



Contemplative Fire

A community of Christ at the Edge

A LETTER FROM THE TRUSTEES OCTOBER 2025

Dear companions and friends



Having returned to the Netherlands from the Contemplative Fire Community Weekend at Ripon College, Oxford, it's really lovely to be able to update you on what we got up to during the weekend and at the trustee meeting. This is a longer-than-usual letter, so I hope you are encouraged to read until the end.



It was a very special gathering, starting on the evening of the funeral of Philip Roderick, founder of CF. Several companions had been present at the funeral and our companion Ali Dorey was involved in its organisation and led the chanting during the service, alongside a friend of CF, Lucy Bolster. Ali and Jo Rowbotham, who is another companion, gave eulogies for Philip. We integrated moments of silence to commemorate Philip during our weekend, alongside joyful, fun and creative moments which Philip would have enjoyed.





A huge thanks to the organising team led by Connie, for putting together such a fabulous weekend. Of the six new companions who have joined CF in the past year, two were present at the weekend. So many different companions participated, both new and old, making the weekend a place to enjoy one another's company and to share in each other's joys and sorrows. We were blessed with storytelling, poetry, creativity, body movement and prayer, contemplative time, stillness, and the opportunity to explore the trefoil either alone or with other companions. Betsy blessed us with story, poetry and creativity on our first evening. Diane led us in stillness each morning and Soobie led our daily body prayer/movement. Elaine and Kathryn guided us into the stations of the trefoil, offering an opportunity to explore what each element of the trefoil might mean to us, individually or together.

Our spiritual accompanier, Sister Clare Louise, of the 'Sisters of the Love of God', helped us explore the theme "balancing at the edge" by speaking about the word 'chaos' as it was meant in the Bible. Nowadays we associate the word chaos with confusion or disorder, but in the Hebrew Bible 'chaos' was something far more mystical and generative. It was a formless and void space, or a wilderness of potential, not yet shaped or ordered. There was a sense of a fertile openness in the deep or primordial waters; a sacred threshold space full of potential. Sister Clare Louise has kindly offered to send us a summary of what she shared and is happy for any of us in the community to email her directly if they feel like a chat. Her email address: clare-louise.slg@slg.org.uk

The AGM was a lively affair, with our financial gem, Sally Livsey, introducing the budget and CF spending in a way that makes it difficult not to start to love figures! Trustees were encouraged and delighted by the interest in the budget, and several companions highlighted how funds from the Across the Threshold Fund have been or will be used for projects — from creating a prayer hut in Grenada, to permaculture, buying Bibles for prisoners, and supporting a charity in Kenya.

An "out of the box" story (facilitated by Kathryn) invited companions and friends to consider how they wish to be supported by CF in the coming year — and how they might offer their gifts to the community. This led to wonderful material and ideas, which the trustees explored further in our meeting on the Monday following the gathering.

Peter and Charlotte led our agape meal in the chapel, where companions were invited to recommit to the CF rhythm of life and friends were invited to join in if they felt resonant with the recommitment prayer. We were invited to circle around the chapel and to gaze upon photos of various edge places or 'ecotones'. These photos will be put up on the CF website soon – so keep an eye out for them. Charlotte introduced this concept beautifully, weaving in its significance to CF as a community of Christ at the edge. An ecotone is a transitional space between two ecosystems, such as where forest meets meadow or river meets sea. It's a rich, dynamic edge where different forms of life mingle, interact, and often create greater diversity. Spiritually, it can symbolize the threshold places where change, creativity, and new growth emerge. As trustees, we are truly committed to listening to, engaging with, and acting on what our companions (and friends) say to us. We want to deepen our connections with one another and to embody a truly loving and caring community.

During the community listening, Kathryn Lord, who is also a new trustee, offered a beautiful story about being at the edge – a wordless story of a person wandering through various terrains, hard and soft, high and low, difficult and easy, before reaching a large gate: a threshold. They peered through, and as a community we were invited to wonder together about what lies beyond.

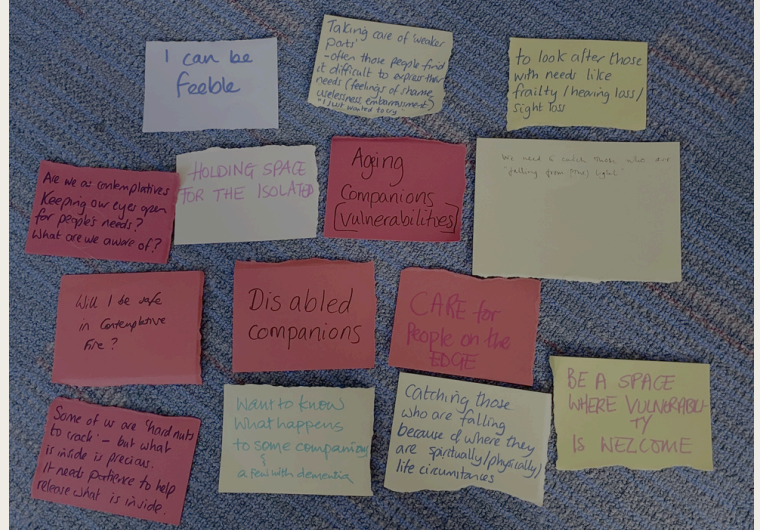
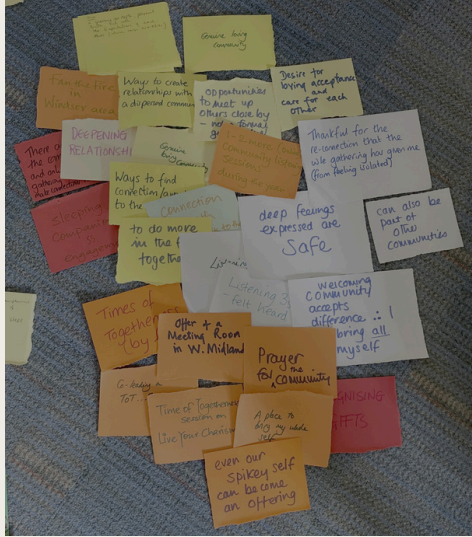
Kathryn invited reflection in small groups around two questions:

- How can CF support you in the coming year?
- How might you like to support and engage with CF?
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Each group was supported by a trustee who listened and took notes. The invitation to respond to these questions is also open to any companions (and friends) who were not at the weekend. Please feel free to be in touch with your responses.

There is also a community e-book with individual reflections on the theme of balancing at the edge. You are warmly invited to add your own voice to this on-going offering by contacting Sarah for a link to the e-book.





Trustees & Transitions

As Sally and Siggy stepped down, Ali and Peter were reconfirmed in their trustee roles. Kathryn joined the trustees, and Soobie, who presented herself at the last minute (to everyone's joy!), was co-opted for one year. Next year there will be a formal election if she decides to re-stand.

So, to be clear: the trustees are — Peter Wright (safeguarding), Ali Dorey (growth and development), Connie Chapman, Kathryn Lord, Soobie Whitfield, and myself. I was asked to become Chair, which I have accepted.

Although Sally Livsey has stepped down as a trustee, she will continue supporting us with CF's financial affairs.

We hope that companions and friends feel they can approach any trustee with matters of concern, ideas, or requests — or simply for an informal chat. Everything is welcome.

Trustee Reflections from Kim

As it was my turn to facilitate, I used elements of a permaculture design web to organise our time together. We grouped what we heard into five clusters:

1. Hopes and desires
2. Concerns or tensions
3. Gifts – what can I offer?
4. Ideas for the future
5. What have I received – what am I grateful for?

Through a process of integration, we discerned where we are being called as a community.

We are being called to:

1. Deepen our learning
2. Deepen our care for those who may be somehow invisible or, through different circumstances, are finding it more difficult to connect with our community
3. Nurture our loving and accepting community
4. Centre the trefoil
5. Spark creativity
6. Clarify and improve communication

We'll continue to update you as we take these next steps, and we warmly welcome your questions, thoughts, and suggestions.



Pearls of Wisdom

Here are my pearls of wisdom from our community gathering and trustee meeting:

- Edges are places of fertility, creativity, diversity and transformation.
- Inhabiting an edge place or ecotone can be both exciting and scary.
- Opening up in vulnerability is possible in places of shared trust and love.
- Chaos can be likened to the womb of creation.
- CF is a space of welcome and love for a hugely diverse group of companions and friends.

Blessings to all

Kim Tsai

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For the calendar

Monday 3rd November

Contemplative Fire Intro Zoom

10-11am Online

Monday 10th November – Thursday 13th November

Silent Retreat

Parcevall Hall Appletreewick, Skipton, North Yorkshire, United Kingdom

Sunday 16th November

Time of Togetherness

5-6pm Online

Saturday 22nd November

Wisdom on the Way with Sister Clare Louise

SLG

10-12.30pm Online

See the website for details of our Advent gatherings in December

www.contemplativefire.org