

WILDERNESS WORDS

Reflections:

Editors

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

This Sunday:

Leading: Suzanne
Preaching: Mary Ellen
Presiding:
Coffee Hour:

Readings this week:

Twenty Sixth Sunday after Pentecost,
13 November, 2016

First Reading:

Isaiah 65:17-25 and Isaiah 12 •
 Malachi 4:1-2a and Psalm 98

Psalm: (above)

Epistle: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

Gospel: Luke 21:5-19

(Click on citation to link directly to



By Bob Padzieski
Stewardship
Sermon, Oct. 30,
2016



*Inviting Mystery, Embracing
 Compassion, Encountering Christ.*

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation as we come to know him...

That wonderful line from Ephesians is just the beginning of Paul’s hope for the wonderful community of early Christians at Ephesus. As the lesson continues Paul presents the consequences of the spirit of wisdom, and we’ll get back to that in a bit. But this letter from Paul gives us a wonderful context for Stewardship which is one of the things I want to talk about this morning.

I’m here today to give a homily as a representative of Stewardship for Spirit of the Wilderness. The purpose of a homily or a sermon is to help grow wisdom and revelation, both for the person preparing the sermon as well as those who hear. What’s in the appointed readings for All Saints Day that we should take into our lives? What’s there that we might have not noticed before, or have heard and forgotten, or perhaps have worked hard to ignore. But what do the scriptures contain that can teach us about stewardship.

One example could be where the old testament says that you are supposed to tithe to the temple. Another is the story where Jesus talks about the widow with the two copper coins, where he tells us that her meager gift is far more acceptable than the larger gifts from those who had an abundance but gave relatively so little. And today’s Gospel has a perfect line for someone in Stewardship “from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt”.

Well, I’m not here to ask you for the shirt off your back today, but I’d like to give you a couple thoughts to take home with you that might linger in your brain as we start this stewardship season. First a couple of side stories, and then we’ll get back to today’s readings.

About two years ago, there was a Toastmasters Divisional

Forums: 2016 - 2017

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

Nov. 13th — “Matthew”
by Carol Mork

Dec. 4th — South Africa

Jan. — Immigration

Feb. — Sacraments

March — Arts and social change

April — the Ten Commandments

May — prayer.

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

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

Box 1115 Grand Marais, MN 55604

Anglican Communion. At our last meeting, a couple of us, including me, asked that we use the Nicene Creed for this period.

Now there are some people who have problems with the Nicene Creed, and it's usually for one of two reasons. First, if you look at the historical background, the creed was created at the Council of Nicea, which was a committee created for a political motive back in 325. Emperor Constantine was trying to establish his power and he

Speech Contest at the Senior Center here in Grand Marais. One part of this contests was “Table Topics”, in which all the competitors leave the room, and then come in one at a time to answer the same question in one to two minutes. The question has been written down and is read twice to each contestant to assure fairness.

However, on that day, I was sorry for the Toastmaster who had been handed the envelope with this question just as the contest began. The question contained just four words: (1) why, (2) are, (3)you, (4)here. Could I ask that question neutrally? I could say “WHY are you here? , or “Why are YOU here? The way I want to pose it to each of you today is “Why are you HERE?” Not here at the Maple Hill Church, but here at the gathering of Spirit of the Wilderness, here as part of this faith community

Why are you HERE?

For some of us [looking at Freddie], it might be because mom and dad made me come, but that's not it for most of us anymore. Most us are drawn here for some reason or another. If you want, you have my permission to just think about that and not listen to what I'm going to say next. Or you can take it home with you as your homework.

The next thing I want to talk about is something that's coming a little later in the service, that fits in with who we are and how we do things, and it's called “The Nicene Creed”. For those who are visiting or new, we have a Worship committee who meets every two to three months and changes things up for our services. We don't just follow that Book of Common Prayer week-after-week. We look for resources from across the

Notes:

- 1.) This Sunday the **Adult Forum** by **Carol Mork** is on the Gospel of Matthew: A Jewish “believers-in-Jesus” Gospel. We will gather following worship.
- 2.) **Empty Bowls** is **Nov. 10th** and lots of help is needed on Thursday at Bethlehem Lutheran.
- 3.) There will be an interdenominational **Thanksgiving** service on **Thanksgiving Eve** at 6:30 at the Congregational Church. Mary Ellen will be preaching and members of other churches are participating. Important to have as many there as possible to show unity.
- 4.) **Saturday, Dec. 3rd**, will be SOTW's opportunity to ring Salvation Army bells at Gene's IGA. Mark your calendars.....

Requesting special prayers for Steve Ashcroft they are doing genetic testing on his tumor to see what mutation it has, in preparation for some drug trials, since the other chemo he's on doesn't usually last long. MEA

saw a unified Christian movement as something very important to his success as emperor. Christianity was young and still defining itself. The Roman had only stopped persecuting and executing Christians less than 14 years earlier and many of the bishops attending the conference bore physical and mental scars of that time.

The bishops were wrestling with the divisive questions about who was this Christ. Who was this Jesus. Some believed that he was divine, that he was part God. To others he was just a man. A very good, holy and powerful man, but not divine. The council wrestled with these issues at a time so close to when Christ walked the earth. They came up with a consensus solution that baffles so many of us today. This idea of a triune God of Father, Son and Spirit. A Christ that was "begotten, not made, of one being with the Father".

And this tradition that we have today, from saints of old that set the original words in 325 and revised in 381, are used across Christianity. Not just Episcopal churches, but Roman Catholic, Lutheran and others. We all come together as one family with this creed. And when we talk about all the saints, they have been praying these words for centuries.

While some have a problem that this creed is a prayer created because of political needs, others have objections that there is so much stuff in there, "I cannot honestly say I believe it all". But the beautiful thing about this creed is that the words say "We believe". And I learned that was important from a teenager. Ah, the wisdom of children. At a retreat, this teen said that she did not have a problem reciting the creed, even though she had doubts about parts of it, because it says WE believe. I may have trouble with this part of it, but maybe you're OK with that part, or someone in the back of the room or someone at St. John's or at St. Mark's Cathedral in the cities truly believes it.

All this gets me to the point of WE. Why am I here? A big part of it is the WE. However, what first got me in the door at Spirit of the Wilderness was "we, the Episcopal Church". It was a church I could grow into. I was raised Roman Catholic, where thinking about your faith was pretty much not allowed. But I discovered the Episcopal Church had all the richness of all the saints behind us. However, a poster at our church in Rochester captured the essence of the difference. It was a picture of Jesus' face with the caption "He came to take away your sins, not your mind." It was what initially brought me here.

Now what brings me here regularly ... well, you know this dulcimer that I play. I bought it and started to teach myself to play. Two month into this endeavor, Mary Ellen said to me, almost everyone is going to be gone for the first Sunday of Advent, could you provide the music? Typical Mary Ellen, eh? But with the WE that I knew was here, I said "Yes, I can." We are a very accepting group of people. We embrace what we have and we don't get hung up on expecting perfection.

So "We" is why I am HERE.

Now I do want to go back to today's Gospel and say more about All Saints Day, since we are celebrating that feast today. When you listen to the Gospel we used today from Luke, it's not quite the eight beatitudes Mark uses to tell the story of the sermon on the mount. It's more like four beatitudes and four "woe-be-gone-itudes". But does this describe what it takes to be a saint? If we don't adjust our live style to be consistent with the Sermon on the Mount, have we lost all hope of sainthood? Well I take comfort in looking at some real people who have received that title of "saint".

St. Paul was basically an inquisitor and executioner. And look at St. Peter. Stubborn, I can identify with that. Denier/doubter, I can identify with that.

When we talk about saint and trying to be part of the communion of saints, think about some of those saints that don't quite fit into the beatitudes and remember WE are a communion of saints. And I think part of today's lesson from Ephesians is a good reminder of who WE are, and why we are HERE today. Listen and think about who we are, and why you support Spirit of the Wilderness with your time, with your talents, and with your money. Think about who we are, where did we come from, what's our background, what's our heritage.

I do want you to keep your shirts on from a Stewardship perspective. I want you to give with gratitude and thanks, and I will close with just a bit more from Ephesians than I read at the start.

*I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,
may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him,
so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened,
you may know what is the hope to which he has called you,
what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints,
and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe.*

Amen