



CAIM

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

CAIM is the Celtic word meaning 'encompassment' or 'encircling'

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An invitation from Trevor Miller:

Pray as you can, not as you can't

One foundational aspect of prayer taught by the Church Fathers is so basic that it can easily become a case of 'familiarity breeding contempt'. It is this: in seeking to understand prayer the spiritual masters were more interested in the state of the heart before God rather than the techniques used and so would summarise it something like this: By far the most important thing for us, if we want to pray, is to seriously undertake to become the kind of people who can pray, who have room in their lives for a God to whom they can pray; then "pray as you can, not as you can't."



This well used maxim from the 'Spiritual letters of Dom John Chapman' is a great example of the kind of authentic prayer expression encouraged in the Northumbria Community. Henri Nouwen in his L'Arche journal 'The Road to Daybreak' gives a really helpful example of this by quoting a summarised version of 'The Three Hermits' story written by Leo Tolstoy in the 19th century, that for me gets to the very heart of prayer.



"Three Russian monks lived on a faraway island. Nobody ever went there, but one day their bishop decided to make a pastoral visit. When he arrived, he discovered that the monks didn't even know the Lord's Prayer. So he spent all his time and energy teaching them the 'Our Father' and then left, satisfied with his pastoral work. But when his ship had left the island and

was back in the open sea, he suddenly noticed the three hermits walking on the water – in fact, they were running after the ship! When they reached it, they cried, "Dear Father, we have forgotten the prayer you taught us." The bishop overwhelmed by what he was seeing and hearing, said, "But, dear brothers, how then do you pray?" They answered, "Well, we just say, 'Dear God, there are three of us and there are three of you, have mercy on us!'" The bishop, awestruck by their sanctity and simplicity, said, "Go back to your land and be at peace."

In other words, "There's a difference between learning prayers and prayerfulness." Christlikeness and spiritual growth does not depend on our ability to learn and recite facts, even facts about God and prayer. In Tolstoy's story, it is the monks who live and pray from the heart, and the bishop who recognises their sanctity and prayerfulness, despite their ignorance of the Lord's Prayer. Speaking metaphorically, why be concerned about not being able to remember much, if you can walk on water!

This story is a great summary of what our Community is all about in encouraging its own prayer life and ministry. Authenticity – which, as well as the 'pray as you can not as you can't' wisdom of Dom John Chapman, is the 'what you have to be is what you are' of Thomas Merton; the 'finding the heart's true home' of Richard Foster; the 'inner heart' of Catherine Doherty's Poustinia. Over time our individual daily use of specific prayers like the Lord's Prayer and the Jesus prayer become prayerfulness, making us more aware of God around us and within us. This awareness makes possible the apostle Paul's call to "pray without ceasing".

Cont'd on pg3

Northumbria Community Scotland Gathering

Where? - St Ninian's Craigmalen Church Halls, Linlithgow, West Lothian

When? - Saturday 17 November 2012 10am to 8pm

What? - Being, sharing, worshipping and learning TOGETHER

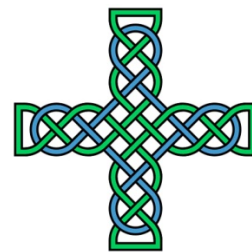
If you are interested in coming (it would help to have some idea of numbers for planning) or just want to know more, contact Rob Holden rob.ambathach@googlemail.com

An introduction to
THE NORTHUMBRIA COMMUNITY
Followed by an afternoon exploring
different ways of praying.

Saturday 22 September 2012
St. Andrew's Church, Awre. GL14
1EW

10.30 arrival and coffee - finish at 3.30pm.
Refreshments and simple lunch provided.

Contact Liz & Brian Brobyn for further details
Tel. 01594 516814 thebrobyns@btinternet.com



Lancashire Gathering & Celebrations!

Celebrations were marked in St John's Church, Yealand, on 19 May – not for the Queen – but for Di and Vince Smith's 25th Wedding Anniversary!



Twenty Companions and friends gathered together for another enjoyable quarterly meeting. Folk had travelled from Gateshead, Carlisle, Manchester, Barnoldswick, Southportand

many points in between.

Michael and Vince led us in song before the Midday

Office. How great it is to have 'live' music at these gatherings! A theme of 'ebb and flow' for the afternoon session was introduced by Michael Connaughton, and the exercises, looking at 'good' and 'not so good' periods in our lives, really made us think. By examining the seasons of our lives we could see where God had been at work directing and helping us.

Plenty of food and drink sustained us during the day, and we finished with the Evening Office before departing homeward - looking forward to the next gathering on Saturday, 18 August, again in St John's Church, Yealand. If you haven't been before, do come along if you can. We bring food to share, and start around midday. More info and directions from Di Smith: dianesmith1@me.com *Lee Johnson (Bolton)*

On St Patrick's Day, a group of Friends and Companions in the North of Ireland climbed Slemish mountain in Co. Antrim. A traditional place of pilgrimage, this majestic mountain dominates its surrounding landscape. Slemish is said to be where the boy slave St Patrick tended herds for his master Miluic in the 5th century, and ever since has been a place of pilgrimage on St Patrick's Day, 17 March.

During his six years here (ages 16-22) Patrick frequently turned to prayer as his only consolation in his loneliness.

After a stiff scramble to the top of Slemish the group were treated to panoramic views of County Antrim, the Bann Valley, Lough Neagh and the Sperrin Mountains. They had a chance to reflect in the very surroundings where Patrick encountered God, and contemplate on the important missionary role Patrick eventually performed in Ireland.



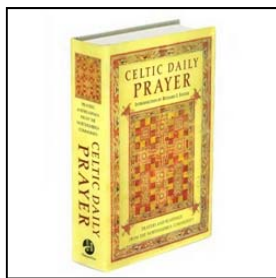
Welcome to the Summer edition of Caim.

This edition of Caim is coming a little later than planned. As it's the Summer issue, I could pretend that we've actually been waiting for summer to arrive... but in truth it was pushed aside by all manner of other deadlines and imperatives which crowded in. One of the things I love about the Office and our Community Rule, is that they provide constancy, and a point of returning when the 'wind blows hard'. Without them, we'd be lost in the storm. Enjoy this issue!
Jeff & Ingrid

I am very aware of the encouragement it gives me when my name appears in the Prayer Guide, and I receive an email from the team to remind me that I am held in prayers across the whole Community (which these days means across the world!)

I'd just like to thank you for this little booklet to which I and so many others refer daily. Not only does it fuel our prayers (and sometimes make us stop and think - no bad thing!) it is also a wonderful way by which our whole dispersed Community is held together as one. We are both informed and inspired, and would be impoverished indeed, without it. So this comes with my thanks to you all, in Christ who binds us together.

Malcolm Nicholas



Prayer as a living relationship with God is at the heart of the Northumbria Community. Our Rule of life and daily Office are the skeleton that makes the living relationship able to live, move and have its being. For us, prayer is life, life is prayer and this is why (early in 2002) we made some minor revisions to our Rule

of life. One important modification was to acknowledge many forms of prayer as equally valid. Under Availability to God and Others, we changed the one-word title of 'Intercession' to 'Praying and Interceding' to better represent this understanding. We realised that not all are called to be intercessors but all are called to pray. Further that the significant quote from the Monk of Patmos 'Those who lean on Jesus' breast feel the heart-beat of God' was more about contemplative prayer than intercession.

We live in mystery. Each of us experiences a reality that others can't see. What we do know is that there are different experiences of prayer. They are as unique as the individuals who live them.

Though prayer may take as many forms as there are prayers, as a Community we have tended to emphasise three types of prayer expression.

a) Liturgical Prayer – the daily use of the Divine Office (Celtic Daily Prayer). This is how our Rule puts it, "A daily discipline of prayer is important. It is often inconvenient and may be dry, but gives stability to our life, making prayer its foundation, and allowing God to teach us inwardly. The Office is there to serve us in this capacity, and it is recommended that Companions in Community use this as an expression of our common life in God."

b) Intercessory Prayer – In our Community there are some who meet regularly to share Principles of Intercession taken from Joy Dawson's YWAM book – 'Intercession, Thrilling and Fulfilling', and in so doing continue a practice used since the earliest days of Northumbria Community with its emphasis on intercession as prophetic listening and healing prayer.

However, for most of us it is simply praying for others whose lives we touch day by day and doing so in very ordinary ways. For example at the Nether Springs we use the Prayer net for specific intercessions, the prayer basket with names of Companions and Friends drawn out for silent prayer twice each day, along with relevant written prayer requests. We also have the informative Prayer Guide to help us. You may have similar helps to prayer and intercession where you live.

c) Contemplative Prayer – This is being 'unbusy' with God instead of being busy with other things. It is learning to relax

into not having to do anything useful or productive when centred in the presence of God. It reminds me of a much-quoted sentence from Thomas Merton in the early formation of our Community, that is, "The monk is not defined by his task, his usefulness. In a certain sense he is supposed to be 'useless' because his mission is not to do this or that job but to be a man of God".

Of course, this sense of 'intentional uselessness' had to be lived in creative tension with the real world. In the every day of our lives there are endless opportunities to pack our minds and hearts with countless things to do, to look at, listen to, read about; numerous people to visit, email, talk to, and worry about. With all of this going on around us and within us, a life without a quiet centre easily becomes delusional.

If the world around us is asserting that "if you are not making good use of your time, you are useless" then we need to remind ourselves that Jesus urges us to "come and spend some useless time with me; come and waste time with God." This is the practice of contemplative prayer, the prayer of quiet.

We live in mystery. Each of us experiences a reality that others can't see. We mustn't presume to know too much. What we do know is that there are different experiences of prayer. They are as unique as the individuals who live them, and it follows that if prayer is to nourish and sustain us, it cannot be imposed. Rather, prayer has to be desired, longed for and then, experienced. It is both a gift, and a lifelong adventure, requiring quality time, humility, and perseverance – like any loving relationship.

We also know that God's nature is love. He does not love us any more when we do everything right and he does not love us any less when we do everything wrong. He just loves us; that's who he is. Prayer is keeping company with the God who loves us. *Trevor Miller*

Andy Foster has responsibility for the Community's finances, and we've asked him to keep us updated:

It's continually humbling to see first hand the financial support given to the Community. We receive all sorts of gifts; from £5 notes stuffed in envelopes, money just arriving in our account from Mr or Mrs Anonymous, large and small one off gifts, and regular giving support. To just say 'thank you' seems inadequate from where I sit. Running my own small business I know full well that money doesn't grow on trees and that much of the money given has been hard earned.

The roller-coaster experience of moving from Hetton to Acton was inevitably stressful at times – not least the unpredictability of the costs. However, we always seemed to receive the right amount of donations to cover the challenges faced at the time. The Community now has a facility fit for its task – functioning as an admin base, resource centre, retreat house and an important symbol and example of so many aspects of the Northumbria Community. It's fantastic seeing it all operating, knowing that it could never have happened without so much generosity.

Having sailed over the horizon we are in another ocean – facing a whole new set of 'day to day' costs rather than setup and capital costs. Despite the challenges of transition, the Trust, thankfully, has a healthy balance sheet at the end of it.

Anita Haigh writes:

Journeying with Hild – A Personal Reflection



Journeying with Hild has indeed been a journey for me. My involvement in writing the resources to explore what it means to be 'Together as a diverse and dispersed Community' has involved journeying in many senses. I have travelled physically to meet

with other Companions in order to share ideas and to discern God's still small voice as we have prayed and talked. I have travelled virtually, engaging in telephone and email conversations with Companions and Friends across the continents to think about how we can communicate in an inclusive way. I have even engaged in a bit of time travel! Re-reading and reflecting on some of the Community's foundational literature, including many of our liturgies, has helped to remind me why I felt called to Companionship all those years ago.

I have also travelled attitudinally, emotionally and (I hope) spiritually in the process, and sometimes the journey has been a bit uncomfortable! I have had to face my fears and frustrations, and work hard at being more open and flexible to different ways of doing things. I have had to be willing to give space to others to voice their fears and frustrations without taking it personally. Yet, this is what Community is about. Availability and Intentional Vulnerability, as expressed by our Rule, needs to be a reality, and it needs to start with me!



We are a growing and increasingly diverse Community, and so we all come with our different hopes, fears, expectations and convictions. As we expand, we find that there are many more people that we don't know personally. It can become tempting to speak of Community as if it were

an external thing, separate from ourselves, something 'over there'. Yet Community is about us. Though dispersed, we are nonetheless bound together in Christ and in a common desire to seek God as the 'one thing necessary'.

As stated in *Journeying Together*:

'...we are united in our desire to embrace and express an ongoing exploration into a new way for living as Christians that offers hope in our changed and changing culture.'

Such an ongoing exploration requires us all to engage, to take our rightful seat, as the Hild liturgy puts it. Such an exploration requires time, effort, prayer, dialogue and grace. It is about making ourselves available and intentionally vulnerable. My journey with Hild has reminded me how easy it is to leave this to others, to disengage as a result of busyness, hurts, frustrations and the stuff of life. As we continue to journey with this year's theme, my prayer is that we will all commit



ourselves to this ongoing conversation and so be enriched, and enrich one another, in seeking and serving Christ.

A practical way to get involved in this conversation is offering some constructive feedback on the Hild resource! As mentioned in my article in the last Caim, and in the Introduction to the Hild resource, I would appreciate hearing how you used the resource, your views on the format, and any ideas and creativity it may have inspired. To date, I have had only a handful of responses. The intention is to develop further resources based on some of our other existing liturgies if people feel this would be of benefit. You can email me at the address below. Thank you in anticipation!

Anita Haigh anita.haigh@northumbriacommunity.org

Ken and Claire Humphrey (Mentors) told us about a very special gathering at an old monastic ruin at Nendrum:

The weather was wonderful and we all stood in a genuine church without walls, dating back to 5th century, to make our vows. 25 people made a commitment to Community, as Companions and Friends, and many others came to

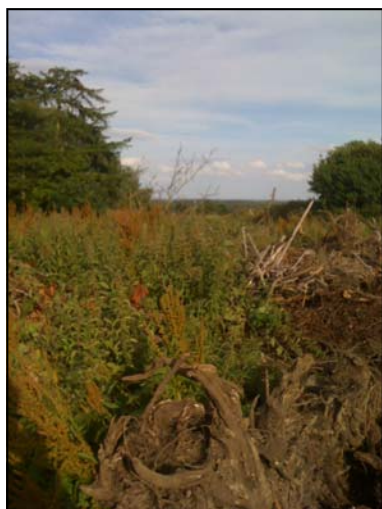
support them. We used the Welcome liturgy, and incorporated some of the Easter resources. People shared in the significance of the day and the importance of Community in their faith journey. Those welcomed as Companions were: **Keith and Judith Dalzell; Peter and Asa McDowell; Jonny Watson and Lisette Manly; Janet Morris; Carol Smith; Simon Coulter and Ruth Gray and Caroline Orr.**

Pete Askew tells:

The story of a Walled Garden

The wide Northumbrian skies are blue and cloudless, not a breath of wind disturbs this wonderful warm spring morning. God encircles me with a full and expectant stillness, palpable and perpetual... presence and promise.

I'm sitting on a bench under a shady tree in the walled garden at Nether Springs. It can be called a garden now; a sacred space where heaven and earth mingle. I look over the young fruit trees with their first pink and white blossom, across the newly sown emerald lawn and the earthy vegetable beds, to the place where a Poustinia will soon stand - a place of the desert in the midst of abundance, looking out to the sea.



Sitting here now it's hard to remember what this place looked like when we first saw it, three years ago this summer. Left to run wild for thirty years with tall, tangled, bramble bushes choking out the light, its uncared for sadness without birdsong or bloom. How different it is now, cleared by a small herd of rare breed

Tamworth pigs, and worked by many hands from all over the world. The birds are singing!

The vision for the walled garden has been a slowly developing Community one. We're blessed with many folk who work on the land in one way or another, professional horticulturists and enthusiastic gardeners. We've listened to them as they've come through Nether Springs and woven together their wisdom. We've also been listening to God in the process to see how he might



speak to people through this space. What's emerging is a garden that seeks to break the divide between sacred and secular, a working garden in the monastic tradition that supplies food for the house and where God is sought.

The development of the walled garden is also a



prophetic act; it raises the questions about where our food comes from. This is a huge issue for our world today, not least in terms of scarcity and sustainability, but also in the increasing industrialisation of food production (watch the film '[Food Inc](#)' if you want to see what this means). Being located on a farm, this

seems one small way for the Community, through Nether Springs, to live the questions, 'How then shall we live? and, 'How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?' To further this conversation we're developing a relationship with [A Rocha UK](#), a Christian environmentalist group who are helping us understand the habitat around Nether Springs and the insects, birds, plants and trees that inhabit it.



Talking to folk coming through the Community's Mother House it's apparent that there are quite a few of us throughout the Community who are growing our own food, raising livestock, or keeping bees. Perhaps this shouldn't be surprising in a Community that has

found inspiration in the Celtic Saints, an earthy lot who read the scriptures and saw creation as place of provision by God and of encounter with God - '*In his hands are the depths of the earth, the heights of the mountains are his also, the sea belongs to him for he made it, and the dry land, shaped by his hands*' (Ps 95:4-5). **Pete Askew**



Roy Searle reflects on a recent visit to IBTS:

Given More Than We Gave

Oxsana lifted her imploring Ukrainian voice into the air, and shrouded us in a reflective, challenging song. In her humble introduction she said that it told the story of how her father used to take her walking on the ice of a frozen river. She was always afraid and exhilarated by the risk in the walk but had trust in her father. Her song spoke of how her journey of faith felt like that uncertain walk on the frozen river - frightening yet exciting.

This is the case for so many of the students at The International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague. Most of them are from Eastern European countries where their faith tradition is marginalised and represents a tiny element of the local population.



Oxsana's song had opened a final night of reflection and worship led by the students in which their vision and dedication was clear for all to see.

We never fail to be generously received at IBTS, and always leave inspired and invigorated by the authenticity and resolve of the staff and students. Our offering to them is a chance to explore the story, values, teaching and creative practices of the Northumbria Community, and the interest and engagement of the seminary and students invariably grows.



The role of the seminary is substantial in preparing many Eastern European young people to bring hope to down-trodden homelands.

This valuable work is threatened, however, by an intensifying financial crisis.

It is hard to go far during free time in the city of Prague without bumping into some representation or other of Jan Hus (1369 – 1415). Hus was a church reformer, and

was burned at the stake for his efforts. He had caught the imagination of many Czechs, however, and a substantial 'Hussite' reforming movement formed after his death, which wrestled for decades with a resistant church. His vision is out-worked in the present-day Hussite church which, 'represents an attempt to bring together the essence of the Catholic Church and the principle of the Reformation', according to a church display in Old Town Square. (Maybe his teachings and the emphasis of his movement may have some pointers for us?)

Reflections from some of the students:

For me it was really good to hear about the Celtic prayer, because since I came to IBTS I was trying to find the way how to pray . . . This week I realise that I should pray as I can, not as I can't; this was like God speaking to me. I'm simple guy and I don't want to be something what I'm not....This is what the Northumbria Community did this week and I think that IBTS is community for me.

How many things we had together, in 'one' community. So many words spoke to me. And the last evening was so amazing! We had lot of worship, prayer, teaching, storytelling and drama. And the music... Great time, new experience, good feelings. Blessed, 'our family'.

First what I liked is the beginning of the day with prayer, continuing with prayer (midday prayer) and finishing day with prayer with whole community. Next thing, what I learned and what was new for me was prayer time in the city. Not just go and pray, but seek God....Simple, hospitable, seeking God - these are things which the Community has brought me.

Northumbria Community has surprised me and gives me the new way of thinking about spiritual life. Before I have never thought that it is possible to practice monastic style of life away from monastery, but now I see that we don't have to be in monastery for living monastic life. Thank you that you come to us and show us a new way how we can to grow spiritually.

... and from members of the Community team: *Beautiful Prague - it was my first time in this amazing city and I was really impressed by its beauty and greatly enjoyed it. The combination with the teaching for the IBTS students made this week even more special. I felt it was a privilege to share our lives with them for a week, some of them coming from really difficult circumstances. Annelies*



It was both inspiring and humbling to share with the amazing students at IBTS. Their dynamism and desire to learn and share was both beautiful and selfless. It was a lovely moment sharing in the Cuthbert compline with people of diverse backgrounds as each accent and voice repeated "My dear ones O Lord bless thou and keep in every place where they are". In a similar way I loved sharing the Lord's Prayer each using mother tongue. It was stimulating to hear so much teaching together, it has left ample food for thought and action. I enjoyed getting to know some hitherto unknown Community Companions as well as renewing 'old' friendships. An enlightening week. *Jenny*

Over the week we shared about common things: our journeys of faith; our churches; the struggles of living and following Jesus in our modern world. It was a surprise to us that the students experienced similar struggles in their homelands - Russia, Ukraine, Slovakia, Serbia, Hungary and Lithuania - and it was here that the story of Community, our ethos, rule and history, struck a chord for them.

There were two key things that were of particular significance for us during the week: the first was a chance comment made by one of the students at the beginning of the week when reflecting on prayer, commenting that



'when coming to Christ they were taught how to pray, but now wanted to know how to pray from the heart'. The second was to share in the homeless ministry the students are involved in, visiting several groups of people living rough in the city who they have built relationships with, taking hot soup, bread and Chi (fruit tea) to them on a Thursday evening. There is much we have learned from our week in Prague. Perhaps the most important is the value and necessity of Community, as well as the surprising realisation that language is not the major barrier to communication. *Paul and Susan*



Don't miss out on the opportunity to be part of the Northumbria Community team that will be going to Prague next year. Put the date in your

diary **10th - 16th March 2013** and look for details in the next edition of Caim.

This may be the last opportunity to be with the students in Prague. Please pray for IBTS as it considers its future and its need to potentially move to another country.

Roy Searle

We asked Judith to give us a

Community Resources update



This is the first of what I hope will become regular updates, through Caim and via e-bulletins, aimed at keeping you in touch with what is

happening in this sphere of the Community's life. For those who don't know me, I am a Community Companion and have been journeying with Northumbria Community for about 13 years. I joined the leadership team last year with a particular remit to work on our resources.

Over the past few months I have been taking a good look at some of our existing resources to see what could be done to give them a new lease of life. Work has begun on pulling together our rich and diverse liturgical material into the first of a series of products that we hope will make them more able to meet the needs of the wider Community and beyond. To start the series off, we have brought out a commercially available version of our Chapel Booklet that many of you will be familiar with from visits to Nether Springs. With the kind and generous help of the Torch Trust we hope to have this available in large print and in Braille later this summer. We receive regular requests from churches wanting to use seasonal liturgies such as our Stations of the Cross and so, over the next few months, we will be making a number of these available as downloads that can be printed out for a small fee.

I have also been looking at some of our previous publications to see what we could be re-releasing and I am happy to say that Celtic Illustrations has staged a comeback! For those of you who were not around Community about 15 years ago, Celtic Illustrations is a prayer journal that combines the inspirational stories of the lives of some of the Celtic Saints of Northumbria with beautifully decorated pages for you to record the reflections, struggles and longings of your own inner journey. Unlike last time, this edition comes in a user-friendly spiral bound notebook format.

Work is also progressing on new products. Recording began earlier this year for a further CD of Community music that will be an eclectic collection of songs reflecting our ethos. We are also underway with the task of compiling a new volume of Daily Readings. We are aware that both these projects have been long awaited, and work to date is encouraging, but please hold us in your prayers as we move forward with them. There is much still to be done!

Judith Goodfellow

Easter Reflections from around the Community



I have attended Easter retreats at L'Abri à Suvigny since 2007. I love the retreat as it enables me to leave the 'world' for a few days,

find the roots of my faith as a Christian and stop to hear what God has to say to me. I also love reuniting with others coming back to L'Abri each year as we share meals and activities together, like the pilgrimage around the local town of Mortain and renewing of vows at the site where Columbanus landed.

There is also time for individual activities such as craft sessions, including mosaic and painting, and a daily quiet time for reflection after lunch. I made a wooden Celtic Cross for the Chapel as a permanent contribution to L'Abri. Whilst the retreat is intended as a quiet time for reflection we also have time to socialise for a BBQ and have fun with an Easter egg hunt.

If anybody wants a relaxing time away I would recommend the Easter retreat. Jane & Andrew make us feel so welcome and once you have been to L'Abri you will find that you want to come back year after year.

Mark Hudson

After worshipping in our own churches those of us in the Bradford Group try each year to meet up to renew our vows together. This year, wind and rain deterred us from going up onto the moors as originally planned, so we retreated into the calm and comfort of Mary's lovely cottage. There were ten of us, including two-year-old Nathaniel, as we welcomed Tim and Lorely from the Otley group. It was good to have Norman and Ingrid with us too on their first Easter away from Nether Springs! Participating in the liturgy was as meaningful as ever – but with an added edge as more of us had managed to meet up on this occasion. This reinforced the sense of togetherness in Community as we embraced again our commitment to Availability and Intentional Vulnerability. Each of us felt blessed as together we were seeking God and his rule over our lives.

Tea and cake followed, with time to chat and share news with each other. Then all too soon we were heading off to continue our journeys Alone, but with the reassurance that in that we are Together.

Joan Parker and Fred Stone

Easter workshop and renewal of vows is central to

Community life. In our little part of South East Essex our Community Group, still in the early days of forming and getting to know one another, came together to share a meal and explore what it means to be Community, alone and together. To help us we have been looking through the stages of the novitiate process, and at our last meeting in April, we focused on the Easter Liturgy and renewal of vows. For all of us this was the first time we had renewed vows together as a group and the following comments highlight the blessings received:

- *Saying the renewal of vows together was very poignant*
- *The first time of experiencing renewal of vows, powerful and uplifting*
- *A very special gathering, an oasis in our busy lives*
- *Sharing the vows together rather than alone was very special*
- *The renewal of vows liturgy is a wonderful reminder of our calling*

The formation of our group has provided each of us a place, not just geographical, to come and share our stories, confident that they will be received openly with love and without judgement. We are finding many things in common, chief among them what it means to be Community.

The Easter liturgy was really helpful and we agreed to look further at this as we continue to meet. We think the team who worked on developing these resources has done a great job for which we are very thankful.

Paul Moore

I renewed my vows on my own on the beach at Marshside, on the Ribble Estuary. The lore is that Cuthbert's body is said to have crossed from Lytham to Meols, which became Churchtown, where there is a St Cuthbert's Church.

Michael Connaughton

In the little church of St Dubricius, on the banks of the



river Wye in Whitchurch twenty five Friends and Companions met together to celebrate. Five Community Groups were represented

at this Marches gathering and as expected, lots of laughter, food and 'togetherness' marked the occasion!

We had hoped to explore the banks of the river and enjoy the scenery but the weather conspired against that. Instead the 'thinness' of the church and its warmth helped us to create a sacred space in which we were able to explore some of the wonderful material from the Hild Easter resources, (thank you to those who put these together), sing together, (thank you to our musicians led by Bobbie and

Rich), and encourage one another through one of the suggested activities.

Finding our place had a special significance for Margaret Wood and Christine Jones as we welcomed them into Companionship of the Community. It had been a huge privilege to journey with them over the last eighteen months and they both gave testimony as to how the last two modules on the heretical imperative had somehow been the key that unlocked everything else!

We renewed our vows together joined (courtesy of a mobile phone) by Shayla Merivale from 400 miles away in Scotland! Following our shared meal we joined together to say Evening Office, before reluctantly making our ways home.

Duncan and Lesley MacLean

At Easter Workshop at Nether Springs we wrote our own Psalms of Thanksgiving. Here are some reflections on Easter at the Mother House.

*Praise be to the Holy God
Who allows me to share
some of His heart and tears.
I love you, Lord, my wonderful Saviour,
who died in pain on a cross for me.*

We journeyed deeply with the Gospel at Easter, remembering the Last Supper with a Footwashing Communion, Good Friday with a Stations of the Cross near Wooler, Holy Saturday with a Night Vigil and Christ's Resurrection on Holy Island and with a joyful Feast and Ceildh back at Nether Springs. For one person, it was his first Easter as a follower of Christ, and for others, their first Easter with the Northumbria Community. We all found new meaning in the ancient story.

*You make vast patterns through eternity
And weave my small concerns
in your eternal story
Lord God of heaven and sky and sea,
King of glory, friend to me.*



We experienced the friendship of God in our times alone and together. As this year's format allowed for more time working in smaller groups, we had opportunities to tell parts of our own stories, to

hold one another in prayer and to worship God in the particular expression of Creation that is Northumberland.

*Deeply rooted as the ancient oak,
Your love nurtures us from dawn to dusk.*

Whether we feel more like acorns or ancient oaks (in faith or years!) we were **nurtured in love**, as we came together as Community at Easter. *Catherine Askew*

Sarah Kinch reflects on a recent Community Group Leaders' Weekend

In between visits to Nether Springs I forget the magnificence of the Northumbrian landscape, the open skies, outstretched earth and vast horizons.

Some of us from the Bristol and Bath Community Group had come up last June for a few days but it is three years since I had been able to come to a Community Group Leaders weekend. By the end of the weekend I realised how much I had missed coming.

Group Leader weekends are an opportunity to share experiences, ideas and resources. This year we heard from Roy and Pete news of the Community and where God is leading it. It was so helpful to keep hearing the question "What is God saying in all of this?" as we experience changing times. Jeff shared with us how the Community is using various ways to communicate with each other which sparked the thought for me of looking at the possibility of connecting online to be able to include some folk taking part in Evening Prayer with the Community Group when they cannot come. I was left with the question of what do the Community Groups have to offer to those that come and the wider Community?

Every time you come to Nether Springs you see how it is developing as a site and how God is equipping it for the life to which the Community is being called. We had a ceilidh on the Saturday evening after which we had our own version of "stargazing live." It is always a joy to be prayed for and sent out with a blessing as on Sunday and to share our sense of God being present with us in the future.

In the coming together as Group Leaders there is a spirit of affirmation of what we are in our alone times because somehow in our togetherness as Community, in being vulnerable and available, we acknowledge and celebrate our similarities and differences. Any concerns, or questions, we have about whether we are doing it "right" as leaders and groups gives way in the face of so much diversity to a gentle confidence that in each of our settings we are fulfilling God's calling to us. We are all being God's realisation of the Northumbria Community in our own locality.

Open skies give way to open hearts.

The outstretched earth mirrors the outstretched arms of welcome.

Vast horizons are revealed round the communal table in broken bread and water.

The heart of Community is God's love in action.

What a gift of a weekend. *Sarah Kinch*

Prayer Guide

For those who are compiling our Community Prayer Guide, it is really helpful to have requests and suggestions for prayer, for people, places and initiatives that are connected with the Community. Please send them to the Office and we will try to include them in the next edition, or email them to prayerguide@northumbriacommunity.org

We were delighted to receive this update from Margene Vessel, on the far side of the Atlantic!

The Twin Cities Northumbria Community Group met the weekend after Easter at the lovely home of Ben and Sara Tucker.



Colourful, delicious and very tasty food was accompanied by honest conversation and laughter. Our meal was followed by an

introduction to the new 'Journeying with Hild' booklet. As we took time to read it several times and then reflect on what we heard and felt, there was space to listen, reflect, ponder and sit together with the words.

As I listened that night, there was a warm familiarity about the liturgy. It was the Hild liturgy that directed my path when I found myself on retreat at Hetton Hall in 1994. The section where we read 'My soul's desire is to see the face of God and to find rest in His house...' gave me a firm centre so many years ago, and still serves as an anchor today.



It was an honour to welcome Pam Keske to join our gathering. She brought her paints and paper and created an artistic rendering even as we were together that evening. For any of the Northumbria Community who were at the Community retreat in Florida at the beginning of the year, you will be

familiar with Pam's art and heart. David showed the video of the retreat so those who were not able to make it could get a glimpse of what we experienced together.

If you live near Minneapolis or St. Paul, MN and would like to find out more about joining us as we 'Journey with Hild' this year, please contact me:

margenevessel@northumbriacommunity.org

Gill Yellowlees writes:

'The House That John Built' – Praying from Melrose

When Andy Raine rang me a couple of years ago to ask if I would be the Melrose link person in the The House That John Built, my initial bemusement gave way to remembering to "Be Available"...so I said yes...as one does...without any real idea of what I was agreeing to!

Then came the email with Laura's lovely image of all of the sites connecting up in prayer on the same day. 12 April 2012. Umm...OK.

At a recent concert given by Anna, Andy introduced me to Olly, who lives in Melrose. Olly said "OK"...so now we were two. A week later, in Earlston church, I spoke to Naomi, who has childhood memories of the earliest Northumbria Community camps. Naomi lives in St Boswells (Boisils), and she enthusiastically said "Yes".

By email, Diane Sekuloff offered to join us by praying from wherever she would be, connecting through her pictures and memories of Melrose.



At 6.30 pm, three of us met at Scott's View, the beautiful spot overlooking the site of Boisil's monastery at Old Melrose, with the Eildon Hills behind, Melrose to the west, St Boswells to the south, and the Lammermuirs to the north. We prayed the

blessings for the other places, and received each blessing, in turn, for the people of Melrose and the surrounding area.

Birds sang, and the gorse in full bloom offered a heavenly scent reminiscent of coconut. We sat in silence as bright rays of sunshine broke through the clouds, and we experienced a real sense of affirmation.

We felt connected, in that deep and mystical way that only comes from prayer. Connected with the earth, and the ancient place of Melrose. Connected with each other, relative strangers up to that point, but sharing a heart to pray for these Scottish borderlands. Connected with all the other links in the chain of love,

passing on the message from Jesus to John, down the ages, and across the land and seas. *Gill Yellowlees*



Caroline Taylor made a trip to the recent **Bridge House Gathering**



Since moving south to Milton Keynes we have been on the fringes of the Community, mainly because it was such a long trek to Northumbria, and we had been unable to connect with Companions locally. So when we heard about the gathering, we were eager to go.

We drove past flooded fields to get to the beautiful setting of Bridge House at Shillingford on the banks of the River Thames, south of Oxford. Philip and Rosemary open up their home as a refuge and retreat for weary souls. This day was a time to officially recognise their house as a Community House.

The day of the gathering was blessed with good weather, good food and



great fellowship. We were able to spill out into the garden at lunchtime and enjoy the sunshine. This was very welcome as the sun had been hiding behind rain clouds for the past few days.

It was uplifting to say Midday Prayer with others and then to be part of the recognition and blessing of this new Community House. We heard part of the story of Bridge House and Roy Searle spoke to us about home, heart, hospitality and hope. He reminded us that we will never know the effect our hospitality has on other people – giving them time is life-giving.



We ended the day with tea and lots of cake, then Evening Prayer. God's peace certainly rests in this place. As always with Community Gatherings, you enter as a stranger and leave as a friend. We met lots of new folk as well as some old friends and made links into a local group which meets not too far away in St Albans, and we are sure that we will be back at Bridge House before too long.

Caroline Taylor

We asked Andy Raine to tell us the story **about the meditation for DAY 20:**

The Day 20 meditation has two parts, but one theme: placing our times into God's hands. It reminds me of the piece in Michel Quoist's 'Prayers of Life' where someone keeps saying, "I have no time", then finally prays, "Lord, I have plenty of time, the days, hours, minutes of my life...."

At an early Easter Workshop at St Mary's in Berwick, Kirsten Coulter split us up into groups with a sheet and a half of prayers and meditations to choose something from, which we were to present in some way. 'Even though..' was one of them, taken from the anthology 'God in our midst' and in turn from 'Hebridean Altars'. Most of us love this piece even more since Jeff and Jill Sutherland set it to music and recorded it on the 'Waymarks' CD. Brenda Grace introduced a dance to it which can be used with groups, dissolving eventually into a free-style jig!

The second part of Day 20 is more poignant. I learned it on the School of Creative Ministry in Dunham, Quebec, with Y-WAM in 1978 out in Canada. This was after Brother Roland Walls had insisted I leave my beloved Holy Island 'for a season'. When I asked God, "Why have You brought me here?" I was told, "To understand Isaiah 62." When I looked up the chapter I found it spoke of being married, and also of being married to the land. So with this song, 'I trust in Thee, O Lord', over and over I placed those two concerns into God's hands. It was Anna Carroll I eventually asked to sing this as her solo on 'Ebb and Flow', and Anna who I finally gained the courage to bring to the Island to be my wife. With both these concerns (the Island and my wife) there was the promise, the waiting which seemed like forever and then the fulfilment. The promise was sure but seemed in the in-between times so fragile. ***Andy Raine***



Thanks for all the entries to the 'Caption Competition' from the last issue of Caim. We had some fun reading them, and our winners - chosen entirely subjectively and with regard only to our own warped sense of humour - were these:



As Pete practiced for the Olympic pole-vault trials, Norm wished he had taken more care to follow the instructions about the location of the door.
Malcolm & Tina Nicholas

I know we are to enter by the narrow way, but a door would have been easier. ***John Davis***



New Companions

Aidan Gillespie of Kent was welcomed as a new Companion at St. Cuthbert's Beach on Holy Island on Easter Day (8 April). His mentor was Nick Haigh.



Margaret Wood and Christine Jones were welcomed into Companionship - see Easter reflections pg 8

Nick and Janice Jones of Bradford were warmly welcomed around the dining room table at Nether Springs on 17 March. Their daughters Issy and Lucy were present, as were their Mentors, John and Jenny Cooper.



On 25 May on a beautiful summer's evening at the Ruskin Studio in the heart of the Wyre Forest, the Worcester Community Group met to welcome **Jan Ansell and Doreen Deaken** into Companionship. They shared that after a hesitant start on the Novitiate process nearly two years ago, they discovered a rhythm

of coming to the studio at regular intervals to study the modules alone and together. These times have become so precious that they are planning to continue this rhythm. *Lesley MacLean (Mentor)*

Cyndy Geraghty (Mentor) writes: We welcomed the **Rev Deb Hill** (New Hampshire, USA) as a Companion with a Seder Meal and day filled with worship, reflection and fellowship on 21 April. The day was closed with the renewal of our vows with the Hild Liturgy.

Several new Companions were recently welcomed in **Northern Ireland** - see the article on Pg 4.



Shayla Waugh and Rob Merivale were married at the end of March in Devon. Sian Murray-Williams led a beautiful service of blessing in the presence of family and friends.

On 2 June, **Elaine van Zon** married **Alan Todd** at Morpeth in the morning, and they celebrated on the beach at Newbiggin in the afternoon with a blessing led by Catherine Askew; many other Community folks were present. The service included a Caim prayer (complete with a circle drawn around them in the sand) and the sung blessing, 'May the Saints and Saviour.'



L'Abri a Suvigny

From 14 July Jane Perkins will be spending the bulk of her time in France. In addition to the programme already publicised in the previous CAIM and on the website, it will be possible for people to come and stay at privately arranged times for retreat and space to enjoy the French countryside, or help with the house and grounds. For more info email ncinfrance@gmail.com

Linda Brown became a proud grandmother when her daughter-in-law and son, Anna & Jamie, had a baby girl, Isabella Rose, on 11 May.

'Invitation to the Master's Table'

Come to Northern Ark, a small, family friendly, non-denominational Christian camp in North Yorkshire. Sun 12 - Sat 18 August. Contact Norma Charlton norma.charlton@northumbriacommunity.org

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