



**HISTORY
INTEGRITY
TRUTH
SCRIPTURE**

www.wittenbergcomo.com



November 2020 Newsletter The Changing of the Seasons

For a second month in a row I don't have any visual illustrations to share. Perhaps it has been difficult to deal with pictures in this world of masked faces. Please use your imagination.

One of the features of Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry that we haven't talked about as much as we should is our relationship to historic Christian faith AND PRACTICE!! Over the past six years we've done a lot to make historic Christianity accessible to onlookers. You only have to look through our blog archives, the recording archives, and dig a little bit to see that we talk about the history of Christianity.

What does that view of history have to do with us today, in the here and now? It dates me, but I remember (vaguely), the comedian Flip Wilson in the early 1970s doing sketches where he is involved in "The Church of What's Happenin' Now." The premise is that all meaning of Christianity is directly related to what I'm feeling today. It has nothing to do with historic thought, faith, prayers, and celebrations. It's all about feelings, and yesterday's feelings don't even matter.

When my wife and I made the move to the Lutheran Reformation, we were frankly tired of trying to deal with forms of Christianity that focused on feelings, on current ideas, on the powerful, the new, the relevant. We had come to a conclusion that relevance is, in essence, going to be very long lasting. I won't say eternal, because many of the practices we consider powerful and relevant and which have stood the test of time will not last into eternity. They are the anticipation of eternal life.

However, we wanted something lasting. One pastor friend of mine says he has nothing against contemporary worship, but he does have something against temporary worship. I must agree.

Christians today are tied directly to almost two thousand years of Christianity, and, slightly less directly, to the principles of Judaism which date back several thousand additional years. How do we relate to those saints of God from former ages? We'll try to see in this year's work.

Why do I bring that idea up at this time? I am writing this newsletter cover shortly after completing the last of my blog posts on the historic one-year lectionary as used in Lutheranism. Granted, lectionary readings are occasionally tweaked here and there, but many Christians have been reading essentially the same lessons on Sundays for the past sixteen centuries or more. I had previously done a three-year series using the three-year lectionary,

but in the past Church year I moved to the one-year lectionary. Now, I'm going to work through feasts and festivals of the Church as recognized by the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, who publish some very helpful materials for devotions and corporate worship.

Considering the different festivals of the Church, as they come up in the Christian year, will help us keep a focus on the way Christians have considered their rhythm of life over the centuries. The Church year begins on the Sunday closest to November 30, St. Andrew's Day, because St. Andrew was the first disciple called to Jesus. It then walks through the life and ministry of Christ and the early Church in an orderly manner. Through the year we meet important characters and reflect on the significance of the different events recorded in Scripture. We have a framework for our life. This is a good thing. We'll take the chance to reflect on it carefully.

It's still November. We're recognizing the coming close of the Church year. Readings are focused on the second coming of Christ and the end of the world. They will tend to have a greater sense of urgency as we move through the month.

We're not in the Church of What's Happenin' Now. We're in Christianity. For generation after generation, Christians have lived in a world which is not really their home. We have lived in eager anticipation of the end of time, though we recognize it is going to be a great cataclysm. How have we lived in this setting? We live in hope, hope of the resurrection, hope of the effective completed work of Christ to atone for sin, hope of realizing the reconciliation God has made for us through Christ's death on our behalf. We bring comfort and charity to our world, knowing that God loved the whole world and gave himself for us.

We'll keep trying to find ways to spread that love on campus, and in all the many people we touch. Times are hard! We've been told we are nonessential, that visiting and caring for others is a potential danger, that souls are not worth anything but bodies are. We choose to stand with the Christians throughout the ages who have loved and served their neighbors, even in times of warfare, plague, and pestilence, bringing the comfort of the Gospel.

Wittenberg Door Financial Update

Ministry expenses have remained below budget, largely because travel and dinners have not been happening. We're gradually coming to the conclusion that they won't be starting up again in the near future. This will be a topic of consideration as we project a 2021 budget. Giving has remained stable. At present income represents about 45% of the year's budget. We trust that as the doors are open for more activities including support raising that income will increase. It was an ambitious step to begin tracking our giving with the hope of raising the entire budget for Wittenberg Door activity including full support for pastoral staff. Non-Wittenberg Door income has kept everything running. However, giving has been a great encouragement and we do have hopes that over the next few years we will come to be in a position of full support. It is our goal to be able to support a full-time pastor, fully engaged in face-to-face care in the campus environments. There's always plenty to do.

We still need additional contributors. Our goal remains to have a total of about 300 monthly individual contributors or about 30 churches or organizations, each representing about the equivalent of 10 monthly donors. We are realistically a little over 60% of the support we need to be fiscally responsible in the long run. We've made it thus far, by God's grace, for which we are thankful.

If you or people you know want to support the work of bringing on-site, face to face, pastoral care to our academic communities, please consider making Wittenberg Door a part of your regular charitable giving. 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.”

Uganda Update:

Last month I told you that our friend Alice would have an MRI and a more thorough medical work-up in November. I learned that it is now scheduled for the start of December. Her medical team thinks she is progressing very well. And, thanks be to God, with her faithful help her medical bills are all currently covered!

Our friends at Eleos Ministries have been able to start sending cards and letters into Uganda again. School has begun meeting again. We are praying for a return to normalcy as the pandemic may begin to ease. Particularly in countries with very little margin of wealth, any disruption can plunge people into hopeless poverty. It is essential that we remember those less fortunate than ourselves in our prayers and in our giving.

Upcoming Activities:

Thursdays at 12:30 pm – Lunch and Learn Bible discussion live and via Zoom

Watch the calendar for times and places where Pastor Spotts can be found around campuses in coffee shops or restaurants!

We have suspended the Matins broadcasts since local churches have managed to strengthen their online presence and make services available.

We have suspended our picnics in parks because . . . well . . . who wants to eat in a park when it's really cold??

Interest is building for a Bible discussion group at Stephens College. They will be on break starting the third week in November until January.

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!