

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:
Preaching: Mary Ellen
Presiding: Mary Ellen

Readings this week:

**Baptism of the Lord, 7
 January, 2018**

First Reading: Genesis 1:1-5
Psalm: Psalm 29
Epistle: Acts 19:1-7
Gospel: Acts 19:1-7
 To link directly to the readings (click)
[https://
 lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/
 texts.php?id=60](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=60)

Candle for Ellen and Karen



Reflections:

By Milan Schmidt

Merry Christmas! This is still Christmas although you may not recognize the story from John as a “Christmas story”. Only two Gospels have a birth narrative, John is not one of them. That got me to thinking: “how do we tell our story? If you have been involved in any spiritual group, it is very likely you have had to tell your spiritual autobiography. I could start mine with “I come from a long line of Episcopalians. My grandfather was an episcopal minister (he would never say priest because he was too low church for that!) This is like Matthew; “A table of the descent of Jesus Christ.” He follows with the Birth Narrative.

Mark starts: Here begins the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God. Then straight to John baptizing Jesus. (after referencing Isaiah to give context) Straightforward. No nonsense. Action oriented. I could begin “I was confirmed in the church while I was still grieving the death of my grandfather, and as the Bishop laid hands upon me it was Grampa Jim’s heavy hands I felt, acutely aware of him as a spiritual presence.”

Luke starts: The Author to Theophilus: Many writers have undertaken to draw up an account of the events that happened among us, following the tradition handed down to us by the original eyewitnesses and servants of the Gospel. Then the story begins: In the Days of Herod.... I too could start with a forward: To all those on a spiritual journey or seeking to know God in their lives, I tell the story of my own journey not for admiration or pity but that you may make connections and begin to see your own story as God working through YOU to accomplish God’s purposes on earth. Then like Luke I could move to my own birth narrative: I was born to a minister’s daughter who married the boy next door after he came home from WWII. I was both first born son and only child...

But where I am now, I resonate most with John. In the beginning was the Word, says John. If I were following John’s lead, I’d begin with something like the Big Bang: All light and matter and energy and love were concentrated in one place that was not yet even a place until God’s Love grew too great and all exploded outward in a wave of Being and Light and Love. The Gospel then fast forwards to John Crying in the Wilderness. My own story would fast forward to my mid-teens and my first truly mystical experience. (Perhaps I’d use third person) There was a boy sitting on a couch in Cincinnati, questioning the church as a place of spirituality and



*Inviting Mystery, Embracing
 Compassion, Encountering Christ.*

Forums: 2017 - 2018

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

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studying Buddhism, meditating, and trying to understand at a deeper level when, for a brief moment, that wave of being, light and love transcended time and overtook him. The world became vibration and light. The material nature of the world was replaced by vibration, sound and light. He was aware of the very molecules humming.

John's image is "Word". Physics could describe word as modulated vibration, but to John the Word is so much more. The Word was with God and the Word WAS God. Nothing that IS was made without the Word. There is no "wordlessness". Word is the very substance of the universe, the very substance of light and life itself. Words have vibration but also MEANING. Just as light is a wave but also a particle. Vibration and substance. All that exists is WORD, meaning, light, life!

Johns goes on to say the light shone in the darkness and the dark has not overcome it. Even in our darkest moonless nights where clouds hide all specks of starlight from our gaze, the darkness does not overcome light. The darkest shadow needs light to exist.

Recent times have emphasized darkness and shadows for me and for many. I have felt political struggles to be exhausting and hope hard to find. Revelations of sexual misconduct on a huge scale leave me embarrassed to have testosterone. The work I do every day shows me all too much of the dark side. The hopelessness of depression and the fearfulness of anxiety are rampant. I recognize these feelings in myself as well. I cannot even "bring these to light" and discuss due to confidentiality. I can say how heartbreakingly hard it was to deliver the news of brain tumor to my dear friend and fellow physician, Ellen.

There is no comfort in knowing the troubles of others. Our own do not seem smaller. It can add to the general sense of shadow. How do we deal with shadow? John's voice crying in the wilderness tells us to REPENT! Turn back toward the light. The darkness has not overcome the light, it is just blocked, by others or most profoundly by ourselves. We need to recognize that we are in sin -turned away- and turn back. It is HARD and FRIGHTENING to stand in the light. Our darkness will be SEEN before it is overcome. We need hope and courage.

We ARE still in Christmas. Christ is small baby of hope and light. We are just past the Solstice. Our whole world has been leaning into darkness, but our dark earth is beginning to lean back toward the sun. We are not always privileged with a bright sunny summer day, but that day will come again. We are not always privileged to see a guiding star. But the Word has been made Flesh. Light is our very being. Love vibrates in our very molecules. THIS is the beginning of the Gospel, the good news. Like the earth itself, let us lean into it!

Prayers for Ellen Stubbs & Karen Kobey: Ellen will undergo brain surgery on Thursday to remove her tumor. Mary Ellen will be traveling to be with both of them the day before. Please pray for them--for healing for Ellen; for peace for both of them. Here are some ways to contact them: Karen: stonefly@boreal.org Ellen: estubbs290@aol.com Their twin cities address is 247 Wildflower Ct., Vadnais Heights, MN 55127 for cards. Calls are discouraged for now.

Help!! Ellen & Karen do many many things in the parish that need covering for awhile. These include taking photos for the newsletter, organizing the weekly 'on deck' Sunday crew, and spearheading the annual Art Show (Ellen); playing guitar for weekly services (Karen). Homilies and Newsletter *Reflections* (both). And countless other things. If you can assist in any of these areas please let Mary Ellen know ASAP: maryellenvicar@gmail.com

Esme's Beautiful Solo (click link to hear)
<https://youtu.be/4DN8CO0ycmM>



Prayers celebrating Carolyn's 30th Anniversary of Ordination to the Priesthood.

