

WILDERNESS WORDS

Interim Editors

If there is anything that you would like to have included in the Newsletter: 218-388-9903 and dmc@chem.wayne.edu or pcoleman@chem.wayne.edu

This Sunday:

Leading: Karen H.

Preaching: Lee S.

Presiding: Mary Ellen A.

Treats Needed!!

Readings this week:

First Reading & Psalm:

Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22 and Psalm 124

Alternate First Reading &

Psalm:

Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29 and Psalm 19:7-14

Epistle:

James 5:13-20

Gospel:

Mark 9:38-50

(Click on citation to go to the reading.)

Vicar Reflections:

I just got an email from John in Adelaide, Australia. He was at Iona while I was there with a group of about a dozen Australians.

As he and I chatted at dinner one evening, we discovered that he (like my son, Steve) is 35, has a three year old son and a newish baby. As I shared with him about my Steve's cancer, he paled and then got out a notebook and wrote Steve's info, my email address. He put Steve on the Southern Australian prayer chain. In this email he was responding to my report, and preparing to put the update on the prayer chain.

What does it mean for people in southern Australia—a place I've never been or even heard much about—to be praying for my son? Or Barb Weller who responded to my news of how Steve's chemo seems to be working very well by saying, "Of course. We have two convents of nuns praying for him. And they're old, so their prayers really work!"

I've never met these nuns. I can deeply feel the love and prayers from people at Spirit of the Wilderness—they feel healing, nurturing, and restorative.

But how does prayer link us with others we don't even know around the world? How does it work? On Sundays we pray for people in different parts of the world and

country—why do we do that? Certainly God must look, say, at Syria and Southern Sudan, and know the suffering there without our reminders.

These are not rhetorical questions! While I'm sure prayer works, I have no idea how it works. Sometimes I imagine a globe with lights shooting up—when Grand Marais is asleep in the middle of the night, Adelaide lights up, etc.

A friend once told me she thinks of prayer as tending a campfire. Since I've been recently teaching my grandsons to build a campfire—this seems real to me. You start a fire with crumpled up paper and twigs, and then bigger sticks and then wood, I showed Henry and



Save these Dates:

Sept. 27: SOTW does Care Center. **Mary Ellen has requested assistance.**

Oct. 18: Annual Meeting after Church.

Sunday, October 11: Hillary Freeman - A Relook at the Good Samaritan

Sunday, November 15: Carol Mork: Year C - A Look at Luke

Tucker. You get it going, but you still have to tend it! I've shown them how to blow slowly on the embers to get more flame, just like my dad showed me. I've shown them how you have to use a poker to shift wood, inserting a new piece here or there, so that more air can get to the places that need it.

Prayer, my friend said, is like blowing on the embers; it is like poking a new piece of wood in so that air can get in and flame can spring up again.

I like this idea—people praying (in convents, or in Grand Marais or in Adelaide) in some mysterious way shift things so that fresh air can get to dark places and chemo may work well for my son. Or blowing on the

embers as we think of people struggling in Syria or Southern Sudan, may in some strange way, cause flickers.

Who knows? And yet we are called to pray, and we do, trusting that it does make a difference.

Mary Ellen Ashcroft

Pastoral Care Committee Assignments:

(week starting) September 27, Beth; October 4, Beth; October 11, Lee; October 18, Lee; October 25, Dave + Shawn

**Vicar:**

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“Dire Colon” Blog: Mary Ellen’s son Stephen is authoring a beautiful, powerful, searing, heartfelt blog describing his journey through this cancer. The latest entry: **“Catharsis and Connection”** can be read at **URL:** <http://wp.me/p6wBC2-g> You can subscribe to receive notification of updates as they are published. The entire Ashcroft family remains in our prayers.