

Spring 2016 Newsletter

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1. Introduction

New initiatives for *LivingSpirituality*

Firstly, on the theme of the intersection between the contemplative and active dimensions of life, we are introducing:

1. The new course **Love for the Future: Being at home on the earth**, designed by Revd Prebendary David Osborne, which will soon be launched via our website, and will be available for all to use in their own locality. This draws on the contemplative tradition to help us to both face and make more manageable our commitments to action on world and earth issues.

2. A new website section entitled **Towards Human Flourishing**, created by Heather-Jane Ozanne, which signposts people to a range of resources to help energise us in our social and environmental commitments.

Secondly, to support the **Guidelines for Setting up a Spiritual Sharing or Spiritual Conversation Group** which we uploaded onto our website earlier this year (www.livingspirit.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/group_guidelines.pdf), we include an article here about the development of *LivingSpirituality's* Journeying Together Group into a coherent and supportive group for sharing spiritual journeys, and what has helped us in that process.

Thirdly, in the offing for later this year are two new website sections:

1. A **Special Interest Area on Health, Healing and Spirituality**, which will include webpages to signpost to places and resources that may be helpful in exploring this field.

2. A new initiative called **LivingConversation**, where we will bring together the guidelines for spiritual sharing groups, with information on how individuals can set up one to one opportunities for conversation about their spiritual journeys and concerns. We will also point to useful books and training opportunities for those who want to take the topic further or get further guidance before getting started.

New regional LivingSpirituality contact for Wales

We are delighted to say that Mary Ashton of Llansôr Mill, near the river Usk outside Newport Gwent, has agreed to be the LS contact for Wales. Mary and Stephen Ashton run an interesting centre in the land around a former water mill, among the gentle hills of South Wales. Richard Rohr is a patron. We will ask Mary for some details about herself for our next newsletter. Llansôr Mill is already one of our linked organisations. Their website is www.llansor.org.

Spring 2016 Newsletter topics

In this newsletter we also report on interesting artistic installations at St James's Piccadilly, that have been

intentionally disruptive and impactful in relation to the big issues of climate change and refugees. We also bring you some of Revd Lucy Winkett's thoughts about meanings of Good Friday, which people at this year's Good Friday service found insightful and generative of an unusual sense of shared experience at that most solemn time of the liturgical year.

Heather-Jane Ozanne writes about non-violence and the Christian tradition, and the trainings that are available to take this forward. We report on the important new initiative Eco Church, encouraging all churches to engage very fully with what they can do to make their church and church members' lives sustainable.

We bring advance news of the launch by Revd Dr June Boyce-Tillman of a new Tavener Centre for Music and Spirituality. We give links to videos arising from a project that engages school children with the wonder of the story of the evolution of the universe, and have an update from the Institute for Theological Partnerships on the Cosmic Walk at the University of Winchester.

And finally we mention the very useful Friday Mailing from the York area and ask you to let us know of similar e-newsletters for other parts of the country.

We welcome feedback and suggestions on any of the initiatives that we are developing to give more opportunities for

involvement with the themes of **LivingSpirituality**.

With our best wishes,

Petra Griffiths

Coordinator, **LivingSpirituality**

2. Art as a disruptive and prophetic force

St James's Piccadilly has hosted two striking art installations in recent months, both being a response to serious issues facing humanity at this time.

1. Her Floe-fall Lament by Sara Mark



Her Floe-fall Lament (COP21) - Sara Mark, 2016. Frozen water, steel, wood-ash. Duration 20 hours. Size approx. 200 x 200 cms. Photo credit: Sara Mark, 2016.

At Advent, close to the culmination of the Paris Climate Change Summit (COP21), Sara Mark's ice melt sculpture was placed at the entrance to the sanctuary at St James's Piccadilly, preventing people from walking down the central aisle. The sound

of the sculpture was audible throughout the morning service.

Sara Mark is an artist and placemaker. Her website is www.saramark.uk.

Sarah's comments about this work can be read at www.livingspirit.org.uk/art-installations.

2. Flight – an installation by Arabella Dorman

From just before Christmas 2015 to 9th February this year, visitors entering the church were immediately confronted with a 30' inflatable dinghy dominating the nave. Tilted towards the altar, as though in danger of imminent capsize, it was illuminated with rippling light. Two adult life jackets, and one child's, were suspended from it. Both ugly and strangely beautiful, it cast a shadow both literal and symbolic on carol services, concerts and everything else that took place in the church during this period.



The public reaction was generally sympathetic, though inevitably there was some hostility: why 'spoil' sacred space with politics and current events? The

artist, Arabella Dorman, explains what led her to bring a boat built for 15, but which was carrying 62 men, women and children when rescued by the Greek coastguard in November, from Lesbos to Central London in this linked article about Flight and its impact – www.livingspirit.org.uk/art-installations.

Arabella is a portrait painter and war artist. Her website is at www.arabelladorman.com.

3. The Experience of a Group for Sharing Spiritual Journeys by Petra Griffiths

The *LivingSpirituality* Journeying Together Group (JTG) emerged out of an initiative in 2014 designed to “explore the spirituality and theology of giving equal weight to female and male language for the divine”. After a few meetings we broadened our scope to reflect the original members’ interests.

Our aims now are to:

- share our spiritual journeys
- use inclusive language and imagery exploring the feminine and masculine nature of the divine, particularly focusing on bringing forth the suppressed feminine strand within the Judeo-Christian tradition
- acknowledge our connection with the web of life

- make deeper connections to God, as we listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit in our time
- be open to insights from the contemplative tradition and from other faiths
- respect diversity.



Journeying Together group members on a visit to Canterbury in 2015

I have written a detailed document explaining more about the group and how it works. We hope this will be an encouragement to others who may want to set up a group in their locality.

Topics covered in the document include:

- how we structure our monthly meetings
- examples of the themes we have covered in our meetings
- the group agreements we have made
- a description of our creative liturgies and the resources we use for them, and information on accessing Jan Berry's new booklet on creating liturgy
- our pilgrimages and other additional activities
- quotes from some of our members about how they have benefitted from the group.

The document can be downloaded here - www.livingspirit.org.uk/spiritual-sharing-group.pdf.

To see the **Guidelines for those wanting to set up a spiritual sharing group**, written by Jenny Sandler, go to www.livingspirit.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/group_guidelines.pdf.

Petra Griffiths is Coordinator of the Journeying Together Group and of *LivingSpirituality*.

4. Encountering the inconsolable parts of ourselves: an extract from a reflection on the meaning of the events of Good Friday by Revd Lucy Winkett

Contrary to the isolation that torturers wish to inflict on their victims, the Christian economy of pain makes the bizarre claim that it can be shared; that God does and we are invited to share in the pain of the world now. And that in the Eucharist which we will not celebrate again until Easter Day, we share the one cup of wine – which Jesus called the cup of suffering. And we share in the new future that this death brings.

And it isn't only the recognisable pain of torture that is somehow contained in this cross. Because God's pain can be shared with ours, old griefs, losses as yet unnamed, incalculable sadnesses we carry or bury – all of our human experience of loss can be brought here, and sat with, and honoured and accepted.

One Good Friday I found myself listening to a preacher who asked us all to think about the cross we wore around our neck, if we did. What was its story, how long had we worn it? As I remembered the story of the cross I wear, I found myself suddenly inconsolable: I was taken back to a jewellers shop and the laughing we did as I bought the cross for a young man for his 21st birthday, and then the incomprehensible task of removing it from

his body after he was killed in a climbing accident just 18 months later.

If you wear or have a cross, it will have a story, a history, a meaning.....

A mature spirituality will acknowledge before God that there are some things that remain “unmended”. There are some griefs that remain uncomforted.

Read more of Lucy’s thoughts on this theme at:

www.sjp.org.uk/uploads/1/6/5/7/16572376/good_friday_addresses_25_march_2016.pdf (from p.6 onwards).

Revd Lucy Winkett is Rector of St James’s Church Piccadilly.

5. Nonviolence - A hidden treasure in the Christian tradition?

by Heather-Jane Ozanne

“Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time” - Dr Martin Luther King

Nonviolence is not a specifically Christian concept, indeed it has been developed and lived by exponents from many different faiths and none. In the Muslim tradition Ghaffer Khan, dubbed ‘the border Gandhi’, was a leader who led a nonviolence movement in the North West Frontier of India. He rooted his belief in the teaching of the Quran, seeing nonviolence as the weapon of Jihad, or

Holy War, based on patience and righteousness. Jewish exponents include Martin Buber and Abraham Joshua Heschel. For some, nonviolence is simply an expedient political/strategic tool but for those who come to it from a spiritual or faith background nonviolence often becomes a way of life.

Nonviolence has good ‘provenance’ in the Christian faith and I believe needs to be taken more seriously in our world where violence seems to be an all too easy method of engaging in conflict. There are many definitions of nonviolence. Some refer only to non-engagement in physical acts of violence. Others, which are far more inclusive, involve refraining from violating the spirit of another.

Dr Martin Luther King is a person who rings in many hearts and is on the syllabus in UK schools, not least because he was assassinated on 4th April 1968 and left an important legacy in American history. Yet how many here know of his legacy in terms of the training and strategy he began to develop in nonviolent action? Based on his Christian ideals, he developed a method which can and did transform many conflicts, preventing them from becoming violent or violating whilst encouraging the highest possible outcome for all parties.

From childhood I knew something of the U.S. Civil Rights campaigns of the 1950’s and 60’s and the big inspiring speeches King is so well-known for.

However I had little idea of the deep Christian theological and philosophical underpinnings of King's social activism, or of the legacy he has left both in what he achieved in the Civil Rights campaigns and in the teaching and training in nonviolence he originated, Kingian Nonviolence Conflict Reconciliation (KNCR).

A full version of this article can be found at www.livingspirit.org.uk/nonviolence.

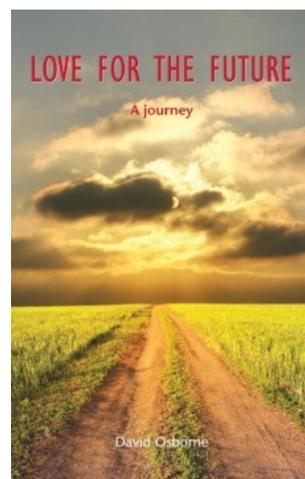
You can see further details and contact information for the talks and trainings that Heather-Jane has developed through the charity *Spirit of Peace* at www.spiritofpeace.co.uk.

Heather-Jane Ozanne is Founder and CEO of **Spirit of Peace**, and is a member of the *LivingSpirituality* Steering Group.

5. Love for the Future: Being at home on the earth – a new course to be offered via the *LivingSpirituality* website

Thanks to Revd Prebendary David Osborne, LivingSpirituality has just been able to do a pilot run of the course *Love for the Future*, in partnership with St James's Piccadilly.

The course accompanies the book of the same name which we published a review of in our last newsletter - www.livingspirit.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015-autumn-newsletter.pdf.



The course involves activity, discussion and contemplation. It involves seeing how different kinds of prayer and action might enable us develop a sense of wonder, and the simplicity, compassion, hope, wisdom and love that we need for the future.

Four groups were run as a Lent course at St James's, though the course can be run at any time of year. David is making some minor changes following this pilot run. The course handouts enable people to run the course themselves in their own setting.

One participant described it as "the best Lent course ever" – so look out for our email launching this new offering online!

6. Towards Human Flourishing: A New Special Interest Area for LivingSpirituality

Heather-Jane Ozanne will soon launch a new section on our website entitled *Towards Human Flourishing* on the themes of contemplative social action and Sacred Activism.

This new website section and the Love for the Future course will both enable us to put into practice our desire to find a balance between the contemplative and active dimensions of life, and to find ways of energising ourselves to meet the challenges of the world.

This is central to the mission of *LivingSpirituality*.

7. Eco Church by Dr Ruth Valerio



St John's Hurst Green, Lancashire, recently received their Eco Church Bronze award

In partnership with Christian Aid, the Church of England, the Methodist Church and Tearfund, Eco Church has been

developed by A Rocha UK - a Christian charity working for the protection and restoration of the natural world - as the successor to Eco-Congregation for churches in England and Wales (Eco-Congregation continues to operate in Scotland and Ireland).

A Rocha UK's vision for Eco Church is for the scheme **to create a vast network of churches as local centres of creation care in the community** - shining beacons of hope for a brighter environmental future. This vision was endorsed by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams who, speaking at the launch of Eco Church at St Paul's Cathedral, welcomed the new scheme as part of a **'tectonic shift' in Christian thinking through which environmental concerns will 'embed more deeply' in church culture.**

The launch of Eco Church at St Paul's (26 January 2016) gave us a wonderful way to get the scheme going, and it has been very encouraging seeing the response since then. Around 200 churches have now registered, and we are starting to see the first awards come trickling through. One of the things I'm really pleased about is the variety of churches reaching Eco Church status: from great big St Paul's Cathedral to little St John's Hurst Green in Lancashire, from Lyme Regis Baptist Church in the South West, to Streetly Methodist Church in the Midlands. And now we can also announce

that York Minster has gained its first Eco Church award, at Bronze level.

I'm encouraged too to see Anglican dioceses all around the country picking up on Eco Church and seeing it as **a way to help their parishes integrate caring for God's earth through their church lives.** We'll be launching Eco Diocese later this year, so I'm looking forward to seeing some healthy competition!

What I love most is hearing from churches themselves about what they've been doing and what they've enjoyed about getting involved with Eco Church.

The people from Lyme Regis Baptist Church told me:

"I think the best thing we have done practically as a church to work towards the award is switching to a renewable energy company to supply all the electricity and gas we use as a church. Due to the fact our building is quite old, it takes a lot to heat it and knowing it comes from 100% renewable resources makes a big difference to our carbon footprint and helping the environment. However, just doing the small things like switching to eco-friendly cleaning products has really got the church family thinking on a spiritual level too about their impact and whether they think looking after the environment is important to their faith.

What I have particularly enjoyed about the new Eco Church scheme is how accessible and easy to use it is. It gets the churches thinking about the environment

on a practical, spiritual and missional level in a way I don't think the church has ever been challenged to before. It looks at all areas of church life and provokes you to think about areas you had never thought of as having an impact on the environment."

To find out more about Eco Church and how you can get involved go to www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk.

Dr Ruth Valerio is the Churches and Theology Director of A Rocha UK, and author of *Just Living: Faith and community in an age of consumerism*.

This is a shortened version of the article by Ruth Valerio distributed by St Paul's Institute to spread the word about Eco Church.

8. Exciting plans for a new Tavener Centre for Music and Spirituality

In an age of searching for meaning, music is often a place where people find hope and inspiration. The Tavener Centre for Music and Spirituality, directed by Revd Dr June Boyce-Tillman, will be a place where the links between spirituality and music can be examined – those established by the great world faiths and those made by people in their everyday lives. The Centre will produce writing and creative projects in this area and will attract people

from a variety of backgrounds and experiences.



The University of Winchester organised concerts in the Cathedral celebrating Sir John's music, and an interview in 2005 in the Theatre Royal, Winchester in which he talked honestly and openly about the interplay between his own faith. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Winchester.

Sir John has given us a wonderful insight into interfaith dialogue. In 1997 he embraced the Orthodox faith where he was drawn to its traditions and mysticism. He stood clearly for religious tolerance throughout his work. He illustrated how to deal with intense suffering and he felt deeply for the suffering of the world. He saw the need to transubstantiate suffering through music in an artistic culture which saw fit to represent the most shocking and violent aspects of our culture in a raw untransformed state. He stands as an icon for a view of artistic expression of a way of generating hope and transcendence. Our age owes him deep gratitude. The Centre celebrates this and wishes to bring

together others who share this vision of music, spirituality and healing.

The Centre's aims are:

- to mount a festival of Sir John Tavener's music every three years in the Winchester area
- to explore the relationship between spirituality and music with particular reference to the great faiths
- to organise a conference on music and spirituality associated with the festival, leading to publications in this area
- to disseminate Sir John's own understanding of the relationship between music and spirituality.

The Centre, led by June Boyce-Tillman in association with Lady Tavener, will work with the Tavener Foundation, Winchester Cathedral and Chester Music.

Revd Dr June Boyce-Tillman MBE FRSA FHEA is Professor of Applied Music at the University of Winchester, and is coordinator of *LivingSpirituality's* Music and Spirituality Special Interest Area.

For the new Centre's leaflet go to: www.livingspirit.org.uk/tavener_centre_leaflet.pdf.

For full information about the new Centre, email June.Boyce-Tillman@winchester.ac.uk.

Save the Date! Tavener Centre event in Winchester: Nov 11th 2016 10.30-4.30

A day conference exploring the spiritual in music, its meaning and its place in contemporary life.

9. Community work with the universe story

Jane Riddiford, educational innovator and Founding Director of Global Generation, an environmental education charity (www.globalgeneration.org.uk), discusses community work with the scientific story of the universe to build connection with the earth and one another in the series of videos available at www.biologyofstory.com.

The topics of the videos are:

- Finding A Meaningful Relationship To The Land
- Learning From The Universe Story
- We Come From The Universe Story
- Working With The Scientific Creation Story
- You Don't Know What The End Is.

Jane Riddiford has 25 years of experience in delivering environmental, arts & vocational training projects in New Zealand & the UK. Her interest in young people and projects that bring different parts of the community together has been a consistent thread throughout her working life.

Her research focuses on the potentials for leadership in moving from a view of the universe as a machine of separate parts to a living story which endlessly reveals the dynamics of an integrated whole.

These videos were brought to our attention by Greenspirit, one of our partner organisations (www.greenspirit.org.uk/community/newsletter.shtml).

10. Cosmic Walk and Labyrinth update from the Institute for Theological Partnerships at the University of Winchester

The Head Gardener, Maurice James, has been busy in the Cosmic Walk this month and has completely renovated the Labyrinth and will soon have fresh white lines marking out the pathways. Please feel free to visit and to Walk the Labyrinth.

New plants have been purchased for the pre- history beds – including 3 tree ferns, a conifer and numerous native ferns to populate the 'dinosaur area'. In addition, the gardening team will also be planting up the boggy area with two varieties of horsetail and Gunnera Tinctoria. So, lots to come in April and May!

Poem for Walking the Labyrinth

Relax & sink into the earth
Breathe steadily and deeply
Take one step, then another, then
another
Feel your body move
Enjoy the moment until
you reach the centre
STOP. STAND STILL.
STILL, IN A TURNING
WORLD. Turn and
retrace your steps
Within becoming without, inverted
and mirrored
Inside out and back to front,
unravelling what has been woven,
revealing what is hidden.
When you reach the exit
Step out
Reborn.
The future has begun.
[Click here](#) for information about the
Winchester Cosmic Walk.
If you would like to arrange to visit the
Walk, please email
Joanna.Wilson@Winchester.ac.uk.

11. The Friday Mailing

Linda Pearson, the *LivingSpirituality* regional contact for the North East and a member of the Steering Group, draws our attention to the very useful free weekly What's On electronic newsletter compiled and distributed by CoRE, York City Centre Churches Care and Development Trust.

In recent years it has become one of the most popular ways to let people know of news and events hosted by church and religious organisations in York and its environs.

Photos, logos, text and posters are emailed to CoRE each week with no charge for inclusion.

One reader described the Friday mailing as "a great way to find out about lots of events taking place in the area that I may not have heard about any other way."

Subscribing to the Friday Mailing is quick and easy - contact the marketing and communications team for CoRE with your name and email address at info@plugandtap.co.uk or call 01904 619489.

For more information, go to www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/news-events/news/the-friday-mailing-miss-it-miss-out.

If you know of similar initiatives in your part of the country, do let *LivingSpirituality* know by emailing petragriffiths@livingspirit.org.uk.