



Green Pastures

A Twice-Yearly Newsletter of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

Autumn 2021

Our Christmastide Greetings

Once again this year, Covid-19 has had a profound effect on all of us, and once again we did not manage to publish our newsletter in the Spring of this year (although this was partly due to the editor going into hospital for surgery). So this edition comes at about the right time to wish you all a holy and blessed Advent and Christmas 2021.

Membership

We have recently welcomed another Member, Lucy Jones, who has begun her six month trial period to become a Companion of our Community. She has introduced herself below.

One other membership item is that Sandra has asked to change her status from that of Companion to that of Associate. She remains a close friend of the Community and a great source of support.



Neil Smith RIP



It's with great sadness that we report the death of our Companion, Neil. He was found dead in his flat on the 30th of November, having suffered a heart attack, and will be terribly missed, both by the congregation of Christ Church, Ebbw Vale, where he was a praying presence in the church building each day, and also, of course, by us, his Community.

Introducing Lucy:

Hi I'm Lucy Jones and I am very pleased to be a new Companion (on a trial basis).

I was born in South Wales and have spent my whole life in the valleys. I am very blessed to be a mother of two beautiful boys Leo (14) and Josh (6). They keep me very busy along with my partner and wonderful pets.

I currently work in the local college teaching GCSE maths. I thoroughly enjoy my job and it allows me to support individuals in all aspects of life. No two days are the same and it's wonderful to see what opportunities the lord has to offer the students.

Whilst I was pregnant with Josh I had PPROM. All the medical professionals told me to abort my pregnancy. I got in contact with my local church who supported me through that challenging time. Thankfully our prayers were answered and Josh was born happy and healthy. I am so grateful every day.

This was the beginning of my journey with God and I hope to learn more and grow closer.

I was fortunate to meet Sister Anita when she was leading worship at our church. During the pandemic the services moved online, which was more flexible for me, though it's good to be back in our church building.

Through joining Weeks of Guided Prayer I found it possible to connect with the lord on another level. Since then I have continued to develop my faith which has led me to having this opportunity to joining this wonderful Community.



Times of travels - Message from Leonie



Alfred and I are in the final weeks of our 3½ month trip through South Africa. We have had time to report back to our sending organisation, help our daughter prepare for her wedding, and celebrate the glorious occasion with friends and family on 25 September.

Since then we've been on a tour through South Africa, speaking at churches, home groups and meeting with many friends. We have established various new partnerships with churches and organisations. I've lost count of how many beds we've slept in.

There has been time for some leisure with a week by the ocean, three days in the Kruger national park, and a flight in a glider! Now we are visiting our daughter, son-in-law and 3 grandchildren.

I do so look forward to returning to McLeod Ganj, in the Himalayas, and to our ongoing mission to the Tibetans living there, although the new Omicron variant of Covid is currently delaying our travel plans. We had just moved to a new house (*photo to the right*) that has enough bedrooms for all of our team, with an apartment for me and Alfred. I am dreaming of setting up a chapel in one room.

The Bible Video project is continuing there, and Teremi and Achui, the two team members sharing the house with us, seem to be doing well. I do look forward to being home.



The Role of our Guardian, Caroline Lewis:



I have been an Associate of SGS. for about 4 years, and was appointed as the Community's "Guardian" in 2018. My background is in Social Work, and as such I have had quite an extensive experience of safeguarding issues. Nowadays most religious Communities have someone associated with them to "keep an eye" on their activities and relationships, to ensure that no abuse takes place on any level, so my role in SGS is in line with this.

I bring an independent perspective to this role, and I attend all the meetings of the Community. As such am able to get to know all the Associates and Companions and they get to know me as well. I am available for anyone associated with SGS who may have an issue and would like advice or to be listened to. If it is possible to help with an issue or resolve it, then I will try to assist and this will be done in complete confidence.

At this time I would like to welcome Lucy to our community and I hope, Lucy, that since you live locally we will be able to meet face to face sometime in the not too distant future.

Our Doings for the Past Year

As Covid restrictions have dragged on, our meetings have taken place almost exclusively online. Even Caroline, though she lives just down the hill from Sr Anita, has used this method to attend.

Sr Anita's ministry has continued largely online. She no longer takes services in Ebbw Vale, but does continue to celebrate the Eucharist online from her chapel at 12.00 noon every day, seven days a week. Her ministry of spiritual direction, retreat work and giving weeks of guided prayer continues, and currently extends to 8 different countries. Her daily Eucharist can be accessed on Zoom via the following link and details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4837488647?pwd=SG5MRINZQWhWYnhhZVhLZHhLTHFkQT09>, ID: 483 748 8647, Passcode: 333.)

Anna's life continues to be fully occupied with motherhood, and she and Austin are expecting another child. Elise is now in her second year. They continue to be based in North Africa.

We remain in close touch with our Associates. **Sandra** has just resigned from her teaching job in London and will, in the new year, be moving north to serve at the central house of the Northumbria Community.

We much appreciate that **Caroline Lewis** continues as our Guardian, as described above. **Chris Phenix** (Sr Anita's sister) has recently moved into a new apartment in Fort Worth, and also joins us for the Eucharist on our College Chapter Meeting days. **Christine Gittings** stays in close touch and her latest challenge is learning to live with her white stick (named Myfanwy) and her new hearing aids. She joins Sr Anita's Eucharist via the telephone most days. **Ruth Scourfield** continues her work as an Occupational Therapist, and is partway through a counselling course. **Christopher Davies** (Ruth's husband) likewise continues his work at an OT, though he enjoys doing handyman work on the side. **Gary Denyer** normally joins us at our College Chapter Meeting Eucharists. Sadly, his guide dog, Rufus, developed health problems since last year and has had to be retired. **Vera Beak** keeps well, and has been able to resume going on an occasional cruise.

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