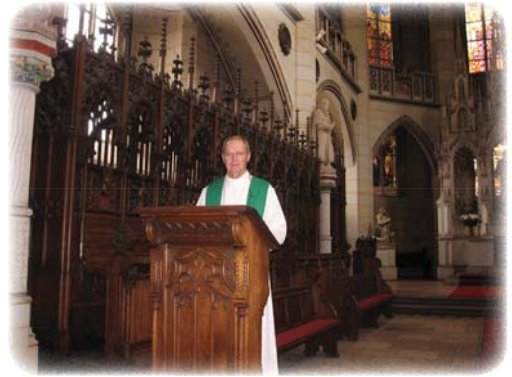


Every year, thousands of people from all parts of the world come to Lutherstadt Wittenberg to visit the sites where Dr. Martin Luther, the great reformer, lived and carried out his ministry along with Dr. Philipp Melanchthon and other colleagues in the 16th century. From July 14 to 28, Rev. William W. Hessler (Faith, Bridgeport) served as the English-speaking Pastor-in-Residence in Wittenberg, Germany, the birthplace of the Reformation. Pastor Hessler, accompanied by his wife, Janis, was one of 13 Lutheran pastors from the United States, Canada and Australia who each served a two-week term during 2009 for the Wittenberg English Ministry.

Established in 1996, the mission of the Wittenberg English Ministry is to “connect Jesus Christ to people through a Christian worship and outreach ministry in English directed toward the international visitors and local residents of Lutherstadt Wittenberg, Germany.” A great majority of these visitors arrive as Christian pilgrims in order to walk “in the footsteps of Luther.” Wanting more than just historical facts, they are on a religious pilgrimage to explore their spiritual roots and broaden their faith. As they visit the churches, see the sites, and walk the streets where Luther walked, these pilgrim/tourists find it deeply fulfilling, highly meaningful, and spiritually rewarding to connect their faith in Jesus Christ with this historic place.



Every year from May through October, pastors conduct English afternoon devotional services in the Corpus Christi Chapel – the oldest building in historic Wittenberg – as well as Saturday evening services in the Schlosskirche – the “Castle Church” where Luther’s 95 theses were nailed to the church doors on October 31, 1517 – and the Stadtkirche – the “Town Church” where Luther did much preaching. In addition, the English-speaking pastors are on hand for Bible study, theological discussion, fellowship, and emergency pastoral care.

On July 24, a group of 28 Lutheran pastors and educators from 22 countries was in Wittenberg as part of an international study tour. About a dozen of them attended the afternoon devotional service. For Pastor Hessler, it was a thrill to sing “A Mighty Fortress” together with Lutherans from Germany, Hong Kong, Palestine, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zambia. Other visitors from the United States, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Japan attended the Saturday evening services. Although the services were conducted in English, it was like a modern-day Pentecost to worship with believers from around the world and to share God’s Word, the Gospel that Martin Luther worked throughout his life to advance.

For more information on the Wittenberg English Ministry, visit www.wittenberg-english-ministry.com.

Lutherstadt Wittenberg, Germany

