

## A place for reflection

**Lisa McDonald**  
News Editor

On Feb. 10, 2016, Ash Wednesday marked the beginning of Lent. It also marked the opening of the Reflection Room in Upper Gage. So far, knowledge of the space has not garnered widespread attention on campus. As such, College Chaplain and the Director of Religious Life Reverend Kristin Hutson took the time to discuss why the space was founded and what it will offer to the Coe community.

Many religiously-affiliated colleges across the nation provide places of worship for students to practice their faith. Coe College has the Poe Chapel in Marquis, but being as it is connected to Sinclair

through a room housing the organ pipes, the space isn't conducive to quiet meditation and prayer.

"We really wanted to be a space where people felt at ease, comfortable, safe, have a good energy, but we also wanted it to reflect the diversity of religious and spiritual foundations," Hutson explained as she described the goal behind the Reflection Room.

During the reorganization of campus following the installation of the Learning Commons, several offices were left empty in Upper Gage. This provided the perfect opportunity to convert one such office into the Reflection Room.

The room was repainted and furnished with various donations, all in

the hopes of providing a quiet, grounded environment in which meditation and worship could take place. Even though it is officially open, the Reflection Room is still undergoing final additions. A prayer wall will be added to provide students a place to hang their prayers, as well as a bookshelf containing texts to aid with spiritual enrichment.

Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to donate any books they feel would be beneficial by simply dropping off the books in the room.

Starting next week, student peer ministers will begin holding office hours in the space. The peer ministers have trained with Hutson in order to

provide students with safe confidants to discuss any religious or personal matters. After spring break, Associate Professor of French Joyce Janca-Aji will start holding weekly Monday afternoon meditation in the room.

If a group wishes to reserve the room for a specific time, they can contact Hutson either through email (khutson@coe.edu) or stop by her office in Upper Gage. As to rules for using the room, Hutson had one major policy: "This is a place where we remove shoes."

The room is open 24/7 to students. If the room ever happens to be locked, students can call security to gain access.



*Clockwise from top left: inspirational quotes are spread throughout the room; the Reflection Room was designed using earthy tones to emphasize peace and relaxation; paper lanterns allow for muted lighting when the overhead lights are turned off.*

*Photos by Lisa McDonald.*

## Dear Queer

### Hello Coe!

We are your friendly campus queers here to answer any questions you might have about... anything we might be able to answer. We are a group of Coe students, queer and ally, who are interested in opening up channels of communication with our peers about issues that are close to our hearts. We do not promise that these are always going to be one hundred percent correct or all inclusive because a shit ton of long ass books have been written in attempts to do just that--and we just have one column a week. But we will do our best to inform and include as best we can. We look forward to hearing your questions. Please email dearqueer21@gmail.com with your questions and comments! Thank

you,  
from your Dear Queers and Ally

### The Question:

Dear Queer, what is the difference between gender and sex? I thought the words were interchangeable.

### Our Answer:

This is a definition issue. Most schools never fully cover the difference between gender and sex. And understanding these definitions is at the root of understanding identities, both your own identity and that of the people around you. So here goes a super condensed version of discussions that have yet to come to a close. (That is, people who spend all of their time talking about gender and sex and stuff, have not yet figured it all out.) But here is an answer, gender is what society says you should do because of your genitals. Sex is the literal physical characteristics that society uses to put you into a category or "gender" and treat you accordingly. And sexuality is what you are attracted to, which is not dictated by what your sex or gender is.

Sincerely, Queer Dears and Ally

## Thoughts on Women's Rights

**Mary Ndupu**  
Guest Writer

Every woman, regardless of her age, race and socio-economic status) should be allowed to stand up for her rights without being suppressed or antagonized.

Several countries in the world today openly ignore the abuse of these rights, and we as citizens can do nothing but protest and vote for a new leader, who often will only end up continuing the abysmal cycle. How many females today know their rights and how to exercise them? "There is a deep cultural belief in Nigeria that it is socially acceptable to hit a woman to discipline her."<sup>[2][3]</sup> Domestic violence is widespread and shows no signs of lessening in Nigeria. The "CLEEN Foundation" reports that one in every three respondents admit to being a victim of domestic violence. The survey also found a nationwide increase in domestic violence in the past 3 years from 21% in 2011 to 30% in 2013.<sup>[4]</sup> It is really sad to see that not even these statistics are enough to shock the government into action.

In China, efforts have been made to combat this issue. The first law against domestic violence was passed just recently and it will officially take effect on March 1. The law unfortunately did not include violence in same-sex marriages but because these marriages are still illegal. Same-sex couples will not have any legal protections from this law.<sup>[5]</sup> The efforts of countries like Iceland, U.S., etc., are also commendable. While I am currently trying to find a lasting solution to this problem, I challenge you (whoever you are- male, female or other) to do something -no matter how little- about this problem. Reach out to someone or stand up for someone else. Be part of the solution.

Sources:

1. "Cultural Beliefs Fuel Domestic Violence". Daily Trust. Retrieved 2013-09-21.
2. "Why fewer men are beating their wives". Standard. Retrieved 2013-10-05.
3. CLEEN Foundation. "National Crime Victimization Surveys". 2013.
4. "China passes first-ever anti-domestic violence law". Inquirer 2015-12-28.