

The Christian Community

Stroud Congregation Newsletter – November 2017

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The Ordination in South Africa

The Johannesburg community was very happy and appreciative that they could host the first priest ordination to be held in South Africa which was for Michaël Merle on 24th September. Michaël is a Waldorf upper school teacher who also trains new teachers and will continue in this role as well as serving both Johannesburg and KwaZulu-Natal as a priest. It was a wonderful festive occasion and I was very happy I could attend and support both Michaël and Vicke von Behr, our Erzoberlenker, with this important event. It was also significant to create relationships with those congregation members who feel themselves to be quite 'cut off' from The Christian Community movement as a whole. I wish Michaël much strength for his immense task!

Selina

The Three Christmas Services are One

Each year we have this extraordinary figure of the three Christmas services at midnight, 8am and 11am, and it is very heartening each year too to see how many make the effort to attend all three. It is no easy thing to do this but it can have a great significance. Each of the three services has its own epistle and gospel reading. In fact one really should imagine the entire gospel sounding forth from the altar space during this time. We hear the beginning at midnight, the middle at 8am and the end at 11am. From one point of view the three services are indeed one. One being as it were. As though all the Acts of Consecration and gospel readings for the entire year to come were reborn with Christmas each year. This is a most profound reality that can be lent all the greater weight and strength the more that we are able at least to take this into our consciousness and as far as possible accompany through our presence and inner work. For all the festivity and joy that this wonderful Christmas season rightly brings, there is also this accompanying inner journey of deepest earnestness without which no true renewal is possible today.

Aaron

Community Reflections

You will have read already and seen in the programme how we have transformed the Community Retreat impulse that was originally intended for St John's and then later for Michaelmas, but now finally brought down so to speak in these three morning Community Reflection gatherings planned for the 28th, 29th and 30th December. Our intention is very much to still attempt to take hold of the original impulse to offer a space of deeper human sharing between ourselves than might perhaps normally be practised. We will divide at least for part of the time into smaller groups and share with each other our personal relationships to our Christian Community work. Our hopes and fears, our experiences and offerings, our discoveries and visions can all be food for this process that we hope will nourish the true Community tapestry of our Christian loom and put healthy ground under our feet for a coming year of great change and development in the biography of our congregation as we enter our 50th year of work here in these buildings in Stroud.

Aaron

The Earth Group

Thank you for the interest in creating a group exploring a theology of Nature, which will be launched on Monday the 30th of October at 7.30pm. The fortnightly group is full, with 25 people signing up after the introductory talk on the 3rd of September. However, over the course of the year, I will let you know of outings, walks and other activities related to the theme which are open to anyone who is interested in coming along.

Selina

Romania Trip 7th - 13th October

Twelve of us travelled to Romania to be present for the Founding of The Christian Community in Romania, which took place in Rudolf Steiner House in Bucharest from 6th to 8th October. It was a heart-warming experience for us all. We then flew north to see the wonderful painted monastery churches of Bucovina. After a few days in that region we flew to Cluj in Transylvania visiting the Community there as well as having a brief guided tour of the city. From there we flew back to Birmingham.

We packed a lot into our six days - it was a wonderful experience for all of us. On Sunday 5th November at 11.30 there will be a report from the group (with slides) on our journey. We look forward to seeing you then.

Carmel (on behalf of the group)

Stroud Youth Initiative

In 2018 we will embark to new territories with our Stroud Youth Initiative begun 3½ years ago. We plan to visit Spain and especially the eco-village of Los Portales 1½ hrs north of Seville. Possible themes will be permaculture, biodynamics, Jungian psychology, dreams, meditation, wind and solar energy, etc. Accompanying our daily work and workshops in the community we will have plenty of time for singing, playing games and hiking and swimming in that beautiful part of Spain. Youth aged 16 – 26 are welcome and should contact Aaron for further details. It is great that Siobhan Porter, the new priest in Stourbridge, and Judy Mirkin will be coming along too.

Aaron

Children's Camp venue

We are still on the lookout for potential new venues for our 2018 Children's Camp and all suggestions would be most welcome. Contact Aaron with your ideas and helpful connections.

Moving House

After 6 months in the large house at Lodgemore Close I have moved up to a small cottage in Amberley. It was great to be close to the church in the initial months of settling into my vocation and to Stroud. There were a few times when I first arrived, that I forgot my ritual book and could luckily pop back home in 30 seconds to retrieve it! But now I appreciate a little distance to the church and the views from Minchinhampton Common. Joanna Dry and Raoul Spiegel, both Waldorf teachers, have moved into 3 Lodgemore Close, and Benjamin Dry, a cello teacher, will move in next month into the annexe part. We welcome them as our new neighbours!

Selina

Open Community Christmas lunch (on the 25th of course)

All are very welcome to a traditional Christmas lunch in The Christian Community community room with bring and share trimmings or a monetary contribution. Bring carol books, a poem or musical instrument to help the festive party. Enquiries: Veronica Madsen 01453 833029

Telephone Tree

For a while now it has been obvious that the Telephone Tree has not been working well, and people who rely on phone calls to keep them informed have not been receiving them reliably.

I would like to suggest that from now on those of you who do not have an email address should make an arrangement with someone you know who does, who would be happy to pass important messages on to you. In this way, by making a personal connection, you are much more likely to be contacted.

Paul

Library Books

Alice Wyndham would like to remind people who have borrowed books from the Church Library to make sure that they return them when they have finished reading them, as many have been out for a long time.