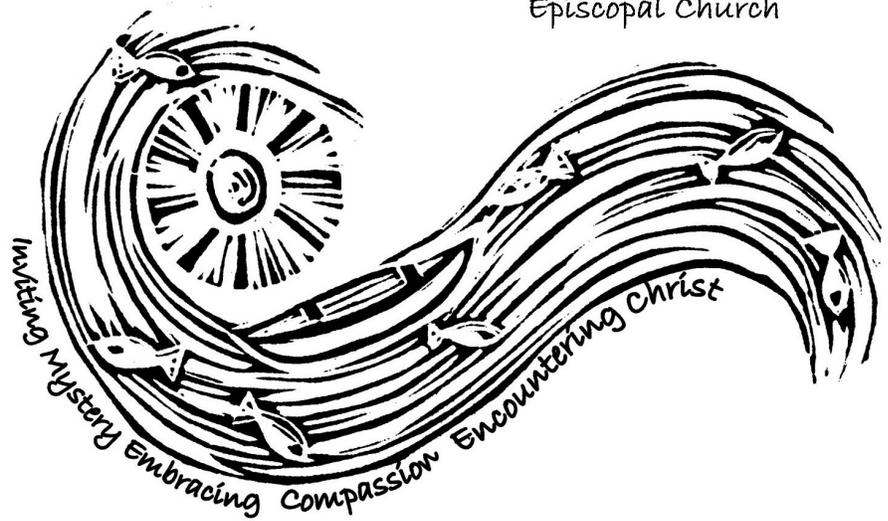


Wilderness Words

Newsletter—
Oct. 16, 2013

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Spirit of the Wilderness
Episcopal Church



Vicar's Notes

When I moved to South Africa in 1975, the Anglican church there had just undergone sweeping changes. For many years the church had been what we called “high and dry;” in other words Anglo-Catholic in worship but a little rigid. It was socially very involved, fighting apartheid left and right.

Then, just before I arrived in South Africa, there was a remarkable move of the Holy Spirit. Out of the blue, many people within the Anglican church had an experience of the power and joy of the Holy Spirit. Almost half the bishops had this kind of experience—the man who was archbishop of Cape Town was reading his newspaper when the Spirit suddenly came on him.

I've been thinking and writing quite a lot about South Africa and the experience of living there. I've especially been thinking about the Anglican church. It had all the social justice focus in place; worship was lovely. The Spirit was added and... The biggest challenge then was for people to learn to grow as Christians, connecting their faith to their lives.

Faith communities vary from place to place, depending on circumstances. But one thing that we can learn from the Anglican church there and then that is applicable for us thousands of miles from Cape Town—is how the church must hold these different areas in tension. In other words, we pay attention to how we worship, we are attentive to our community involvement, we expect the Spirit's engagement with us, and we learn how our faith connects with our lives. All of those must be part of a vital faith community.

When I was talking to Lee the other day about small groups I said that I thought their main point was simple—to help people connect their faith to their lives, and to help them connect to each other.

That main point—people connecting faith to life and connecting to each other—is simple, but it's not easy. I believe our beginning small groups will help to aid this.

A group starts this Thursday evening at Lee and Karl's. I hope that another one may start in January, and perhaps another a few months later. Please speak to Lee or to me if you are interested!

Blessings, Mary Ellen

Coming up:

Oct. 17th—6 pm Small group at Lee and Karl's.

Nov. 14th—Empty Bowls.

Nov. 19th, Bishop Brian will come to us for a lunchtime visit at Carolyn and Milan's. Mark the date in your calendar... more info coming soon.

Empty Bowls!

We need volunteers on the day—Nov. 14th—for set up, serving, and clean up both for the noon and evening servings.

Please contact Kelsey Kennedy kelsey.rogers.kennedy@gmail.com or Kathy Sullivan kmsullivan8@gmail.com to sign up to help with this event which is so crucial to our community's health and wellness.

Stewardship!

Over the next month we'll be focusing on stewardship at *Spirit of the Wilderness*. As a new church, we've taken a strong stance on giving away a portion of what we take in—through the Good Samaritan Fund. I believe this really makes us clear on our priorities as a church, but it also means that (since we have no cushion of endowments or other funds) that we can end up pretty close to the edge financially.

I would invite all of us to consider our calling as part of this faith community—how we can give from our resources so that *Spirit of the Wilderness* can continue to nurture our spiritual growth, as well as continuing to reach out in love to those around us.

November 17th will be the date when we collect our pledge cards; we will follow the service with a celebratory meal provided by the Bishop's Committee.

Look out for more on all of this, and in the meanwhile, pray about what God is calling you to give.

Oct. 13— Sunday service responsibilities

Leading—Jennye
Homily—Carolyn
Presiding—Mary Ellen
Music—Peter
Treats—

Opportunities:

- We need someone to organize the cards we send to our further-flung members for the holidays. **Thanks Val!**
- **We need to have our directory updated. Want to help?**

Sunday Lectionary Readings:

Proper 24, October 20

Jeremiah 31:27-34
Psalm 119: 97-104
II Timothy 3:14-4:5
Luke 18: 1-8

The image of God (as one who is better than someone who responds to nagging) seems a bit strange. Our prayer says something of our God image—what is yours?

Proper 25, October 27

Joel 2:23-32
Psalm 65
II Timothy 4:6-8. 16-18
Luke 18: 9-14

“All who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted,” Jesus says after telling the parable about the Pharisee and the tax collector. This is a tough on in our culture...how do you understand this?

