

Newsletter

No. 65—Saint John's 2021

LETTER FROM THE LENKER

I am writing this report just before attending a meeting of the Executive Committee of The Christian Community Trustees. It seemed a good idea to give an update on the Charity's situation, particularly as we were not able to hold an Annual Meeting last year.

Most of the assets—the houses and church buildings—in the Region are held by a charity, The Christian Community in Great Britain. For reasons of history and organisation, the assets in London are owned by a separate charity. As Ireland is a different country altogether, there is a charity—the Movement for Religious Renewal (Ireland)—which owns the property in County Clare.

As well as being the legal owner of the properties, the charities are responsible for the aspects of our work that bear on legal and social responsibilities, for example safeguarding and risk management, as well as preparing annual accounts. Each charity has a Board comprising priests and lay members and some professional help. The Christian Community in Great Britain is looking for new trustees: if you are a member of The Christian Community and have some experience in charita-

ble governance or business, please approach your congregational priest or myself.

One of the responsibilities of charitable trustees is to ensure that their charity is a 'going concern'. I am pleased to report that the overall picture in this regard is good: the congregations have responded to what could have been a time of need with generous support.

The situation in Ireland is somewhat different, as a major source of support has fallen away over the last years, namely the gifts from Camphill centres where we held services. This has left the finances under severe strain. The group in County Clare is working hard to remedy this.

Longer term, the members in Ireland are hoping to develop the site by building some apartments which could be rented out or sold. In a phased development, we would build a chapel behind the house, where the chapel is currently located, which would give us the space we need for all of our services. A community space could also provide a much-needed resource for Christian Community and allied activities in Ireland. The hope is to create a 'cultural island' to serve the wider community as well.

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<https://wp.me/p5ovPM-2Ca>

The Christian Community in Great Britain is still carrying a considerable debt for the final phase of the building work in Stroud. We took the decision to complete the work on the church, even though we did not have the funds, as we had some assets that were able to dispose of. Meanwhile we have sold two properties and received some legacies, so we have been able to pay nearly half of what we owe. We are very grateful to those members who placed their faith in us by giving us unsecured loans at low or zero interest. Floris Books and some of the Regions of The Christian Community in Germany also provided loans on favourable terms. Ultimately, all of our major spending is financed by legacies—the properties we have sold were bought this way too. If you would like to ensure the future of The Christian Community and its development, do please think of us in your will.

The new church building process in Edinburgh is now picking up after several delays over the past year. The architect has produced the final design and the application for full planning permission will be lodged in the next weeks. The rest of the year, after it is

hopefully granted, will be spent working further with various experts to get a final costing and building warrant before putting out to tender. The intention now is to first sell Fountain House to raise funds for the build, with the congregation seeking temporary accommodation for the nine to twelve months needed to complete the new buildings.

The congregation in London has a special set of circumstances, as its welfare is bound up with the guesthouse, which has hardly been able to open since the first lockdown. Thankfully we have some reserves which we pray will carry us over until our guest numbers increase. At the time of writing there is a steady flow of new bookings. Meanwhile, the garden, which was recreated around the new Garden Studios, is looking in splendid fettle. If you are in need of a break after the trials and troubles of this last period time, Peter van Breda and his team would be delighted to extend their warm welcome to you.

We are hoping to welcome a new priest in the Autumn, to join Aaron Mirkin in Stroud.

Tom Ravetz

A WINDOW ON IRELAND

While 2020 and early 2021 has seen many challenges for The Christian Community in Ireland, there have also been many positive developments that should be acknowledged and celebrated.

In the summer we had a major redesign of our logo and website, and pre-

pared a website, logo and brochure for an intentional housing community around The Christian Community in Ireland, called Solas na Gréine, meaning 'the light of the sun' in the Irish language. In September we managed to have a small-scale autumn conference with friends from the Irish congregations, and some very special

contributions from Vicke von Behr, where we presented plans for the Solas na Gréine development, and the proposal to develop a chapel that also doubles as a community space for local initiatives. The website for these developments can be found at: www.solasnagreine.ie

In November we dedicated a small memorial area at The Christian Community house in Tuamgraney, Co. Clare, with the installation of a memorial stone for Tom Leonard. We also began actively updating our website with weekly sermons (www.thechristiancommunityireland.net) and now send regular newsletters to our congregants and friends. In February we began a new initiative with the launch of a platform that allows us to reach out culturally to give people content to work with when physical attendance at services is not possible. So far we have released several videos and resources. This content is freely available on: www.patreon.com/theccireland

Finally we were recently blessed with the donation of a significant collection of anthroposophical books by friends from Camphill in Dingle which allows us to establish an expanded library with its own dedicated space.

So there are many challenges during these times, but behind the scenes many fertile seeds are sown and quietly take root. Work on the development of the housing and chapel project continues, the work of celebrating the Act of Consecration of Man continues, even at those times

when we cannot publicly celebrate with the congregation, and we find ways to look and work towards the future. We are challenged, and these are challenging times, but we are also blessed.

Brian Walsh

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A NEW PAGE OPENS IN WALES

On Sunday, the 25th of April, the South Wales Community celebrated, for the first time in many years, The Act of Consecration of Man.

The service took place in the hall of the Nant-y-Cwm Steiner School and was held by Aaron Mirkin who travelled down from the Stroud Christian Community with his wife, Judy, to join in the preparation of the fledgeling community core after many months of determination and patience.

There was a mood of deep reverence and anticipation ignited by Aaron's opening address and uplifted too by the fresh and sunny spring weather, a bouquet of blossoming branches at the altar and the elated chirping of the birds outside.

The congregation of seven enjoyed the musical contribution of Christopher Dry who provided a poignant accompaniment to the sacrament on the piano with music by Leopold van der Pals.

Later, over refreshments, the future of our unfolding community was discussed and, equally so, the past... By virtue of the arrival of Adelaide Wheeler-Cocks, whose unexpected personal accounts of her role in the founding of the Nant-y-Cwm school, Plas Dwbl biodynamic farm and a previous era of Christian Community activity centred around the school, couldn't have made for a more fitting Sunday Talk if we had asked for one!

It certainly feels as if foundations have long since been prepared and now, with a vibrant new holding group, there is all the potential for something wonderful to arise anew.

The next sacraments to be held will be The Act of Consecration of Man on May 22nd, followed immediately by the Christening of baby Raphaél Spiegel. A further visit by Aaron is pencilled in for October.

There is already growing interest amongst the wider South Wales community and we look forward to seeing how things are to develop in the days and weeks to come!

Raoul Spiegel
Pembrokeshire, Wales

Guest Rooms

at

The Christian Community
23 Chapel Street
Buckfastleigh TQ11 0AQ



There are four small guest rooms, three single and one double room. Three of the guest rooms have a wash basin; toilets and shower are separate. There is a kitchen for self-catering needs. Local shops and pubs/restaurants are within a couple of minutes walking distance.

Unfortunately we do not have disabled access and there are steps and stairs inside and outside the building. We ask for your consideration regarding the other guests and our events taking place in the house.

Suggested contribution £25 per person per night, one night £30.

Weekly rates available, also pick-ups and drop off for Two Moors Way.

For further information and bookings:

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