

INTERNATIONALE SCHLOSSKIRCHENGEMEINSCHAFT

Dear Members of the International Castle Church Community,

I greet you very warmly from the Castle Church in Lutherstadt Wittenberg!

The world has moved closer together. The digital bridges to which we have grown accustomed—perhaps only by necessity—now lift space and time restrictions and create new opportunities to come together. I remember the wonderful feeling when, while scrolling through my Facebook messages, I came across a just live-streamed service of "my" exchange church in the USA, where I got a lot of impulses in the early 2000's. So, there I was, sitting in my living room and also in the Midwest of the USA, exchanging greetings via chat with names that still were familiar to me.

In the Pentecost narrative we find not only an answer to the ending of the primeval history with the scattering of the peoples. The story of Pentecost refers to the unity of humankind in the miracle of mutual understanding and continues today in digital media. It is good that we can cultivate our community of faith across all political borders, and most recently across the boundaries of space and time.

We would, therefore, cordially invite you to the digital ICCG service on Pentecost Sunday in "your" Schlosskirche in Wittenberg and in this way also give you the opportunity to participate in the life of the congregation.

Despite many restrictions, the Schlosskirche has always been open for services, pastoral care, and an abundance of music during this time. In addition, there were digital offerings on the homepage. Every Sunday there was a musical evening service.

We celebrated Christmas Eve, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and Ascension Day together with the congregation of the Stadtkirche in the courtyard of the Schlosskirche "open air." In this way we were able to invite more people than we would have been able to when celebrating in the churches during the lockdown. In each case, a very special atmosphere was created. We are very happy and grateful for this opportunity. Since Easter, we have held the 10 o'clock services in the Schlosskirche, and musical evening services continue to be held every two weeks.



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Our great longing and hope is that we will again be able to sing joyfully in the services and that the choirs will be able to rehearse regularly. Holy Communion is served with respect for the rules of spacing. The wine is served in small, individual cups due to hygiene regulations. Our new communion cups donated by ICCC are currently serving as blessing cups on the altar. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the donors!

A very special event is coming up on Pentecost Sunday. For the first time since 1975, there will be a confirmation service in the Schlosskirche. Since then, the previous confirmands have been blessed either in the Stadtkirche or in another church in the area. As a congregation we are very happy and wish the confirmands Lena Herzer, Vivien Müller, and Nuria Witter and their families God's blessing. Our thanks go to the Evangelical Academy, the parish of Dobien and the Preachers' Seminary for making the classes possible.

We greet you from far and near and look forward with longing to an in-person encounter again on Reformation Day 2021, Pentecost 2022, or whenever you come to Wittenberg.

Until then, we would like to invite you to be in contact with us via digital media of newsletter, email, or gladly in the **ICCC digital worship service on Pentecost Sunday, May 23, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. (Wittenberg local time)**. You can follow the broadcast live on the ICCC website at the following link: <https://internationale.schlosskirche-wittenberg.de/index.php/de/>.

Warm regards from Lutherstadt Wittenberg!

Matthias Pohl
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