



North American Seminary Newsletter

Fall 2011



Dear Friends,

We greet you from our new home in Spring Valley, New York! Where, however, is this new home? It is not in Holder House, where we live and cook. It is not at the church, where we have our classes and share space

with the Spring Valley congregation. It is not at Green Meadow Waldorf School, although we have our Eurythmy class in their beautiful Eurythmy room. The Seminary seems to live in between, on the footpath we walk each day from the dorm to the church. In our walking, we fill the trees and the canopy with the Seminary.

Eight of us have come together to live and study at the Seminary. We laugh, cook, play music, and discuss Theosophy and Philosophy of Freedom in our free time. We participate in the wider community, playing pirates in the annual Halloween Lantern Walk and sharing courses with the Pfeiffer Center interns. Dorm-wide potlucks and movie nights bring us together with the garden interns and Eurythmy students.

In this newsletter, you'll find reflections on our studies and experience thus far. We've included some leaf verses and riddles to puzzle and entertain you. Let us know if you find the answers, especially if you come meet us at an open course, which we hope you will.

—*The Editors*



Samuel Parker is a 34-year-old gardener from Philadelphia. Likes music, coconuts, and the world of things.



Kimber Martinson: blue, bubbles, flying, catching frogs (only sometimes), ice cream cones in the snow, piggyback rides, sneaky, sleepy, solemn, giggles.



Ben Horsington: Learnt early to ask questions. Learning now who not to listen to!



Jen Zimberg has music in her bones. Brings a serious sense of humor. Spent the past two years working in central Vermont with boisterous teenagers.

Emma Heirman is a bilingual baker. Spent the last two years working with teenagers in the DC CC. Appreciates sarcasm, songs and the Bible.



Eric Conroe spent many years in Camphill Communities in Scotland, Germany and the US, all good preparation for this new and exciting adventure.



Abigail Dancey loves to Dance, believe it or not. She misses the New Mexico sky, but has traded it in for some NY trees and the Act of Consecration of Man.



Lisa Hildreth: Wife, mother of teenage boys, a writer of words, a singer of songs, and a former Waldorf teacher, Lisa is happy to take up her new task as a Seminary student.



A Walk to Remember

In mid October, the Seminary students joined the Pfeiffer Center interns and Mac Mead on a tour of the land under the stewardship of the Threefold Educational Center. With the Seminary being the new kid on the block, we set out in exploration with hopes of seeing a grander view of the community and the land. Walking is a wonderful way of gaining an overview. We traversed Threefold's fields, active through farming by the Fellowship, a community centered around the care of the elderly. Mac told us stories of how the woods were once the fields of a dairy farm. He showed us how the young tulip tree is the same size as a much older white oak. He told us that one could have stood on that hilltop in the 1900s and see the next town; now I see only trees and branches.



On the daily walk to the church, I notice the tumbled-down stone-walls that criss-cross the forest. I contemplate the human work this land has seen. We know that nature will continue its metamorphosis as we continue ours. Fields can return to forest and the human endeavors will renew as well, this time in the form of eight, who carry the Seminary on the footpath.

—*Jen Zimberg*



Snow in October

In Spring Valley we had our first snowstorm on October 29th. I ventured out early on in what turned into eight hours of snowfall. The trees began to creak and the weight of the snow proved to be too early and too much for many of them. They began to crack. Every few seconds I heard something fall, and our magical first snow started to sound apocalyptic. I retreated into Holder House, shaken up and needing comfort. A few hours later our power went out. The trees were falling outside and it was getting steadily colder inside. I felt entirely helpless for our first day without power. The feeling of helplessness is hard to contain, and what starts as the power going out can very easily turn into something even darker. My concern for our dependence on electricity turned into my concern for our dependence on everything other than ourselves, and it was in this space that I began to read 'Philosophy of Spiritual Activity'. It could not have hit me harder how essential a view of man is who has a support for all that comes toward him in the form of doubt and uncertainty. Having just experienced how easily my support systems can disappear, I was faced with the necessity to find this support, to build this foundation that cannot be shaken. And I am beginning to build something stronger now, in the dark and in the cold. Our fourth day without electricity.

—*Abigail Dancey*

Spirit Receptive Sulphurous
And Fire-Burned Through
I'm Seen, Spoken, Immersed Mercurial
And Humbly Born Anew.
Awoken, Formed, and Stilled in Salt
Preserved, Ripened, Remain
Until I Die And Shine Alike
Into Ash Again.
- *Samuel*

A Song Sleeps in Everything

One of our weekly meetings at the Seminary is a course entitled 'The Word of Things', in which we share our experiences and insights surrounding 'things'. In our everyday, it is often the case that things have become all too common and we neglect to notice the spirit that informs them. It can be said, that as individuals living with modern Christian impulses, we have a responsibility to free the living spirit in all things so as to make the 'common' uncommon again. Liberating the spirit that sleeps spellbound in the world of things, so that it may return to its divine origins, is a new task, which we must work diligently to inaugurate. Such work demands great attention and begs manifold and varied questions of "How?"



Through observation and cultivating serious forms of play, we've managed to have many different 'common' things uniquely rise up within us. Thus far, we've considered twigs, autumn leaves, discarded manmade things, as well as our feet and hands as the focal points of our creative energies.

Through writing and discussions we seek to soften and make transparent those aspects that were hitherto solid and opaque. We are relating the experiences, histories, and riddles of these 'things' as they are touched by, and come alive, within us - we come to love these things through observing them, through listening to them. If you give some 'thing' a place to dwell within you, you too will find, as we are, that a song sleeps within.

—*Samuel Parker*

Your home is on fire, your children have flown.
Sing to me quietly of the widths of horizons,
the sugar sweet nip of summer's first rush, the
finesse of your fall and the softness of dust.

- *Abigail*

Eurythmy in the Clouds!

I had the fortunate experience of living and working in Tokyo, Japan, for eight delightful years. During this time, in 1993, I had the life-changing experience of meeting anthroposophy. Within a very short time, I contacted some local Japanese anthroposophists and was invited to attend a study group as well as join a group that did eurythmy weekly with Ms. Agematsu, an amazing eurythmist and a leading light of eurythmy in Japan.

I will never forget the first time I went to do eurythmy with this group. They met weekly at the Sumitomo building in the heart of Tokyo. Not only was this building one of the tallest in the world, but also to my surprise and delight, they met on the *top* floor. My ears popped as the elevator finally came to a stop. The room was filled with many large windows through which one had an amazing vista over this large and amazing city! Although new to eurythmy, I loved bathing in the ethereal sounds of the Japanese poems as we glided across the room. I could soon experience the beauty and healing power of doing this new, unfamiliar form of movement. My soul had entered uncharted waters. As I look back on this time from my present experience of doing eurythmy at the Seminary, I realize that in more ways than one, it was a real meeting of the Christ in the realm of the clouds!

—*Eric Conroe*

Donations Are Needed!

Donating to the Seminary goes towards keeping Seminary programs available to future students, worldwide. Please make your check payable to “Seminary of The Christian Community” and mail it to the address printed on the last page.

A Moment in a Week of Color

There is something exhilarating for me in meeting new people, especially people with whom I am going to share an experience. This excitement of being in a new place with a new group of people set the mood for our week in Hillsdale, New York, with the students in Free Columbia – a year-long painting training with Laura Summer and Nathaniel Williams. For this week we worked with the color wheel: painting colors, walking as colors, speaking as colors, and creating color sculptures. We also learned about the Threefold Social Organism with Seth Jordan.



One thing that stood out for me in all of this color work is how colors are affected and affect each other. Blue is Blue, and yet somehow Blue is different when painted on the page in a conversation with Green. Blue is again different when it meets Violet on the page. Blue is Blue, yet it is changed. How

can this be? How can something be what it is, and also be completely different depending upon whom or what it is meeting? Just as I experienced the colors being changed by their environment, I also experienced myself changed.

In the farmland and autumn foliage of upstate New York, the people there and the first snow of the year, everything felt fresh and new, and I was able to experience myself again with new eyes. We returned to Chestnut Ridge with arms full of paintings to decorate with, and I returned with a new experience of color, with new friends, changed, and still...Me.



—*Kimber Martinson*

I am the beginning, but also the end,
I am a germ of potential.
I am the kernel of summer's sun fire,
I am winter's deep sleeper.
To become I must die, to chaos must fall,
I must find my cosmic expression.
For good soil I do yearn, for a harmonious heart,
Where my fruit, like the Word, can be ripened.

- Lisa

Why am I here?

I have confused many people by telling them I am going to a Seminary, a priest training, and yet I may not become a priest. If I'm not certain that I want to become a priest, then why am I here? This first year of The Christian Community Seminary is a foundation year. For me, it may be a foundation for becoming a priest, a teacher, a linguist or perhaps an event planner. The possibilities are open. Here I have found teachers and fellow students who together are striving to build a deep, living knowledge of anthroposophy. We share a wish to dive into the riddles of the Bible and foster what it means to lead a religious life. While this may not provide a specific foundation for future professional work, it will begin to lay the solid ground upon which I will build in the years to come.

But the question is always there. Sometimes I have to remind myself that it is not, 'will I become a priest or won't I?' but rather, 'why am I here?' Remembering this keeps my work alive and I am learning to live in the questions. I am more awake to what is around me and what is in me. If I am open and always looking, the future can come to meet me and I to meet it.

—Emma Heirman

A prized possession – grasped by a chubby hand and tucked into an already overflowing pocket.

- Lisa

What is it to speak with ‘authority’?

Studying at The Christian Community Seminary in Spring Valley offers many revelations to a wakeful eye, many appearing not inside a building, but just within this glorious natural, wooded setting. Autumn has given the trees permission to radiate forgotten colours from their leaves, and allowed the sky to offer daily light-shows of wondrous hue. Ah, the phenomena of nature!

So each day, making my way home through the woods, observing the raining of autumn leaves, the urgent gathering of squirrels, the flight of birds, I could almost feel Goethe next to me (and telling me to slow down to a more 'observing pace!'). What, or who, is speaking to me through these phenomena? What are they saying?

In Mark's Gospel, Christ Jesus' first teachings in the synagogue in



Capernaum aroused astonishment within the people, “for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.” (Mark 1:21-22) The Greek word for this type of higher authority is 'exousia'. Rudolf Steiner reminds us that the revelations in nature of the Exousiai, above the Archai, include

phenomena as the sunrise, lightning, fire, etc., and are equalled by “originally suprasensible-sourced revelations” of the human being.

So how can we receive this higher authority in our own lives? Aside from the immediate supra-sensible revelations of Zarathustra, Moses and Paul, preparing ourselves as a vessel in which the spirit-world in nature can reveal itself, creates the possibility for us to not only receive the deep truths, like Goethe, of a higher authority, but also for these to then be passed on to others in our relationships in life.

—Ben Horsington

New Beginnings

Striking out on your own... It is a common experience for young adults, as they leave the family circle. But how is it when Mom leaves the nest and goes off to become a seminary student in the middle of her life? Can a Mom begin anew and yet maintain the family ties long distance?

I am a living example of this. I live in a dorm room in Spring Valley while my husband and younger son live near Boston area and my older son is in a culinary arts school in Pennsylvania. I am poised between the two branches of my family, both geographically and spiritually. Do I feel torn? Occasionally. But mostly I feel grateful for the opportunity that has been given to me. Without the support of my family, without my husband and teenage sons being willing to take up responsibilities that I carried, I would not be able to be here.

Here I am, half way through the first semester, able to put my full effort into this task of learning, growing and becoming. The classes speak deeply to me. I have developed new relationships with many striving towards the same goals. Although I cannot be with my family during the semester, they are always with me. It is a gift to have loved ones who not only believe in you, but also love you enough to let you be free to follow your star.

—*Lisa Hildreth*

With the gentle autumn breeze, you slowly
float down, one by one, like large blazen
snowflakes.

- *Eric*

You were once the arm to a gentle rose.

- *Emma*

Blushing bright red and then kissing the ground.

- *Jen*

Main Courses, Fall Semester, 2011

Foundations of a Religious Life; Richard Dancey

Living with the Act of Consecration of Man; Gisela Wielki

Christ and the Earth; Daniel Hafner

Practicing Stewardship of the Earth; Mac Mead

Apostles of the Living Light: Paul – Mani – Rembrandt;

Gisela Wielki

Painting and Experiencing the Color Wheel; Laura Summer,
Nathaniel Williams and Free Columbia students

Social Threefolding; Seth Jordan

Epistemology – The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity; Bill Lindeman

Christology; Erk Ludwig

Traces of the Ancient Mysteries in Modern Life; Bastian Baan

Christ: A Central Theme in Anthroposophy; Douglas Sloan

Gospel of John; Daniel Hafner

The World of Prayer; Marcus Knausenberger

Genesis; Oliver Steinrueck

Ongoing Courses



- Theosophy (Steiner)
- Gospel Study of Mark
- Sacraments
- June Course (Steiner)
- World of Things
- Greek
- Gardening
- Singing
- Speech
- Eurythmy

Open Courses for Winter/Spring Semester, 2012

Feb. 13 - 17

Knowing Evil: How to Confront and Work with It
Bastiaan Baan, The Netherlands

Feb. 27 - March 2

Shakespeare and the Bible – Dramatic Commentaries on the Old and New Testaments
Peter von Breda, Great Britain

March 5 - 9

Sermon on the Mount
Erk Ludwig

March 16 - 18

Priest Ordinations

April 2 – 6

Holy Week Retreat
The Cross Casting its Shadow on the Greening Earth
Jonah Evans, Oliver Steinrueck, Gisela Wielki

April 16 – 20

Jesus or Christ: The Evolution of American Christianity
Sanford Miller

April 30 – May 5

Theme to be announced*
Roger Druitt, Great Britain

Cost:

Courses only, five sessions, suggested: \$50

Weeklong retreats, with participation in Seminary life, include all classes and breakfast (but not housing): \$200

For more information, the daily schedule, housing and to register, please contact: Gisela Wielki at the Seminary.

For information on additional Open Courses check the Seminary website in the New Year.

www.christiancommunityseminary.org

Closing up the Seminary Building

Among many others, there was one special moment last summer as we cleared out and closed up of the Seminary building in Chicago. It happened when we had a final, public sale of items. As we said goodbye to odd bits of furniture and other accumulated stuff, one person appeared who said she was interested in the one and a half foot tall metal wire sculpture still hanging on the wall in the hallway. Her name was Julie, and she claimed a long and specific feeling about this piece. Why? How? When? It turned out that, unknown to anyone in the Seminary, she had often passed that way and taken time to look at it and love it through the window. And could she buy it now to take home? Sold!



Later Gisela (who had not been there at the time), and I met with Julie, herself an artist, at The Perfect Cup and shared ideas about art and religion and life altogether. Gisela's admission, that all she had done was "see" and that the wire shape was exactly as she had found it, did not lessen the buyer's joy of having acquired this piece of Chicago alley art.

One of those moments that makes you pause and wonder about connectedness and life altogether.

—Christa Macbeth

Priest Ordination in Spring Valley

March 17-18, 2012

Darryl Coonan (Australia), Ann Burfeind (USA), and Paul Newton (Great Britain) are former students from when the Seminary was still in Chicago. They are now in their final preparations towards the Sacrament of Priest Consecration. For information closer to the date of this event, visit our website or look for it in the program of your local congregation in the New Year.



Dear Friends and Donors,

Homeless we may appear for now with our daily moves, sometimes twice, twenty-five minutes on foot, from building to building, for service and classes and living and sleeping, but homeless we do not feel. So where is the seminary? ‘On the path’, was the response of one of our students. What better training ground can there be for students who in time wish to serve in the Movement For Religious Renewal?

An engaging group, the students have taken to their studies with open minds, learning and considering things they have never heard or thought before, experiencing outlooks once hidden now in full view. Beginning with this semester the seminary now offers the full training in English. The first semester, but especially the first two semesters prove increasingly to be a solid foundation year, valuable for anyone interested in other anthroposophical endeavors or who wishes to bring a spiritual dimension to his or her professional work.

We are grateful to our donors and all who keep us in mind. With your support, we can look with confidence into the future. If you are considering, and we hope you do, please join the circle of donors. Thank You.

—*Gisela Wielki, Seminary Director*

We apologize if you receive more than one copy of this newsletter; we rely on the mailing lists provided by each congregation and do not currently have a way of cross-referencing these lists. Please pass any extras on to another interested person. Thank you!



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