

# Newsletter

**No. 68—Easter 2022**

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## LETTER FROM THE LENKER

One of the striking experiences that many of us had in the first, long lockdown was how it was possible to take part in the service spiritually from afar. It would often happen in those first, early days, that I would take a service in the church which was outwardly empty. Afterwards I would speak to someone on the phone or read an email, where they told me how powerful the service had been for them. I doubt if any of us started to think that we could dispense with attending the service in person, but it was reassuring to realize that a different kind of 'being there' was still possible.

Many of us gained experiences in another realm during the last two years, as well: we were forced to come to grips with zoom and other ways of meeting 'virtually'. Some priests—myself included—made modest attempts at using these technologies for delivering talks or conducting conferences. We all had the chance of experiencing the benefits that these technologies could bring, as well as their limitations.

In some churches and other groups, it seemed obvious that 'live-streaming' services would be a good way of helping people to attend them, who could not otherwise be there. In the meantime, it has become an almost automatic assumption that a funeral service will be live-streamed, and some of my colleagues

have told me that, like me, they have faced some awkward situations when we have had to explain that we have an undertaking amongst the priests of The Christian Community that we will not record or transmit any of our services.

This undertaking is rooted in our understanding of the reality of the ritual word, which is an event that unfolds in the living connection of voice to ear and heart to heart. However, this does not mean that we cannot be part of the service. If we are not able to be present in person, we can still participate, using the methods that served us so well in the lockdowns: lighting a candle, thinking of the person, even accompanying the stages of the funeral service. Of course, many people who wish to attend a funeral are not familiar with the service in the way that members know the Act of Consecration of Man, which enabled them to call up their memories of taking part. But there is help that we can offer here: we can share the thoughts that will flow into the eulogy, perhaps even before the funeral; we can give an orientation about the structure of the service and what is happening there. All of this can help when we want to join in the stream of life that flows into the world whenever a true ritual is celebrated. Having taken part in funerals held by other groups via a video stream, as well as Christian Community funerals in which I participated while

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<https://wp.me/p5ovPM-2H9>

sitting quietly at home, I can say from my own experience that the connecting to what was going on through inner participation was far more powerful than watching a ceremony on my laptop.

These thoughts are intended as a help in a situation where our practice may seem counterintuitive and out of touch with modern life. I sense there is an opportunity here for deepening the wonderful discovery

*As a newly ordained priest, Nataliia Shatna has had her first sending to the Forest Row community, and here she shares something of her life's story.*

Dear friends,

When I was a young child, instead of going to kindergarten, my sister and myself stayed at home with my grandfather. He was the one who educated us - as much as you can educate 3-4 year olds. He was the one from whom we both absorbed love and kindness, and who embodied a true teacher for us. He used to take us on his lap and sing us beautiful Ukrainian songs. Some of them were really sad, as they reflected our history and what our grandfather had experienced. But there was never a lack of courage, as well as love for what life brings, in those songs. He would sing them with such passion and with his full heart. And then he would tell us stories and take us to the garden, show us the world around full of beauty - plants and animals. What I could always perceive as a little child from my grandfather's presence was his gentleness and gratitude to the world for everything he had and everything that surrounded him.

Growing older, I went as a child to The Christian Community summer family camps, one hour away from my home town, in a beautiful River Dniester canyon. There, for the first time, I heard people speaking dif-

ferent languages and even as a child I suddenly realised, that if I want to live in this world I should learn foreign languages, as it is the way to communicate with others, to know about other countries and to hear people's stories. Later, after school, I indeed studied languages and gained a degree in English translation.

In 2014, when the Revolution of Dignity happened in Ukraine, the situation in my country made me re-examine and rethink my ideals. I decided to leave my country and look for the meaning and purpose of my life elsewhere. My life path brought me to Germany, looking after the children of Peter Selg. Searching for what I wanted to do, I went to the Youth conference of The Christian Community in Dortmund in 2015 and met priest seminary students there, who told me about an open week at the seminary. After I attended this open week at the Priest seminary in Stuttgart, my life changed yet again, and took a different path from what I could ever have imagined or expected. I then realised that it is important not to have clear pictures and set expectations, as they can be so very different from reality, and to follow and learn from what my life's path would bring.

With best wishes,

*Tom Ravetz*

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After two years at the seminary, I was privileged to spend three practicum years in different congregations from East to West,

starting in Prague, then Germany and going finally to Stroud. As I experienced different Christian Communities, different challenges and different colleagues, I had an impression of richness of The Christian Community - in celebrating the festivals through the year, but also a richness in how different we all are and can be, which is also our treasure. Maybe this is one of the reasons I love going to conferences - because one can see how different we all are and yet we still belong together as The Christian Community.

Saying yes to the priesthood meant, to me, becoming one of the carriers of that Community of Christ, which we build together in every sacrament, the substance of which can be carried out as a little seed into the world - in every meeting, every festival, and every story that can be told. These seeds are thus sown, hoping that one day they will grow in their full beauty and bear the fruit of love for others, and for the future.

*Nataliia Shatna*



### David Bromage

18th April 1929 – 12th December 2021

In many cards of condolence, David's friends say in different ways: this was truly a good man, an ethical gentleman, a serious person with a virtuous attitude to life.

Over the years many people have sought David's advice and counsel. He had a broad background born out of constant study and life-experience which enhanced the help he offered. A little anecdote repeated many times by others is worth retelling. An elderly lady who had known David over many years here in our church, Temple Lodge, intimated to me that she knew that her time was short. "I will be going to see David in the next few days for him to sort out my estate, he can really do such things." This she did and few weeks later with her estate sorted out she passed on.

This confidence that people had in David's ability to grasp a situation and deal with it in a solid manner was an undoubtedly a special characteristic and attribute that he bore within himself.

Turning though to the beginning of his life we know that David was an only child born on the 18th April, 1929. For those who follow the star signs aspect of a destiny, David was born under the sign of Aries. If you follow the distinguishing qualities of an Aries person, David most certainly ticked all the boxes. He was for instance a born leader, inwardly and outwardly demonstrative in what he believed, not one to stumble for long as he was constantly contemplating the next new day with all its possibilities.

In his early years his parents moved from Minehead to Forest Row so that David could continue attending the Waldorf School. By his own admission, he was a particularly naughty boy at school getting into all kinds of mischief. One instance which almost made him legend in the school was an attempt to stop a eurythmy lesson by scattering pebbles all over the dance floor. He reasoned that it was quite within his right to protest as he had asked the teachers why they should do eurythmy and as they failed to give him a coherent response, he scattered pebbles on the floor as a protest!

After school this same mischievous boy showed that he had in fact great inner resources. He went to university, studied law and became a barrister. The only deterrent stopping him from opening up his own chambers was lack of money. Meanwhile, he had been called up to do his national service. David spent the next three years excelling as an army officer, renowned for his ability to be a leading officer on grand parades.

David did not return directly to the law profession but entered into a life-long occupation as an insurance and ethical investment consultant. He drew many clients over the years and was prominent in Forest Row in East Sussex where he had his office and work place. His relationship to ethical investments was in his time an innovation which attracted both support and respect.

His connection to the Rudolf Steiner Waldorf school movement guided him to his first wife, an ex-Waldorf pupil, Putty. Putty died in 1986 leaving four children: Michael and Jenny from a previous marriage and their two children Sarah and Anne. When Gillian and David married in 1989, Gillian brought Jonathan into their community of life. Gillian was a good

school friend of Putty. David and Gillian married in France in The Christian Community.

The time of his Waldorf education in Forest Row brought David into contact with many prominent anthroposophists, among whom was AC Harwood, a great literary scholar and teacher. This connection inspired David greatly; he responded in a natural way as if this were part of his ongoing life to this body of knowledge known as anthroposophy. Soon he became a life long member of the Society. The Christian Community he knew from his childhood as he attended the services on a regular basis. His relationship to our church and Temple Lodge became much more than a mere formal connection as he was centrally involved in all the processes of growth and care over many decades. It is correct to say that we would not be celebrating David's life in Temple Lodge if it were not for his loving care and management skills. He was deeply connected to Rev Evelyn Capel and over the years they brought about countless innovations for this property. The Gate Restaurant, which has been here for 33 years, is such a happy and successful innovation.

David also had a great connection to the arts; he loved music, especially opera, and he was also a regular theatre goer. He was extremely well read and followed critically the ongoing events of the world. He played tennis on a regular basis and he loved both gardening and cooking.

Rudolf Steiner, who was David's life long spiritual teacher, wrote these far reaching words: "In earlier times the relationship between the living and the dead was a much closer one than it is today. The influence of materialism has been to weaken and gradually to sever this bond. But in the future a bridge will be built once again to those who have died, it will

need to be a conscious bridge. For those who have died who have passed through death need and long for the love and the thoughts of those who were close to them on Earth. Although they find themselves surrounded by the light of the spirit, they also need what the living can give them. Yet materialistic thoughts have little reality for them and do not reach them. Loving life filled spiritual thoughts on the other hand are like nourishment for them. We can work and help not only those on Earth but also the so-called dead."

Rudolf Steiner goes on to say that this relationship is by no means one-sided, as those who have died can in turn be of very real help to the living, to us, especially to those who mourn. They turn their gaze towards us who still live on the Earth, they imbue us with life, they are with us, their forces stream down upon us. He describes

a way in which we can cultivate this connection, devoid of anything mystical. While we are engaged in some every day activity, we may find that the thoughts or words of the one we loved may resound in us. If we attend to this, we may feel their presence and their wish to be with us and to help us. In a very real sense they stand behind us. In this way, we can become aware that those whom we call the dead are in all reality constantly there, about us and behind us.

At the gate of death, Christ, the lord of destiny, has met David and led him over into the world of spirit where he will meet up again with the many friends he once had here on earth. We may turn to him on his journey in this light filled world with gratitude and thankfulness and we may know through Christ he can help us on our own journeys here on earth.

## The Act of Consecration of Man

 Floris  
Books

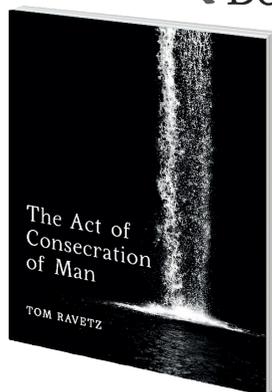
### *Contemplating communion*

Tom Ravetz, Lenker of The Christian Community in Great Britain and Ireland, has written and spoken on a wide variety of theological and spiritual topics.

In this fascinating book, Ravetz explores the communion service, weaving together contemplations inspired by Rudolf Steiner with insightful commentary on the meaning and purpose of the ritual itself.

The book will be valuable for both new worshippers and those who have been taking part in the communion service for years.

The Act of Consecration of Man | 128 pages  
paperback | 978-178250-665-2 | RRP: £9.99 | OFFER: £7.99



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# Creating Sacred Spaces where present and future meet

## Annual Meeting of The Christian Community in Great Britain and Ireland

The past has formed us—the future beckons us. Our task is to notice that every moment can become an opening for the sacred to stream in

- in worship
- in encounter
- in prayer

In this, the centenary year of the founding of The Christian Community, we are delighted to be able to host the Annual Meeting in Forest Row. Vicke von Behr, who was until recently the Erzoherlenker, the spiritual leader of our community, will give the opening talk on The Founding of The Christian Community in the Spiritual World. This deed of founding was not complete 100 years ago—our community is founded every time anew when we celebrate the Act of Consecration of Man together.

In our conversations as we were preparing this programme, we noticed that something new is asked of us as we move into the next 100 years. For over 100 years, we have experienced the reality of our community forming around the Act of Consecration of Man. How can we share what we have experienced there? If we can find the power to listen, then the sacred space of the altar will be extended out into every encounter. Then we may find the interest to hear the concerns of people beyond the walls of the church, and the words they need us to hear. This would be in line with the purpose of our community, which was never to erect a wall around its own sacred space, but to contribute to the sacredness of the world.

The meeting will start with supper at 6pm on 10th June and conclude with lunch at 1pm on 12th June.

Vicke von Behr will speak on The Founding of The Christian Community in the Spiritual World at 7pm on 10th June.

The Act of Consecration of Man will be celebrated at 9am on 11th and 12th June.

We will deepen the theme with further contributions, group conversations, artistic activities and an open artistic evening, to which you are invited to contribute.

It would be a great help for us if you can apply online via this link:

[tinyurl.com/CC-22-appl](https://tinyurl.com/CC-22-appl)

If you would like a printed application form, please write to:

Annual Meeting,  
The Christian Community,  
Hartfield Road,  
Forest Row  
RH18 5DZ