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## **March 2020 Newsletter Recommit! Lenten Worship**

On February 27, the day after Ash Wednesday, I overheard part of a conversation on campus. That isn't unusual, as I work in public places. I overhear people and they overhear me. But this was an interesting conversation. I almost interrupted it. An international student was asking an American about a booklet she had, which was Christian devotional readings for Lent. What is Lent? And what's the thing with ashes? The American student was not terribly sure what the deal was with the ashes. She said she thought Roman Catholics did something with them and it had something to do with fasting. But she said a lot of people take some time before Easter giving up some things or spending more time in readings and prayer.

Of course, I was itching to interrupt and ask if they wanted the perspective of a Lutheran who has studied some of the history and theology. But I resisted the urge to be intrusive. Just to set the record straight, there are a lot of people who are not Roman Catholics who do something with ashes. It's a relatively old custom, dating back perhaps a thousand years, but which fell out of common use for several hundred years in the meantime. It symbolizes the fact that we all face death and decay. The period before Easter has been a time for repentance and recommitment since a very early time in the Christian era. It ended up being forty days in remembrance of Jesus' time of temptation for forty days in the wilderness. It is, in actuality, more than forty days because Sundays are not days of penitence and sorrow, so the Sundays are not observed as a part of the fasting time.

The season of Lent, then, is often seen as a time of giving up things. Many will give up pleasures which they are accustomed to, thus associating themselves with not only Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, but also with the many ways Jesus gave of himself. We may also recognize that we stand in solidarity with the countless Christians who have suffered and even died for their faith over the last two millennia.



As our Bible study at the fraternity house has gained some traction and interest, we started talking about the season of Lent. Several students were eager to focus on living for Jesus even when it runs counter to our world's expectations. So in this Lenten season, we are gathering to participate in traditional Vespers services on Wednesdays. We began on Ash Wednesday, with the imposition of ashes. We will continue with the Vespers services until Holy Week. Then again, we might keep having the Vespers even afterward. We're flexible.

Rather than giving up something for Lent, our focus is on adding something - Bible study, more church attendance, prayer, service to others, etc. Above all, we will be working to see what God's Word says to us about living life as people saved by grace through faith in Christ.

All this is consistent with Wittenberg Door's commitment to the historic practices of the Church. As we gather to sing Vespers, read Scripture, and pray together, we join the Church throughout the ages, past and future. Thanks be to God.

## **Wittenberg Door Financial Update**

Last month I made a valiant effort at a chart. This month? The valiant effort was continued but apparently I really don't understand how to do a chart. I'm a verbal person, remember? Maybe next month I'll have a chart for everyone.

Giving to Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry has remained fairly strong through February. Actual expenses have been almost exactly on level with giving, which is not as good as I would like. However, we're still solvent. Right now we have donors who have committed to \$2,000 per month toward salary, keeping me on campus. To keep everything together, we still need another \$400 per month going toward salary. Aside from that, we've squeaked by on health care and housing, though February brought a visit for a furnace repair. We are hoping, praying, and asking our supporters, including you, to keep us going through March.

Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Checks mailed to us are deposited with no commission paid to any intermediary. Most of our contributions are actually received this way, but we can receive funds sent through Paypal or Google Pay as well. Giving is easy! Simply visit our website at [www.wittenbergcomo.com](http://www.wittenbergcomo.com) and click on "about" and "support us."

## Uganda Update:



I don't have much of an update from our Ugandan friends. Alice will be on her way to the doctor in Nairobi, Kenya in the upcoming week. I will mention that this year the Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry board approved having a designated benevolence category in our budget. It does not draw from the general fund, but if people make contributions toward our benevolences, the money goes directly into that category. So far, our only beneficiary is Alice, who is continuing with treatment to stabilize her condition in the long run.

The school we visited in January is functioning, though they are having a challenge from the Ugandan government due to their relative lack of textbooks. Our friends at Eleos Ministries are working on making sure the school will not be shut down by the government. Students do need books to study. We have reason to believe that funding provided through Eleos will be used for its designated purpose, as is the case with the funding Wittenberg Door gathers for Alice's treatment.

Did you ever dream of a "back to basics" education? Here's a picture of the inside of one of the classrooms, where I caught Mr. Lazarus helping one of his students work on her English skills. When we were there, we were constantly noticing the fingers and eyes exploring through the spaces between slats on the walls. After all, education is for everyone!

As Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry grows, I would welcome the opportunity to take teams to Uganda and continue some of the work we have begun there. May the Lord raise up interest among Christians young and old who wish to encourage and strengthen those halfway around the world!



## Upcoming Activities:

Tuesdays 5:15 pm – Mere Christians – at The Heidelberg  
Wednesdays 5:30 pm – Lenten Vespers – at Beta Sigma Psi  
Thursdays at 1:00 pm – Bible discussion at Mizzou Student Center  
Pastor Spotts teaches two courses at the American Lutheran Theological Seminary:  
Tuesdays 7:00 pm The Bible in Context  
Thursdays 7:00 pm Greek 1

March 6 – That Friday Dinner – 6 pm Spotts House  
March 11 - Pastor Spotts at Calvary Lutheran High School Chapel  
March 15-16 - Pastor Spotts at Trinity Lutheran Church, Columbia MO  
March 20 - That Friday Dinner - 6 pm Spotts House  
April 3 - That Friday Dinner - 6 pm Spotts House  
Tuesday, April 7 - Field Trip to Missouri State Capitol and Central Dairy Ice Cream - departing from Columbia early afternoon.

**We always have something new at the website, the blog, and the activities calendar. Please be a friend on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. If you're in Columbia, let's get together on or near campus. Go to <https://www.wittenbergcomo.com/support-us.html> to provide financial support. The Wittenberg Door 300 needs you!**