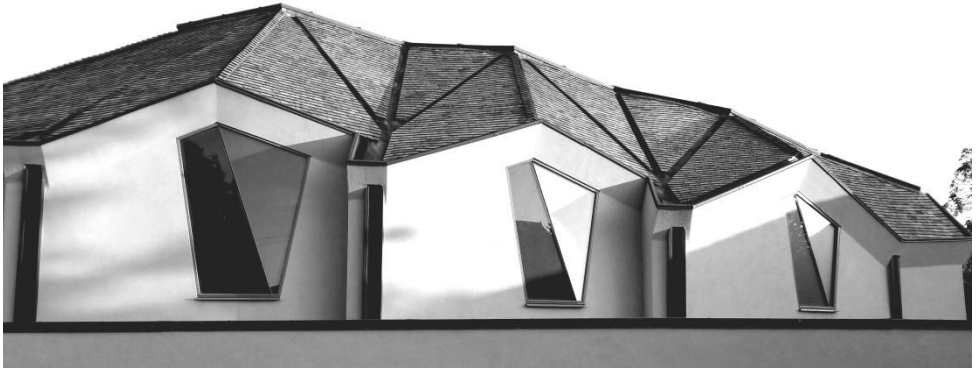


The Christian Community movement for religious renewal

73 Cainscross Road, Stroud GL5 4HB



Contemplation

Dear congregation,

how good it is to have been able to more-or-less pursue and host an active cultural life within our buildings and community again in recent weeks. It nourishes not only ourselves and our friends in the music, theatre, and arts and crafts worlds, but most especially produces creative substance for the world. Albeit invisible; but no less real for it.

From one point of view the cultural life is by its very nature always free. In other words it can never fall into the category of something that simply must be done for survival, as a basic necessity like food, drink and shelter, and therefore it always takes more effort and love and conviction to maintain it and keep it alive. But when we do, we cultivate another level of food, drink and shelter – more refined and enduring; more substantial and elevating – an essential nourishment for our soul and the soul of humanity. One cannot overestimate what it means for the world that the cultural life is currently so very curtailed – and on a global scale!

All the more, in such times of restricted outer life, does it behove us more than ever to do all we can to nurture and maintain our inner lives and take every opportunity to let the substance thus created flow into whatever free cultural and spiritual life is still possible. For this reason it has been such a privilege and honour to have been able to celebrate and host what we have. We have taken it seriously to say yes to each one who has approached us with a creative initiative, be it a concert, an arts and crafts table, an educational initiative, an art exhibition or a Shepherd's play – and thereby we have made important new friends too, and that mean a lot us.

Let this be our New Year's resolution: That the precious substance of our inner lives; of our sacramental lives; of our congregational altar, continue to find ways and means of flowing over into the cultural life of our community near and far, through the goodwill and conviction of our hearts – willing to meet and make the most of every challenge; whatever may come. Now and ever more over the years ahead! Aaron

~

Christmas Midnight service – pre-booking and ushers needed

As we generally have quite a large attendance for the Christmas Midnight service it is considered necessary to regulate numbers to make sure we are able to keep within the current guidelines. Please make sure that you and your families and friends pre-book in the church office. Gaby will be taking a break, so Michael Close will be managing the list. We will also require 2 ushers for the service to welcome people and manage the seating. If you can help please contact Aaron.

Sibylle's talks – Man's search for Meaning

All who have attended Sibylle's recent talks will agree what a high standard they have been and are. She started a week later due to the second lockdown and sadly missed a Sunday. Fortunately however we have been able to place the fourth talk into the Holy Nights for the 2nd January. We are most grateful this can happen.

St Brides Fund

Just over a year ago on the 20th October we opened the outer and inner doors of our new church buildings to the world. Since then, too, we have begun to transform the old chapel into a wonderful and worthy new multi-purpose hall. Our St Brides Hall!

We have achieved a lot in making a worthy space but it is still not quite there yet. We still have a list of items that we are hoping to fulfil in order to make it the kind of space that can all the more serve our growing social and cultural life:

- Design and construct a stage.
- Improve the insulation in the roof.
- Purchase specialist microphones and loop devices to serve those hard of hearing.
- Install a proper ventilation system.
- Install blinds into the windows and glass door.
- Clean the Annex roof of moss.
- Complete the porch.
- Reverse the double doors in the SE corner to open outwards.
- Complete the quiet/store room (Old vestry)
- Open up the access between Hall and kitchen.
- Redo the flooring in the Annex entrance lobby and quiet room.
- Sand and treat the floor of the Hall.

There is no rush, but as funds become available we will slowly get on with completing these things. To help us to cover all these items we have created a St Brides Fund which is managed by Paul Abel. If you would like to contribute to this fund donations can be made to our usual Lloyds bank a/c whose details are in the back of our programme. Just be sure to put 'St Brides' as the reference.

Wales

We have a growing number of community friends in the Pembrokeshire area who have a connection to our work and have expressed the wish to have services there. A first visit will take place on the 8th and 9th of January with The Act of Consecration of Man being celebrated in the Nant-y-Cwm Waldorf school. We are most grateful that we can make this small beginning and we look forward to seeing where it may lead us in the future.

Nataliia's ordination

We are very happy to announce that Nataliia Shatna who did an internship with us in 2018/19 is due to be ordained in Berlin on the 21st February. Aaron had been hoping to accompany some Stroud friends to Berlin to share this event, but it may well prove not to be possible given the current restrictions which may or may not have changed by then. Nonetheless if you have any slight interest in coming along please contact Aaron and perhaps something may yet be possible.

The latest programme accompanying this Newsletter promises a rich and substantial Holy Nights and weekend programme for the first quarter of 2021. We hope sincerely that circumstances permit us to fulfil it and share more depth of soul between ourselves and our neighbours in our lively and precious congregation. Thank you to all who have offered and continue to offer their strength, patience, peace, enthusiasm, content and care for 2020 and now going on into 2021. No matter what - we always have each other!

Aaron and Carmel