

Cultural Group Report  
AGM and to our Members and Friends  
May, 2015

In this letter we hope to give you a picture of what has happened in the past year through the efforts of a small group of individuals dedicated to improving the social/spiritual livelihood of our Branch.

We welcome your comments and more importantly, your will to support our efforts by joining us in any way that works for you or by your monetary contributions for the costs incurred in our activities.

The year has been marked by a series of events primarily around the major Christian festivals with the addition of providing content for the Branch meetings. With so few people working on this, it is not possible at this moment to broaden and enlarge the possibilities of what can be offered. We have offered what is possible within the scope of member involvement thus far.

Michaelmas was a celebratory event with actors working with excerpts from the Mystery Dramas, Edward's ongoing work with Parzival, Joanna's work with a lovely group of singers and our guest member from Virginia, Samantha Embrey, who brought her iron gongs to play and and for all to listen to.

We also had 3 lyricists playing together to open and close our gathering. Thank you to Paul Jackson, Christina Beck, Jenny and Ben Bingham, Edward Schuldt, Suzanne Mays, Samantha Embrey and the Festival Singers; Dirk and Martha Kelder, Allen Barenholtz, Suzanne and Robert Mays, Tatiana Zybin and Viorica Comaniciu.

In addition to that day we also had an evening of working with David Newbatt's paintings around the Zodiacal gestures of Michael.

We then focused on Advent and as there was an opening to offer something new and different, we conceived of the theme of the Divine Sophia as the backdrop for our study.

4 people from the wider community were invited to present one aspect in relation to the particular Sunday of Advent that was happening. Each Sunday was marked by a presentation of thoughts on a particular related topic and then an exercise and conversation as well.

The Advent Sundays also included a potluck supper and finally a showing of the Madonna Sequence.

The four presenters were Lynn Jericho, Kelly Calegar, Karen Rivers and Joanna Carey. We each worked with the physical, etheric, astral and ego forces present in each Sunday. Each brought very interesting and thought-provoking material for us to work with.

Though it was a long day, we realized there are only 4 Sundays in Advent and working with all aspects of each Sunday and the human contact, was essential and quite fulfilling for many.

We even had children at one viewing of the Madonna Sequence and an elderly woman with past associations with EWS and various study groups in the area, (Jean Young), who has since passed away.

We then focused our attention on the Holy Nights and Christmas. As anyone who has worked in this capacity before, it is a highly involved process of working with a theme through our conversation together and then finding the people who are willing to host and/or offer something. Our theme was based on innocence and wisdom as keys to the understanding of the human being through the Holy Nights.

Many different people offered insightful and informative material which all who attended could participate in in a number of ways. We marveled at the level of spiritually creative thought available to us from all those individuals who brought their offerings to us.

Our gatherings during Holy Week were shared among a few. We chose to work with the Planetary Seals, to hear the planetary tones and to experience the planetary gestures in Eurythmy associated with each day. We also heard a summation of the events pertaining to each day of Holy Week and its deeper implications in modern life. We met at 8:30 or 9:00 each morning during Holy Week. On Easter Sunday we chose to read the 4 Gospels related to Easter and then to engage in a writing activity around the reality of resurrection and how it might live in our lives.

This was a great sharing time. Many thanks to Eve Olive, Jenny and Ben Bingham and Joanna Carey for sharing their homes and their thoughts on this.

At all of these events, an average of 14-24 people attended on a regular basis.

Having just observed a Whitsun gathering this past Sunday, May 24th, we engaged in an exercise of sharing poems and thoughts using a model conceived by Eve Olive for this occasion. This helped to focus our attention on the nature of individual destiny and its relationship to the Universal. We also had singing and lyre playing and eurythmy to augment and deepen our experience of this festival.

This festival gathering was prefaced by two additional events which happened in people's home during last week.

One was a gathering at Lynn Jericho's home where we studied the images of the various components of the Pentecost event. 18 people joined in a remarkable conversation which opened doors more fully into what this festival is about in our times.

The other was a gathering at Eve Olive's around biography given by Sarah Putnam who offered us exercises in biography and a further dedication to Renate Wend who recently passed away.

It is this process of working toward a deeper understanding of the consciousness soul which is appropriate for our times, that is at the heart of the Cultural Sphere's work in the Branch.

This is brought about by our invitation to the broader community to participate in creating/attending events which allow deeper conversation and insight into the nature of spiritual life through the tenants of Anthroposophy.

Steiner stressed continuously the need to keep Anthroposophy alive and evolving in our daily life, practice and work with one another. Through our creative efforts and sharing, we open the door to ever new understandings of community life through Anthroposophy.

The other component of the CCC has been to develop the content of the Branch meetings.

These have been learning experiences for many of us and have brought forth some of the researchers and experts on various subjects stemming from Anthroposophy who reside in our area.

We have striven to create a collaborative process that benefits both the researchers and the members and friends learning from them.

Many thanks to Edward Schuldt for his ongoing work with Parzival, Suzanne and Robert Mays and their consciousness studies, Lynn Jericho and her work with biography and Allen Barenholtz and Jon Lyerly and their work with projective geometry and the bees and plant world. You each brought a world of knowledge and insight that inspired many in our community.

The long term goals of the cultural group are based on these first steps in the cultural work.

In the future it is hoped that more educational, artistic, social and healing gestures will be brought to enlighten our way in these challenging times. Through striving to realize the truth and understanding of the 3-fold social order, it is hoped that each sphere will begin and/or continue its own work and bring the Branch to a new, more vital realization of itself.

The Cultural Sphere hopes to bring this vision alive through its many members who offer a wealth of insight and experience for our collective learning and evolving.

We welcome others to please join our group in whatever capacity you feel inspired to do so. This work cannot continue to be brought with so few dedicated individuals. We would like to see a much larger support system of individuals who can find their way to helping in whatever capacity works for them in our various endeavors.

The cultural life is at the heart of our striving in the soul/spiritual spheres of which we attempt to understand and also in our relationships with one another.

Please let any CIC members know of your interest to offer help or insight toward future endeavors.

In gratitude,  
The Cultural Initiative Circle

