

THE FRIENDS OF JULIAN OF NORWICH

Christmas Newsletter 2017



Message from the Chair, Shirley Buxton

Dear Friends & Companions,

What a whirlwind of activity has accompanied becoming Chair of the Friends of Julian of Norwich!

Since Easter we have enjoyed the Julian Festival with Godelinde Gertrude Perk inspiring us with her lecture 'Stories Heard Though Anchorite Walls: Julian's Narrative Art and Theology'.

Over the summer we had a reflective day led by Fr. Luke Penkett, CJN and a week of family activities during Open Churches Week.

Autumn brought a Quiet Day open to Julian Meetings groups and the wonderful two day retreat/conference led by Fr. Brendan Pelphrey.

Friends and Companions have also started to hold events in different parts of the country, enabling

more people to learn about Julian's teaching. Thank you to everyone who has worked so hard to make all these events so successful.

There is also a great deal of news I need to pass on to you, some of which you may have already heard. Sr. Pamela, after many years of association with us, is leaving Norfolk. She stresses she is not retiring, but will be continuing her ministry in Scotland on the Isle of Mull.

Sr. Pamela has been the linch pin in the transition at the Julian Centre as we moved from paid staff to volunteers. This has been in addition to giving talks and all her other roles as well as running All Hallows Guest House next door. Along with our prayers and best wishes go our grateful thanks for all she has done. We will miss you greatly Sr Pamela, but will be happy knowing Julian will be taken to the people of Mull.

Her move is part of the Sisters of the Community of All Hallows, Ditchingham making the decision to disperse, leaving the Mother Convent.

As I write, the future use of the Mother house and All Hallows is under discussion. For many years now we

(continued overleaf)

ADVENT TEA

**Thursday 14th
December**

**From 2pm to 3.30pm
in the Julian Centre.**

Join us for reflection and refreshment as we look forward.



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have paid the Sisters a hazelnut rent for the use of the Centre. We look forward to continuing the lease of the property into the future.

The final service in the chapel at Ditchingham, led by the Bishop of Norwich will be on Saturday 12th May 2018. The Friends of Julian of Norwich are invited to Ditchingham to join CAH for this celebration. It is on what is traditionally our Julian Festival Day.

As we wish to support the Sisters, it is proposed that our Annual Julian Lecture be moved to Sunday 13th May 2018 as part of an extended Julian Weekend starting on Thursday 10th May. (The outline of the weekend can be found on page three, and full details will be in the Easter Newsletter.)

Many of you will have known Canon Michael McLean, who has recently died after a short illness. As a past Rector, Fr. Michael gave such support and encouragement to St. Julian's

Church and the Centre. We give thanks for his love and wisdom.

He wrote the Julian collect that is prayed in the Julian Centre and used daily by many of you. When visiting Fr. Michael, not long before he died, Fr. Brendan Pelphrey asked Fr. Michael if he had a word for us. Michael replied 'JOY'.

In this season of Advent we anticipate Jesus coming anew. It's a time of expectancy, preparation and delight. There is of course, the danger of being swept into a frenzy of preparations for a Christmas that has little time for the prayer that 'oneth us with God'. Will we choose to take time to meditate on the mysteries of God's endless love that is our creation, enfolds us and keeps us safe? Julian speaks of God as our Father and Christ, not as a baby, but as a caring mother who feeds, tends and nurtures us. May we be enfolded in God's love and find true joy this Christmas.

WELCOME JENNI

We were sad to accept the resignation of our Treasurer, Claire Woodmansee, particularly because of her ill health. Our thanks and prayers go out to her. Our huge thanks to Howard Green, our Secretary, who worked alongside Claire and carried the treasurership until we appointed Jenni Hancock, who we warmly welcome:

Hello. I was delighted to take over the role of treasurer to the Friends of Julian in September of this year and have had an interesting few months getting to grips with the various aspects of the role.

Originally from London, I moved to Norwich two and a half years ago. I enjoy crafting, especially crochet and knitting, am a keen amateur genealogist, and am learning Egyptian dance. I am a member of St Andrew's

church, Norwich where I play clarinet as part of their music group.

Before moving to Norfolk, I worked as a charity fundraiser for almost 10 years. Prior to that, I spent nearly 20 years in various financial roles, including Treasurer for an archaeological charity.

I look forward to supporting the Friends of Julian in my new role.

Jenni Hancock

JULIAN 'LONG WEEKEND' 2018

THURSDAY 10TH MAY – SUNDAY 13TH MAY

It was the nuns from the Community of All Hallows in Ditchingham in South Norfolk who led the effort to rebuild the church of St. Julian after the terrible bomb damage in the Second World War.

The fruition of their efforts was not only a re-built church but also the discovery for the first time in modern times of the footings of a small room on the south side of the church which prompted the building of the Julian Cell we enjoy today. We are having a special set of events next year to mark their efforts and success as the Community disperses from its historical base at Ditchingham.

Do consider pencilling in a visit to Norwich sometime over this long weekend for this special time – especially as, in addition to our four-day celebration, the city will also be enjoying its annual Norfolk and Norwich Festival (nnfestival.org.uk).

We will be start with the Prayer pilgrimage with the Bishop of Thetford from St. Julian's to the Anglican Cathedral on Thursday 10th and enjoy a meditation in the special atmosphere of the St. Catherine's chapel.

There will be a series of events running through to Saturday when we will be guests of the Sisters at Ditchingham. And our Julian Celebrations will culminate at St. Julian's Church on the Sunday with a Julian Symposium consisting of both the annual Julian Lecture from artist, writer, and film maker Sally-Anne Lomas, and an address by Sister Pamela, erstwhile Mother Superior of the Community of All Hallows.

A detailed timetable will be available on our website in the New Year and in the Easter Newsletter.





TAKING JULIAN NORTH...

When I came here seventeen years ago I did not envisage I would still be here in 2017! It was my third time here at All Hallows and I embraced the challenge and all it entailed.

However we have been struggling as a Community and I must admit the last few years here have not been easy. It was suggested a number of years ago that we all as a Community prayed for our future but it was only this spring that things became clear and I felt called to Mull. The tune for 'Julian of Norwich anchored in King Street' and also for 'Morning has Broken' kept haunting me. The tune is

Bunessan which is a place four miles from the ferry to Iona. It has been an extraordinary unfolding experience with so many 'Godinstances' along the way. I am not retiring but beginning a new ministry on a smaller and hopefully more manageable scale and in the process becoming more Mary than Martha, getting back to my vocation as a Sister.

Sr. Pamela CAH

Labyrinth Day with Sr. Pamela – Journey of Discovery

Saturday 13th January 2018. St. Julian's Church and Julian Centre. £10 donation.

10.30am	Registration and coffee in Centre
11am	Introducing the Labyrinth
12pm	Buffet lunch (please book place by Monday 8th January)
1pm	Labyrinth meditations
3pm	Tea available in the Centre

This is an opportunity to say farewell and thank you to Sr. Pamela. Another chance will be during the Julian Festival weekend: Saturday 12th May at Ditchingham and Sunday 13th May at St. Julian's when Sr. Pamela will be giving a short address.

LIGHTEN OUR DARKNESS: An Ecumenical Quiet Day with Julian of Norwich. Saturday 3rd February 2018, 10.30am to 4.30pm.

Memorial Room, Corpus Christi Church, Boscombe, Bournemouth, BH7 6AN.

As we look forward to the first signs of Spring join us to explore the concepts of light and dark in the *Revelation of Divine Love*, both spiritual and material.

For more information please visit our website: juliancentre.org

COMPANIONS

By Luke, CJN

As Bruce, CJN, foretold in his piece for the Spring Newsletter earlier this year, two of us were welcomed as Companions in the Cell during the Festival. And what a welcome Sheila and I received!

There were intimations of this welcome before we even arrived in Norwich. Bruce, as Companions Coordinator, had sent out details of the Festival to all the Companions and Sheila and I were moved by the messages of welcome and assurance of prayers sent from all over the world for our reception.

As you may know, Companions choose a phrase from the Revelations of Divine Love as their particular focus when joining the CJNs which we say aloud in the Cell. Sheila had chosen 'You shall not be overcome' and I 'Faithfully pray to himselfe of his goodness and cleyn thereto be his grace' (I must admit here to a great passion for Middle English!). Our older brothers and sisters (I use the words meaningfully as we are all part of one greater family) then shared their



thoughts about the past year and/or what it means to be a Companion.

As a priest, ordained in order to receive Holy Communion each day, and as a solitary monk, having professed my life vows back in 2006, much of my day grows out of prayer – intercessory, meditative, and contemplative. But I consider myself to be simply a learner as my very dear friend, Sr Wendy Beckett, tells me (under some pressure!) how many hours she shares in contemplation every day! It is a profound joy and happiness – and a privilege, too – to engage in that quiet stillness of which the Cell is a focal point. Please continue to pray for us as we so blessedly begin our 'way of life as Companions' and, together with my carer-companion, Paul, and my guide dog, Naylor, move to Norwich next year.

With the joyful welcoming of Luke Penkett and Sheila Tolley, our Companions now number 26. Please also pray for Andrew Norman who has been a much valued Companion for a number of years, and who now feels called in a new direction. We wave him off with much love.

With three aspirant Companions currently journeying with us, we look forward to further receptions in 2018. *Bruce CJN*



THE JULIAN CENTRE AT CHRISTMAS

The Julian Centre will be closed from Saturday 23rd December, opening for one day on Friday 29th December and re-opening for the New Year on Wednesday 3rd January. We wish you a very Happy New Year.



DAYS OF FIRE & GRACE, AND COSMIC SCIENCE

On the face of it, the connection between these two titles and Julian of Norwich might seem tenuous at best, but our facilitator for this year's Two-Day Retreat, Fr Brendan Pelphrey, led us wonderfully through both days. He shed a new and brilliant light on both the association of Julian with Furse, a seventh-century Celtic monk, and on Julian's vision of space, time, and the apocalypse.

Fr Brendan, a Greek Orthodox priest, is well known to us. His two books, *Christ our Mother and Lo, How I Love Thee!* have passed into the scholarly bibliography of books on Julian and are considered classics in their own right. The Library at the Julian Centre has copies of these and of other works he has written.

On Friday evening Fr Brendan talked on Furse's and Julian's experiences of near-death and revelations, and on Saturday on Julian's understanding of incarnation, death and resurrection and running throughout his time with us he threw light on the links between the Revelations and Eastern Orthodox belief.

It was good to have the retreat in St Julian's this year and to enjoy one another's company during periods of prayerful reflection and in plenary discussions. And we were generously refreshed, as ever, by volunteers in the Centre.

It was a great joy for me, personally, to meet Fr Brendan and his wife, Presvytera Sharon, to know that many friendships were re-kindled during their stay in England, and to learn that they both enjoyed a safe and happy journey back home to Texas.

Fr Luke, CJN

Brendan Pelphrey's talks will be available as a booklet in the New Year.

and after this I saw

FROM A VOLUNTEER

“Good morning, welcome...may I offer you a tea or coffee?...Have you come far?... I'll put the kettle on just as soon as I've answered the phone.... Good morning, The Julian Centre, could you hold for a moment as I'm part way through a till transaction...oh, a book delivery...wonderful...I'll make a space... it's the 'Penguins'...Thank you!”

Being a volunteer at the Julian Centre is a wonderful experience. No two days are alike or predictable, some days we have a gentle flow of visitors so there is time to welcome them personally. Other days we may have a large party of pilgrims, all needing drinks, asking questions and purchasing gifts and books, needing volunteer reinforcements. Really quiet days give time for the photocopier to roll into action, printing booklets, leaflets and cards which in turn need folding and compiling. Shelves need tidying and restocking, books ordered, correspondence dealt with and orders sent out. Quiet doesn't mean not busy!

All the time there is the opportunity to learn more about Julian from books in the library, from questions people raise and from the wisdom of visitors. It is lovely to hear the stories people bring about their experiences in the church and cell, of their special link with the hazelnut or how they first

encountered Julian of Norwich. Best of all, we meet such a variety of wonderful people from all over the world. Some pilgrims make an annual visit, others stay nearby and come into the Julian Centre to study, but for many it is their first visit and one they have wanted to make for a long time. There are those with sad stories to tell, some whose friends are in need of prayer. This is where our 'Please pray for.....' book is helpful, at hand for our 'God in the Centre' prayers, an oasis in the midst of a busy day. It's wonderful to know that so many of our visitors become Friends of Julian, so inspired by her words that they want to tell others about her too.

Volunteering at the Julian Centre has enriched my life. It has provided deep friendships, the opportunity to meet so many wonderful and interesting people and spiritual nurture. It is a lovely environment in which to work and even at the busiest times, a place of joy, love and deep peace.

JOIN OUR TEAM...

Would you or do you know someone who would like to join our team of Volunteers? Some volunteers come in once a month, or help on those very busy days, while others come in once or twice a week or to do specific tasks. We all fit into roles that suit us best. Whether you enjoy greeting people or burying yourself in the computer there is a place for you. And then there is the outreach... you don't have to be resident in Norwich to become part of the team! We have invaluable help from Bournemouth to Australia!

OBITUARY: MICHAEL MCLEAN PRIEST, 1934-2017

By Sheila Upjohn

I have three hundred words in which to remember Michael McLean. It's easy to find words for his official appointments – Priest at Walsingham... country parson... Rector of St John Timberhill and St Julian... Canon of Norwich Cathedral – where he saw bursaries provided for choristers for the first time.

Words can describe his inspired invitation to Robert Llewelyn to become a hermit in Julian's cell – and how his ministry there led to the publication of *Enfolded in Love* and Robert's other books. Words can begin to tell how far Julian's message of God's love has spread because of this

There are words, too, but not enough of them, that tell of Michael's gifts – for art, for food, and flowers, and friendship – and his beautiful voice. And how his sense of fun and quick wit (never used in malice) made him the most joyous of companions.

But there are no words that can describe his priesthood, the very heart of his being. It was a priesthood that changed lives and continued until the very end when, in his eighties, he was asked to go back to Walsingham – not as a retiree but as part of an active ministry.

After he was diagnosed with leukemia Michael emailed: "All's unknown (save that I am not to receive heroic medical intervention to prolong my life). Hopefully the time may be short, but the good Lord may have other plans. Thank heaven I'm very happy and content, and if this is 'the end' well splendid. It's what I've lived for and what I've tried to teach." Learning of his death a friend wrote: "It will be a wrench for you his friends but another blessing that it seems he is showing you how to die."

Showing us how to die is Michael's last generous gift to us.



The 2005 Annual Julian Lecture 'Jesus of the Scars' was given by Canon Michael McLean. Copies of this Lecture and others are available from the Julian Centre. There is also a CD sound recording of Canon Michael's lectures.

A SPECIAL MESSAGE If you've received this newsletter by post and you would be happy to receive an email copy in future, please send your email address to us at admin@juliancentre.org. This would make our communication with you so much easier, and save valuable funds. Thank you.

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