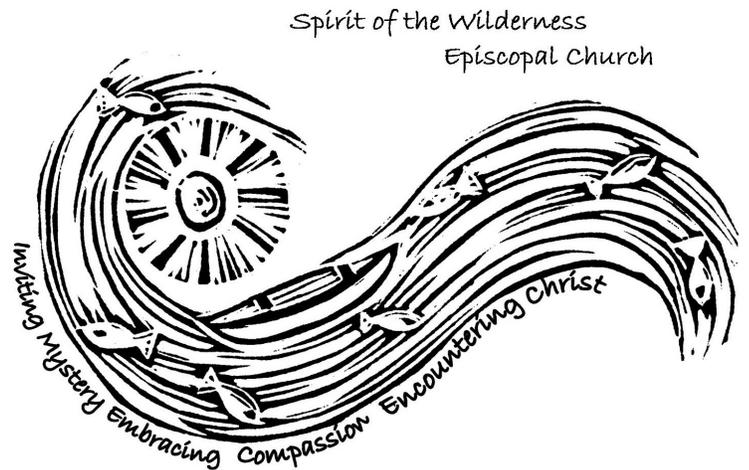


Wilderness Words

Newsletter—

January 1, 2014

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Vicar, Mary Ellen Ashcroft
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Vicar's Report

Worship and music are two big areas—overlapping but not synonymous—in the life of every church. Here at Spirit of the Wilderness we are no exception! As a small, highly participatory church, we are known for our exuberant singing—what could be better?!?!

We have been well supported by the music box, and by the folks—especially Layne and Karl—who have used it to give us music. In terms of other music we've had rhythm instruments, visits from violins, guitars, flutes, drums, bagpipes....and Jane's once a month piano playing.

With Jane going, and others coming it seems like such a good time for us focus our prayers, discernment, and creative thinking on next steps. Here are some questions:

- What music style (or range of styles) would best suit us at SOTW?
- How can we embrace the new and treasure the traditional at SOTW?
- How might we attain some of these goals?

On Sunday after church all are invited to meet to discuss (if you won't be there, please send input). Later in the week the Worship Committee will meet to follow up..... Trusting that God has something up God's sleeve!

Blessings, Mary Ellen

Jane Howard's departure:

Jane Howard is moving this week (with her daughter Ashley) to Onamia to be a psychologist with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwa. We will miss her musical gifts to us. Not only has she provided us with monthly lovely playing; she has also expanded our range of music. She's done all this without asking for pay. I would like us to send a gift to her as she settles into her new life there. If you would like to donate please make out a check to SOTW with Jane Howard in the subject line. There will be a card for us all to sign next Sunday. Mary Ellen



Coming up:

Jan. 7th, 6:30 PM Centering Prayer at Schmidt's.
(note later start)

Jan. 8th, 6:30 PM Bishops Committee

Jan. 21st, 5:30 PM Centering Prayer at Schmidt's

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

Feb. 8th, 10 AM region meeting (place TBA)

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

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

January 5th— Sunday service responsibilities

Leading—Layne
Homily—Ellen
Presiding—Mary Ellen
Music—Karen
Treats—Rolf

Adult Forums

- Sunday, January 12, noon - 1:00 - "The Book of the Year - Matthew" (Carol Mork)
- Sunday, February 9, noon - 1:00 - Hunger Issues - Beth Kennedy)
- Sunday, March 9, noon - 1:00 - Exploring some Old Testament Roots of Jesus - Hillary Freeman
- Sunday, April 6, noon-1:00—Literature and spirituality—Mary Ellen Ashcroft
- Sunday, May 4, noon-1:00—Why liturgy? Carolyn Schmidt

Sunday Lectionary Readings:

Second Sunday after Christmas, January 5th
 Jeremiah 31: 7-14
 Psalm 84:1-8
 Ephesians 1: 3-6, 15-19a
 Matthew 2: 13-15, 19-23 or Luke 2: 41-52

News from the Fergus-Moore's in Israel:
 Hello everyone,

It is sunny with dense fog patches and about 10 degrees celsius here in Jerusalem on this first day of 2014.

We are resting, and getting ready to resume duties in our placement soon. Many of you may not know that, a few weeks ago, the sudden illness of a fellow EA caused a shuffling of the members of three different teams, including Jerusalem and Bethlehem. The unexpected and for us happy result is that we are now on the same team, Jerusalem. We will serve out the rest of our time here together, before we return to Canada on February 1.

The violence and oppression have increased here in the last few weeks, and, despite the token release of a few prisoners by the Israeli military, the year has ended very badly for the people under occupation. After bombing Gaza, the state of Israel is building more settlement units, in defiance of international law.

Although it seems on the surface futile to do so, we pray for a better year, and a true, just peace for all the people here. We hope that we have contributed in some small way to a better world here, and look forward eagerly to sharing our stories and experiences when we return home in a few weeks.

May God abundantly bless you who read this, and everyone, now and in the coming year, and may the Reign of God begin Now.

--Joyce and Peter