

Wilderness Words

Newsletter—

February 25, 2015

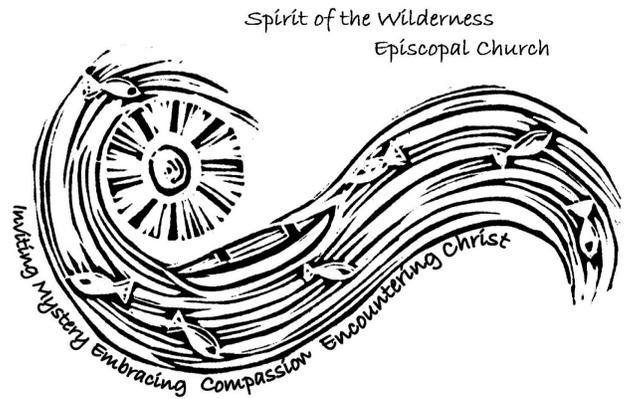
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Vicar, Mary Ellen Ashcroft

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Vicar's Report

Last Sunday I was teaching at Holy Apostles (the largely Hmong Episcopal church) about Anglicanism, and what it means to be part of the world-wide Anglican communion.

As I presented at my forum on the same topic, we talked about how the Anglican reformation pushes us to be moderate, to not claim to have a corner on the market of truth, but to see ourselves as one expression of God's "One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic church." In other words we as Episcopalians know that there are other expressions of God's big idea of THE CHURCH. (Of course we may believe that we're the best expression!)

And then in the class at Holy Apostles, we discussed some of the tensions that are inevitable in our trying to be the kind of church we are trying to be within the Anglican communion. These are not 'solved' once and for all, but must be grappled with by one generation after another.

1. One of the marks of Anglicanism is its idea (largely hammered out by Richard Hooker) that the church MUST change in order to continue to be the expression of God's work in a changing world. How do we change in order to be contextually relevant, without becoming so wishy washy that we are indistinct from the society around us or we lose the core of our message?
2. Elizabeth's great dictum "I do not want a window into men's minds" pushed away from trying to force right belief. Instead people were asked to show up for worship. What does that mean for us in a time when, for many people, worship is not a part of their lives and routines? Even the more recent model of offering something Episcopalian in the smorgasbord of churches, hoping to appeal to some, no longer holds in a world when so many people respond to questions of religion with "none."
3. How do we place ourselves fully as Anglicans in God's church, while on the other hand being fully who we are called to be as a church in our own context? The greater Anglican Communion is such a gift with its range of expressions in a range of places, but some would disapprove of our acceptance of gays or our inviting dogs to church.
4. The primary push of that earliest Anglican reformation was toward worship and the Bible in in the vernacular. Worshiping in our own language was crucial. And yet the Book of Common Prayer is meant to form our identity as Anglicans. How can we live with this tension—to be guided by the prayer book but to be fully committed to worship in the vernacular?
5. Finally, the name "Episcopal" clearly shows one mark of Anglicanism—Bishops, priests, and deacons. How can we live with a system that is inherently hierarchical while living in a time in which egalitarianism and participation are crucial values?

We cannot look back at "the reformation"—it is an ongoing process, of which we are part.

Blessings, Mary Ellen

This Sunday:

Leading—Lee
Preaching—Milan
Presiding—Mary Ellen
Music—Layne and Bob
Treats—

(If you want to bring treats for next Sunday, please contact **Beth Kennedy—387 1314.**)

Adult forums:

March 8: on The Minor Prophets. (Hillary Freeman)

March 22nd: The history of the Episcopal church in Minnesota. (Ben Scott)

May 17th: Historical Service—1670. (Karen Halbersleben)

June 7th: Sacraments—(Mary Ellen)

Ellen Stubbs will be presenting on medical issues—date TBD

South Africa Book and Movie Group—CCHE 6:00-8:00

February 26—Discuss M'pho 'M'atsepo Nthunya's *Singing Away the Hunger*.

March 5—Watch Athol Fugard's *TsoTsi*.

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

Lessons for Second Sunday of Lent

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16
Romans 4: 13-25
Mark 8: 31-38

“What will it profit a person to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?” Jesus asks this question, and it is one about priorities. How can we during this Lenten season check our priorities, asking if we're investing our time, talents and energy as we want to?

Mark your calendars:

Saturday, Feb. 28th—Field trip to Silver Bay to experience Ruby's Pantry.

Sunday, March 1st—Bishop's Committee meeting—concerns to wardens Milan Schmidt or Karen Halbersleben.

Tuesday, March 10th—Illuminations art show materials will be dropped at Johnson Heritage Post. (Help needed 10-6!)

Friday, March 13th—show opening including presentation on the St. John's Bible. (Help needed for this too!)

Saturday, March 14th—class 10-12 using St. John's Bible.

Sunday, March 15th—SOTW at the Care Center.

Wednesday, March 18th—worship committee meeting—concerns to members Lee, Karen K, Ginny or Layne.

Sunday, March 29th—Palm Sunday service, art show closes.

Thursday, April 2nd—Seder Meal at Hedstroms.

Friday, April 3rd—Good Friday service, 1-2 at the Dental Office.

Sunday, April 4th—Easter celebration!!

Summer—aaaah!

