



by Naomi Wenger

views from the hermitage

Enbridge pipeline completed



Downed red oak tree still bearing the prayer banner from the Service of Lament and Hope on March 30

Destruction

The Enbridge Corporation has replaced a high-pressure crude oil pipeline carrying oil from the tar sands in Alberta to refineries in Ohio and Ontario. The original pipeline has crossed the land here since 1968 (when it was still a farmer's field). As part of a project to upgrade its network of delivery pipelines, Enbridge determined that this section of pipe should be "replaced." This replacement project entails putting in a new pipeline, yards from the old one, and decommissioning the old pipe. This required a larger easement for the pipeline. Work began here in mid-July.

In just over one day, one man and one machine cut approximately 4 acres of trees and made huge piles of the trees and brush. The next day, the piles of trees were burned and ash



Burning the trees

covered the nearby trails. By the end of a week, the stumps had been pulled and chipped and a "road" had been cleared for the large machines that would dig trenches and lay the pipe. Huge dirt "dunes" lined the right-of-way.

Construction

Within two weeks, pipes had been delivered and were welded together to create over 700 miles of



Soil "dunes" as high as fifteen feet

new pipeline in the Enbridge system.

We have been hearing sounds of construction vehicles this summer and into the fall. Our hermitage cabins were closed for the summer because we could not guarantee access to them at all times. There is a different, urgent, kind of energy surrounding a construction project of this

magnitude and we have felt this surge each day the crews were active on the site. We had days of activity and days of calm as the crews



Pipes delivered and prepared

moved up and down the pipeline completing various projects.

Reclaiming the land

Now, the pipeline area has been graded, topsoil has been added and we await a propitious time to plant a tall-grass prairie with wildflowers and habitat for birds, reptiles, and mammals. The plan for reclaiming the

Advent Quiet Days
A Way in the Wilderness
 Monday, Dec. 2 and Saturday, Dec. 7
 9 am to 3 pm

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom... A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. Isaiah 35:1, 8

Guests gather for Morning Prayer at 9 followed by short reflections on the theme, "A Way in the Wilderness" with ample times for quiet reflection. Lunch is provided. Fee for the day is \$50. Those wishing to stay overnight can reserve a room for the night before or after the Quiet Day for a suggested donation of \$75 for the overnight and the retreat.

Retreats in 2014

Lent Quiet Days
March 10 and 15, 2014
 9am – 3pm

Look for more information about these retreats on the web site after the New Year.

Hermitage Way Retreats 2014
 – **Earth Stewardship, April 12**
 – **Silence and Solitude, September 27**

If you are interested in keeping The Hermitage Way, please plan on attending these retreats in 2014. The retreats are open to keepers of The Way and those interested in exploring what it means to be a Way Keeper. Additional information on The Hermitage Way will be available on the web site, www.hermitagecommunity.org, after December 1.

Taizé Evensong
Celebrating 10 Years
Second Sundays at 7:00 pm

December 8, 2013 marks the tenth anniversary of Taizé Evensong at The Hermitage. Singing chants, lighting candles, praying in silence, and beautiful musical accompaniment are the hallmarks of this service. The music helps our prayer to move deeply into us as we are carried by the melodies and the community of voices blending with our own. Please join us for a special celebration of the 10th anniversary. There will be a small reception following the service on December 8.



Spiritual Direction at The Hermitage

Spiritual Direction or Companionship is an agreement between persons to listen together to the Holy Spirit, discerning the leading of God for life's journey. Direction is a form of accountability in a safe, prayerful environment. A spiritual director is someone who pays special attention to your deepening spiritual life and encourages the pursuit of God through examining the holiness and love that flow from your life of prayer.

Spiritual Direction is available at The Hermitage. David and Naomi Wenger are experienced Directors having both received training from "Sursum Corda" a spiritual director's formation program of the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina and have practiced Direction for many years. Persons interested in scheduling an initial interview should contact David or Naomi.

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space also includes new prayer gardens along the margins of the permanent easement to invite the prayers of all who walk here and remind us of our commitment to “intervene” with the way we live (including our prayers) and not only with our protest.

We are also renaming the area. To honor what grows above the soil instead of focusing on the destructive possibility that lies under the soil, we will call the open area “The Prairie” rather than “The Pipeline.” We hope that this practice will help us live into a new reality for this radically changed space. We continue to challenge ourselves with the realization of our complicity in lifestyles that engender the “need” for more oil. A recent guest was humbled by the vast opening left by the project and for the first time began reflecting on his own choices that cause this mounting need for more carbon fuel. Every time we fill our gas tanks with fuel, we participate in a complex international sociopolitical act; an act of taking, not only from our neighbors, but from the earth and the living creatures that are sustained on its surface. Mourning the loss of trees and other creatures is just a beginning for all of us.

The Hermitage is using the funds paid by Enbridge in the land settlement to replace two ageing gas furnaces in the Barn with a highly energy efficient geo-thermal heat pump. We are also pursuing the production of some of our own power using wind or sun. We continue to look around us for ways that we can reduce our dependence on the kind of energy that disrupts life and poisons the environment even while giving us the life we desire. It has become clear to us that the price we currently pay for ease may be too high.

Projects for restoration

We welcome your help with the restoration work. If you have a skill or just a desire to assist with creating a prairie or a prayer garden in the early spring, let us know. We can use your time and effort. Contact us to volunteer: 269-244-8696.

What have we been doing?

This has been a season full of events. While the pipeline project played out to the east of our main buildings, we were praying in the west.

Accompanying Children on their Spiritual Journeys

Led by Becky DeBlaey, seven retreatants gathered in mid-June to discover ways we can be attentive to the spiritual lives of children.

Hermitage Way Retreat: Prayer

The first of our Hermitage Way retreats was held in June on the topic, “The Depths of Prayer.” Five Hermitage Waykeepers or those exploring The Way met for a day of investigating and experiencing the varieties and depths of prayer.

Hermitage Jam/Feast of the Transfiguration Retreat

Once again we had a successful Jam Workday. We picked buckets of blackberries, made 52 pints of jam, froze 9 gallons of berry puree, laughed, talked and enjoyed a delightful and not-too-hot day in the field and kitchen.

The next day, about 20 folks gathered for the Feast of the Transfiguration Retreat with a time of Visio Divina (Holy Looking) led by artist and spiritual director, Sylvie Gudin. We were encouraged to see with our hearts as we explored works of the great masters with our inner eyes open.

Anatomy of the Soul

In October, we hosted a retreat led by Dr. Curt Thompson using insights from his book, *Anatomy of the Soul*. He related findings in the field of interpersonal neuro-biology to our connections with other people and ultimately with God.

Hermitage Way Retreat: Rule of Life

Eight folks gathered on October 19 to examine their Rule of Life in the second in our series of Hermitage Way retreats.

IN-MI MALEs – Sage Retreat

In our continuing relationship with the Indiana-Michigan chapter of MALEs (Men as Learners and Elders), we hosted the fourth in their series of retreats on the major male archetypes: The Sage or the wise man.

Farewell to Nazareth

*Place of beginnings,
place of living, growing, working,
place of gathering inner light.*

On November 13, Nazareth was razed. We have used Nazareth as community housing for the last sixteen years. But in the last several years, we have been fighting a losing battle with woodchucks and raccoons that delighted in the crawl space as winter (and summer) homes. The odor of these friendly rodents drove away all but the hardest human guests. Their presence was an open invitation for other decomposers to take up residence and mold had become a persistent problem in the building. While the kitchen in



Nazareth has been the perfect place to make jam during our summer Jam festival, we could not save the building for one annual use. After much prayer and deliberation, the board of Directors decided that the best way to proceed was to take Nazareth down to make room for what might emerge as housing for a more robust residential community at The Hermitage.

We have been impressed with the care the demolition company has taken in recycling or re-purposing much of the building—windows, doors, fixtures, appliances, steel frame, and wiring. These efforts reflect our sensitivity to the environmental impact of “throwing away” a building.

The board is using the next several months as time for discernment about where we should build the community residence and how the design of that building can best serve the community. You will be hearing more from us as we begin to design and build. If you have ideas now, please contact David Cowles (dcowles@northcountrytrail.org), chair of the building committee.

*Place of hosting,
place of pondering,
place from which to dream
new beginnings.*

Thank you

We are grateful to the following individuals for their service:

- Judy Somers, bi-weekly cooking and housekeeping
- Larry Somers, grounds keeping, maintenance
- Rich Yeckley, weekly bookkeeping
- Weekend Hosts:
Willard & Alice Roth
Larry & Judy Somers
Natala Moh
Alicia Drost
Amy Jonason
Mary Knapp
Biff Weidman
Margie Pfeil
- Weeklong Volunteers:
Chico & Tatiana Fajardo-Heflin
Deanna Risser
- Intern Volunteers:
Zachary Kovitch & Julia Baker have been a helpful presence from August through early December. They have ably entered into our daily rhythm of “creating an environment of attentiveness to God.”

Opportunities for Service

- trail maintenance
- wood cutting & splitting
- painting
- meal preparation
- weekend hosting
- housekeeping
- gardening
- machine maintenance
- board service
- spring cleaning of the Hermitage cabins
- roofing

URGENT NEED

While we were getting this newsletter ready to publish, we experienced another very destructive windstorm. Our woodland trails are now all impassable until further notice. We have an urgent need for woodcutting crews to help us remove a tree from the shed roof and clear the trails. If you can gather a group together to assist in this massive clean-up project, let us know. Individuals are also welcome. Call 269-244-8696 to schedule a time to help.

Come Live the Hermitage Way

Would you like to come for a week to pray with us? We are looking for folks to work and pray through the days, experiencing our rhythm and listening with us for what God is doing in us and in the world. If you are interested, contact David at 269-244-8696 or contact@hermitagecommunity.org We are also looking for longer-term commitments. Let us know if you would like more information about keeping The Hermitage Way or joining the Resident Community.

Hermitage Calendar

December

- 2 Advent Quiet Day Retreat, 9-3
- 7 Advent Quiet Day Retreat, 9-3
- 8 10th Anniversary Taizé Evensong, 7pm

January

- 12 Taizé Evensong, 7pm
- 21-22 Board Retreat and Meeting

February

- 9 Taizé Evensong, 7pm

March

- 9 Taizé Evensong, 7pm
- 10 Lent Quiet Day, 9-3
- 15 Lent Quiet Day, 9-3

April

- 12 Hermitage Way Retreat – Earth Stewardship, 9-3
- 13 Taizé Evensong, 7pm
- 25-26 Board Meeting

Retreating at the Hermitage

As Jesus was revitalized for being about his Father's business by periodic withdrawal to retreat and prayer, so The Hermitage seeks in its mission:

- To be a prayer community, available as a place of spiritual formation where scripture, silence, nature, group experiences, and personal companionship are cultivated elements of retreat.
- To provide a guesthouse away from daily tasks where pastors and other pilgrims can deepen their call and relationship with God, be refreshed in their whole person and be revitalized by the presence and promise of Christ.

If you would like to join us for a retreat of any length, contact us by phone: 269-244-8696, email: contact@hermitagecommunity.org or find us on the web: www.hermitagecommunity.org. We provide silence, solitude, Spiritual Direction, guided group retreats, space for groups to meet, community Morning Prayer, simple healthful food, walking trails, and a gentle atmosphere. You provide the willing spirit.

Board of Directors:

Ned Arnold
Mary Asmonga-Knapp
David Cowles
Kevin Driedger
Patty Hogan
Jeff Miller
Deanna Risser
Biff Weidman

Resident Community:

David and Naomi Wenger,
Co-directors

Please hold the Board in your prayers.

Creating an environment of attentiveness to God



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We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
Through the unknown, remembered gate
When the last of earth left to discover
Is that which was the beginning;
At the source of the longest river
The voice of the hidden waterfall
And the children in the apple-tree
Not known, because not looked for
But heard, half-heard, in the stillness
Between two waves of the sea
Quick now, here, now, always -
A condition of complete simplicity
(Costing not less than everything)
And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
When the tongues of flame are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.

-T.S. Eliot from "Little Gidding," *The Four Quartets*

Contact us by Email:
contact@hermitagecommunity.org