

REPORTS FROM THE REGIONS

EVENTS – FINANCES – FUTURE PLANS

NO. 78 ADVENT 2017

Australia and New Zealand

no message

Austria/Czechia/Hungary

As announced during the course of the year a new lenker region was formed: ‘Middle Europe’, comprising Austria, Czechien and Hungary and in spirit budding congregations in Slovakia, Slovenia and Croatia. It is envisaged that in the coming year the newly established region of Romania will be incorporated. Walther Giezendanner, formerly lenker for Switzerland, Italy, France, Spain and Hungary has agreed to take on the lenkership for a few years.

For the first time the traditional Austrian Autumn Meeting turned into a getting together of the regions from Bavaria, Czechia and Austria and extended to include for the first time Hungary, thus making it a four-nation event. Priests and members of the congregations discussed a mutual way forward since Czechia, Austria with Hungary are now a new region but Bavaria constituting a separate one. Besides a talk by Dr. Friedrich Glasl on Community Building and another contribution by our new lenker Mr Giezendanner we had opportunity to meet and learn about the other regions and their representatives. In good spirits, we decided to convene again next year in Vienna.

Vienna

On October 1st the congregation said good-bye to Paul-Steffen Garn who is taking up his new sending in Saarbrücken. Jakob Butschle started his one year paternity leave on 1st November.

On the first Advent Sunday, the following priests were inducted by the lenker Mr Giezendanner: Dagmar Jeserschek and Malcolm Allsop. During the welcoming ceremony Mr Giezendanner pleaded for understanding that the situation in Vienna had been unresolved for such a long period. He also thanked the congregation for bearing with it so patiently. In the newly formed region Austria, Czechien and Hungary, Vienna, with its central geographical location and strong congregation will play a pivotal role. Mrs Jeserschek, Mr and Mrs Allsop and Mr Giezendanner then introduced themselves and gave a brief account of their lives. The festivities ended with a well-known song but slightly altered text: “What good the gods do send us, we will hold and treasure in our hands”.

Now that the new Community Centre in Vienna – South has been opened, plans are under way to renovate the two upper floors of Haus Bayer and convert them into priest’s accommodation. For that we will use some money from the building funds of the region.

Ulrike Cibulka

Bavaria

Until recently the congregations of Bavaria, Austria and Czechia shared a lenker. Since autumn Austria, Czechia and Hungary joined forces and now have their own lenker while Bavaria became a separate region with it’s own lenker; while at the moment an interim-lenker has been appointed for

Bavaria discussions are underway about what a new lenkership could look like. This presents a new situation to the priests in Bavaria who after decades had never been solely amongst themselves for a synod. A new way of working together will be required...

At the end of November we hosted a lively and stimulating regional gathering with the theme on „Conflict between Freedom and Commitment“. The results of group conversations are meant to help the continuation of a process which was begun to look at ways how to raise funds for the Foundation, the Corporate Body and the Region. In due course we will report further here.

Dorothea Humérez

Central Germany

Nothing new to report.

Albrecht Schwenk

Eastern Europe

no message

Japan

no message

Great Britain-Ireland

In November, the Canterbury congregation hosted our Annual Meeting. The context for this was the closure of the Steiner School in Canterbury. Along with the painful changes in the Camphill movement that have taken place over recent years, these developments change the context for our work as Christian Community in the region. Whilst we have always striven to be available for everyone, it is a fact that people generally find their way to a religious or spiritual community out of a particular context, and for us that context has been provided by anthroposophical work in the widest sense. The changing context throws up some important questions:

- Can we help our brothers and sisters in allied movements?
- Are we called to support and encourage the emergence of new endeavours that might continue working out of Anthroposophy?
- Can we reach people who don't yet know about our life and work and who might benefit from what we do? – the question of 'outreach'
- Can we help each other to keep our connection to The Christian Community alive – what we could call 'in-reach'.

The meeting in Canterbury was a great success. Along with the usual mixture of talks, reports and artistic activities, there was a special quality of deep listening. A highlight for me was hearing a member of long standing acknowledging that hearing that the Act of Consecration could help with the healing of the earth was an inspiring, new thought.

After the Annual Meeting, I was in Dornach for a meeting of the general secretaries of the Anthroposophical Society and the lenkers of The Christian Community, convened by the leadership of the Goetheanum and The Christian Community. It was inspiring to meet the General Secretaries and hear about their work, as well as sharing thoughts and questions on the themes of spiritual leadership and the question where we meet Christ in the world today. There is something very refreshing about sharing thoughts and questions on such central themes with others for whom they are equally central and who approach them from a different perspective. The question of the difference between our two movements along with their common source was an important theme of the meeting. It was good to be able to report on the very positive relationship that has been established in our region between the general secretary and the lenker. This bore fruit in the recent visit of the British/Irish synod to Steiner House. Marjatta von Bouschoten and I also reported on the initiative to start a research group into Christology under the aegis of the Anthroposophical Society, which will meet in Steiner House in January.

Planning for the church building project in Stroud is proceeding in earnest. It was a great boost to get the news in the summer that a sizeable legacy had been left to The Christian Community, with the specific request that it be used to support the building in Stroud. This demonstrates once again how the future growth and development of our congregations can be supported by legacies, and it can serve as a reminder to us all to think about what we want to support after we are no longer on earth to take an active role.

Tom Ravetz

Netherlands and Belgium

no message

North-America

no message

North-Germany

North-Germany twice?!

For several years we have been pondering about it. But finally, the region of North-Germany has been re-structured, divided into two regions and yet building a unity. Thomas Nayda will continue as coordinator for both areas and regional assemblies, council and administration remain unchanged. During the autumn synod, the Oberlenker Christward Kröner inducted the newly co-opted lenkers by placing the collars on Christian Bartholl (lenker for the North-German region) and Joachim Paulus (lenker for the Northwest-German region). The names for the regions were suggested during the synod and generally accepted as appropriate.

Gerhard Ertlmaier will in the future take on the role as Lenker for Russia and also look after the congregation in Bergedorf-Lüneburg-Wendland. The autumn synod reflected already the new kind of cooperation. We are working together but independently within the sub-regions. We are looking toward the future to embrace what presents itself anew or needs changing. Altogether, it was felt that the transition into the new situation was a positive one, supported by everybody and allowing for a harmonious beginning. Of course, not everything has been cut in stone yet. But in the years ahead life will teach us what needs changing and requires renewal. Nevertheless, it was already noticeable that the future cooperation between the regions could be a fruitful one for the whole area.

Gerhard Ertlmaier, Christian Bartholl, Dirk-Joachim Paulus

Northern Countries

no message

Romania

no message

South America

no message

Southern Africa

no message

South-West Germany

During the summer, the congregation in Saarbrücken witnessed a dramatic change within the priesthood: Norbert Martini took his well-deserved retirement and moved back to the Dresden area. He stood at the altar for the last time on 23rd July. There followed an interim period during which Siegfried Gehlhaar, in his 82nd year, together with Daniel Schietzel from Mannheim looked after the congregation and its affiliates in Kaiserslautern and Trier. Karl Frevert (77) continues to be responsible for the congregation in Zweibrücken.

It was a joyous occasion when on 15th October we welcomed our new priests: Paul-Steffen Garn and Tatjana Maydanyuk, formerly working in Vienna and Kiev respectively. This will allow Siegfried Gehlhaar to step back. Daniel Schietzel is going to continue to serve the congregations in Kaiserslautern, Saarbrücken and Zweibrücken and be responsible for Neustadt/Weinstraße.

Hellmut Voigt

West-Germany

The new regional coordinator for West Germany introduces himself:

Klaus-Peter Hunold, aged 63, is a semi-retired civil engineer. He encountered the Christian Community in 1979/80 whilst working as a conscientious objector in Beddelhausen (Ederhöhe). Then apprenticeship as carpenter followed by studying civil engineering in 1985-90. After a year at a structural analysis office he joined the county construction management offices in 1991 and took early retirement in 2014. He married I. Goldmann-Hunold in 1990 at the Christian Community Dortmund; they have no children. In 2015, they celebrated their silver wedding anniversary in Herdecke. Since 1989 member of the Anthroposophical Society and for over 20 years member of the initiative group of the Thomas-Zweig Dortmund. Since 1992 member of the council "Paritätisches Altenheim Hermann-Keiner-Haus e. V." in Dortmund. The administration of the region West Germany still lays in the hands of the secretary Tim Gottschalk.

Contribution to the Corporate Body: The pledged contribution of € 450 000 to the corporate body for the year 2017 shows a shortfall of approx. € 30 000. It is hoped that the region will still be able to raise this amount before the end of the year as at the last conference on 27th November it became clear that the 'gap' for a pledge for 2018 (equal amount = € 450 000) is considerably higher. It would also mean that the shortfall in 2017 would be carried over into the new year.

Düsseldorf Congregation: As part of the regional synod a meeting took place with the board, the regional secretary, the new and previous co-ordinator, the primarily responsible members Mr. Bruckmann and Mr. + Mrs. Glasow as well as with the community council. The events of the past were briefly touched upon. Mr. Bruckmann gave a detailed account how he, as priest in charge for the region, together with Mr. Schietzel, have, over the last three years, been trying to inaugurate a new start at the Terstegenstr. However, he felt that he had reached a dead end and asked Mr. Rolka to allow him to take on emeritus status. Mrs. Glasow too will resign by autumn as religious lessons teacher; a new sending is under these circumstances not an option. What will the future hold?

Klaus Peter Hunold

Wirklichkeit – Reality

Worldwide Youth festival of the Christian Community 19th – 23rd May 2018 in Cologne.

In this day and age, we are overwhelmed by the sheer multitude of information. Or are we rather drowning in light of the fact that we are flooded with conflicting news about wars, enemies, populists, refugees, humanity and the earth? Fake News and alternative facts determine our social discourse, the post factual age has been ushered in, the fight for the truth has begun. While the outer world we inhabit seems to shrink, due to globalisation and population growth, the space between what lives in each individual seems to grow ever bigger. Feelings, perceptions and opinions seem to drift apart more and more. Are we trapped in this inner reality or is there a reality beyond the personal where we can meet?

If we individually could find a community that resonates within us then this REALITY can be brought about. Through workshops, lectures, art and culture, dance and music we will endeavour to consciously create this REALITY. We are trying to offer a healthy balance between contents related and practical work and also between soul-spirit and physical activity. Adolescents and young people from around the world are warmly invited to share a space for five days, to meet and exchange ideas, to celebrate together, have fun but also be serious.

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Switzerland/Southwest Europe

no message

Wuerttemberg

no message

Körperschaftsverband (KV)

no message

Verband der Sozialwerke

no message

Haus auf dem Berge

no message

Publishers

no message

Haus Freudenberg

Nothing new to report.

Jutta und Dietmar Reisch

Seminaries/Stuttgart

On Friday 8th December, our autumn trimester rang out with an evening festival and an intimate rendering of the four-part song “A Ship is Coming Laden”. The wonderful harmonious fellowship in the seminary is very present at the moment as we have many good musicians and singers; the listening to each other therefore also extends into the work-sphere. As there was a positive response to the intensive Greek-Course offered before the start of the trimester we have decided to repeat the course at the beginning of next summer.

The trimester groups very quickly bonded. There is a youthful excitement in the first-year intake with six of the twelve candidates not even 30 years old. The five gentlemen of the second year – again two are under the age of 30 – have established an intensive study group, working together in an inspiring way and, introducing new ways of celebrating the festivals beyond traditional lines. The new year will see some changes within the trimester groups. A female student in the first year will not resume her studies, two older ones will join the second year. Two new students will join the first year: a teacher from Spain and another from Armenia. Nine students are at the moment gaining practical experience in different congregations; on rare occasions, we receive positive feedback. The ‘practicum’ is a vital part on the path of the decision-making process to become a priest.

The group selected for the preparatory course started off harmoniously, went through a phase of difficulties but then emerged radiant and with a clear sense of direction; it certainly was a learning curve in acquiring social skills which we would not have offered under normal circumstances. Meanwhile all candidates have met with the Circle of Seven in Berlin and were accepted for ordination. They will now spend another week at the Seminary to be introduced to the celebrating of baptisms and The Act of Consecration of Man. With this the future is laid before them. The Ordinations will take place on 16th and 18th February 2018 in Stuttgart and a week later in Tiflis. The winter trimester will commence on January 7th with the ‘Three Kings Play’ and the 21st birthday of our youngest female student.

Georg Dreißig

Seminars/Hamburg

no message

Treuhandverwaltung (Trustadministration)

The primary task of the trust fund is to administer incomes which in the long term will benefit the Christian Community but which might be at the time still subject to risks and/or specific conditions. Here are some examples:

It could be that a donation is received with the proviso to recall some or all of the gift if circumstances would dictate this. In the event of the donor passing away the gift would become available and distributed to the Christian Community. The trust also administers immovable property where tenants’ rights to stay are protected or where the donor itself resides and the property cannot immediately be sold. If, however these conditions no longer apply then the gift will be allocated according to the wishes of the donor.

Gifts can be dedicated to a specific congregation, for particular projects or to the Christian Community Movement as a whole. If you would like to find out more about the work of the Trustfundadministration then please contact: Mr Gottschalk, Treuhandverwaltung zur Förderung der Christengemeinschaft e. V., Meckelstrasse 2, 48225 Wuppertal, Tel: 0202-7478085 oder treuhand@christengemeinschaft.org

Plans and negotiations regarding the sale of Haus zur Höhe in Scheidegg have progressed to the point, that hopefully during the first quarter of 2018 we will be able to sign the deed of sale and in the course of the year transfer the monies to the Foundation. With this transaction, a painful process has come to its conclusion but it is hoped that it might bring about new possibilities for further developments within our Christian Community.

Tim Gottschalk

Translated by Gabriele Kuhn – many thanks to her!



End