



views from the hermitage

Creating an environment of attentiveness to God

Holding On and Letting Go Lent Retreat-March 9, 2019

9 am-3:30 pm

\$50.00 (lunch included)

Lent is an opportunity to draw near to God as we meditate on the life of Jesus while discerning our lives and actions. The lectionary Scripture texts for this year encourages us to explore these two parallel invitations: 1) to hold on to what is most important, and 2) to let go of what is peripheral or what is hindering our deeper growth in God.

In this retreat we ask ourselves: “What am I holding on to? What do I need to let go? What do I need to let go of in order to hold on to God?” We will have periods of lectio divina, silence, and conversation during the day.

To register for this retreat email Kevin Driedger:
contact@hermitagecommunity.org
or call 269.244.8696



Board members Ned Arnold, Linda Hollinger-Janzen, and Mary Asmogga Knapp with Hermitage staff Naomi Wenger, feed copies of the mortgage into a fire in November 2018.

Photo by Joel Hogan

Fifteen years ago The Hermitage Community, Inc., purchased the property and buildings known as The Hermitage from founding directors, Gene and Mary Herr. The Hermitage board made the final payment at their meeting in November 2018 and had a “mortgage burning” ceremony to celebrate. We are grateful for all those people who have supported the Hermitage over the years.

Prairie Prayer Gardens Praying Counter to the Flow by Naomi R. Wenger



Photos by Naomi R. Wenger

While walking the trails at The Hermitage, you may come across two seating areas, each with a bench and a single chair, nestled into the edge of the woodland overlooking a short-grass prairie. The grasses, sedges and abundant wildflowers in the Prairie provide a home to butterflies and other insects, birds, and small mammals. Deer and other larger animals find forage and prey in this verdant place.

The first Prayer Garden along the yellow trail to the east of the main trunk trail is dedicated to the memory of Gertrude Bailey Ruder, whose life of prayer and careful concern for living things we honor by this placement of a bench and chair, plantings of bulbs, flowering shrubs and the gathering of nut trees in this natural clearing on the edge of what was once the middle of a wooded area. The trees south of this clearing were removed to make way for the equipment used to place an oil pipeline under the ground.

The second garden is across the Prairie to the west of the main trunk trail. It sits on a hill overlooking the trails and much of the wildlife that has come to call this prairie home. This area also has a bench and a single

chair situated under the shading branches of a white oak that will hopefully become the dominant tree on this forest edge. The *blue* trail cuts through this prayer area joining with the *yellow* loop close to its juncture with the *red* trail.

What you cannot see under the Prairie are three fossil fuel pipelines. The first, was initially constructed in 1968. That pipeline carried crude oil from the oil-rich areas of the Canadian plains to refineries in Canada. This pipeline was retired in 2014 after a massive rupture in 2010 created one of the largest inland oil spills in history, dumping over 800,000 barrels of crude oil from the tar sands in Alberta into the tributaries of the Kalamazoo River.

The second pipe, carrying natural gas, was installed in 1999. The gas runs at a rapid rate through this 4-foot diameter pipe. Friction inside the pipe heats the surrounding soil so that the snow melts first here each winter often leaving a stripe of bare land.

The third pipe is a replacement for the first pipe. After its completion, the first pipeline was shut down, emptied, and abandoned in the ground to disintegrate. The new pipe, is two times the size of the first pipeline, carrying millions of gallons of the Athabasca oil sand's diluted bitumen (dilbit₂) to the refineries.

When construction for this third pipeline began in 2013, we were told by the pipeline company that they would be taking an additional 55-foot-wide easement. This easement required the cutting of over 4 acres of trees and significant disruption of wildlife habitat and human pathways. We felt helpless to protest but also knew that it was our own demand for oil products by the way we live our lives and live on this land, that continues to create a market for oil and continues

providing profits for the companies that control the extraction, transportation, refining and sale of petroleum products.

As part of our protest against both our own way of life and the oil company's placement of a poison stream under the earth's surface we planted the Prairie. We also created the two prayer gardens flanking the Prairie.



The placement of these two gardens across from each other, counters the flow of oil and gas through the pipelines. As folks pause to pray, to listen, to watch and learn, they participate in the hope we have for this land: that someday, it will no longer be needed to transport toxic materials to support our unsustainable lifestyles of ease and injustice toward the world's poor and marginalized. We hope that the Prairie symbolizes our trust that the land will be returned to its more productive use of sustaining all kinds of life. As we pray *across* and *against the flow* may we find what actions we can do in our own lives to send the message to international oil and gas companies that this pipeline is not needed.

If you use these prayer gardens, we encourage you to make a commitment to at least one practice that will minimize your dependence on non-renewable carbon fuels and help us return this land to purely life-sustaining work.

ECOSYSTEMS DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE

The Ecosystems Discernment Committee (EDC) has scheduled two types of work days, Garden Work Days and Invasive Species Eradication Days. When the day is designated as a garden work day, the work will be in the vegetable garden and the flower beds. Invasive Species Eradication happens mostly in the woods.

The EDC is calling all gardeners and forest lovers to five days of convivial work, each from 9am to 4pm. Lunch is provided.

The first Garden Work day is scheduled for April 6. We will focus on preparing the soil in the vegetable garden and flower beds, planting early crops, mulching the fence line, and weeding.

Two Invasive Species Eradication Days are scheduled for late spring. On *May 4* we will focus on eradicating garlic mustard from the woodland edges. On *June 15* we will concentrate on removing invasive shrubs and vines.

For all of the work days, participants are encouraged to wear or bring long sleeves and long pants and wear appropriate footgear. If you wish, bring your own labeled equipment but we have tools for use.

Mark your calendars now for the two fall Garden Work days, *October 12* and *November 2*, focusing on cleaning up the beds, harvesting and preserving food.

Lent Activities at The Hermitage

Lent Retreat: Holding On and Letting Go

Lent is an opportunity to draw near to God as we meditate on the life of Jesus while discerning our lives and actions. The lectionary Scripture texts for this year encourages us to explore these two parallel invitations: 1) to hold on to what is most important, and 2) to let go of what is peripheral or what is hindering our deeper growth in God.

In this retreat we ask ourselves: “What am I holding on to? What do I need to let go? What do I need to let go of in order to hold on to God?” We will have periods of lectio divina, silence, and conversation during the day.

March 9—Gathering Room in the Hanby Center
9 am-3:30 pm
\$50.00 (lunch included)

To register for this retreat email Kevin Driedger: contact@hermitagecommunity.org or call 269.244.8696

Service of Lament, Confession, and Hope

In 2013, in response to the construction of the Enbridge pipeline, we held a Lament for the Land on the afternoon of Holy Saturday. In solidarity with many who care for Earth, we will continue this practice. This year we will hold a Service of Lament, Confession, and Hope on *Saturday, April 20* from 2-3:00 pm. Please join us on this day of darkness to hold space for the resurrection and commit ourselves to prayer and practices that support life.

Registration is not needed for this event.



Photo by Naomi R. Wenger

Pysanky Egg Decorating Fridays in Lent:

Pysanky eggs are Ukrainian Easter eggs, decorated with traditional Ukrainian folk designs using a wax-resist method. The word *pysanka* comes from the verb meaning, “to write” or “to inscribe”, as the designs are not painted on, but written (inscribed) with beeswax. This process of decorating eggs can be a contemplative practice with multiple symbolic meanings in the season of Lent. Please join us for one or more Fridays in Lent to create your own Ukrainian Easter egg. You are welcome to join the community for Morning Prayer in the chapel at 8am. Instructions will be given each Friday at 9am. The process is easily introduced so that you will have most of the day to work on the design of your choosing at your own pace. Depending on the intricacy of your design, an egg can be completed in one day or you may choose to work over the course of several Fridays.

Pysanky Eggs cont.

Who: anyone seeking a contemplative creative practice during Lent; no prior experience is necessary.

What: Instruction in Ukrainian Easter egg decorating, all supplies needed to create your own Pysanky egg, lunch and the use of Hermitage grounds and common spaces in Hanby Center and St. Joseph's Barn

When: *Friday, March 15, 22, 29, April 5, 12* from 9am-4pm

Where: Gathering Room in Hanby Center

Cost: \$60. (If you choose to come multiple days, add \$10 for each additional day you are here. Lunch is provided on each additional day).

If you wish to stay overnight for personal retreat, please make reservations with Kevin Driedger at

contact@hermitagecommunity.org. The suggested donation for an overnight stay in conjunction with this programmed event is \$90. For each additional night of your stay, the suggested donation for an overnight with meals will apply (\$75-\$90). If you have further questions about the program, please contact David Wenger at david@hermitagecommunity.org.

Help Us Cultivate Community

We are preparing to build our new resident community house. To keep up-to-date on the activity, to find out how to donate, and to volunteer go to: www.hermitagecommunity.org/cultivatecommunity

Thank You

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

(Kevin@hermitagecommunity.org or 269.244.8696)

We are grateful to:

- Nancy Boyd**, for providing baked goods twice a month;
- Jay Budde**, for his continued work on the earth/clay chapel, particularly the roofing;
- Ursula Hess**, for providing hospitality, November 17 which included preparing and serving meals;
- Larry and Judy Somers**, for making granola, providing water, and preparing and serving meals on December 11;
- Roger zum Felde**, for weekly library work, including digitizing the library card catalogue;
- Mary Jane Feder**, for housekeeping, library, meal clean-up during December;
- Gloria Showalter and Maeve Smucker**, for providing weekend hospitality, October 5-7, which included preparing and serving meals;
- Nick Simons**, for woodcutting and splitting for the Hut, October. 19-21;
- The Crossings**, for woodcutting and splitting, December 19;
- Steve Wirzylo**, for chapel building assistance, November 5-7.

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



the hermitage

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



11321 Dutch Settlement Rd
Three Rivers, MI 49093

www.hermitagecommunity.org
contact@hermitagecommunity.org
269.244.8696

Creating an environment of attentiveness to God

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 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.*

If you would like to join us for a 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
Deb Borst
Jay Budde
Joel Hogan
Lynda Hollinger-Janzen
Jeff Miller
Darrell Paulsen
Margie Pfeil

Resident Community:

David Wenger
Naomi Wenger
Kevin Driedger
June Mears Driedger

Please hold the board and community in your prayers.