



NEWSLETTER



CHEMIN NEUF COMMUNITY IN THE USA

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ON GOD'S SHOULDERS

Fr. Jean-Sébastien Laurent, CCN

Country Leader of Chemin Neuf USA

Last Sunday, we had our last Community Day of the semester with the members of the Community at the Crossing. We listened to Solène, who is a YACN and works at the United Nations, share about 7 current major conflicts and crises happening worldwide. A wonderful thing about being in New York is to be so closely connected to these global realities. After Solène's talk, we took time in the oratory, seated around a world map, to pray for each of these situations and the populations they affect. It was a great afternoon and a great way to dive into Advent, as we await the coming of the Prince of Peace. In the evening, one of the community members sent the following quote in the group chat: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). She then added as a comment: "The God we serve who can carry the weight of the world so easily on His shoulders."

This spoke to me a lot. As we wrap up this semester, I am amazed by and thankful for what the Lord has done in just a few months, some of which you will hear more about later in this newsletter. I really look forward to 2026 and the surprises of the Holy Spirit. However, I also sometimes feel that it is a bit heavy on our shoulders, maybe unreasonably-so for a small foundation such as Chemin Neuf in the USA.

And then, I look at the child Jesus, carrying the whole of cosmos and the whole human history on his shoulders, and it does not seem too heavy for him! And in the end, I find comfort in imagining that our community is actually kind of riding on God's shoulders.

So, enjoy the ride, and have a blessed Christmas season!

MINISTRIES

CANA USA

Bethany Givens Blankespoor - CANA USA Team (East Coast)

In November, we hosted an overnight weekend CANA retreat on the East Coast, gathering 10 couples from DC, VA, MD, PA, and CT. We were grateful to have a beautifully sunny, crisp autumn weekend at a retreat center in PA as the backdrop for our theme: "Wonder". You may wonder how 'wonder' is a fitting topic for a marriage retreat. Many of the participating couples came in with a similar question.



Throughout the weekend we discovered how something as seemingly simple as wonder can shift the posture of our soul and our relationships in profound ways.

Through the talks, worship and activities, we experienced the decentering movement of wonder that frees us to receive God and God's creation -including our spouse- with curiosity, delight, gratitude and praise. At the end of the weekend, couples expressed a desire to cultivate regular space for the counter-cultural slowness and apparent inefficiency of wonder in their relationships and life.

For our couple (Brian and Bethany), it was a joy to help lead and create space for couples on the East Coast to receive the gift of CANA. We enjoyed building community within the fledgling East Coast Cana team as we planned and prepared for the retreat. We experienced partnership with the Spirit throughout. And we felt held by the prayers and support of the greater CANA and Chemin Neuf Community. We are excited to see what God may grow in East Coast CANA in the coming years!

You can find out more about CANA and CANA events in the U.S. at canausa.org.



COMMUNITY AT THE CROSSING

Sr. Hannah Spiers, CCN (Program Coordinator for CATC)

The first semester comes to an end for the third cohort of the Community at the Crossing. As usual, it's a busy, hit-the-ground-running season, full of discovery of self and others and God. This semester featured an emphasis on interreligious dialogue and encounter, including a Dialogues on Divinity event with peacemakers and program staff from the Rossing Center for Education and Dialogue in Jerusalem and Jewish speaker from the Rossing Center in Jerusalem and a Sukkot meal hosted by students from the local Jewish Theological Seminary. Our friend and esteemed theologian Dr. Aaron Hollander courageously attempted to cover the history of the Church...in 4 hours!



We dived deeper into Ignatian spirituality through the eyes and experience of people from different church traditions, we danced the night away at Friendsgiving with Scottish ceilidh dances and Austrian waltzes, and prayed our way through and for the world in an afternoon hosted by a CATC alumni (the same that Fr. Jean-Sébastien mentioned in his introduction). The highlight, as usual, was the silent retreat of the Spiritual Exercises in Canada, accompanied by an early snowfall (which led to several snow figures springing up, including a snow Virgin Mary and child!). Christmas break starts December 18 for members to have some rest and recuperation as they touch base with their roots after an intense semester. Bring on Semester 2!

Applications are open for the 26-27 cohort via our website, do share the news with any one you think might be interested! Our new [presentation video](#) is finally live, also via our website.

[Find out more on the CATC website](#)



YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Sr. Hannah Spiers, CCN

I've been away in Europe for a few weeks getting my visa renewed and I've been amazed by how the team and particularly the young adults have taken up their responsibility and service. Our Thursday evenings have been evolving and growing, we've been learning a lot and delighted to meet new faces. We've been doing prayer gatherings every other week, with something different in between weeks - candlelit mass, a testimony evening with Pierre-Yves and Catherine Denis (our Chemin Neuf country provincials), a formation evening with dinner and a talk from Br. Lukas...

A highlight would be our most recent Saturday retreat morning, which saw over 30 people attend - the maximum capacity for our normal room! We're experimenting, reviewing, and praying our way forward.

Coming up, we have our [Jericho retreat](#) over the new year (also in Canada, registration open until December 19!), and then a [discernment retreat](#) in New Jersey in March.

[Find out more](#)

REFLECTION

Br. Lukas Kroesen, CCN

The Scripture passage the Catholic Church chooses to read on the first Sunday of Advent is very surprising. Jesus, in the gospel of Matthew chapter 24:37-44, compares the coming of the Son of Man to the unwise men during the time of Noah: they carried on with their everyday activities without foreseeing the drastic change that was about to happen with the flood. In the same passage, Jesus also warns that from "two men [...] out in the field, one will be taken, the other left"; and from "two women [...] grinding at the mill one will be taken, and one will be left." This violent prophetic message seems to be in complete inadequacy with the silent and unobtrusive birth in the stable of Bethlehem. Why does Jesus speak of the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven with such a sense of urgency?

Just as the prophet Jonah runs through the city of Nineveh with his divine message, Jesus runs through our citadels of self-indulgence, our fortresses of our daily frenzy, and our dried-out inner deserts. "Wake up," He says, "I am here: the beginning and end, the fulfilment of ancient times, heaven touching earth."

Shake off your sleep, I am here to make everything new, to bring strength to the feeble, to console the afflicted, to feed the hungry. My promises go well beyond everything you can imagine. Will you wake with me?" Through the violent prophecies, Jesus intends to shake us spiritually in order to make us attentive to his coming. He does not want us to do something, but to simply be. To be awake and to be vigilant like watchmen looking out for something they themselves don't know yet.

This is the silent power of the time of advent: it invites us to a change from a paradigm of doing to a paradigm of being. Stop doing something for the coming of Jesus in your life and start being attentive to the signs of His arrival. These signs are already here. The German Lutheran Pastor Bonhoeffer has grasped this mystery in the following, surprising way when he writes out of his prison: "A prison cell like this is a good analogy for Advent. One waits, hopes, does this or that—ultimately negligible things—the door is locked and can only be opened from the outside" (Berlin, November 21, 1943).

May you also receive this grace of being still and waiting for the arrival of Jesus during this time of Advent. We will pray for you!

SUPPORT US

We are thankful for a growing mission and new opportunities showing up, as this newsletter shows. We are grateful for each donation and commit to a wise and careful stewardship of your gift.

You can donate via:

- Zelle on the account payments@ccnusa.org
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- Check: payable to "Chemin Neuf Community," and return to: Chemin Neuf Community, 1047 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10025.
- Online payment on our website: www.ccnusa.org
- To setup a regular transfer, please reach out to us: treasurer@ccnusa.org

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