

The Christian Community

Stroud Congregation Newsletter – May 2019

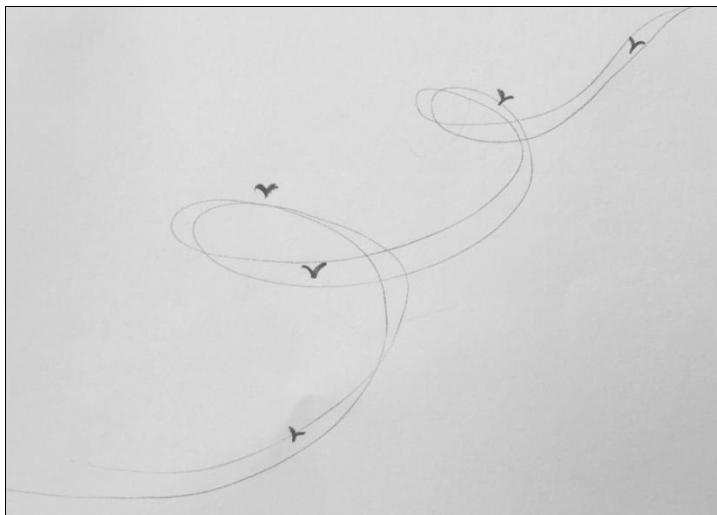
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Contemplation



Especially at this time of year, birds soar in between the five Stroud valleys on the flowing air currents. Sometimes they ascend in spirals or lemniscates upon the air. As we behold their flight, they make the invisible flow forms of the air visible for us.

As we live upon the earth and carry out the activities we choose to do each day, what do we make visible? Through our being human, what unseen forces become seen through us? Do we show the force of freedom in our choices and movements upon the earth? Or do we find that our choices have actually been guided by flows of fear rather than peace?

Our own inner life of prayer and meditation together with our participation in the sacramental life of the church helps us sense the strong flow forms of peace that stream through the world. We are invited by this incredible force to make peace visible in the world.

Selina

Confirmations 2019

At the beginning of April we had a successful and sunny trip to Iona. We walked around the entire island and painted the sea views and accompanied the dusk with services in the oldest chapel on the island which is called St Oran's chapel. The young people are now looking forward to the ceremony itself on May 26th, and on June 16th they will join us for a Sunday morning. After attending the Act of Consecration of Man they will introduce themselves to you in a variety of musical, poetical and other surprising ways. After serving for the Holy week evening services, they have surprised me by expressing an interest in serving for the Children's Service in July and then once a month from September! Selina

New Church Opening and Annual Community Meeting

From 18th – 20th October we will hold and host a week-end conference that will serve not only as the framework for the consecration of our new church but also as the Annual Community Meeting for The Christian Community in Great Britain and Northern Ireland for 2019. We expect many guests to join us including our representative in the Circle of Seven, Christward Kröner. We hope to put on a community performance of '*The Angel of Wrath*' for the Saturday evening of 19th October and we welcome all those who were involved in the first performance at Michaelmas 2015 to approach Carmel Iveson if they wish to be involved again. New 'performers' would be equally welcome.

There are a number of logistics that need to be carefully thought through and planned to ensure a smooth week-end conference, and to this end we are hoping to form a small group to take this on. If you would like to help with this planning please contact Aaron.

New Church Developments

The building work is still on track to be completed for handover on 12th August. We will then be able to make use of the renewed parking area and new spaces, and be able to enter through the new main entrance and into the old/existing chapel from the new foyer. This will free us up to be able to remove the temporary ramp, steps and porch and begin work with laying down paving on the south side of the annexe and the old chapel, pathway around the west end of the annexe, and construction of the wooden deck on the south side of the old chapel. In addition we will be creating a new border/fence along the pavement on Cainscross road with the removal of most of the shrubs but retaining most of the trees. Further landscaping work will still be required there over the following months. We will also be busy with installing cupboards in the new vestry and office and beginning the decorating work in the new chapel and ancillary spaces. In addition the new altar and altar fittings need to be prepared and put in place. We do not intend to use the new chapel for services until it is consecrated on the 20th October.

After the consecration on the 20th October we will begin the next phase of repurposing the old building by removing the old altar space fittings and upper steps and putting in new doors and windows into the old chapel for more light and south access to the garden. The lowest altar step is concrete and we will retain that with a view to eventually creating a stage area for future performances. In addition we intend to upgrade the roof insulation and electric lighting in the old chapel and redecorate it in a way more fitting to its new purpose. These will be the first steps towards turning it into a multi-purpose community hall. We also intend to convert the old vestry into a guest room and open up the doorways between the new community hall and kitchen. Once we have lived with the new arrangements for a reasonable while, at least a year or two, we will discover what alterations we may still want to make to the interior of the annexe to suit our new requirements and improve access between the kitchen and the hall.

Children's Camp

So far we have close to 50 children signed up for our children's camp this year and still have space for another 20 or so. Again it will be at Colin Godman's Farm near Forest Row where we held it last year. A wonderful venue with wonderful people.

Whitsun Festival

As we again cannot host a Spring Fair this year we thought to at least build up the Whitsun Festival to include a bring-and-share lunch and Maypole dancing with wonderful live music. To this end the Children's Service will take place after the Act of Consecration of Man and we ask your understanding to 'hold' the space while the children go in and come out of their service. Everyone is then warmly invited to join the children at the back of the chapel to hear the first five verses of the John Gospel spoken in many languages. Please contact one of the priests if you could offer to speak one of the languages – and do stay for the lunch and dancing in the garden.

Ascension Visitors

On Ascension Thursday we will receive a visit from a group of some 17 members and friends from The Christian Community congregations in Bendorf and Siegen near Bonn, Germany. They will be staying with various members in Stroud and doing day outings. They will also join us for the service on Ascension Day and for the gathering afterwards with singing and eurythmy. It would be wonderful if we could have some extra cakes and treats to share with our guests after the service on that day. Do let Aaron know if you are able to offer something. The guests are being accompanied by our priest colleague Wiebke Goebel who will hold the service in German on the 1st June.

Family Ceilidh and Picnic in the Garden on 6th July

The six children who attend the religion lessons on Monday afternoons invite you to a celebration. Throughout the year they heard about a different saint each week, following a kind of 'spiritual alphabet curriculum'. We looked at Saint Ambrose in September and by July we will have finished our alphabet (I have yet to find a Saint Z...!). Before the main part of the lesson, I play songs on an Irish tin whistle and the girls made up their own group dances. They had the idea to share these with their parents and siblings and anyone who wants to come and join in to celebrate the end of the saint alphabet. They ask if you could please bring something to share at the picnic. All are welcome, old and young! Selina

Farewell for Nataliia Shatna

On Sunday 14th July we will have a bring-and-share farewell lunch for Nataliia who has been a welcome community helper at the church since the end of November 2018, during her internship from the Stuttgart priest seminary. All are welcome to attend and share in gratitude for her sunny presence in our community life and to wish her well with her next steps. Nataliia will be coming along as a helper on our children's camp and will return to Germany at the end of the camp.