



## Come to the Quiet

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Repeatedly in the Gospels, Jesus is pictured as going to a quiet or secluded place to pray. This was in a place away from his daily work and sometimes even his disciples. Jesus used these times for rest and renewal as well as discernment. It was after one such prayer time that he set apart twelve of his followers to be his core support and teaching group.

When we see him praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, he does not appear to be doing an unexpected activity. His disciples don't ask him, "Why don't you sleep here with us?" They seem to expect him to go off on his own and pray.

Like Jesus, each of us has a need for time alone with God. We may each do this in a different way. Some spend a set time in quiet prayer and bible study

each day. Some go for prayer walks. Some meditate or sit for centering prayer. Whatever your daily practice, an additional time of taking a whole day or 24 hours or even longer, to become still down to your bones, is a stimulating practice. Each one who participates in a time of retreat finds that God is present in surprising ways.

Jesus' experience of the long retreat, for him forty days, led to an articulation of his mission against the cultural trappings of his lived experience. He did not *need* miraculous bread for life, though he was known to provide a fair bit of it. He did not *need* earthly power and admiration, in fact he alienated the political and religious elites of his day. He did not *need* to cheat death by amazing feats of daring. Rather, he defeated death at his resurrection. I believe he

## Advent Quiet Days—Incarnation: God with Bones and Blood

Our Advent Quiet Days, a long-standing tradition at The Hermitage, will be held on Saturday, December 3 and Tuesday, December 6 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. The theme for this year's reflection, *Incarnation: God with Bones and Blood*, will include opportunities to pray with our bodies.

Possible body prayer practices will include various prayer postures, mimetic movement, coloring mandalas,

poetic collage, haiku, making music and more.

If you wish to participate, register by contacting us before November 20. The suggested donation for the day is \$50 and includes lunch. Guests may stay overnight before or after the retreat day. The suggested donation for a retreat with an overnight stay is \$75. Reserve a room when you contact us to register.

God gave us bodies.  
What we do with our  
bodies is our gift to  
God.

God came to us in a  
body. We receive  
this as God's gift to  
us.

## With Thanksgiving

### Spiritual Thorns

“Discipleship is not limited to what you can comprehend—it must transcend all comprehension. Plunge into the deep waters ... Bewilderment is the true comprehension. Not to know where you are going is the true knowledge...’ Martin Luther’s words apply truly to our living together...he saw that what he wished to articulate must, in the end, remain a mystery. *If we understood what happens in our life we should not be living it properly.* We do know that there are spiritual thorns and boulders, that we get pricked or stub our toes if we try to build a nest for ourselves, that there are too many people and there is not enough room. But we know too that if we are ready to allow space for one another, the desert can blossom like a rose, and if our wilderness is a place where the evil in each of us can be absorbed and contained, not sparking off an endless chain of reactions, then we can be used by God in the redemption of the world.”

Sister Jane SLG  
(emphasis added)

One of my favorite phrases from *A Hermitage Affirmation* (Morning Prayer liturgy), is, “We are a people who share in life together here at this time”. This is the essence of community, people who share in life together in space and time.

I am especially grateful for all the volunteers who have shared in life with us here this summer and fall. Nancy Joy, Hermitage resident volunteer from 2003-2006, was back with us for a portion of the summer, tending to daily operations while Naomi and I were away on family vacation. Mary Asmonga-Knapp, Natal Mohl, Jane Stoltzfus Buller, Judy Somers and Larry Somers also filled crucial roles in hospitality and maintenance throughout the summer when we were away.

We also enjoy working alongside volunteers who come. Jeff and Jen Osterink and their beautiful family of four young children came for a day of clearing trails, weeding beds and cleaning. Kevin Wilson gave a day to trail maintenance.

Thanks to all who have worked at making a way through the woods where there is no way since the tornado in May: Steve and Matt Thomas, Jim

Buller and friends from Walnut Hill Mennonite Church, Goshen, IN, Larry Rinzel, Luther Eberly, Don Dykstra and Ed Horski.

The grass never stopped growing from end of April through the end of September. At the risk of forgetting one of the many mow-ers, here are the ones I recall (with gratitude): Phil Bontrager, Nate Bomgardner, Larry Somers, Nancy Joy, Marsha Heck, Biff Weidman, Allan Martling, Kevin Driedger, Joel Steiner, Ed Horski, and Alfred Driedger.

It is always a delight when a retreatant asks to work for a period of time during their retreat. Whether it was washing dishes or windows, cleaning rooms and cabins, weeding flower beds, clearing fallen branches, library assistance and other tasks, doing (along with being) became a part of the retreat experience for many: Amy Jonason, Deanna Risser, Rob & Jayna Gallagher, Gay Kaashoek, Joel Steiner, Ed Horski, Biff Weidman, Kevin Driedger, Sr. Barbara Hansen, Brenda Rich, Steve Wirzylo, Renita Reed, Martha Haile, Judy Somers, Bill & Inga Buttelmann.

Finally, we have been blessed  
(Continued on page 3)

## Tree Update

“How is the clearing of trails going since the tornado in May?” many of you ask. We have made some small strides in clearing the yellow trail which still remains impassible on the back portion of the property. However, a tremendous effort was given by those who have worked on the enormous task (see above).

Several forest managers have looked at the downed trees but have not yet found interested loggers. We continue to follow leads of lumber companies who might take on the job of clearing major portions of the damaged areas. All the while we wait with the land to see what wants to happen in the woods given the new reality.

## Thanksgiving ... continued

(Continued from page 2)

again this year by the invaluable service of SOOP Volunteers (Service Opportunities for Older Persons). Alfred Driedger, from Leamington, Ontario spent a month with us in early fall. Besides keeping the grass well manicured through the end of the mowing season he made apple sauce from the gnarly apples offered by the tree along the lane, pruned the tree so it will bear more next year, and re-sided the lean to and Thoreau's outhouse with recycled boards from St. Joseph's Barn. Most evenings, retreatants would join Alfred around the fire in the picnic grove while he played his harmonica and violin.

John and Nellie Nickel, from Winnipeg, Manitoba, returned for a third term of service through SOOP in the first half of October. John painted the new apartment and built kitchen countertops and still had time left over to make 50 rustic wood frames out of more recycled boards from St. Joseph's Barn. The frames in various standard sizes are available for sale at The Hermitage. Nellie cooked, baked, cleaned and enjoyed the warm fall afternoons outdoors raking leaves and picking up an abundance of black walnuts.

Blessings and much gratitude to all who share in life together at The Hermitage.  
-David Wenger

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## Transfiguration Joy

The Feast of the Transfiguration followed a wonderful Hermitage Jam Work Day gathering berries and clearing trails. The overwhelming feeling of the day was pervasive joyfulness. Thank you to all who gave so openheartedly of your time and, in some cases, skin when the berry canes just would not let go.

For the Transfiguration Day retreat, "Witnessing Glory," we walked with the writer of I John who witnessed the glory of God in Jesus. A focus for the day was from a sermon by Charles H. Finney, the nineteenth century reviv-

alist who reminded us of Moses' request to see God's glory upon which God showed Moses his "goodness." We reflected on the goodness of God as a way of seeing the glory of God in the world. We wondered about how we wait for God's goodness to appear. And we declared our intentions to participate in showing forth the goodness of God now.

Plan to join us for the Feast of the Transfiguration next year on *August 4, 2012* for a retreat led by Mary Schertz of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

### hermitage calendar

#### November

13 Taizé Evensong  
7:00 pm

13-14 Into the Silence: A  
Retreat for Spiritual  
Directors

#### December

3 Advent Quiet Day  
Retreat

6 Advent Quiet Day  
Retreat

11 Taizé Evensong  
7:00 pm

#### 2012

#### January

8 Taizé Evensong  
7:00 pm

#### February

12 Taizé Evensong  
7:00 pm

#### March

10 Lent Quiet Day Retreat

11 Taizé Evensong  
7:00 pm

11-12 Into the Silence: A  
Retreat for Spiritual  
Directors

19 Lent Quiet Day Retreat

#### April

8 Taizé Evensong 7:00 pm

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gained this deep understanding by being attentive to one thing over a sustained period of time. His awareness of God caused him to repeat with certainty that he was doing the will of the Father. "I am the good shepherd," he says. "I know my own and my own know me,

just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:14-15).

How do we know what our mission is? The same way Jesus knew, by spending time with the one who gives us our gifts and calls us to serve. -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 II 2011*

*The Hermitage  
11321 Dutch Settlement Road  
Three Rivers, MI 49093*

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FIND US ON THE WEB!  
[www.hermitagecommunity.org](http://www.hermitagecommunity.org)

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**JOIN US FOR TAIZÉ EVENSONG**



**SECOND SUNDAYS AT SEVEN**