

## *WILDERNESS WORDS*

### Editors

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

### This Sunday:

**Leading:** Sarah  
**Preaching:** Ellen  
**Presiding:** Carolyn

Readings this week:

**Sixth Sunday of Easter,  
 1 May, 2016**

**First Reading:**

Acts 16:9-15

**Psalm:**

Psalm 67

**Epistle:**

Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5

**Gospel:**

John 14:23-29 or *John 5:1-9*

(Click on citation to go directly to the reading.)

### Reflections:

by Mary Ellen Ashcroft

#### Context

I've just begun sharing with some of you what I learned on my sabbatical, particularly during my time in South Africa. One lesson was about how well I think we are doing in terms of being missional and contextual.



*Inviting Mystery, Embracing  
 Compassion, Encountering Christ.*

Another was a confirmation of the crucial nature of leadership in a church setting. More than in a typical clergy-centered church, we who are committed to being missional and ministry centered, must function out of a strong vision and center.

As I mentioned in my sermon yesterday on our Acts passage (in which Peter is called to explain his proclamation of the gospel to gentiles before the more conservative Jerusalem leaders) it can be complicated to follow the Spirit's leading. The earliest church struggled (like so many churches today) to be missional—agile, vibrant, outward looking, ministry centered. There were (and are) always those who want to hold the line on change—"don't we need to circumcise Gentile believers?" "Let's just get the liturgy right and people will stream in..."

Several churches we visited in South Africa seemed to be trying so hard to hold on to something from the past, rather than looking to see where they are now (context) and what God might be doing here and now, and joining in that.

I think we are really good at seeing where God is at work and entering in to that work, probably made easier for us by our lack of a building, our creative and energetic members, our supportive bishop, not to mention the vicar's personality!

But it's an ongoing challenge to look and see where God wants us to be—as I suggested yesterday we sometimes have to look at what's going on in the world around us and look through the news for the human longing and need. Some of what we mentioned yesterday as indicative of the longings and needs in our world today:

**Save these Dates**

**May 8th:** SOTW at the Care Center. Carol Mork is Presiding, but lots of help needed. Please let Carol know.

**July 3rd:** SOTW at the Care Center.

**Vicar:**

Mary Ellen Ashcroft

Phone: 218-387-1536

<maryellenvicar@gmail.com>

**Assisting Priest:**

Carolyn Schmidt

Phone: 218- 387-1806

<madrecj@aol.com>

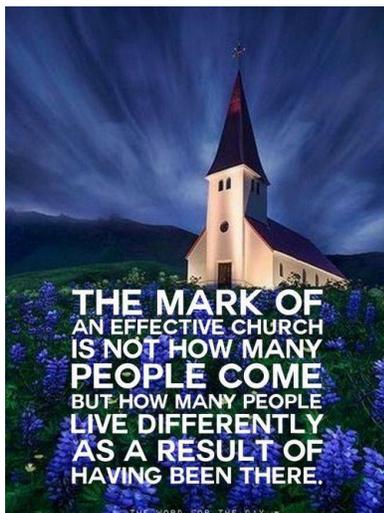
[www.spiritofthewilderness.org](http://www.spiritofthewilderness.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/SpiritoftheWilderness>

SpiritoftheWilderness

Box 1115 Grand Marais, MN 55604

**Reflections!** It was great to hear 'many voices' during Mary Ellen's sabbatical. So we will continue from time to time. If you are willing to author an occasional Reflections for our Newsletter please let Mary Ellen know. We will again take over coordinating this after our return in early July.



- The popularity of certain presidential candidates who seem to be appealing to people who feel they haven't been heard.
- The almost religious fervor and gathering around Prince's death, showing a longing for community and meaningful marking of loss.
- Awareness of human trafficking as a huge problem to be addressed.
- Growing suicide rates.
- The popularity of Wendell Berry among young persons, with his emphasis on the land, and focus on values of "loyalty, neighborliness and kindness."

Any of these, (add your own from the news), might be God's word to us—look at this need....where are we being called, within THIS context, to follow God's leading?

Blessings..... MEA



**Last Sunday: Celebrating Val & John's Anniversary and Bonnie Gay's Birthday**