

JUNE 2017

Continuing The Journey



Continuing the journey conference is an open temporary community, creatively exploring continuity and tension between the world and church, nature and grace, psychology and theology.

At a time of uncertainty in our world, we as a planning group find ourselves mid way in the planning process, half way up the stairs if you like, having just transitioned from that uncomfortable place of unknowing, to one where we can say with certainty and delight that we have 4 speakers and a growing shape to conference. We now find ourselves entering a playful place of exploring creative ideas, as we play with our theme.

So it is my pleasure in this edition to introduce you to our speakers and declare that bookings for 2018 are now open! As our speakers address our theme from their different perspectives, I'm confident that they will bring a rich diversity of life and church experience, coming from

Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Quaker traditions and from pastoral, therapeutic and church leadership positions, they represent the bringing together and dialogue that conference seeks to create.

In this newsletter we will introduce you to all of the speakers and will interview Jennifer. We will also hope to entice you with glimpses of what two of our workshops might look like. Do put the dates in your diary and book before Oct 31st to get the early bird rate.

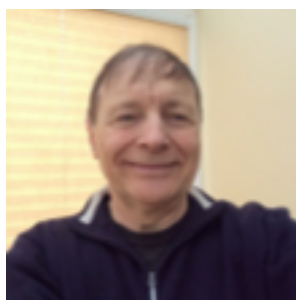
Can I also take this opportunity to remind you that our research and your feedback tells us that the most likely way for people to come to conference for the first time is if YOU invite them!

Kim Gooding, Chair of Planning Group

Introducing our 2018 speakers...



Margaret Barker is an independent biblical scholar who has developed a new approach known as Temple Theology, for which she was made a Doctor of Divinity. She has published 17 books as well as numerous articles and reviews. She was co-founder of the Temple Studies Group, and she is a past president of the Society for Old Testament Study. For 12 years she was a member of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's international symposium Religion, Science and the Environment. She is a grandmother, a Methodist preacher, and for over thirty years she was a volunteer at a women's refuge.



Nigel Copsey has a deep passion for pastoral care especially the integration of psychological insights within Christian faith. He has taught pastoral ministry at Spurgeon's for over twenty years. Currently Nigel is the Team Leader for Spiritual Care in two NHS mental Health Trusts where he is responsible for ensuring that spiritual needs are incorporated within Care. Nigel lives in East London where he began Christian ministry in one of the first Anglican / Baptist churches. He is an Anglican minister who is also trained as a psychologist and psychotherapist and is a Programme Leader in the psychology department of The University of East London.



Jennifer Kavanagh is a speaker and writer on the Spirit-led life, a retreat leader and an associate tutor at Woodbrooke Quaker study centre. She has published eight books, including *The World is our Cloister* and *A Little Book of Unknowing*. Jennifer worked in publishing for nearly thirty years, the last fourteen as an independent literary agent, and in the past fifteen years has run a community centre in

London's East End, worked with street homeless people and refugees, and set up microcredit programmes in London and in Africa. She has also worked as a research associate for the Prison Reform Trust and currently facilitates workshops for conflict resolution both in prison and in the community. Jennifer is a Winston Churchill Fellow, a trained singer and a member of a Community of Fools. Balancing an active life with a pull towards contemplation is a continuing and fruitful challenge.



The Reverend Canon Mark Oakley is Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral. Mark is responsible for the educational and outreach activities of the Cathedral through the work of its Schools and Families Learning Department and the St Paul's Adult Learning Department. He also oversees the work of the St Paul's Institute through which the Cathedral seeks to engage with ethical issues concerning the City, finance and human wellbeing. Mark is also

responsible for the visual arts policy of the Cathedral which seeks to enhance the mission of the Cathedral through temporary art installations. Mark's interests are the relationship between faith and poetry, human rights and the language and place of faith in the contemporary world. He is the author of several books, including *The Splash of Words* and *the Collage of God*. He is a regular lecturer and broadcaster and is a Visiting Lecturer in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at King's College London. He is a trustee of the Civil Liberties Trust, an ambassador for Stop Hate UK and a Patron of Tell MAMA.

Jane Foley will be running a poetry workshop again at the next conference, and she has been busy composing already for our new theme....

I am halfway up the stairs,

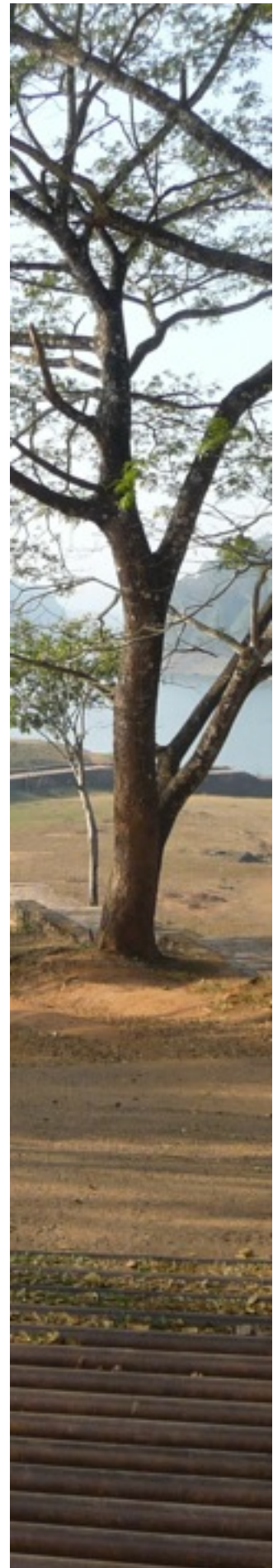
I have been part of this staircase
For such a long, long time.
I can scarce believe that I used to be a tree.
I no longer bend & sway to the wind & rain,
But instead, I bow to the footsteps that land on my tread.

I am the tread halfway up the stairs,
The one the cat sits on during the day.
The Summer sun's ray's cascade through the
windowpane,
Warming the carpet above my head,
Making for an inviting space to settle....
And to keep a watchful eye on the dog!

I am the tread halfway up the stairs,
Where the boy who used to live here would sit,
Listening to the TV program he wasn't allowed to watch.
His imagination inventing scenes to go with the words,
On high alert for any parental movement,
Poised to sneak back to his room & feign sleep.

I am the tread halfway up the stairs.
The one the old & weary pause on,
Looking back to see how far they've come,
They then continue steadily to the top,
Their breath heavy & laboured,
Holding on tight to the handrail for safety.

I am the tread halfway up the stairs,
Where that same boy now a man sits.
The house is empty, the furniture gone.
He has tears in his eyes, but a smile slips onto his lips.
Both Mother & Father gone to Heavens gate,
Time to move on, another family awaits....
I wonder if they have a cat ?



A quick interview with Jennifer Kavanagh....

Why did you accept our invitation to Conference?

Because I was excited by the opportunity of interacting with such an interesting and diverse group. And the opportunity to stretch my mind and soul with such a thought-provoking topic!

What are your first impressions of Conference?

That it's an original and enterprising group, bringing people together from different realms – and without a formal structure. Self-motivating, open-hearted, and concerned with what matters.

“Halfway up the Stairs” what first things spring to mind?

My first thought was the image of Winnie-the Pooh being bumped downstairs at the beginning of the book, and up at the end, where his little community of other animals is waiting.

My next thought was

"As I was going up the stair

I met a man who wasn't there!

He wasn't there again today,

I wish, I wish he'd stay away!"

Do you have an experience of sitting halfway up the stairs?

I remember sitting at the top of the stairs as a child, when I was supposed to be in bed, eavesdropping on the music my mother and brother were listening to.

I remember a lovely long window half-way up the stairs in my adult home, that looked out over London and gave me my essential view of sky. I remember standing waiting there one night at the age of forty, a night that turned out to be the beginning of the end of my marriage, and the seeds of another life. Now I live in a little first-floor flat, with no stairs, except outside...

What would you like us to know about you before you come?

That I'm a Quaker, a writer and a fool. That my life was transformed by faith in mid-life. That if anyone had told me twenty years ago what I would do in those twenty years, I'd never have believed them!

Mogs Bazely will be leading a workshop on willow weaving...



For years I've had a hankering to learn willow weaving and hoped a weaver would come to CTJ and do a workshop. I thought there was bound to be some rather mystical woman of the woods who would eventually be invited . So now that we're semi - retiring in Derbyshire I have had a chance to attend a two day willow sculpting workshop for my birthday ... it turns out I can't get enough of willow weaving... and I am now that woman! Come and join me at the conference and we will make whatever small pieces you would like to try out....nothing too mystical but definitely playful and a wondrous material to work with.

Early Bird catches the worm... or in this case the best deal... save money by booking now!



**Date of next conference:
21st-25th May 2018**

Download your booking form by visiting continuingthejourney.com