



# Wittenberg Lutheran Church

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Rev. Emily Edenfield, Pastor

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is such a joy to be the pastor of a church that is energetic and moving forward, particularly in times that can be so trying. I know it may be difficult to see what is happening, but God is doing amazing things through this congregation we love.

Just as a reminder, here are things that have changed or come back to in-person status at Wittenberg since we moved all of our worship online in March.

- On May 31, we resumed in-person worship.
- The Preschool Program opened in June.
- We started including links to videos in the Midweek Message so that we could hear the hymns that help us worship each week.
- We upgraded our video camera and wifi signal so that our web presence would be more robust, and our sound systems in the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall so that we are more ready to be together. These are permanent improvements that have allowed our preschool to offer a place for virtual learning for elementary school students along with our previous classes.
- Meetings and small groups within Wittenberg began to have some meetings in August.
- Starting September 6, we have resumed having Holy Communion on the first and third Sundays of the month. We have also implemented drive through communion from 12-1 pm on those days.

Many other ministries have been ongoing through the year. Our Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen have changed up their ways of serving but have never missed a minute of their allotted times. We have continued to have council and other meetings through phone and online options throughout this year. Our offices have remained open and our staff has continued to serve.

We are excited to announce that Sunday School will start back in operation on Sunday, September 27. Mark your calendars and plan to come at 10am! Many of our dedicated and talented teachers will be back in their roles, building the faith of this community each week. We will have classes for ages 3 through adults and encourage parents to keep young children with them rather than in the nursery at this time.

As with everything else Wittenberg has been doing, we will be practicing social distancing and wearing masks. We do not plan to offer Sunday School opening or BBW at this time. Some classes will be combined, and many will be meeting in different locations from their usual. We will have those details available to you as things draw closer.

Council also approved a Child and Youth Security Policy this month. We will be implementing background checks for all volunteers who work with our children and youth, among other policies. This is in line with our insurance carrier's recommendations and with policies at other churches. Many of these new policies are similar to what we have been practicing and formalize our measures to ensure the safety of our youngest Lutherans.

Wittenberg has also been a place where our Batesburg-Leesville community could gather. We are glad to be using our facilities for the community good again, as we welcome Girl Scout Troop 1951 back to their regular meetings at Wittenberg on October 8. Girl Scouts USA has well-developed guidelines for troops, which will be adhered to along with Wittenberg's guidelines. We look forward to hosting other community groups over the coming months.

There will be more information coming to you about our most recent updates, but we wanted to share things with you as soon as we could.

Thank you to our Covid Renormalization Task Force for all of the research and conversations that have led to these developments. Thank you to our council for tackling these leadership challenges with good humor, thoughtfulness, and faithfulness. Thank you to you, Lutherans of Wittenberg, for your patience and your prayers.

Your leaders have been in prayer for you and for our congregation throughout this year, and we have been working hard to balance personal safety and community fellowship as we move forward together. It is good to see you, hear from you, and be with you in person and in spirit.

God's Peace,



Pastor Emily Edenfield



Brian Shealy