

REPORTS FROM THE REGIONS

EVENTS – FINANCES – FUTURE PLANS

NO. 82 ADVENT 2018

Australia and New Zealand

no message

Central Germany

no message

Japan

no message

Bavaria

There is still nothing new to report from Bavaria. But we wish everyone a bright Christmas time and a good New Year!

Dorothea Humérez

Great Britain-Ireland

We held our Annual Meeting from 9th-11th November in Stourbridge this year. I brought a question to the attention of the members which our synod has resolved to look at in the coming time, namely the question of the second person in our ritual texts. In the German, the intimate “du” is used whenever we address one person or being; the intimate “ihr” is used for the plural. German does not make the distinction between a way of addressing the divine and a way of addressing an individual human being. The languages of the Bible did not make this distinction either. The original translation that was made into English used Thou as the equivalent of “du” and You to translate “ihr”. Over the years, most of the instances where single human beings are addressed have been changed from Thou to You, leaving Thou for divine beings and, in the Act of Consecration, the celebrant.

Many members in our region are aware that the other English-speaking regions have made the change to versions that use You throughout, for both singular and plural, without distinction of the person being addressed. We are not bound to follow the other regions in our translation, but the synod has lived with the same question over a number of years and we have resolved to turn to it once more.

Discussions of ritual translations have to balance many different criteria. We are aware of the special quality of Thou, which represents for many people the holiness of our approach to the divine. We are aware too of the richness of sounds represented by “thee – thou – thine”. One thing that weighs in our deliberations is the question whether Thou brings us closer to God or perpetuates a world which is divided into holy things and profane things.

In the discussion at the Annual Meeting, the full range of view-points was expressed. I was glad that the atmosphere that we created engendered this openness to explore. I know that some of my colleagues have broached the subject in the congregations already. Our aim at the moment is simply to hear how this question lives in the souls of our members and friends as we take further steps in our exploration. The priests will consider the responses, which will flow into the next phase of their deliberations.

Tom Ravetz

Netherlands and Flanders

In the year past the youth work of the Christian Community Netherland/Flanders has gained in strength. The movement arranged activities under the banner of ‘Young and Spiritual’. This was also chosen as title for the e-newsletter which is circulated several times during the year to subscribers.

A Facebook-Page has also been created to inform followers of events and activities and on themed weekends. For the following year we are planning to attend the priests’ ordination ceremony in Stuttgart. Besides these activities we are also engaged in organising children’s and youth camps. We have renamed our camps Helios, Camps of the Christian Community and in 2019 there will be eight different camps on offer. About 600 children, young people and adults are expected to join.

At the meeting of the Landelijke Raad this year great emphasis was placed on the topic of young people. The Landelijke Raad meets four times per annum and consists of representatives from all congregations. Besides the regular items on the agenda like approval of the budget and the year-end financial statement other themes were also concentrated on. On two occasions ‘Youth’ was the central theme of discussion. Where do the young people fit in our movement? Several youngsters shared with us what their needs and expectations are.

Last year a number of priests have moved to new congregations in our region. Many of our priests live in houses which were purchased through regionally administered housing funds. Not every house is suitable as priests’ accommodation which often results in the sale and purchase of an alternative property. By the end of this year almost all priests will have settled in their new congregations. We are still looking for a house in Antwerp where property prices are a challenge. At the end of December Bastiaan Baan will return to the Netherlands after an absence of several years as leader of the priests’ seminary in the USA. He will be based in Zeist.

Ellis Booi

North-America

Oliver Steinrueck, who has served as Lenker for North America since 2000, has been asked to join the Circle of Seven and the Oberlenkers. This new task will require him to move to Berlin in the summer of 2019. In the course of the coming year, the leadership, along with the North American priests’ circle, will be working on a new solution for the Lenker position in this region. Oliver will continue to be actively involved until a new person is in place.

Cheryl Prigg, Luis Gonzalez, and Matthias Giles will be consecrated into the priesthood of the Christian Community on 30 and 31 March 2019 at the Christian Community in Spring Valley, New York. The North American seminary will host an open course the week before this event titled: “The New Priesthood; Priest training and ordination in the era of the free human self”. For information about these events, you can visit: <http://www.christiancommunityseminary.org/>

Oliver Steinrueck

North- and Northwest Germany

Nothing new to report, business as usual.

Thomas Nayda

Middle Europe

no message

Northern Countries

no message

Russia

Founding in Moscow: From 12th to 14th October 2018 celebrations were held to mark the founding of a congregation in Moscow. For this occasion, the conference centre 'ISRKRA' was hired, a space with two big rooms, a stage, plenty of seating, plus another room for exhibitions, gatherings and breakfast.

300 people from 19 countries came together to celebrate in Moscow and see the first Russian priest, Anna Geyer, inducted. Smaller congregations like St. Petersburg, Monino (situated between Moscow and Riga), Samara (at the river Wolga) and Rostoy (at the river Don) sent representatives, who introduced themselves in their own unique and humorous way through singing, theatre etc. The various anthroposophical initiatives contributed with music, eurythmy, Bothmer gymnastics and speech. Several painters exhibited their paintings and people involved in agriculture, working with disabled people, from Waldorf Schools and other institutions were given the opportunity to give a flavour of their work and sell products they had brought along. The guests from the many different countries shared visual material from their congregations and churches. Thus, the breaks were a lively affair with lots to see, to enquire about and to engage in conversations.

Of course, there were also talks revolving around the theme of the development of Christianity in the Slavic regions, St. Sophia in the East and the future of Christianity. A gathering of youth groups from Hamburg, England and Russia was also realised, mainly in the Moscow congregation. On Sunday, toward the end of the festivities, there was a never-ending exchange of presents and good wishes from all over the world. Participants then had the opportunity to join excursions to see the golden ring around Moscow, visit Novgorod and/or Petersburg. Looking back, it was the celebration of the Act of Consecration of Man in a congregation with people from 19 different countries which left a lasting impression; one could almost speak of a small world-congregation, enhanced through the presence of 33 priests joining the ritual on either side of the altar in their vestments.

Gerhard Ertlmaier

Romania

no message

South America

no message

Southern Africa

no message

Southwest Germany

During the summer and after 18 years the congregation in Wangen (Allgäu) said good-bye to Stephan Neß: Together with his family he was sent to Stuttgart and in his place the priests-couple Michaela and Nicholas Wijnberg arrived in September. As well as a new beginning it was also a kind of reunion as Nicholas Wijnberg had been working in the congregation before during the 1990's. About 50 people still remembered him from those days.

In October a memorable event took place in Karlsruhe: The Kaspar-Hauser-Tage (which have been running for the last seven years) and the bi-annually arranged Michaelmas-Conference of the Southwest region were rolled into one. The theme "Kaspar Hauser and the Apocalypse" allowed for a rich programme with lectures, presentations on new results in the Kaspar Hauser research, theatre performances and theme related talks and group discussions which focussed on the relevance between the Apocalypse and present-day questions (e. g. transhumanism etc.). Through artistic activity, singing and our rituals a lively community came into being which enriched and in gratitude is looking back over those intense study- days. The congregation in Karlsruhe has once again proved its efficiency in hosting such an event in cooperation with the Parzival-School. Luckily the weather was very much in our favour.

Hellmut Voigt

At the last regional gathering themes were touched upon which are not normally on the Agenda: A talk by a professional consultant from the Gemeinwohl-Ökonomie (GWÖ) and a discussion on the subject of distribution ratio of congregational shares to the budget of the Foundation and the German body corporate (Körperschaftsverband).

The evening began with a talk by the consultant of the GWÖ outlining their approach to a value-directed accounting practice. Their focus is on human dignity, solidarity and justice, ecological sustainability, transparency and joint decision-making. A GWÖ assessment will then lay out how these values find their practical application in relation to the various service providers and groups e. g. financial institutions/owners, employees, customers, society/surroundings (incl. humanity, nature, earth). With this in mind the GWÖ-matrix consists of 20 spheres of work to which a manual gives detailed instructions/aspects on how to evaluate the present situation. Each matrix field is assessed individually on a points-scale; the totals are then added up and thus reflect the overall value for a company/institution. In the ensuing conversation it became clear that working with these specific matrix fields in a church community would initially require a major rethink in the adjustment and re-defining of the existing terminologies. On the whole it is a learning curve and we will continue to work for possible implementations to congregations of the Christian Community (e. g. some Steiner Schools have already been certified).

How are the funds from the community contributions distributed “justly” to the regional congregations? This is a frequently asked question. One option would be a percentage-based system which takes income and expenses into account. We adopted a system whereby we use the arithmetic mean value of a three-year cycle as part of a five-part calculation (sounds more complicated than it is). However, we realised that a one to one fund appropriation to congregations is not a viable option. There could be considerable variances through unforeseen situations in a congregation, which might make it necessary that historically accrued contributions are no longer in line with the key-contribution. Thus, it is clear that working with a key-contribution scheme could be a useful tool where it has emerged that a somewhat unjust situation has arisen and changes have to be implemented. But in each individual case it is reasonable and also in the spirit of ‘brotherhood’ more practical, to determine contributions on the basis of a congregation’s financial capabilities and re-assess the situation in the following year. Those aspects should be discussed in conversations.

Thomas Gerber

Switzerland/Southwest Europe

As reported in previous issues there is a lot happening in our region, particularly in Italy and France. Meanwhile Luisa Testa has moved to Milano where now twice a month the service is held and also during the festival seasons – fortunately this winter we will have a service during the 12 holy nights. In Bologna the service is held once a month in a rented space; in other places the services are celebrated as before.

For the purchase of a flat for our priests in Paris we were lucky enough to secure interest free loans; however, we gratefully accept any donations.....

Like everywhere else the congregations in Switzerland are working hard to fill the budgetary gaps by the end of the year or at least reduce the outstanding sums. This is only possible through a combined effort.

Christine Jost

West Germany

no message

Wuerttemberg

no message

Haus Freudenberg

no message

Körperschaftsverband (KV)

no message

Publishers

no message

Haus auf dem Berge

A kingdom for a glass of water! This year we experienced a severe drought in our area with almost unbearable heat. From spring to autumn there were only two or three minor downpours. With the start of summer, the meadows had already turned into sandy, grey patches, cornfields showed premature ripening and the extent of the damage to trees in the surrounding can probably only be fully assessed next year. While considerate guests took their left-over teas and juices outside to save those flowers near to death, a manager from a transport company in Hamburg, which specialises in delivering drinking water explained: No matter if you order five- ten or twenty thousand litres of water this will financially not make much of a difference. However, ‘if you can fork out the money for the transportation, then I will gift you the water’.

How much joy we shared with our guests who without exception bowed to the restrictions! The climatic situation brought home to us how much we depend on our fellow-human beings: the shepherd in the village who supplied us with general water, the butcher from the neighbouring village who delivered drinking water with his tractor, friends of the house who saw to urgent repairs and technical problems.

No matter if we spoke to a person at Telekom, contacted a handyman or our garage, if we needed advice from a local authority the help and support we received far exceeded what we under normal circumstances would have experienced. I was amazed and looking back feel tremendous gratitude.

I am hoping that next year we will host more groups of confirmands again. I also hope and wish that the situation will not be as dramatic as it was this summer.

Tobias Knabe

Seminaries/Hamburg

no message

Seminaries/Stuttgart

no message

Treuhandverwaltung

no message

Verband der Sozialwerke

Nothing new to report.

Dietmar Schwarz

Conferences

Gotland/Davide: At the end of November we had a gathering in Hamburg-Volksdorf with priests and members of congregations from Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Lithuania and the North-German region in order to prepare for the upcoming conference in Davide during the summer of 2019. Looking back, we enjoyed a conference with the theme ‘Heart be courageous...!’ (Herz sei mutig...!). 90 people attended in wonderful, sunny weather and altogether we gratefully acknowledge a successful – although logistically at times stretched – conference.

Over the last few years Davide has undergone more renovations and additionally two bunk-houses were built. This was all financed through donations and trust monies. There is still a long way to go like re-roofing the chapel, the supply of sanitary equipment and odds and ends to be seen to. Slowly and steadily we are working on the upkeep and caring of this special place and its chapel which all of us have so grown to love.

The big heading for the conference is: the mysteries of the Baltic Sea. Those mysteries of the future and their secrets will be explored under various aspects. Since 2015 people from the Baltic region and further afield have been meeting annually to look at the theme from different angles. Over the last few years increasingly more participants from Moscow, Petersburg and Samara joined the meetings. We are hoping that in the coming year interested people from the Baltic and Poland will be able to join us as well.

You are heartily invited to come to our conference which will take place during the summer of 2019 from Friday 26th July – Friday 2nd August with the theme: ‘The Wind blows, wherever it wants... Within the Breath of Time’ (‘Der Wind weht, wo er will... Im Atem der Zeit’.)

Gerhard Ertlmaier

Translated by Gabriele Kuhn – many thanks to her!

*****End*****