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December 2020 Newsletter Advent Leads to Christmas

I have a friend who likes to coin new words. One he spent several years arguing with me about is the word "calendarize." Though it isn't a word, we could probably do some calendarizing here. The season of Advent is upon us! It's a time of anticipation, of longing, of pleading with our Lord and Savior to come and save us. Advent begins on the Sunday that is closest to November 30. So this year, it starts on Sunday the 29th. The season then runs through December 24.

During the time of Advent, our Scripture readings are focused on the need for Christ to come, both in the first coming in Bethlehem, and in the second coming, when everyone will see him. In many churches, and many homes as well, during their family devotions, an advent wreath is used. This is a pretty recent tradition, first done in the 1830s. On the first Sunday a candle representing hope will be lit. The second Sunday introduces a candle representing faith. Both of these candles are purple, symbolizing royalty and preparation. The third Sunday uses a rose colored candle signifying joy. On the fourth Sunday we add a purple candle symbolizing peace. On Christmas Day, the finish line, the white Christ candle, representing purity, is lit. At that time, the season changes from Advent, with its blue or violet color scheme, to Christmas, which is all dressed in white.



Photo Credit:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advent_wreath



*Photo Credit: D. Spotts, Trinity
Lutheran Church, Columbia
MO*

As we continue calendarizing, the other season that begins in December is . . . Christmas! It *begins* in December, but includes twelve days, running through January 5. Many churches and cultures have ended the season with an elaborate Twelfth Night celebration. During the season of Christmas, there are a number of other holidays. We've observed some "Saint's Days" in the past months, when one has come on a Sunday. These are days when the Church has traditionally remembered something that they think happened on that date. For an individual, it is normally the date that person died and received his eternal inheritance.

What are those holidays within the season of Christmas? We remember St. Stephen from the book of Acts on December 26. We remember John the Evangelist on December 27. We remember the Holy Innocents, who were killed by Herod's forces looking for Jesus on December 28. We remember the Circumcision and Naming of Jesus on January 1. We then move to the day and season of Epiphany starting on January 6. When people called the end of December "the holidays" that was some of what they were talking about.

I pray that we would remember Jesus throughout this holiday season. That during Advent we would be eagerly praying that he would come and set things right. That during Christmas we would be rejoicing that he has come to save us. The Christian life has a rhythm and a calendar all its own. Recognizing it is a powerful testimony to our world. Why did we set aside extra time for extra church services? Because the season is real!

Wittenberg Door Financial Update

The Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry Board of Directors will be meeting in the month of December to discuss ministry priorities and budget. We really want to be the best stewards we can of the finances that our supporters have entrusted us with. Giving has remained stable. At present it looks like Wittenberg Door is about 50% funded. 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:

We have some fairly big news from our friends in Uganda. Pastor Simon Peter is in the process of building a house, after running into difficulty with a landlord. Some contributors have provided him with the ability to get brick walls up! He is still working on little details like a roof, windows, doors, and a floor. The land was left to him by a relative.



Having a secure location to live should help Pastor Simon Peter improve his ability to concentrate on reaching the communities surrounding his home with the Gospel. Though he didn't expect to be building a house this year, God is bringing it to pass by His wisdom.

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!