

Church of All Saints in the Vendée

"To know and to share Jesus Christ"

The Grapevine

December 2014

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Preface



Dear Friends,

We can't get away from it any more, Christmas is coming! We have lots of special services coming up, so please check out the details.

The other thing that is nearly upon us as I am writing this is my first anniversary of my time amongst you. We are very pleased that we came but it has been a steep learning curve, especially with the geography and driving. It hasn't been an easy year for us because of the housing situation, I hadn't appreciated how stressful and difficult it would be not being able to settle anywhere for so long, especially whilst trying to work. But now the Parish has "The Vicarage" and despite the amount of work to do, the dust and trying to find things (or somewhere to put them!) we are settling in and it's home at last! The Lord has been so good giving me the opportunity to be here and work with you to his glory.

I have had the privilege to meet and work with many other Christians both French and English-speaking who are doing God's work here in the Vendée and they have enhanced my life tremendously. My French still causes problems, but mostly we can laugh about it! There are so many opportunities to explore, learn, discuss and worship our God, it constantly amazes me that I should find so much here, we are blessed indeed.

As you may guess I am loving my work! Thank you all for contributing to that enjoyment.

With Christmas can come stress, travelling, families, spending. Somehow, despite the familiarity of the words and services, we need to try not to lose sight of the wonder of the Incarnation. Each year during Advent we try to prepare ourselves afresh to meet our Lord. We need to try to remember that it's not all about indulgence, despite what the advertisers try to persuade us to buy, but about an amazing gift from God.

May God bless you and yours this Christmas and for the coming year, and may your gift be to come to know his love for you more and more so that you may grow into his likeness.

Happy Christmas!

Caroline

DECEMBER into JANUARY CHURCH SERVICES WITH BIBLE READINGS

All Services start at 11am except where indicated

[We have also included the Psalms for each week, as they may inform your own reading at home]

30/11/2014	C	PDS	Advent – Christingle
<i><u>This Service will start at 4pm</u></i>			
7/12/2014		LCP	Lessons and Carols
14/12/2014		PDS	Lessons and Carols
21/12/2014	HC	LCA	Advent 4
1st Lesson: Isaiah 35: 1-10		Epistle: James 5: 7-10 <i>[Psalm 146: 4-10]</i>	Gospel: St Matthew 11: 2-11
24/12/2014	HC	LCP	Christmas Eve
1st Lesson: Isaiah 52: 7-10		Epistle: Hebrews 1: 1-4 <i>[Psalm 98]</i>	Gospel: St John 1:1-14
24/12/2014	HC	PDS	Christmas Eve
1st Lesson: Isaiah 52: 7-10		Epistle: Hebrews 1: 1-4 <i>[Psalm 98]</i>	Gospel: St John 1:1-14
<i><u>This Service will start at 4pm</u></i>			
28/12/2014 There will be <u>no</u> Service			
4/1/2015	HC	LCP	Epiphany
1st Lesson: Isaiah 60: 1-6		Epistle: Ephesians 3: 1-12 <i>[Psalm 72: 10-15]</i>	Gospel: St Matthew 2: 1-12

LCA = La Chapelle Achard; PDS = Puy de Serre; LCP = La Chapelle Palluau,

MW=Morning Worship; HC(CW)=Holy Communion (Common Worship); BCP=Book of Common Prayer; C=Christingle

On Sunday, 25th January, there will be the *Service for Christian Unity* held at Puy de Serre at 11o`clock. This will be an ecumenical Service held with members of local French churches, led by Père René Claude, Pasteur Michel Parry and our own Reader, John Matthews.

PLEASE JOIN US

for Tea, Coffee & Biscuits after our services, followed by a Bring & Share Lunch.

Everyone is welcome to join us - even if you have not brought anything, there is always enough to go round!
(Unfortunately, when there is a service on the fifth Sunday in the month, the hall is not available).





Dates for your Diary

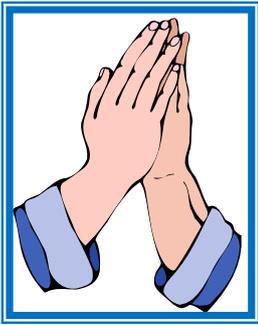
- 1st December, Monday, 10am-4pm: Christmas Draw** will take place at the Vicarage.
- 9th December, Tuesday, 7pm onwards: Faites le Plein**, see details on page 7.
- 10th December, Wednesday, 12.30 for 1pm: ASV Christmas Lunch** Chez JBs, St Pierre du Chemin.
For more information, please contact Mike Mylod on 02 51 51 07 36
- 10th December, Wednesday, evening: Carol singing** at the Auberge de St Vincent Sterlanges
- 11th December, Thursday, 11am: Ladies Circle** at Mouilleron en Pareds.
For more details, please contact Joan Stewart on 02 51 00 34 70
- 12th December, Friday, Christmas Evening Meal, 6pm.** Maison du Dioces, La Roche sur Yon.
For more information please contact Polly Ward or Liz Jond.
- 16th December, Tuesday, 5pm: Your Favourite Carols: at Puy de Serre**
- Led by Stuart Stainton-James and inspired by the recent Questionnaire



A Thousand Gifts, a Thousand Blessings!

Don't forget your gifts on the **2nd Sunday of each month.**

Bill and Carole will collect them and pass them on to Resto du Coeur in Coulonges.



Names on our Prayer List.....

Please continue to pray for **Peter Hutchinson** who is much improved and is managing to walk the corridor with help. He has recovered his dry sense of humour which is always a good sign.

Please continue to pray for Anne Brechet's family members: **Martine** who has lung cancer and **Yvette** who is dying; also for a neighbour, **Jacky**, who is in hospital following a brain haemorrhage.

Please continue to pray for **Avril Simmons** who is out of hospital and is now at home. She is cheerful and slowly making progress. She still has to have more tests and investigations but apparently she is coping well.

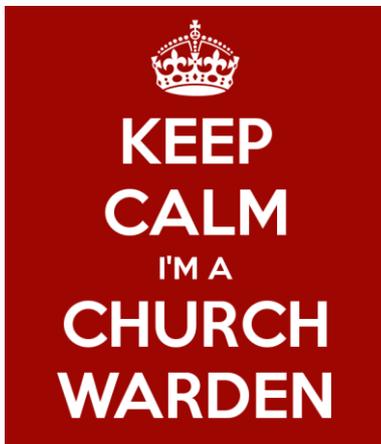
Our Prayer Co-ordinator is David Pearson. Please let him have details of any folk you become aware of who need our prayers. ☎ 02 51 61 05 04 ✉ david.sally@orange.fr

"Thank you all for your continuing prayers"

You may sometimes hear of members or friends of our congregations who are not wanting to go on our Prayer List, but who are ill or in need.

In these cases, please let David Pearson, our Pastoral Organiser, know.

Tel: 02 51 61 05 04



Notes from our Church Wardens

It isn't the first time that we have posed the question "Where has the time gone?" but here we go again with "Where has the year gone?" it is difficult to believe that we are almost in 2015.

This year has been a good year for us, we feel more settled now as not only has Caroline been with us for a year but we now have our own property. A great step forward. We are grateful for the help and support you have given us so thank you all.

The year is ending with a touch of sadness at the departure of a number of our members who have all made substantial contributions to A.S.V. Last weekend at La Chapelle Achard, we said goodbye to Lucia & John Golding who have both worked hard to support and help A.S.V. Very shortly Jenny & Graham Salt and Val & Jack Goadby will also be leaving us. We will miss their friendship and their support and wish them well in their new surroundings. Thank you all!

We are looking forward to getting together for our Christmas Lunch or our evening meal and also to the special Christmas Services planned for the next few weeks.

We wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year and look forward to whatever 2015 has to offer A.S.V.

Barbara and Joan

Don't forget the

ASV CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Wednesday 10th December

at 12.30 for 1pm

at

JB's, St Pierre du Chemin



Booking and Details from Mike Mylod (02 51 51 07 36) or Geoff Kent.

There is a great choice of menu - see the website

The price of 21 euros includes 4 courses, plus apero, wine and digestif

This is the very last chance to get your tickets!



Christmas Draw 2014

Tickets are now available from Polly

1st Prize: Vapour steam mop

2nd Prize: Christmas hamper

3rd Prize: Camera

Plus many, many more!

[The draw will take place at the Vicarage on 1st December]

Proceeds to Médecins sans Frontières

Tuesday, 16th December - 5pm

Everyone

is invited to join us at

L'Église Ste-Marthe in the centre of Puy de Serre 85240

for

AN EVENING OF

FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS CAROLS

(chosen by members of all 3 All Saints Vendée Churches)



For more information, please email Stuart at sjfamily66@hotmail.com

Helping ourselves to grow spiritually.

As church congregations we and our friends are better at meeting socially and fundraising than we are at working together to grow spiritually. The distances we live from each other and our busy lives contribute to this, but sometimes there are other less obvious reasons which can include fears of not being knowledgeable enough, concerns about dealing with disagreements and theological discussions and other such things. These worries are quite normal.

At the moment we have some house groups and we have `Faites Le Plein` as gatherings where we can have more input to our spiritual life than just Sundays. All house groups are open to new members and would welcome you warmly. For further details of a group close (ish!) to you for further details:

Doug and Chris Green
Suzanne and Simon Patterson
Maureen Willis
Caroline Sackley

`Faites Le Plein` happens once a month in La Roche sur Yon and is advertised in each month's Grapevine as there is a different speaker each month. All are very welcome to meet us there for an evening of praise and worship and teaching.

The Council have agreed for us to have a series of "Away Days" throughout 2015, and these are planned to take place on the fifth Sundays. Speakers will be arranged and the details announced later.

As distance can be a problem, as can travelling, one suggestion is that as many of us as possible study the same book for the coming year, possibly discussing our thoughts via emails if we can't meet up together. The book suggested is " We make the Road by Walking" by Brian D McLaren published by Hodder and Stoughton and costs £11.90, or £9. 50 on Amazon and £6.99 for a kindle edition. You could even ask for it as a Christmas present! If your copy could arrive before the new year that would be good and we can all start. Studying like this together means that even if you are away for a while you needn't miss anything as it can be done on the internet. Also it means we will all have something in common in what we have read even if we don't agree!

Finally on my list of things to communicate to you, but probably the most important (!) is prayer. As you all know David Pearson is our Pastoral Care Co-ordinator. What we would like people to communicate to either David or me is a commitment to pray. This list of 'pray-ers' would be mostly an electronic list so that group emails can be sent out. We would be asking for prayer for anything and everything, whatever was needed. What we need from you is a commitment to pray as and when asked, and also, of course to communicate prayer needs to us. Prayer is an essential task in the life of the church which anyone can do, fit or not. VIP doesn't stand for Very Important Person but Very Important Pray-er.

Best wishes,

Caroline

If you would like a copy of the daily Bible reading books `Daily Words`, Suzanne Patterson can obtain them for you. Please contact her on SiSuPatter@neuf.fr



Letter from the Editor



Season's greetings, everyone!

What a special time of year it is. This edition of Grapevine heralds the season of Advent, the start of the new year in the Christian calendar. Advent is a time of preparation and expectation, a busy time, yet also time for quiet reflection. We are preparing to celebrate the arrival of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as a vulnerable human baby. Yet we are also mindful that this child became the man who sacrificed Himself for us, so that we might enjoy everlasting life.

I'm sure you have seen all the pots of poinsettias in the shops and maybe, like me, you have already bought one! Called 'etoile de Noel' in French [such a lovely name!], they originated from Central America and Mexico. The plant became associated with Christmas as long ago as the sixteenth century. Legend tells of a young girl, too poor to buy a gift to celebrate the birth of Christ. An angel came to her and told her to pick some wild flowers by the side of the road. She then took them to church to place on the altar. When she returned, they had turned into beautiful poinsettias. The shape of the 'flower' is said to represent the Star of Bethlehem and the colour red, the sacrificial blood of Christ.

The Star of Bethlehem is one of the most powerful symbols in Christianity. Over the years, astrologers, historians and scholars have debated what this incredible light could have been. Yes, it is the time of year when a bright star shines in the west just after sunset, the planet Venus. However, this is not exceptional enough of itself. Research has shown that, at the time of Christ's birth, there were some incredible conjunctions of planets that was certainly unusual and would have looked like a large, very bright star. [Aren't computers wonderful?!] Or was it a sign from God, created miraculously to mark the birth of His Son?

Star of wonder, star of light, Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to Thy perfect light

This is a very special season for all Christians. Enjoy the celebrations: the retelling of the Christmas story, singing the carols, eating your Christmas lunch, putting up your Christmas tree, spending time with friends and family – and all under the light of our Christmas Star!

Happy Christmas!

Joan Stewart

ASV Website News



Don't forget the website is there for you!

You'll find **STOP PRESS** messages .. **SERMONS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED....**
EVENTS and **NOTICES** that were received too late for the Grapevine deadline
PHOTO GALLERY.... and even previous editions of **THE GRAPEVINE.**

Have you seen the photos taken at the Autumn Bazaar?

They're all there....in the GALLERIES. Just click on: www.allsaintsvendee.fr/GALLERIES

Jacqui Stainton-James - (Website Co-ordinator)

**TO AVOID CONFUSION WITH ANOTHER
GROUP WHICH MEETS UNDER THE TITLE OF
`THE FILLING STATION` OUR**



IS NOW KNOWN AS:



'Faites le Plein' !

(Faites le Plein is a monthly activity run under the umbrella of the Congregations of All Saints Vendée.
Literally translated into English, it means "Fill up"!)

So we invite you to come and "fill up" spiritually at our December meeting held in La Roche sur Yon.
We first of all share some refreshments, then there is a time of sung worship, followed by a talk given by
a guest speaker.

After the talk there is an opportunity, for anyone wishing to receive prayer, to do so.

The prayer team is trained specifically to minister to others and in a sensitive and confidential way.

The guest speaker for December will be Brian Streeter.

Brian is the vicar of the Anglican church "Saint Mary's, Windermere".

He will be speaking on the topic : "Identity in Christ – Who in heaven do you think you are?!"

So we welcome anyone who has not been before to join us on :

Tuesday 9th December 2014, from 7pm onwards...

At the Maison du Diocèse
62 rue Maréchal Joffre
La Roche sur Yon

(Just by the Siloë Bookshop, there is a car park, behind the high railings).

The ground floor room in which we'll hold the meeting, is situated at the back of this car park on the left hand side,
behind the big house, through the blue doors.

We look forward to meeting and greeting you !

Liz JOND for the "Faites le Plein" team

For more info: liz.jond@wanadoo.fr

<http://www.thefillingstationfrance.com>

***If you can't make it to the Christmas Lunch on the 10th, then how about joining us for the
ASV Christmas Meal?***

Friday 12th December

ASV Christmas Meal

Maison du Diocese

La Roche sur Yon

6pm

10euros

[Please contact Polly Ward on 02 51 51 64 29 or Liz Jond on liz.jond@wanadoo.fr]



A Thousand Gifts, a Thousand Blessings!



*Don't forget your gifts on the 2nd Sunday of each month.
Bill and Carole will collect them and pass them on to Resto du Coeur in Coulonges.*

*There are several ladies who knit garments for Restos du Coeur.
If anyone has knitting wool that you don't want,
Carole Stoking would be very happy to receive it.
Thank you!*



This "Letter to Grapevine" has been received from Bill and Carole Stoking:

20th November 2014

Our first collection for Restos du Coeur, The Restaurants of the Heart, was 11th August 2013. Since then more and more people have become involved and, hopefully, have an understanding of the needs and how people become desperate trying to feed their families and themselves. People who are often in difficult circumstances through no fault of their own.

The collections are increasing. Many people want to give. Pause Restaurant in L'Absie. The customers of the bar in L Chapelle Thireuil who bought a plant in exchange for a tin of feed. The Craft Creation Group in L'Absie who have made lovely garments and knitted dolls. If anyone has knitting wool that they don't need, please could Carole have it. Non-Christians giving things. Good people who want to help. The remarks in The Grapevine, thanks to Joan and Jacqui. Thank you for the donation of soft toys. Some little girls will be delighted at Christmas. Thank you too to Vee Houghton in Lincolnshire who sent a box of pretty items to sell for Restos as well as some lovely hand-knitted Teddies.

Polly....what can I say about Polly and her helpers?...except...The lovely Polly who works tirelessly doing so much for us all. The money they have raised and there is something to show for every euro that brings help to the poor.

Thanks, Geoff, for all the work you do to help at Parthenay and Ranton. I have always hoped that one day I would completely fill the car. Ranton did! Two families merging two households into one gave us lots of bedding and many other helpful items. As we loaded the car, I really thought that Carole would have to catch the bus home. We just managed to get her in.

Last year Restos had appealed for bedding to which there was no response. When this appeal was repeated at our 3 churches, the response with duvets was truly amazing. I was so pleased and I'm sure that nobody need feel cold in bed again.

However, the food collection each month is so wonderful, a "miracle". All who regularly give are so generous. The combination of the churches working together is tremendous. Last year we gave lots of super Christmas presents for the children. Please remember Christmas is nearly here again.

It is all a worthwhile contribution to people in need, living the Gospel. Praise the Lord!

A very happy Christmas to everyone. May the peace and joy of the Lord that passes all understanding be with us all now and for evermore.

God Bless and Thank You,

Bill and Carole





A Big THANK YOU!

The Autumn Bazaar Committee would like to send sincere thanks to the many helpers and all the visitors who supported the Autumn Bazaar at Puy de Serre on the 15th November 2014.

We raised what appears to be about 2170€ for All Saints Church, which would not have been possible without your help.

God bless you all,

Maggie C., Jenny W., Peter S., Marian R.

[Here are a few photos taken on the day. To see more please go to GALLERIES on the ASV website: www.allsaintsvendee.fr - Jacqui]





House Clearance Sale Coulonges sur l'Autize

Kitchen - dresser, fridge/freezer, table and chairs, small appliances, English cut- glass etc

Living room - sofas, coffee table, rugs, mirrors, pictures etc

Bedroom - beds, cabinets, antique armoire, lamps, linen etc

Garage/Garden - furniture, petrol lawnmower, tiles, light fittings, etc

Tel. 05 49 25 69 72 or email mairivenables@hotmail.com

for full list of items and prices

pop in for a coffee and have a browse.



Please send your contributions and letters for the January issue to:
"The Grapevine" Editor at: jpsmorandiere@free.fr before 15th December



Requests to be included on the emailing list should be addressed to Jacqui Stainton-James at: sjfamily66@hotmail.com