

# Newsletter

**No. 60—Easter 2020**

## THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY A PLACE OF PEACE IN MERCHISTON

The house at 21 Napier Road dates back to 1875 and was the last house to be built on the street. From the beginning it had an unusually large garden of nearly an acre. The property was purchased in 1963 by the Edinburgh congregation of The Christian Community.

Two of the founding priests brought The Christian Community to the UK in 1929, with services first held in Edinburgh in the 1940s. A first residential priest, Adam Bittleston, came in 1949 and a property was purchased in the New Town. Fourteen years later the congregation moved to 21 Napier Road and one level of this Victorian family house was converted into a chapel with ancillary rooms.

For many years, there were thoughts to build a purpose-built place of worship in the large garden. In the last few years a process has unfolded within the congregation that has led to this plan becoming ever more a reality. This has been driven by a number of considerations:

- The problems associated with a building of mixed use (private residences and place of worship) and the lack of access for those with mobility issues.
- The wish for the architecture of our chapel to express in its forms a modern, renewed spiritual striving rather than a Victorian family home.
- The wish for a stronger interrelation between the chapel and the garden.

The plan is to build:

- a chapel together with other rooms to be used by the congregation and as a resource for other community groups (as our present church is to some extent).
- separate accommodation for the priests.
- and with the main entrance on Polwarth Terrace, with a beautifully landscaped garden around the church.

This is to be financed through the sale of the existing house together with a portion of the garden. We will complete stage one by building the community rooms (ground floor) and the priests' accommodation (second floor, including visitor rooms). The priest and congregation will decant and use the community hall as a temporary chapel as we sell Napier Road. Finally we will turn our attention to building a modern church for the new century of The Christian Community.

### Administrator for The Christian Community (part-time)

The Christian Community in Great Britain, a religious charity, is looking for a competent administrator and book-keeper to assist the trustees in carrying out their responsibilities.

The job is about 8–10 hours per week and can be done largely from home. It is a key role, reporting directly to the lenker (national coordinating priest) of the church. It would therefore be important to be in reach of Forest Row/East Grinstead, Sussex. Day-long Board Meetings take place four times a year and they move around the centres.

The heart of the job is book-keeping and liaising with trustees as well as treasurers of local congregations up and down the country. For more information, please contact Tom Ravetz via

*lenker@tcc-mrr.co.uk*

Over the years, the word that comes up again to describe how people feel both in our existing chapel and in the garden is "peaceful". How important this is amidst the often frantic haste and worry of modern life! Our vision is to develop this space as a place of peace for all who seek it.

### FURTHER ECHOES FROM STROUD

Christine and I wanted to attend the opening of the new church in Stroud. There are three active priests there—Aaron Mirkin, Selina Horn and Carmel Iveson, who has just this last month gone into retirement. Stroud was my first sending in 2000 and already in 2001 the opportunity came to purchase an adjoining overgrown orchard—who knows when it might come in useful?!

The congregation almost immediately started to dream, envisage, and gradually plan a new build for the 1968 built-on-a-shoe-string church, ancillary rooms and small flat (in which we were living). The first architects were approached, as well as the first costings floated for the various permutations.

Time moved on, and we too, but the wheels continued to turn, the plans took on form.

And now this marathon run was completed, and a proud new church stands, for all to see and admire and, since Sunday, 20th October, to use! A festive weekend, and particularly because the original church still stands alongside: this meant that the events began in the 'old' space, (evening lecture, the final Act of Consecration of Man) followed by the symbolic scraping of the walls, while those assembled remained seated in the middle, then the removing of the altar, the fittings and the contents of the now 'old' vestry.

In the afternoon, across the adjoining hallway, we gathered again to hear from the architect's team (now their third church for The Christian Community), some of the factors and challenges involved, including the new design possibilities through working with so called 'cross laminated panelling'. Then the red ribbon was cut by the wives of Michael Tapp and Peter Allan, (both priests of the congregation and both still living in Stroud until recently).

Lines from T.S. Eliot's well known "Choruses from the Rock", which was performed on the

Saturday evening, stood over the weekend festivities;

"The Lord who created  
must wish us to create  
And employ our creation again  
in His service."

And so it was, on the Sunday morning the Act of Consecration was preceded by the consecration of the new church space—this time from the centre to the periphery and beyond; North, West, East and South, each in relation to one of the four elements, Earth, Water, Air and Fire. Following the Service came greetings and gifts from other communities, children from the congregation performed folkdances, new music and choir pieces filled the packed space.

It isn't often given to experience the consecration of a new church, still less to witness it dovetailing with the farewell to the previous space—almost a once in a lifetime occasion.

*Malcolm & Christine Allsop  
(Malcolm is priest in Vienna)*

### COMINGS AND GOINGS

It is planned that whenever a new priest starts work in the UK, or a priest in the UK retires, a few lines from them would be of interest. We start off with Peter Holman and Carmel Iveson.

#### COMING TO EDINBURGH

The name's Holman. Peter Holman. I was baptised into The Christian Community 55 years ago, ordained 25 years ago and moved from South Africa to Edinburgh in the summer of 2018.

After almost twenty one years near the tip of Africa, ten in Camphill Village Alpha where our four children grew up among Nguni cows and sandy molehills, and a little over ten in Hillcrest, Durban, where I served an active little congregation in the subtropics, it was wonderful to arrive in the UK in the lush month of May when hedgerows and blossoms were in exuberant bloom.

Together with my wife Judy I was very warmly welcomed into the congregation at Napier Road, where we quickly settled in. Carers were found to help with Judy's dementia and I have steadily found my way into the work. Unaccus-



Carmel Iveson's farewell (and Selina Horn's welcome), Bristol, Sunday November 10th, 2019

tomed, long summer evenings enabled me to explore Edinburgh's historic parts by bike, while my weekly day off has given ample opportunity to walk in the Pentland Hills and beyond. I also visit the thriving Camphill community at Loch Arthur.

My new colleague, Paul Newton, soon became my ex-colleague as he was unexpectedly called to the USA, but the community rallied round with Whitsun warmth and devotion to support the main areas of my work, including our new church building process.

I look to the future and life's challenges with good cheer. Following my formative priest years in South Africa (and two before that in Freiburg, Germany) I feel I have something to contribute in Scotland, and can truly say that my work here is especially enjoyable and fulfilling.

*Peter Holman*

**RETIREMENT**

On Sunday 3rd November, one week after the consecration of the new church in Stroud, the congregation was again joined by Rev Tom Ravetz, our Lenker/regional co-ordinator. This time it was to officially mark my retirement from working as a congregational priest. After my ordination in 2001, my first sending

was to Botton Village, then to Buckfastleigh in Devon, and finally the last six years were in Stroud. Each sending was very different, challenging and rewarding and I am very grateful that the last decades of my working life—I was 51 when I was ordained—were filled with such rich and fulfilling experiences.

What does it mean for a priest to retire? Tom spoke of this question in a short address to the congregation before my last celebration of the Act of Consecration as one of Stroud's congregational priests. An ordained person remains a priest until they die; remains a member of the circle of priests, attending synods and so on—but a retired priest is freed of congregational responsibilities which include soul care, teaching and congregational decision making. If needed, and if their health is good enough, they can help in the congregation or elsewhere in The Christian Community worldwide.

Each time a priest is 'sent' to a congregation they are inducted by the Lenker—who formally introduces them into their work in that congregation. And now, just as there is an official beginning to congregational work—an official ending—a releasing from congregational work has also recently been introduced.

*Carol Iverson*

## *Faite Romhat— Welcome to Clare so Fair!*

### Guest Rooms at The Christian Community, Co Clare, Ireland

Tuamgraney is situated near Scariff and Lough Derg, north of Limerick and forty minutes from Shannon airport. Just a good hour away are the Atlantic coast and Cliffs of Moher, the Burren, Galway etc.

Bed and Breakfast (£/Euro 25 pppn) and special rates for longer stays and self catering (all rooms are on the ground floor).

For further enquiries and bookings contact us on  
(00353) 061 640 967 or 087 2185560



## The Origins of a Community

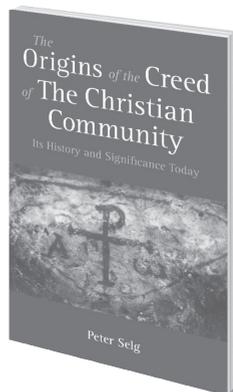


### *Tracing the roots*

This book offers an insightful and informative overview of how, in the time leading up to the founding of The Christian Community, Rudolf Steiner formulated both the creed itself and its founding principles.

Author Peter Selg goes on to examine the history of Christian creeds – including the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed – and compares them to each other, before exploring the ongoing significance of the creed for The Christian Community today.

The Origins of the Creed of the Christian Community | 80 pages  
paperback | 978-178250-612-6 | RRP: £9.99 | OFFER: £7.99



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