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Next issue

Meditation News is published quarterly by WCCM in the UK. Contributions are warmly welcomed.

Please send articles for the next issue to:
uknewsletter@wccm.org
and events to:
events@wccm.uk to reach us by **1 February 2024**.

Space is limited and if the item exceeds 700 words please contact us in advance.

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Image: Freepik.com

It's often said the crises of our age reflect a crisis in our humanity. We live in a culture and an economic paradigm that has encouraged us to forget our place as participants in a larger whole, dependent on goods we do not generate. As a result of this forgetting, we seem to be undergoing a collapse of systems at almost every level – institutional, economic, social, ecological. More and more people recognise that responses to this unravelling must go deeper than technological solutions or tweaks to the existing order. They must reconnect us to deeper rhythms of reality.

It's not surprising, then, that more and more people are drawn to contemplative practice and community. It's as if an inner wisdom calls us to seek fuller ways of knowing and being. Many are looking for something like what St Benedict called 'schools for the Lord's service', communities rooted in and sustained by a larger life, where truth can be faced and possibilities discerned.



Many churches seek to be such spaces. They offer ways of learning and practising contemplation, ranging from weekly meditation groups, to regular contemplative services, retreats and labyrinth walks. Fewer churches, however, take an avowedly contemplative approach to everything

they do and are. Meditation groups may be one of the activities offered, but meditation is not at the heart of every liturgy. And I wonder what difference this might make?

Almost thirteen years ago, we founded Benedictus Contemplative Church in Canberra, Australia. We have been exploring what it means to let contemplative practice shape the whole of our life together, from our worship to other ways of gathering, from governance to our sense of mission and service. I always emphasise that contemplative church is not primarily about a certain style of worship, involving hushed tones, flickering candles and Gregorian chant – Christianity for introverts. Rather, contemplative church has a practice at its heart, the practice of silent meditation. This, I think, is what opens the community to the reality of God and a journey of faith that is more than doctrinal, devotional or moralistic. Like the WCCM, Benedictus is rooted in the Christian tradition, but the priority of practice means we need not be threatened by other

traditions or perspectives. It means that wherever people are on their journeys of faith and doubt, they can participate in their own way and at their own pace.

I am honoured to be joining next year's gathering of the UK WCCM community to offer some reflections on the vocation and promise of contemplative church. From the establishment of new, ecumenical communities like Benedictus to the transformation of existing parishes and congregations, there are many forms contemplative church can take. Different contexts invite different responses, and this UK gathering will be an opportunity to listen and learn from each other's experience, open to what might emerge. Those exploring the possibilities of initiating and enabling contemplative forms of church and community may find it of particular relevance, and everyone is welcome.


Sarah Bachelard

Rev. Dr. Sarah Bachelard is the founder and leader of Benedictus Contemplative Church, based in Canberra, Australia. For the past 13 years, Benedictus has been exploring what it means to be a contemplative worshipping community engaged with the needs of our world.

www.benedictus.com.au

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IN THE UK

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WCCM in the UK

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Gift Aid

If you are a UK taxpayer you can Gift Aid your donation, which increases the amount we receive at no extra cost to you. Information about Gift Aid and a declaration form is available online or from the office.

The National Council Weekend - 3 to 5 November 2023 at the Kairos Centre, London

There was a warm and friendly welcome awaiting the 22 souls who arrived at the Kairos centre on Friday afternoon from all over the country to meditate, exchange ideas, and discuss how WCCM in the UK might go forward and put names to those faces they had only ever seen online.

After the formal welcome and introduction we reflected on progress against the priorities set at last years meeting when we were still finding our feet after Covid. In 2023 our main priority was to reach out in new ways which we did, not only through social media but also in more traditional ways through the new literature and postcards. We have started to gain some momentum in making contact with young adults having committed to following up the suggestions of the international coordinator for young people. And there was also significant activity in taking forward meditation with children in schools, in prisons, with those on the margins, with learning disabilities and contemplative church, while maintaining our focus on the environment.

There was much to be joyful about in the regional reports with new groups forming, introductory days and courses being organised as well as quiet days, study days, social events, retreats, a day for anglican clergy and regional group meetings. After a 20% drop in the number of local groups following Covid, things have now stabilised and we have just under 300 groups including physical, hybrid and online meeting across England, Scotland and Wales.

Other priorities for 2023 were looking at how we are organised, to make it easier for people to step up to new roles and encouraging and empowering our community members. The outcome of this was a proposal on 'how the UK might look going forward', put together over the last 9 months by the Action group with suggested changes to all aspects of the way we manage ourselves. The ideas underpinning the proposal are:

- a. Shared working - working in teams across the community to make it more likely roles will be fulfilled and reduce isolation.
- b. Empowering Group Leaders - enabling Group Leaders to get involved and feel more connected and supported.
- c. Going back to basics - ensuring our attention is on nurturing and sharing the practice.
- d. Focusing on local and regional activities - directing our resources to support local and regional events.
- e. Simplifying how we are organised - more effective organisational systems.
- f. Using the technology - not only supporting online groups but making best use of all resources.



There was a lengthy discussion on the implications and the implementation of the proposal with a number of amendments being agreed. You can see the key points listed under National Council Priorities 2023 on page 4.

We also heard from Special Interest Coordinators, Celia Heneage (Adults with Learning Disabilities) and Pat Hay (Children in Schools) and Shelagh Layet (Group Leader) about their experiences developing groups. (See Shelagh's article on this topic on page 6.) This was followed by small group discussions to share ideas on what we could do. Hopefully some of the insights will feature in a future newsletter.

As always on these occasions as Saturday draws to an end it seems you have barely settled in when you are packing to leave, but after dinner we had a quiz evening. It is great to have social time together and having shared a few glasses of wine and enjoyed the challenges set by Roger Layet, our quiz master, this was a great way to end a very full day.

On Sunday morning we heard about plans for 2024 - changes to the distribution of the UK newsletter; the School; the UK gathering at Minsteracres; changes at the Meditatio centre; and offerings by WCCM International (the Academy program and new online courses). Information and updates on all of these are in, or will appear in future newsletters.

Having completed my 2 year term of office I formally stepped down as the National Coordinator knowing that there is much to do to bring about the changes proposed. I will be still be around in the new role of National Liaison and am grateful to Birgit Duncan (NE London Region) and Pat Higgins (South Manchester, Cheshire & Merseyside Region) who volunteered to work with me.

After all the preparation that goes into organising a weekend event, as often happens everything fell into place and we enjoyed another wonderful community weekend. And as always one leaves thinking there is nothing to compare with meeting and meditating together in person.

Love to you all
Julie Roberts
julie.ann.roberts@icloud.com

National Council Priorities 2023-24

1) Implement the *Proposal on how the UK might look going forward with some amendments. The key points agreed are listed below:*

1. The National Coordinator role to be replaced for the time being by a National Coordinating Team.
2. A new role of National Liaison accepted to work with the Trustees, International and the office.
3. Two new roles of Area Liaison accepted to provide continuity of the Coordinator meetings and represent regions.
4. These three new roles would join Communications, Office, and School representatives as members of the new National Coordinating Team.
5. Existing Regional coordinators would be asked to consider how they could best be organised into areas to work with adjoining regions (11 areas proposed subject to discussion).
6. In consultation with existing Regional Coordinators /Contacts the three new roles would work together to implement changes to the current regions.
7. A new role description of Area Team Member to be introduced in areas where there is no Regional Coordinator and to support current Regional Coordinators where there is.
8. Special Interest Coordinators would be invited to be Area Team members.
9. All Group Leaders would be connected with an existing Regional Coordinator or Area Team member for support and advice.
10. Group Leaders would have direct communication with the office who together would ensure the database/ website information is up to date.
11. With there being no National Coordinator the office will be the first point of contact for all enquiries. The office would redirect both people and information received.
12. The UK website along with the office would be at the centre of how we communicate as we make more use of online and social media opportunities.
13. There will be a renewed emphasis of The School being at the heart of our teaching and formation of all leaders and potential leaders.
14. The Meditatio Country Coordinator and Oblate team while working independently to support the Special Interest Coordinators and Oblates would be closely connected to the National Coordinating Team.
15. The UK would encourage members to support international events, with the UK conference possibly organised jointly with a partner organisation in future, not necessarily taking place annually, the focus being on regional and local events.

2) A renewed emphasis on developing groups by encouraging

- ◆ groups to offer Introductory courses
- ◆ everyone to attend an Essential Teaching workshop
- ◆ Group Leaders to complete the new online Formation Training course
- ◆ shared group leadership
- ◆ flexibility in how courses are offered

3) Support further development of outreach by offering formation training to help connect with people who may be different to ourselves eg those on the margins, with mental health problems etc.

Lone Meditators Network

This network for meditators, who are unable to get to local groups, has been running for over 16 years. A contact sheet with names, contact details and times of meditation forms the basis of the network. People are free to contact each other, which helps them to feel part of a meditating community. The network coordinator sends out information and a couple of newsletters a year as a means of keeping in contact.

If you feel that you would like to be part of this network, please contact Pam Winters on 01462 892265 or email pam@wccm.org



Do you have any questions about your meditation practice, or your spiritual life in general?

Meditation Companions are experienced WCCM meditators who are there for you to talk to, in confidence.

**Contact Bob Morley.
rgm1@live.co.uk
tel. 07704 419526.**



A testimony of World Youth Day 2023

I arrived at Bonnevaux in the late afternoon of the 21st of May this year. Looking out onto the abbey, suitcase still in hand, I was pointed to the chapel. Evening prayer was just beginning and I was welcome to join. Reflecting now on this moment - rushing down the hill and pushing the big wooden door to reveal a group of people enshrouded in the day's fading light, many sitting or kneeling on the stone floor, all united in silence - I see the significance of this invitation as the beginning of a journey still unfolding in my life.

The daily rhythm of practice, the close guidance from the core community, the beauty and stillness of the place, and a precious friendship with two fellow volunteers older and wiser than I, lit the path upon which I embarked. So when Father Laurence told me about 'World Youth Day' one lunchtime and then asked if I would like to attend with the World Community of Christian Meditation, I immediately said yes. The incredibly generous support from the community, and the patient guidance of Tayna, the youth coordinator, made this possible for me.



We started on the 28th of July, with a few days of retreat in Leiria Seminary before the official event. I had no idea what to expect but when I was cheerfully greeted and shown to my room by none other than Clara, Tayna's young daughter, wearing a flower crown and holding a clipboard, I knew I was in the right place. As a group we numbered around 20 and had travelled from far and near (a neighbouring Portuguese town, Brazil, Indonesia, Honduras, Italy, Mexico, Canada, Finland; only myself from the UK). The closeness that grew so quickly between us showed me clearly the truth of the phrase emblazoned on the special WCCM WYD t-shirts we wore proudly: 'meditation creates community'.

During the retreat we were fortunate enough to be taught by Fr Laurence and collaborate in workshops; all specifically focusing on the topical themes identified at Pope Francis' pontificate: integral ecology, social friendship and mercy.

On the 31st of July we visited Fatima. In the throngs walking the Stations of the Cross with us, there was a prefiguring of the sheer abundance of other young people we would join when we arrived in Lisbon that evening. Near

the statue of Mary marking the first apparition, we meditated in a circle, perched on the wall under the beating mid-day sun. Even now I am moved thinking of this moment; how the surrounding chatter ebbed unexpectedly away, silence flooding around us as those passing looked on, growing still or simply curious. All participating somehow.



In Lisbon there was more than chatter. Over 1.5 million young people had come together to share in an experience of joy. Our apartment was central and after our morning practice we would venture out and explore until our feet could carry us no more, attending the multitude of events happening continuously. One evening chaos arose in the streets below, loud and somewhat unsettling, and yet we still meditated. Initially I was confused but by the time the gong sounded the end, it made sense. We did more 'flashmob' meditations outside, in busier locations than before, all to the same effect as in Fatima. It was an utter privilege to be a representative of the WCCM along with the rest of the group, sharing my budding knowledge with those who had questions.

WYD culminated in the vigil at 'Campo de Graca' before the Pope's holy mass on Sunday the 6th of August. We were an unfathomable sea of people, waving flags from countries all over the world, spanning the whole horizon. On the stony ground, only a tarpaulin beneath us, our group meditated. I have never felt so truly part of the body of Christ, the Church, as in those remarkable 24 hours.

On my flight home that evening, dust from the camp still in my hair, I wrote furiously to my two dear friends from Bonnevaux. I can still hardly believe how fortunate I am to have been given this ever-growing gift of Christian meditation, and I will always be grateful.

Grace Reynolds



Building Team Leadership

I would like to share how I came to this idea of team leadership. It seems so obvious now but has not been the current practice.

Roger and I had been leading the meditation group in Nailsea, Bristol for over 20 years. As the years passed and we got older and in my case weaker, we were realising that it would be right for us to move house.

What worried me most was pulling out from this group where we had leadership positions without it creating a terrible hole in the living network of the group. I knew how it felt when any couple left – they were missed. We really do become bonded when we sit together in meditation week in and week out over many years.

Our community is a living thing strong yet intangible. How could we do it without harming the group? And who would be leader? I realised that we needed to get out of the position of being the sole providers of leadership. It was vulnerable and unhelpful for the group.

Already there were two or three members, meditators of long standing who had completed the Essential Teaching Weekend, and did facilitate the meetings from time to time. In fact, when we held a Six Week Introductory Course, which we did every year, they participated and would present at least one of the weeks.

I decided that we needed to extend this further. So I encouraged one or two others to go on the Essential Teaching weekend. And slowly but surely others did. Without fail people enjoyed it and when I asked them afterwards would you like to lead the group next week, they unflinchingly said yes! And of course I would go on to ask them again and again, so it became normal.

Finally I got to the stage where there were six of us who had all done the essential teaching weekend and I proposed team leadership to the group. I explained that we would each take one week in six to present the meditation for that evening. It all went well and actually began to happen in practice.

Things were going well for my covert plan of making Roger and me, not exactly redundant, but certainly not indispensable!

Finally last year there were two more group members who joined the Team. This was towards the end of Covid and both did the Essential Teaching Weekend online. I was dubious that it would be effective. Yet, to my surprise, both people were delighted with the course and came on board as Team members!

At this moment we were offered a flat at a retirement village in Bristol which suited our needs and immediately said yes to it. So by the time we reached July 2022 I was able to break the news to the group that Roger and I were moving. We arranged a meeting with the Team, the six people who were going to carry on the leadership of the group from summer 2022. Everybody seemed to be accepting and ready to carry on and serve the group, by taking turns at facilitating the weekly meetings.

There was also the big question about who the leader of the team would be. Having pondered it I knew in my heart who the right person was. She was someone who had been part of the group for a long time and had actually stepped down from presenting meetings when she took

up a very demanding new full-time job.

What to do? Well I met with Sally and suggested it. Her reply was that it wasn't the right time due to having the full-time, demanding work commitment. Yet at the same time she

somehow recognised that she might be the right person for this role. I emphasised that as things stood there were enough people for it only to be a commitment to facilitate the group once in every six weeks in terms of presenting on the Monday evening. She would be the contact person. She said she had thought about it in the past but was not ready yet. She went away and thought and prayed about it. She emphasised that it must be a shared thing. She would be the contact person but wanted the involvement of the whole group. In fact she does not even want to use the word 'leader' but talks about 'the person in the chair tonight'! But she did take on the role of being Contact person for this Team leadership group.

A second sound and gifted group member, Francesca, would cooperate with her by being the liaison person with the parish. We had free use of a room in the Parish hall - although the majority of our members were not parishioners.

Now one year on, having met up with both of them at the Ammerdown retreat, I asked them how it was going? They were enormously positive. The group was flourishing. They worked well as a team and discussed and shared ideas about how they would do things. They were at this very time embarking on a six-week course. They were positive enough to be reaching out to others. And significantly at least three new people had joined the team as well as one or two having to leave it. So all signs of life.

We all agree that in this day and age with everyone being so busy working or having responsibility for children and grandchildren, it is very hard for someone on their own to carry all the responsibility for leading a group. In fact I now think it is unhealthy for the group.

I hear that there is difficulty in finding people to fulfil the role of regional Coordinator. No surprise in that, if again it is one isolated individual. Why not extend the practice of team leadership to the regions as well? We have in fact had a Steering group in the Bristol and Bath region, somewhat weakened at present after Covid. This could be revived and have a joint and rotating membership representing as many groups as possible.

We had found that team leadership is enriching and of course if a number of people come together it's dynamic. It gets things done without anyone having to feel overloaded but rather participating in a dynamic and creative team...

And we really are sharing the gift because you develop and learn so much more from having to teach it than just passively receiving it week by week. Participation is the watchword for me in having a healthy community.





ESSENTIAL TEACHING WORKSHOP

19 – 21 April 2024
Wistaston Hall Retreat Centre, Crewe CW2 8JS
www.orc-crewe.org



A weekend together in person
- to deepen our practice
- to clarify our understanding
- to give us confidence to share the gift of meditation.

More information: contact Ailsa Adamson
ailsa.adamson@gmail.com 07846 476545

Essential Teaching Workshop

19 – 21 APRIL 2024
WISTASTON HALL RETREAT CENTRE, CREWE CW2 8JS

The Workshop is offered in a spirit of community, spending the weekend together, meditating together, and eating together, listening to the wisdom of the tradition and to the lived experience of each other. The themes of the programme are:

- ◆ The Practice of Meditation
- ◆ The History of the Tradition
- ◆ The Meditation Journey
- ◆ Sharing the Gift

There will be talks, discussions and practical sessions, led by Liz Watson and Mark Ball.

Is it for you? Have you been meditating daily in the tradition taught within WCCM for at least a year? Do you feel ready to take a new step? (If you're not sure and would like to talk it over, contact Ailsa - see below.)

The cost is £175. This is subsidised by the UK community to keep it as affordable as possible. But don't be put off if that is still too much, contact Ailsa about a bursary.

Application form, and queries: contact Ailsa

✉ ailsa.adamson@gmail.com ☎ 07846 476545

BUILDING TEAM LEADERSHIP CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

There is a sad little postscript to this. After a month or two we realised that the meditation group at The Well at Westbury on Trym led by our dear friend Caroline was quite close at hand. We happily joined and enjoyed the experience of not being responsible for making things happen. Sad to say it did not last long. Just after Easter this year Caroline was diagnosed with a brain tumour. She turned to us and said, 'Would you two take over?'

Of course we were happy to do this. But what struck me was that but for our arrival a few months earlier that group which had only three permanent members would have collapsed. This is an all too familiar scenario. The fact is that single person leadership of a group is a very vulnerable model. Participation benefits the members of the group and gives the Group a future. Participation is giving people the opportunity for spiritual growth. Why would we not want to do that?

Sally wrote to me, 'I often asked myself, if there ever was a need, if I would I be prepared to take a leadership role in the meditation group. I knew I could not see the group diminish as this unique group signifies a unified place for those from different denominations and those who do not align to church in silent prayer. This is indeed profound and might not be experienced elsewhere in the community.'

What has emerged is a good number of consistent and passionate attendees who carve out the space in their week, others come and go which is also a joy. We now have 7 of us who lead in turn. I realise that the gift of shared leadership enables us to let go of unnecessary roles and we reduce any possible power of

holding such a task. We give each other a gift of appreciation as we follow a joint structure, however, also absorb each person's unique contribution.

This enables us also to 'give and receive', to have faith in one another, as we let go into trusting one another with thanks. Encouraging one another can be a life changing event for someone else. It frees a potential line leader of a possible burden of responsibility week by week which helps to be in a more healthy frame of mind for our meditation practice.

'Encourage one another and build each other up'. (Thessalonians 5 v 11.)

Francesca adds a few thoughts. 'Sharing the leadership of weekly meetings had not only sustained the group it has enabled us to hear the range of gifts and voices of at least six members whilst keeping to the structure WCCM suggests. This has reminded me that it is the spirit who leads and we are means of the spirit working through all of us in sharing this wonderful gift of meditation.'

And in having two named contact leads: "I have found sharing the role of contact lead/ organiser of rotas etc has shared the load. Both of us are busy people and we know we can make things happen between us!"

I would like to address those of you reading this article to respond. Would you like to contribute your experience in your group or in your region and share it in this newsletter? If you had an experience that might be of interest to others in the community, send it in. It would be good to hear from you. This newsletter is a good vehicle for us to communicate with one other.

Shelagh Layet.

Benedictine Oblates for WCCM calls you to



BENEDICT'S WELL

"PREFER NOTHING TO THE LOVE OF CHRIST"
-RULE OF BENEDICT 4:21

MONDAYS 9AM BST
ZOOM with LIVE STREAMING
<https://www.youtube.com/@benedictswell6373>

Let us drink of the wisdom of St. Benedict and together be the well of love the world can draw from.

ALL ARE WELCOME AT BENEDICT'S WELL!

Benedict's Well is an International on-line meditation and reflection group that meets on Zoom every Monday at 9 a.m. GMT for a total of one hour. The group is hosted by Benedictine Oblates of the World Community for Christian Meditation.

From Australia

"I like to join because I love the idea of being connected to other meditators all around the world."

From Canada

"It is such a privilege to meditate together from everywhere. It is a special connection, and like friends."

From Spain

"Being connected worldwide and when I meet some of you in person I feel I know you already - especially the speakers."

Benedict's Well is open to anyone who wants to deepen their meditation practice, has an interest in the monastic tradition and would like the support of a community online for their spiritual journey.

Please feel welcome to come to Benedict's Well. Send an email to wccmbenedictswell@gmail.com and we will then send you the weekly Zoom link.

You can watch previous sessions of Benedict's Well on [//www.youtube.com/@benedictswell6373/streams](https://www.youtube.com/@benedictswell6373/streams) or

From Asia

Support of a group is the best guarantee to remain a faithful meditator.

From Europe

"I enjoy the silent prayer fellowship and the sharing of experience as Christians, and I brush up my English, too!"

Each week, there is a time of silent meditation with a reading to prepare us for meditation and then there is a guest speaker. The group is ecumenical and from all over the world, but united in meditation and the nourishment of shared reflection on their Christian faith journey.

From Ireland

"Finding deep resonance with the speakers."

From UK

"Shared wisdom and love with prayer united in spirit with some many kindred spirits from around the world and for peace in the world."

A regular speaker is Father Laurence. Over the 3 years that we have been meeting, many speakers have offered their reflections and wisdom. You may wish to offer your own reflections!

From the UK

"It keeps me connected to everyone and keeps me anchored."

From New Zealand

"Inspiration and encouragement from soul friends"

From Australia

"Inspiration and encouragement from soul friends."

From Europe

"My week feels empty otherwise."

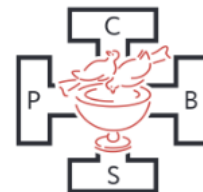
The quotes here are some of the wonderful testimonies we gathered from a recent time of sharing at Benedict's Well. They come from those who join together on a regular basis from across the world.

search YouTube for [@benedictswell6373](https://www.youtube.com/@benedictswell6373) and they are on the streams tab.

Please note we have a period of silent meditation at the beginning of our time together.

With blessings from the Benedict's Well Team

Monastics in the World – WCCM Oblate Community



Meditation creates community. Meditators who experience personal transformation through a daily practice seek to express this in ways suitable to their own path. Oblation is one of these.

The World Community is ecumenical and the Oblate community specially reflects this. However, the WCCM as a whole acknowledges a special relationship to the Benedictine tradition which was the first in the western Church to form a stable form of inclusive religious life and, in succeeding generations, has always adapted to the needs and circumstances of the age. Oblates live out their oblation in a spirit of *obedience, stability and conversion* and promise to *share always in the life and work of our Community*.

To read on, please take a look at the Oblate Path Booklet which can be found as a download or read online at [//wccm.org/become-an-oblate](http://wccm.org/become-an-oblate) or go onto our oblate website [//oblates.wccm.org](http://oblates.wccm.org)

OUR UK BENEDICTINE OBLATE COMMUNITY

The basic element of our Oblate Community, is the 'cell'. This word has a long monastic tradition referring originally to the monk's cave or room. With us it is used to describe presence not only physical space. The cells meet with regularity, to meditate, to share the Word, to consider their ways of sharing in the work of the wider community and where time allows share a meal together. All are welcome.

For more information about our oblate cells, please contact oblates@wccm.uk

OBLATE EVENTS

Annual UK Oblate Weekend: 13 - 14h Oct @ The Kairos Centre, Roehampton, London. SW15 4JA

UK Oblate Community Days: Saturday 20 January 10.30 - 16.30 IN PERSON ONLY @ St. Mark's. London. Contact oblates@wccm.uk

Benedict's Well: Weekly online Oblate led prayer session and talk. Mondays at 9am. Contact: wccmbenedictswell@gmail.com

WCCM OBLATE CELL MEETINGS

Cambridge: Contact oblates@wccm.uk for new cell contact.

Berkshire: Online Zoom meeting on the last Wednesday of each month from 14.15 - 15.45. Contact: Angela Greenwood angelagreenwood@hotmail.com 01344-774254

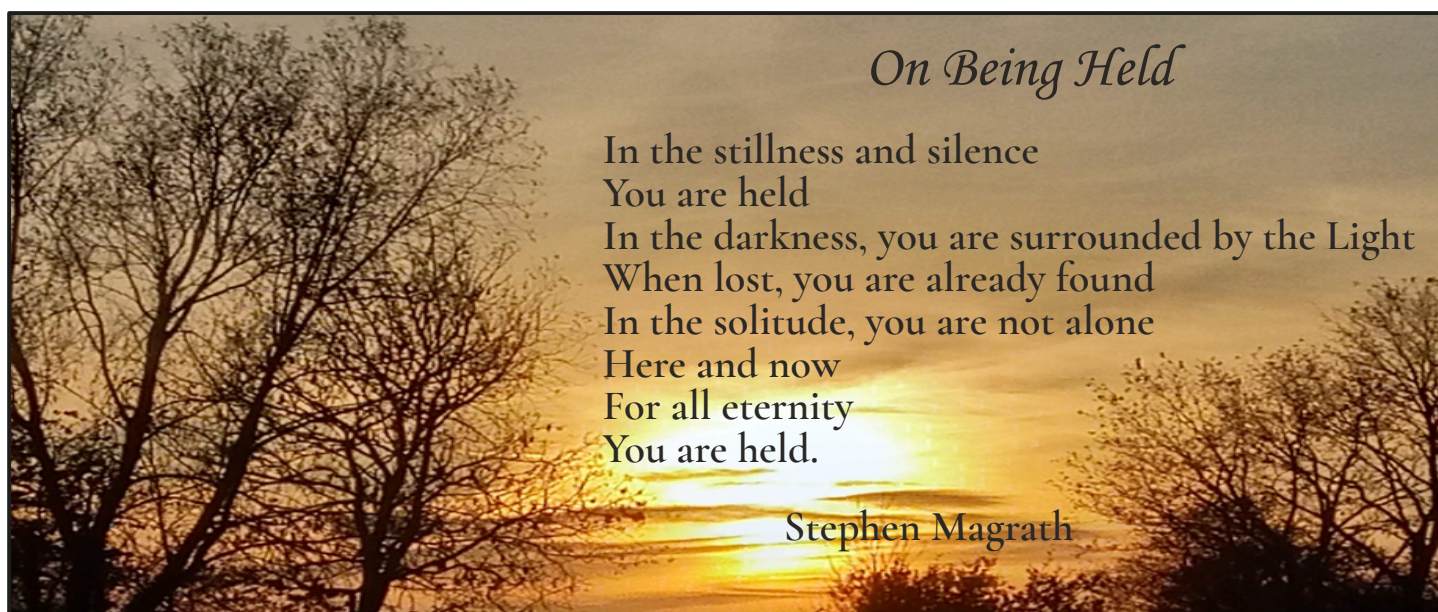
North London: Meets at Christ the King Church, Cockfosters. Contact: Philomena Phillips philomenaphillips51@hotmail.co.uk or on 07970-971674

Northern Cell: Online 14:00-15:30 Saturdays 3 February, 2 March. In person Saturday 6 April noon-15:30 @ Horwich. Contact: Angela Gregson via oblates@wccm.uk for more information

Scotland / Borders Cell: led by Eileen Dutt. Contact oblates@wccm.uk for details.

Western Cell: led by Janet Robbins. Contact janet@jrobbins.co.uk for details.

UK Led Online Oblate Cell Meetings: Sundays 14.00 - 15.30 14 January, 11 February, 10 March, 14 April & Wednesday Evening 19.30 - 21.00 24 January, 21 February, 20 March, 24 April. Contact Angela Gregson via oblates@wccm.uk for more information



On Being Held

In the stillness and silence
 You are held
 In the darkness, you are surrounded by the Light
 When lost, you are already found
 In the solitude, you are not alone
 Here and now
 For all eternity
 You are held.

Stephen Magrath

Meditatio Newsletter

In this Newsletter, I would like to draw your attention to the planned visit next year of Dr. Sarah Bachelard to Minsteracres Retreat Centre near County Durham for an inspirational weekend exploring 'Contemplative Church' from 7-9th June. It is hard to imagine anything more urgently needed at this time of global uncertainty, fear and confusion. (Please see an article by Sarah Bachelard by way of introduction to the above event on page 1-2) I know that many of you will have already made a note in your next year's diary, but now is the opportunity to ensure that you book your place to be there. Minsteracres Retreat Centre is set in very beautiful countryside and is the ideal place for such an event. WCCM and Meditatio have booked the whole retreat centre which will add to the focussed, contemplative atmosphere of the weekend. However, space is limited, so I do hope that you will not delay too long in making your booking. (Booking forms and information are included in this mailing of the newsletter. Online booking is also available - see page 2.)

If you look at the listings for Special Interest Coordinators, you will see that Terry Doyle has kindly agreed to take on the role for 'Addiction'. We are very grateful for the work of Mike Sarson who previously took on this task, but he has recently had to step down due to health problems. Don't hesitate to contact Terry if you come across any meditation questions or difficulties that are related to addiction. Terry is particularly experienced in this area due to his ongoing work with people 'on the margins'.

The COP28 Climate Change Conference took place in Dubai from Nov 30th- 12 Dec. Fr Laurence led an online meditation on Nov 28th in the lead up to this, encouraging as many meditators as possible to join him.

In connection with the above conference I also wanted to encourage you, if you have not seen it, to look at a most powerful 'Forum' presentation given by Dr. Jason Brown from Vancouver, Canada on 'Ecological Grief'. This can be

accessed on the outreach 'Earth Crisis' page on the wccm.org website, just scroll down to the Forum recordings. People attending the talk found it to be a most powerful, moving presentation which brought the need for a contemplative approach to solving the ecological crisis right into focus. I do also urge you to visit the 'Earth Crisis' Blog, as there are many new articles and posts to explore.

Not strictly a Meditatio project, although reaching out to the age range 18 – 45 years is seen as 'Outreach', but I want to take this opportunity to mention that following the successful launch of an international young people's weekly online meditation group, we are fortunate that now there is an opportunity to set up a UK based Young People's online meditation group. If you know of anyone in that age range who might be interested, do encourage them to contact the UK Office, or alternatively they can email me and I will make certain that they are informed about progress in setting up this new group.

Finally I would like to share with you the advice that I understand Father Laurence gave recently in Bonnevaux about the crucial task of building bridges and encouraging diversity in our community. While emphasizing the great importance of attentive listening, Father Laurence said that we don't so much need a 'strategy', but to 'stay in the moment' plant a seed and then 'let go'. If everyone of us took his advice to heart, who knows how far our meditation outreach would begin to grow! Our world needs contemplative wisdom above all else at the moment, so how about making a commitment to try it? He advised us to 'stay rooted' and rest in the knowledge that living with 'Metanoia', as meditators do, creates a most powerful attraction. We can do nothing better than allow the power of this attraction to do its work in growing the seeds that we take the time, and opportunities to plant.

Diana Ohlson

email: dohlson24@gmail.com



Bonnevaux

An Intensive Silent Meditation Retreat

John Main: To be free ourselves we have to learn to set God free, free to lead us and love us. You could think of the days we spend together in this retreat as an experience of deeper silence and solitude in closer community.

The whole retreat is conducted in silence, sustained by a stable daily rhythm in common. The scaffolding of each day is provided by eight periods of meditation. The silence is only broken by a talk from the retreat leader, a 15 minute meeting with a mentor and a contemplative Eucharist each day.

Date: 27 January - 04 February 2024

Location: Bonnevaux - On the Ground

Leader: Liz Watson

For more details and to book see [//wccm.org/events/](https://wccm.org/events/)

Events

Events from end of December 2023 onwards. Please visit the WCCM in the UK website for more details and to check for changes and additional events: [//wccm.uk/events](https://wccm.uk/events)

The School Events

Contact: Ailsa Adamson ailsa.adamson@gmail.com or phone UK office: 020 8095 4442.

Friday 19 to Sunday 21 April. The School Essential Teaching Workshop. Leaders: Liz Watson and Mark Ball. Venue: Wistaston Hall Retreat Centre, Crewe CW2 8JS www.orc-crewe.org

Scotland

Friday 12 to Sunday 14 April. Retreat: The Voice of this Calling - Listening to the voice of our souls in a confusing world. Leader: Bridget Hewitt. Venue: Kinnoul monastery Perth Cost: £216 (whole weekend) Contact: Lynda lynda.stark@btinternet.com

Northeast England

Saturday 2 March. Meditation day in Newcastle. Leader: Rev Nicholas Buxton, director of St. Anthony's Priory. Venue: tbc Contact: Angela angefoley@btinternet.com

Northwest England

Saturday 27 January. I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life' - in poetry Venue: Ambleside Leader: Bob Morley. More details to follow.

Friday 15 to Sunday 17 March. The Hying Retreat tbc. Leader: Christopher Collingwood, Anglican priest and Zen teacher. Details to follow.

Sunday 16 June. The Aramaic Jesus. Leader: Dr Neil Douglas-Klotz. Details to follow.

South West England

Mondays weekly 18:30 – 19:00 Meditation on Zoom from Ilminster. Cost: free. Contact: Alexis le Fèvre; watteratviolet@gmail.com for an invitation.

Events at St Mary's Minster Church, Ilminster TA19 0DU. Cost: Donations towards expenses. Contact: Susan Lendon susanlendon18@gmail.com 01460 52504
Wednesdays weekly, except first Wednesday of the month 19:00-20:00 Meditation.

London

Wednesdays 19:00-20:15. Addiction and Grace Meditation Group. Venue: Kairos Centre, Mount Angelus Road, Roehampton, London SW15 4JA. Contact: May Nicol maymbnicol@aol.com 07768 310666

Meditatio Centre

St Marks Church, Myddelton Sq London EC1R 1XX
Contact: 020 7278 2070 meditatio@wccm.org
www.meditatiocentrelondon.org

Repeating events at the Meditatio Centre :

Monday – Thursday 13:00-13:30. Meditation at the Centre
Every Monday 19:00-19:30. Meditation at the Centre
Every Wednesday 13:00-13:30. Meditation online (Link: <https://bit.ly/wedmed> Meeting ID: 452 619 517 Passcode: 300137)
First Thursday of every month 18:00 – 19:00. On Beginning Meditation.
Every Monday 19:00 – 21:00 Yoga with Lucy Barnes
YOGA ONLINE every Wednesday: 9.00-10.15 Contact Lucy for details and a link lucybarnesyoga@icloud.com

Single events at the Meditatio Centre :

Saturday 15 December 10:30-16:00. Hybrid. How the Birth of Jesus changed Human Consciousness. Speaker: Laurence Freeman.
Cost: £40/£20 Online £25

WCCM Online and Bonnevaux Retreats

Friday, 16 13:30 to Saturday 17 February 18:00 (UK time) Stretching into Freedom – Lent Retreat. Leader: Laurence Freeman Venue: online. Cost: £25 (conc. £20, bursary available: support@wccm.org) Registration: <https://wccm.org/events/stretching-into-freedom/>

Week of 25 March 2024: Holy week retreat - Sacred Life is Death and Resurrection. (more information to follow, see [//wccm.org](https://wccm.org))

Online series: The Space Between Words: How to read the Bible and other Sacred Texts ([//wccm.org/events/space-between-word/](https://wccm.org/events/space-between-word/)) Time: 18:30-20:30 (UK time) Cost: Single episodes £15 (conc. £10) Full series £105 (concessions £90)
Mondays 18 December, 12 February 2024, 18 March 2024, Monday, 29 April, Monday, 10 June 2024, Monday, 29 July 2024, Monday, 30 September .

Contemporary Anxiety series This series looks at the issues that can cause us anxiety and how a contemplative approach can help. Venue: online ([//wccm.org/events](https://wccm.org/events))

Monday 11 March 17:30 – 19:30 Contemplative Ecology and Grieving Through Dark Times. Speaker: James M Brown

Saturday 15 June 9:30-15:00 online. Shouting, Cancelling, Signalling: Christ and the Anxieties of Speech. Speaker: Sarah Bachelard. **Tuesday, 29 October 18:00 God 2.0** Speakers: Sr Ilia Delio in dialogue with Laurence Freeman

Future of Wisdom and Intelligence An online series with well-known speakers currently in development. Check [//wccm.org](https://wccm.org) for full details.

4 week introductory course (talk, meditation, questions, sharing). Leader: Laurence Freeman Venue: online (check [//wccm.org](https://wccm.org)) Cost: £25. Wednesdays 17 April, 24 April, 1 May, 15 May 18:30 – 19:30

4 week course in spiritual growth (Distractions, inner and outer silence, God, the ground of our being). Leader: Laurence Freeman Venue: online (check [//wccm.org](https://wccm.org)) Cost: £25. Mondays 21 October, 4 November, 18 November, 2 December 18:30 – 19:30

Silence in the City. See [//www.silenceinthecity.org.uk](https://www.silenceinthecity.org.uk) for the programme. Unless stated otherwise all talks are at: Westminster Cathedral Hall, London SW1P 1QH. Contact: 020-7252-2453 info@silenceinthecity.org.uk Pre-booking is necessary.

Keeping In Touch

If you would like to ...

- Receive Meditation News by email or post
- Find out about meditation groups in your local area
- Find out about the Lone Meditator Network

Visit: www.wccm.uk

Email: uk@wccm.org or Phone: 020 8095 4442

Or contact:

WCCM in the UK ,
PO Box 80029, London, EC1P 1RE

Office Coordinator: Sarah Humphreys

PO Box 80029, London, EC1P 1RE

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Birgit Duncan–020 8883 0666 / 0772 631 2350 birgituduncan@blueyonder.co.uk

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