



## views from the hermitage

### Enbridge pipeline provokes prayers of lament and hope

By June Mears Driedger

Choosing to pray rather than fight, the Hermitage held a service of lament and hope Saturday, March 30 along the planned Enbridge pipeline that will be installed across its property. Two pipelines, one carrying oil and one natural gas, already cross the Hermitage property.

More than fifty people attended the service to offer confessions and lament for the ongoing dependence of oil requiring a pipeline and to offer prayers of hope for more sustainable living.

“We will work together to protect the earth,” the group prayed in unison. “We will change our lives so that what we do supports sustainable life here.”

Another service of lament was simultaneously held in Gretna, Manitoba where more than sixty participants stood on the land

directly above where six Enbridge pipelines cross just a mile north of the U.S. border.

When The Hermitage staff and board understood that the pipeline would be built regardless of legal actions, they opted to withdraw from the proceedings. Instead, they chose to respond with the service of lament and hope, ongoing prayers for a sustainable world, and a commitment toward further ecological living within the retreat center itself.

In addition to its commitment of prayer and sustainability, the Hermitage is committed to not demonize Enbridge or vilify the pipeline workers. The prayer of hope included these words: “We believe there is good work for Enbridge to do--we believe in transformation.”

As a way of embodying their prayers of lament, the group moved meditatively toward the woods, pausing to pray at different locations while carrying strips of fabric to tie around a tree tagged for



cutting. The fabric strips were a sliced painted mural which portrayed a young man grieving the loss of a cut tree. Afterwards the group gathered in a circle to dance and sing their prayers of hope.

“We believe that the act of constructing a new pipeline is not the last word for this land,” said Naomi Wenger.



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## Upcoming Retreats

### Accompanying Children on their Spiritual Journeys with Becky DeBlaey

4:30 pm Friday, June 14 - 3:00 pm Saturday, June 15.

Children develop spiritually. Before they have language to articulate a relationship with Holy God they experience God. In the Gospels, Christ beckons children to come to him and tells us that children can lead the way to God. To accompany children on their spiritual journey one must see God through the child's eyes, attend to the voice of the child and follow where the child leads.

This retreat is designed to explore the joy of spiritual journeying with children. Through perspective thinking and assessing the place of the child in our lives, we will address welcoming the child, the balance between modeling for and learning from children, and practical ways of being with children on their spiritual journeys. This retreat is a mix of silence and dialog to encourage all who seek to be with children and guide anyone who is curious or passionate about a child's spiritual formation.

Becky and her husband have raised three sons. Her passion for children has taken her beyond her family into the lives and homes of many children. From running a day-care and after-school-care program in her home to teaching pre-school, she is always seeking to fan the creative flame in children or encourage their development. She has recently focused on child spiritual formation from a Christian perspective. She holds a BS in Christian Education from Houghton College, Houghton, NY and a MAED from Ashford University. Her practical nature inspires her to learn directly from dialog with children and put academic theory into practice through traditional and nontraditional means.

Currently Becky is an active volunteer children's minister, leading worship with children and training others to lead. Becky also serves families as a nanny seeking to understand servant relationships, develop friendships, and actively learn from children and parents about family life today.

Cost: \$100; includes three meals and lodging. Please register by June 1.

### Anatomy of the Soul with Curt Thompson, M.D.

4:30 pm Friday, October 11 – 12:00 pm Sunday, October 13

*Anatomy of the Soul* is based upon two basic observations:

- First, at our core, **we all are desperate for joy, courage, kindness, and security.** We long for these qualities to be displayed in our children, our families, our communities, and ourselves.
- Second, new discoveries in neuroscience – the study of how our brains function – reveal that our **interactions with each other help shape our brains** and relationships in ways that either point to the qualities above, or point to negative, harmful qualities.

*Anatomy of the Soul* examines the process of paying close attention to our brains and our relationships—a process that not only strengthens our awareness of their existence, but also enhances our ability to become more joyful, courageous, kind and secure as we interact with those around us.

For those who desire to follow Jesus, the findings in neuroscience reflect what we already know from Scripture – that God desires for our lives to be changed in concrete ways for the good of ourselves, our communities, and for humanity as a whole. God desires for us to tell a better life story than what we ever could plan for ourselves. By paying attention to how our brains and relationships shape each other, we create space for God to work. **We create space to “be transformed by the renewing of [our minds],** so that [we] may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2, NASB)

Comprehending all of this begins and ends with understanding the difference between *knowing* and *being known*. *Knowing* is an activity of the mind that keeps the “knower” separated from the fact, idea, object or person s/he knows. Such separation is not so bad for facts, ideas or objects, but it is bad for

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## The Hermitage Way: A Covenant for Extended Community

The *Hermitage Way* is a set of practices for a contemplative daily life. People who choose to practice *The Way* are members of the extended *Hermitage Community*. If this life is compelling to you, contact us to be enrolled as a member of the community.

Those who choose to keep *The Way* commit to the following ten practices.

1. Engage in a daily prayer practice. This practice will include silence, meditation on scripture, intercession and affirmation. Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer liturgies from The Hermitage or other sources may be used.
2. Keep a personal Rule of Life, adopted with the help of a Spiritual Director (a model is available from The Hermitage), oriented toward awareness of God in all daily activities and within all persons.
3. Pursue simple living: a lifestyle that includes an effort to live with only what is needed and sharing what one has with others as an act of generosity or hospitality. (Consider supporting the residential community of The Hermitage with financial gifts.)
4. Connect with The Hermitage, by regular visits to retreat in silence and solitude (at least annually), to support the residential community, to serve, and through daily prayer for the community.
5. Study or explore fields of interest to which a contemplative perspective is applied (e.g., Scripture, spiritual writings, physics, psychology, anthropology, religions, nature, agriculture, bread baking, pottery, poetry, etc.)
6. Work for reconciliation between persons and with God. The “journey inward” and the “journey outward” are bound together. Inner transformation will result in pursuit of holiness, involvement in social justice and efforts of peacemaking.
7. Receive God’s invitation to steward the earth. Pursue sustainable living, giving support to the earth and its creatures even as you take from them.
8. Develop creative gifts, pursue leisure wholeheartedly and practice having fun with others.
9. Support the Body of Christ. We need each other to challenge, encourage and enlarge our understanding. We encourage followers of The Way to participate actively in a local worshiping community.
10. Meet with a Spiritual Director or Spiritual Friend at least twice annually to assess fidelity to the personal Rule of Life and to discern areas of growth.

### Hermitage Way Retreats

Members of *The Hermitage Way Community* are invited to participate in regular daylong retreats at The Hermitage when we will explore the *Way* together. These retreats are also open to anyone interested in exploring *The Hermitage Way*.

The first *Way* Retreat is Saturday, June 22, 2013. We will be looking together at the foundational experience of *The Depth of Prayer*. We will read and examine types of prayer practices, experience several kinds of praying and spend time alone in prayer. The retreat begins at 9 am and will end by 4 pm.

The second *Way* Retreat is scheduled for Saturday, October 19. We will be exploring *Crafting a Rule of Life* during this retreat.

If you wish to join our growing community of keepers of *The Hermitage Way*, contact us for an introductory packet. We provide accompaniment on the journey as we walk *The Way* together.

## Upcoming Retreats - Continued

people, who are meant to *be known* at a deeper level. *Being known* requires an availability, vulnerability, and trust of the person knowing you. It requires an understanding that life will only be full of joy, courage, kindness and security to the extent that one is engaged, known, and understood by another, especially by God.

This retreat is for people interested in the interconnection of the findings of contemporary neuroscience and spiritual life. Curt will give us information and lead us through exercises that help us practice *being known*. There will be time for silence, and individual and group practice.

Cost: \$265. Please register by September 21.

We joyfully receive whatever you are able to pay. If this amount is a hardship for you, let us know.

Curt Thompson is a psychiatrist in private practice in Falls Church, Virginia and founder of Being Known, an online community, and author of *Anatomy of the Soul: Surprising Connections between Neuroscience and Spiritual Practices That Can Transform Your Life*.

You can read more about Curt and *Anatomy of the Soul* online at [www.beingknown.com](http://www.beingknown.com).

## Hermitage Jam and Feast of the Transfiguration

Friday, August 2 & Saturday August 3

Our annual workday and homecoming retreat will be held the first weekend of August. Join us for berry picking, jam making, and prayer. More information about these events will be posted on our web site. We extend a special invitation to all members of the *Hermitage Way Community* to attend the retreat and meet other *Way* keepers. (See article on p. 3 for more information about the *Way* and other *Way* retreats being offered this year.)

## Men's Retreat: The Sage

Friday, October 25 – Sunday, October 27

The Sage is a retreat for men wanting to explore and experience the archetype of spiritual wisdom known by many names; healer, seer, magician, and priest to name a few. The Indiana-Michigan chapter of MALEs (Men as Learners and Elders) is offering the retreat at The Hermitage on Oct. 25-27. For further details contact David Wenger using the contact information below.

### Contact Information

To register for any scheduled retreat, to reserve a room for a personal silent retreat or to inquire about reserving space for a small group:

11321 Dutch Settlement Road  
Three Rivers, MI 49093  
269-244-8696

[www.hermitagecommunity.org](http://www.hermitagecommunity.org)  
[contact@hermitagecommunity.org](mailto:contact@hermitagecommunity.org)

## Hermitage Calendar

### May

May 4 Board Meeting  
May 12 Taizé Evensong,  
*CANCELLED*

### June

Jun 9 Taizé Evensong, 7 pm  
Jun 14-15 Accompanying  
Children on their  
Spiritual Journeys  
Retreat  
Jun 22 Hermitage Way  
Retreat. 9-4 *Topic:*  
*The Depth of Prayer*

### July

Jul 14 Taizé Evensong, 7 pm

### August

Aug 2 Hermitage Jam Work  
Day, 9-4  
Aug 3 Feast of the  
Transfiguration, 9-4  
Aug 16-17 Hermitage Board

### September

Sep 8 Taizé Evensong, 7 pm

### October

Oct 11-13 Anatomy of the Soul  
Retreat  
Oct 13 Taizé Evensong, 7 pm  
Oct 19 Hermitage Way  
Retreat, 9-4 *Topic:*  
*Crafting a Rule of Life*  
Oct 25-27 Men's Retreat: The  
Sage

### November

Nov 8-9 Hermitage Board  
Nov 10 Taizé Evensong, 7 pm

### December

Dec 2 Advent Quiet Day, 9-3  
Dec 7 Advent Quiet Day, 9-3  
Dec 8 Taizé Evensong, 7 pm

FOR MORE EVENTS SEE  
OUR WEB SITE:  
[www.hermitagecommunity.org](http://www.hermitagecommunity.org)

## Hermitage Happenings

### Gratitude

We are grateful for all who have responded to the invitation to join us in the daily rhythms of prayer and work at The Hermitage. There have been consistent work retreatants here since mid February and the weeks continue to fill up into the summer and fall. Thank you to each one who has given one to three weeks in service at The Hermitage throughout the winter months:

Anthony Franchina

Lynda Hollinger-Janzen

Alicia Drost

Alice Harms

Lorna Hiebert

Chico & Tatiana Fajardo-Heflin

### 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](mailto: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.

### Wood Anyone?

We have not been able to interest local timber companies in the wood that is available due to the pipeline construction. Do you or anyone you know have use for wood? Whole trees, large or small are available. Available species: red oak, white oak, black cherry, hickory, white pine, red maple and many other scrub trees. Please contact David ([contact@hermitagecommunity.org](mailto:contact@hermitagecommunity.org) or 269-244-8696) to schedule a cutting day. Interested persons must have the capability of felling, cutting and hauling the wood. Details can be discussed with David.

### Quiet during the Pipeline Construction

We are receiving guests during the Pipeline construction this summer. While we do not have a specific starting date, construction is expected during the months of June through August. The hermitage cabins will not be used during construction and trails may occasionally be inaccessible. The Labyrinth will not be available during construction. However, there is a labyrinth at GilChrist that may be available. There are also well-maintained hiking trails available just 1.5 miles away at Spirit Springs Nature Preserve. We encourage guests to take advantage of nearby quiet areas during construction.

### Annual Report to Conference

The Hermitage is endorsed by the Indiana-Michigan Conference of the Mennonite Church, USA. We send a report of our activities to the conference each year. The following is an excerpt from this year's report.

*Our very lives are prayer. This is one of the central tenets that we teach and model at The Hermitage. Rather than being a series of events or the struggle for significance, life is first the moment-by-moment acknowledgement that each breath is a gift of God. Out of each breath taken in awareness of God, comes the possibility that now is when God wants to work in the world through me and here is where God is working. This kind of attentive living is prayer, prayer without ceasing. We encourage all who come here to practice this kind of awareness and take it into their "back-home" lives.*

May you find your own practices that assist you in your daily awareness of God.

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## 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](mailto:contact@hermitagecommunity.org) or find us on the web: [www.hermitagecommunity.org](http://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, a prayer labyrinth 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

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*Creating an environment of attentiveness to God*



### Prayer for Being Still

*O God of Peace, you have assured us you will keep us safe  
if we turn to you and calm down;  
you will make us strong to live our lives  
if we quietly trust you.*

*Help us.*

*We place our hope for living well in this world in you.  
Make us aware of your presence in us and all around us  
so we can calm down and learn that you are God.*

*Invited by your Spirit  
and encouraged by Jesus, the Son,  
we pray. Amen.*

**We have a NEW Email ADDRESS**  
[contact@hermitagecommunity.org](mailto:contact@hermitagecommunity.org)