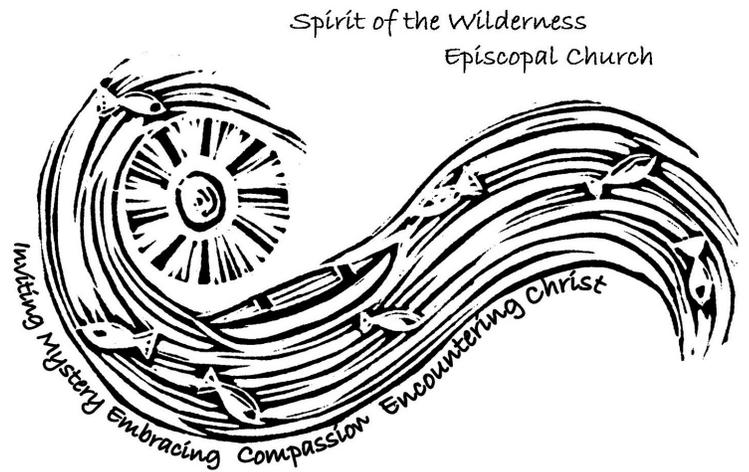


Wilderness Words

Newsletter—
February 21, 2013

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Vicar's Report

(Over the next few weeks, I will be sharing in the newsletter some of what I've been hearing in my one on one meetings with folks. If you haven't met with me yet, I'd like to fix a time to get together and get your input about how SOTW is working for you!)

If there is one overall theme in people's input to me it is about the sense of involvement they have at Spirit of the Wilderness. People say that being at SOTW, they don't feel like a spectator or audience member, but part of the action, part of the family. And this involvement seems to mean—another theme I've heard from many—that there's less gap between "life" and "religion" than many have experienced before. In other words, life and religion flow into each other and back, instead of separate categories.

If we look at the earliest writings of the New Testament—some of Paul's letters—there doesn't seem to be a split between life and religion. Instead the transformative power of the Spirit has flooded these believers and that reality spills throughout their lives.

One concern that has been expressed by a number of folk with whom I've met is that we might grow too much and lose some of our closeness. (This concern is often followed by some guilt for feeling that way...) How do we balance our care for those within the church and a welcome for those outside?

When we met with Bp. Brian over lunch at Schmidt's a few months ago, this topic came up. Karen Halbersleben responded in a way that was profound. She said (and I paraphrase) that our job is not to get big, but to be who we are and help the word get out so that those who would be blessed by becoming part of this kind of community can find us.

People have also expressed their joy at our involvement in the larger community in Cook County—The Good Samaritan Fund, for example.

We've been following up on the meeting we had when Rolf Lowenburg-DeBoer and Bp. Steve were here as well as Beth's input on hunger in Cook County. We'll discuss these on Sunday after church—Bring ideas and help us make some plans. See you then!

Blessings, Mary Ellen



Coming up:

Feb. 23rd—After service meeting to follow up on our ministry to Cook County Kids.

March 5th—6 pm. Ash Wednesday service at WindCradle,

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

Some ways we're following up getting involved:

- School enrichment programs.
- Mentoring through the Y.
- A play about sex trafficking in MN.
- Supporting a boy's program at the school.
- Sex ed programs.
- Community wood sharing program.
- Ruby's Pantry program.
- Snack packs for kids.
- A community meal.
- Putting packets at VPC for families in need.

We'll be reporting back on these at the meeting after church on Sunday.

Sunday, February 23rd:

Leading: Howard
 Homily: Carolyn
 Presiding: Mary Ellen
 Music: Jennye
 Treats:

Adult Forums

Sunday, March 9, noon - 1:00 - Exploring some Old Testament Roots of Jesus - Hillary Freeman

Sunday, April 6, noon-1:00—John's gospel—Mary Ellen

Sunday, May 4, noon-1:00—Why liturgy? Carolyn Schmidt

Sunday Lectionary Readings:

Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany, Feb. 23rd

Lev. 19: 1-2, 9-18
 Psalm 119: 33-40
 I Corinthians 3: 10-11, 16-23
 Matthew 5: 38-48

This gospel passage is one of the most challenging of Jesus' teaching. How do you understand the demands he makes on his followers in this part of the Sermon on the Mount?

Last Sunday of the Epiphany, Transfiguration, March 2

Exodus 24: 12-18
 Psalm 2
 II Peter 1:16-21
 Matthew 17: 1-9

What does "transfiguration" mean to you? How have you been transformed?