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January 2021 Newsletter Epiphany - Realizations!

Last month I talked a little bit about Advent and Christmas. We're ready to plunge into a new season of the Church year, now. Epiphany! (Just try saying that one while brushing your teeth.)

The word "Epiphany" is borrowed from Greek. It can mean an appearance, an arrival, or a realization. In Lutheran circles we use the season to talk about all three.

The day of Epiphany is always January 6, right after the twelfth day of Christmas. It's the day we specifically remember the arrival of the Magi who came to see the Christ child.

To understand this rightly, let's set the scene a little bit. It's different from the scene we normally create in a church Christmas play. When the Magi ask King Herod where this person born king of the Jews is, Herod asks when they first saw the sign in the heavens which led them there. In response to their answer, Herod sent troops out to execute male children two and under. This suggests that the Magi had a very long trip and that Jesus may have been about two by the time the Magi arrived. They find Jesus in a more permanent shelter. The Gospels use the term for a "house" as opposed to a "stable." There's a little calendar confusion about the date. We recognize the day of the Holy Innocents on December 28, but the arrival of the Magi about a week later, on January 6. Yet it was shortly after the visit of the Magi that Joseph was warned in a dream to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt and go into hiding. So one or both dates may be off a little. The sequence doesn't quite work.

Whatever the date was, though, the Magi went and found the child born to be the King of the Jews. They recognized him, and brought gifts which even symbolized his coming death, with frankincense and myrrh, used for burial. The bringing of gifts have inspired countless works of art, sometimes placing characters in different times and places.

*[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adoration_of_the_Magi#/media/
File:Giorgione_010.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adoration_of_the_Magi#/media/File:Giorgione_010.jpg)*



The readings of the Church have grown up in the period after the day of Epiphany. While some church bodies recognize just a day, Lutherans keep a whole season, which lasts until Ash Wednesday. This year, that will be February 17th. During the season of Epiphany we walk through some of the parts of the Gospels where we realize just how special Jesus is. We are amazed at his miracles. Our understanding and awareness grows until Transfiguration, this year observed on Sunday, February 14th. At that time, we go up onto the mountain with Peter, James, and John, and we see the glory of Jesus revealed.

During this season of Epiphany, it is my prayer that we will store up the things we read about Jesus in our hearts. We ponder them and consider the fact that Jesus is exactly the same mighty Lord today that he was when he was walking around with his disciples.

May we all have grace to remember Jesus and bring our realization of just who he is and how important his life, death, and resurrection are to our family, friends, and our whole community. Remember Jesus!

Wittenberg Door Financial Update

The Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry Board of Directors meeting in December did not happen according to plan due to a death in my family and some unexpected church obligations. We will make the meeting happen in the near future. We really want to be the best stewards we can of the finances that our supporters have entrusted us with. Giving remained stable until the death of one of our major supporters. Your financial support is very important at present. It enables us to provide face-to-face pastoral care on the campuses of Columbia, Missouri, serving people who are not reached by any of the other organizations. There's always plenty to do. I'll keep working to supplement finances and try to keep this ministry going!

We still need additional contributors. Our goal remains to have a total of about 300 monthly individual contributors or about 30 churches or organizations, each representing about the equivalent of 10 monthly donors. We've made it thus far, by God's grace, for which we are thankful. Yet, looking at the situation realistically, we need more help.

If you or people you know want to support the work of bringing on-site, face to face, pastoral care to our academic communities, please consider making Wittenberg Door a part of your regular charitable giving. 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 and click on "about" and "support us."

Uganda Update:

Our friends at Eleos Ministries continue to do a bang-up job! They have been busy around mid-Missouri distributing supplies to the unhoused community, as well as preparing boxes of helpful gifts for expecting mothers. At the same time, they have continued to gather more mentors for school tuition and encouraging contact with those in great need in several Ugandan villages. Some mentors and others in the community recently gave a little extra. This enabled many of the children to get a new outfit (most have approximately one set of clothing for the year). They were also able to prepare a Christmas feast for the students! There's even some sort of purple food on their plates! Served with love and care, encouraging the young people to live for Christ and to study hard so as to achieve security in their communities in the future. This picture is from the Eleos Ministries International Outreach. For more information go to www.themercyway.com!



Upcoming Activities:

Thursdays at 12:30 pm – Lunch and Learn Bible discussion live and via Zoom

Watch the calendar for times and places where Pastor Spotts can be found around campuses

in coffee shops or restaurants!

We have suspended our picnics in parks because . . . well . . . who wants to eat in a park when it's really cold??

Interest is building for a Bible discussion group at Stephens College. They will be on break starting the third week in November until January.

Sundays, 10:00 a.m. Pastor Spotts at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Centralia MO

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!