

The Christian Community

Stroud Congregation Newsletter – July 2018

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Contemplation

'I see his face in every flower;
The thunder and the singing of the birds
Are but his voice - and carved by his power
Rocks are his written words...'

Extract of a poem by Joseph Plunkett (1887-1916)

Into the summer expansiveness, flowers and plants are offering themselves in growth towards the sun. Now they begin to give nourishment to the soil again. In a recent talk about the local micro dairy, Kees Frederiks spoke of the tall grasses which give 70% of their sugars back into the soil in late summer as a thank-you for the minerals it had received. The soil in turn becomes more nutritious and helps grass grow even taller next year. (He told us that healthy grass from nutritious soil should grow up to our shoulders!)

The later summer period is linked with the feeling of a need to give something to others and to the earth, because we have been endowed by the gift of the summer sun and the earth's generosity. Any act of kindness, no matter how small, nourishes our community, here in the life of the church, but also in the wider sense of a global community as it is permeated quietly by Him, who looks at us through the life of the growing Earth.

Selina

Russia trip

Although the numbers are not quite certain yet, some five or seven of us will be travelling from Stroud to Moscow on the 11th October to meet up with four youth connected with our congregation, and participate in the official founding of The Christian Community in Russia from the 12th – 14th Oct. With your permission we will bring warm greetings and a gift from the Stroud congregation - and a song or two. No doubt we'll find a chance to report back when we return.

Aaron

Funeral Fund

Our Funeral Fund has been in place for over a year now and currently holds a sum of £27,500 from 6 people in the congregation. Most contributors have paid between £4000 and £5000 each to the fund. In return one's funeral costs and admin are carried and paid for from the fund when the time comes, with any remaining surplus reverting to The Christian Community as a donation. The cost of an average funeral in Gloucestershire is around £3000, but can vary a fair bit depending on one's wishes. It is up to each contributor to the fund to decide how great or small they wish the surplus to be. The interest also accrues as a donation to The Christian Community.

The idea is to liberate family and friends from having to deal with the funeral costs, and at the same time to be able to help The Christian Community financially. For example we are able to make internal loans against the fund to finance small scale development projects within the community whilst making sure there is always enough remaining to cover 2 or 3 unexpected funerals at short notice. In this way for instance we have been able to finance a large part of the alterations to the annexe without dipping into the building fund.

If you wish to enquire further about the fund you could ideally speak directly with Paul Abel in the office, or with one of the priests. Paul arranges the final administrative side of things with the signing of the agreement form, receiving the money into our Triodos account, and managing the fund. Part of the agreement is the possibility also to withdraw from the fund at any time without having to give a reason, with two months' notice.

Aaron (on behalf of Selina, Carmel and the Finance Group)

Children's Camp

We now have 70 children and 38 helpers for our annual children's summer camp which will be held at the new venue outside Forest Row on the beautiful Colin Godman's farm. All the equipment is already there and the farmers, Michael and Jayne Duveen, are very generously preparing the spaces for our arrival on the 18th July to set up camp with the helper team. The children arrive on the 21st July and the camp ends on the 31st July. If by any chance you are in the area on the 31st, you are warmly invited to come along to our final camp gathering between 11am and 12noon.

Aaron

Memorial Book

On the table on the right as you enter the chapel from the new entrance at the rear lies a beautiful, large, red Memorial Book intended to hold memories and pictures of dear people connected with members of the community. One creates a special page or two in the book in memory of a loved one who has died, whilst at the same time making a donation to the church in their name, and thereby supporting the capital development of the community. It can be especially gratifying as an inner gesture on behalf of someone who may not necessarily have been known in the community, but who one nonetheless wishes to 'integrate' into the consciousness of our sacramental community striving.

We are most grateful that it has already been made use of with lovely pages and a generous donation. Allmut French and Selina Horn are available to do the entry with calligraphy if wished for. If you think you might like to pursue this idea any further then please do speak with one of the priests.

Aaron (on behalf of Selina and Carmel)

Spring Valley Ordinations 30th and 31st of March 2019

The dates and venues for the ordinations have been announced and three people will be ordained at the church in Spring Valley, Upstate New York. Three people will be ordained in Hamburg and five in Stuttgart. One of these ordinands could well be Luis who spent some time here in Stroud.

Selina welcomes those who are interested in attending the Spring Valley ordinations, as part of a group, to contact her soon. A day in New York could be arranged as well as meeting the nearby congregations and staying longer to be there for Luis' first celebration of the Act of Consecration of Man. (Trip dates are approximately the 26th March - 3rd April.)

Outing to "ExperienceCOLOUR" Saturday 22nd September 10am- 4pm

We will travel to the Glasshouse Arts Centre in Stourbridge to discover the world of colour anew with the displays, experiments and installations on offer with lunch in between! See www.experienceCOLOUR.org for more details and the small poster on the noticeboard.

Selina