

**Wittenberg Lutheran Center**  
**201 South Main St., Normal, IL**  
**(Located at the corner of Main St. and College Ave.)**  
**Ph. (309) 425-5971**



**WITTENBERG**  
LUTHERAN CENTER

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Normal, IL 61761



## August 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 I-Hub Fall Welcome Night	16
ISU WELCOME WEEK						
17 Bible Study 9:30 Worship 10:30	18 Classes begin ISU/HCC	19	20 Bible Study 6:00 Chapel 7:15	21	22	23 Lutherans for Life Illinois @Auburn
24 Bible Study 9:30 Worship 10:30 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday Lunch	25 Classes begin IWU	26 Festival ISU 10-2	27 Wittenberg at Festival ISU 10-2 Bible Study 6:00 Chapel 7:15	28	29 Board Game Night 6-8	30

## September 2025

31 Bible Study 9:30 Worship 10:30	1 Happy Labor Day! NO CLASSES IWU/HCC/ISU	2	3 Bible Study 6:00 Chapel 7:15	4	5 INN 6:30	6
7 Bible Study 9:30 Worship 10:30	8	9	10 Bible Study 6:00 Chapel 7:15	11	12	13 Service Project @ Christ Normal
14 Bible Study 9:30 Worship 10:30	15	16	17 Bible Study 6:00 Chapel 7:15	18	19 I-Hub	20
21 Bible Study 9:30 Worship 10:30 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday lunch	22	23	24 Bible Study 6:00 Chapel 7:15	25	26	27
28 Bible Study 9:30 Worship 10:30	29	30	1 Bible Study 6:00 Chapel 7:15	2	3	4



## FROM the PASTOR

Four events this summer prompted me to think about the way Christianity has survived all these years. The first thing was a Bible study on Colossians, and the challenge the early Church faced during the Apostolic age. Judaism and Gnosticism were the first major heresies to be addressed. Now, if you're like a lot of people, the word "heresy" conjures up images of medieval inquisitors casting stern judgments on the "heretics" who poison the thoughts of the unsuspecting laity. The word has actually been in use much longer than the middle ages. The word "heresy" was first used during the inter-testament period in Greece. The Greek word from which "heresy" derives (αἵρεσις, *haireisis*) originally meant "choice" or "opinion." In broader terms, a heresy is any belief, theory, or opinion that is contrary to what is the established custom or belief. The more narrow definition has limited the established norm to that which is Biblical.

But even then, the concept of heresy was really nothing so new. Although Hebrew doesn't have the words "heresy" or "heretic", we often see "blasphemy" and "blasphemer" in the Old Testament. We are consistently warned of those who prophesy or teach falsely. By the time of the Apostles, there were many schools of philosophy. The "Judaizers" and the "Gnostics" were active in Christian congregations throughout Asia Minor, one demanding adherence to Jewish traditions, the other spreading the heresy of a "secret" knowledge of God, and of the dualism of good vs. evil, spirit vs. flesh.

*"The word appears nine times in the New Testament, often referring to a religious sect that was characterized by its distinct opinions or practices (Acts 5:17; 15:5; 24:5; 26:5). The Biblical term 'heresy' could also characterize those who departed from acceptable beliefs and conduct (Acts 24:14; 28:22). The word appears twice in Paul's letters to describe unhealthy divisions that should be avoided (1 Cor 11:19; Gal 5:20)."* (New Bible dictionary, 3rd ed., p. 467).

The second event of the summer was the 1,700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed. The very first ever ecumenical Council of the Christian Church was held in Nicea in the summer of 325. It produced a Trinitarian confession of faith still used in the Church today. Primarily, it addresses the Incarnation, and the heresy of Arianism, the idea that Jesus is some kind of lesser god. A few years later, the Third Article regarding the Holy Spirit was strengthened to address the lingering heresy of subordination.

The third event I experienced was our District Convention, where we looked into some of the heresies that were taking place during the early days of the Reformation. The Council of Trent drove a wedge between the Roman Catholics and everybody else. Among the "protestants", the heresy of anti-nomianism taught that the Law was no longer necessary. Charismatic sophistry was being practiced, as well as re-baptism. The dual nature of Christ was being denied. False teaching, blasphemy, and heresy.

The fourth thing that struck me was our summer book review on "The Hammer of God", a trilogy set in different eras of the "modern" Church, which witnessed to the heretical movements of the day (Vatican I, the Enlightenment, Rationalism, Humanism). They all served to "water down" the true Gospel, and have proved to be stumbling blocks to our faith. That's why **Jude 3** encourages us to "*contend for the faith*". We still hold today that the Church only has the right to confirm Biblical truth, not make up new truth. Our creeds and doctrines make explicit what has always been implicit in Scripture. So on this basis, we can say with authority that Mormonism is heresy. The Prosperity gospel is heresy. Universalism is heresy. They each make up another gospel. People who preach them are modern-day heretics.

St. John Chrysostom, the presbyter of Antioch in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, wrote: "*There comes a heathen, and says 'I wish to become a Christian, but I know not who to join; there is so much fighting and faction among you, so much confusion; which doctrine am I to choose?' How shall we answer him? Each of you asserts 'I speak the truth'. No doubt this is in our favor, for if we told you to be persuaded by arguments, you might well be perplexed, but if we bid you believe the scriptures, and these are simple and true, the decision is easy for you. If any agree with the scriptures, he is the Christian. If any fight against them, he's far from this rule.*" GOD BE WITH YOU! BEAR HIS FRUIT! CONTEND FOR THE FAITH!

Pastor Bill



## NEW ACQUISITIONS (additions to our library)

Walking Together: Simple Steps for Discipleship

Blessed Be His Name: Revealing the Sacred Names of God

Myth of the Millennial: Connecting Generations in the Church

Clearly Christian: Following Jesus in this Age of Confusion

Eternal Anthems: The Story Behind Your Favorite Hymns, Vol. 2

How to Respond to Judaism



## Milestones of Our Lutheran heritage

**Five-hundred years ago** this summer, on June 13, 1525 Martin Luther and Katharina von Bora were married in a small private ceremony at the monastery in Wittenberg known as "the Black Cloister" where Martin lived. This would later become their home, a gift from John the Steadfast. Two weeks later, their wedding was celebrated publicly at the town Church (aka St. Mary's, right) in Wittenberg, presided by Johannes Bugenhagen. Martin was 41 and Katie 26. Their marriage bore fruit and produced six children, two of whom died of childhood disease. They also raised 4 orphaned children in their home. Their wedding anniversary is celebrated every year with a town-wide festival and parade through the streets of Wittenberg.



## DOLLARS for MISSIONS Coming to Wittenberg

As stewards of God's gifts, we look to make the most of the blessings He has provided for us. The Central Illinois District's board of missions has successfully raised funds through its **Dollars for Missions** campaign. Wittenberg is set to receive the next disbursement of these funds for a project that has been on our "wish list" for a while.

Originally installed in 1980, the fiberglass batt insulation above our chancel area has fallen from its intended place (immediately under the roof), allowing heat to escape through the roof. The area (approx. 775 sq. ft.) is not accessible due to a non-structural ceiling above the altar and organ area. Replacing this insulation will require ingenuity and creativity, beyond the relatively minor costs for materials. With thanksgiving for the funds coming in, we pray for a qualified contractor who can take on this much-needed corrective project. If anyone would like to contribute or learn more about this project and/or the District's Dollars for Missions effort, please go to [www.cidlcms.org/ministry-a-dollar-for-missions](http://www.cidlcms.org/ministry-a-dollar-for-missions).