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February 2021 Newsletter Lent - Ashes!

We're continuing our walk through the seasons of the Church year. You may well remember that we began the year with the season of Advent, a "penitential" season. The other season set aside for repentance is Lent, which will begin February 17.

The start of Lent is always on a Wednesday, and it is the Wednesday which is forty days, not counting Sundays, prior to Easter. Since Easter moves around a bit, so does Ash Wednesday.



Ash Wednesday is so-called because of the custom of applying ashes to oneself as a sign of repentance. On Ash Wednesday, Christians have traditionally assembled for prayer and have been marked on their foreheads with the sign of the cross, using ashes made from the previous year's palm leaves from Palm Sunday. This signifies that we become repentant when we see that Jesus has entered into the holy place on our behalf. He shows his victory and that lets us see our sin and our need for sorrow.

<http://www.passionart.guide/project/ash-wednesday>

Ash Wednesday has also led to numerous festivals in which people feast to remove the meat from their households, because the period of Lent is traditionally a time of fasting and humbling yourself before the Lord. Because forty days is too long for a complete fast, many people give up meat during the season. Some people will give up something else which is important to them.

The season of Lent, then, gives us time to reflect on the fact that Jesus humbled himself. Philippians 2:5-8 describes this process. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (NKJV). He endured suffering, the very same kind of suffering that we who were born in the sin-cursed world with a sinful nature endure.

The Lenten season consists of forty days, plus Sundays. Sunday has historically been seen as a little version of Easter, therefore it is not normally counted as a fast day. Scripture readings during the Lenten season describe Jesus' process of humbling himself, eventually culminating

in his entry to Jerusalem, his subsequent arrest and illegal trial, and his execution as a criminal, put on display to warn the world not to be lawless. The season ends with the stripping of decorations from the church on Maundy Thursday, followed by a dark and sorrowful church service for Good Friday, continued by a quiet day on Saturday, symbolic of Jesus' rest in the tomb. The season comes to a close at dawn on Easter Sunday, when the resurrection is celebrated. This year, Easter Sunday is April 4.

I always encourage people, during the season of Lent, not only to give something up but to take something on. Maybe you fast from certain foods. Possibly it is a good time to increase your charitable giving to provide food for the hungry. Maybe you give up some sort of appointments or activities. It is a good time to spend more time reading the Bible and praying for others. Maybe you observe Lent by attending special services at your church. It may be time to form a habit of more regular attendance at church services or biblical studies.

God gives us times and seasons with different purposes, but all of them can serve to change us, bit by bit, into the image of Christ who loved us and gave himself for us. The season of Lent, though it is a time of sorrow, can be used to bring great joy and hope. It points toward the work of Christ, dying in our place, to forgive our sin.

Wittenberg Door Financial Update

If you were one of our contributors in the past year and don't receive a giving receipt for tax purposes, please make sure we have your address! As I prepared the receipts I was reminded of the many contributors who we have never met, and, as far as we know, have never been to Columbia Missouri and our mission field. Your care is priceless!

When the Wittenberg Door Board of Directors met, the consensus was that due to financial shortfalls we would fall back to part-time work again. Fundraising has only provided about half of our stated budget, and it has decreased recently due to the death of a major supporter. We think this is largely a function of pandemic restrictions. At the same time, the Lord has made it possible for me to supplement income through a ministry partnership with an area church. The two ministries are not only sharing my time, but there is some growing interaction between them, as the congregation plans activities and outreaches.

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 continue working to supplement finances so we 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 Simon Peter and Alice continue to communicate from Uganda. Simon Peter is working with a growing Christian community in various parts of the country, as he leads other pastors who are less trained and experienced. Alice is still receiving treatment for the brain tumor which was only partially treated by surgery several years ago. She had a very good report from an MRI in December and is scheduled to continue medication but only see the doctor in Kenya four times this year, rather than every month. Her ongoing medical treatment is the Wittenberg Door benevolence project, so contributions for her care can be received and receipted. On average, the care this year costs about \$1000.00, down considerably from last year. If you saw pictures of her three years ago, you’d hardly recognize this healthy young woman!



Only contributions designated for Alice’s care are earmarked for the benevolence project. This is not funded from our general offerings.

Upcoming Activities:

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

Watch the calendar, follow our Facebook page, and friend WDCM Chaplain on Facebook to see 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??

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!