

# Newsletter

**No. 57—Saint John's 2019**

---

## LETTER FROM THE LENKER

We are looking forward to the celebrations around the consecration of the new church in Stroud, which will take place as part of our Annual Meeting from October 18–20 this year (see separate article). When we consecrate an altar picture or new vestments, we imbue the objects themselves with the spiritual power to bless the work that is to be performed with their help. The consecration of a church has a different quality. We do not bless the bricks and mortar; rather, we call on the elemental forces of the four points of the compass, asking them to be at work in this place. The building that we have designed and built with such immense efforts is important as a focal point of forces that converge here from the whole universe.

What will we do after Stroud has been completed? Our first task is to repay the loans that we have taken out in order to complete the building work, which we will do through the sale of two sizeable properties elsewhere in the region. The Edinburgh congregation is hoping to build a chapel, but they plan to finance this by selling one part of their property to pay for the building of a chapel and community space on the other part. We do not have any further plans for major building projects. However, at a recent synod the priests gave themselves the challenge of thinking of what we would do if we received a major lega-

cy after our debts had been paid. One area that we looked at was the buildings that we are using now. Many of our churches and chapels were completed over twenty years ago, and they are showing signs of wear. We also need to make investments in people: we have supported a number of students through their trainings with loans and grants, and our Training Fund is nearly empty. We need to support priests in their continuous professional development, and we have also made a commitment where possible to support priests' children in Waldorf School education.

A group of priests and lay people is meeting to explore issues around gender and sexuality. In another region the first marriage service has been held for someone we were aware had transitioned from one gender to another. Does this make a difference to how we say the words of our Sacrament of Marriage, which makes such a clear distinction between man and woman? What do we mean when we refer to 'man' and 'woman' in that service? And do these questions have a bearing on the question of the blessing service that we have offered gay couples for some time? We are not expecting to find definitive, dogmatic answers. We hope to start an exploration that can draw on current thinking and accounts of experiences, all of which we hope to understand with the help of anthroposophy. *Tom Ravetz*

## ANNUAL COMMUNITY MEETING AND CONSECRATION OF THE NEW CHURCH IN STROUD, OCTOBER 18–20

*The LORD who created  
must wish us to create  
And employ our creation  
again in His service*

T S Eliot,  
from Choruses from The Rock

This year, the Annual Meeting of our Region will be combined with the Consecration of our new church in Stroud.

The programme will include the last service in the old chapel followed by its de-consecration on Saturday 19th, and the Consecration of the new church followed by the first Act of Consecration of Man in this space on Sunday 20th. There will be dramatic performance by our lenker Tom Ravetz and Christward Kröner, Oberlenker. In 2022 The Christian Community will celebrate the centenary of it's founding and we will be

turning to the past, present and future of our Movement for Religious Renewal as part of the week-end. There will also be time to meet and thank the architect and structural engineer and also to hear from them some of the background to the design of the new church. We are still working on the programme and application forms, and will send them out once they are ready. We have a list of local friends and members who offer accommodation at very reasonable rates. The list can be sent to you if you send a request to Paul Abel in our Stroud office by email, phone or post on

ccstroud@talktalk.net  
+44 1453 762926

The Christian Community  
73 Cainscross Road  
GL5 4HB, Stroud  
England

### A new church in Stroud

The congregation in Stroud, England, has been working steadily for more than ten years to bring to realisation the building of a new church. The existing church and community spaces that were built in 1968 under the guidance of Rev. Michael Tapp have served us very well but are no longer adequate for our growing community. The existing chapel seats 76 whilst the new one will be able to seat 120. In addition we will have a larger office, foyer and vestry as well as purpose-built wake room and consultation



room. The old chapel will be converted into a multi-purpose community hall. There is also an old two bed flat which has already been altered to provide a larger kitchen, further meeting and storage rooms as well as space for our Parent and Child group. The old vestry will become a guest room, which will make it easier for us to accommodate community helpers in the future. The new church with its larger facilities will allow us to serve not only our local congregation but also the region, by hosting larger conferences, synods and ordinations in the future. In that sense we also consider it a regional centre.

Nic Pople (architect) and David Tasker (structural engineer) have come up with a pioneering design that already looks very impressive, a few months before completion. The work began in July 2018 and is planned for completion by the middle of August 2019. The entire structure is made of self-supporting cross-laminate timber elements. Effectively it is an enormous three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle that had to be swung and mounted into place piece by piece by a great big crane. The interior of the chapel as well as several other inner spaces are exposed wood which has a beautiful effect enhancing the complex angular geometry of the design. The striking geometry of the vaulted inner roof space, which rises to 9m at the highest point, is reflected on the outside with multiple planes of cedar shingles all angled to each other with many more ridges and valleys than one might normally expect on a roof, but which adds enormously to the interest and overall wakefulness of the building. A specialist roofing company was needed to achieve the final form.

The entire project will have cost us close to £3m once the last bills are paid.

No small amount indeed, but one that reflects the value that the community places on our precious sacramental work and the strength of community faith and will that lives behind this project, as well as the engineering challenges that arose from building on our highly constrained site. The funds have come through the sale of property, several legacies and many, many fund-raising ventures and generous donations from members and friends over the past years. In addition we have also received many low or zero interest loans from members, friends and three German regions to help us with bridging the final cash-flow gap. An expected property sale and a large legacy will enable us to repay all the loans within the next two to three years. If you would like to donate or lend us money to help us to reach the finishing line, please contact Paul Abel in our Stroud office by email, phone or post on

ccstroud@talktalk.net  
+44 1453 762926

The Christian Community  
73 Cainscross Road  
Stroud, GL5 4HB  
England

After the handover in August we will still have work to do with decorating and installing various fittings and furnishings, but we are confident that everything will be ready for the grand opening on the week-end of October 18-20, 2019.

*Aaron Mirkin  
(on behalf of my colleagues  
Carmel Iveson and Selina Horn,  
Paul Abel, community secretary and  
project administrator, as well as our  
tireless and enthusiastic  
Development Group)*

**NEW GARDEN STUDIO ACCOMMODATION**

We are extremely proud to be able to offer three new, exciting rooms to our guests at Temple Lodge. These unique and elegant rooms have been designed and purpose built so that they overlook our lovely garden, giving guests the feeling that they're occupying a tastefully furnished en-suite Garden Room. They are situated far enough away for privacy from the main house but close enough to walk across the newly paved pathways to the dining room, where you can enjoy a delicious organic breakfast. The breakfast is of course included in our very reasonable room tariff.

The rooms are provided with Wi-fi, a desk and chair to work at, and a com-

fortable armchair. Of course, the other little extras, like tea and coffee are provided, while assorted snacks are available for purchase.

When next booking your London accommodation with us please do enquire if one of the Garden Studio Rooms is available. If you're able to book one it will certainly enhance your stay in London, making it more memorable and enjoyable.

Our opening discounted price valid for stays before June 30 is:

Double occupancy: £110

Single occupancy: £90

PS. The landscaping of our new-look garden is still in progress.

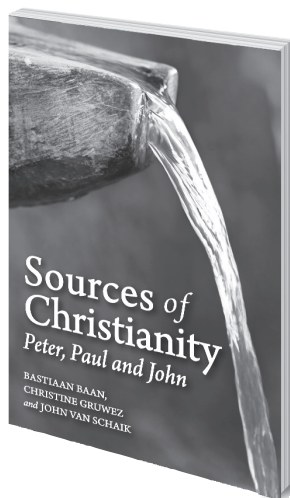
## Sources of Christianity

*Tracing the beginnings...*

This fascinating book paints a vivid picture of the three apostles, Peter, Paul and John, exploring their similarities as well as their significant differences, and demonstrating their continuing relevance today for understanding the beginnings of Christianity.

The authors discuss the pre-Christian context and finish by tracing the esoteric streams of Petrine, Pauline and Johannine Christianity in the first few centuries after Christ. Ultimately, they demonstrate that all three are needed to truly approach the reality of Jesus Christ.

Sources of Christianity | 224 pages | paperback  
978-178250-429-0 | RRP: £14.99 | OFFER: £11.99



 Floris  
Books

Sign up to our mailing list for special offers  
and a FREE BOOK with every order.

Visit [www.florisbooks.co.uk](http://www.florisbooks.co.uk) to claim your 20% discount with offer code PR0619

Offer valid until 31/08/2019

SAVE  
20%