



views from the hermitage

Mourning Trees

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The mourning doves have begun calling. In the evening, they begin their haunting organ-like tones. I hold my breath after each call to listen for the distant response. Their voices bleed sadness and invite reflection. Hearing them lets me know that summer is here.

We have a new mournful voice in the woods. On Sunday, May 29, a tornado hit the back quarter of the woods, flattening the trees on what we guess to be around 10 acres. The few trunks left upright in the glaring sunlight are twisted and snapped off, standing as sentinels of what was once the soft shade of towering canopy. Hundreds are propped 10-15 feet off the ground resting on other trunks like a giant game of pick-up-sticks. These propped trees groan in the breeze, giving voice to the fallen ones lying on the ground.

I am mourning the trees. As I have walked the trails each day for the last five years, I have come to know them. They have character, personalities, even. An old dead locust leaned so heavily on a maple that the young tree conformed in a long vertical arc to the downward pressure. A huge red oak was split from top to bottom with a splinter of light shining clear through and yet standing strong through the seasons. One hickory tree, victim of another windstorm, was bent like a bow, arching over the trail in a holy embrace. Along the lane of honey locusts, trillium found enough moisture and shade to bloom profusely. The largest trees lined the abandoned county roadbed and at one time must have provided shade for loaded wagons pulled by weary teams. I miss the trees. But I realize that new growth will come because

Summer Reading Groups

Books to read:

Brian McLaren, *Naked Spirituality*, HarperOne, ISBN 978-0-0618-5401-9

Robert Farrar Capon, *The Supper of the Lamb*, Modern Library Press, ISBN 978-0-375-76056-3

We are offering two opportunities to read and discuss together books of significance for spiritual development.

The first book of our summer series is Brian McLaren's *Naked Spirituality: A Life with God in 12 Simple Words*. McLaren presents the spiritual life in a framework of four stages: simplicity, complexity, perplexity, and harmony then connects each stage to several simple prayer practices. Discussion will be Wednesday, June 22, from 7-9 pm.

The second book we will read is an older gem, Robert Farrar Capon's *The Supper of the Lamb*. In a time when food has become a lightning rod for health, economic, ecological, and political reasons, Capon reminds us that food is essential goodness from God and writes us a literary feast. Discussion will be Wednesday, July 20 from 7-9 pm.

Read the books ahead of time and join us. Let us know you are coming to either of these events. 269-244-8696.

New Retreat Series with June Mears Driedger

Being and Doing

“Most powerful of all the powers in its holy insinuation is *being*. *To be* is more powerful than even *to do*. Action *may* be hypocrisy, but being is the thing itself, and is the parent of action.”

-George MacDonald

We are pleased to present three retreat offerings led by June Mears Driedger. June is a pastor, an editor and an artist. She has been a spiritual director for more than fifteen years and has led retreats and workshops in the Lansing area. She has co-led the “Storytelling in Fabric” retreats at The Hermitage for the last four years. June has been a committed friend of The Hermitage for twelve years.

Clergy Renewal Days: A nine month series of quiet days (9 am to 4 pm) with facilitated group spiritual direction, this series falls on the following Thursdays: September 8, October 13, November 3, December 1, January 5, February 2, March 1, May 3 and June 7. The cost for 9 sessions is \$600 and includes a private room, lunch, and facilitated group direction. Interested clergy should register by August 15. Overnight accommodation may be available for an additional fee.

Writing Spiritual Memoir: Scripture is filled with people telling the stories of how God is present in their lives. In this series, we continue the tradition using the text, *Memoirs of the Soul: A Writing Guide* by Nan Merrick Phifer. Each day will include an opening meditation, writ-

ing time, lunch, and reading aloud. Interested persons should register by August 15 for the 9-session series which runs on the following Fridays from 9 am to 4 pm: September 9, October 14, November 4, December 2, January 6, February 3, March 2, May 4, and June 8. The cost for the series is \$500 and includes lunch each day. Individuals wishing to stay overnight or have a private room should make separate arrangements when registering.

Arts Saturdays: “Spirit Collage” is a way of praying with images. This four-session Saturday retreat explores God’s presence in our lives through constructing collages and contemplative gazing, 9:30-3:30 pm.

Registrants can choose from the following options: September 10: Introduction to Collage; October 15, Mandala Collage; March 3, Labyrinth Collage; and May 5, Triptych Collage.

Cost is \$60 per session or \$220 for all four sessions and includes lunch and all retreat materials. Interested persons should register one month before each session or for all four by August 15.

More registration information is available by contacting us, 269-244-8696.

Loggers, Lumberjacks and Luggers

We are gathering information about how best to use the bounty of downed wood. If you can help with one of the following, let us know:

- If you know someone who would like to have hardwood lumber and is willing to work for it, we have the logs and possible access to a portable sawmill. Common wood types are cherry, red oak, maples and hickory.
- If you need wood for heating and can help clear our trails, both can be accomplished at once.
- If you can imagine a creative way to use thousands of board feet of lumber locked in logs, give us a call. 269-244-8696

Summer Volunteer Opportunities

Ah, summer! Relaxing in the cooling breeze, listening to the grass grow and volunteering at The Hermitage. If you come, we will provide all three. We need the following help this summer:

- Roofers; come by yourself, come as a team, for a day, for a week. The shed and two of the Hermitage cabins need to be re-roofed this summer.
- The grass is just ridiculous! Some of it needs to be mowed. Can you come once a week or once to help?
- Adopt a flower bed. If you think the grass is ridiculous, the weeds are positively silly. You can almost see them grow! Adoption too much of a commitment? How about bed-sitting (and pull the weeds while you sit there).
- Canning? Freezing? Throughout the summer and fall we could use your help with these projects. Like making applesauce? Peeling tomatoes? Whatever you want to do, we've got the job for you.

- How about removing old fencing? You know you'd love to wrestle with a ton of rusty wire. C'mon. What are you waiting for?
- Cleaning and window-washing make you feel happy? We've got plenty of that, too.
- How about moving books in a cool library on a hot afternoon? We've got an inventory project for you.
- You're the cook! Do you love baking, making, slicing and dicing? Any help in the kitchen is help that makes us smile.
- What about painting? We have interior and exterior painting projects just waiting for your inner Van Gogh.
- Want to get sweaty? How about cutting hundreds of limbs from hundreds of pine trees. Oh, and did we mention sticky with pine pitch? But the smell is heavenly!

Call us. You could make our day, or whole summer! 269-244-8696.

Join us for the Feast of the Transfiguration

Each year we gather on the Feast of the Transfiguration to remember and celebrate God's transforming presence and power.

Join us this year on **Friday, August 5** for **The Hermitage Jam**, a general workday including berry gathering for the coming year. Due to the tornado damage, we would also like to cut wood on this day. Let us know if you have a

chainsaw and can help clear a trail.

On **Saturday, August 6**, we host a quiet guided retreat on the theme of the Transfiguration. Both days provide opportunities for quiet, good food and fellowship with others of the Hermitage Community.

There is no cost for either day. Donations gratefully received for overnight stays. Register to reserve your place, 269-244-8696.

hermitage calendar

June

- 12 Taizé Evensong
7:00 pm
- 22 Summer Book
Discussion, 7-9
Naked Spirituality, Brian McLaren

July

- 10 Taizé Evensong
7:00 pm
- 20 Summer Book
Discussion, 7-9
The Supper of the Lamb, Robert Farrar Capon

August

- 5-6 Hermitage Jam and
Feast of the
Transfiguration

NO TAIZÉ IN AUGUST

September

- 8 Clergy Renewal, 9-4
- 9 Writing Spiritual
Memoir, 9-4
- 10 Spirit Collage, 9-3:30
- 11 Taizé Evensong
7:00 pm

October

- 9 Taizé Evensong
7:00 pm
- 13 Clergy Renewal, 9-4
- 14 Writing Spiritual
Memoir, 9-4
- 15 Spirit Collage, 9-3:30

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of this catastrophic clearing made in the woods. This part of the woods was nearly succeeding toward maturity and now begins again with scrub, brambles, and weeds to shelter the replacement seedlings.

Set-backs are not endings. They are new,

albeit ragged, beginnings. The pain that we bear, the jagged edges of our torn-up hearts, our frail and failing bodies are the very sites of new light, new life and hope. Each of these is an “opportunity to lay the situation before God and let [God] into it.”

-NRW

Retreating at The Hermitage



Creating an environment
of attentiveness to God

The Hermitage has been serving the needs of those who are called by Jesus to “come away and rest awhile” for over 25 years. Our mission is:

—*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. (from The Hermitage Rule)

We are here to welcome you.

Resident Community: David & Naomi Wenger, *co-directors*

Board of Directors: Mary Asmonga-Knapp, Darrin Compagner, Kevin Driedger, Allan Martling, Natala Mohl, Cheryl Nakata, Biff Weidman, David Wenger, Naomi Wenger

Pentecost 2011

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SECOND SUNDAYS AT SEVEN

⇨ NO TAIZÉ IN AUGUST ⇩