

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 or pcoleman@chem.wayne.edu

This Sunday:

Leading: Sarah
Preaching: Carolyn
Presiding: Mary Ellen

Readings this week:

Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost, 1 October, 2017

First Reading: Exodus 17:1-7 and Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16 **OR** Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32 and Psalm 25:1-9

Psalm: Above

Epistle: Philippians 2:1-13

Gospel: Matthew 21:23-32

(To link directly to the readings (click) <https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=161>



Reflections:

By Milan Schmidt

In last week’s Old Testament reading God’s people are grumbling in the wilderness. It is a common theme in the old testament. Not an uncommon one in Grand Marais for that matter. Even in our beautiful environment



Inviting Mystery, Embracing Compassion, Encountering Christ.

we find things to grumble about from the weather, to politics, to some slight (real or imagined) at the hand of another. We do have real issues too, of affordable housing, full employment, and of course lack of time. It seems to be a universal human concern to have “enough” and to get one’s “fair share”.

Enough. An interesting word. It can mean as much as required, to a moderate degree (adequately) fairly, *quantum sufficit* used to be something I wrote on prescriptions all the time. It means just enough medicine to complete the required course of treatment. It was nice to just decide how long the course of treatment was and let the pharmacist do the calculations! This is particularly helpful with creams and drops. One less error I needed to worry about making. Sadly, electronic transmission of prescriptions has made it out of date. One more use of the word enough is as an exclamation meaning too much! It can apply in anger or joy.

What is enough? Manna was enough for the day, and once a week enough for the Sabbath also. Whatever was stored would go bad, become corrupted. (but that is another whole sermon). The Manna could not be stored except for the Sabbath loophole. Storing a little for one specific purpose ordained by God seems OK but otherwise they were to be satisfied with the bread of the day. This is reflected in the Lord’s Prayer, give us this day our daily bread.

Another aspect of the story: God seems to supply what the people need because they grumble. Would He have let them starve if they did not grumble? I doubt it, but they needed to acknowledge their dependence, to feel it in their guts. This is another subtle aspect of enough. What does it take to be satisfied? That is not as easy to count as a number of pills. If you think there will not be more later, you may think you need more now. If you are “saving room for desert” you may eat less of your entrée (or not!). In many ways, enough has primarily to do with our expectations and desires. It is a matter of faith and trust. What do we believe about our needs? Do we trust God to provide for them?

Forums: 2016 - 2017

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

Oct. 8th: Potential impacts of climate change on the local level — by the Nordic Nature Group — young naturalists including Olya Wright.

Oct. 22 — *Evolution and Faith* MEA

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Notes:

1.) This Sunday: Blessing of the Animals

2.) On Saturday Oct. 14, women from Holy Apostles Episcopal Church in St. Paul (who will up here on retreat) will offer an egg-roll making class. Maximum size is 20. Cost will \$20 each (will help defray their retreat expenses...) RSVP to Mary Ellen by Sept. 27th (this Wednesday) any remaining spots will then be opened to the greater community. maryellencar@gmail.com **Update:** the group teaching would then like to cook a meal to eat with participants. There will be an added cost.

3.) Preaching Class — please let MEA if you are interested and we'll set up a good time....

4.) We would like to have more different voices in our newsletter *Reflections*. Would you like to sign up--perhaps for once a month or once every two months? Please let Mary Ellen know.

In that Gospel workers are paid the same regardless of how long they work. Not very American! It doesn't seem FAIR.

When I was in High School several of the Honors students from various local schools around Cincinnati were chosen to assist with a local scientific assembly. We were to hold microphones for those asking questions. It was a day away from school and they paid us 10 bucks! Plus, it was an opportunity to hear scientists tell about their work. For the sermon, I had to look up the names, but one of the sessions I assisted with was presented by either Noyes or Kirby, an inventor of the microchip. He talked about the purity of the chip, how it's properties as a semiconductor made it unique for the purpose, how layers were built up on the chip. It was fascinating and really cool, although at the time I had no idea of its transformative importance.

The reason I remembered this story now is the way we were paid. There were other schools and other students doing the same job, but some came

later for only the afternoon session. As we stood in line to get our \$10 checks, they were paid first and got the full \$10. I remember us discussing if we had misunderstood and it was \$10 per session not for the day. Although hopeful for more, we received the \$10 we were expecting for the day. Our group did not talk about it being unfair. We were somewhat jealous of the hourly wage. (I mean, they were getting over \$2 per hour!) but at least in our circle there was no anger. Ten bucks could cover the cost of a date night at the time but the money was not really the point. We were still too excited about all the cool stuff we learned.

As it turns out, the money was really the least valuable thing I got that day. The money has long since been spent and has passed unnoticed. The experience of being there and participating was far more valuable. It was a chance to be a part of something meaningful and learn something. It helped cement my interest in science and perhaps is partly why I find computers fascinating. As I reflect on it now, it is amazing the changes that inventive bit of science has made in the world, and sharing in the excitement early was a privilege.

Working a vineyard in the hot sun I'm sure was not as intellectually stimulating as my day, but work does have its own satisfaction. Each worker was part of something bigger. Perhaps, looking beyond the immediacy of the work to the final



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Prayer Book I: The Sacraments | begins November 6

Family Systems and Human Awareness | begins November 6

Missional Management | begins November 6

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schoolforformation.org

**Unity in Christ
PRAISE & WORSHIP**

...make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Philippians 2:2

**Thursday, October 5, 2017
Hovland Town Hall**

6:30 Snacks and Chat time
7:00 Praise and worship!
Prayer afterwords

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity! Psalm 133:1

For more information please call Treg or Denise at 475-2314
Love, your brother and sister in Christ!

product of wine would have helped their mood. From his perspective, the owner wanted to have as many workers as possible participate in production. Perhaps he was just generous and socially responsible or perhaps: More wine! The workers were working for the day; the owner was looking to the long term.

But this is not about work hours, or fairness, or just wages, or getting enough. The Gospel is NOT speaking against equal pay for equal work. The concepts of FAIR and ENOUGH are about us and OUR values. This is a parable about the Kingdom of heaven, it is always about God. It is God who chooses us for our work. It is God who decides our wages. It is God who puts us to work in His vineyard. The sinner who arrives late to God’s Kingdom still arrives at God’s Kingdom. Even late in the day there is always some work to do. The rewards are not something that is ours to claim; it is God’s to give. We do not work so we can be independent. We do not work to get our fair share or to have enough. We work to further God’s kingdom. We don’t earn but are given. And we are part of something that is so much bigger we can’t imagine it now. I suspect the reward will feel like enough. Perhaps like being tickled mercilessly until between bursts of laughter, rolling around on the floor in joy, we shout “ENOUGH!” God’s gift to us is indeed more than we can ask or imagine. In confidence, we can write in our hearts “God to us is *quantum sufficit*. Praise be to God.”