

Church of All Saints in the Vendée
"To know and to share Jesus Christ"

 *The Grapevine* 

January 2024

DIOCESE IN EUROPE
THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



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4-Thought
January 2024



I wonder how many of us are feeling "flat"? All the anticipation of Christmas, the celebration, the exchange of gifts and good wishes, all over and done with.... Except that the greatest gift of all, that of God's own Son, lives with us and in us for all eternity.

We've thrown away, or recycled the trimmings, eaten the last of the festive grub, promised to go on a diet, made New Year resolutions and so on. Whether those resolutions are kept remains to be seen.

The Christmas season ends with Epiphany which this year falls on a Sunday, the 6th of January. The 'Epiphany' (Greek *epiphaneia* – revealing, manifesting) refers to the revealing of Christ to the 'Magi', the Wise Men from the East who searched for truth and found it at Bethlehem. The main theme of the Epiphany season is the revelation of Christ as the light of the world and the King of **all** nations – Gentiles and Jews.

I commend the following prayer to you, for use daily:

The Wise Men offered gold to Christ, the King of all. Father, we pray for all who take authority to serve their country: our Queen, and the government of this and every nation ...

Give wisdom and integrity to all who lead, that their service will promote justice, peace and human well-being.

The Wise Men offered frankincense to Christ, the Son of God. Father, we pray for the Church's life of worship and prayer, and for all who lead, teach and minister among us ...

Send the Holy Spirit to bless your servants with the gifts they need to build up the Body of Christ, and to strengthen us to be his witnesses in daily life.

The Wise Men offered myrrh to Christ, the Son of Man. We pray for all who suffer from the injustices and frailties of human life ...

Bring deliverance to those who are trapped in grinding poverty, terrifying conflict or brutal oppression ... Strengthen your servants who go to help them. Be close to all who suffer from pain or ill-health ... Grant healing and hope to them all.

We remember with thanksgiving those who have died ... Grant us with them, and with Mary, Joseph and the Wise Men, a share in your eternal Kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This month sees the celebration of the Week of Prayer for Christian unity, between the 18th and 25th, and we will be joining with our Catholic and Protestant brothers and sisters in a service at Foussais Payré, this year the service has been prepared by Christians in Burkino Fasso and is on the theme "You shall love the Lord your God ... and your neighbour as yourself (Luke 10:27)". I look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible. Details may be found elsewhere in this Edition of Grapevine.

Hazel

Prayer List

Please remember in your prayers:



Jo and Brian

Colin and Hester

Gini and Martyn

Heidi and **Millie-Jean**

and their parents, Joël and Jo

Maureen

Steve (Hazel and Martin's son-in-law) and Nicky

Nel (Mair & John Pugh's daughter)

Pat and Roy

Polly

Bob and **Caroline**

Michael (Sally's brother)

...and for the bereaved:

The family and friends of
Malcolm Butcher

The family and friends of
Dick Hardwick

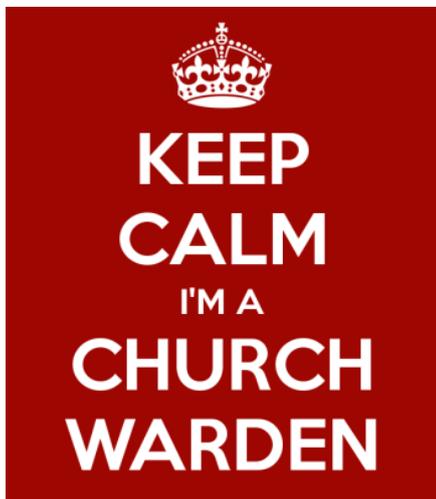
The family and friends of
Allen Rothwell

The family and friends of
Jean Gibbs

The family and friends of
Eelan Hodgson

The family and friends of
Bill Stocking

*[If you would like a name to be added to the Prayer List, please contact David Pearson.
Tel: 02 51 61 05 04 or Email: davidlpearson@orange.fr]*



Churchwardens' Notes For January 2024

I know it's an old 'chestnut' to say it yet again, but how quickly the years seem to fly by! It was 'only' 24 years ago when everyone was on tenterhooks waiting for all the computers and electronic machines to blow up as the new millennium arrived! And here we are, 24 years later, living and worshipping together in this delightful corner of France with electronics intact and far in advance than in the year 2000!

The past year was an eventful one for the world in many negative ways. There have been problems with the changing climate, wars and disasters. Here, within our congregations of All Saints Vendée, several families have returned to live in the UK and sadly, some of our friends have died or had long illnesses. We pray for them all.

Although reported on elsewhere in Grapevine, we must mention the Christmas lunch held in the Church Salle at Puy de Serre on Sunday 10 December. The food and fellowship were wonderful and again, our grateful thanks go to Fiona and Iain McGregor for all their efforts to feed us all! We also had a delightful service of Lessons and Carols at Vouvant church on Sunday 17 December followed by a Christingle service on ZOOM during the afternoon. Thanks go to Jenny Wilkinson for leading it.

We hope you have had time to visit Puy de Serre church to view the Crèches of the World. It's free to enter and is open every afternoon from 2 p.m. and closes on 1 January 2024. As Jacqui usually publishes the Grapevine before the end of the month, you still have time to see the displays. It's well worth a visit. Any donations made will go to the Sisters of Torfon in Burkina-Faso.

You are all invited to attend the 'Voeux de l'Année' to be held on Wednesday 10 January at 6 p.m. in the Salle OPS, Rue de la Republique in Fontenay-le-Comte. It's an opportunity to meet representatives of the many organizations in Fontenay and is organized by our French Catholic and French Protestant friends, along with ourselves. As well as informative speeches, there will be refreshments for all.

Another date for your diaries is Sunday 21 January. At 11 a.m. there will be an ecumenical service for the week of Christian Unity in Foussais Payré Church. This annual service is usually well attended and again gives us the opportunity to communicate with our fellow French Christians.

We can't let this opportunity go to thank all those who take on responsibilities in our Churches. We particularly thank Stuart, Anne and Carol for their enriching music and Jacqui, without whom there would be no Grapevine! There are far too many more to name individually, but we thank you all for your dedication and constance.

Let us look forward with hope to a year of peace, love and kindness throughout the world.

A Very Happy and Blessed 2024 to You All

Doug and Margaret

Grapevine Treasurer's report:
for November 2023:



Income: 1487.21 €
Expenditure: 302.56 €

We have a **positive** balance for the month: 1184.65 €

The positive balance this last month was mainly due to the absence of bills and the November Quiz, showing how important it is for ASV to maintain its fundraising and outreach activities.



Thank you so much to everybody who already contributes so generously to the running of the church, but if anyone should wish to discuss the benefits of planned giving, please contact a member of Council, or myself...

Joyeux Noël et Bonne Année à tous!

Iain McGregor
(Treasurer)



Sunday Club

"No one will be turned away,
everyone is welcome

Calling all children, including holidaymakers,
to attend Sunday Club.

Do **please** let us know a couple of days in advance, if you'd like to come, so that we can prepare something special for you."



Please contact Jenny if you require
more information: email:
jennywilkinson213@gmail.com

...and there's much more...
So.....

KEEP READING.....



Dates for your Diary



January 2024

1st January Monday

7th Sunday 11hr00 **Holy Communion** at La Chapelle Palluau

10th Wednesday 18hr00 **'Voeux de l'Année'** in the Salle OPS, Rue de la Republique
in Fontenay-le-Comte. (See Churchwarden's Report)

14th Sunday 11hr00 **Holy Communion** at Puy de Serre

19th Friday 18hr00 **Quiz** at Puy de Serre

21st Sunday 11hr00 **Ecumenical Service for the week of Christian Unity**
at Foussais Payré.

28th Sunday 11hr00 **Holy Communion** at Puy de Serre

31st Wednesday January

Please check with the website and/or the Churchwardens in case of any alterations.



Dates for your Diary

February 2024



1st Thursday February

4th Sunday 11hr00 **Holy Communion** at La Chapelle Palluau

11th Sunday 11hr00 **Holy Communion** at Puy de Serre

18st Sunday

25th Sunday 11hr00 **Holy Communion** at Puy de Serre

29th February Thursday

Please check with the website and/or the Churchwardens in case of any alterations.

*[Note **Ladies Group/sewing group will be postponed until 4th Thursday in March 2024**]*

EAST & WEST VENDÉE – CHURCH SERVICE ROTA

JANUARY INTO FEBRUARY 2024

**IF YOU FIND YOU ARE UNABLE TO BE AT CHURCH ON “YOUR” DAY,
PLEASE TRY TO ARRANGE A SWAP AND INFORM THE WORSHIP LEADER**

DATE 2024	VENUE	TIME	SERVICE	PRESIDENT	PREACHER	WORSHIP LEADER	ORGANIST	INTERCESSOR	READERS	NOTES
Sunday 7 th January	La Chapelle Palluau	11.00	HC	HD	HD		SS-J			mmm
Sunday 14 th January	Puy De Serre	11.00	HC	HD	HD	CG	SS-J	MM	BC SP	
Sunday 21 st January	Foussais Payré	11.00								Ecumenical Service
Sunday 28 th January	Puy De Serre	11.00	HC	HD	HD	DG	AM	CM	JW GK	
Sunday 4 th February	La Chapelle Palluau	11.00	HC	HD	HD		SS-J			

FORWARD PLANNING

JANUARY 2024

This Forward Planning Rota displays those essential responsibilities which make our Services and Refreshments afterwards possible. If you feel able to “fill in the blanks,” please contact the Organiser concerned.

Responsibility (Organiser)	14 th January Puy de Serre 11hr00	28 th January Puy de Serre 11hr00
Refreshments after the service (Jenny Wilkinson at PdS)		
Flower Rota (Barbara Matthews)	-	-



Did you know
PREVIOUS SERMONS and TALKS
can be read at:

www.allsaintsvendee.fr
See : John Matthew's recent Talk





These are YOUR pages.....

My thanks to all the Contributors of notices and articles for this month's "Grapevine".



Christmas Lunch + photos; Poppy Appeal thanks; The Remnants; Ladies Circle; Next Quiz; Resto du Cœur;

Keeping in Touch; Sunday Club; Christmas Lunch photos



ASV Fun



Date: Friday 19th January 2024 at 18.00 hrs

Place: The Salle at Puy de Serre.

Cost: 10€ to include the meal

Booking: By Monday 15th January at the latest
(with details of food allergies / vegetarian option)

Fiona McGregor mcgregor@lalogette.com 02 51 53 82 55

Please let me know if you can donate a dessert or a raffle prize for any of our quizzes

All are welcome!

- so please invite your family, friends and neighbours!

Maggie and Geoff Kent are our new Quizmasters, with lots of easy-to-answer questions (we hope!), and Jenny and her team are providing the meal.

There will be tables of 5-6, so if you want to enter with a group, please let me know, alternatively if you want to come alone or as a couple, I can put you into a group - a great way to make new friends!

Please bring any 'nibbles' you want to sustain you during the first few rounds before the meal, and your own **cutlery, drink and glasses**



Sunday Club

The Christmas Story

by Leanne Guenther



Once upon a time,
A long, long time ago,
Begins the story of a baby,
That most of you should know.



His daddy's name was Joseph,
And Mary was His mom,
This babe was very special
He was God's only Son.

Some angels came from heaven,
And they began to sing.
To the shepherds in the fields below,
"Glad tidings do we bring!"

A bright star lit the heavens,
To light the magi's way,
To the baby in the manger
Who was born on Christmas day.

And all who gathered round Him,
Rejoiced and praised His birth.
For the babe, the King, named Jesus,
Is our Saviour here on earth!

Jenny



The Children's Society

It was a lovely ZOOM service in Jenny's home attended by Maggie, Fiona, Tonie, Francine, Juliette and Lizia.



Sunday Club

Something to chew over...



The Bishop and the Bus Driver

A bishop and a bus driver both die on the same day and rock up to the Pearly Gates where St Peter holds the keys.

St Peter looks at the bus driver's records and, with a smile, waves him straight into Paradise. He punctiliously studies the bishop's curriculum vitae, with a slight frown. The bishop, incredulous, asks St Peter, how come a bus driver gets into Heaven before him, a bishop, who has devoted his life to God.

St Peter replies, « You bored everyone rigid with your turgid sermons, but the bus driver always had his passengers praying. »

Dietrich Bonhoeffer :

'Stupidity is a more dangerous enemy of the good than malice. One may protest against evil; it can be exposed and, if need be, prevented by use of force. Evil always carries within itself the germ of its own subversion in that it leaves behind in human beings at least a sense of unease. Against stupidity we are defenseless.'

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran pastor, theologian and anti-Nazi dissident. He was arrested in April 1943 by the Gestapo and imprisoned and executed on 9th April 1945.

Trudy



The Remnants

Christmas Meeting

La Chapelle Palluau



On a wild rainy and wintery day, on the 10th of December, The Remnants met in the cosy mobile home of Christine in Mache. We were six, unfortunately Linda and Nigel had been in contact with Covid and stayed away to protect us.



Led by Christine, we were invited to choose carols to sing, and to recount the memories they provoked. A happy sound as we sang out, and a warm feeling of the lovely memories they brought back.

We were led to discuss the nature of Jesus Christ and his most important message of Love and Peace in our lives, and so needed in our world today.

There was a juggling of furniture in the tiny room as the table was brought out, extended and filled with good Christmas food. We finished off with a warm Christmas pudding (no silver pieces) with double thick cream coming all the way from Ireland and ordered by Alison for this special occasion.

The fire flickered in the corner, giving a warm glow,

As we discussed our Christmas plans. Christine was leaving the next day for her Christmas in UK with her family. We reassured each other to make sure no one was being left out. Jo and Brian were being fetched by their son and taken to UK to be with their family there.

We left, as we had arrived, In the Deep dark Winter, but warmed by the love we had been surrounded with, and the bulge of the warm spicy Christmas Pudding!



Joyce



Mike Mylod is our link with Restos du Coeur

He will continue to collect your gifts of dry goods, etc. which are particularly important now and which from now on will be delivered to the local depot at La Châtaigneraie

Please phone Mike before leaving goods with him at Moulleron-en-Pareds: 02 51 51 07 36



All Saints Vendée Christmas Lunch



Although organized in a very short period of time, a Christmas Lunch was arranged and took place at the St. Augustin Salle in Puy de Serre on Sunday 10 December to offer fellowship, fun and food to our congregations.

It was the 'brain child!' of Fiona and Iain McGregor. They planned it, advertised it, sourced it, cooked it (well, Fiona mainly!), served it and cleared up. It was quite a feat and certainly quite a feast!



We had to use the salle for the service of communion beforehand as the church was being used for the display of crèches from around the world. So Doug Green used his authority as Churchwarden, plus the fact that he had the church key, to take advantage of the opportunity to conduct the hungry congregation up to the church to look at the display, giving Fiona time to finalize the food and for preparation of the salle for lunch.

Fiona's computerized check list was impressive. So as Fiona slaved over the ovens (including lack of shelving and a gas blow-back), several of us organized tables, coverings, place settings and table decorations for 26 people.

After starting with a Kir apero, we feasted on roast butternut squash soup, a full turkey (or salmon) main course, cheese and biscuits, Christmas pudding with proper custard - as specially requested and coffee. It really was delicious.

The afternoon included singing some carols, led ably, as ever, by Stuart and delightful chatter, not to forget the inevitable Christmas cracker jokes!

A huge thankyou to Fiona and Iain for all their endeavors. It was such a lovely way to continue with our journey towards Christmas and the joys of Christ's birth. To be repeated next year perhaps?!

Maggie Kent





All Saints Vendée Christmas Lunch



Choraline Choir members rendition of "Falalala"
at the Christmas Lunch

Photos from Doug and Jenny

ASV LADIES' CIRCLE

The Ladies' Circle Meeting and Sewing Group

Women's Fellowship - Ladies Group -

Ladies Group/sewing group will be postponed until 4th Thursday in March 2024

New members very welcome
contact jennywilkinson213@gmail.com
or Joan Stewart jpsmorandiere@outlook.com

It's a real joy to hear from our ASV friends....Keeping in touch....

Christmas Pughsnews 2023. 98 West Hill Road, Retford, DN22 7SG.



Dear Friends,

Another year of huge changes for us.. the only thing constant is our life is that nothing is constant! Apart from God and our faith, which has kept us strong over the past decades.

January 2023 saw us still resident in France but preparing to move back to the UK. Our house sale went through smoothly, at the end of March, and we moved into the flat in Harrogate with Nel for a few months. We eventually moved into our new home (address above) at the end of June. Since then we, mostly John, have been busy re-decorating the bedrooms and have had artisans in to re-furb the bathroom, re-wire the house and fit a log burner which we will really enjoy these next cold months. The garden has mostly been left to its own devices, although as it is largely paved it remains quite tidy... a job for next year.

This autumn we have taken on a short live-in carers job near Cambridge, being recommended by friends, giving us some much needed cash and allowing Nel to have some time to herself. Unfortunately Nel has yet to find work and so is filling her time with various health care appointments and, of course, the ever present football. After several false starts she now plays for a development team at Newark, a train ride away, her enthusiasm is endless! Her mental health has improved somewhat and she has several statutory agencies helping her each week. She would like to live independently but that is unlikely while she has no employment.

Bec and Phils life has changed this year too, still living near Harrogate but now with Anwen at university and Lou starting at a school for young people with autism their home life has become rather different. Both are really enjoying their new sphere of learning and Ted continues to thrive in the local primary school. Bec had covid for the second time in January and was left with long covid. Due to this, and other issues, she changed jobs in the late summer and is now a Child and Families worker. She is really enjoying the change of pace and works from home some days which is suiting her well. Phil remains busy with parish life and is also benefiting from Lou being at school.

Hannah and Steve are well settled into their house in Sheffield, with Hannah finding her green fingers and getting to grips with life as a practice nurse, which she enjoys very much. Wilf has started uni, choosing to study in Sheffield so still living at home. Amos has GCSE's this coming summer with his eyes set on a career in catering, bringing home delicious meals each week. Steve travels far and wide with his structural engineering work and now has a hybrid car which is a new experience for them all.

Mairs mum, soon to be 96, moved to Bristol in July when Huw and Anna retired from the ministry. She has settled well, finding a postbox within walking distance to keep her letters to friends flowing. She misses her friends in Sandy but is now making new ones at a Day Club in Bath once a week. Their local church is friendly and they have been made very welcome there. We have been criss-crossing the country regularly, visiting Bristol every 4-6weeks to care for mum so that Huw and Anna can have a break

A big thank you to those of you who continue to donate money to our mission fund. This year we have been able to support one of our early students with the setting up of a clinic in the bush for mothers who cannot afford the high hospital fees of the local facility. Happiness has saved half her wages each month, in spite of being alone, for the past 7yrs, to fund this venture. With your money we have helped her to buy mattresses, a delivery bed, wheelchairs, dressing trolley and lab equipment. Please ask for more info if you would like it... we have photos too we can share with you. She has asked us to thank you all, in Jesus name, for your generosity to her and the mothers and babies in her care.

So, we send much love to you all, please stay in touch, wishing you all a Blessed Christmas,
Mair and John



Season's greetings to you all
and blessings for a healthy and
peaceful 2024
Love Marian

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Mobiles: M: 07789129617

G: 07748838408

We wish you a happy and blessed Christmas and New Year. May you know and share God's love with those around you, wherever you are and whatever your circumstances.

Our year began with Gini's pain and mobility problems increasing, until at the end of January her hip broke. She spent 17 days in hospital getting a new one and having treatment for heart failure. She now has a French hip and an English one. We are so very grateful for the care she has received from the NHS and for the love, prayers and practical support we have both received from our family and friends especially during the early months of the year.

We rejoice that Gini's health is much improved. She's no longer in heart failure (showed by an MRI) and just takes low doses of blood pressure medications which are keeping things steady.

We didn't get to France until May and missed the spring flowers but were able to welcome Bryony and family and to watch the Coronation with our neighbours, Gilles and Brigitte.

We returned to England in June where Gini enjoyed a restorative week at Scargill, including wild swimming in the River Wharfe, whilst Martyn and friends returned to St. Oswald's, Sleights for their annual retreat. Scargill continues to be an important part of our lives and we were glad to be able to resume being Pastoral Helpers there from July onwards.

We returned to France for the summer where we enjoyed visiting Gini's old pen friend from school days and her family in les Landes. Later we were joined by Rowan and family for their summer holidays. The weather was hot and dry, so there were many visits to local swimming pools and lakes as well as sitting in the shade of our fig tree in the garden.

At home in Meltham we continue to enjoy church, the Community Choir and helping in the Food Bank. Martyn's walking group has been joined by a number of ladies so Old Men Walking has now been rebaptised as Walking Friends. We are so thankful to still be able to enjoy the wonderful countryside around us, not to mention the pub lunches.

November was spent in France where we visited Carcassonne with our friends Christine and Philip as part of her 80th birthday celebrations. We were blessed by the weather, the beautiful autumn colours on the vines and the local food and wine. We celebrated Holly's 40th birthday earlier this month with all our family and look forward to seeing everyone again at Christmas. We thank God for them and all of our friends. Call and see us if you are passing our way. In the meantime, we pray for peace and justice in our troubled world and wish you love and joy in the coming year.

With our love and prayers

Martyn and Gini

I would like to thank you for your contribution of £45 to the Poppy Appeal.

The Royal British Legion was founded by veterans after the First World War. A century on from the start of that conflict, we are still helping today's Service personnel, veterans, and their families in almost every aspect of daily life. We also champion Remembrance, safeguarding the memory of those who have given their lives for our freedom through Remembrance education and events. The Poppy Appeal is the major source of revenue for the Royal British Legion and every penny donated makes a difference to the lives of our beneficiaries.

Over the last year, you helped us to respond to more than **30,000** requests for support. Thanks to your help our specialist debt and money advice team supported **2,000** beneficiaries secure **£10 million**, helping them to access benefits and grants or negotiating debt relief – a 15% uplift on last year. You aided **1,170** people who contacted our War Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation service for support and you supported **2,084** people through our Branch Community Support service. You also helped us make **59,560** buddy calls to **17,990** members of the Armed Forces community as part of the Branch Community Support programme.

For more information about our work, how we use your data or to update your communications preferences, please email supportercare@britishlegion.org.uk, call our team on 0345 845 1945, or write to us at Supporter Care Team, The Royal British Legion, Haig House, 199 Borough High Street, London, SE1 1AA. You can also find our policy at www.britishlegion.org.uk/about-us/data-protection-privacy-and-communications-policy.

On behalf of the many who will benefit from your kindness, thank you.

Yours sincerely,
Kim MacKenzie
Supporter Care Manager



The Royal British Legion, 199 Borough High Street, London SE1 1AA
rbl.org.uk

I hope you have enjoyed this edition of "Grapevine".

My thanks to all the Contributors.

Please consult the website for updates at www.allsaintsvendee.fr

Please send your items and comments for the **February edition**
to: Jacqui at:

sjfamily66@hotmail.com **before 15th January 2024**

