

# Newsletter 4

2 March 2018



Lily, Grace, and I after Ash Wednesday. It was fun to have Lily visit Linguère for a week as part of her work. We attended the Ash Wednesday service at the Catholic Church as the Lutheran Church did not have a service. All of the teachers I work with at the Catholic Primary School were in attendance. It was meaningful to be with them in a different context and hear them sing!

## Greetings! Asalaam alaykoum!

Juroom-benni weer – this is now my response when asked in Wolof how long I have been in Senegal (six months). It sure feels like I just sent out my last newsletter – nearly two months ago! Lots has happened in the meantime and life here feels more routine all the time as I spend time with various family and friends sharing meals and numerous cups of attaya. Here is a sampling of recent events:



## SLDS Center 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

The organization at which I work is called SLDS (Senegalese Lutheran Development Services). A community center operated by SLDS in Dakar celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year. Myself, Grace, and Mariam (one of my bosses) came to Dakar to participate in the four-day event, which included a basketball tournament, blood drive and presentations about the history and impact of the center. I did not have basketball shoes so my pair of loafers sufficed. Though I did not get to “lace up” it was still a pleasant game.

The Saturday of the presentation employees of SLDS (including YAGMs) wore matching fabric. Each employee received fabric and tailored it as we please. YAGMs Casey Haffield and Berkley Harris work here. Meeting their coworkers, practicing Wolof, and learning more about the work of the center was a treat.



Sal, Gallo, and I at Gamou in Nguith in a coworker’s home. I work with Gallo and Sal. They have also been patient teachers as I learn to make attaya (Senegalese tea).



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### Chéré Mboom

Chéré or Senegalese millet couscous is made through a two-day process. It ends with the couscous being steamed over the brewing mboom sauce. Mboom is a delicious sauce of beans, dried fish, ground peanuts, and cabbage. After eating the sauce milk is poured into the bowl and mixed with the couscous. This evening meal is one of my favorites!



SSP (my health worksite) had an event this week where members of the Association (HIV/AIDS support group) came together to spend the day. After breakfast, my bosses Mariam and Rose talked about different ways of “family planning” or birth control. Infant mortality is a great challenge in Senegal. Lunch was then shared after numerous bowls of Yassa were prepared and distributed. I enjoyed seeing the members, some who I have come to know. The support and community SSP provides is invaluable.

### Fête de L'Église

More matching fabric! This celebration of the ELS or Lutheran Church of Senegal followed Ash Wednesday and was held in Fatick, Senegal. Different Lutheran church bodies in Senegal came together for a day of worship. One memorable part of the event was when each congregation processed to give their congregation's offering for the larger church while the Fatick choir sang. It was humbling to be a part of the Linguère congregation as the six of us walked through the aisle towards the altar.



### Conference Khol Khol

My boss, Mariam, invited me to visit a nearby town for a religious conference, where a Grand Marabout (a religious/spiritual leader in Senegalese Islam, different than an Imam) was coming to speak. I piled into the car along with a number of my coworkers and we made the drive through the savanna over the dirt gravel road. As we came into town we passed the mosque and large shelter that seated many people. We continued to the home where we would have lunch and rest. After a beautiful lunch of rice, vegetables, and chicken followed by a variety of fruit I visited the mosque. Here I joined a crowd under the shelter as the Marabout explained teachings in Wolof and Pulaar.



Here is a picture of the garden with which I assist. Gallo is working in the background. It is flourishing, though the end of the cool season is here. Temperatures are now increasing and I have resumed using my fan while I sleep.



### Gamou

This is a celebration observing the birthday of the Prophet Mohammed. Although the official holiday in Senegal is marked at the end of November, many neighborhoods and towns hold their own celebrations throughout the year. This provides a reason to dress up, get together with family and friends, and share a meal. During February, I had the chance to attend two Gamous. One was in a coworker's village, while I visited another with an aunt in a nearby neighborhood.



The Mosque of Khol Khol and adjacent shelter at the conference I was fortunate to attend.



Ba beneen yown ~ Until next time

Please take a look at my blog if you have not already!

<http://amberwavestoambersands.wordpress.com/>

I appreciate the continue support! If you feel inclined to support YAGM financially please follow this link.

[http://support.elca.org/site/TR/Events/General?px=1047397&pg=personal&fr\\_id=1181](http://support.elca.org/site/TR/Events/General?px=1047397&pg=personal&fr_id=1181)



Communion-ware at the Ash Wednesday service of the Catholic church.

Here are a couple of books I've been reading lately:  
*Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi and *Peace is Everything* by David Maranz