

# The Christian Community

Movement for Religious Renewal

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*Passiontide 2017*

## Edinburgh Congregation Newsletter

This programme covers precisely the period of the ‘moveable feasts’, the festivals which come in the middle of the Christian festival cycle (which begins at Advent and ends after Michaelmas).

Just as the human organism has a moving ‘middle’ in the rhythmic feeling system of heart and lungs (between the thinking/sensing of the head and the doing of the limbs) so too does the festival cycle. Passiontide, Easter, Ascension and Whitsun vary each year within limits of just over one month. This moveable nature has a *cosmic* basis: Easter Sunday being the first *Sun*-day after the Full Moon after the Spring Equinox.

Each year anew, in the varying cosmic configuration, a soul journey can be undertaken – from the reality of the perishable body to the reality of the imperishable spirit.

This period will witness important events in the life of the Christian Community in the UK and in this congregation.

By the time you read this, three new priests will have been ordained in the first ordination services to happen in the UK since 2001. Two of them – Siobhán Porter and Selina Horn – will be working in this region and will be inducted into the Stroud and Stourbridge congregations during Passiontide.

The life of the Christian Community unfolds between priests and the congregations to which they are sent. The event taking place in *this* congregation is not the arrival of a new priest but

the formation of a **congregational council** as an organ of perception and will for the congregation.

I am sure I speak on behalf of everyone in the congregation in expressing deep gratitude to those members who have been willing to take on the responsibility and commitment of serving on the founding council. As priest, I would add that I am excited about what I feel will be a very positive forward step in the co-working of priest and congregation.

## On the Programme

Conscious intention didn't come into it but perhaps it is symptomatic of such new possibilities in priest-congregation co-working that this year's Holy Week study involves a collaboration between myself and Anne Byrne with the theme *Preparing for Death*.

I will also be working together with John Andrich for the first of a series of sessions looking at aspects of our central ritual, the Act of Consecration of Man. The congregation are financing John to attend the annual 'Kirchenbautreffen' (Church building meeting) in Stuttgart. The theme of that meeting is *the Altar Space* (encompassing altar, steps, picture, pulpit etc.) and this will also be the theme that John and I will bring.

Another member of the congregation, Donna Simmons, starts off this quarter's Friday evening "talks and presentations about things that matter" with some thoughts concerning euthanasia. The following speaker, in April, is not part of the Christian Community but is a significant member of the anthroposophical milieu, Bridget Beagan of Garvald Home Farm. Bridget will speak on a theme that is close to her heart: organisations as *living* entities and how they face the challenge of what she calls "the ideology of managerialism". In May someone from quite outside 'our circles', Andy Wightman MSP, will speak on the theme that has been his life's work for more than 20 years, *Land and Democracy in Scotland*.

*Paul Newton*