

Trinity Tribune

Trinity Lutheran Church ✠ Paola, Kansas

2021



Sine Dominico Non Possumus

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." (Exodus 20:8)

The Roman Empire classified all religions into two categories, *religio licita* and *religio illicita*. A *religio licita* was a legal religion. This included worshipping any of the numerous pagan deities of the Romans and Greeks, along with those of various other peoples that the Romans conquered and amalgamated into their Empire. On the other hand, a *religio illicita* was an illegal religion. We're so accustomed to the modern concept of freedom of religion that it is difficult for us to conceive that some religions were strictly prohibited and violently persecuted.

After the Romans conquered the Jewish nation in 63 B. C., Judaism was a significant addition to the list of religions classified by the Romans as *religio licita*, and its practice was legal throughout the Empire. That is how the Apostle Paul could be both a Roman citizen, born in a city that was a Roman military outpost, and at the same time a devout Jew, as he declares: *"I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of an important city . . . I am a Roman citizen by birth"* (Acts 21:39, 22:28).

Initially, the first Christians were considered by the Roman authorities to be a new sect of Judaism, like the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians. This new group was first called simply "The Way" (Acts 24:14) and later "Christians" (Acts 11:26). During the first three decades following Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, this legal status that was accorded Christianity under the umbrella of Judaism greatly aided the rapid spread of the faith across the Empire.

However, a drastic change in the status of Christianity came about in 64 A. D., when Emperor Nero blamed a great fire that destroyed most of Rome on the Christians. He needed a scapegoat because it was widely rumored that he himself had the fire started so that he could rebuild the city according to his megalomaniacal plans.

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For the next 250 years Christianity was a prohibited *religio illicita* throughout the Roman Empire, which spanned much of the inhabited world. Enforcement of this ban ebbed and flowed, largely dependent upon the attitude of the reigning Emperor. There were periods of toleration under some Emperors so that the faith, though illegal, was allowed to be openly practiced.

However, other Emperors viciously persecuted Christians, even throwing them to the lions and other wild animals to be eaten alive as "entertainment" in the arenas. But, even during the worst times of persecution Christianity

continued to spread. Indeed, because it seemed as though the more the faith was persecuted the more it grew, the saying arose: *"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."*

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Christianity finally received official status as a *religio licita* when Emperor Constantine himself converted to Christianity and issued the Edict of Milan in 313 A. D., permanently establishing religious toleration for Christianity within the Roman Empire. But, some of the worst persecution of Christianity came in the decade just prior to the faith being granted official status. In 303 A. D. Emperor Diocletian issued an edict ordering the destruction of Christian Scriptures and places of worship across the Empire, and prohibiting Christians from assembling for worship.

The following year a group of 49 Christians in Abitinae, a city in the Roman Province of Africa, now in modern Tunisia, were arrested and found guilty of illegally celebrating Sunday worship. The group included both men and women, and four children. They were violently tortured to force them to renounce their faith, which would have spared them from death, but all held firm and were executed. They are celebrated today for their faithfulness in the face of death as the "Martyrs of Abitinae." They are remembered in the Church calendar on February 12, the date of their martyrdom.

One of those tortured was Emeritus, who admitted that the group of Christians had met for worship at his house. Asked why he had violated the Emperor's

decree, he boldly replied in Latin: "*Sine dominico non possumus*" [SIN-eh doe-MIN-ee-co non PAUSS-oo-h-mus], which means "*We cannot live without Sunday.*" Worship was so essential for them that they would give up their lives rather than give up the Lord's Day. This bold proclamation by the martyr Emeritus became a rallying cry for Christians throughout the ages since, whenever denied freedom of worship: "*Sine Dominico Non Possumus!*"

It is a measure of just how unusual things were in 2020 to note that we were extremely blessed at Trinity to be able to hold in-person worship services every Sunday throughout the year—something that normally would be taken for granted! Though for a time attendance was voluntarily limited to a small "studio audience," and then for about six months we had drive-in services, thankfully we were able to do that!

Fortunately, the restrictions imposed by the civil authorities in our area seem reasonable and manageable and still make it possible to hold services. But, in many parts of the world, even in some parts of the United States, restrictions on churches are so severe as to basically outlaw in-person services.

Sadly, it is not unusual, even in the modern era, for Christian worship to be outlawed in Muslim ruled nations or

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communist countries such as China. But, even in some instances in the United States, the restrictions imposed on account of the virus seem to be oddly targeted toward Christian churches in a discriminatory manner. It takes years for such matters to work their way through the courts, but hopefully the Supreme Court will eventually rule that such infringements upon our First Amendment rights are unconstitutional.

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In addition, the leadership of some churches and denominations have themselves gone beyond what the civil authorities actually require and imposed their own, more onerous restrictions. A mega-church in Atlanta with 40,000 members announced in July that they were cancelling all services indefinitely, and still have not resumed in-person worship. Several months ago the bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ordered their churches across Kansas to cease all in-person services—even for Christmas! One visitor commented that her ELCA congregation has had no services, either in-person or even online, since March.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has a congregational structure, so such decisions are made on the local level by each congregation. It is a great blessing that we at Trinity had the facilities to offer drive-in services when necessary, and have also been able to continue broadcasting audio of our worship into the parking lot, and livestream all our services on Facebook, later uploaded to YouTube, for those unable to attend in person.

We pray that soon the virus will be under control to the point that all restrictions on worship and other church activities can be lifted, and we can return to the normal routine of our congregational life. But, no matter what happens, and whether you worship in person, in the parking lot, or online, make your motto in 2021 the faithful cry of the Martyrs of Abitinae:

"Sine Dominico Non Possumus!"

"We cannot live without Sunday!"

Pastor Kevin Vogts



Sermons for January

Complete videos of all our services, as well as audio and printed text of the sermon only, are available on our church website at www.trinitylcms.org/sermons. Printed copies of that day's sermon and several of the most recent sermons are also available in the Gathering Room.

January 1 (New Year's Day)
"The Year of the Lord's Favor"
Isaiah 61:1-2

January 3 (Epiphany Sunday)
"Epiphany—The Rest of the Christmas Story"
Matthew 2:1-12

January 10 (Baptisms of Our Lord)
"The Hidden Power of God"
2 Kings 5:1-14

January 17
"Your Body Is a Temple"
1 Corinthians 6:19-20

January 24
"Fishers of Men"
Mark 1:16-20

January 31
"The Promised Prophet"
Deuteronomy 18:15

**Quarterly Meeting
January 24**



The first quarterly meeting for 2021 of the Voters Assembly will take place after worship on Sunday, January 24. The Church Council will meet to prepare for the Voters Assembly on Tuesday, January 19 at 7:00pm.



**Worship on
Facebook
and YouTube**

Please help spread the word that videos of all our worship services are livestreamed during the service on our congregation's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/trinitylutheranblock), and later uploaded to our YouTube channel (www.trinitylcms.org/videos). Also, audio and printed text of the sermons and links to the full service videos are on our church website (www.trinitylcms.org/sermons).

Many people don't realize they already have the ability to watch our services in these ways, through their smartphone, tablet, smart TV, computer, or other internet connection. If your smartphone has internet access, go in your browser to www.trinitylcms.org, click on "Sermons," then select the TV icon for the service you would like to view—and in moments it will be just like you're sitting in church!

Our thanks to Kyle Minden, Jon Schlegel, and Clint Haley for all their efforts to upgrade the livestream of services from our church. It is a work in progress, but the audio is already greatly improved and further enhancements are coming. Using multiple cameras allows zooming in on the pulpit, lectern, or other special action.

Two new 70" televisions have been installed in the basement Fellowship Hall to provide excellent viewing for overflow seating. Our recently improved internet connection broadcasts an uninterrupted stream from the church. We are



Poinsettia Donations

Given By

In Memory or Honor Of

Venita & Arlin Prothe (2)	LaVern & Vivian Wilson Vernele Pipes
Stan & Gayle Plummer (2)	John & Bonnie Plummer Leland Gerken
Gladys Prothe & Family (3)	Bob Prothe Myrtle Thoden Nada Thoden
Doris Rodewald	Herman Rodewald
Rev. Kevin & Terese Vogts (2)	Leroy & Ruth Vogts Our Grandparents
Rich & Sally Wood (3)	John & Bonnie Wood Edith Moser

investigating options for somehow providing video of services to those without internet access.

If you have memorial funds you would like used to help with this project please notify chairman Greg Windler or treasurer Paul Brack.



Our records of birthdays and anniversaries may not complete. If your information is missing or inaccurate, please accept our apologies and notify the Church Office at 913-849-3344 or email trinitylutheranblock@gmail.com.

January 1	Bryce Peckman
January 2	Jan Minden
January 2	Anisha O'Barto
January 2	Tara Smith
January 4	Cathy Hieber
January 4	Jessica Parks
January 4	Stan Plummer
January 4	Dustin Prothe
January 5	Levi Alcorn
January 6	Matthew Richardson
January 7	Caylin Garrison
January 7	Sunye Oswalt
January 8	Mike England

January 8	Cormick Ferrell
January 8	Linda Ferrell
January 8	Michael Kriesel
January 9	Jobie Debrick
January 10	Don Minden
January 11	Phyllis Trickett
January 12	Devon Smithhisler
January 13	Bill Dillenbeck
January 13	Lorri Jenson
January 14	Paul Deering
January 14	Bruce Nowasell
January 15	Chancie Minden
January 15	Cooper Minden
January 17	Lindsey Hall
January 20	Zachary Donahue
January 21	Jody Burnett
January 22	Rick Holte
January 24	Trent Fleming
January 25	Mike Koelsch
January 25	Webb Oberheide
January 25	Aubry Peckman
January 25	Joel Plummer
January 25	Mike Thompson
January 26	Gregg Hall
January 26	Michael Thoden
January 26	Philip Oberheide
January 27	Suzie Prothe
January 27	Brianna Hoden
January 28	Jimmy Massey
January 29	Lindsey Holtz
January 30	Elbert Jones
January 30	Mason Kunard
January 30	Mitch Plummer
January 31	Morgan Richards
January 11 ...	Jeron & Kendra Fuller (17)



While many churches sadly did not even have services on Christmas Eve this year, it was so wonderful that we could maintain the old German tradition, unbroken at Trinity for over 150 years, of a program by the congregation's children on this holy night. And amidst all the other things being cancelled this year, it was great for the children to have this bit of normalcy in their lives. Our thanks to the students and their parents, superintendents Michelle Haley and Kristina Eilts and all the Sunday School teachers, organist Gladys Prothe and pianist Nancy Golubski, Clint Haley for arranging the sound system and Kyle Minden for broadcasting the livestream. It was a truly wonderful, impressive program! In this still shot taken from the livestream they are singing "Away in a Manger," the classic children's song for Christmas Eve. A high quality video of the entire program is available on our congregation's YouTube channel at www.trinitylcms.org/videos.

Missionaries of the Month

Each month we remember in prayer in our worship services—and you are encouraged to remember in your personal prayers—specific missionaries around the world who are supported by our congregation through our mission offerings to our Synod.

January 3

Rev. Andrew & Kelsey Schlund
Mexico

January 10

Rev. P.A. Richard-Wokoma
Nigeria

January 17

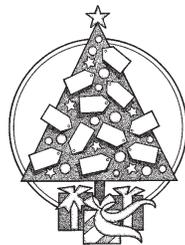
Phillip & Cheryl Magness
Togo

January 24

Rev. Daniel & Joan Jastram
Japan

January 31

Jana Inglehart
Dominican Republic



Angel Tree Thanks

Thank you to everyone who gave so many wonderful gifts for our Angel Tree, to help the children of our church share the Christmas spirit with less fortunate children in our community!



The new quarterly devotional booklet *Portals of Prayer* for January thru March, 2021 is available in the Gathering Room. A great way to keep close to the Lord in the New Year!



New Bible Class on Titus

On Sunday, January 24 we are beginning a new study in Adult Bible Class on *Titus: The Conduct of the Christian and the Life of the Church*.

Titus was a young man who assisted the Apostle Paul in his missionary efforts, becoming so close to Paul that the childless Apostle came to consider Titus "my true son in our common faith" (Titus 1:4). Though one of the shortest books in the Bible, this personal letter from Paul to Titus is rich in practical advice, both for the individual Christian and the Church.

Join in Sundays at 9:00am in the basement Fellowship Hall!