



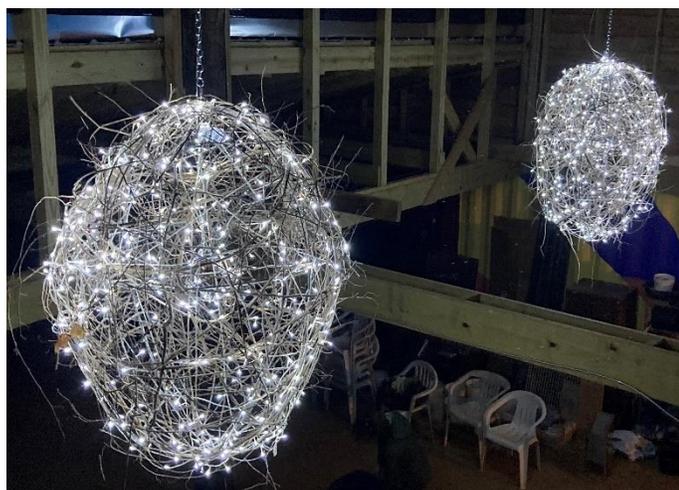
Finding Common Ground December, 2021

Up Front

We reach the closing weeks of 2021 on a very high note, indeed. After almost a year of regular conversations with a highly experienced loan originator, we have received a strong vote of confidence: PROCEED! And that we are! Get the details in the Planning & Development Circle News section. **In fact, we hope you will read the whole issue.** After years of careful planning and growth, our village will be rising soon thanks to the stellar talents and contributions from members like you.

Read on...there's **★ a spectacular offer ★** from the Marketing & Promotion Circle to inspire members to send in bios & photos for the website members page. You can connect with the land on December 4th at the Open House, followed by a Care & Feeding event on the land.

In this season of deepening darkness, we invite you to come warm your hands, ignite your heart, and weave your singular strands into the glowing matrix that is Common Ground Ecovillage. You are so very welcome.



These luminous chandeliers, thickly woven with grapevines and strings of light, are now swinging from the barn rafters. Thanks to all who helped to craft these beautiful beacons: Paul, Margret, Lisa, Kathleen, Anthony, Doug, Ruth, Amy, Lara, Jeffry, Nell, Kim, Bob, and Hope.

COMMON GROUND CALENDAR



Banner—Casting long shadows, together
Above—A winter wonder-wetland (photo by Jess)

GET INVOLVED!

- ◆ Contact any of the Circle leaders listed below—they'll be happy to talk with you! **All events are open to everyone unless otherwise indicated, and you must RSVP!**
- ◆ Most (but not all) Circle meetings are happening via Zoom. For in-person events, masks are recommended for all and required for those who are not vaccinated.

◆ **Google Calendar Link:** <https://tinyurl.com/CGEV-Calendar>
To add an event, email Ren at ren.enberg2@gmail.com with "Google Calendar Request" in the subject line. Thanks, Ren!

COMMUNITY EVENTS SNAPSHOT

- ◆ **Open House**, December 4, 11-1pm
- ◆ **Care & Feeding on the Land**, December 4, 1:30-4pm
- ◆ **Racial Awareness Reading and Reflection Group**, Every Monday, 6:30 - 7:30 pm
- ◆ **Heart Sharing Circle**, December 10, 7-9pm
- ◆ **Take a Hike!** December 12, 10:30am, place TBA
- ◆ **Fresh Take Info Session**, December 18, 4-5:30pm

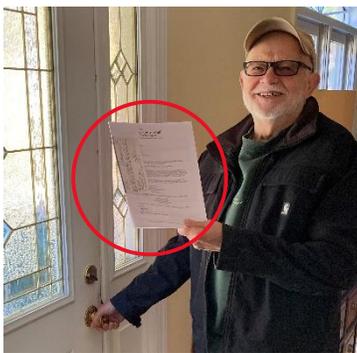
CIRCLE NEWS

Marketing & Promotion: We're updating the "Who is Involved" page on the website. Why? Because new folks want to get a sense of the people who are already in this community. That means **YOU**. If you are an active Exploratory member or above and you haven't yet sent your bio and photo to [Lara Struckman](#), here is **★ a spectacular offer★** to encourage you to **ACT**. **If you send your stuff to Lara by December 31, 2021, you will receive a seated neck & scalp massage, OR a shoulder & arm massage, OR your choice of homemade cookies from Kathleen Biernat!** Kathleen is an extraordinary massage professional with 16 years of experience. And all YOU have to do is send in a bio and photo! Still hesitating? Then please contact [Ren](#) and let her know what's holding you back.

♦ We are busy **shepherding four central projects:** developing our Marketing Plan, finalizing our general messaging, producing the new overview video for our website home page (which is coming along nicely), and supporting other Circles in updating their areas of the website.

♦ A brainstorming session is in the works to help us form the **best possible marketing strategy** to stay on track with the new loan timeline. So, if you would like to participate, please contact [Ren](#) ASAP so we can include you in the invitation. Visiting members are welcome. Soon after this meeting there will be many offerings of ways to help us achieve our collective goals!

Planning & Development Circle: Geez, what *isn't* happening? On November 16, Paul mailed a formal



Letter of Engagement with Centennial Mortgage, Inc. (CMI). An underwriting team at CMI has been assembled. Katy and Paul of P&D (but, of course, proudly representing the CGEV community) have met

with this team and have set up regular upcoming weekly meetings with them. We have paid the Engagement Fee to CMI (\$5,000), and we have engaged the services of a market analysis firm (another \$6,600) to carry out an Initial Market Assessment (a HUD requirement addressing the question: "Are there enough people really interested in this kind of community for the CGEV dream to succeed?"). And we have completed a **draft Reservation Agreement** in which CGEV members will

♦ **Simpler Living: Earth Skills Sunday—Gifts of the Season**, December 19, 12:30-2:30pm

♦ **Winter Solstice Ceremony**, December 19, 3-5pm



These two know how to relax at the Gathering of Gratitude & Goodies

MARKETING & PROMOTION CIRCLE

Every Wednesday, 6:30-8:30pm, Zoom

RSVP to Ren: renenberg.cge@gmail.com

Seeking creatives and those with interest in outreach, visibility and marketing to share this essential work and increasingly urgent work. RSVP for Zoom link and meeting/work plan.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CIRCLE

- Wednesday, December 1, 6:30-8:30pm
- Sunday, December 12, 6:30-8:30pm
- Wednesday, December 22, 6:30-8:30pm

RSVP to Anthony: weston@elon.edu

All meetings are via Zoom. We are seeking new members and observers are very welcome.

MEMBERSHIP CIRCLE

- Friday, December 3, 3-5pm via Zoom
- Friday, December 17, 3-5pm via Zoom

RSVP to Lisa: welcome@commonground.eco

New members are very welcome to visit!

have the opportunity to soon let the community know that they wish to become a Shareholder/Resident of our Housing Cooperative. This draft form presently is under review by an attorney at CMI and should be ready for mailing to our membership within the next two weeks. Some of this and more was discussed at the 2nd Saturday Ecovillage News in November which 30 people attended! [This recording will help you get up-to-speed.](#)

♦ **On the architecture side**, we are pleased to have put up [revised “Village Design” pages](#) on the website—please visit them, especially the full portfolio of Living Options we have been incubating. **A revised 3BR house design** is underway, with two stories rather than one, to economize both footprint and cost and increase flexibility. Planning for the **Common House** has resumed with some significant changes to the current schematic design in the works. ♦ **Detailed site engineering** is also underway: soils testing for our own roadway, subsurface water flow testing, and beginning village layout planning. Lots happening!!



Katy and Anthony mull over the village site plan

Membership Circle: We welcomed Kathleen Biernat as our newest circle member. ♦ The plans for the **Community Conversation on Justice** are coming along and it will likely be held in January. Expect a phone call in early December with further details. ♦ All of the 30 adult visitors to the Fall Fest Open House received follow up emails and several are now actively exploring Common Ground. ♦ We are exploring a process **to train additional Common Ground members to serve as buddies** to new Visiting Members. The buddy program has proven to be an effective tool for growing



An engineering crew takes soil borings to test for our roadways

OPEN HOUSE

Membership Circle

Saturday, December 4, 11-1pm on the land

RSVP to Lisa: welcome@commonground.eco

Come on over and tour the land and farm. Hear the latest information on housing and timelines. Meet some members and get to know each other. Bring a lunch and stay if you can for the Learn & Tend event described below. **Wear something bright**—it’s hunting season.

CARE & FEEDING ON THE LAND

Land Stewardship Circle

Saturday, December 4, 1:30-4pm

RSVP to Margret: earthbound52@gmail.com

There are many ways to play this day, from helping on the burgeoning farm to grooming the trails—and chatting along the way. **Wear something bright**—it’s hunting season. Hope to see you on the land!

RACIAL AWARENESS READING & REFLECTION GROUP

Membership Circle

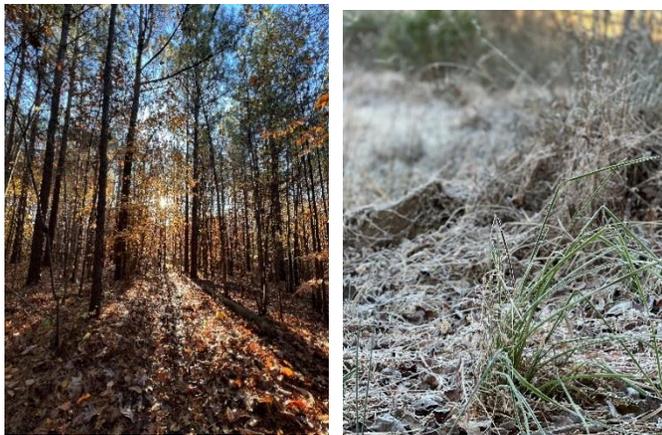
Every Monday, 6:30-7:30pm

This Group is reading My Grandmother’s Hands, by Resmaa Menakem. Newcomers are welcome. To sign up & receive a Zoom link, contact [Lisa](#).



Thriving radishes (photo by Lisa)

our membership, and it's a rewarding experience for everyone involved. Contact [Lisa](#) if you are interested.



Wintry wood and wetland (photos by Jess)

Governance & Training: Overall, 30 members attended a 4-part training in early November: cooperative skills, consent decision-making, power distribution, and how to use the OnlyOffice administrative portal. Thanks to Becky, Robert, Hope and Quai for their magnificent offerings! [Here's a link to the first two trainings.](#) (We can't seem to get the other two Zoom recordings to upload to the Google drive yet. If anyone knows a snappy way to do this, please contact [Hope](#) or [Quai](#)!).

♦ We're launching a **new approach to Sociocracy training** in January or February called Empowered Learning Circles from Sociocracy for All. Read more about it in the **"Looking Ahead"** section (at the bottom of the right column.) Our G&T team really likes this program and we think you will, too!

Land Stewardship Circle: Paul offered two large, welded metal 'eggs' which were splendidly upfitted with grapevines and lights to serve as chandeliers in the barn (see above for a photo and helper list). ♦ The "pollinator team" continued planning and preparing to spread wildflower/pollinator seed with enough "sponsored" seed mix (from a friend of CGEV) to create new wildflower habitat. ♦ The November Circle meeting welcomed 11 folks (!) and included reports of member's activities along with discussion on updating "agrarian mission" related language on the website.



GOVERNANCE & TRAINING CIRCLE

Thursday, December 9, 5:30-7:30 via Zoom

RSVP to Hope: hopematrix@fastmail.com

We're seeking new members, particularly those with training, facilitation, and administrative skills.

HEART SHARING CIRCLE

Membership Circle

Friday, December 10, 7-9pm via Zoom

RSVP to Ren: renenberg.cge@gmail.com

December's facilitator is Doug Jones. This is an opportunity to get to know other members on a much deeper level as we practice both compassion and vulnerability. We will offer question prompts to help us get started, and we also share whatever is alive for us in this warm and accepting environment. If you thirst for genuine connection, join us when you can.



Whipped cream bliss, at the Gathering of Gratitude & Goodies (photo by Amy)

TAKE A HIKE!

Membership Circle.

Sunday, December 12, 10:30am, place TBA

RSVP to Margaret is essential: bkittle@gmail.com

Enjoy the outdoors and get to know other CGer's and friends. We may try an urban hike that ends with food! Check the [google calendar](#) for place and time or email Margaret.

MEMBER HAPPENINGS

Is there something you are offering that you want the community to know about? If so, contact Hope by the 25th of each month: hopenatrix@fastmail.com

From Jessica Cudney & Michelle Rozek:

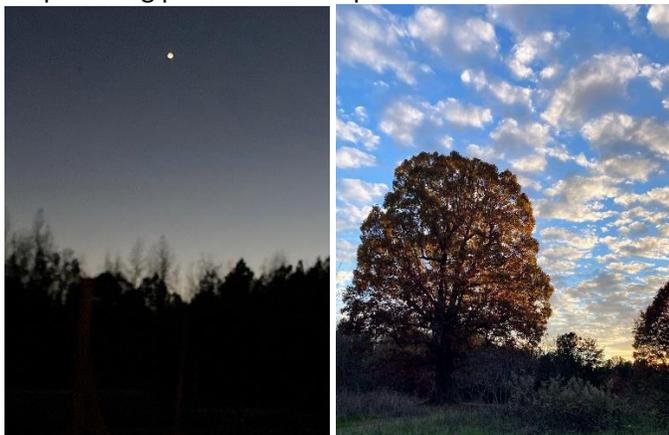
♦ **Forest Walks**, Sunday, December 12, 4-5pm on the land. For details & directions: [RSVP](#)

Experience the healing power of nature and strengthen our connection to the "felt presence" of the living Earth.

♦ **Forest Temple: Winter Solstice**, Sunday, December 19, 3-5pm on the land. See "Winter Solstice" in the CGEV calendar for details and to RSVP.

♦ **Grieving Earth: An Eco-Grief Support Group**, Wednesday, December 22, 7-8:30pm via Zoom—[RSVP](#)

Talking about and sharing in grief rituals helps us to channel the energy of anger, fear and anxiety into empowering practices and expressions.



Night and day (photos by Hope and Amy)

IN THE KNOW

Have you read/seen/heard something inspiring lately that you'd like to share with the community? Please send in your recommendations to [Hope](#).

Truthsgiving at the Nest: Unsettling Thanksgiving

Jessica Cudney, a Nest resident, wrote a [compelling blog post](#) encouraging all of us to learn the truth behind the Thanksgiving myth that has been propagated by colonizers and resisted by Indigenous peoples since its inception. Jessica shared short and impactful videos with our guests (links are in the blog post). As we broke bread together, we expressed the griefs and gritudes arising in our lives right now. It was an eye-opening and richly connecting experience for all. We highly recommend reading the [blog post](#). Thank you, Jess!

GENERAL CIRCLE

- Sunday, December 12, 4:30-6:30pm
- Thursday, December 30, 6:30-8:30pm (tentative)

RSVP to Bailey: cgev.generalcircle@gmail.com

We welcome observers. RSVP two days in advance to receive the agenda, Zoom link, and documents.

LAND STEWARDSHIP CIRCLE

Tuesday, December 14, 7pm via Zoom

RSVP to Randy: dodd.randy@gmail.com

Be sure to RSVP as meeting details may change! Interested in joining? Contact Randy.

FRESH TAKE: An in-depth info session

Membership Circle

Saturday, December 18, 4-5:30pm via Zoom

RSVP to Lisa: Welcome@commonground.eco

This "CGEV 101" session includes an up-to-date overview of where we are now, what's next, and how you can get involved and contribute. You'll hear from other members and have a chance to ask questions. It's a great way learn a lot, fast!

SIMPLER LIVING: Earth Skills Sunday Gifts of the Season

Governance & Training Circle

Sunday, December 19, 12:30-2:30pm at the Nest

RSVP to Hope: hopenatrix@fastmail.com

Come for an indoor event to engage with the earthen materials of winter and create beauty of all sorts. There will be plenty of hot cider and conversation! Then, mosey over to partake in the Winter Solstice Ceremony if you like. More details to come. **If you'd like to help create this event, contact Hope.** *Limited to 10 vaccinated and masked guests*





LOCAL EVENTS TO EXPAND OUR SOCIAL & CULTURAL HORIZONS

Is something happening that you want our members to know about? Please send your listing to Hope by the 25th of each month: hopematrix@fastmail.com

Racial Equity Institute Training

We **strongly recommend** these 2-day virtual trainings as a way to begin a shared conversation about racism and social justice at Common Ground Ecovillage. [Click here](#) for information and to register.

Paint and Sip with Indigenous Memories

Saturday, December 4, 5-7:30pm, 101 W. King St., Hillsborough, NC 27278

Indigenous Memories welcomes you to come learn about a local Black Indian (Maroon) community engaged in resistance work as you sip cider and paint. [Click here](#) for information and tickets.

Recognize and Reduce Implicit Bias

Foundation for Intentional Community (FIC)

Friday, December 3, 3-4:30pm ET

[Click here](#) to register

FIC offers many short events and continuing courses that are highly relevant to our work at CGEV. Visit this website (<https://www.ic.org/learn/>) to see the array of intriguing options for the months to come.



What to do with a ginormous cauliflower? Make a centerpiece for the Gathering of Gratitude & Goodies. Thank you, Doug!

//*WINTER SOLSTICE CEREMONY

Governance & Training Circle+

Sunday, December 19, 3-5pm on the land

[RSVP](#) to Jessica Cudney

Just two short days before the Winter Solstice, we'll honor the mysteries of darkness; drop into ritual space together to acknowledge and metabolize any grief or anxiety you might be carrying in your heart for Mother Earth and the pain of our world; and slip into the dreamtime of Winter, just ahead...



LOOKING AHEAD

SOCIOCRACY—EMPOWERED LEARNING CIRCLES

Governance & Training Circle

Good governance is the backbone of any community, affecting our relationships with each other and guiding how we get our work done. Since 2013, CGEV has been implementing the Sociocracy system of governance as one way to cultivate an effective and cooperative culture. **Governance training is required for all members**, yet our training program to-date has fallen short in helping members truly understand, and skillfully apply, this rich system.

Governance & Training Circle (G&T) members will be contacting all CGEV members to invite them into a 4-part training offered by [Sociocracy for All](#) called Empowered Learning Circles. (For a preview, [click here](#)) Groups of up to 8 members can arrange their own meeting schedule, and G&T members will help with any questions that arise. There will be a small donation requested to defray the \$250 cost/group.

Eight hours of training may seem a lot to ask, but when you consider the cost in time, energy, and effectiveness through confusion, lack of clarity, missteps, and resistance, it's an excellent investment! G&T looks forward to shepherding this experience with you. For more information, contact [Hope](#).

