

REPORTS FROM THE REGIONS

EVENTS – FINANCES – FUTURE PLANS

NO. 93 MICHAELMAS 2021

Bavaria

Nothing new to report from Bavaria. We wish everyone a powerful Michaelmas!

Dorothea Humérez

Great Britain-Ireland

In many conversations with colleagues and members, it has been striking that for many of us these last months have been a time of deepening. In regard to the Act of Consecration of Man, this may have come about through needing to stay away, but noticing that it was possible to take part from afar; it may have come about through experiencing the reality of the communion even when we were not coming forward to receive it; it may have been too as we noticed how sorely the world needed the values that we live by when we celebrate together. This September marks 99 years since the founding of The Christian Community in a world that was going through social and political upheaval. It is good to feel that the relevance and vitality of our task have not diminished over the last 99 years.

Following discussion in the Synod, we took the decision not to plan an Annual Meeting this year due to the uncertain situation regarding travel and accommodation. After a two-year gap, we hope to be able to meet again next year, the centenary year of the foundation of The Christian Community. In a region such as ours, where most congregations are relatively far apart, it can be a challenge to extend our awareness to the whole Region. Nevertheless, our Annual Meetings have often given rise to rewarding and deepening experiences.

We welcomed Nataliia Shatna to Forest Row in September. Nataliia was born in Ukraine. She was ordained in March this year. Paul Corman will be helping out in Stroud for the autumn and winter, whilst we continue to look for a second priest for Stroud. Selina Horn (Forest Row) is on maternity leave.

Progress on our translation work has been carrying on rather more slowly than we hoped, due to the extraordinary circumstances we have been in. Following discussion in the Synod, we now have a version that replaces Thee and Thy with You and Your, which we expect to sign off at our synod in the autumn. We are expecting to adopt this version in Advent. We have left one question open to live with over the summer, namely the opening words of the Lord's Prayer. We are living with three possible translations, and we decided to sound out our members about these possibilities. We hope that we will be able to inform our discussions at the Synod in October with the feelings and insights of the members.

Tom Ravetz

Netherlands and Flanders

Maintaining soul-sense

It took some getting used to for all the children to enjoy each other's company again after a year of online classes at school. "You managed to find the right balance between people who care about social distancing and participants who care less." The leaders of the children's camps received this compliment after they were able to organise them in the summer with a lot of ingenuity. Measures for health protection, high water and strong winds, all elements were braved and nine wonderful camps were held.

In the congregations, too, we are increasingly leaning towards dealing with restrictions in a sensible way for the sake of our health. After a period of restraint and reflection, new initiatives are being unleashed. In the autumn, a lecture cycle on the 'Future of our Earth' will be launched, discussions on a new website will take place and a regional members' day will be held. It needs strength in our souls at a time where crises follows crisis in rapid succession to keep coming together and to keep welcoming change.

Philia: I will offer from world spirits,
That the light of their being
Receive the sense of the soul,
And the sound of their words
Unbind the spirit's hearing,
That it may not be extinguished,
What was awakened
On soul paths
In human lives.
Guardian of the Threshold, tenth image

Laurien van der Laan de Vries

North America

Nothing new to report.

Craig Wiggins

North- and Northwest Germany

There has not been a report from the Northern Germany region (Schleswig-Holstein/Hamburg/-Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) for a while. Over the last two years there have been some changes within the priesthood of the congregations: Friederike Waizenegger from Hamburg-Blankenese and Rasa Kabailaite from Kiel have taken up new sendings in 2019, and Gerrit Balonier from Hamburg-Mitte became priest-emeritus at the end of 2020. Newly appointed to the congregations were Annette Semrau to Kiel, Martina Alexi to Greifswald and Tiu in't Veld to Schwerin, as well as Luke Barr to Hamburg-Mitte. There was a major change in the Schwerin-Rostock-Greifswald affiliated congregations during this time: In addition to Dorothea Wolber, who is priest in Rostock, T in't Veld has now been seconded to Schwerin and M Alexi to Greifswald, and thus for the first time these congregations have their own priests working there. This was made possible by the decision to fill these positions as half-time employment, as these congregations are unable to support a full-time position. In this way, however, the development and the desire for more independence was met, and this has a very positive effect on the congregational life.

The "meeting of all people active in our congregations" on Ascension Day at Lake Mözen, which has almost become a tradition, had to be cancelled again in 2020 and 2021 because of the Corona situation. In the coming years, we will try to continue this four-day meeting, which is regularly attended by about 70 to 80 people.

It was different with the meeting on Gotland in Sweden in the summer: This meeting ('In the Footsteps of the Baltic Mysteries'), which has regularly taken place since 2015 with participants from a wide variety of congregations and all regions (Scandinavia, Northern Germany, Baltic States, Poland, Russia) around the Baltic Sea, was also held in 2020 ("Out of the Powerlessness of Time. ../Utifrån tidens vanmakt..") with 40 people and 2021 ("Healing as grace/Läkedom som Nåd") with almost 80 people. In times of Corona, these were incredibly enriching and light-filled encounters.

After the original large region of Northern Germany had been divided in 2017/18 through the appointment of two lenkers (Joachim Paulus in Bremen and Christian Bartholl in Hamburg), a regional meeting was only held once a year as a corporate meeting, previously there were two. Since then, in place of the second meeting, invitations were sent out for so-called regional meetings, where the focus is not on dealing with formal regulations, but on dealing with a current topic of our society in addition to reports from our region and other regional bodies. For example, the most recent meeting took place on 18 September in Lübeck with 45 people attending on the topic of: "Living and Let live – the Basic Maxim of the Free Human Being".

It is nice to note that such events are not only attended by the usual participants of the corporate meetings, but really speak to a wider circle of members and friends.

Last but not least, we would like to report that the conversion and renovation work on the building at Mittelweg 13 in Hamburg, which was home to the Hamburg Seminary from 2001 to 2016, and which had guest rooms and a priest's flat on the 4th floor, has been completed. The 4th floor, including the roof, was completely rebuilt and three flats were incorporated. In the course of the renovations, the basement was also remodelled (as well as the staircase) and refurbished according to current fire safety regulations. The façade of the building was cleaned and renovated. Financing was provided by various loans from congregations or institutions connected to the Christian Community. The additional rental income is intended to add to the contributions to the stipends for the priests in the future.

Thomas Nayda

no message from:

Australia and New Zealand
Nordic Countries

Central Germany
Russia South America

Central Europe
West Germany

Japan

Southern Africa

Interestingly, most of our communities have begun to re-look at their constitutions and re-assess their relevance to their current situation. Particularly in Johannesburg the view is also to bring in the aspect of Threefoldness and how it is currently endeavouring to be expressed. There is also a restructuring of trustee bodies going on, mostly age-related. It seems younger congregants are reluctant to commit to such voluntary long-term roles. Part of this looking at the earthly side of things is reflected in questioning the fact that we are dependent on being landlords of rental property.

Across the Region we are responding to the need to de-centralize, which is evoked through the see-saw of restrictions. In preparation for 2022 and looking forward the topic of the 'Reappearance of Christ' has been picked up and small groups form to meet and study this, often using Hans-Werner Schroeder's booklet. The endeavour is to come from head to heart and into experiencing how this reappearance manifests, also in the sacraments and in life.

Reingard Knausenberger for the regional synod

Switzerland, Southwest Europe

Two years ago, the summer conferences, which play a major role in each of the Swiss countries, were under threat in Spain and Italy. During their respective founding phases, it was the annual

meeting which was the driving force for the founding in both countries. In addition, there are members and friends in the various countries and in France who live far away from any congregation and who therefore are particularly looking forward to the meetings in summer. There will be alternative programmes on offer for children and/or young people, so that families can also take part. However, a certain fatigue had set in, and as there were only a few registrations it was decided to give it a break.

However, by now due to the pandemic, the desire for personal encounters had become so strong that, for example, in Italy there were 135 participants this year. Many applications were unsuccessful and for the coming year the wish to have two summer conferences in succession was expressed. In Spain, too, it was no longer a question that a meeting would take place and, France too reported a renewed impulse and high quality of the meeting. In Italy and Spain, suitable recreational accommodation is being sought in restful places e. g. mountain region or by the sea. In France, the meeting place has for a long time been at the youth seminary Foyer Michaël in Saint-Menoux in the heart of the country.

A tentative start was made in Portugal with a small children's camp, lasting several days and, an extended congregational weekend during the summer. In Switzerland, too, children's holiday camps and family retreats were held at our conference centre in Walkringen, well attended and largely unaffected by the pandemic. Soon to follow is the "Reflective Hiking" in the mountains, which has become very much a tradition.

In the four "romanischen" countries of our region, in-depth seminars for young people and young adults will soon begin, not only but also with the aim of maybe recruiting new candidates for the priest seminary. In France in particular, the shortage of priests is dramatic, with only three priests still in fulltime work, that's fewer than ever before, apart from the beginnings 75 years ago!

Michael Bruhn

Southwest Germany

Nothing new to report.

Hellmut Voigt

Wuerttemberg

There will be changes in two congregations in the autumn: Marcel Frank will take up work in Schwäbisch Hall, and Alik Kristalli and Johannes Roth in Stuttgart-Mitte.

The regional Michaelmas conference continues the series of "100-year events" and is dedicated to the core sentences of Christianity (Credo): **Shaping the Future in Times of Upheaval – The Creative Power in Christian Confession.** Lectures, sermons, conversations and art will bring us together to allow for diverse encounters and exchange. The conference will take place from 15-17 October in Stuttgart-Mitte. More information can be found on the website of the region and from the Stuttgart-Mitte congregation.

Martin Merckens

Foundation

The Foundation (Stiftung die Christengemeinschaft in Deutschland) has the purpose of promoting "The Christian Community – Movement for Religious Renewal" in all countries of the world. To this end, contributions flow in from many regions of the world, with which the expenses for the Circle of Seven, the Upper Steering Group (Oberlenkung) and the rooms used by them in Gubener Straße in Berlin are financed. Contributions are also made toward the expansion and the support in many regions and congregations, and for the training to become priests of the Christian Community.

In addition, there are many donations from members and friends, which support individual causes or our expansion in general. All this has been supported and organised by Petra Wilms in the

Foundation's office in Berlin for many years. She has been involved in a wonderful way and has maintained many personal contacts with congregations, members, friends and donors. I would like to take this opportunity to express my great thanks to her for her prudence, drive, patience and tireless commitment to the Christian Community. Petra Wilms will go into well-deserved retirement at the end of 2021 – and I am therefore looking for a suitable successor for the Foundation in Berlin. If you are interested in this work (40 % part-time) or know a suitable person, please feel free to contact me: foundation@christengemeinschaft.org.

Thomas Nayda

The Sozialwerk in Berlin

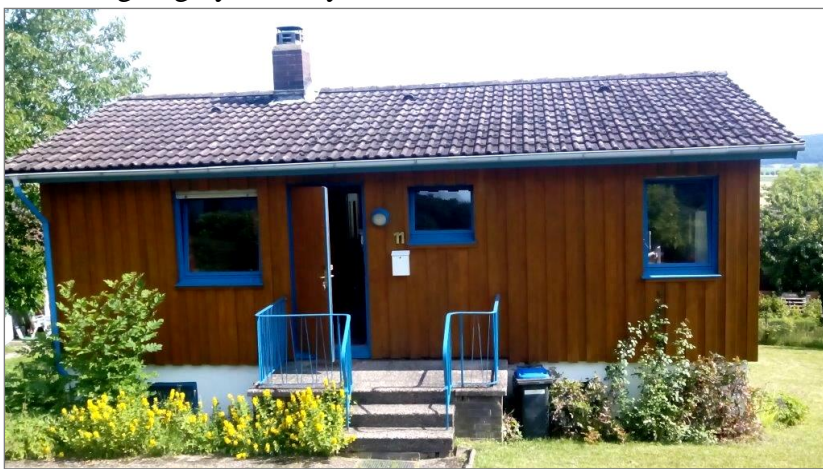
Ruhrstr. 11, 10709 Berlin offers a very special place of recuperation: There is a small holiday house in **31195 Lamspringe, Hellegrund 11**.



Years ago a little holiday house was bequeathed to our Sozialwerk for “members and priests of the congregation in need of recuperation” in the hamlet Lamspringe, in a very charming relaxing countryside of the Vorharz. Lamspringe is situated in the county Hildesheim in the southern Lower Saxony, it is an officially approved place of recuperation near the Heber, and it is member of the region Leinebergland. In the neighbourhood are Goslar, the old diocesan town Hildesheim, the saline steam and mud baths Bad Salzdetfurth, Bad Gandersheim the town of St Roswitha, and

Alfels/Leine, all of them with rich cultural offers. An excursion into the Harz nearby is worthwhile in every season of the year.

Lamspringe is not far from the motorway A7 (exit at Bockenem or Rhüden/Harz), the major roads B 3, B 64 and B 243. The nearest stations are [Bodenburg](#), [Freden/Leine](#), [Bad Gandersheim](#) and Hildesheim, where you'll have Intercity connections. The holiday house is a little distance outside of the village. You do your shopping in the little town; walking there takes approximately half an hour, going by car only few minutes.



Directly around the holiday house there is a superb wood of beeches, which invites you with its tidy paths to go for a walk. The garden, 600 m² big, can be used as playground, grill place or to bask in the sun, but as a working place for amateur gardeners as well. The little house with a living area of about 60 m² has a fully equipped kitchen, bathroom, a large living room with a balcony and a panoramic view

into an enchanting countryside, a children's room with a step-ladder bed and a bedroom for the parents. A heating system for off-peak electricity and a fireplace stove provides warmth.

The entire house is comfortably furnished. For your own requirements you may bring with you bedclothes, terry towelling, and tea towels. To cover the running costs we ask for € 50 per day; at your departure we would like you to do a final cleaning, which can be dropped by paying € 35. If we succeeded in arousing your interest and you want to spend your holidays there, you may contact Mrs. Petra Wilms by phone 030/213 24 08 or e-mail petra-wilms@t-online.de.

no message from:

Körperschaftsverband (KV) **Seminaries** **Haus auf dem Berge**
Haus Freudenberg **Treuhandverwaltung zur Förderung der Christengemeinschaft e.V.**
Verband der Sozialwerke

Translated by Gabriele Kuhn – many thanks to her!

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