

The Christian Community in Forest Row
Programme for December, 2023 - March, 2024



Hartfield Road/School Lane Forest Row RH18 5DZ
tingurl.com/CCFR-Home

Dear congregation,

The church year reaches its climax with readings from the Book of Revelation that point to the fulfilment of creation with the image of the New Jerusalem, the world in which darkness and conflict have been overcome and the peoples of the earth unite in bringing their treasures. Then, a few days later, we hear the reading for Advent with the "Little Apocalypse" in Luke 21.

Ever since Jesus proclaimed the coming of a new kingdom, people have struggled to understand what these prophecies mean. At the time of the early church, there were those who believed that the end times had already come, or that they were about to come. Time and again, Christian groups have decided that the end is near, only to be disappointed when it didn't come. Others have interpreted the prophecies of the Book of Revelation as referring to the distant future, or perhaps to what awaits us in 'heaven'. We ourselves are familiar with this tension between what is to come and the reality in which we live: Every time we set a new goal, such as a New Year's resolution, we draw the future towards us. For a while we may feel energised by having made our resolve. It may be that we have a true inkling of the future self we wish to become. However, after the initial enthusiasm, we find that our resolve is challenged when it comes up against the power of our habits and the stresses of everyday life. Then we can feel discouraged, as if change will never come.

There is a phrase in the Book of Revelation that helps us to understand the tension between our future and our present. This is: 'It is already here ... and yet to come'. The moment in which change is inaugurated is real, even if the full unfolding of that change lies in the distant future. And in the gap between 'is already' and 'is yet to come' there is a space that involves us. The changes we wish to see in our own development require that we patiently cultivate our souls and work towards the future we have dimly intuited. Whenever human beings have tried to rush the fulfilment of history into the present, it has always ended in bloodshed and catastrophe. But to despair of human progress is no answer either. Rather, we are

called to realise the future here and now. The apocalyptic prophecies are not predictions of what will take place, with or without us, but an indication of what might be possible. They give us a yardstick, especially in times like now when there seems to be so much evidence to the contrary. Our task is to seek the future that is 'already there', revealed in the creative acts of humanity that overcome the forces that assail us. In seeking it, in praying for its fulfilment, we become part of its realisation.

Traditionally, the Holy Nights have been seen as a time when the heavens are close and the earth is particularly receptive. Even in our secular world, it is a time of gathering and socialising. We hope that the contributions and conversations in our Holy Nights workshop on the mysteries of encounter will allow us to be attuned to the apocalyptic dimension of our encounters with the earth, with each other and with the Spirit. We have left the fourth session, on the 30th of December, open for a conversation in which we can build on what has been brought and what has filled our conversations over the past three days.

We are glad to welcome Ilse Wellershoff-Schuur, a priest of the Christian Community in Oldenburg, for our weekend workshop on The Holy Land is our Teacher. Ilse has been working in the Holy Land since 1993. Initially, she took youth groups there; then she was involved in setting up the Jewish-Arab-European meeting place Sha'ar laAdam - Bab l'il Insan between Kibbutz Harduf in Galilee and the neighbouring Arab villages. She is involved in interfaith work and has been leading study tours for a number of years. Her talks will try to make understandable and tangible how incredibly complex the developments in this country are - and what we in Europe might have to do with them. Looking ahead, we are hoping to welcome Peter Selg back soon after Whitsun, for a conference weekend about the mystery of community.

With very best wishes for the coming months and winter holiday,

Tom Ravetz, Selina Horn and Nataliia Shatna

Services

The Act of Consecration of Man

Sundays at 10am, Thursdays and Fridays at 9am

On Christmas Day, the Act of Consecration of Man will be celebrated at midnight,
8am and 10am

From 25th December until 6th January, the Act of Consecration of Man
will be celebrated daily at 10am (on 30th December in German and
on 2nd January in Ukrainian)

First Saturday of the month

6pm Evening Service for those who have died

Sunday Service for Children with a Story 11.10am for 11.15am start: 3rd, 17th and
25th December (11.30am); 7th, 28th January; 11th, 25th February; 10th, 24th March

Other regular events

Sundays, 9.15 - 9.30am

Little Ones' Gathering for pre-school children with songs, story and a prayer
3rd December, 7th January, 4th March

Tuesdays 10.30am

Conversation Group (until 12th December, starting again 9th January)
(Coffee and tea from 10am)

Thursdays

fortnightly at 4pm Skylarks Children's Group

30th November; 25th January; 8th and 22nd February; 7th and 21st March

7pm Choir

8pm Experiencing Christ in the cycle of the year (until 16th December,
from 18th January)

Fridays

3-4pm Enlivening Psalms (February 3rd-March 22nd)

4pm Confirmation Class (until 15th December, from 18th January)

Saturdays

First Saturday of the month at 4.30pm Reading Group for those who have died

Programme

Advent

Saturday, 2nd December, 6pm

Evening Service to prepare for Advent

Sunday, 3rd December, 4pm

Advent Spiral

Sunday, 10th December, 11.30am

Artistic Gathering for Advent - Sharing of poems, story, music

Thursday, 14th December, 4pm

Christmas Carol concert given by violin students of Angela Campbell

Friday, 15th December, 5.15pm

Advent cello concert with students of Marina Logie

Saturday, 16th December, 10am –12pm

Preparing the Church for Christmas

Sunday, 17th December, 11.30am

Carol Singing with Katharina Baiter

Saturday, 24th December at 4pm

Christmas Play

Please bring your lantern to carry the heavenly light home!

Holy Nights

Holy Nights Workshop

Mysteries of Encounter

Contributions with conversation in front of the Christmas tree

11.15am-12.30pm

Wednesday, 27th December

The encounter with the earth

Thursday, 28th December

The encounter with each other

Friday, 29th December

The encounter with the spirit

Saturday, 30th December

Converstation on the theme “Mystery of encounter”

Sunday, 31st December, 6pm

The Birth-Pangs of Humanity

Evening Service for the New Year with Sermon by Tom Ravetz

followed by

Gathering for New Year’s Eve with bring and share supper, to end by 9pm

Tuesday, 2nd January, 11.30am

**Movements from Olivier Messiaen's 'Vingt Regards sur L'Enfant-Jésus' -
'Twenty Meditations on the infant Jesus'**

Piano contemplation with Christian Lillicrap

Thursday, 4th January 11.30am

Artistic Gathering for the Holy Nights

Sharing of poems, story, music

Epiphany

Saturday, 6th January

10am The Act of Consecration of Man for Epiphany

4pm Three Kings’ Play

Sunday, 7th January, 11.30am

Three Kings’ Play

Sunday, 14th January, 11.30am

King Herod and the Magi - two images of kingship

Talk by Tom Ravetz

Sunday, 21st January, 11.30am

**Behind the Grey - Exhibition Opening and Lecture Performance
by Deborah Ravetz**

Sunday, 28th January, 11.30am

Open congregational meeting

Trinity

Sunday, 4th February, 11.30am

Server’s Meeting

Saturday, 10th February, 10am-12pm
House and garden morning

Sunday, 11th February, 11.30am
Members' Meeting

Sunday, 18th February, 11.30am
The Life of the Essenes
Talk by Selina Horn

Passiontide

Saturday, 2nd March and Sunday, 3rd March
Holy Land is our teacher
weekend with Ilse Weleshoff-Schurr

Saturday, 9th of March, 3pm
Divine & Spiritual love - Seven centuries of spiritual song
Concert with Andrew Thompson, Jorien van Tuinen and Joris Boon

Saturday, 16th March, 3pm
“From Dvorak to Ullmann - a journey in song”
Concert with Katharina Baiter - sopran and Rhyll Godber - piano

Sunday, 17th March, 11.30am
Trip to Auschwitz - experiences and sharing with Nataliia Shatna

Absences

Tom will be in Ringwood: 16/12/2023; 27/01/2024; 16/03/2024
Nataliia will be in Canterbury: 10/12/23; 26/12/23; 20-21/01/24; 17-18/02/24;
28/03/24

Nataliia away for further training: 19-28th February and 13-16th March

The British synod will take place in Stourbridge, 4th-7th March

Nataliia will be on leave 8-14th January,

Selina will be on leave 8-22nd January,

Tom will be on leave 14-20th January

Gospel readings

Advent

Sunday, December 3 ... Luke 21:25-36
Sunday, December 10 ... Luke 21:25-36
Sunday, December 17 ... Luke 21:25-36
Sunday, December 24 ... Luke 21:25-36
Christmas Monday, December 25
Midnight ... Matthew 1:1-25
Dawn ... Luke 2:1-20
Morning ... John 21:15-25

Epiphany 2024

Saturday, January 6 ... Matthew 2:1-12
Sunday, January 7 ... Matthew 2:1-12
Sunday, January 14 ... Luke 2:41-52
Sunday, January 21 ... John 2:1-11
Sunday, January 28 ... John 4:46-54

Sunday, February 4 ... Matthew 20:1-16
Sunday, February 11 ... Luke 18:18-34
Sunday, February 18 ... Matthew 4:1-11
Sunday, February 25 ... Matthew 17:1-13

Passiontide

Sunday, March 3 ... Luke 11:14-36
Sunday, March 10 ... John 6:1-15
Sunday, March 17 ... John 8:1-12

The Christian Community exists through the generous donations of its members and friends. If you would like to make a one-off donation or a standing order, our account details are below. If you are a UK taxpayer, please ask us for a Gift Aid form or download one here: <https://tinyurl.com/CC-FR-FRM>

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