

## *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:**  
**Preaching:** Milan  
**Presiding:** Hillary

#### Readings this week:

**Second Sunday After Epiphany,  
 15 January, 2017**

**First Reading:** Isaiah 49:1-7  
**Psalm:** Psalm 40:1-11  
**Epistle:** 1 Corinthians 1:1-9  
**Gospel:** John 1:29-42

*(Click on citation to link directly to the reading.)*



### Reflections:

By Bob Padzieski

January 9, 2017

*"...snow had fallen,  
 snow on snow, snow  
 on snow..."*



*Inviting Mystery, Embracing  
 Compassion, Encountering Christ.*

As I sit at my desk today and look out the window, the hymn "In the Bleak Midwinter" rolls around in my head. The greys of the sky and Lake Superior almost become one at the horizon. There is fresh snow on the old snow with more snow coming soon. The branches of the spruce trees are bending down with the weight of their white loads. Yet in the branches of the distant mountain ash trees, there are several robins munching away on the bright orange berries.

"In the Bleak Midwinter", number 112 in our hymnal, is a wonderful marriage of lyrics and music from two exceptional artists. The words are a poem by Christina Rossetti, who was seen by some as the foremost female English poet of her time. She is also recognized as a saint by the Episcopal Church with the feast day of April 27. Her poem was set to music by Gustav Holst, the composer of "The Planets".

There are two things I like about the melody for this hymn. The first is that it doesn't fill my spirit with sadness, but with a sense of peace. The second is that when the tune changes up halfway into each stanza, it causes a quiet excitement within me. It's a bit like seeing those robins eating the bright orange ash berries.

Often when we sing a hymn, we don't have time to let the meaning of the words sink in, especially when the lyrics are poetic. Poetry is also open to individual interpretation. When I take time to read the lyrics, I hear a reminder that although God is limitless, beyond our comprehension, Jesus was born to us in the humblest environment. Although the angels and archangels and cherubim and seraphim proclaimed His glory, it was only Mary his mother that "...worshiped the beloved with a kiss."

In the final stanza, we are provided with our

**Forums: 2016 - 2017**

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

**Jan.** — Forum on Immigration (*details to follow.*)

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

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

Box 1115 Grand Marais, MN 55604

**Shower for Sarah & Kyle.**

**Sunday, Jan. 29th** at Solbakken.

Save the date! Details soon.



opportunity to respond to this wonderful gift from God.

*What can I give him, poor as I am?*

*If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;*

*if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;*

*yet what I can I give him: give my heart.*

There many kinds of hearts that we might have to offer. We may have the heart of joy, perhaps from the excitement of new life, or love, or opportunity. We can give that heart of joy with thanksgiving.

We may have a heart of sadness, perhaps from death, or loss, or the uncertainty surrounding us. We can give up that heart of sadness with the hope of finding peace in return.

We may have a heart of nothingness, perhaps lost by our busyness, or emotional protection, or disappointments. We can offer that empty heart with the hope of finding purpose and direction.

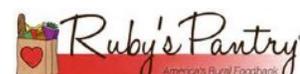
Although we are coming to the end of singing all our joyful Christmas carols, we are not coming to the end of snow on snow on snow. May it be a reminder of both God's wonderful gift to us and that God would be greatly pleased to receive the gift our hearts.

**Notes:**

1.) The SOTW **Annual Meeting** will be held on **January 15, 2017** following the 10:30 service.

2.) **Ruby's Pantry, Tuesday, 10 January, 2017.** (Notes from Barb Spaulding: Ruby's is discontinuing their Recycling program. I know some of you have been keeping your items at home til you have "enough" to turn in. Please bring it this time, as it is the last time Ruby's will accept it. We will send it back with the truck driver.

Also, with the upcoming snow, tomorrow and in future months, there is a chance, slim, but still a chance, that the truck won't come. I've never heard of this happening, but we should have a plan just in case. If this happens, I'll post it on our Cook County Ruby's Pantry FB page and on Boreal. If you have not already "liked" our Facebook page, please do so, so you will get the notifications. Depending on when I get the news, I'll attempt to email all of you, but if it's last minute and I'm not by a computer, where all my addresses are, FB and Boreal are the next best thing. But for now, Ruby's is on for tomorrow!! See you there, Barb)



## Beloved Minneapolis educator and mentor Stephen Ashcroft dies at 37

Stephen Ashcroft was busy with the birth of his daughter, who arrived six weeks early, when he started to feel ill and frail just 18 months ago.

By Faiza Mahamud *Star Tribune* January 4, 2017

Stephen Ashcroft was busy with the birth of his daughter, who arrived six weeks early, when he started to feel ill and frail just 18 months ago. His shoulder and stomach ached, and, weeks later, doctors diagnosed him with stage 4 colon cancer. Ashcroft, an educator and mentor to Minneapolis elementary school students, died Dec. 14 at home, surrounded by family and friends. He was 37.

“He was a beautiful soul,” said his wife, Anna Ashcroft. “He had a very gentle way about him.”

Ashcroft, who went by Steve, was born in Capetown, South Africa, and came to the United States at age 4. Ashcroft grew up in the Twin Cities, the son of Episcopalian priests, and earned a bachelor’s degree in African history from Kenyon College in rural Ohio. After a stint in New York while Anna attended graduate school, the couple came back to Minneapolis in 2011 and made it home.

Long before his diagnosis, Ashcroft threw himself into teaching and mentoring children. He was a site coordinator for the Minneapolis Kids child care program at Bancroft, Lake Harriet Lower and Hale elementary schools. He was later promoted to program director, managing resources and the effectiveness of the program, among other duties.

“He had a really keen insight into the kids and their needs. He just loved all of the time with them,” said Charity Kroeker Calubayan, a friend and former classmate who knew Ashcroft through Minneapolis Kids. “He would develop goals especially for individual students to help them with relationships. He just wanted them to grow up to be good people and to have a positive social life.” Previously, Ashcroft worked with Americorp Vista, tutoring and tending to youths with developmental disabilities. He also spent some time working as an office manager for Whittier Alliance.

Ashcroft’s love for children and education prompted him to start on a master’s degree in elementary education at Hamline University in St. Paul; he was halfway through before his illness ended his studies.



Shortly after his diagnosis, Ashcroft became a member of Gilda’s Club, a support group that offers education, socializing and therapies for people living with cancer and their families. He was a participant in the LISTEN Project, a collaboration between Gilda’s Club and Stuart Pimsler Dance & Theater, performing a monologue on stage about his cancer experience.

“He was a really well-loved member,” said Ali DeCamillis, Gilda’s Club program director. “In his young life, he gathered a lot of wisdom that he really shared very openly here and very authentically with a lot of truth.”

Ashcroft was an avid reader and writer, who also relished bird-watching, music and ultimate Frisbee. In fact, his Frisbee playing skill and stature enticed Anna on the field. “When I first met him I was so drawn to him because everybody was drawn to him,” Anna said. “He was tall and athletic. If you talked to him, if you had a conversation with him, he would always make you feel like you were the most important person in the world.”

Ashcroft was a keen observer and had passion for connecting with people, his wife said. He often invited people over for dinner. He was emotionally and socially connected because “he generally wanted to know what you had to say and wanted to understand people,” Anna Ashcroft said.

Ashcroft is survived by his wife and children, Henry and Alice; his parents, the Revs. Ernie and Mary Ellen Ashcroft, and his siblings, Andrew and Susannah.

Funeral services will be Jan. 7, 1:30 p.m. at St. John the Evangelist Church, 549 Portland Av., St. Paul, Minn.

And, in case you missed it, baby Reese Crosby Stover and parents Sarah Holt and Kyle are back home in Grand Marais. There is on-going recovery from a difficult C-section; but all are doing well. We are so anxious to see them.

 **Sarah Holt Stover** 😊 feeling indescribable with Kyle Stover at [St Luke's Birthing Center](#).  
4 hrs · Duluth, MN · 🧑🏻‍🤰

Reese Crosby.  
8:25 am CST.  
6 pounds, 15.3 ounces.  
He is perfect.  
Our hearts are full.  
❤️

