

*Michaelmas 2009*



**The Christian Community**

*Movement for Religious Renewal*

Greater Washington-Baltimore Area Newsletter

[www.ccgwb.org](http://www.ccgwb.org)



Dear Friends,

After a wonderful summertime of renewal, many of our congregation members have come from their Summer activities with refreshed energy and renewed hope and anticipation for the Fall and the beginning of a new school year.

Our youth came back from Australia sharing their “once in a life time” experience, and families with children were back with full energy to start the religious instructions and special projects. Members who traveled far away have shared their precious experiences of the Summer, such as, a “Hellenic Odyssey” and some even attended wider community events and have sent in their thoughts and experiences.

We were also blessed with visits this Fall from two visiting priests, Jonah Evens from Spring Valley, NY and Jim Hinds from Denver, CO.

The community is experiencing very dynamic times in its efforts of growth and development. Both in the Site Development Group and in The Board of Trustees diligent work has been done to create an organizational structure that can truly serve the healthy unfolding and flowering of our community. It is in such times of vibrant reshaping that Michaelic help is most needed. Thus the light and guidance of Archangel Michael is noticeable not only in its outer form of distinct warm and bright Autumn sunlight, but also in every event and change that we as a community have been so wonderfully embracing and experiencing.

Wishing you a wonderful and bright Michaelmas season filled with great courage, enthusiasm and hope!

Our warmest greetings to you all,

*Patrick Kennedy & Nora Minassian*

## Michaelmas 2009

3... Creatively Living their Lives  
By Patrick Kennedy

4... New Community Service Team  
is Forming  
By Colleen Cordes

4... Our Welcome Back Sunday  
By Andrea Daney

5... Address Given On Our  
Welcome Back Sunday  
By Bruce Chamberlin

6... September Days – A Poem  
By Bruce Chamberlin

6... Hellenic Odyssey  
By Colleen Shetland

8... Interfaith Iftar  
By Jeanne Feeney

9... Report From The Treasurer  
By J-Lee Newell

9... Upcoming Articles for Advent  
Issue

10... CC Service Teams

11... Upcoming National and  
International Events

Cover art by Dionisii  
(Dionysius): The Archangel  
Michael. c. 1502 - Church of  
Nativity of the Virgin in the  
Ferafontov Monastery. The  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow,  
Russia- [www.abcgallery.com](http://www.abcgallery.com)

# Creatively Living Their Lives Youth Group 2008-2009

By Patrick Kennedy

From the youth group team

It's been a really full and incredible first year for our Youth Group, and we wanted to share some of this with you all.



By the summer of 2008, our first ever, fledgling youth group began to form. It was just three young people at first, coming over for ping-pong, pizza and the discussion of the movie, *The Truman Show*. By November of 2008 the group had grown to ten active and regular participants with no less of an ambition than to travel to Australia to attend an international youth conference of The Christian Community and to encounter this unique and incredible continent on the other side of the world. With the devoted and talented help of Amos Dancey and Emma Heirman, the youth group endeavored to live up to its mission:

*There are young people here and around the world who are longing to wake up to what is happening in the world, to wake up to who they truly are, and to arise and creatively live their lives. To make a place available for such creativity and to connect with like-minded young people around the world is the goal of this youth group.*

And they did this while concentrating their efforts around activities that would also help to raise money for the trip. Here is a list of some of what they did from October 2008 to June 2009:

- 11/1/08 “Bridging the Abyss” - meal for workshop of the Anthroposophical Society and The Christian Community and candles creatively designed and sold.
- 11/22/08 original Christmas Cards designed and printed for Waldorf Bazaar, Christmas Cards created and sold in December in the congregation
- 1/19/09 MLK Service Day on the Anacostia with Devon, PA Youth Group
- 1/23/09 Sangamore Singers concert in the community
- 3/28/09 Meal for C. Aldinger NOVA Institute event
- 3/20-3/21/09 Overnight trip to Devon, PA
- 4/17/09 “I Am Not Afraid of Life”, a collection of three short plays by Thornton Wilder, interspersed with songs sung by the youth group, was performed at the Parish House
- 4/23-4/24/09 “I Am Not Afraid of Life” performed in Spring Valley and New York, NY
- 6/4/09 Encore performance of “I Am Not Afraid of Life” in College Park
- 6/2009 Design and produce T-Shirts for sale to raise money for the trip to Australia.

By June, our local teenagers had raised over \$4,000 for the trip and another \$8,000 regionally. Their devoted, creative efforts paid off and we had an unforgettable, life-enriching and changing time together. We look forward to what adventures the next year will bring!



Australia - Photo by Amos Dancey



Photos and collage by Rev. Patrick Kennedy

Those who went to Australia (names for collage photo from left to right from top) - Amos Dancey, Emma Heirman, Leslie Johnson, Ethan Anderson, Chapman Zon, Simone Grossman, Paige Duncan, Charlotte Smith, Shelby Duncan, Armin Weise, Julia Noack, Casey Mueller, Christopher Roman, Karen Malarin, Morgan Kulesza, Ben Bryla, Robert Coleman, Patrick Kennedy.

## Bridge Initiative is Forming

Unity Walk October 18

By Colleen Cordes and Rev. Nora Minassian

A new initiative is forming for those who want to identify opportunities and help organize activities to respond to the needs in our larger metropolitan community of Washington and Baltimore. The Bridge Initiative will explore how we might best share our gifts, talents, and time in offering service to others, while expanding our experience of the gifts of others.

This is an opportunity to develop relationships involving mutual learning, teaching, and sharing as well as ways to weave our efforts meaningfully into the celebration of the festivals of the year.

All are invited to join the first activity of the Bridge Initiative – participating in “The Unity Walk” which will include tours of houses of worship and interfaith dialog in the Embassy Row neighborhood of Washington, DC- <http://www.911unitywalk.org/> If you can join us for the walk or would like to be part of the Bridge initiative or share suggestions, please contact Colleen Cordes, [ccordes@starpower.net](mailto:ccordes@starpower.net) or Rev. Nora Minassian, [noraminassian@yahoo.com](mailto:noraminnassian@yahoo.com)

## Our Welcome Back Sunday

By Andrea Daney

Beautiful grounds...more diversity...a chapel...retreats...lots of honey.... were a few aspects of what individuals saw in the future for our community.

Our welcome back Sunday on September 13 ranged widely. Beginning with a festival service for all ages and especially well attended by children, we joined together to sing and listen to a story. The Children’s Service and Act of Consecration of Man were all the more special since we had a visiting priest, Rev. Jim Hindes from Denver, who delivered the sermon. After services we moved to a lovely potluck, and several people mentioned quite happily that the food at our potlucks just gets better and better. Thanks to all who brought something to the meal! The children happily went to explore the park and the creek while the adults gathered together in a circle for conversation. Bruce Chamberlain gave a warm address and shared a poem (see the following). Next, Rev. Minassian led a little game, which paired people together in an opportunity to get to know each other and spend some time talking. We gathered together again and shared some of our partner’s background and path to the Christian Community, as well as some visions for the future of our community. Many people found the chance pairings quite resonant and everyone enjoyed spending some time with each other. Rev. Kennedy mentioned some people of our congregation who were unable to join us, specifically Carol Petrash and J-Lee Newell. As the children returned happy, wet, and muddy from the creek, the adults also went outside. We formed a circle in the warm sun, and Rev. Minassian read, “A Prayer for Our Work” to conclude the afternoon...and begin the new year.



Rev. Jim Hindes and Rev. Patrick Kennedy playing table tennis at the Parish House  
Photo by Rev. Nora Minassian

# Address Given on Welcome Back Sunday

By Bruce Chamberlin

(The following is an excerpt from an address offered by Bruce Chamberlin at the September 13, 2009 celebration to launch another year together in the CC in Washington)

I was asked if I would share a few words to help celebrate the beginning of a new year together, which for us, historically, has been in September. And I was thinking about this rhythm that we have together in the CC in Washington. For many years, we came back in September after a three-month hiatus, during which time we didn't see much of each other. So it was a kind of reunion. We would gather for our September monthly service, and afterwards try to encourage as many people as possible to stay for the annual organizational meeting to fill the tasks necessary to keep the activities of the CC going in Washington. As many of you remember, we would sit in circle and our dear friend Carol Petrash would have the flip chart with the tasks for the year written on it, and in her inimitable way, sweet but determined, she would try to get all the slots on the chart filled before everyone escaped. But invariably there would be some blanks at the end. However, we had a secret weapon and his name was Rudolf. Rudolf would saunter around after the meeting to this one and that one, put his arm around their shoulder and whisper in their ear—and pretty soon the chart was full.

I look back on that now, and though it wasn't that long ago, it seems almost like a another lifetime, doesn't it? How far we've come in the last couple of years. The level of participation now in this community is amazing. Consider for a moment the monthly set-up teams that prepare the parish house and sanctuary for the services each week; the work being done by the Site Development Group to steward our land and prepare for our future chapel; the work by the Board to ensure the financial viability of the

community; the beautiful displays prepared by the Festivals group; the focus of the Carrying Group on how we move and grow together; the Prayer Group that holds the community and individual needs and intentions in daily prayer; the Servers who help celebrate the Act of Consecration on Sunday and during the week; the beautiful music offered by our musicians that enriches our services and celebrations; the Youth work, the Study groups—I mean, we have a real community here! And now, for the first time, we celebrated services throughout the summer. This was made possible by the great blessing of a second priest! Nora Minassian joined us in July, and those of you who have gotten to know Nora, have experienced the warmth, enthusiasm and intelligence that she brings to us. After a dearth of priests for most of our history, we now have two young priests who exhibit a real joy in the work. It feels like we are coming into our own, and I believe we haven't even seen what's possible yet.

I believe we are building a spiritual momentum in our community that we see evidence of everywhere. For example, the services on most Sundays throughout the summer were full. I can remember a number of times as a server stepping from the vestry into the sanctuary expecting to see a smattering of people—and it was a full house! The fact that the Youth Group was able to pull off their trip to Australia, who would have believed that was possible just a couple of years ago? And now we have a budding satellite community in Asheville, NC in addition to our growing satellite community in Chapel Hill. We have begun our first efforts at ecumenical outreach here in Washington to stand together with other religious communities with a spiritual will and work in the world. What a wonderful thing that is, and so deeply needed. I think we are seeing a phase of transition in our community where, in fairly short order, we have made these quantum leaps from a satellite community, to a full-time community with a chapel and land and a full-time priest, to a full-time community with two priests and two satellite communities of our own. And we're just getting rolling! So there is this sense of

possibility, of increased capacity and enthusiasm, and belief that we are not just this little circle of people who get together from time to time, but we are, in fact, a Movement for Religious Renewal, and we are making that visible in the world.

So I'm encouraged and excited, as I know all of you are, and looking forward to a new year together, unfolding all that is to come. I would like to finish with a poem that I wrote for the occasion that is my way of bringing us back to that feeling level of what we are, and what is living in us, and why we are here. This is called "September Days."

## September Days

A poem

By Bruce Chamberlin

*This is the time when the last bounty  
of sweet corn, melons, pole beans  
and tomatoes are gathered in,*

*and the earth stretches out  
her tired limbs,  
lolls back her head and settles in  
for her long winter sleep.*

*But for us this is a new beginning,  
a waking up from summer's sway  
as we make our way back  
into this circle of hands and work.*

*We stand before the Shining One,  
our own lights fluttering and dim,  
and ask once again to be filled  
by Him.*

*He comes to us like an Indian Summer  
ripe with warmth and promise,  
and fills us with the holy light  
of summer's high sun,  
bright enough to carry us  
through all the days and nights  
to come.*

## A Hellenic Odyssey

A Look at the Old and New Mysteries as Seen  
in a Journey to Greece and Turkey, August 29

By Colleen Shetland

Travelers Sandra Doren and Jeanne Feeny narrated a slide presentation of their odyssey to an enthusiastic audience in a packed social room at the Parish House. Their three-week tour was led by eurythmist Gillian Shoemaker and actor Glen Williamson.

With their slides, Jeanne and Sandra depicted an amazing variety of experiences—there were relaxing afternoons on beautiful white sandy beaches; bathing in azure Mediterranean waters; dinners at Greek tavernas; boat and ferry rides; climbs to monasteries at dizzying heights “hanging in the air”; descents into sacred caverns; a drama enacted in an ancient Greek amphitheater; the lovely Parthenon illuminated at night. This was not a vacation cruise, however; study was the focus.



Temple of Aphaia  
with some Odyssey travelers  
Photo by Jeanne Feeny

Study of the Parthenon introduced them to the old mysteries. The Parthenon is a temple to Athena, the ancient Greek goddess who brought intelligence to humanity. Jeanne and Sandra

showed slides of the snakes on Athena's shield and aegis, which symbolize humanity's attainment of intelligence. Athena's gift to Athens, the olive tree, was given to help lift the fallen aspects of our intelligence.

Actor Glen Williamson led the group in exploring many theaters, including the most ancient at Thorikos. Drama was present in the Greek culture both as art and as medicine. Slides were shown of the healing centers of Epidaurus and Ampharion, which had theaters, as well as musicians, athletics, baths, and even board games for the mentally stressed. These therapies were valued equally with medicine. There was a special healing center for soldiers returning from battle, in a lovely and protected valley.



A monastery in Meteora, Greece  
Photo by Jeanne Feeney

In addition to these healing centers, the group visited the sacred mystery centers Delphi, Eleusis, and Ephesus, places of training for initiates. The presenters related that at Delphi, the Temple of Apollo housed the famous Oracle, where the Pythia breathed the vapors that made

her receptive to messages from Apollo. A young English scholar wrote a pseudo-scientific article in 1900, debunking Plutarch's careful records of the conditions in the temple chamber. From this start, a 20<sup>th</sup> Century dogma formed in the academic world, ridiculing the classical tradition. In the last fifteen years, however, scientists have postulated that mind-altering gases seeped along geologic faults crossing under the temple. (See "Questioning the Delphic Oracle," August 2003 *Scientific American*.)

While art was therapeutic for the Greeks, it shows to modern people the qualities of human possibility in physical beauty, intellect, and spirit. In addition to the Parthenon, Jeanne and Sandra pointed out other examples of Greek architecture that illustrate sacred geometry. These demonstrate the relationships between the structure of the human body and our earthly and cosmic surroundings. Sculptures such as the charioteer show human uprightness, an aid to our evolution of consciousness. Two ancient marble figures, a lyrist and flutist, dating from 3,000 BC, show the impulse of music to help guide our development toward a bodily home for the ego: the lyre for the heart, the flute for the breath. And of course there was the painting of Apollo playing the lyre, demonstrating that music is a gift to humanity from the spiritual world, for our health and well-being.

Jeanne and Sandra described the strong "sense of place" one can feel in these ancient sites. They contrasted the darkness of centuries of violence and betrayal which can be felt at Mycenae (scene of Agamemnon's betrayal) with the light and purity one can feel near the House of Mary in the hills above Ephesus, where the apostle John and the mother of Christ lived.

Since their other tour leader, Gillian, was a eurythmist, we were not surprised to hear that the group did eurythmy in many places. We were surprised, however, to hear about "eurythmy-puncture." The word was coined from "acupuncture," and the concept is that performing eurhythmy in sacred, ancient, and troubled places can have healing effects both for the earth and for human beings. The group noticed a response from nature to their "eurythmy-puncture."

One of the highlights of the tour, and of the presentation to us, was the cave on the island of Patmos, where the apostle John received the Revelation during his year's exile by the Roman Emperor Domitian. Our presenters mentioned that no one would leave this sacred place without feeling touched by the mood that is preserved through the centuries.

It is heart-warming to be in a community where the historical evidence of humanity's evolution of consciousness is welcomed, and is allowed to enrich our knowledge of Christianity and our understanding of Christ's deed and mission. Many thanks to Jeanne and Sandra for sharing the riches of their odyssey with us.

## Interfaith Iftar

By Jeanne Feeney

On Thursday, Sept. 3, a group of us attended a Fast2Feed Interfaith Iftar gathering at the I St. Historic Synagogue in Washington, DC. "Iftar" is an Arabic term meaning breaking the fast immediately after sunset during Ramadan. It is usually made up of a light snack, which in our case consisted of very delicious dates, and water. This was followed by a lovely catered meal in the lower level of the synagogue with various leaders of the Islamic and Jewish faiths as speakers. We all enjoyed this lovely event and I found that having fasted that day made it an interesting experience. We took the metro from my house and noticed with particular sharpness the sights, sounds and smells of the journey downtown to the synagogue. Before breaking the fast, we listened to brief speeches from a member of the White House staff and the Salvation Army. A number of us remained to observe the Muslim call to prayer, which took place at the bimah in front of the synagogue. In attendance were Emma Heirman, Ben Bryla, Amos Dancey, Patrick Kennedy, Luis Amadeo Hernandez, Jeanne Feeney, Justine Epstein and Johanna Muller, who was visiting from Stuttgart, Germany.

It was hosted by ML Resources Social Vision,

9/11 Unity Walk, All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS) and the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA). (Our youth group had previously worked with 9/11 Unity Walk last January when they set up an Anacostia River clean up as a part of a community service project.)



Youth Group at Anacostia River  
Photo by Paige Duncan

The Iftar was a social component of Interfaith Service Week, which was part of President Obama's United We Serve Campaign.



Muslims in the call to prayer at the  
Historic I St. Synagogue  
Photo by Justine Epstein

# Report from the Treasurer

By J-Lee Newell

I am writing to you this season as the newly minted Treasurer for our community. I welcome this role and the responsibilities it carries with real enthusiasm and sense of purpose. As of October 1<sup>st</sup>, I will no longer be the administrator for the congregation and I know that Revs. Kennedy and Minassian hope to introduce the new administrator to you very soon.

I am happy to report that our community continues to rise to the occasion in meeting our financial goals and holding steady to our budget. Income goals for 2009 are much higher than last year. We are striving to achieve a balanced budget from donations and interest earnings by the end of next year. The Board decided, in the fall of 2007, to work diligently towards a balanced budget over a three-year period when we became an independent congregation with a full-time priest at the end of 2007. As of August 31<sup>st</sup> of this second, full-year, we had donations of \$50,000 (this includes \$10,000 from the Pamphalon Foundation as well as \$1,034 from the congregations in New York City and San Francisco) and \$5,590 in interest income for a total of \$55,590. We are earning less interest this year and our end-of-year income goal is \$85,000. Regular donations as well as special gifts offered around the sacraments, study groups, and special gatherings give us the bulk of our income. Your continued financial support is vital to the community and your regular donations and special gifts will get us to our goal.

The Christian Community treasurers from North America will meet in October to discuss many issues which affect the region. We also will explore thoughtful ways to share the financial needs of each community with members, especially in regards to special gifts around the sacraments. If you have any thoughts or questions you would like me to bring to that meeting, please let me know.

October begins our pledge season and you will receive more information about that in the mail. Pledges help the Board make conscious decisions about next year's budget and give the Regional Board for North America a sense of our stability and growth. When you receive your pledge card, I encourage you to take some quiet time to reflect on what you can do to financially support your congregation. There is a helpful brochure at the Parish House entitled, *Our Financial Foundation* which is a good place to begin when considering your pledge for the new year.

A solid base of volunteers has kept the grass mowed, the Parish House clean, the altar and sanctuary ready for the sacraments. Your gifts of time and hard work have a real and positive financial impact on our community life and budget. Thank you all! If you are interested in supporting the community in any way, please contact the priests and they will get you in touch with the contact person for that particular circle within the congregation. Want to work on the grounds? Contact Camilla Lake. Want to keep the Parish House clean and ready for services? Contact Carol Petrash. Want to help put seasonal music together for the services? Contact Colleen Shetland. You get the gist of it. You are always welcome and your time and talents are deeply appreciated by all.

Thank you again for your generous support.

## Upcoming Articles For Advent issue

- *Our Tuesday Breakfast*
- *Reports from various groups in the Community*
- *Article on Membership by Rev. Kennedy*

Please send submissions by November 15, 2009 to Rev. Nora Minassian at [noraminassian@yahoo.com](mailto:noramianassian@yahoo.com)

## CC Service Teams

Support still needed where you see a blank line. Please contact Carol Petrash and let her know where you can help, (301) 946-9465 or e-mail at [ChristianCommunityDCMD@gmail.com](mailto:ChristianCommunityDCMD@gmail.com)

### Blue Team – December and May

Jane Parker  
Michael Anderson  
Camilla Lake  
Bruce Chamberlin

### Yellow Team – March and October

Wende Patton  
Wendy Jackson  
Michele Coleman

### Red Team – January and June

Carol Petrash  
Jack Petrash  
Kathy Chaney  
Kathy Dews

### Purple Team – April and November

Mary Brauer  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Green Team – February and September

Lark Anderson  
Sandra Doren  
Patty Deuster

### Orange Team – *Confirmation Parents – Once a month when confirmation class is on a Saturday*

Mattkes  
Manskys  
Romans  
Jane Janotta  
Lisa Gray  
Colemans  
Mooney-Johnsons  
Hills

*“What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder, because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.”*

**Ralph Waldo Emerson**

# Upcoming National and International Events

*Saturday October 10th - Monday October 12th*  
**Youth Group travels to Devon, PA congregation**

*Thursday October 22nd - Sunday October 25th*  
**North American Delegates' Meeting**  
**Spring Valley, New York**

*Friday October 23rd 8 pm*  
**Talk by Rev. Patrick Kennedy**  
*The Heart's Power of Sacrifice and*  
*the Birth of the New Human Community*

## **FUTURE NOW!**

The world conference of The Christian Community  
Dortmund, Germany, Whitsun 2010. It will be a wonderful event!

For information contact  
Miriam Roger by email [info@futurenow2010.org](mailto:info@futurenow2010.org)  
The web site is  
<http://futurenow2010.org/typo3/en/future-now.html>

## **Fall Open Courses at the Seminary in Chicago**

*The Transition from the Old to the New Testament*  
*with Rev. Oliver Steinruck*  
*October 5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>*

*Christ and the Earth*  
*with Daniel Hafner*  
*October 12<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>*

*Gospel of Matthew – Awakening to the Holy Spirit*  
*with Rev. Georg Dreissig, author and co-director of the Seminary in Stuttgart, Germany*  
*October 19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>*

*COLOR: The Deeds and Sufferings of the Light*  
*with Daniel Hafner*  
*November 30<sup>th</sup> – December 4<sup>th</sup>*

*Advent: The Second Coming*  
*with Rev. Richard Dancy*  
*December 14<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>*

Cost for each week-long course: \$350, includes room and board, breakfast and kitchen use. For more information please call or e-mail Gisela Wielki (773) 472-7041 [giselawielki@sbcglobal.net](mailto:giselawielki@sbcglobal.net)

Three one-week Open Course Seminary Retreats  
Spring Valley, NY  
Fall 2009

*The Evolving of the Human Being and the Angels*

With Rev. Gisela Wielki

November 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>

*Encountering Evil: Explorations into the Task of our Time*

With Douglas Sloan, Prof. of History & Education, Emeritus

November 9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>

*Christology*

With Rev. Erk Ludwig

November 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>

We are making a contact list of those community members and friends who would like to host a guest visiting the community for few weekdays or for a weekend.

If you live in Washington DC area or in Chapel Hill and would like to be a host, please call Rev. Nora Minassian at 240-381-8557 or e-mail at [noraminassian@yahoo.com](mailto:noramianassian@yahoo.com)

There is a tide in the affairs of men  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.  
On such a full sea are we now afloat,  
And we must take the current when it serves,  
Or lose our ventures.

William Shakespeare

Julius Caesar (IV.ii.269–276)