

Pentecost 2006

Views from

the hermitage

Creating an environment of attentiveness to God

Com-unity

“Unconsciously, you may wound what you touch. Only Christ can touch without wounding.” These words to the Taizé Community written by founder and prior, Brother Roger, sum up the experience of those who try, in any form, to live in Christian community. Whether in a family, the Church or self-defined community, we rub against the uniqueness in another in a process that both injures and polishes what is there.

Over the last several months, we have been ruminating on the concept of community. As we live into communal patterns at The Hermitage, we find ourselves drawn into conversations about community and we begin testing the ideas by living them out. The stress has been on being formed together toward union with God. The word *community* literally means “with unity.” So, we work together toward that one relationship worth pursuing and are formed (transformed?) in the company we find along the way.

Drawing on the basic components of a rule for life, we have defined some principles that support our communal life. The first principle is prayer. We are a community that prays: together and individually, for one another and for the world, as part of the larger Church and as a local (and very transient) expression of the Body of Christ.

The second principle of community is to love. This is not simply emotional output but the in-rushing of God’s very self (cf. Eph. 3:14-19). We strive to be opened by God and to receive God so that we may, in turn, give God to those whom we encounter each day.

A third principle is to know God. This includes study, reflection, and reproduction of what we are learning. Our study includes both the Word of God (in scripture and in the world around us) and books/articles that form us for God’s kingdom work. We reflect on what we have studied and what the Spirit brings to our attention. We reproduce what we learn by teaching others, by living faithfully what we have caught and by being aware that we are literally “bearing” God each day.

Fourth, we cultivate spiritual disciplines. Some of

the disciplines most needed and practiced are personal prayer, solitude, and punctuality. Our work, too, must be disciplined so that it does not take over our life. There is time in each day to complete what must be done in that day. Living this out requires the open-handedness of release at day’s end and an entering into rest that is often pure discipline.

Submission to the other is also a cultivated discipline. Learning to temper “leadership skills” with “listening skills” leads to an attitude of waiting. The Spirit leads out of the waiting to what must be done. As we are all submissive to the Spirit we are also submissive to one another.

Finally, we must practice the discipline of gratitude. More than simple thanks, gratitude flows from the deep well of joy inside each of us. This well is where God lives, “you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand” Psalm 16:11. If joy is where God is then God is where joy is. Gratitude is both to God and from God. We practice the discipline of gratitude in our meals and in our work, in our play and in our inner labor. Each day, we are conscious of God at work and in that awareness we are grateful.

We invite you to consider with us how we might continue to live out community at The Hermitage. On August 6, The Feast of the Transfiguration, and our annual Hermitage Homecoming, we will be experiencing together what it might mean to be present in the glory of God. Our meditation focus will be on how the mountaintop experience of the Transfiguration prepared Jesus’ community of disciples for his immanent death, resurrection and ascension.

-Naomi R. Wenger

Feast of the Transfiguration

On Sunday, August 6, we will hold our annual Homecoming event beginning at 10:00 am in the Chapel of the Transfiguration for worship and teaching. We will have a community pot-luck in the picnic grove at 12:00. Following lunch, there will be a talk and questions in the Phoenix Gallery with artist Suzanne Siegel about her paintings. At 4:00 we will conduct a prayer walk, for blessing

the grounds and buildings. We will conclude with a sending prayer at 5:00 in the chapel.

To join us, call 269-244-8696 or email thehermitage@juno.com to let us know you are coming for all or part of the day and to let us know what you are bringing for lunch. There is no cost for this homecoming day. You are welcome to stay Saturday and/or Sunday nights. Donations are accepted for overnight stays.

Annual Report

Flour, yeast, salt, sugar, warm water, a little skill, a smidgen of effort and a bit of patience, then heating in a hot oven. Voila! Fresh bread. It's so easy to make and so good to eat. Why would we rather labor over the breadboard than stand in the bread aisle at the supermarket and decide which to buy? Because there is something soul satisfying about digging your hands into a mound of sticky dough and turning it over and over until it becomes smooth and supple. After a hundred loaves, it becomes a meditative practice, a rhythmic body chant of praise.

Reserving time in your cycle of days to "come apart and rest awhile" for prayer and time alone with God is much like making bread. You can live without doing it. It might even be easier to visit the spiritual "supermarket" of devotional books written by someone who has taken their own time with God and be enriched by their labor. But there is something about pushing your Self into the ocean of God's presence and turning it over and over until the ragged and sometimes hard, brittle edges become supple and centered in the God who lives within you. After some practice, retreats and prayer become as necessary as breathing and nourish your life of praise.

God continues to bring individuals to The Hermitage who want to be yoked with Christ in their labor

of prayer. Over the past year, we have served over 600 people on either individual or group retreats. We offered both Advent and Lenten Quiet Day retreats and provided a Stations of the Cross meditative walk for Holy Week. We also kept a day of prayer and fasting on the UN International Day of Peace (September 21). We are grateful for the groups and individuals who volunteered to clear trails, cut wood, garden, cook meals, mow, and assist with housekeeping tasks.

We are enriched by community prayer in our monthly Taizé worship. We average twenty at this sung prayer on the second Sunday evening of each month.

The Phoenix Gallery hosted sculpture by Rick Light and Susan Clinard, paintings and sculpture by Ruth Gee, paintings by Greg McChensney, and quilts by Carol Honderick. We are delighted by the quiet presence of these artists who sometimes goad us into new visions of God and ourselves.

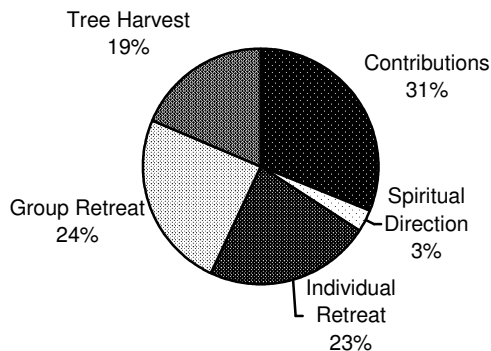
Entering the information super-highway on the slow ramp, we now have a web presence, www.hermitagecommunity.org. Many are hearing of us through this medium. Some are requesting our quarterly newsletter, *Views from the Hermitage* by electronic delivery, which is available through our site.

We look to God for our daily bread, trusting that whatever is provided is what we need. We rely on charitable giving for one-third of our annual operating expenses. By the end of 2005 we have paid nearly \$100,000 toward the property purchase, leaving a balance of \$155,000 in mortgage loans. We continue to solicit and receive funds for the elimination of the mortgage.

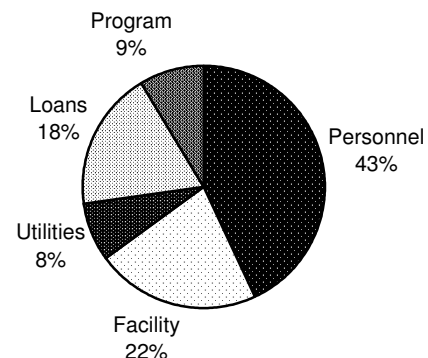
Thank you for all the ways you contribute to The Hermitage Community. Your prayers, presence and shared resources fulfill the Hermitage mission of providing a way and a place to pray.

David and Naomi Wenger, Co-Directors

2005 Income



2005 Expenses



Book Group

A regular group has been meeting in the Gathering Room the last Monday evening of the month at 7:00 pm to discuss the Spiritual classics. We will not be meeting in July and August. Note the schedule of readings on the web site (www.hermitagecommunity.org) or in the calendar printed below and plan to join us on September 26 as we journey through the writings of the saints.

Phoenix Gallery

During July and August, we will have the second installment of paintings by Suzanne Siegel. Suzanne's landscapes draw us to examine our own journey through a particular way of seeing. The themes of place and perspective are dominant in her works. These will be on display through the end of August and will include a presentation with time for questions at our celebration of the Feast of the Transfiguration on August 6.

In September and October, Suzi Lattner will be showing her paintings. The gallery theme for this season is World Peace, coordinating with our day of prayer and fasting for World Peace on September 21.

The gallery is open from 9:00 to 5:00, Monday through Saturday or by appointment. Call 269-244-8696 for more information or to arrange for a viewing.

“How Can I Help?”

We are often asked “is there anything I can do to help?” Following are some of the suggestions currently on the list.

- Canning, freezing and baking: this can be done on site or in your own kitchen. We welcome contributions of home-frozen or -canned fruits and vegetables, especially jams, applesauce, peaches, green beans and corn. We are grateful for items like cookies, quick breads, soups, muffins or other items that freeze well.
- Housekeeping: The windows need to be washed and carpets need to be shampooed.
- Wood cutting : The woods is full of fallen trees that can be cut and split.
- Trail maintenance: Each summer storm that blows through creates more work in the woods; limbs to cut, and new growth to clear for easy passage. The trail signage is also getting worn and should be replaced.
- Painting: We will be painting the St. Joseph's Barn from July 17-29. Any willing hands are welcome during these weeks.

Comings and Goings

Nancy Joy, a steady presence and help for the last three years, has moved on to another calling. We are grateful for her cheerful presence and energetic contribution to lightening the daily load.

Anthony Franchina joined our resident community this spring. He has worked for more than 20 years in international educational exchange as a teacher, administrator, and missionary in schools, universities, and other organizations throughout North America, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. We are grateful for his collaborative spirit and openness to living out a call to community life in this place at this time.

The Hermitage Calendar

Jul 2	Paintings by Suzanne Siegel Phoenix Gallery, thru 8/1
Jul 9	Taizé Evensong, 7:00
Aug 6	Feast of the Transfiguration- A Hermitage Homecoming, 10:00 am—6:00 pm
Aug 13	Taizé Evensong, 7:00
Sep 1	Paintings by Suzi Lattner, Phoenix Gallery, thru 10/31
Sep 10	Taizé Evensong, 7:00
Sep 21	Day of Prayer and Fasting for World Peace
Sep 26	Spiritual Classics: Book Discussion, 7:00 <i>Self-Abandonment to the Divine Providence</i> , deCausade
Oct 8	Taizé Evensong, 7:00
Oct 30	Spiritual Classics: Book Discussion, 7:00 <i>Contemplative Prayer</i> , Merton

E-news Available

If you would like to receive notice of an electronic posting of the newsletter rather than receiving it in the mail, send us an e-mail with the word “subscription” in the subject line. We will remove you from our mailing list for the newsletter and add you to an electronic list. You will receive an e-mail notice containing a hyperlink to the newsletter page on the web-site.



the hermitage

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

The Word Alone

[Jesus looked up into heaven and said,] ...As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

John 17:21-24

the hermitage Mission

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 companioning 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)

 * **Resident Community:** David & Naomi Wenger, *
 * co-directors, Anthony Franchina *
 *
 * **Board of Directors:** Robert Charles, Allan Mar- *
 * tling, Larry Terlouw (chair), David Wenger, *
 * Naomi Wenger *
