



CAIM

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

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

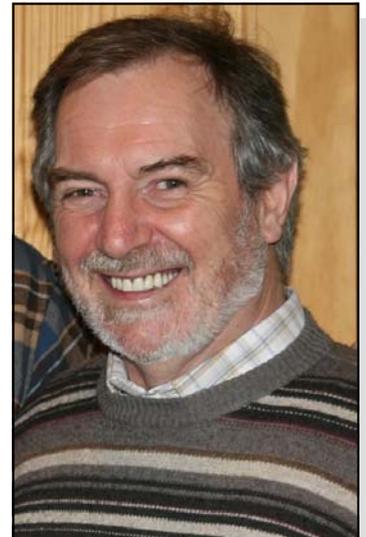
Inside this issue:

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Lazarus - 'Preview & Paradox' | 1 |
| Journey with Brigid | 2 |
| Easter Meditations | 4 |
| Community Group Leaders' weekend | 5 |
| Risky Living | 6 |
| Crucible Course | 7 |
| On Retreat | 8 |
| Intercessory Prayer | 9 |
| Meditation | 10 |
| Book Review | 10 |
| Resources Update | 11 |
| New Companion | 11 |
| The Newsy Bit | 12 |

Trevor Miller shared some thoughts on

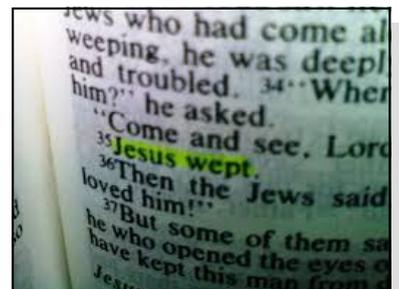
The Story of Lazarus: A Thin Place of Preview and Paradox

There was a Celtic saying that 'heaven and earth are only three feet apart', indicating that such 'thin places' in Celtic thought were sacred places where it was believed the veil between heaven and earth, human and divine, temporal and eternal, were especially thin and where we experience that which is beyond normal time and the limits of our five senses.



As Easter fast approaches, the story of Lazarus in the Gospel of John is a timely reminder that in many ways it is the story of the ultimate 'thin place' – between death and life, time and eternity. These 'thin place' moments are often our catching a glimpse of God's promised future which is already happening for those who have passed on. This is 'the kingdom of God' which Jesus ushered in and while (this side of heaven) we are yet to experience it in its fullness, in so many ways it's breaking in all around us. And yet, at the same time the story of Lazarus reminds us that it doesn't always look or feel like that, as the context is not only one of human love and friendship but also one of sickness and mortality, as in when we experience the very real pain of grief and loss. We see this in our current Prayer Guide for March where we have the joy of "seeing the harvest of our lives bearing fruit" and in the same week praying "for all those who know the pain of suffering and loss".

So yes, 'thin places' reveal the presence of God, the touch of God, the glory of God but it doesn't mean exemption from disappointment, dashed hopes, confusion and tears. We see this in Jesus himself as he experienced the awfulness of death's consequences, and we read 'Jesus wept'. God cried! God had become a man, made friends and then Jesus' friend Lazarus died and Jesus burst into tears. He identifies with the pain of Martha and Mary and cries with them. He's upset because they are upset. But that isn't the only emotion Jesus has. 'Jesus wept' is a poor translation, because it takes away the emotional intensity of it; it makes it seem so formal. It's better translated as 'deeply moved or greatly disturbed'. It's the word used to describe 'a snorting horse'. When applied to people it meant anger, so it actually means that Jesus was absolutely livid at death and its effects on people he loved. *Cont'd on Pg 3*



Anita Haigh invites us to

Journey with Brigid – at Easter and beyond

For the last three years at Easter, we have been using some of our liturgies to explore and reflect on our core values as a Community.



So far in our 'Follow the Example' series, we have journeyed with the Hild, Brendan and Caedmon liturgies. This coming Easter, we will explore together the treasures of the Brigid liturgy, in particular focusing on what

it means to show hospitality.

Our Community Rule of Life of Availability and Vulnerability encourages us to open ourselves to God and to others, to be hospitable. This is not simply about opening our homes and offering warmth, food and drink. It also requires us to open our hearts to others in acceptance and love, and our minds to different perceptions and insights.

As we reflect on the blessings and challenges of this call to hospitality, whether at specific gatherings, or in our own homes, may we know Christ's presence with us and be open to encountering him 'in friend and stranger'.

Do remember to share your reflections and experiences on your Journey with Brigid via Caim and so encourage others. *Anita Haigh*

Welcome to the Spring edition of Caim!

We hope that this Easter season will bring you a renewing of the hope we have in Christ - and that you will enjoy setting out with the Community's 'Brigid' resources, on a journey which will take us through the whole year.

If you haven't seen them yet, do download them from the website - they're on the home page. Enjoy this issue of Caim - and why not drop us a line with some news, or a reflection, perhaps on something you've read here? It's 'our' newsletter... Deadline for the next edition is May 22! We'd love to hear from you: caim@northumbriacommunity.org

Jeff & Ingrid

Easter has always been a special time for the Community to gather; a time for all of us to explore our journey of faith and for Community Companions to renew their vows.

Easter Retreats and Gatherings

Nether Springs - weekend retreat - Maundy Thursday (late afternoon) to Easter Monday (10am). For more information, contact: office@northumbriacommunity.org

Bradford group - meeting on Easter Sunday at 4 pm to renew vows. Anyone welcome - for details contact Joan Parker - mamajoan1@gmail.com or tel: 01274 607944.

Cornwall group - special relaunch on Easter Saturday at 4pm, probably using the Methodist Church and Manse (or garden if fine) renewing vows for those who want to make them and inviting others to listen and join discussion afterwards over tea at Canworthy Water. For more details: doreen.sd@btinternet.com

East Yorkshire Community Group are hoping to get together on Easter Monday on Hornsea beach for renewal of vows and to eat fish & chips! We would aim to meet at 11.30am. Folks are welcome to join us but e-mail for details: mrs.lindadavis@gmail.com

Herefordshire - Gathering at 'The Venue', Ross on Wye. Easter Monday 3pm-6:30pm. Programme: gathering around the Brigid resources, worship, fellowship and food (bring and share meal). Cost: donations towards the hire of the hall and resources. For more information contact: lesleymaclean68@gmail.com Please book in as it will help with planning.

St Albans group meeting on Easter Monday at 5.30pm for a cup of tea and renewal of vows following the Easter Monday pilgrimage to St Albans Abbey. (Venue - 13 Cottonmill Crescent, St Albans, AL1 1HW) If you would like to meet up with other Community folk joining in with the pilgrimage please contact Mike or Netta Gibbs so we can arrange to meet up: 01727 854860 or netttag@tiscali.co.uk

Sheffield area group meeting on Good Friday evening to share items collected whilst walking during the day and using them to create something together as an act of worship (may also include renewal of vows). For meeting details contact Helen Lings: helen.lings@live.co.uk

L'Abri a Suvigny (France) - weekend retreat - Maundy Thursday to Easter Sunday - varied programme and outings - renewal of vows - suggested donation £25 per person per day. For more information, contact ncinfrance@gmail.com

The Brisbane (Australia) group will be renewing their vows around the feast of Pentecost on 24 May. *There may well be other local gatherings throughout the UK and beyond. Please check the website!*

Cont'd from pg 1

In the Jewish tradition the soul hangs out near the body for three days only and Lazarus had been dead for four. So John is telling us that this is not a story of recovery from the sick bed, or reviving from a coma, he's dead dead. And his distraught sisters say to Jesus 'if you were here my brother would not have died'. This is real honesty and deep frustration at his delayed arrival, as they look at him saying in effect – we are dying here and where were you? They're right though, aren't they, because who hasn't felt that? ... where is God when our loved ones are dying? Where is God when we hurt so bad from life's circumstances that it feels like death? How many times have we said, 'If only Jesus had been here, it wouldn't have turned out like this!'

So, greatly disturbed in spirit, Jesus asks where they had laid his friend and they say 'come and see' and it's then he cries! Remember 'come and see' is exactly what he'd said to them. At the very beginning of the Gospel he had called to his would-be followers and said to them 'come and see' and so much had happened since then. So now they say to Jesus the very thing he'd said to them, but they are telling him to 'come and see' death. Come, Jesus, and see the thing that ends life! and for this Jesus weeps and later for this Jesus dies.

Lazarus is 'already four days in the tomb' and the word for 'tomb' literally means 'the place of remembrance' ie now in the hearts and memory of those left behind. 'Take away the stone' – no, he stinks, he is decomposing, we don't want to see. They didn't know that the tomb is to become a womb as Lazarus is restored to new life. Jesus yelled, shouted three orders (same word to be used later by the crowd yelling for his blood).

- **Lazarus** – calling his friend by name (Lazarus knows His voice).
- **Come** – come to me, I am calling you, 'here, as a master to a pet dog'.
- **Out** – come out of the tomb, darkness into light, death to life, let the power of God raise you up and flow through you now.

It was Jesus declaring as 'the dead man came out' the Resurrection and the Life.

Imagine today – if you've just come out of the Big Brother house or the Jungle, you're interviewed and written about ad nauseum. BBC/ SKY News would be having aerial shots of the tomb, the crowds, interviewing key witnesses, offering Lazarus/Jesus huge sums of money for an exclusive – but the Bible is silent other than it happened as described.



Such was the impact of this that after Lazarus was called back to life the authorities became determined to kill Jesus. It was Jesus preparing his friends and disciples for his own death and resurrection. Amazing though it was, it was simply a sign of a greater miracle to come – a preview that Jesus was soon to die the death of death itself, to show that as 'the Resurrection and the Life' he had authority over death, and many would 'put their faith in him'.

It is vital that we grasp that the restoration to life is not just something that happened historically but that it happens now. Not merely the 'there and then' of the past but the 'here and now' of the present. The resurrection is not just a point of doctrine. For Jesus it is primarily a matter of living, of taking our place in the community of others who are resurrected too. It was the invitation to continue the life of Jesus by simply living in the daily gift of his love and grace. We are not called solely to believe in Jesus' resurrection, but in resurrection life. Not a single event, however fantastic that event but in a state of being that now combines 'resurrection and life' – the spiritual principle of life being lived now from the inside out. It is the daily prayer of each Companion, 'This day, be within and without me'.

The story of Lazarus is an invitation to embrace paradox and mystery, not as an escape from the need to wrestle with faith, but as an invitation to live an incarnational life – to allow God to live in and through us 'in the day in which we find ourselves' – whatever the ever-changing circumstances of our differing roles, responsibilities and relationships in the ordinariness of life.

This is the Easter call of the Northumbria Community. We like Lazarus need the Risen Lord Jesus to call us out of the tomb to renew our vows to live as resurrected people:

- Called out like Lazarus personally, individually, intentionally to a Way for Living of Availability and Vulnerability.
- Called out to life in the context of death, love, anger, compassion, grief, family, friendship, pain, disappointment, and confusion, all in the mix of that life.
- Called out to be a Bethany for those Jesus loves – to provide 'heart, home, hospitality and hope.'
- Called out to be a place of welcome, to enable others to say 'see how he loved them'.
- Called out to a life of prayer to illuminate the darkness of our culture.
- Called out to create opportunities for the Kingdom of God to break through.
- Called out to live as "Easter people in a Good Friday world" so that the 'glory of God will be revealed' in who we are alone/together. *Trevor Miller*



Good Friday

Torn from your Father's embrace
iron hardness

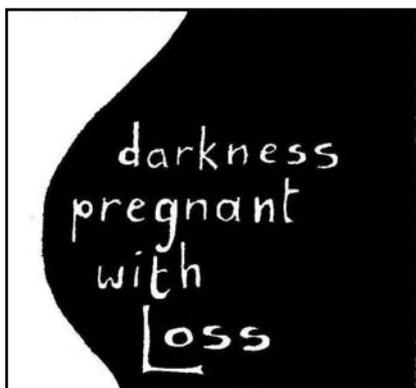
binds living flesh
to
unforgiving wood.

Humbled, stripped, emptied, broken,
You make that last step
of
separation.

Darkness without, darkness within
Your dying light made perfect in suffering.

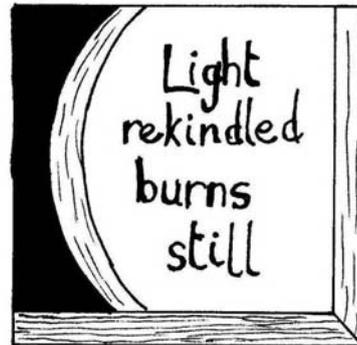
It is finished...

Complete!



Holy Saturday

The sealed tomb
filled with darkness,
pregnant with loss,
barren,
void,
empty of all
but the husk
of a seed
which fell
and
died.



Easter Day

In the cold sepulchre
a spark?
a glimmer?
an explosion?
The darkness shattered.
The cave flooded by the light
of the mystery of resurrection.
Uncreated light rekindled,
burning still,
never consumed.

Rob Holden

We asked one or two attendees to reflect upon the

Northumbria Community Group Leaders' Weekend, January 2015

An abiding image left with me from the Group Leaders' Weekend will be the three men standing in a row wearing green shiny wigs, neatly coiffured by our resident hairdresser,



Norma Wise, looking something like a cross between the Beverly Sisters and the 'Three Little Maids from School'. Whatever do they get up to at these

weekends, you may be wondering!

Well it's amazing what we can pack into two days. Apart from exchanging news and ideas about our groups, we were given new partners and groups to pray for in the coming year to help us feel connected. We composed a New Year Liturgy by selecting prayers and blending them together; there were shells and pebbles to help us reflect on our own lives and a first opportunity for a number of us to say Morning Office in the chapel by the walled garden, kept warm by the log fire and lit by candles.

There were many opportunities to renew friendships and make new ones, chatting over coffee and delicious meals, and the fun and enjoyment of the Saturday night ceilidh, where those with musical and story-telling gifts entertained us regally.



As always we were sent on our way with an anointing and blessing to empower us for the time ahead and we left with grateful thanks to the

House Team for their hospitality and to Norma Charlton for taking care of us all.

Liz Brobyn, Forest of Dean Group.

It's hard to describe the experience of representatives of sixteen Community Groups all together at Nether Springs. With Norma's leadership we had the opportunity to pool our experiences and take part in the activities offered to help us shape our sharing alone, and together, with God.

Roy and Pete also shared some reflections on the current life of the Northumbria Community which helped us to see the Community's unique place in the world. Our rhythm of prayer and Way of Living have inspired many people, including a group in the Philippines who didn't know how to pray anymore in dealing with life when faced with disaster.

However we were challenged by Pete that we mustn't get

carried away by the positive feedback: The Community lives or dies as to how/whether every Companion and Friend goes to the Cell and listens to the Father. It is the heart alone with God travelling with others that matters. It's not about numbers; we measure ourselves with God. We are here to point people to the Rule of Life and discipleship.

One really meaningful experience was shared as a group. Norma had cut out a large variety of prayers. We were invited to choose a prayer and reflect on our own what God was sharing with us; then we shared in pairs. At the end of the weekend Norma invited us to join in prayer together using the prayers we had chosen. In the quietness we read our prayers out loud when we felt it was right to share them. The result was a deeply meaningful time with each prayer following the last one beautifully. Sometimes the prayers grouped themselves together in themes. None of this was pre-planned. The Spirit just flowed so graciously.

In a sense it is really hard to capture the atmosphere and deep connection that was present that weekend. How do you convey something that is elusive to the senses but present to them all? How do you know that you have truly experienced something deep in your spirit but you never saw it?

Perhaps the best we can say is that what struck us is that all the Community Groups are very fluid, like the Community itself. We are all attempting to live the Community questions in the places we are and that gives us all a unique flavour. No group expresses itself in the same way yet the DNA of the Northumbria Community holds us together.

Listening to other people, putting ideas into the melting pot, was heaven sent for us. We look forward to continuing to share the journey.

Sarah, Chris and Malcolm, Bristol and Bath Group

Norma Charlton gave us this snapshot of our

Community Groups:

We now have 48 groups in 44 areas. Last year new groups started up in Puget Sound, Washington State USA, Bournemouth, Nottingham, Leicester and Sheffield - and we have another new group in Lancashire meeting for the first time on March 26.

Each group chooses what form their meeting will take to suit their own members. The main objective is to help each other to live out our Rule and follow the rhythm of daily prayer. Hopefully they give an experience of being 'together' to sustain and inspire in the 'alone' times with God.

Numbers regularly attending the groups vary, from 3 to 20+. There is no ideal, although many people report that sometimes when fewer are there the experience of fellowship and spirituality can be deeper.

There is a summary of each group on the forum on our website. For more details do contact norma.charlton@northumbriacommunity.org or write via the Office at Nether Springs.

In the last edition of Caim, Duncan MacLean introduced some reflections on the life of Brendan, themed 'The Call to Risky Living'. This second instalment, taken from his talk at Lee Abbey, asks:

How can we help others (and ourselves!) to risk, journey, and discover life?

By living authentic Community. In today's post-modern world, many people see togetherness as a rare, precious and elusive thing. The fear is that in the midst of so much pluralism and diversity, it may degenerate into fragmentation. This is why true community is highly sought after: a place of welcome and hospitality where it is safe to fail and be human; that accepts people with their doubts, contradictions and dysfunctionality.

By becoming genuine seekers again. Our starting point is



not to present the answer, rather to live authentically the life God has revealed vocationally and be open to others to join us so together we can explore a journey of discovery.

By being culturally aware. There is a great hunger for a spirituality that gives a sense of place and space; for a rhythm that encompasses the whole of life; for silence, contemplation and liturgy. Incarnation is all about living in the world, 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us'. Jesus was a Jew in Jewish culture and he embraced his culture by simply living in the world of people and place. We are not to be removed from culture nor are we to be immersed in culture but to engage with culture in order to play our part to redeem it through faith, hope and love. It is not separation from the world but living in the world with no sacred/secular divide.

By living the questions not insisting on answers. It is discovering mystery and paradox as friends as we explore our questions 'Who is it that you seek? How then shall we live? How shall we sing the Lord's song?' Not just living with the questions in terms of resignation to the way things are but living the questions themselves as a platform for experimentation and re-imagining so as to contribute to what can be.

By embracing religionless Christianity. It is realising the understanding of Christianity as a religion is obsolete and that relationship is paramount. 'Jesus calls us, not to a new religion but to life'. We need to anticipate new and liberating discoveries as we explore what it means to be church on the margins and to live with liminality [threshold] through the transitional period from what is to what could be.

By emphasising the differences between dogmatism and faith. It is accepting that the only way forward is to dialogue with God, listen to others who differ from us, and seek to understand other viewpoints to help us discern what is true. It is living 'a Generous Orthodoxy'. It is being open to providing way stations for those who are 'disillusioned followers, reflective exiles, transitional explorers, integrated wayfinders' to use the categories of New Zealand writer Alan Jamieson. Dogmatism is like stone whereas faith is like soil. Dogmatism is closed, defensive, stereotyped and polarises. Faith is open, resilient, diverse and teachable, stimulating understanding and tolerance. Dogmatism insists on propositions and doctrine, faith knows and follows Jesus.

By bringing a social justice orientation. Without getting into fads and fashions we need to be good stewards in God's world: to work for justice, to make poverty history, to help the environment, to oppose injustice and exploitation, to put a high value on ethical shopping and living; above all, to have a new awareness of God's heart for the poor.

By welcoming those points of connectedness as the edges of a sketch map rather than a detailed contoured

Ordinance Survey Map. We have no detailed answers but the beginning of a response to help us live with the questions, rich themes that touch all our lives. Community, Journey, Spirituality, Story, Pilgrimage, Faith, Relationship, Memory, Language, etc can all lead to Jesus. Jesus is true but all versions of Christianity are incomplete because they

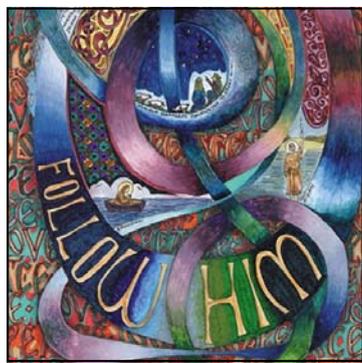


are human. Post-modern people are in transition and we must join them on the journey. Northumbria Community links to the current interest in the ancient-future church – a recovery of older patterns of spirituality for today.

By being unafraid of validating and sharing our experiences. We have become embarrassed by the spiritual, the mystical & the supernatural. It's ironic that the Church is in serious decline at exactly the same time as our whole culture is experiencing a rising tide of spiritual concern. We need to note the centrality of personal experience as a prime indicator of that which is true and important. Spiritual searchers today are ignoring the Christian Church as an option not because it is old fashioned but because they perceive it to be 'unspiritual', merely institutional and therefore irrelevant. Yet the gospel is always about experience, encounter, relationships, healing, grace. By genuinely validating the spiritual experiences of others we ask 'who is it that you seek?' We say that your experience is valid evidence of a spiritual dimension.

By sharing our own stories. Life is being part of a story still being told, chapters yet to be written, a participative narrative. We need to tell our own unique stories: unedited, un-sanitised, rough and ready - not squeezed into a formula. Our doubts, fears, problems, embarrassments, and confessions have great apologetic and pastoral value in a post-modern world. They illustrate 'truth' in its post-modern form of honesty, authenticity and transparency.

Finally, we are called to become heretics! Jesus was transparent and vulnerable and because of it was shunned by the religious authorities of his day. He wasn't challenging the Truth but their perception of truth based on legalistic interpretations. As we attempt to follow his example, with much trial and error, we try to embrace the vulnerability of the Heretical Imperative; not to be academics/intellectuals but ordinary believers willing to think (as best they can) about their faith and how to live it in today's world. In order to live faithfully in this fragmented world, we are willing to explore the new terrain and in this we risk misunderstanding, even the



charge of heresy in order to obey the gospel 'imperative' of seeking God as Person, a subject to be known and loved in relationship, rather than as Doctrine, an object to be analysed and known about, which limits God to our own understanding of 'truth'.

In pre-modern society religious certainty and authority were taken for granted. Modern society by contrast is fragmented, steeped in pluralism and relativism. Truth and morality are no longer seen as absolute, objective realities that apply to everyone, but relate to different personal values, all equally true. There is now no religious certainty or authority which is binding for all. Biblical Christianity is now a choice, a heresy because it goes against the tide of the general pattern of life and thought today. It is this context that makes it important to 'explore new ways of being church' and embrace risky living by offering hospitality, living missionally and challenging the status quo.

In these 'new dark ages', exodus and exile characterise the pilgrim people of God. We are on a journey in a foreign land, living on the margins. Northumbria Community is always a draft, never a finished product. We continue to live and explore the Questions. The 'only way to justify the claims of the gospel is by living the way of life to which the gospel calls us'. To live vocationally is mission: sent to be, to live the good news of Jesus Christ. In living this fresh expression, it is our prayer that in the goodness and grace of God we will be part of the 'enacting a fearful hope for society'.

Duncan MacLean.

'Follow Him' artwork courtesy of Mary Fleeson of Lindisfarne Scriptorium.

Northumbria Community contributes to and supports the Crucible Course

We live in a pluralistic society, with multiple religious options alongside the prevailing secular assumptions, in which Christianity has lost its position of dominance and privilege and churches are on the margins of society. Although we seem to be declining in numbers and influence, this context offers many new possibilities – if we have the courage and imagination to grasp them.

Crucible is for Christians with courage and imagination, who suspect that:

- We need to operate as cross-cultural missionaries because we live in a cross-cultural mission context.
- We need to think creatively about incarnating the gospel and planting new kinds of churches in emerging and diverse cultures.
- We need to recover the biblical vision of shalom and reflect on how we live as followers of Jesus in light of this all-embracing vision.
- We need to pay particular attention to the margins, because we serve the God who frequently does new things there:
 - on the margins of society among the poor and disenfranchised;
 - at the margins of culture, where creative thinking explores new possibilities;
 - on the margins of the familiar, the spaces all around us, neglected or ignored, but full of potential.

What is a crucible?

- A melting pot, where antiquated structures are made pliable and reshaped.
- A time when powerful political, social, intellectual or economic forces converge.
- A place where different cultures or styles can mix together and produce something new.



Crucible runs three intensive training weekends each year to equip Christians to follow Jesus on the margins. Two streams are available on each weekend. Each stream flows separately, but the subjects can be done in any combination. For more information about dates and modules please find us at: www.cruciblecourse.org.uk or contact us at info@cruciblecourse.org.uk

Anne Wadey wrote about her experience moving toward, and through, retreat:

“It’s time I went on a retreat” I thought to myself, so sat down with the Nether Springs retreat programme to look for a) dates that might work, b) something I hadn’t already done and c) something I thought I might cope with having been more ‘alone’ than ‘together’ for a significant period of time.



Which is how I came to choose the peg loom weaving retreat, having no idea at all that, by the time I arrived at Nether Springs some months later I would already have become an enthusiast for the technique and be in the process of moving to Northumbria!

It was a few days in which Alone and

Together was very evident. After an initial demonstration of what to do and a reflection on how we might use the process to guide meditation on spiritual themes, we were free to choose our own work station close to others or in a space on our own. There were very few spaces and surfaces apart from the kitchen and dining room that were not overtaken by wooden boards with pegs threaded with string and large quantities of a variety of wool.

Indeed the library took on a somewhat rural odour as some of the raw fleece had not been washed. Like our own characters, there was much evidence of the environments through which the sheep had passed ensnared in the wool, and even other substances that

most would prefer to avoid or hide. No fault is hidden from our Father God and like the dedicated weaver he



has no qualms in dealing with things we find difficult.

Sometimes we worked in silence, sometimes listening to music including

old weaving songs from the western islands of Scotland. At other times we shared and listened to each other’s stories of the work of God in our lives, often apparently mundane but also marvellous. And those who needed more alone space still came together at meal times, sharing, supporting and celebrating a birthday.

A few of us completed our woven pieces; more of us took away our looms with more work to do but confident we knew what to do. It was a very simple technique, with a limited range of materials and yet in just a small group (not all women) there was significant variety revealed in the fabrics produced. A common journey was undertaken together, but with a diversity of experiences and destinations. There was certainly joy and laughter, and perhaps also some private tears as life knots were untangled.

Personally, I learned anew that being together could be a safe place. And we all came away with softened hands from the lanolin in the wool! *Anne Wadey*



Julie Johnson wrote about the

North-West Winter Gathering

A smaller number than usual gathered for midday office at St John’s Church, Yealand, with many apologies from those unable to come. The office was followed by an introduction to the day’s theme, ‘The Cell’, and an invitation to list (anonymously) distractions that prevent us from spending time alone with God. After an excellent shared lunch (special thanks to Di for the delicious soup), and time of fellowship, Michael’s short presentation focussed us on the meaning and purpose of The Cell. Here are extracts from it:

Why? Go to your cell, and your cell will teach you everything!

CDP, Meditation Day 4

You should go to the cell for a total confrontation with yourself...

For one goes to the cell to see more and to see better

Alessandro Pronzato

Where and when? The martini principle - “Any time, any place, anywhere”

Michael then led us into a time of meditation and contemplation, drawing us back together to share our experiences. The Evening Office brought our day to a close with singing and an invitation to offer to God one thing He wants us to replace or address in our lives. Throughout the afternoon I was drawn to, and affected by, simple words of invitation that were displayed on a poster as we gathered and worshipped: Here I Am. I Am, just be, with me.

Julie Johnson

Stephen Hewitt wrote after attending the
North Northumberland Community
Group 'Intercession' Meeting

What does it mean to be a Companion in Community? Sheena's and my journey with Community began several years ago and, having recently retired from church leadership, the value of being a part of Community has been highlighted for me.



Not long ago we attended a meeting of the local Community group in North Northumberland, which is led by Sheila Hay. Fourteen of us from a radius of about 15 miles met at Alnwick for a session on Intercessory Listening Prayer introduced by Andy Raine*. This practice is different from a conventional intercession prayer group and specifically focuses on listening in the Spirit and then sharing whatever word or picture might occur. If there is time the group proceeds to a second and possibly a third round to 'hone' the insights received. Intercession based on this practice is fine-tuned to seeking to pray according to the Father's will (John 5.19); extraneous thoughts or interfering impressions are excluded and taken authority against, so what comes then may be attended to with some confidence.

That evening a number of different words and pictures were shared, such as *the sensation of being carried along by a flooded river*, and *a row of town houses in Edinburgh*. I expect that everyone at the meeting had a different interpretation of what we were hearing. The words I received in the first round were simply, *community*, *plus a sense of warmth and pleasure*, and for me the other words/pictures shared in the group underlined the value of belonging to a Community group such as this. In the following account I've summarised what people said in italics.

One member saw a picture of *ducks, swans, frogs, etc in a pond*. For me this represented the rag-bag, miscellany of people we are as a Community (no offence meant!) One woman had a picture of a *clam*. This reminded me of the

need of many of us for healing and release; but, I've since wondered, was the clam an oyster containing a priceless pearl?

Another member reported *almost a full moon*. We realised that particular evening was only two days from the next full moon, recognising God is known principally in the here and now; together, rooted in prayer, we are called to live each day as it comes. Other pictures represented an appreciation of *creation* and God's creative presence in the *galaxy*. Linked to this was a real sense of God's holiness symbolised by a *dazzling light* and also a feeling of *excitement and anticipation: 'Awake my soul'*. The *Edinburgh town houses* recalled a recent meeting with John Philip Newell at his home about his profound prayers** based on themes from the days of creation in all its variety, and linked with our motivations.

The sensation of *a flooded river, maybe out of our depth*, and pictures of *the sea* spoke both of its immensity and also our vulnerability in a world full of God's presence but fraught with unknown danger. However, though a dispersed and fragmented group, we know we are secure in *a boat of faith, with a Celtic cross on its sail*. *A tempest* may rage around us, but we can trust in the *Jesus who saves*.

It is only possible to summarise the words shared in our meeting, but all these images capture much of what the Northumbria Community means to me. And, we must not forget, this is not just for ourselves, however privileged we may be. There were also the words *digging fresh ground* and a picture of *white domed buildings*. We also have a vital call to mission that we must not ignore.

As I left the meeting that night I thought of the novel by C. S. Lewis, 'That Hideous Strength'. In the story, confronted by unspeakable evil in society around, a small group of diverse believers find themselves called together, not only for refuge but to preserve the truth. Many writers have suggested that it is in small monastic communities such as Northumbria Community that our faith will survive in the coming years. That Monday meeting reminded me that it is in such a diverse group as the North Northumberland local Community group that we discover the true meaning of this.

Stephen Hewitt (with Sheena, now living at Tweedmouth, Berwick upon Tweed)

*It was Joy Dawson who initially introduced this approach to intercession to YWAM.

**Prayers and some commentary taken from John Philip Newell's 'Celtic Benediction' and 'The Book of Creation', inspired by John Scotus Eriugena's essay on the seven days in Genesis.

We asked Andy Raine to tell us the story behind the

Meditation for Day 16



When I came to the Island in 1976 Aidan's Prayer for the Holy Island of Lindisfarne was already in use – and typewritten on a sheet the size of writing paper. (The wording we use is the original except we now say 'those' who do Your will, instead of 'men' who do Thy will.)

No-one remembers exactly who brought it to the Island or gave it to Father Denis Bill, the then vicar. In that sense it is a piece of poetry, or a speech from a drama in which words are put in the mouth of Aidan.

But increasingly we see its fulfilment. More and more people come to experience the peace of the Island as visitors, pilgrims or seekers. It

has also become home to two families from our own Northumbria Community (with others who worship here), half a dozen folk from Aidan and Hild Community, as well as Kate who is a Franciscan tertiary and Sister Tessa who is a Daughter of the Cross. Rhythms of daily prayer are kept up, retreat houses are full, and many leave here refreshed with new vision and purpose. We pray, we work, we serve in Aidan's lengthening shadow.

We know Aidan mostly through the writings of Bede, who greatly admired him, despite disapproving of his Celtic customs and practices. Only one actual prayer of Aidan is recorded, his words on the Isle of Inner Farne where he was staying during Lent, when he saw the war-lord Penda and his men lay siege to nearby Bamburgh, and set fire to what they could. So close to Bamburgh but too far to intervene in any way except to pray, Aidan did pray, speaking quietly to the Almighty: 'Lord, see what evil Penda does!' Aidan knew he had God's ear at all times..... the wind changed direction so flames and smoke attacked the attackers and drove them away. So Bamburgh was saved and the villagers' homes soon repaired.



We pray, and trust our prayers to God's care. Andy Raine

Cathy Turton sent us this book recommendation

Michele Guinness's novel 'Archbishop' is set in the 2020s starring the first female Archbishop of Canterbury. It raises lots of interesting concerns in the Church and I've found it spiritually inspiring too. Also of interest is a reference to the Northumbria Community 2023.

The central character, Vicky Burnham-Woods, is a master of diplomacy, and deeply committed to bringing the church back into the heart of community and cultural life - but not everyone wants a woman at the top and behind the scenes dark forces are moving. Can the first ever female Archbishop of Canterbury last long enough to achieve her mission?

What the critics say:

"The book is immense and covers some huge themes. While you may not agree with Michele's treatment of them all, I think 'Archbishop' is a brilliant insight into what life could be like for Britain's first female archbishop. I wonder how long it will be before the actual first female archbishop's memoirs are written..." Claire Musters

"This is a book that many will want to read, and many might enjoy if they're looking for a different kind of conspiracy novel. But many more will be disappointed as it misses a golden opportunity to give a real insight into what the Anglican Communion's highest office will really be like for a woman. As a social commentary and picture of the Church of England, it is somewhat interesting, but your enjoyment of it as a novel will probably depend on which you're more engaged by." Michael Trimmer

Cathy Turton



Judith Goodfellow sent us this

Resources Update

At Nether Springs, the library has been receiving a thorough overhaul with the invaluable assistance of Sarah Berry who, along with her husband Alan, is working as part of the house team for three months.

With Pete Askew's help, she has cleared out redundant volumes and re-catalogued some sections to make it easier for visitors to find what they might be looking for, or stumble across treasures they didn't know they were seeking! We have also added some lovely new painted section guides along the tops of the bookshelves to guide browsers to the theme of their choice.

Aware that many books have a limited shelf life, we hope in time, funds permitting, to be able to add some new titles to our collection so that the library remains a relevant and life giving resource for the Community.

Work is progressing well on Celtic Daily Prayer Book 2 and the new edition of Celtic Daily Prayer Book 1. At the time of writing we are doing our final proof-reading of the manuscripts and are still on track for publication in September this year. It has been quite a journey but the end is in sight!

For anybody who has been patiently waiting for it, Celtic Daily Prayer CD is also back in stock, now also as a digi-pack.

Judith Goodfellow



Adrian Smith sent us this report on our latest New Companion

Andrew Clark became a Companion of Community at the end of the evening meal at Acton on 28 January. In reality Andrew has felt joined to Community for a number of years and the liturgy of 'Welcome and Blessing' was a way for him, and those of us present that day, to recognise what God had been doing within him during his journey as he "lived the Rule". He found the Rule to be provocative, helping him to reflect and review his life, and guiding him through important stages.

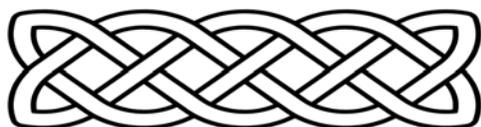
I got to know Andrew over a period of six months as we completed a course on 'Spiritual Direction' at St Anthony's Priory in Durham in 2014. I came to appreciate his passion for all things Scottish and his dry sense of humour as we had lunch together or walked to and from the railway station. Being asked to mentor his noviciate process added a further dimension to our friendship and I could see that this process reflected the things God was doing within him. Like many of us he used the word 'homecoming' to describe his relationship with Community.

Andrew is currently the Ministry Team Leader at Trinity Church, Gosforth, in Newcastle upon Tyne. Married with two children he has a sense of connection to the City, and is seeking new ways of helping those on the margins. Please pray for him and the family during the coming weeks as they enter a new stage of their journey. *Adrian Smith*



'Being silent means waiting, waiting for the Other to say something to us. Being silent before God means making room for God . . . to breathe in the will of God, to listen attentively. . . . For God alone my soul in silence waits.'

Dietrich Bonhoeffer



The newsy bit



New Arrivals!



Congratulations to **Faith and Simon Airey** on the arrival of **Martha Rose**, born 27 November.

Congratulations to **Philippa and Jonny Walker** on the birth of their baby daughter, **Avalon Isabella**, on 16 December – a sister for Joseph.



Annie Hewson has become a grandmother with the arrival of Iris, born on 21 December, to Annie's daughter Jen and her husband Johnny.

Marriages

Congratulations to **Diane Sekuloff** (Vancouver) who married **Andy Hobelaid** on 11 October last year. Please pray for them, as joy turns to pain whilst they confront very serious health issues for Andy.

Congratulations also to **Carolyn and Wayne Hansen** (Seattle) who celebrated 45 years of marriage in December.

Dates for Your Diary

Saturday May 16 2015 is the next quarterly **North West gathering at St John's, Yealand Conyers**, starting with midday office. More info and directions from Di Smith ~ Tel: 01524 782341 dianesmith1@me.com.

L'Abri a Suvigny

Celtic Saints Retreat - Following in the footsteps of some of the Celtic Saints of Brittany - **June 21-28**. Suggested donation £30 per person per day.

Community Work Week - July 20-25 - Time to help out with maintenance, garden work and renovations within the rhythm of the monastic day - suggested donation £15 per person per day.

Family Holiday week - August 17-22 - Time to enjoy the surrounding area or relax at Suvigny in the sunshine, within the rhythm of the monastic day. Suggested donation £20 per person per day - Children under 12 £10

For more information on any of the above, we can be contacted on ncinfrance@gmail.com

New Companion

Andrew Clark became a Companion of Community at the end of the evening meal at Acton on 28 January. See Pg 11!



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

© CAIM is the official newsletter of the Northumbria Community.

Northumbria Community Trust, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Registered Charity No 1156630
Nether Springs, Croft Cottage, Acton Home Farm, Felton, Northumberland NE65 9NU
Tel : 01670 787645 email: office@northumbriacommunity.org

Caim Editors: Jeff Sutheran & Ingrid Cumming

email: caim@northumbriacommunity.org