

Pentecost 2008

Views from

the hermitage

Creating an environment of attentiveness to God

Annual Report

Do you remember the first day of spring? Not the calendar day, but the one day when the grass which had just yesterday been dull gray-brown turns bright green; that day when the trees are no longer defined by their stark skeletons but by the fuzzy key-lime-pie haze around the crown or the purple pendants that carpet the ground around the roots. Do you recall the morning when you were startled by the cacophony of bird-song after being accustomed to just a few twitters under the eaves? Do you remember the first evening the tree peepers shrilled their mating cries? Just a few days after the last cold day, when the sun really warms the air so that even in the shade you feel it; this is the day I mean. Perhaps you can even remember what you felt like on that day.

What about the day when you first experienced God's love, do you remember the breath of thanksgiving that simply lifted you off your feet? Can you sense, even now, God at work deep in your soul, transforming you into the likeness of Christ? Or do you know how to touch the deep inner resource of joy when you do not feel particularly joyful? Is there a way to both know God's call for your life and how to act on it?

Our task at The Hermitage is to notice both the first day of spring and the action of God at work in the world. We take our mission to "provide a way and a place to pray" to mean that our first work is to notice, then we remember, and finally we give thanks for each act of God. In noticing God's work here, this year, we are thankful for each one who shared this space and some of their work, making this a community that is

ever changing but never ending.

This past year we hosted small groups who came with their own programs, provided programming for small groups, and welcomed people who came individually for a day or two of prayer and noticing God. Our work also includes spiritual direction, listening with another as they notice and remember God's action in their lives. We served 600 people who stayed an average of two nights.

One of our joys in hosting is providing simple, nourishing meals. In addition to baking our own bread, we give thanks for participating in a Community Supported Agriculture program (*White Yarrow Farm, Marcellus, MI*) from which we receive locally grown organic produce to serve our guests from June to September. We have grown in our appreciation for and ability to eat what is in season and delight in a diversity of diet over time.

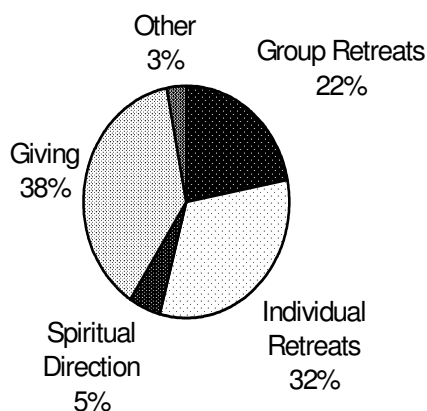
Through the generosity of friends and retreatants we met all financial obligations for the year. We have also reached the halfway point of paying off the mortgage loans on the property.

The Board of Directors instituted a new way to celebrate the Hermitage in 2007 by adding the "Hermitage Jam" to our calendar just before our annual community retreat on the Feast of Transfiguration. The Jam is a workday, a jam making extravaganza and time for the extended community to spend a day together at the Hermitage.

Thank you for your part in supporting what we do. We notice.

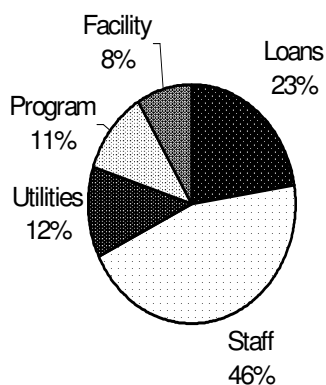
-David and Naomi Wenger

2007 Income



The revenue streams that sustain The Hermitage are donations for personal retreat and spiritual direction, group fees and charitable giving. For individuals on personal retreat we gratefully receive what each one is able to contribute for their stay. Persons receiving spiritual direction also contribute as they are able. Groups pay a fixed rate.

2007 Expenses



Loan expenses include interest and principle payments on loans secured to purchase the Hermitage property in 2003. The remaining balance on these loans at the end of 2007 is \$122,400. *Staff* expenses include one full-time director position (shared by two co-directors), with benefits of health insurance and continuing education, and a small stipend for a resident volunteer. *Utility* expenses include electricity, propane, fuel oil, phone and mileage reimbursement. *Facility* expenses include building maintenance and repair, furniture & furnishings, grounds upkeep, and maintenance and repair for one vehicle (pick-up truck). *Program* expenses include resources (periodicals, books, chapel visuals), hospitality supplies (food, paper products), honoraria, office supplies, postage and printing.

Hermitage Jam and Feast of the Transfiguration

On Friday **August 8th**, the Hermitage will host an all day gathering for food, fellowship, fun, and work! Please come with your exuberance and joy to make Jam, mow, repair odds and ends, and contribute the work of your hands to God's island in the storm, the Hermitage. We will begin at 8 am with Morning Prayer. There will be lots of blackberries to pick, God willing, if you have a good work gloves, please bring them along! Naomi will be leading us in the holy act of Jam making. If you have never made home-made Jam, this is your learning opportunity! David, like Saint Joseph himself, will lead us on the road to repair. If you have a special talent, this is the time to share it with us! Lunch will be provided! If you would like to bring a dish to pass, please do, although it is not necessary.

On Saturday, **August 9th**, we will be celebrating the Feast of the Transfiguration! Join us as we retreat together, bless the grounds and meditate on the marvelous gift of the God's transformation in our lives. We will begin the day with Morning Prayer at 9:00 am. We will provide a fellowship lunch!

You are welcome to spend the night of August 8th. For those of you who would enjoy camping out with tent, camper or RV, the corral is ready and waiting for you! There is no cost to attend either of these fellowship events. However, donations are gratefully received for overnight stays. To register, contact us: 269-244-8696 or hermitagecommunity.org/contact/.

-Mary Asmonga-Knapp, Board Member

Divine Comedy Retreat

Individuals with varied backgrounds and experiences participated in the third *Divine Comedy* retreat at the Hermitage, May 9 to 11. The weekend was enriched by prayer times in the "Upper Room" of Saint Joseph's Barn, especially during Vespers and Compline on the Vigil of Pentecost.

The next *Divine Comedy* retreat will be offered October 31 to November 2, beginning with supper on Friday and concluding with lunch on Sunday. The cost of \$195 will cover lodging, meals, and materials. For more information, contact Anthony Franchina at hermitagecommunity.org/contact/ or 269-244-8696.

-Anthony Franchina

International Day of Peace Observance

Believing that world peace begins with the individual, we will be observing the UN International Day of Peace on Sunday, September 21 with a showing of the documentary film, *The Power of Forgiveness*. We will begin the showing at 3 pm followed by time for personal reflection, group discussion and a prayer service. We will conclude by 7 pm. Donations will be gratefully received. To register, contact us: 269-244-8696 or hermitagecommunity.org/contact/.

Volunteer Needs

- Gardeners: Adopt-a-bed and keep it beautiful throughout the season. We have several flower beds in need of TLC. Help needed for ongoing gardening or one-time help. Contact Naomi Wenger.
- Cutting and splitting wood for The Hut: bring your own saw/axe or use ours. Contact David Wenger.
- Trail Blazing: Our trail system needs to be re-blazed. Tools and materials will be provided. Contact Naomi Wenger.
- Weekend Cooks: individuals who are willing to cook simple, wholesome food for weekend guests. Contact David Wenger.
- Volunteer coordinator: recruit and coordinate volunteers. Contact David Wenger.

Phoenix Gallery

The Phoenix Gallery of The Hermitage will be hosting an exhibit of multi-media masks created by Gay Walker, entitled *Outside and Inside*. Gay says about the exhibit: "As an art therapist, my art work

is about my inner processing of life. The masks represent the idea of the inside and outside representation of self. I want my inside and outside to be transparent, so nothing is hidden and I am living fully open to my true nature and authentic self."

The masks will be on display from August 3 through September 28, 2008. Gallery hours are from 9-5 each day. For more information, contact Naomi Wenger, 269-244-8696.

The Hermitage Calendar

Jul 13	Taizé Evensong, 7:00 pm
Aug 3-	
Sep 28	"Outside and Inside" exhibit by Gay Walker in the Phoenix Gallery
Aug 8	Hermitage Jam, 8:00—4:00
Aug 9	Feast of the Transfiguration - 9:00—4:00
Aug 10	Taizé Evensong, 7:00 pm
Sep 14	Taizé Evensong, 7:00 pm
Sep 21	International Day of Peace— <i>The Power of Forgiveness</i> , 3-7p
Oct 12	Taizé Evensong, 7:00 pm
Oct 31-	
Nov 2	<i>Divine Comedy</i> Retreat
Nov 9	Taizé Evensong, 7:00 pm
Dec 3	Advent Quiet Day
Dec 6	Advent Quiet Day
Dec 12	Advent Quiet Day
Dec 14	Taizé Evensong, 7:00 pm

Electronic News

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hermitagecommunity.org/contact/



the hermitage

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Taizé Services: Second Sundays at Seven, Chapel of the Transfiguration

The Word Alone

But this I call to mind, and therefore I
have hope:

The steadfast love of the Lord never
ceases, his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning; great is your
faithfulness.

“The Lord is my portion,” says my soul,
“therefore I will hope in him.”

The Lord is good to those who wait for
him, to the soul that seeks him.
It is good that one should wait quietly for
the salvation of the Lord.

Lamentations 3:21-16

the hermitage Mission

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

- *To be a prayer community, available as a place of
spiritual formation where scripture, silence, nature,
group experiences, and personal companioning are cul-
tivated 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 per-
son and be revitalized by the presence and promise of
Christ.*

(from The Hermitage Rule)

Resident Community: David & Naomi Wenger,
co-directors, Anthony Franchina

Board of Directors: Mary Asmonga-Knapp,
Allan Martling (chair), Natala Mohl, Biff Weid-
man, David Wenger, Naomi Wenger