



The Christian Community movement for religious renewal

73 Cainscross Road, Stroud GL5 4HB

July 2022

Recent Special Sacraments

Funeral Services

16th June 2022

Peter Bradley

**14th April 1941 † 13th May 2022*

23rd June 2022

Elsbeth Helene Hampton

**18th June 1951 † 24th May 2022*

Confirmation

Sunday 22nd May

Lucian Allan-Bruce, Aaron James, Sennen Johnson, Tilman Ryder.

Contemplation

Contemplation

I turn around - and it's fear.

I turn around again – and it's love. *

There is a difference between dissecting a plant discovering its wholeness.

There is a difference between being analysed and being understood.

It's easy to take something apart,

But to put it together requires a master plan.

Yes! Despite all our failings; despite all our weaknesses and inadequacies –

We are all made in the Image of God.

Each one of us is!

And no amount of self-analysis or putting ourselves down can take that away, thank

God! I turn around - and it's fear.

I turn around again – and it's love. *

*Laurie Anderson – lyrics from 'Sharkey's Day'.

Aaron

First Impressions - My start in the Stroud Congregation

Actually, it was some time ago but feels as though it is part of the story: it was Monday, June 26th, 2017, that I first stepped inside the building here in Stroud. Christian and I had walked just the first 45 minutes of the Cotswolds Way and we happened upon the Christian Community. To be honest we didn't know it was there and it was such a lovely surprise. We glanced into the chapel and felt like we were being blessed on our way and all the more so when we were offered a glass of elderflower cordial! I wonder whether whoever it was who gave it to us, remembers it?

Then life continued as expected, we continued our walk, finishing at Bath Abbey and experienced both rain and fine weather, incredibly English and incredibly beautiful countryside, which we often returned to in our thoughts.

We returned to our lives in Australia and one thing led to another (moving to Hamburg in September 2020) and then another and so on until I received the sacrament of ordination in Berlin in February 2021. Then what now feels like a brief year in Bremen and then the long waited for return to the Motherland and starting work in Stroud in April.

What a joy it has been so far! The warm welcome we were given by those present at my induction, including people from our previous life in Devon 22 years earlier, will remain in my memory as another blessing.

Of course, there are many new people to meet and names to learn and I am also still learning how things are done in Stroud: what happens at the festivals and what the expectations are of me as a person and as pastor and as priest. So far, I have found absolutely everyone to be friendly, encouraging and willing to help me in whatever way is necessary. My prayer is that I too can be here for each individual member in the way that best serves them.

The energy of Stroud is very different from North Germany. In particular, the music reflects the differing soul qualities of the two places. I sense that the Celtic influence here, the soft lush greens and the undulating hills and valleys finds their expression in the music.

The beautiful green of the stone in the church as well as its bright natural light and the wood of the building also has a very different quality from the granite and concrete of the Bremen church. Of course, the setting also could hardly be more different, St Michael's in Bremen is in the middle of a busy city and Bremen is ten times the size of Stroud.

Working in English is also a significant change for me and I enjoy not having for the verb to wait! (a word order joke many of you understand will!) Although I will continue to alternate with Aaron celebrating in German, and will certainly enjoy doing so, it is definitely a joy for me to celebrate in my mother tongue.

I look forward to co-creating community with you all.

Liza

Children's camp 2022

Our camp is now full and has been for some weeks already with 83 children from all over the UK and even from Spain and Rumania. Added to that is our wonderful helper team of some 30 young people who each year are willing to 'sacrifice' their holidays and party freedom to work hard for 2 weeks providing for these special children entrusted to us with singing, games, hiking, swimming, arts, crafts, projects, stories and general creative silliness and earnestness. And all without any financial reward of any kind! All for the love of the children! And yet we feel each year how such an intensive time together fills our souls with a mysterious and unexpected authenticity and sense of true freedom – enough to carry us through another year. As one helper recently put it – 'This is how I imagine real life could and should be' – Creating something out of nothing!

If you would like to come and get a taster of the camp life then do feel free to come along for the final presentation hour from 11am – 12 noon on the last morning the 2nd August – at Colin Godman's Farm, Perrymans Lane, Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 3RR

Update on Finances

These are difficult times financially for most of us, and the Finance Group will be carrying out a half-year review of this year's Budget in its meeting in July, after which we will be clearer about how the rest of the year will look.

We already know that certain areas of expenditure are 'over budget', in particular, car costs and priests' housing costs now that we have another full-time priest to support. We have yet to feel the full impact of the rising cost of energy for the church buildings, as we are still on a fixed rate tariff for gas and electricity, and it won't be until next year that this will change.

We will no doubt be appealing to you all in the new year to see whether you can increase your monthly contributions – or to start making a monthly contribution, as half of the people who receive this Newsletter still do not make one! – although we appreciate that many people are struggling to manage these days.

We are very grateful to those of you who have increased their contributions in recent months. Unfortunately, these have been partly offset by a few people who have reduced or stopped their contributions, so we do all need to maintain awareness of the situation and consider how each of us can help. Details of how to set up a regular contribution appear towards the back of the Programme or near the end of the Community News which is emailed out every Wednesday.

LOGOS international conference

The LOGOS international conference of The Christian Community will be held from 7th to 11th October 2022 in Dortmund. Do look out in the Community News emails for the latest details of this unique conference with members and priests from all over the world coming together to celebrate 100 years of The Christian Community together. If you are interested and want to know more or need some support, do contact Aaron. There is an excellent website for the conference with many more details. Just do an internet search for *LOGOS consecrating humanity*. Liza and Aaron are both hoping to attend.