

The Ash Tree

Companion Rebecca Mealing writes:

An Ash Tree, approximately 40 years old, was felled and upon splitting a log, about 20 years old, I was surprised to discover a story symbolic of growth, healing and history greater than ours.



The log was split. The centre of the log shows the stress of the growth of a branch from that part of the tree.



Towards the outer edge of the log it split.



Like a piece of a jigsaw puzzle a straight cut edge was revealed within that part of the tree. (Counting the rings from the scar outwards, eight years had passed as the tree had grown over this place and continued to grow and thrive, withstanding many adversities).



The outer bark shows a dark scar but otherwise nothing out of the ordinary.



Moving the two pieces apart, the scar of a cut branch is revealed (on the right hand piece of the log).

The left hand piece shows where the tree had grown over the cut and continued to grow and thrive until the wood cutter felled it.

What pain and struggle did the Ash Tree experience in the loss of that branch?



Counting the rings it was at least 10 years old when it was cut.

Revealed to me was an incredible capacity for physical healing.

In August, Philip wrote:

In the context of the current news re the same-sex marriage debate within the C of E and its impact on the Reader ministry of Jeremy Timm, a Companion and one of the co-ordinating group of Companions in CF North, encouraged by Diane Rutter I have been in touch with Bishop Paul Bayes, our Bishop-Accompanier for Contemplative Fire. In return, he has asked for our prayers and I follow this note with Bishop Paul's suggested words.

"Please pray for Bishop Paul Bayes who is attending one of the Church of England's "Shared conversations on scripture, sexuality and mission" - a process of facilitated listening designed to help the Church as it seeks the right way forward in the light of the fast-changing context especially of same-sex relationships and same-sex marriage".

Companion Jane McBane writes:

Jeremy was informed by the Archbishop of York that once he marries Mike, who is already his Civil Partner, his Permission to Officiate as a Reader will be withdrawn. He, therefore, led his final Service on Sunday morning, 20th September, at Howden Minster.

His local churches, where he has led Services for many years, were very supportive of him and upset at the decision, so it was a special Service where they honoured him.

When asked about how he would feel about members of CF North coming to the Service, he said he would be delighted, and that it would be lovely to be able to look out and see companions for his future journey alongside those he'll be leaving behind. He and Mike converted their Civil Partnership to a marriage the following Thursday.

<http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2015/14-august/news/uk/reader-to-lose-permission-to-officiate-over-marriage-plans>



(Howden Minster)

Reflection from Canada – "Flowing"

Last summer I spent some time on Cortes Island and fully enjoyed the tide waters of Manson's Lagoon. One day I stood in the shallows of the lagoon, threw myself into the incoming tide, allowing it to carry me along till I could finally find some bottom to touch. Then I slowly made my way back to the edge feeling the current with each slow and carefully placed step. The next day I entered the shallows again but instead of throwing myself into the tide I began to step into the flow. I tried, I really tried to face the ocean and take a step contrary to its purpose. There was no way I could lift my foot and move against it. I couldn't move against the flow of the tide.



Teresa of Avila speaks to us of God's love flowing into the world. She teaches how we can be conduits of God's healing love and grace to whomever, wherever it is needed in the world. As I press against the ocean's tide, I experience the pouring of God's Love into the world. I realize I don't ever want to press against the flow of God's Love. If there is any way I am resisting. If there is anything in my life that would stop the flow, may I experience that as clearly as I feel the difficulty of moving against this incoming tide. I want to live not moving in opposition to God's Spirit, but throwing myself into the current and co-operating with the flow of the Spirit of God.

God's Love is flowing into the world. Do you experience the flow of Love or do you experience resistance or a cross current struggle? Are you resisting something, someone who would bring healing and goodness into your life if you turned and relaxed? Are you resisting having some barnacles removed or seaweed scraped off? Are you resisting trusting God's flow of Love to carry you?

May we all experience the flow of God's healing love and grace in our lives.

Love and prayers.

Anne, Community Leader, Canada

Companion Jenny Cuff writes:

After our recent Still Waters gathering in Reading, a version of this poem was posted on my Facebook page. It's called "*The Peace of Wild Things*" by Wendell Berry. I found this on YouTube and am moved to share it with you.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=oduKRKUKKww>

*When despair in the world grows in me
And I wake in the night at the least sound
In fear of what my life and my children's lives
may be*

*I go to lie down where the wood drake
Rests in his beauty on the water
And the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
Who do not tax their lives with forethought of
grief.*

*I come into the presence of still water
And I feel above me the day blind stars
Waiting with their light.
For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and
am free.*



Philip writes:

As mentioned in the recent *CF Post 4*, now that we are into our second decade as Contemplative Fire, I have been encouraged to record and make available some impressions of the very early days of this network community of Christ at the edge.

The link takes you to the first instalment of a small series of interviews – initially with me and then, following, with two other Companions on the Way, Charlotte Wright and Diane Rutter,

who shared in the emergence of CF in its infancy. I hope that you find these short reflections to be of interest and perhaps of some use. The interviews/ conversations are available on the Media page of our CF website.

The link for the first one is:

<http://www.contemplativefire.org/media.html>

"Thank you so much for these interviews- I found myself getting choked with emotion a few times as I found it really affirming to hear certain points and feeling a resonance with why I'm part of CF. It is a good record of the beginning and the story so far".

Contemplative Fire Post **August 2015 – no.4**

Wisdom on the Way: 11th July
Douai Abbey

"What a lovely edition-thank you so much. Made me determined to make Douai Abbey next year! Don't know the poetry of RS Thomas BUT determined also to seek out. I cried (in a good way) when I read that last requested poem. Altogether very inspiring; many thanks."

"We think that the CF Post makes a wonderful contribution to our community ... It is a great way to keep people in the flow and reminds us of the wider influences and movements of the spirit in other Companions' lives."

"Thanks again for another inspiring read. "

Contemplative Fire Post **September 2015 – no.5**

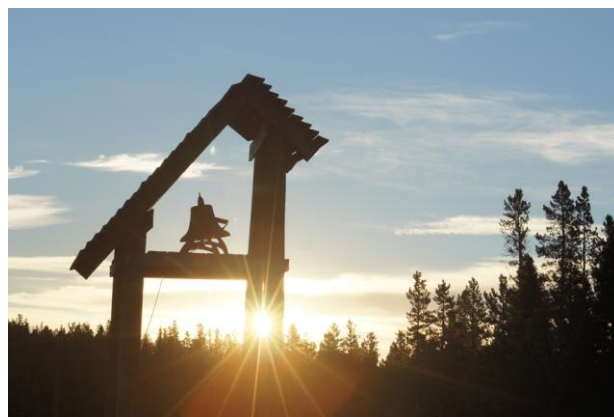
Community Weekend
12th – 13th September

"Let us praise the grace and risk of Fire"

"I love the Post. Thank you so much; good to be reminded in such detail and to see the pictures again."

(CF Posts are now available on the CF website:
<http://www.contemplativefire.org/post.htm>)

Morning Bell



Last month, we had the chance to hear a brief song/chant sung by Ali Dorey (a Companion from Sheffield), Lucy Bolster and Philip. Ian Adams, a Fresh Expressions colleague from way back in 2004, used the songs as a part of his Morning Bell daily reflection series.



Ian writes: I suggest that you make the link via Beloved Life (the mother of Morning Bell!) - this link introduces the series and all the options for accessing Morning Bell are shown there:

<http://www.belovedlife.org/morning-bell-noon-songs/>

Fresh Expressions

Below is the link to Fresh Expressions. Is there someone, or a small group, within CF who could keep up to speed with and deepen our connection with Fresh Expressions? Companion Ali Dorey is now on the national team, Philip continues as an Associate Missioner and Paul Bayes is speaking at a fascinating-looking Fresh Expressions conference in London on 21st Nov: <http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/events/margins15>

Now New Testament

Companion Richard Craig has been working on a version of his blog about the synoptic gospels for possible publication as a little book and would value some opinions on whether it's worth taking any further. One Companion has offered to assist – is anyone else interested?

thenowshow@icloud.com

"Tuning in with Creation – Singing and dancing our way into the Genesis Story"

with Jenny Williams



St Mary's Church, Church Lane

Wendover HP22 6NL

Saturday 31 Oct/Sunday 1 Nov

Booking: mheald@uk2.net

01296 622 707

Walking the Camino

Companion Tony Mealing writes:

I have been walking in Spain over the last few years following the Camino in its various stages. (The Camino de Santiago is the name of any of the pilgrimage routes to the shrine of the apostle St James the Great in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, north western Spain).

The last this year was from France with my daughter, up over the Pyrenees into Spain, crossing the old pilgrims' way on foot, staying in hostels, monasteries, and hotels.



Next June we are planning to walk the second stage from Pamplona into central Spain - about 100 miles. One or two Companions have asked about how to "join in". Booked through a specialist company "Follow the Camino", the cost is about £600, covering maps, moving baggage, morning and evening meals, and single occupancy in a hotel room each night with six days walking. The air fare is separate (about £150 return) as is the bus fare from airport to the start and return (about £35).



Walking "the way" is a spiritual event, just meeting other pilgrims, this last time from Japan, Germany, Ireland, USA, Canada, Australia, NZ, Finland, Norway - talking and listening. The previous year we walked with an Irish nun and the Irish under-secretary of state for education and this year with the UN representative for children's affairs and a UN peace negotiator from NI and Bosnia. Ages range from 8 to 87.

Walking "the way" is different, it is moving and there is something else you can't touch but it is there - all those feet over the last 1,200 years having been there before, like an echo.

Contact Tony on austin124@btinternet.com

