

The Christian Community Movement for Religious Renewal

Aberdeen Congregation

End of October 2014

Dear members and friends of the Aberdeen congregation,

As we approach the winter months, we enter into the mystery of the darkness, and of the light that shines within it.

We have gathered all our fruits from the summer, the fruits of deeds that have matured in our souls, and offer them up to the being of light that approaches when the external darkness holds sway and outer life has reached its nadir.

In November, the grey mists that descend and envelop all life, can be difficult for many. Yet it is precisely this darkness that enables us to appreciate the light, and to feel its purity. And we may experience this most beautifully with the Christmas festival of light and of the child.

The consumer culture that has grown up around the pure festival of Christmas, threatens to consume the essence of the festival: the child. The festival of Michaelmas prepares us for this through the image of the dragon who wishes to devour the child in Revelation 12.

And so the festival of Michaelmas schools us in the courage that we need if we are to guard the gentle light of Christmas each year—so that the child may appear.

In The Christian Community, we too have been blessed with the warmth and life that children bring: In June, the parent-child playgroup moved in and for two days each week, the community room shines with the joy of play! Bread is baked, pictures drawn, songs are sung and little wooden kitchen stoves serve to nourish the children's fantasy. As the selfish giant in Oscar Wilde's story says of his garden, "I have many beautiful flowers, but the most beautiful flowers of all are the children."

The church garden too has continued to see much care and close attention paid to it, and has benefited from the house and garden days which have been supported by many. The work has been supported too by delicious soups and hearty conversations! And the building and the grounds bask in the care they receive and the fact that they provide a place where people may come together and freely give of their time and strength.

The garden provided us with a beautiful sunny day on which to celebrate our Harvest Festival and Michaelmas with the children. The harvest table

heaved under the weight of John Fraser's vegetables—and all their earthiness was radiant under the halo of a harvest wreath. Paul Kieniewicz told the children a self-composed children's story and the children sung and enacted a little song for us, led by Ursula Mathers.

Our next festival will be the lantern procession of St. Martin's. As the darkness further descends in November, the good deed of St. Martin shines out like a beacon of light. The children make lanterns and walk into the night with them, singing Martinmas songs, their voices penetrating the darkness like light.

There are many initiatives and new ideas that have arisen out of our community life in recent months. Some of these you will find in the programme, and I hope that you will be inspired to take part in them. Others will have to wait for another year until their right time has come. Still others are near to bearing fruit in a future programme. I send out emails regularly to update and remind the community of what is happening—should you wish to be on the mailing list, please let me know.

We have, over the summer, re-established a Church Council with Christoph Hanni, Amber Kieniewicz, Stuart Probart, Richard Keys, Simon van Holsteijn and myself, as an organ of perception and initiative for the life of the congregation.

Also, the Gospel Study group has reconvened, currently on Mondays at 3pm. We have chosen the Gospel of John as the focus of our attention. Study is perhaps a misleading word, as we attempt rather to immerse ourselves in the stream of living thought, word and pictures that we find there—just as John, the Baptist, immersed those who were to be baptised in the living waters. An encounter with the Gospel can be as life-changing as the encounter with the Baptist must have been. Can we attain and sustain such intensity?

Finally, the small group in Forres continues to meet once a month (details in the programme) at the beautiful Newbold House. Following the transition into the new location, the group feels that new initiatives are needed. Perhaps an increased and fruitful interaction between the two communities of north-east Scotland could gradually unfold. Just as Forres and Moray are different to Aberdeen in geography, light and climate, so too the communities differ. I would encourage those who can, to visit the Forres congregation on the weekends when services take place, and to get to know this exciting, idiosyncratic and 'young' community (less than ten years since the founding). It is a thing of great worth when the sacraments find a place on the earth where they can live.

with warm greetings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Luke Barr". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of "Luke" and "Barr" being capitalized and prominent.

Luke Barr