

Wilderness Words

Newsletter—

December 17, 2014

www.spiritofthewilderness.org

Box 1115 Grand Marais, 55604

spiritwilderness@boreal.org

Vicar, Mary Ellen Ashcroft

Phone 218 387 1536



Vicar's Report

People I talked to in the Twin Cities this past weekend all were stressed and rushed. So much to do. Haven't started shopping. Have hardly done any baking. How can I get all this done?

It made me think about other Christmases. When I lived in South Africa, for example, I would cook a Christmas lunch for around twenty people. Turkey with roast potatoes, gravy, four other veg and a steamed Christmas pudding—in honor of nostalgia for some British expats. I didn't have to salt anything, because my sweat in the baking summer heat dripped onto everything I cooked.

For years I made hand made gifts for everyone I knew—sewing, knitting madly. And then there was the baking of cookies and Christmas cakes and mince tarts. Rush, rush, rush. Shopping for the perfect gifts for family.

How sad that this quiet, deep, dark time of year has been so taken over by shopping frenzy. No wonder some churches have declared a seven week advent to battle the shopping frenzy.

In the Twin Cities, the couple of churches I went to seemed like true sanctuaries, in which people were keeping advent as a time of preparation. There were advent hymns, wreathes, and prayers. Walking out of church meant going into the busy-ness and consumer swirl again.

No wonder I love advent in Grand Marais so much!

I'm so thankful to live somewhere where it is dark and deep, and where the woods are so quiet they almost ring in your ears. It's not hard to keep advent here. It seems like a natural hibernation.

The waiting of advent, the expectation, the self-examination, the pregnant silence—for most people in the western world, these are a dream.

What are we waiting for? The three great monotheistic religions all assume a progression, a movement from here to there. We are not part of some great circle that we can step on and off of, but rather part of a story which has a beginning, a middle and an end.

On Christmas Eve we will consider that story from the beginning through now, and consider our part in the story. In the meanwhile breathe deep and let the deep woods and the dark nights fill you with expectation.

Blessings, Mary Ellen



South Africa Book and Movie Group—CCHE

Save the dates and invite a friend. 6:00-8:00

Jan. 8-- Background to literature/film of South Africa. Watch Athol Fugard's *Master Harold and the Boys*

January 15-- Discuss Alan Paton's novel-- *Cry the Beloved Country*.

January 29—Watch Andre Brink's--*Dry White Season*.

February 5-- Discuss Nadine Gordimer's-- *July's People*.

February 12-- Watch Athol Fugard's *TsoTsi*.

February 26—Discuss J. M Coetzee's *Disgrace*.

March 5—Watch *Invictus* and discuss some short readings by Nelson Mandela.

March 12-- Watch *Long Night's Journey Into Day*. (Optional reading: Antjie Krog's--*Country of my Skull*).

Come, and invite a friend! Free, though there'll be a jar out for the Good Samaritan Fund.

Coming Up!

Dec. 21st Help decorate after church.

Dec. 24th Christmas Eve service at 5 PM. (Christmas potluck follows at WindCradle—RSVP if you can....)

Jan. 7th Bishop's Committee Meeting

Jan. 8th—South Africa Book/Movie group begins

Jan. 18th—SOTW retreat at Hedstrom's House of Holy Happenings. We'll begin at noon with appetizers, and then do our retreat work, and then share dinner and fun. All are welcome.

We hope to give grocery store gift cards to some low income folks again this Christmas—if you'd like to make a special donation, please write a check or give some cash to the Good Samaritan Fund.

This Sunday:

Leading—Val
 Preaching—Mary Ellen
 Presiding—Mary Ellen
 Music—Bob and Karen
 Treats—Patsy

(If you want to bring treats for next Sunday, please contact Lee—387 2983.)

Lessons for Advent 4

II Samuel 7: 1-11, 16
 Romans 16: 25-27
 Luke 1:26-38

Our gospel is such a famous passage! Consider your impressions of Mary—who she is and what she said yes to here. How can you follow in her footsteps?