

## Wilderness Words

Newsletter—

October 2, 2014

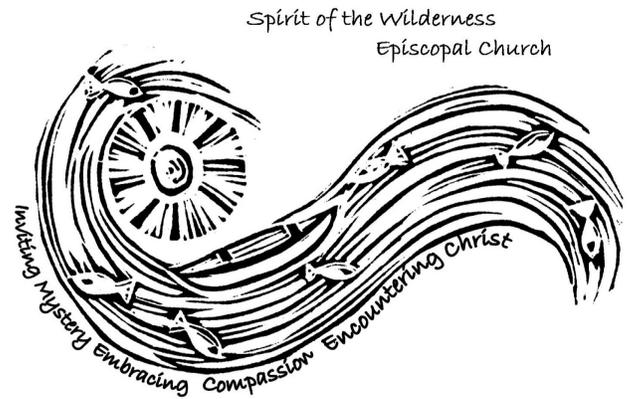
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Vicar, Mary Ellen Ashcroft

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### Vicar's Report

One weekend a month I travel to the Twin Cities to teach and preach at other churches. Last Sunday I spent at Holy Apostles, the largely Hmong church in St. Paul. I led the service and preached in the morning, and in the afternoon I taught their Shared Ministry team. I'm teaching two subjects for them this year: "Preaching" and "Anglican Ways of Reading Scripture." But Rev. Letha Wilson Barnard, their vicar, suggested I combine the two, which seems to work well.

We talked about what authority scripture has for us and has in different traditions. I had asked them to look ahead at the lectionary readings for last Sunday, so I could talk about my method or preparing a sermon, and they could begin to think about how they would do that—which passage they would choose and why.

One man said that the passage about the people of Israel complaining to Moses in the wilderness—having been freed from slavery—really stood out to him. When I asked him to elaborate he said that the people at Holy Apostles had crossed the Mekong and been in refugee camps in Laos and Thailand. While they were there they could hardly wait to get away from there. But once they got into a new place, sometimes they complained, just like the people of Israel.

Wow, I said. Just think how that story touches you, resonates with the experience of this congregation in a way that I could never have known. When I'd read that same passage, that would not have occurred to me. That is why preaching must be contextual, I said. You as a person who knows that history bringing the story from then to people here and now.

The service I was leading in church could not have been more different from our services at Spirit of the Wilderness. At Holy Apostles, much of the service is chanted, most of the service is led from the front, and people bow before they receive communion. During the prayers of the people, which were chanted in Hmong, one part went something like, "Tuab xngo Spirit of the Wilderness lqi bqen Grand Marais." They were praying for us.

I found myself thinking, "How wonderful! This service at Holy Apostles is a fully Anglican service, fully contextualized for these people here and now. And our services at Spirit of the Wilderness are also fully Anglican services, fully contextualized for us in Cook County. That's what we're meant to be doing."

Blessings, Mary Ellen



### Coming Up!

**October 5th—Blessing of the animals at Church—invite friends with four or two legs.**

**October 5th, 12:30 SOTW leads worship at the Care Center**

**October 9th—Field trip to check out Ruby's Pantry in Cook MN (let MEA know if you'd like to go...)**

**October 9th—Centering prayer at Schmidt's.**

**October 12th—Rescheduled forum—How were the books of the Bible chosen?**

**October 19th—Annual meeting after church.**

**October 25th—Joyce and Peter Fergus—Moore present on their time in the occupied West Bank at CCHE**

**November 7th and 8th—"All Hearts are Open" liturgy workshop at St. John's Linden Hills—let me know if you're interested!**

**November 9th—Stewardship Sunday**

**Please bring your friends with four or two legs to church this Sunday!**

This Sunday's lessons:

Exodus 20: 1-4, 7-9, 19-20  
 Philippians 3: 4b-14  
 Matthew 21: 33-46

In this wonderful passage in Philippians, Paul writes about how he had the world's best pedigree, but how it had become meaningless in light of his life in Christ. Read and consider what this means for you.

**This Sunday:**

Leading—Karl  
 Preaching—Mary Ellen  
 Presiding—Carolyn  
 Music—Karen and Layne  
 Treats—?????