NEWS FROM Celebration!

A People Serving the Church

Spring 2003

Ministry of Presence: Expanding our Vision



"...time for this butterfly to emerge from its chrysalis"

Eighteen years ago the Community of Celebration moved to Aliquippa from Scotland. We came with a vision of not just maintaining a ministry to the church around the world, but also with a vision that our presence here would become a gift of hope to a town experiencing depression and lost dreams. Our lives have become rooted in the warp and weft of Aliquippa, and what happens to our neighbors, happens to us. Building our chapel has emphasized more than we could have imagined just how much we are now at home here.

During recent months it has become increasingly clear that our gift to Aliquippa is to be more active than simply being present. Perhaps it is the time for this butterfly to emerge from its chrysalis. As a Community we have always been ready to "walk the walk" as well as "talk the talk." Finding solutions to the long-standing problems facing Aliquippa requires us to establish a new partnership with our neighbors and with others of goodwill in the city.

With Steven and Bill established as members of Franklin Avenue development groups Aliquippa Alliance for Unity and Development, Weed and Seed, and Franklin Avenue Development Committee, it is clear that we are becoming partners in bringing fresh hope in practical ways.

With very high numbers of unemployed and disabled people, single parents with children to raise, those with drug and alcohol abuse problems, ex-offenders, and many others looking for an opportunity to make a fresh start in their lives, we hope to set up several Franklin Avenue projects and businesses over the next three years. During 2003 we are consolidating our plans for local ministry into a coherent 'Business Plan' for what we are calling the **Aliquippa Community Enterprise (ACE)**. This will take us from our vision of hope into a practical action plan that enables local people to change their lives for good.

By 2004 we want to appoint an Executive Director of New Mission to run under the umbrella of our existing not-for-profit status. The role of the director, who will be someone with experience in this sector and with these kinds of projects, will be three-fold: to get the projects up and running, to provide ongoing oversight of these projects, and to help in the major fundraising that will undergird the ongoing mission. The projects themselves have target start times in 2005 and 2006.

The ACE Women's Training Project will provide introductory programs that will prepare women for education and work. Childcare will be provided during training sessions and women will be able to work at computer skills and academic basics. Our target is to enable women to go onto Community College or directly into work. We expect to help up to forty women and their children each year to begin on a pathway to work. We will work from premises on Franklin Avenue.





Facade and streetscape improvements have begun; now we need new businesses to fix derelict properties and to provide employment

The ACE Work Crew will initially use government contracts to provide low skills jobs that will start unemployed people on basic work schedules and working skills, enabling them to develop a resume that leads to jobs of more significance. Our target is to help long-term unemployed people, ex-offenders and those overcoming substance abuse problems that need a start on a productive working life. A crew may have up to ten workers and each year a number of our crew will be able to apply for local jobs and be replaced by others needing a similar step up. With a workshop on Franklin Avenue this is another contribution to turning around the vacant and semi-derelict lots.

The ACE Work Project for Disabled People will be a sheltered workshop to help people who could probably never get into the job market without support. We plan to draw in people with mental health problems, learning difficulties and physical disabilities. We hope to base this project close to our office on Franklin Avenue. Our current idea is that this will be a business growing plants and involved in yard and garden work.

The most challenging project perhaps will be our **ACE "Mushroom Farm."** It may not be mushrooms but we use this shorthand to describe a for-profit business that will run in our vicinity, employing local people, often with very low skill levels, in productive work. The product will be sold to stores in the area.

Is there a benefit to the Community of Celebration? Yes, it is the fulfillment of our call to share with our neighbors in finding New Hope for the future. It is to fulfill an aspiration to belong to Aliquippa as more than travelers finding a roost. These projects will require new workers—Community and others—as project directors and teachers, as enablers and crew leaders. We have often been hampered in recruiting new members because of the lack of gainful employment, but now there can be jobs for new Community members and associates here on Franklin Avenue. We seek your prayers and support for these new beginnings.

Some of you have asked us to share with you about Celebration's finances. Here is our projected budget for 2003:

Projected Income	
$114,000	Music ministry
28,700	Employment of members
38,000	Rental properties
15,100	Conferences, retreats, hospitality
$195,800	**Total Income**
Projected Expenses	
$ 11,293	Cost of music ministry
10,000	Cost of newsletter
21,189	Cost of rental properties
7,668	Conferences, retreats, hospitality
97,875	Community costs
10,000	Aliquippa Community Enterprise
51,275	Administration
18,000	Other Costs
$227,300	**Total Expenditure**
$ 31,500	**Funding Target**

After a year of discernment, Barbara Gilbert asked to be released from her vows. She will return to England on July 11. Our prayers go with her in her new life.

How can you help?

- Volunteer to help in the administration and housekeeping for conferences. Your time can help underwrite an expanding program of conferences, retreats, sabbaticals, and Gap year volunteers.
- Encourage friends and church members to register for these programs.
- Visit us and celebrate the new chapel and our new ministry.
- Contribute financially. Your donation or sponsorship can underwrite the developing of Aliquippa Community Enterprise, enabling us to develop or bring in the skills that are needed to get going.
- Volunteer your time and expertise.
    - Maybe you have run a small business and know how to help us.
    - If you have experience of fundraising, you could let us know of any foundations or companies who may help us with grants or sponsorship.
    - Do you have time and experience to offer to our fundraising program?

Another way to help would be to consult your attorney about leaving a legacy to the Community of Celebration. A bequest may be a lump sum. It may be a residuary legacy that leaves the balance of your estate to Celebration after your commitments to family and loved ones have been met. If you need help, we can provide you with more information. If you would like to advise us now of your intended legacy (a pledge) we will be able to build your contribution into our plans for the future mission of Celebration. You are also welcome to dedicate your legacy to a particular aspect of our mission, the life of prayer, the ministry of music, the hospitality in conferences and retreats or the New Mission of Aliquippa Community Enterprise.

Musings on a Lenten Pilgrimage

by the Rev. Daphne Grimes, Spiritual Advisor to the Community of Celebration



In the time of April's sweet showers, to paraphrase Chaucer, people long to go on pilgrimages. So it was in the fourteenth century. Pilgrims are a little out of style now, when we can be almost anywhere, vicariously, by a push of our remote, or by scanning the Internet. Yet there is still, deep down inside, the remnants of the need for a ministry of presence: just being there, not because we have anything special to do, any earth shaking remedies to offer. It may be the illness of a distant friend or family member, it may be a celebration, a retreat, a special place where we like to go alone. It may be a call to service. It may be a call to silence. We may be called to stay where we are; we may be called halfway around the world. But we sense, at times, a call that comes from somewhere deeper than any of our rational explanations. When we heed the call, we embark on a spiritual journey, whether or not it is physical as well. This for me seems to be the essence of pilgrimage. *(continued next page)*

Go to Galilee

by the Revd Christine Bainbridge

In Matthew's gospel it is two women who are the first to encounter Jesus risen from the dead. He instructs them to tell the other disciples to go to Galilee where they too will see him. The disciples had first met Jesus in Galilee. There he had commissioned them to catch people as well as fish. Somewhere nearby they had listened to his teaching and watched him feed a crowd of 5,000. From there he had sent them out in pairs to announce the good news of God's kingdom. Galilee was the place where their faith had been kindled. It is to Galilee they must return to encounter Jesus again, but this time as their risen Lord.

Most Christians will have a Galilee. We need to go there from time to time to meet again the Jesus who inspired us to follow him. It has gradually dawned on me over the past couple of months that my decision to spend some extended study leave with the Community of Celebration in the USA is about an instinctive need to return to my Galilee before moving to a new parish. In this instance Galilee is not the USA (which I hardly know at all), but this particular community.

When Richard and I first moved to South London we were subscribing to a magazine called *Grassroots* produced by a community at Post Green in Dorset. The community was linked in some way with a movement of renewal at the Church of the Redeemer in Houston, Texas. Many of the articles in *Grassroots* were about developing an authentically Christian lifestyle. We had not long returned from teaching in West Africa where I had encountered a far less individualistic culture than my own. I saw for the first time that there could be alternatives to a way of life that I had taken for granted. *Grassroots* spoke about community living as a Christian alternative. I found this a very attractive idea. When Post Green and the Community of Celebration held day conferences in London I went along.

Two things impressed me; the first was the worship that touched me at a depth I had not experienced before, and the second was the quality of relationships. The community members I met paid attention to others in a way that was new to me. Their teaching about community was a surprise. Community life was not necessarily about living with others in the same physical space, but about developing loving relationships where Christ was at the centre. The place to start was with the people who were already closest to you. In my case this was my husband and children. I



The Revd Christine Bainbridge is a priest of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Southwark, London. She spent one month of an extended study leave with us in Aliquippa prior to moving to an inner city London parish.

remember returning home with this revolutionary idea and announcing to my startled family that we were about to become a Christian community! For me this represented a significant shift in understanding; no longer was I searching for the ideal community somewhere out there. Instead I was building community right now with the people whom I loved, but also found infuriating at times! Community can begin with just two people trusting one another, listening, and being open about those things that really matter to them.

I believe that the church is meant to be this kind of community. God puts us together with those whom we call brothers and sisters in the faith. We may hear this as an honorary title, but God wants it to be real. The church offers a context in which to develop sisterly and brotherly relationships with each other. It is likely to challenge our usually narrow definition of those whom we might welcome as brothers and sisters. On the whole God's way of helping us to love one another is to give us plenty of opportunities to practise.

The Community of Celebration has developed over the years. Their loving commitment to God and each other is now expressed through a Benedictine rule of life. I'm looking forward to seeing how that works. The Galilee I once knew will have changed, but I'm hoping it might still challenge me to a love for others that cuts across human preference and announces the new dynamic that entered our situation after Good Friday and Easter.

(Musings, cont.)

Who does the calling? I pray, I believe, it is the Christ within us. As I set out for Jerusalem this Lenten season, after many doubts and wondering whether such a venture at this time is foolishness, I am more and more aware, convicted, that the call for me right now, is a very literal one. "Follow me", he said, as he headed towards Jerusalem, that city of so much unrest and suffering, that city where the highest spiritual aspirations meet the hard, rank material violence of conflicting peoples. Why I should be present there at this particular time I do not know. The pilgrim never knows what he or she will meet, either on the way or at journey's end. My suspicion is it will be another call, further and deeper into the mysteries our Lord unfolds to us as we are ready to see them. I go, I pray, with openness of heart and peace in my soul, to receive whatever God wants me to receive, and to give to others, if only by sharing common time and space and prayer.

There is so much to pray for, so much we must leave to God. As the epistle to the Hebrews points out, we may not see the resolution of present events. Our trust in God must go beyond ourselves and our times. God alone is unwaveringly faithful. May we each walk whatever spiritual journey, whatever pilgrimage to which we are called, with the sure confidence that if our heart's desire is truly for God, we are walking in the footsteps of his son, Jesus Christ.

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Chapel of the Holy Spirit



View from Franklin Avenue



Chapel and the rowhouses



We thank God whom we worship here in the beauty of holiness.



James painting the Celtic knot frieze

Celebration's Schedule

Hosted at the Community's new Chapel, Kitchen, Dining Room and Gathering space.

Annual Conference	June 13-15
Art Workshop	July 21-25
Music Workshop	August 12-15
Chapel Dedication	August 30

COME JOIN US!



Easter Vigil, the first service in the new chapel when we retrieved ourAlleluias from the Lenten box