

WESSEX SILENCE AND RETREATS GROUP

Notes of Meeting on 13 April (11 am – 3 pm) at Abbey Manse Romsey

Present: Clare Downing, Terry Hinks, Brenda Stephenson, Edward Symmons, Diana Townsend, Hester van der Wilk (Coordinator Centre for Reflection, Aston Tirrold) and her husband Chris Connisby.
Apologies from Alison Dalton

Morning Reflection

Terry asked the group to reflect on an event during Holy Week or Easter that had had a powerful effect on them: examples shared were the tenebrae service, Maundy Thursday vigil of prayer, the stations of the cross, music and dance – showing the power of non-words. This led into a half hour of reflection and prayer:

- A Prayer stations from Roots teaching material focussing on the silver coins (Brenda)
- Reflection on John 19:16-28 – the crucifixion (Edward)
- Meditation on the cross using ‘I am the great sun’ by Charles Causley (Terry)

Thank you for your input.

Before and after lunch we dealt with items of business:

1. Membership

We welcomed Diana Townsend (from the North of the Synod) and Clare Downing to their first meeting.

2. Ministers’ Quiet Day in 2011

The Ministers’ Lenten Quiet day in March 2011 at Wisdom House, Romsey led by Richard Davies, had been appreciated; numbers small (perhaps because there were too many Synod ministers events happening at the same time).

3. Ministers’ Quiet Days in 2012

We will aim to have Ministers’ Quiet days in Spring and autumn (Lent and Advent) 2012; we will ask Ann Lewin to lead one of the days. Terry will explore date and venues.

4. Synod Retreat

The Retreat at Old Alresford for the Synod on 7 - 9 October 2011 (Friday – Sunday) for members and ministers, with the theme ‘God is still speaking: are we listening?’ to be led by Peter Mackintosh. 18 people have signed up (19 with speaker, leaving just one place to fill); Terry will contact Peter to start planning programme (suggestions of time for shared silence, some listening to music as well as time for conversation).

5. Synod Prayer Chain

Edward had raised this idea at the Mission and Outreach Committee; it was felt that as a group we could explore this further (recognising the questions of confidentiality, permissions etc). It could take various forms:

- a) A small group taking prayer requests with total confidentiality.
- b) A sharing of news between all serving ministers – for information and prayer.
- c) A sharing of news between all ministers who wish to be part of a network (serving and retired)
- d) A general sharing of pastoral news around the Synod (obviously where permission to do so had been given).

Terry to devise a simple questionnaire based on these options to first gauge response of serving ministers. Linked to this is the future of the Synod Prayer cycle (no longer a printed handbook but kept on the e newsletter).

6. Synod Mission and Outreach Committee

Edward is our link person and gave us a brief report; he reported plans for Synod consultations or workshops, at which there might be a place for our group to give some input.

Edward will check website and contact Peter Pay if need be to get our events / activities on the web page.

7. Synod Day 18 June

We are involved in providing a prayer tent / sacred space. Terry, Diana and Alison able to come and to staff tent for an hour (or two?); will aim to have a focus for prayer, some resources and also provide 3 or 4 short

times of prayer – say 15 minutes (perhaps Alison do ‘messy prayer?’) Terry to co-ordinate.

8. Centre for Reflection, Aston Tirrold <http://www.reflect.freeuk.com/>

Hester shared the latest programme from the Centre which is attracting a good number of people (and includes some excellent interfaith events); still running a small deficit, but hopefully this can be covered.

9. URC Retreats Group <http://urcsrn.retreats.org.uk/>

Terry represented us at the meeting earlier in April at the Windermere Centre.

Key activities in 2011 are:

- A Consultation on spiritual direction at Windermere Centre (23 – 26 May 2011)
- Denomination-wide Quiet Day/Day of Prayer (2 July 2011)
- Denominational Retreat at Windermere Centre

The Group will bring a resolution to General Assembly 2012 (via a Synod) to suggest an annual denomination-wide Quiet Day/Day of Prayer.

10. Methodist Spirituality Group

Malcolm Rothwell from the Methodist Spirituality group was unable to join us for our meeting; Terry will keep in touch with him and see if anything develops.

11. Theme for September meeting

We will explore a rule of life with the help of either an associate member of the Iona Community or a Roman Catholic nun (Diana to pursue her contacts).

12. Date of next meeting

This will be on:

Tuesday 13 September (11 am – 3 pm), at Centre for Reflection Aston Tirrold (Paul Holmes will join us for the meeting) **NOTE NEW DATE**

TJH 20.4.11