

CHRIST IN THE WILDERNESS

A place for solitude, prayer and reflection

Hermitage Retreat Center Sponsored by the Congregation of St. Joseph Winter, February 2017

Retreatant Jottings...

"My first visit to beautiful CITW! From the moment I arrived I was so excited for this time alone! I feared I would not sleep all night for fear I would miss all that God has for me on this weekend and I wanted to enjoy every minute! From the moment I entered this little hermitage, I could feel the presence of God filling this place with His love and grace and peace! The Lord so speaks to me in nature! I can imagine the delight of the Creator as He Created! You must have so much fun creating for us, Father, out of the overflow of your love. I imagine You with a radiant smile, Lord, perhaps with a paint brush in Your teeth as You create and mold and color. I imagine Your eyes sparkling and laughter out of pure Joy. I feel Your excitement as You created hardly able to contain Yourself as You begin each new project, eagerly anticipating how You will bring me awe and delight.

Do You laugh at Your funny little creatures, or even at snakes? Do You weep at the beauty of sunrise and sunset? Does Your heart soar and burst at the majesty of the mountains, or the Grand Canyon, or a mighty rushing river? Do You, O Lord, giggle with pure delight as the hummingbird darts about sampling the rich nectars of Your lovely flowers? What about storm clouds overhead? Are You amazed at what only You can do?

You are perfection—therefore all that Your hand creates is beautiful and perfect. God made us in His image to find beautiful the things He finds beautiful. May your stay at CITW be filled with beauty. I'm praying for each of you as I have read your stories. Blessings,

Pam R, September 2017

Garage

Yea, you did it! With the generous donations sent in from our appeal letter, we were able to get the new garage for the retreatants cars built and ready to use in mid-December. It has benefited the retreatants because it kept their vehicles free of ice and snow. Now we will not have retreatants needing to get repairs done as a result of critters chewing the wires while they are here. Thank you for your support on this project. Hope you can come on a retreat soon to enjoy the wonderful garage.



Spaghetti Dinner

If you live in a reasonable driving distance of Christ in the Wilderness, we will be having a Spaghetti and Meatball Dinner Fundraiser on February 25, 2017 from 4 to 7 pm at Holy Cross Parish Center in Stockton, IL. We will have lots of good food. Tickets are \$6.00 in advance and \$6.50 at the door for Adults; Children: 5 years & under —Free; 6-12 years—\$4.00 each. Call Sr. Julia at 815-947-2476 or email citw@citwretreat.com for tickets. Thank you for your support of our retreat ministry.

Christmas Concert

On Sunday, December 4, 2016, we had a beautiful concert by Luke and Sarah Windham. We had delicious food, which all enjoyed. There were some great auction items as well as the bakery goodies.

A special thanks goes out to all who pitched

in to set up and make the day run smoothly. We appreciate all who came out that day to celebrate and have fun with us. It was a successful day and we look forward to seeing you again next year.

In the Wilderness....

This Fall and Winter, we have not had very much snow although the days have been cold and often cloudy. The retreatants that have come had a wonderfully delightful stay, in spite of the weather conditions. We have openings in February and March, so give us a call and set up some time in solitude. You will never regret the time away.

We had all three hermitages painted in January, so they are looking bright and beautiful. Lent is coming up in March. What better way to prepare for our celebration of the Resurrection than to spent time with God in this Lenten season. As Pam R. shared there is beauty everywhere and CITW has a beauty in all seasons. The deer are more visible with the woods being clear of weeds and leaves. The birds delight with colors of red, blue and yellow against the brown of winter foliage.

We completed a second year of working to rejuvenate our woodland acres. With the help of the Department of Natural Resources, a plan was developed to eliminate the invasive shrubs and trees and thin out diseased and crowded trees, so that native trees can grow and flourish. We will continue to do that over the next couple of years. This work will be beneficial for the wildlife also because it will provide for food and shelter in the future. This project has been funded by a grant from the Congregation of St. Joseph Generous Promise Grant Fund.

In addition to the woodland project, you will notice ten new bluebird houses in the upper meadow. Most of our bluebird houses had deteriorated over the years, so our bluebirds did not have a place to stay. The bluebird restoration project has been continuing in northwest Illinois over the past few years. We are happy

to be able to contribute to the success of this endeavor for the future of the bluebird population in this area. The funds to buy the houses, posts, etc., came from the Congregation of St. Joseph Generous Promise Grant Fund. We are very appreciative of their contribution to these projects. Many thanks to the Congregation of St. Joseph for your assistance to make these a reality. God bless you.

We also planted two new trees in memory of family members of retreatants here at CITW. Over the next few years, we will continue to plant native trees in areas of the property that get cleared of invasive plants. If you would like to contribute to planting a tree in honor of or in memory of a loved one, get in contact with Sr. Julia to make arrangements for the purchase and planting of the tree.



Don't forget to get your retreat scheduled for the rest of the year. Some months are already filling up quickly. Have a safe and peaceful remainder of Winter and we look forward to welcoming Spring. God bless you. Peace, Sr. Julia

Openings:

You can check out our website: www.citwretreat.com for updates when openings are available, especially on short notice.



If you are on Facebook, check out our Christ in the Wilderness page: <https://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Christ-in-the-Wilderness/257739718945>. I will post openings there regularly. You can also share those pages with others who may be interested in coming. Contact Sr. Julia for reservations.