

Wilderness Words



Spirit of the Wilderness www.spiritofthewilderness.org

Weekly News—August 23, 2012

Vicar Notes

We were privileged to have Rev. Dr. Dwight Zscheile with us on Wednesday night. As an expert in missional church, he had encouraged us when we were starting Spirit of the Wilderness.

We started by “reporting back” to Dwight about what’s been going on since his encouragement four years ago. We did that by asking people to answer these questions: What do you like about SOTW? What is unique? Some answers....

dragon boat team,
great building—great to rent
website
the welcoming, inviting and questioning community... no one is threatened by questions--safe
wide variety of music
healing ministry
blend of Episcopal church tradition with freedom of being in Grand Marais
an embracing community
people can be outspoken and speak their minds
collaboration with the art colony
evolved under the radar
joy every week
appreciation of many gifts
kid and dog friendly
openness, flexibility, lay leadership,
variety of preachers
acceptance of all—age, gender, history
energy and enthusiasm
ownership
flexible liturgy in a traditional framework
socials
reaching out committee—Good Samaritan fund

We also asked people to write down what challenges they believe we face. Here are some of those:

our geographical spread
to keep the energy and the sense of tradition
how do we help people make the shift from where we meet them (like the art colony) to church?
more fine music for services
keeping connected to the Episcopal Church in MN and worldwide
encouraging people to sign up
growing our core
how do we encourage youth (under 45) attendance in a transient community
small town id issues—are you here to stay?

For Dwight’s response, see next page!!

Dwight's Response:

What you are doing here is an important theme/message for the Episcopal Church, by modeling a “bottom up” approach—both in terms of how the church came to be, and in terms of clergy getting out of the way, so that all can be empowered. This is something, Dwight pointed out that the hierarchies of the church, and often the seminaries—just don't get—that the Holy Spirit is working in and through the grass roots, and that leaders need to make space to facilitate God's work—encouraging all to listen to the Spirit and their neighbors.

He argued that this culture of empowerment is crucial in finding a fresh expression of the tradition—not trying to be flashy—but being rooted and open, so that all can find their voices and ways to tell the story of how our story fits with God's story. He said that a metaphor for church leadership that he and others are using is that of Cultivation—as in a garden—making safe spaces for enquiry and deep listening.

He affirmed the importance of our presence in public spaces—like dragon boat and the art colony, and talking to friends in our social networks and listening to their needs.

Some thoughts on helping people make the shift from wanting community to coming to church:

- are there ways that at the art colony or dragonboat or in other public spaces, there could be more spiritual presence on our part?
- Anglicanism has always been about using the vernacular, but the difference is that now people don't know the story, whereas then they did, so perhaps there would be ways in the bulletin or otherwise, for explanation—hyperlinks, or notes, or “ask Lee, she loves this stuff...”

Other ideas (from Dwight or others....)

Maybe it's time to start something quieter and more meditative in town at a different time of the week.

It would be good for us to describe our ID as a church...an “elevator speech” about who we are and why we're different.

St. Matthew's has done a “no agenda” dinner....

A book group?

To the church itself, ask the question—who are we at our best? Or from neighbors, “What are your impressions of SOTW?”

I'd love to hear if you want to pursue any of these!

Blessings, Mary Ellen

What's happening?

For your calendars:

August 26th: Trinidad Steel Pan Band plays at Cornerstone Community Church, 6:30 PM

September 21-22 Convention for the Episcopal Church in Minnesota being held in Morton, MN.

October 6-8 Regional visit of the Bishop—he will be mainly in the Duluth area....some of us may go down for parts of this!

October 21??? SOTW will hold its second Annual Meeting—with voting on officers, etc. in early October. Last year we had a potluck and the meeting....look out for more details on this!

Looking Ahead.....

- Following Patsy Coleman's helpful input on healing ministry—look for some of her brochures on the back table; Also we'll soon be initiating a prayer chain.
- Look out for our book group on native writers beginning in the next month or two....
- Look out on the Diocesan Website for a film about Deepening Roots, being shot by Wendy Johnson this week.....also a piece about Spirit of the Wilderness...
- How about a study on the making of the Nicene Creed? Or a book group that meets to talk about a novel and what we can learn from it about our faith lives? Or a group Spiritual Direction group? Or an occasional meeting on some topic of interest? **Please let me know if you are interested in any of these!!**

