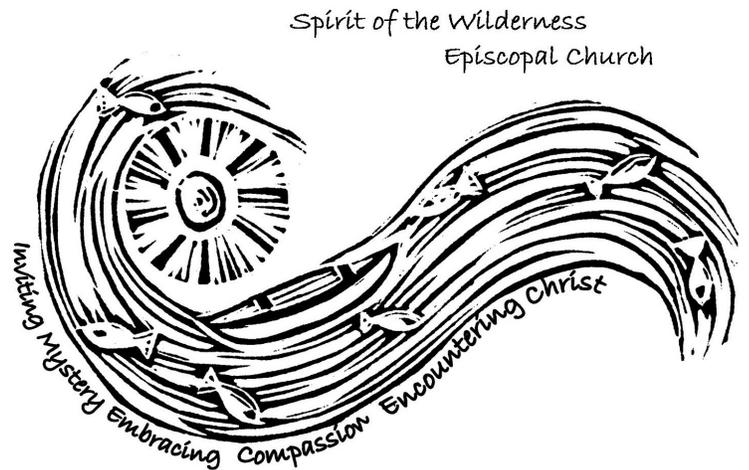


Wilderness Words

Newsletter—
December 18, 2013

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Vicar's Report

I'm sure you, like me, have seen the pix of refugees from the conflict in Syria—tents covered in snow, people carrying sick children. In the *Central African Republic* we hear of a descent into chaos. In the world's newest country—*Southern Sudan*—it seems like all is slipping into destruction. The Phillipines and Haiti are still in a mess. How do we process all this need? How do we keep caring?

While world situations are pressing, closer to home, we've been hearing about the needs of children in Cook County—from ISD 166, the Violence Prevention Center, and Health and Human Services. Here are more needs and these closer to home.

How do we, as we prepare for a festive holiday, consider the implications of all this need?

I think one major one is to remember that Christmas is about the descent of God into the neediest places. We're told that Christ, though he was rich became poor for our sakes. As we celebrate in our warm homes, with plenty to eat—let us remember those who are poor and hungry and dispossessed.

Wake up/ little baby God/ thousands of children/have been born/ just like you/without a roof/without bread/without protection. (A prayer from Chili.)

As Christians we are called to care about 'the least of these.' May we know how to follow this calling.

Blessings, Mary Ellen

Kathy Sullivan writes:

Last Sunday Grace Brouhard from Cook County Health and Human Services came to speak as part of our "And how are the children?" series. Grace believes the needs of children in Cook County, other than those provided by Social Services, would be support in buying the things they would need to partake in sports, art lessons, music lessons. These are the activities that help kids build self-esteem and be a part of the larger group. Also help for after school and summer activities. When asked about hunger issues she felt that it doesn't show up as much. But perhaps it is hidden, an embarrassment.

Grace also talked about the Good Samaritan Fund and thanked Spirit of the Wilderness for the ongoing fund and the freedom to use as the Social Workers see a need. The balance is about \$1200 mostly due to Holaday's sale.

Christmas:

Dec. 22nd, 10:30 Advent 4. Help decorate after the service.

Dec. 24th, 5 pm. Nine lessons and Carols with candles. Please bring friends! Also we need lanterns before the service begins.

Dec. 24th, 7 pm. Festive potluck—bring traditional fare to share—at WindCradle.

Dec. 25th, 10 am Eucharist at Spirit of the Wilderness.

Look out for.....

....a monthly forum beginning in January organized by Carol Mork.

...a social sleigh ride coming up in the next month—more info from Sara Stover!!

....a SOTW t-shirt so we can be a little more identifiable in public! Who wants to help design this?

First and Second Thrift offers an opportunity for folks to volunteer and then dedicate their earnings to a cause of their choice. The amount turns out to be around 13.00 an hour... We're hoping some SOTW folks will do this and designate The Good Samaritan Fund as their cause, as a way to raise money. Mary Ellen has forms to get names into First and Second Thrift.

The Good Samaritan Fund is providing Christmas grocery gift cards of 25.00 for a number of our neighbors. These names were provided by Health and Human Services.

Let's give thanks that we're able to provide in this way for others. If you'd like to make a contribution to this fund it can go in the regular offering with Good Sam Fund in the subject line.

Coming up:

Jan. 26th, Rolf Lowenburg-DeBoer (missioner for community outreach) will visit with us.

Feb. 21st and 22nd—Enneagram retreat at WindCradle.

March 28-April 5th—Entry Points to the Creative, Johnson Heritage Post.



Meeting Min-

utes (for annual meeting or monthly Bishop's Committee meetings) are available for anyone who wants to read them. Please email Val at jfgroth@boreal.org & she will send them.

**Leading—Rolf
Homily—Layne
Presiding—Mary Ellen
Music—Layne
Treats—Suzanne**

Dec 22— Sunday service responsibilities

Sunday Lectionary Readings:

Advent 4, December 22

Micah 5:2-5a
Canticle 13 The Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55)
Hebrews 10: 5-10
Luke 1: 39-55

This Sunday we consider Mary's 'yes' to God and her words—often called the Magnificat. How do you understand her 'yes'? How might you say this kind of 'yes' to God's call?

Christmas Eve and Day

Lots of lessons at 9 lessons and carols, and then familiar gospel passages and Isaiah prophecies

What does Christmas mean to you and why? What does your sense of Christmas have to do with the great stories from scripture?