

## *WILDERNESS WORDS*

### Editors

If there is anything that you would like to have included in the Newsletter: 313-673-6519 and [dmc@chem.wayne.edu](mailto:dmc@chem.wayne.edu) or [pcoleman@chem.wayne.edu](mailto:pcoleman@chem.wayne.edu)

### This Sunday:

**Leading:** Lee  
**Preaching:** Mary Ellen  
**Presiding:** Mary Ellen  
**Coffee Hour:**

#### Readings this week:

**Twenty Second Sunday after Pentecost, 16 October, 2016**

#### **First Reading:**

Jeremiah 31:27-34 and Psalm 119:97-104 OR Genesis 32:22-31 and Psalm 121

**Psalm:** (above)

**Epistle:** 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

**Gospel:** Luke 18:1-8

*(Click on citation to link directly to*

### Reflections:

*It's always good to get a different perspective. This is taken from Marcella Gillis' report to her seminary:*



*Inviting Mystery, Embracing  
Compassion, Encountering Christ.*

I had attended services at Spirit of the Wilderness in years past while visiting my family in Grand Marais, and had been drawn to the liveliness and intimacy of the worship experience. The Sunday worship follows the general shape of a Rite II Holy Eucharist, but with most of the Prayer Book liturgy substituted with material from alternative liturgical resources. The service is mainly lay-lead, with the priest performing the absolution and the Eucharist, and attendees are encouraged to pick up small blocks upon entrance to the church, which assign them specific roles within the worship service.

As someone who tends to lean more high church, I was pleasantly surprised by how keenly I felt the movement of the Holy Spirit amidst the exuberance and joyfulness of worship at SOTW, and I am continually reminded of how grounding the Episcopal liturgy is for me, even when it leans towards a more loose/creative/broad edge. While it may not have been an appropriate setting for quiet contemplation and prayer, it felt alive in a way that I have never quite experience before in a parish setting. The rhythm of the morning seemed to strike a very functional balance between being casual and comfortable and reverent and liturgical at the same time.

I was also surprised and impressed by how welcoming the congregation was to newcomers and strangers in spite of it being such a tight-knit group. Aside from a few inside jokes during the announcement period, it seemed like a very welcoming space for strangers without being overbearing, inappropriate, or putting people on the spot. I certainly wonder if the nature of a self-started grassroots mission church might be part of what makes worship at SOTW so spiritually fulfilling and life-giving. The high levels of participation and investment create a sense of



**Forums: 2016 - 2017**

Forums — we grab our coffee and treats and spend an hour learning.

**Oct. 16th** — Stewardship

**Nov. 13th** — Matthew

**Dec. 4th** — South Africa

**Jan.** — Immigration

**Feb.** — Sacraments

**March** — Arts and social change

**April** — the Ten Commandments

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

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**Ruby's Pantry TODAY, Tuesday (Oct. 11):**

October distribution is here. Meet at 3:30 in the high school cafeteria to sign in to assist and donate your \$20 cash for a share!!



community, which infuses the small clapboard church building with total joy; it feels completely alive. It seems as though everyone is there because they genuinely 100% want to be there and are so engaged and involved, which is refreshing and adds a dimension to the worship that I hadn't even realized I was missing.

While my time in Grand Marais ended up being more chaotic than I had expected, I found my work with Rev. Mary Ellen and the SOTW community being the most relaxing and fulfilling part of my summer. I was grateful to be part of a church community that welcomed me and wanted me to be there, but that wasn't needy or excessively emotionally draining. My 4+ years of very stressful parish experience have made me very wary of parish ministry, and so part of my learning goals during my time at SOTW was to study and experience the creation, growth and functioning of a small, ministry-centered mission parish. I have grown increasingly skeptical of the large program-based parish model, both in its functionality and sustainability, as well as its treatment and expectations of clergy, and SOTW was a wonderful study in a very different style of intentional Christian community. While I was not privy to the inner workings of the church, interpersonally and otherwise, the community appeared to be high functioning and the parishioners were theologically engaged and spiritually fulfilled. I spend a great deal of time considering the future of the Church, especially amidst the breakdown of the traditional parish model, and it was very heartening to witness such a strong divine presence in the midst of this bottom-up grassroots Christian community.

