved. The harvest is great and the laborers are few.

Upcoming Activities:

Thursdays at 12:30 pm – Lunch and Learn Bible discussion live at the MU Student Center

Watch the calendar, follow our Facebook page, and friend WDCM Chaplain on Facebook to see times and places where Pastor Spotts can be found around campuses in coffee shops or restaurants!

What to say? We hope our county will release its restrictions just in time for many to leave town. But we'll be trying to do some activities together.

Sundays, 10:00 a.m. Pastor Spotts at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Centralia MO

We always have something new at the website, the blog, and the activities calendar. Please be a friend on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. If you're in Columbia, let's get together on or near campus. Go to <https://www.wittenbergcomo.com/support-us.html> to provide financial support. The Wittenberg Door 300 needs you!