

E-Correspondence

from the Central Regional Council
January, 2013



Communication Support:

If you are receiving this email as a leader in your area, **please forward it on** to all the members in your group, branch or initiative. We want to ensure that all our members in the region remain connected. If you prefer that another member of your group be responsible for receiving and passing this on, please let us know. **We need your help and thank you.**

Awakening to our Regional Community

In response to the call throughout the region to share with us what is happening the following have been received. Thank you for those who have contributed for this month. We hope to continue this work of weaving our regional vessel to hold the courageous work that has the power to impact the world through many points of light.

Candlemas - A Festival of Light

As we head into February, we find ourselves mid-way between the winter solstice and spring equinox. Throughout the world February 2nd is noted as one of the cross-quarter days. We are certainly familiar with the celebration of Groundhog Day at which point we hope for a peep into what we may expect regarding winters end. It is also a celebration of Candlemas. This is a feast of light and stirring within the womb of earth, a warming and awakening in anticipation of the renewed fertility of nature. It is also identified as a festival for the presentation of Jesus in the temple at whereupon the old Simeon announced this child would be a light for the Gentiles. Beginning in the fifth century, candles were lit and in the 11th century blessed as a way to mark this day. Many Waldorf Schools and their communities celebrate this day by making hand-dipped beeswax candles with students or planting seeds. Candles are amazing in their capacity to warm and lighten the darkness. Seeds are likewise amazing as all that becomes from a single seed is contained within such a compact and potent mystery. Snowdrops, one of the first early spring flowers to poke their heads toward the light often through a blanket of snow are also known as Candlemas Bells. These sweet white blossoms are believed to purify a home when brought inside after February 2nd. Have you seen any snowdrops yet?



SAVE THE DATES: Central Region Annual Meeting - May 3 - 5, 2013 - Viroqua, WI

We are delighted to announce that we will be in Viroqua, WI for our May gathering this year. We have invited **Albert Linderman** to join us for the weekend to lead those of you able to join us in some exercises around Theory U. He has been a student of this envisioning process and one which may be utilized by members and partners in groups, branches and initiatives to sense what is coming out of the future. We are very excited about this year's event and hope many of you will be joining us in Viroqua, WI.

The Central Regional Council will be meeting **February 15-17** in New Orleans to formulate our theme, title, agenda and other details. We will also have several opportunities to meet with local members and initiatives.

Thursday: February 14 - Marianne will speak about Waldorf School Governance and Social Threefolding

Friday: February 15 - Dennis will speak with members interested in the School for Spiritual Science.

Saturday: February 16 - Together we will speak to the Spiritual Impulse of Waldorf Schools and Rudolf Steiner

Reports from Around our Region:

Our reports from around the region this month reflect the various ways in which the Holy Nights were held and experienced. I want to thank those who offered these reports and photographs which demonstrate how we are linked in our spiritual striving regardless of distance. It is a remarkable picture to contemplate the depth living among our members as they move through the seasons and the course of the year.

New Orleans, LA

Our tradition of reading for the Holy Nights began in 1999/2000, when, as Rita Amedee's mother was dying, Rita and I took up the John Gospel. Joan Hammond crossed the threshold as we were reading aloud in her room the High Priestly Prayer on the evening of January 2. It was deeply moving and utterly convincing!

Every year since (with the exception of two years post-Katrina), we have met nightly at my house, beginning Christmas night; and have taken up, in rotation, Rudolf Steiner's lecture series on the gospels. Working year after year with this material about the true nature of Jesus, of Christ, the nativity, the Mystery of Golgotha, and the Resurrection has allowed it to enter into our group in a most profound way - something readily sensed even by those who are new to our group and to Steiner.

Every year it is a journey. The commitment to 13 nights from December 25 through January 6 seems at the outset overwhelming, but it is definitely worth the effort! After last year's work with The Fifth Gospel, Darlene Wapegan enthused that, having been given this new understanding, she had "fallen in love with the Christ."

It should be noted that this was our first Holy Nights without Inge Elsas physically in our midst. Though Inge never attended every night, she loved being with us on Christmas and Epiphany. Now that she is in the spiritual world, dear Inge chalked up perfect attendance - even outdoing the hostess, who was in bed with a stomach virus on the first night!

*May our feeling penetrate
To the center of our hearts
And seek in love
To unite with those
Who share our goals
And with the spirits
Who look down benevolently
On our heart's earnest strivings
Sending us strength
From realms of light
As they illuminate our love.*

Verse for America ~ Rudolf Steiner

There were more new participants with us this year than for any Holy Nights reading thus far - as many as a dozen individuals cozied up in my living room at once. We read The Gospel of St. John, and even those unfamiliar with anthroposophy were amazingly undaunted by the content. We opened and closed each reading with the fourth panel of Steiner's Foundation Stone meditation (though one could argue that the evening begins with the "tea selection ritual" in the kitchen!). Conversation was animated and often leavened with warm humor.

Having travelled together through this sacred time, we closed with a reading of the entire Foundation Stone, and then celebrated with a revered New Orleans Twelfth Night tradition: King Cake! Patty Carbajal always treats us to our favorite version of this decadent ring of sweet braided bread, baked by her sister Henri. Now it is Carnival Time in New Orleans, and we carry with us the blessing of the Holy Nights into the new year.

- Margaret Runyon

Austin, TX

Novalis Branch in Austin, Texas celebrated the 12 Holy Nights by meeting in the homes of members each night from December 25 through January 5. We read "The Christmas Festival in the Changing Course of Time" on Christmas. On the Dec. 26th we read the Christmas Imagination lecture from FOUR SEASONS AND THE ARCHANGELS. For the remaining 10 nights we read BETWEEN DEATH AND REBIRTH (10 lectures). Each evening started by remembering friends who have crossed the threshold and inviting them to the reading. We experienced a deep and peaceful mood. After the reading we enjoyed refreshments and unstructured togetherness.

- Stephen E. Usher

Little Rock, AK

We are not able to participate together during the Holy Nights (only two of us are close enough to each other geographically), although each of us individually observes these blessed days. We are, however, developing the festivals within the group. We held our Christmas Festival in December. This does include the mixing and spreading of the biodynamic preparations (from Dr. Williams' book). This past year was our first for the festivals, so we will continue to develop our content, and appreciate input from other groups.

- Sonjia Michaels

Akron and NE Ohio

The Girasol members gathered at the home of Brad and Susan Crozier for our Holy Nights gathering on December 28th. We shared the following activities: sounding of the TAO - That AM I, read Steiner's words concerning the Holy Nights and the Foundation Stone Meditation, sang, shared our work with the Calendar of the Soul during the week of Advent, wrote down our wishes for the New Year. (1. personal, 2. for our group/community, 3. world) to be sent up in fire on New Year's Eve, then viewed Raphael's Madonna paintings (a series of 12 images) with light and lyre music. We left this sacred work together with silent meditation in order to carry it with us out into the light of the full moon night! What a magical evening! Thank you to Sue and to all of those members able to be with us to share in this work on behalf of our group and the spiritual world.

- Felicia Campbell

Ann Arbor, MI

The Great Lakes Branch had a series of events in celebration of Christmas and the Holy Nights. December 14 - The Christmas Festival play written by Catherine Katz was performed by a group of students and adults at the Rudolf Steiner School.

December 15 - a Christmas Festival was held at the Steiner House incorporating a couple of star stories, carols and verses. The lighting of the Christmas tree was our final offering before treats and social time together.

December 26-30 - A small but dedicated group gathered during these five evenings at the Steiner House. We opened each session with the Calendar of the Soul Verse followed by a reading of selected lectures found in the compilation of lectures entitled Festivals and their Meaning. We closed each evening by speaking the daily rhythm of the Foundation Stone Meditation and singing.



On December 28th we had a special guest presentation by Mary Adams who shared with us a beautiful picture of the position of celestial bodies in the sky at this point in time and what the significance is of those relationships of the heavenly bodies. Mary led us on a journey through the year based on the colored glass etchings of the New Images of the Zodiac currently on display in the lobby of Steiner House. We closed with our verse and songs.



January 6 - In the afternoon the biodynamic Three Kings Preparation was stirred at the Community Farm of Ann Arbor. The fields were covered in snow and the mood was one of joyous gratitude for the work of the elemental beings. Once the stirring was completed, the preparation was divided up and the land blessed along the perimeter of the farm, the Steiner Schools, the Rudolf Steiner Medical Clinic and Steiner House. That evening, the Three Kings Festival included a staged pageant of the Kings' arrival from Mathew 2. We shared a Three Kings cake, blessed the house by marking the threshold and blessed the front garden with some of the prep stirred



earlier. Dona Nobis Pacem sung in a three-part round concluded our festival events.

- Marianne Fieber

Harbor Springs, MI

During the season of Advent, I hand-rolled twelve 'zodiac' beeswax candles, plus one large pillar, for use on my Holy Nights altar (pictured here).

I pair the candles with the corresponding card that represents the New Images of the Zodiac from the original Calendar of the Soul, and this I place around the crèche.

Starting at Solstice, I come before this altar, and lighting first only the large pillar candle, I draw the images, starting first with the image that appeared three times in the original Calendar of the Christ Being being released from the spiritual world and descending into the Earth to then ascend from there (pictured here in pink, behind and left of the guarding angel). This image holds the boundary of the Holy Nights journey, and my plan is to draw it three times throughout the Holy Nights:

1. at Solstice (Christ's descent from spiritual world);
2. at New Year's Eve midnight (Christ penetrating Earth);
3. at Epiphany (Christ ascending all the forces of the zodiac from the physical world).



In between these three activities, I come before the altar each evening, and lighting the pillar as well as the corresponding zodiacal candle, I draw the image that corresponds to that evening. I also review my journal from the year past that corresponded to Sun's moving through that sign of the zodiac, and on the following morning I contemplate that same zodiacal season for the coming year. By the 12th night, all of the candles are burning and, if I have done my work, there is a great deal of solace and comfort streaming forth from the display.

The elements of this contemplation have come together over many years, starting with my work with Tamara Slayton in 1996 and followed by my sister Patricia's repackaging of the New Images for contemplation, and then my work with candle maker Linda Nagel of www.candlesconnectinghearts.com

Each year I have hoped to offer a workshop in making the candles and building the connection between starlight and candlelight, two forms of light that do not diminish the mystery of the darkness, and so this work has taken many forms over the years, including my joining the group in Ann Arbor on the 28 December this year.

- Mary Adams

What's going on in our Region?

Follow the link below to the events listed on the Anthroposophical Society's website.

[Anthroposophical Society in America: Central Region Events](#)

Chaparral Eurythmy will present a program of Classical Music Thursday, February 21 at 12:00 pm, as part of the Noontime Concert Series at the Central Presbyterian Church at 8th and Brazos in Austin, TX. This invitational Noontime Series has been ongoing for over thirty years. The Chaparral program will include the magnificent Prelude and Fugue in e minor, Op 35, No.1 by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy.

Eurythmists - Barbara Bresette-Mills and Beth Usher; Recitation - Stephen Usher, Ph.D.; Piano - Anthony Tobin, DMA, Steinway Artist. Chaparral Eurythmy is a 2013 Sponsored Project of the Austin Creative Alliance. Admission is free, donations for the Church are accepted at the door.

Lunch by advance reservation is \$5. Reserve online here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/ccc?key=0AvRG8HwUa7V1dHFqbEJmUm82TlI40G9QaW4zTThZaUE#gid=0>



The Two Rivers Folk School (TRFS) in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota

seeks to create a more democratic, humane, and sustainable society by providing means for the sharing of practical arts, applied technologies, theoretical wisdom, and the capacity to intuit the sources of awareness and intention.

March 1-3, Craig Holdrege Lectures, Evolution beyond Darwinism and Creationism

A Series of Three Talks, At City of Lakes Waldorf School

The public discussion of evolution has become highly polarized. Material and spiritual views of nature and humanity are presented as irreconcilable opposites. Instead of nuanced arguments, we are offered oversimplifications that gloss over deeper questions. One way to move beyond oversimplification is to return to a careful consideration of the phenomena themselves, which are always more complex than any simple scheme can encompass. In this series of talks, Craig Holdrege will discuss the topic of evolution by drawing on concrete examples from animal and human evolution. While offering no pat answers, he will point to patterns and riddles that embrace the physical-spiritual nature of evolution. The three lectures will build on one another, so participation in all three is encouraged. All three lectures - \$30, Individual lectures - \$15

For a full list of courses and activities go to tworiversfolkschool.org

MA in Transpersonal Psychology: Concentration in Anthroposophic Psychology

Beginning July 29, 2013

Central Region Member **Roberta Nelson, PhD** is a core faculty member of this program along with Dennis Klocek, Orland Bishop and James Dyson MD and others. (See program flier attached.)

For more information visit: www.SteinerCollege.edu
or call 916.961.8727, x145 ask for Dr. Bento.





If you have any suggestions or contributions for upcoming issues, please send them to Marianne Fieber at marianne.fieber@yahoo.com. In the subject line, indicate that they are for the e-correspondence. We hope this format will help us reach members in a timely way with information that is of interest.

Some simple guidelines for submissions:

Deadline: 3rd Saturday of the month

Electronic submissions only to marianne.fieber@yahoo.com

Activities taking place within the Central Region

Activities which are led and/or developed by members living within the Central Region

Note: We reserve the right to edit contributions as needed

The Central Regional Council is:

Dennis Dietzel, Roseville, MN
Marianne Fieber, Ann Arbor, MI
Mary Louise Hershberger, Fargo, ND
Alberto Loya, Ann Arbor, MI