



views from the hermitage

Creating an environment of attentiveness to God

Feast of the Transfiguration

Saturday, August 7, 2021

9 am—3:30 pm

Celebrating the Ministry of David and Naomi Wenger

Join us as we honor David and Naomi Wenger as they conclude their 20 years of ministry at The Hermitage. Bring a story, a poem, a memory to thank them for their faithful service.

We will be walking the Hermitage land during the day and walking shoes are advised. We will be enjoying the traditional mid-day potluck feast—please bring food to share.

Questions, suggestions? Email June at June@hermitagecommunity.org



Reconciling Together

Each Hermitage board meeting begins with a devotion provided by a board member, followed by *The Hermitage Master Plan* read aloud in its entirety. This practice enables the board to keep the purpose and focus of the Hermitage vision before it as the group reflects on the activities between meetings.

The first meeting of the new year includes a retreat day to dream, discern, and listen for God's leading. At the January 29-30, 2021 meeting, board members Jane Stoltzfus Buller and Darrell Paulsen led the group in a discernment process to perceive God's vision and direction for this next year (and possibly beyond).

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Each person identified three of the core values (out of ten) which arose for them as an important emphasis for this time. Based on the reporting of small group conversations, one word emerged: reconciliation, number six of the ten core values.

The Hermitage works for reconciliation between God and people and reconciliation between people, especially those who are marginalized. We recognize and trust that inner transformation will result in the pursuit of holiness, involvement in social justice and efforts of peace-making.

- We encourage inner transformation in silence, solitude and prayer;
- We provide study resources on justice, peace, inter-spiritual dialog and other areas of reconciliation work in the Menno Simons Library;
- Spiritual Direction is a key component of our support for inner transformation/reconciliation;
- We offer an ecumenical spiritual environment in which reconciliation is invited;
- People of differing backgrounds and commitments gather around a table in peaceful fellowship;
- Being in and on the land invites retreatants to listen for God’s Spirit and be reconciled to Earth through God’s Creation.

(from The Hermitage Master Plan, available on request)

For the board, “reconciliation” included racial reconciliation, and the sharp divisions between theology, praxis, and politics.

To that end, a board subcommittee was appointed to continue discerning how the Hermitage can engage and foster reconciliation. The members of this group are Katie Barkley, Deb Borst, Jay Budde, and Hermitage staff member, June Mears Driedger.

A few modest steps have been taken toward this focus of reconciliation. First, the Hermitage has purchased several books by writers of color for the Menno Simons Library (see “Library Update,” p. 3). Second, a grant proposal was submitted to begin an “Invitation Fund” to be available for new people who want to retreat at The Hermitage but are unable due to financial burdens. This fund could cover the costs of transportation, child-care, and possible loss of wages to retreat. We will keep the broader Hermitage community updated regarding this grant proposal.

—June Mears Driedger



Menno Simons

Library Update

The long-term library project to digitize the library catalog, eliminate redundancies and re-organize the collection, helmed by Naomi Wenger and Roger zum Felde has concluded. Roger continues to volunteer bi-monthly to catalogue books. During this project Naomi and Roger discovered many books are missing from the collection which we would like to replace. If you have a copy of any of these books you would like to donate or could purchase a new copy, please contact June Mears Driedger at: June@hermitagecommunity.org.



(An abbreviated list)

Disputed Questions by Thomas Merton

Raids on the Unspeakable by Thomas Merton

The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton by Naomi Burton

Thoughts in Solitude by Thomas Merton

New Seeds of Contemplation by Thomas Merton

Healing of Memories by Matthew and Dennis Linn

Healing Life's Hurts by Dennis Linn

Healing the Eight Stages of Life by Matthew Linn

The Wisdom of the Psyche by Ann Belford Ulanov

Spiritual Direction by Sandra Marie Schneiders

The Cloister Walk by Kathleen Norris

Traveling Mercies by Anne Lamott

Spiritual Guidance by Kevin Culligan

Why O Lord? By Carlo Carretto

The Long Loneliness by Dorothy Day

The Essential of Mysticism and Other Essays by Evelyn Underhill

No Moment Too Small by Norvene Vest

Also, we have added books by writers of color to the library collection. Here are few of the new titles:

Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope by Esau McCaulley (IVP)

Anchored in the Current: Discovering Howard Thurman as Educator, Activist, Guide, and Prophet, ed. Gregory C. Ellison II (WJK)

Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church by Barbara Holmes (Fortress Press)

Kaleidoscope: Broadening the Palette in the Art of Spiritual Direction, ed. Ineda P. Adesanya (Church Publishing, Inc)

Trouble I've Seen: Changing the Way the Church Views Racism by Drew G.I. Hart (Herald Press)

Who Will Be a Witness? Igniting Activism for God's Justice, Love, and Deliverance by Drew G. I. Hart (Herald Press)

Roadmap to Reconciliation 2.0: Moving Communities into Unity, Wholeness and Justice by Brenda Salter McNeil, (IVP)

So You Want to Talk About Race by Ijeoma Oluo (Seal Press)



Hermitage Community

Morning Prayer

A gift of the pandemic was praying our morning prayers together by Zoom. While we are praying in the chapel again, those at a distance can virtually join us. If you are interested in joining us at 8 am (EST), please contact either Kevin or June for the Zoom link and if you need a copy of the prayer liturgies.

A House Built of Sky ... and Earth, and Wood, and Nails, Lots of Muscle, and Time



David Wenger and volunteer Tim Lind apply earth-plaster in the hallway of the house.

The building of the staff house continues with volunteers joining David and Naomi Wenger to plaster the inner walls. This plaster is made of a natural clay and applied against the lath and cover the straw /clay walls. Wisely, volunteers were instructed to “wear mud clothes.”

We anticipate the installation of the 24 solar panels donated to us by Inovateus Solar of South Bend on the south-facing roof by Turtle Island Solar, a Native-owned business out of Marcellus, Michigan. We are hoping that the solar panels will completely provide the energy needs of the house.

In the summer, we anticipate the need for assistance in applying the finishing trims on the interior and siding the exterior. There will be work for all skill levels at that time, including, painting landscape work, and more.

You are welcome to help us with these items. David Wenger is the keeper of that schedule and you can reach him:

david@hermitagecommunity.org
or by text: 269-718-3693.

Our **Deepest Thanks** to our building volunteers:

Mary Asmoga Knapp
Jay Budde
Joel Chupp
Lauren Doerfler
Dennis Gable
Kate Gross
Matthew Gross
Andrew Hudson
Tim Lind
Johnny Mettlach
Michelle Russels Lyon
Fred Schaufele
Jane Stoltzfus Buller
Dan Truesdale
Randy Weaver
Margaret Wenger



Jay Budde (front) goofing off with other volunteer plasterers, left, Dan Truesdale, Fred Schaufele, Dennis Gable, David Wenger, Margaret Wenger

UP CLOSE WITH VOLUNTEERS

1) What is your name and where do you live?

My name is Ned Arnold and I live in Naperville, IL, which is about 25 miles west of Chicago. It takes just under 3 hours to get to The Hermitage from my home, depending on Chicago traffic, of course.

2) How did you learn about The Hermitage?

My brother-in-law has been regularly visiting St. Gregory's Abbey for many years and was familiar with The Hermitage. It came up in conversation once and I was quite intrigued, so I scheduled my first retreat. This would have been in the 2005-2007 timeframe, I think.



3) What do you do as a volunteer? I'm the bookkeeper. The staff records all income and expenses in an online spreadsheet and I enter these transactions into our online accounting software. I balance the checkbook each month (also online) and prepare quarterly financial reports for the board meetings. It is quite convenient that I can do all of this remotely.

4) What draws you to volunteer? I discovered the benefit of silent retreats later in life and enjoy introducing other pilgrims to the experience. The Hermitage is the perfect place to send novice retreatants because everything is provided and all one needs to do is "show up". I want to do my part to ensure such opportunities remain available for myself and others.

5) What is one thing you want people to know about The Hermitage? I want people to know that their generous gifts, of time and money, are what allow The Hermitage to be a place of respite to hundreds of people a year. Such generosity puts The Hermitage in a financial position that allows the staff, board, and volunteers to be focused on the retreatants, not the checkbook. It is a privilege to serve such a community.



Deepest Thanks

The Hermitage thrives due to the generous help of our volunteers. If you sense God's nudging to volunteer, please contact Kevin to offer your time and skills: Kevin@hermitagecommunity.org

We are grateful to:

Ned Arnold - bookkeeping and creating financial reports;

Nancy Joy - garden work;

Johnny Mettlach - vacuuming, kitchen clean-up, trail maintenance, gardening, house plastering;

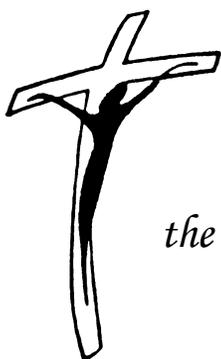
Larry and Judy Somers - making sure we are always stocked with water and granola; mowing grass

Margaret Wenger - garden work;

Roger zum Felde - library work;

All the South Bend **Catholic Worker House members** who assist in the various tasks around The Hermitage.

Lastly, and continuously, we are grateful for **all the board members** who carry many tasks for The Hermitage year-round.



the hermitage

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contact@hermitagecommunity.org
269-244-8696

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Retreating at The Hermitage

As Jesus was revitalized for begin 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 the 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 retreat of any length, contact us by phone: 269-244-8696, email: contact@hermitagecommunity.org, or find us on the web: 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, and a gentle atmosphere. You provide the willing spirit.

Board of Directors

Mary Asmonga-Knapp
Katie Barkley
Deb Borst
Jay Budde
Jayna Gallagher
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Joel Hogan
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