

REPORTS FROM REGIONS

EVENTS – FINANCES – FUTURE PLANS

NO. 75 EASTER 2017

Australia and New Zealand

no message

Austria and South-Eastern Europe

no message

Czech Republic

no message

Bavaria

Nothing new to report.

Dorothea Humérez

Central Germany

Much to our delight Sebastian Otto was sent to Darmstadt from the group of newly ordained priests. Since the two priests, Gisela Thriemer and Michael Gerasch, handle many additional tasks, more support was urgently requested.

Albrecht Schwenk

Eastern Europe

no message

Japan

no message

Great Britain-Ireland

We were very glad to be able to host three ordinations in Forest Row on 11th and 12th March. Following their ordinations in Forest Row, Siobhan Porter will be introduced to the Stourbridge congregation on 19th and Selina Horn will be introduced to the Stroud congregation on 26th March. Both these situations can benefit from a new priest who will be partly carried by a grant from central funds. Stourbridge has taken on visits to Botton Village, as well as regular visits to Ilkeston and Manchester. Stroud will soon begin building its new church.

We were able to support Siobhan and Selina from our Training Fund. This fund supports students from the second year of their studies on the understanding that if they are not ordained, they will pay back what they have received. A few years ago, we received a legacy for this purpose, and this has meant that we have been able to support a number of students over the years.

Ute König and Tom Ravetz held a very encouraging retreat in County Clare in January to which all those who help to carry our work in the Republic were invited. There was a mood of real commitment to supporting our community in changing times.

Tom Ravetz

Netherlands and Flanders

In the region many are consumed by the preparations for the International Whitsun congress and looking forward to meeting many readers of the information in 's-Hertogenbosch face to face.

Ellis Booi, Netherlands

North-America

Early in the morning on February 14, I got a call with the shocking news that Rev. Richard Dancey had passed away at his home in Silver Spring, Maryland. He had just come down with the flu two days ago, and his wife, Margaret, lamented that when he gets the flu he usually gets really sick. He was having trouble breathing and was experiencing pain in his shoulder, lungs and chest. Margaret called emergency services, but by the time they arrived he had already passed and they were not able to revive him. Over the last years Richard had several moments where he was in a very precarious health crisis, taking him to the hospital in Chicago. Maybe what he experienced in those moments was a help for him at his death, as he was pulled away from this world so suddenly. It can take awhile for the soul to realize what has happened.

I know that I, and many, many people will profoundly miss what Richard brought into our circle and into the world. Above all else was his lifelong practice of meeting every situation, every person, with an affirming, loving and noncritical attitude. From the time I first met him in 1982 as a helper on a confirmation retreat until a phone call four days before his death, I can't remember Richard ever saying a disparaging or dismissive comment about another person, and I got the sense that this was something he worked with, and was not just given to him. Over the course of his priesthood, Richard worked in Wuppertal, Philadelphia, Chicago (at the seminary and in the congregation), and finally in Washington, D.C. His biography will be published in an upcoming issue of *Perspectives*.

On another note, we are happy to have a guest priest from Germany, Jörg Kirschmann, visiting and assisting for a few months in the Devon, Pennsylvania congregation.

Oliver Steinrueck

Northern Germany

In Northern Germany, the Regional Council has for many years been pursuing the goal of providing housing for priests and employees by means of loans from members and friends, who are made available for a certain time by members and friends to the so-called House Fund. This is above all to ensure that in the long term a part of the maintenance of our priests and priestesses in Germany is secured.

The Hanover congregation, 25 years after the ordination of the church of St. Michael, was able to pay back the remaining member loans of almost one million euros, which still existed as a liability from the construction period, due to a favorable sale of a residential property. Some loaners wanted to make the money available to the Christian community and those funds were contractually transferred to the "Norddeutscher Hausfonds" (housing fund). In order to free the borrowing communities from the interest charge for priests' homes, we were able to agree with most of the loaners that the funds for the house fund will be left to us without interest. In cases where the loaner was not happy with this agreement, the loan was repaid. In the building of the Christian Community in Hanover, a second priests' residence was created, which could be financed through the housing fund.

The Ottersberg congregation has had its own chapel for several years. In spring 2017 a parsonage was added next to the chapel on the parish ground. The funds are also made available by the housing fund. Other communities, which have already taken up financing pastoral living spaces this way are Göttingen, Braunschweig, Bielefeld, Hamburg-Mitte, Volksdorf, Kiel and Lübeck.

On the 4. and 5. of March, priest ordinations took place in the Johanneskirche in Hamburg-Mitte. The priests' seminary in Hamburg and the community had prepared the premises with great

commitment for this festival. The organist of the church, Andreas Rondthaler, composed some music for organ and choir especially for this event. Thomas Prange, the current church practitioner, gathered community members in a short space of time and launched a choir so the priestly ordination could be accompanied musically. The many helpers have made it a wonderful and successful festive weekend.

After the ordinations we are now pleased to welcome Ms. Tabea Hattenhauer in Blankenese and Ms. Birgit Häckermann in Rendsburg as new priests. In Rendsburg, Alexandra Matschinsky was able to substitute the parting priests Sabine and Michael Rosenbruch at short notice. The Rosenbruchs were sent to Wuppertal at the end of 2016. Earlier in autumn 2016 we had some new arrivals in our region: Ms. Edda Haensel in Lübeck, Ms. Sophia Gerhold in Flensburg and Ms. Helena Otterspeer in Osnabrück.

The community of Bremen was able to erect a barrier-free community hall within the framework of the housing project “Zukunftsräume” (future space). This project has been discussed for many years, always re-planned, discarded, and again re-taken. In the last three years, a plan of action has finally been worked out: The community is renting its own property next to the church to a non-profit-making gGmbH, which has a multi-storey dwelling-house with apartments on this property. On the ground floor of this building a large hall has been built, which is now available to the community. The congregation is gradually designing the hall with its own financial resources and donations. The inauguration of this communal hall was celebrated on 22. October 2016.

Thomas Nayda

Romania

The preparations for our founding party in Bucharest from 6. to 8. October 2017 are making progress. We are very happy about the many guests who have already registered. You can find information on our website www.comunitateacrestinilor.ro or by contacting Monica Culda, phone + 40-264-45 20 00.

Monica Culda

Northern Countries

no message

Southern Africa

no message

South America

no message

South-West Germany

Nothing new to report.

Hellmut Voigt

Switzerland, Italy, France, Spain/Portugal

Since mid-March 2017, Michael Bruhn has now completely taken over the responsibility for the region from Walther Giezendanner. In the course of the six-month handover period, Italy was added as the last sub-area. For the time being, Hungary remains under the leadership of W. Giezendanner and therefore has its own column in these *reports*. The work in Portugal is still in its baby-shoes; S. Hecker from Munich visits the group of interested people three times yearly for a few days.

Christine Jost

Frankreich: The congregation in Paris is very pleased to welcome the newly ordained priest Philippe Aubertin as their new priest on 19 March.

The construction in Colmar is progressing well, the walls and ceilings are all now poured-in-place, the last, being on the top floor, the floor of the chancel. Now the carpentry work will proceed

quickly (everything has already been prepared in the studio) and many other craftsmen will join, so the deadline for the inauguration (16. to 17. December 2017) can be well met.

Christine Krüger

What happens in our communities in Spain? In Madrid, the “headquarters” of the Christian community, in Alicante and Barcelona, visited by a priest once a month, in Bilbao and Valencia, receiving priestly visits a few times a year? Movement, desire to continue, new families and adults who show interest, reaching out to the outside through lectures and seminars in non-anthroposophical circles... this being a sketch of the scenario that lives as the impulse moving the Christian community in Spain. In October 2017 it will be seven years in existence. With the goal of staying healthy, keeping the balance between all the tasks we face, being vigilant for what is happening around us, allowing ourselves to let go at times, to not lose the sense of humor and remember to enjoy the privilege – that sums it up in short.

Madrid, or more precisely, Torrelodones, located 35 km outside of Madrid, is enriched by the woodworking and dolls’ workshop, which are visited by mothers and fathers. A practical way to stand firm in the world! And furthermore? Yes, in Alicante, the community has now finally got a room, inaugurated during the visit of Michael Bruhn in February. The special thing about it is to be able to hang up a sign that bears witness to the existence of the Christian community... This is a big step that Madrid has not been able to do up to now. Another thing to mention: This year will be our holiday camp for young people aged 14 and over in Clare, Ireland from 20. to 31. July. And for the first time, we will offer a meeting for families with children from 21. to 27. August during our summer activities.

Nicole Gilabert Bernard, Francisco Coronado Castillo

West-Germany

no message

Wuerttemberg

In the Stuttgart-Mitte congregation, location for many priestly ordinations and international synods, planning and preparatory work for a major renovation of the large chancel has been progressing well so the estimated time to start building is early summer this year. In addition, a building application for an extension of an elevator to the church building of many floors will be handed in.

From the circle of newly-ordained priests this year, we warmly welcome Aliko Kristalli for the congregation of Schwäbisch Hall and Robert Katz in the congregation of Stuttgart-Möhringen.

Martin Merckens

Hungary

At the time we jointly prepared and carried out the church foundation in 2011 together with Gwendolyn Fischer, Lenker Walther Giezendanner, leaders of the Christian community and our employees, I was the only Hungarian speaking priest. Thus, the question of who could follow in my footsteps has occupied our minds a lot: Who, as second Hungarian-Speaker, would be able to take priesthood in Hungary to the next level and, above all, make sure that community life can unfold to its fullest by having at least two priests living in the country. This applies to city communities as well but is most important when community life is to reach and embrace a whole country, as is the case in Hungary. Hence, when in February 2016, Anna Bozóki was ordained as a new priestess in Stuttgart, we celebrated this very enjoyable, important event with a large group from Hungary.

In December we discussed the significance of a new stage in community development at a parish assembly, and encouraged the strengthening of the carrying capacity so that Ms. Bozóki, as the second Hungarian-speaking priestess, could be sent to work in Hungary. The number of regularly

contributing families has risen to 100, thus one-third of the budget is covered. We still need the support of the Circle of Friends and are grateful for all donations.

Again and again we experience how one impulse opens the door to another and creates new initiatives. In autumn 2015, we took part in the meeting of the Eastern European communities in Tbilisi/Georgia. The motto “The Face of Peace” and the contents were so stimulating that a working group was formed in Budapest, with whom we read and discuss the works of Vladimir Solovyov every month. One of the initiators, Zsuzsa Vincze has been studying at the University of Solovyov since then. On the basis of this work Andrej Ziltsov (priest in Odessa) gave a well-attended lecture on Solovyov in March and gave further impetus to the working group.

Several people had their first contact with the congregation through a gospel circle, which could work out of its own motivation without priestly accompaniment. Since the foundation, seven such circles have been established in the country, for which we organize a country meeting in the summer, before the beginning of the family holidays.

The theme of the last family leisure was “From fear to trust”, origin of fear, encounter with fear and the transformation of fear in trust, in loving capacity towards other people and the spiritual world. We developed this motto in the autumn of 2016 at the meeting in Szombathely/western Hungary, where, for the fourth time, we organized a conference with Gwendolyn Fischer. Most of the participants came from Örség/Ispánk, where Ms. Fischer gave monthly talks on various religious questions. It was very perceptible how the work of the past years has formed a community of fate, which can become the seed for a Western community.

We priests are approached by Waldorf kindergartens, schools and other anthroposophically oriented communities to give lectures every month. Two years ago Gwendolyn Fischer gave lectures on the spiritual background of Christian festivals. In the organization of the Hungarian Waldorf Association, 120 participants, mostly Waldorf teachers and parents, took part. Since then, several Waldorf teachers’ colleges have been working more actively with the topic and are asking for further deepening.

It is important for us to maintain contact with other communities. The meeting in Tbilisi also strengthened our relations with the Georgian and Ukrainian communities. In 2016 we had visits from both regions. Ukrainian youths have sung wonderfully in our chapel and touched on the challenges and community-building fruits of their lives. Our friends from Georgia have talked to us about the Kolchian Mysteries.

In September 2016, we visited a group of Ms. Bozóki in Wuppertal, where she worked. In the course of a beautiful summer festival, we met the congregation of Wuppertal and new friendships emerged. During this year’s Easter week, a group from Wuppertal will visit us to get to know Hungary and our community.

For more than two years, the Romanian community and us have been visiting each other, once in Cluj (Klausenburg/Kolozsvár in Hungary) and another time in Budapest. The Romanian community is close to being officially founded and we have recently come to life as a congregation. This also makes our encounters, the shared experience of the Hungarian and Romanian Act of consecration of man, very valuable. In addition, the common story tells us that Cluj is still a living part of Hungarian culture, and that Hungary is also part of the Romanian community. We are very pleased to be able to celebrate the founding of the Christian community in Romania in October.

Imre Silye

Foundation

Ms. M. E. Förster passed away in February. For many years she translated the *Reports of the Regions* on a voluntary basis into English. We are very grateful for this enormous support to the Foundation.

This issue is translated by Michaela Cramer but we are looking for someone who could do the translations for future issues so that the *Reports of the Regions* are continuously available in English

too. If you are willing and able to do this, please contact Ms. Katja Orłowski via e-mail: leitung@christengemeinschaft.org or phone: +49-30-609 785-99.

Seminaries/Hamburg

The Hamburg seminary for priests and the community “Hamburg Mitte” are still basking in the afterglow of the ordination of priests, which was attended by the “greater Christian community” at the beginning of March. Full-time students as well as part-time students, community members and friends, members of staff and many other helpers have made it possible to make this major event a success. The project choir initiated by one of the trainees, Thomas Prange – with singers from the groups mentioned above, as well as music enthusiasts from all Hamburg communities – was directly involved in the consecration process with a choral work created by Andreas Rondthaler for this occasion. We are grateful for the fact that our “Hamburg candidates” can now begin their journeys into priesthood in the congregations they have been sent to.

During these weeks we are reflecting on our first year in the new premises and the “study for professionals”. With regards to the new training course, the cautious expectations have so far been fulfilled more than positively: The intensity and joy the students are approaching their third presentation of study work with, makes us once again feel so grateful about the way our new study concept has been adopted with ease and how creatively it has been implemented. At the end of the priestly ordinations first meetings of the seminary leaders with the mentors of our accompanying students took place. These meetings will be concluded at the Synod in June.

As much as the new spaces and close proximity to the community have become familiar, the feeling of being with the two different student groups is still new and requires special attention with regards to workload and pressure on the staff members and seminary leaders.

In order to develop the concept for the full-time studies our small group consisting of Christiane Hagemann, Erich Colman and the seminary leaders, is currently working on a detailed presentation similar to the one we presented last year called “Guidelines” for the accompanying study program. The core of our re-orientation will be the inclusion of a concept of so called “theme rooms” – a concept which was already formulated at the time the seminary in Hamburg was founded. Similar to the modular structure of the “Studies for professionals”, we are aiming to come up with a description of differentiated learning processes, which are successively passed through. A new idea which will also be introduced is to open up the Hamburg priestly seminary for singular themed sections which can then be used as “stopovers” for guests. If everything goes according to plan, the brochures are to be presented at the International Whitsun Congress in Den Bosch. We hope that by the beginning of the new academic year a somewhat larger group of students will be registered for full-time studies. We warmly invite interested students to attend the “open week” in Hamburg from June 18 to 23 this year.

Ulrich Meier

Körperschaftsverband (KV)

no message

Verband der Sozialwerke

no message

Haus auf dem Berge

no message

Publishers

no message

Haus Freudenberg

We are looking back onto a year filled with moving events: We were able to offer 492 friends of the Christian community to participate in 27 events, of which 16 were courses from our own seminar program, seven meetings (synods, etc.) two family and two children/youth holiday camps. This cor-

responds to 44% of all participants and 58% of all events. Eleven other events, such as class outings, orchestral events or seminars of non-profit organizations, took place in the house.

In order to be able to guarantee the economic basis for the above-mentioned events, additional revenue is required. Eight additional events from guest groups, rental income from employees, sales of beverages, postcards and books and generating our own electricity as well as sponsorship by an initiative called “citizens can do so much” helped us to work towards this goal. Grants from the total movement of the Christian community and the region of Bavaria, the Tessin Foundation, as well as individual donations from about 100 persons are another important and necessary basis for operating and maintaining Haus Freudenberg.

The decline in total overnight stays unfortunately continued. In 2016, we could only record 3 676 overnight stays. The family and children’s facilities of the Christian community reduced by 372 overnight stays compared to the previous year.

Jutta und Dietmar Reisch

International Whitsun Conference of the Christian Community



The great international Christian Community Whitsun Conference is fast approaching. At the end of the conference in Dortmund 2010 participants vowed to meet again in six years from then, not knowing at the time where that meeting would take place. Seven years later it is now clear where and when this event will take place: 2. to 6. June 2017, in ‘s-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands. The International Whitsun congress is a unique opportunity to talk, pray, celebrate and share ideas and experiences with members and friends of the Christian community from all over the world.

About the subject

During the time of Whitsun we hear the word of the flames as a “revelation of the Spirit” spoken in the Act of Consecration of Man. How can we grasp this fire? We cannot reach for the fire to own it. The fire of Whitsun waits until we can make ourselves available for its inspiring and enthusing power. How can we learn to use this fire in the right way, so that it can become a healing, warming force that has a real effect in the world? When we look around us we see that this fire is much needed in the world. A lot of spiritual fire is burning – but in a world which does not pay attention to the freedom and dignity of human beings.

The Act of Consecration of Man and evening celebrations

The Act of Consecration of Man will be celebrated in sixteen languages during the conference. At the four mornings of the conference everyone can participate in one of the five celebrations of The Act of Consecration of Man: in the three large halls, in the smaller hall and in the tent outside on the conference grounds. On the four evenings, all participants will have the opportunity to round off the day at the altar.

The presentations

The initial lecture, the evening lectures and the final speech are simultaneously translated into all conference languages (German, Dutch, English and Spanish). The morning lectures will be translated into one of the other languages. On the website, you find the language for each presentation.

The workshops

The various workshops can now be viewed on the website. Once you are registered, you will receive an e-mail reminding you to complete your program with a selection from the many workshops

you can partake in. There are a large number of workshops on offer: talking, singing, dancing, painting and music to name but a few.

Project market

Everywhere in the world new initiatives in the Christian communities are springing to life in the Christian communities. These are proof to religious renewal being effective as a renewal impulse in various areas. We call these initiatives fireplaces. During the conference you can find out more about such “fireplaces” in various countries. We hope the spark will jump over and spread the fire. New projects can be registered. Please report to Myriam Driesens (Priestess in Eindhoven) myriam@mdriesens.nl

What's more

Informal encounters, spontaneous presentations, culture and relaxation complete each day. But we made sure there are enough breaks. Apart from those you are also always free to withdraw into our peace-room set aside for people wanting to breathe and regain their strength.

Youth Festival

For the 14 to 25-year-olds, there is a youth festival on the conference grounds with its own program. It's all about meeting each other, searching one's own idealism, discussing, dancing and playing with fire and around the fire.

Children's Camp

Our experience of building beautiful, playful and harmonious camps flows into a special five-day camp for children from 10 to 13 years of age. Building tree huts, playing in the forest, theater, sports and fairy tales are just some of the activities happening at this camp. The children are transported back and forth to the site by bus. A German-speaking priest will be on site.

Registration

On the four-language website www.whitsunconference2017.org you will find all information about the conference; the website is updated regularly with new information. Please use the contact form for any questions you should have. Registration is only possible online. We are aware of objections to this procedure as some would like to have registered in writing but the organizers have decided to strictly adhere to this form of registration for practical reasons. We ask for your understanding and to help each other where necessary.

Finances

It would be nice if you could help one another within your community financially. Not everyone is able to pay the set fee. Perhaps you can join forces within your community to still make the participation possible for the one's less fortunate. In general, you can support others by donating to: De Chr Gem schap Whitsun 2017, NL14 INGB 0007 5547 10, BIC INGBNL2A.

The Netherlands-Flanders region is very much looking forward to welcoming you to 's-Hertogenbosch.

Ellis Booi, Netherlands

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 Salzdethfurt, 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.

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 burner for all kinds of combustibles 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 € 45 per day; at your departure we would like you to do a final cleaning, which can be dropped by paying € 25. If we succeeded in arousing your interest and you want to spend your holidays there, you may contact Ms. Petra Wilms by phone 030/213 24 08 or e-mail petra-wilms@t-online.de.

The End

Translated by Michaela Cramer – many thanks to her!