

Church of All Saints in the Vendée

"To know and to share Jesus Christ"

The Grapevine

March 2016

CONTACTS:

Priest: Reverend Caroline Sackley:

Vicarage: 27, rue de Malvoisine, 85110 St Vincent Sterlanges:

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e-mail addresses: revcarosack1@gmail.com and allsaintsvendee@gmail.com

In Revd Caroline's absence and/or in case of emergency, please contact any of the following:

Church Wardens: Barbara Kenyon: Phone no: 02 51 40 51 59, email: bandrkenyon@orange.fr

Doug Green: 05 49 72 18 46, email: greensinfrance@yahoo.co.uk

Reader: John Matthews: Phone no: 05 49 75 29 71, e-mail: matthewsj@wanadoo.fr

Website: www.allsaintsvendee.fr



Preface

Dear All,

This year March gives us the possibility of breaking our fasting on Mothering Sunday, before the blackness of Good Friday, the grief of Holy Saturday and then the Resurrection joy of Easter Day. In some ways this mirrors our faith lives. We give up things when we become Christians because our lives change and usually this is a joyful kind of fasting because we delight in our lives with God. Then there are high days and holy days when we celebrate with passion, but always, because such is the way of life there are times of darkness and grief, sometimes even the apparent disappearance of God. This is one of the reasons we need to be careful in our dealings with others, we are not aware of 'hidden' illnesses whether physical, emotional or spiritual. But hopefully, like the disciples, we eventually come out the other side able to praise God again, to say "He's alive!"

Our God is the God of life, a living, loving God who conquered death on the cross and gave us the gift of eternal life. This is the God whose voice we hear sometimes from the Bible, sometimes from a hymn or prayer, sometimes in nature, sometimes in the quiet. This is our God who cares for each and everyone of us, our God whose gift of new life we celebrate on Easter Day.

We are told in the Bible of the need to be 'born again', to be born again by the Holy Spirit. It is a shame that this has become, in some circles, a term of derogatory abuse against those who worship in a different style. We all need to be born again (John 3: 3-8). And this is just what we celebrate at Easter, a new life, we are resurrection people. The people of the risen Lord who leaves us with the gift of his Holy Spirit, the Spirit who can change our lives, give us new birth, a new life in Christ.

I hope you have been able to plan one or more of our Lent lunches into your busy diaries, they are a great time of fellowship, with good fun and good food and Resto de Coeur benefit, it's a win-win situation, which of course culminates in the Looking forward to hearing from you. This is an enjoyable way of helping others. I pray that Lent is being fruitful for you in other ways, particularly in your walk with God.

We also join with Christians throughout the world in 'The Women's World Day of Prayer' (Jour Mondial du Prière) on March 4th in the morning in English and in the evening in French so please see the later adverts for these events, and join in with a 24 hour pray cycle drawn up by the women of Cuba.

Giving you advance warning in April it is time, as a part of the Church of England to have our Annual General Meeting. Of course meetings can be tedious, but it is so important for you, yes you, to attend. The people of the Church Council who work for you all need to know your opinions; they need you to hear what has happened and what is planned. These are old sayings but very true, the church is not a building, it is the people of God, church is not just for Sundays but for life, so people who are the church of God here on earth, whose lives reflect, however dimly, his glory, please come and be church.

May you all have the joy and blessings of Easter throughout your life.

God bless,

Caroline

Bereavement Support

If anyone has done the **Bereavement Support Training**, or there is anyone who feels called to support people at this difficult period in their lives I would like to call a meeting at The Vicarage on Monday 11th March at 10.00am. If you are unable to make this day but would like to express an interest please contact me.

The point of this meeting is to gather together and make a list of people who are still interested in this ministry, would like to train or refresh their training, to get together and discuss where next and what needs are required.

Many thanks,

Caroline

MARCH into APRIL 2016 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]

6th March 11.00 LCP Mothering Sunday Holy Communion
1 Samuel 1:20-end, (Psalm 32) Colossians 3:12-17, Luke 2: 33-35

13th March 11.00 PDS 5th Sunday of Lent Holy Communion
Isa 43: 16-21 (Psalm 126) Phil 3:4b-14 John 12: 1-8

20th March 11.00 LCA PALM SUNDAY Holy Communion
Palm Gospel: Luke 19:28-40 (Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29) Isa 50:4-9a The Harmonisation of the Passion Story

25th March 11.00 LCP GOOD FRIDAY Service of Reflection
25th March 15.00 PDS GOOD FRIDAY Bi-lingual Ecumenical Service of Reflection

27th March 11.00 PDS EASTER DAY Holy Communion
Isa 65:17 - end (Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24) Acts 10: 34-43 Luke 24: 1-12

3rd April 11.00 LCP Second Sunday of Easter Morning Worship
Acts 5:27-32 (Psalm 150) Rev 1:4-6 John 20:19-31

(There may be last-minute changes to the readings so please check with Revd Caroline or the Worship Leader if you are a Reader)

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.



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 always available).



Sunday Club

**Sunday Club takes place at Puy de Serre.
If you know of any children who would like to join our Sunday Club
please bring them along at 11a.m.
They will be most welcome.**

Barbara

*[Please contact Barbara if you require more information:
Phone 02 51 40 51 59, email: bandrkenyon@orange.fr]*

MARCH FORWARD PLANNING

*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)	6 th March LCP	13 th March PdS	20 th March LCA <i>(Palm Sunday)</i>	25 th March LCA 11am PdS 3pm <i>(Good Friday)</i>	27 th March PdS <i>Easter Day</i>
Welcomers (Polly Ward)					
Salle Setup/ Clearing away (Chris Green at PdS)		Parkyn/Rackham			Rackham/Ward
Refreshments after the service (Jenny Wilkinson at PdS)		Marian & Richard			Jenny W.
Musicians +/- Organist (Polly Ward)		Stuart		LCA - Simon	Stuart
Readers (Polly Ward)					



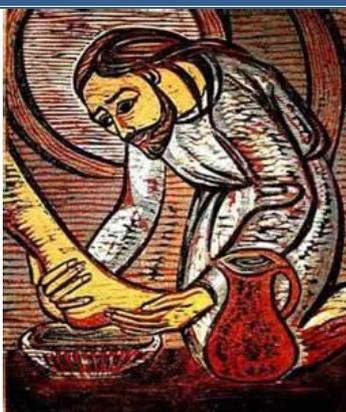
Deux-Sèvres BIBLE STUDY GROUP

*We are now studying MATTHEW AND BECOMING A DISCIPLE.
We meet each Monday afternoon at 2.30pm at our house
at La Barangerie, La Chapelle Thireuil (79).
Our phone number is 05 49 06 05 85.*

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

Please give us a ring if you would like to join us and we will give you directions to the house if you don't already know where we are.

Carole and Bill Stocking.



Passover Supper

The Passover Supper with Foot Washing and Holy Communion will take place on Maundy Thursday (24th March) at the home of Anthea & Keith Fowler, 12 rue des Gagneries, Coex at 18.30.

There will be a small charge of 10 euros to cover costs, any surplus will be donated to charity.

People wishing to attend should telephone Anthea & Keith on 0251 49 83 25. Numbers may be limited.

If you require any more information, please give me a call.

Keith



Dates for your Diary



- 1st March, Tuesday, **Lent Lunch**, with Jean and Mike Mylod in Mouilleron-en-Pareds
(Please ring: 0251 51 07 36)
- 2nd March, Wednesday, 7pm for 7.30pm **Filling Station/Faites le Plein**
at Maison de Diocèse, La Roche-sur-Yon. (Contact Liz Jond or Revd Caroline)
- 3rd March, Thursday, **Lent Lunch**, at the home of Malcolm and Myra Holmwood in Champ St Pierre
(Please ring: 0601 82 20 51)
- 4th March, Friday, 11.00 Women's World Day of Prayer Service** in English
at La Morandiere, Mouilleron-en-Pareds (contact Joan Stewart or Revd Caroline)
18.00 Women's World Day of Prayer Service (Jour Mondial du Prière) in French
at The Upper Meeting Room, Les Essarts (contact Revd Caroline for details)
- 10th March, Thursday, **Lent Lunch** hosted by Keith and Anthea Fowler in Coëx (Please ring: 0251 49 83 25)
2.30pm **Sewing Circle** (see notice on page 9 contact Joan Stewart)
- 18th March, Friday, **Quiz & Raffle for Lent** at Puy de Serre (contact Polly Ward 0228 130193)
- 22nd March, Tuesday, **Home Group with "The Greens"** at La Valiere in Deux-Sèvres
(email: greensinfrance@yahoo.co.uk)
- 24th March, Maundy Thursday 18.30 **Passover Supper, Foot Washing & Holy Communion**
hosted by Keith and Anthea Fowler – numbers limited (see page 9 for booking details)
2.30pm **Ladies Circle** (see notice on page 9 contact Joan Stewart)
- 25th March Good Friday 11.00 LCP Service of Reflection**
15.00 PDS Ecumenical Service of Reflection
"On Easter Day we all share in the joy of Christ's resurrection, but before then, on Good Friday, we must also be with him at the foot of the cross, sharing his suffering".
(This bi-lingual service is being arranged with the local RC congregation of Puy de Serre and will be led jointly by John Matthews)

Also, a Reminder...

Every Monday Deux-Sèvres BIBLE STUDY GROUP at the home of Bill and Carole Stocking

...and looking ahead...

9th April, Saturday, 14.30, **ASV AGM** at Les Essarts

30th April, Saturday, **Non-Annual Coffee Morning & Plant Sale**

(contact: The Rackhams : richard.rackham@cegetel.net)

24th May, Tuesday, **Car Treasure Hunt + Meal** (contact: greensinfrance@yahoo.co.uk for details)

There is the possibility that the church at La Chapelle Achard will be unavailable during April.
Please check beforehand on the website that the service will take place. www.allsaintsvendee.fr.



A Thousand Gifts, a Thousand Blessings!

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



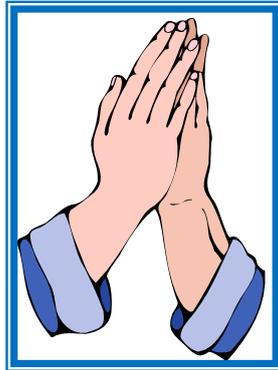
Bill and Carole will collect them and pass them on to Restos du Coeur in Coulonges-sur-l'Autize.

For more details and updates of all these events, please visit our Website: www.AllSaintsVendee.fr

Names of our Prayer List.....

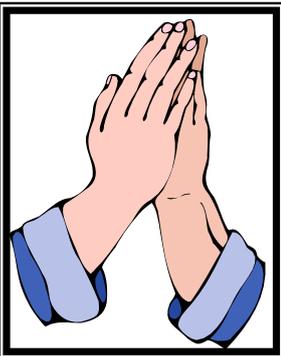
Please remember in your prayers:

Alasdair Anderson.
Paul Brechet & Anne.
Tony Calton & Maggie.
Geoffrey Cornwall
Pat Darley & Roy.



Joelle Gosselin & Bernard
Richard & Marian's daughter,
Lorna Inglis & her family.
Sally's brother, **Michael Mantle & Sue**
Jean Mylod & Mike.
Caroline Sackley & Bob and Beccy*

**Revd Caroline has asked if we could include their daughter Beccy on the prayer list; she has been poorly for several weeks. The doctors have done some tests, but they are struggling to find a cause. At first they treated a urine infection but although she is now clear of that she hasn't improved a great deal. She is not very mobile at the moment and was in tears recently because she couldn't dance at a party. Beccy's communication difficulties make the situation very frustrating, not least for Beccy herself! It is now the third month of Beccy's illness and she now needs a wheelchair to get about. We are still waiting for scans. Please pray for Beccy and for Bob and Caroline.*



We remember those recently departed,
their families and friends.

***Celia Houghton
Peter Hutchinson
Desmond Vine**

And we remember **Reverend Tom Goode**,
whose year's mind fell on 16th February.



And please continue to remember all those whom we know and whose names do not appear here,
who are in need of prayerful support at this time.

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 do not want to go on our Prayer List,
but who are ill or in need. In these cases, please let David Pearson, our Pastoral Organiser, know.*

**(See Page 19)*



NOTES FROM YOUR CHURCH WARDENS

CHURCHWARDEN VACANCY

Doug Green will not be seeking re-election as Warden this year. He served as Warden for five years at the start of All Saints, Vendee and prior to this he served as Vendee Regional Warden for about three years when the Vendee was still part of the Chaplaincy of Poitou-Charentes. Last year, after a break of three years he agreed to stand again but for one year only. All wardens are elected annually and there **must** be two wardens elected. At the time of writing, there is no one to replace Doug so, if you know someone who can fill this post, seek their agreement and nominate them on the form which can be obtained from Caroline or the secretary. One suggestion we have made is that, because of the distances between the churches in ASV, we could appoint "Deputy Wardens" or "Local Wardens" to help the two elected Churchwardens with their duties.

ANNUAL MEETING

This year's Annual Meeting and Open Forum takes place on the 9th April, 1430hrs at Les Essarts. As well as the Wardens there are also vacancies to be filled on the Church Council for a three year period and nominations are sought. The Annual Meeting is the formal part where the elections are held and reports are reviewed. You can only vote if you are on the Electoral Roll of ASV. The Open Forum which follows is a chance for everyone to share their views on relevant topics. Please make every effort to attend – this is your church – your views are important. We hope to see you there.

ASV WEBSITE

Please check the website frequently <http://www.allsaintsvendee.fr/> . Jacqui does an excellent job in updating information especially in the "Stop Press" section of the Home page. For example there are details here of the Lent Lunches which we are sure you will support.

Doug and Barbara

Do you **pay** French taxes?



If so, did you know that for every 100 euros that you give to our Church the taxman will reduce your tax bill by 60 euros thus a 100 euro donation will only cost you 40 euros (and you will be able to increase your donation!!!)

You simply need to make your donation in a recordable manner. You can put your donation in numbered envelopes in the collection box, set up a standing order (virement) or send money to the planned giving officer (Mike Mylod) giving your name and address. At the end of the year your contributions will be totted up and a certificate issued. You enter this amount on your tax return (no need to send proof, just keep your certificate in case you are asked for it) and the taxman will reduce your tax bill by a figure equal to 60% of your donations.

Donations to the vicarage renovation can also qualify for tax relief if made through A S V.

Start planned giving now and let the taxman help our Church!

Contact..... Mike Mylod 02 51 51 07 36 (joseph.mylod@wanadoo.fr)
or..... Colin Grimshaw 02 51 98 67 91 (colingrimshaw@orange.fr)

.....**To find out how easy it is!!!**



Women`s World Day of Prayer

Friday 4th March 2016

11am

at

La Morandiere

Mouilleron en Pareds



The theme this year is:

“Receive children. Receive me”

and has been written by a group of women from Cuba

Please come along everyone, all you men too!

[If you would like to take part in the Service
please contact Joan (jpsmorandiere@free.fr) or Caroline]



You are warmly invited to our next
"Faites le Plein" meeting
which will be held in La Roche sur Yon
on Wednesday 2nd March 2016

We are pleased to welcome as our speaker

Andrew West:

Andrew is a law teacher, bi-lingual, lives near Nantes, and has a passion for sharing the Gospel message

The evening starts at 7pm with refreshments followed at 7.30pm by a time of
sung worship, in French and English, then Nicolas Soullard will speak to us.

He'll speak in French and there will be a translation into English.

Anyone who would like personal prayer ministry, offered by a qualified team, can receive that at the end of
the meeting.

The meeting is held at the Maison du Diocèse, 62 rue Maréchal Joffre (the entrance to this site is opposite the
Boulangerie Potier which has a red frontage, through the large gateway, into the car park).

Look out for the "Faites le Plein" signs directing you towards the restaurant.

Hope that you may join us !

Liz JOND for the "Faites le Plein" team.

liz.jond@wanadoo.fr

ASV LADIES CIRCLE
SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2016

Thursday 11th February, 2.30pm
Sewing Circle
Inaugural meeting

Thursday 25th February, 2.30pm
Ladies Circle
Games with Sandy
Cakes: Sandy

Thursday 10th March, 2.30pm
Sewing Circle
Sewing machine tips and queries with Jenny
Beginners patchwork cushion or square with Pat W.

Thursday 24th March, 2.30pm
Ladies Circle
Glasses chains and keyrings with Joan
Cakes: Joan

Thursday 7th April, 2.30pm
Sewing Circle
Block of the month with Caroline
Tote bag with Jenny

Thursday 28th April, 2.30pm
Ladies Circle
Tap dancing with Julie and Mel
Cakes: Julie

Thursday 12th May, 2.30pm
Sewing Circle
Dressmaking demo with Barbara
Block of the month with Joan

Thursday 26th May, 2.30pm
Ladies Circle
Candles with Jenny and Jane
Cakes: Jenny

Thursday 9th June, 2.30pm
Sewing Circle

Thursday 23rd June, 2.30pm
Ladies Circle
Strawberry tea with everyone
Cakes: Mel

Thursday 7th July, 2.30pm
Sewing Circle

Thursday 28th July, 2.30pm
Ladies Circle
Flowers and cards with Dot
Cakes: Pat M

Thursday 11th August, 2.30pm
Sewing Circle

Thursday 25th August, 2.30pm
Ladies Circle
Shopping and Chinese lunch in La Roche
No cakes necessary

Thursday 8th September, 2.30pm
Sewing Circle

Thursday 22nd September, 2.30pm
Ladies Circle
Craft with Olga
Cakes: Rita

Thursday 13th October, 2.30pm
Sewing Circle

Thursday 27th October, 2.30pm
Ladies Circle
Bargeware with Debs
Cakes: Jaynie

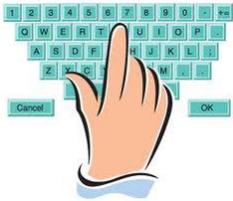
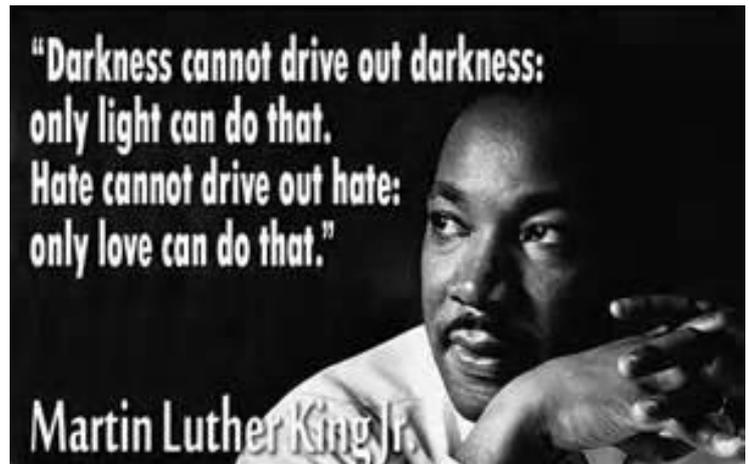
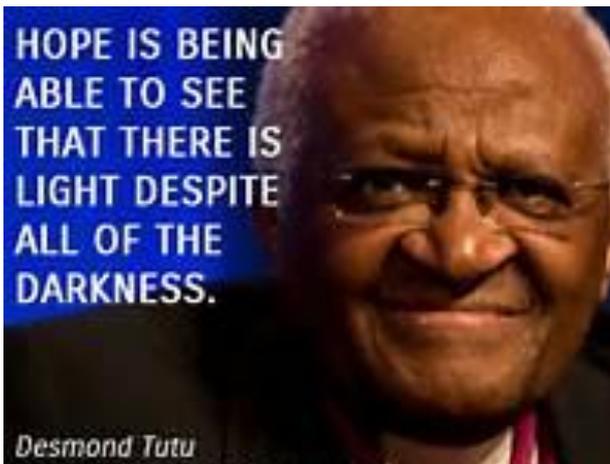
Thursday 10th November, 2.30pm
Sewing Circle

Thursday 24th November, 2.30pm
Ladies Circle
Cake decorations with Dot
Cakes: Jean

Thursday 8th December, 2.30pm
Sewing Circle

Thursday 15th December, 11am
Ladies Circle
Get ready for Christmas! – crackers, table centres, wreaths, etc
Bring and share Christmas lunch

Here are two quotes from the Home Group at La Valiere who are studying "Light"....



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

Thank you to all the Contributors and
I look forward to hearing from you next time
SO.....

send your contributions and comments to:
Jacqui at: sjfamily66@hotmail.com
before the 15th of March, please



Requests to be included on the emailing list should be addressed to:

Jacqui Stainton-James at: sjfamily66@hotmail.com



For more "Celebration" photos, see the ASV website Gallery

www.allsaintsvende.fr



Questions and Answers



These are YOUR pages.....

Once again, my thanks to all the Contributors of notices and articles for this month's "Grapevine" so, read on, and see what you can discover:

Tonie Chandler has shared her thoughts on becoming President of The European Mothers' Union. As a result of John Matthew's "Where are they now" article last month, I am delighted to publish messages received from friends of ASV – Lucia & John Golding, Revd Clifford Poole & Jean, Revd Martyn & Ginnie Crompton have sent an update from the heat of the Bangkok mission,and much more.....

Please send your Notices and Comments to me, Jacqui, at : sjfamily66@hotmail.com



"Happy Birthday Caroline"



Presentation to Bob at the home of Marian and Richard



*To see lots more photos of "Bob's Presentation", see the website Gallery:
www.allsaintsvendee.fr*

Greetings to ASV from The Pooles

All best wishes for Christmas and the New Year from Hamburg, where we are doing (yet) another locum. We fly home on the 5th January after four very good months here in this very vibrant and cultural city. We don't really want to go back.

Please remember us to all our friends in the Vendee and thank you for sending us the church magazine. It was good seeing you earlier in the year.

All best wishes,
Cliff and Jean

Dear All,

A year now since our departure from France and all that was known as our life. Basically we are OK; our accommodation is sufficient for our present requirements, John feels safe and I have managed to arrange all the formalities without too many problems.

In January 2015 John was diagnosed with Moderate Vascular Dementia.

We keep every day as calm and as uncomplicated as possible and try not to plan too far ahead, a week is just enough. It sounds very mundane, we don't meet many people or go anywhere new and different, but now is not the time for new and different so 'mundane' is just fine and it helps the situation.

Sundays we attend a lovely little Church nearby, the people there are super and very good with John, I am on the rota to read the Lessons, my first was at the Candlelight Carol Service and the second on Christmas Day and I notice that it will be my turn on Easter Day. Attending Church helps keep me focused and mindful of my responsibilities. There are times when it all gets too much and goes wrong and I have to 'steady the boat' once more and start again.

Once a week we go to a singing group which John loves. A great opportunity for the Carers (family, friends and the Professionals) to share any worries or just to air their feelings. The singing lifts every ones spirits and it is fun and enjoyable.

So, not quite the life I thought we might have had, but we are managing. I receive the Grapevine each month so am able to read what is happening in All Saints Vendee. Just recently my Windows 7 laptop gave up so I have been plunged into Windows 10 on a new laptop and am now learning the new world of Home Computing and Apps - whatever next!!

love and best wishes to you all,
Lucia and John

Thank you – from the refugees

Over the past 6 weeks we have been collecting clothes for the refugees – mostly childrens clothes, some of which needed laundering as they had been stored in a barn for a number of years.

During this time, I have made requests for help with the costs of laundry and transport of these items, and you have been very generous. This is an attempt to let you know what has been done with the money that you have donated.

The total received was €250 – mostly from a collection in the East before |Christmas and a collection in the West at the beginning of February and this is where it went.

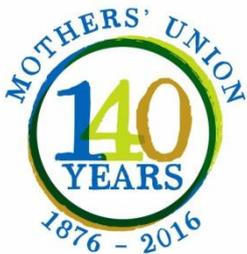
Laundry costs (estimated)	60
Travel costs to deliver to collection point	80 (incl tolls)
Donation to towards travel costs	40
Donation to buy 'non-perishables'	70

Thank you for your generosity towards those who find themselves in a terrible situation.

Polly Ward

*Tonie Chandler is an ASV Church member, living in the Vendée, who will be installed as **Mothers' Union in Europe Diocesan President** later in the summer and we are hoping she will let us have photos of this wonderful event. In the meantime, Tonie has written this letter and also enclosed an article published in the Diocese in Europe Newsletter (DIET).*

Jacqui



MOTHERS' UNION ANNIVERSARY

On the 1st January this year, I took on the role of Mothers' Union in Europe. Diocesan President. This is a very special year, being the 140th anniversary of the Mothers' Union. On August 9th, there will be celebrations in many countries of the world, to celebrate Mary Sumner, the founder of our organization.

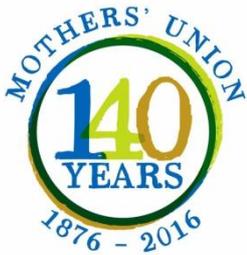
Mothers' Union branches will also be celebrating Her Majesty the Queen's 90th birthday. She is a Patron of the Mothers' Union, and it is hoped that a number of members will be able to attend the 'Patron's Lunch' on Sunday June 12th 2016, when The Mall in St James's Park will be transformed for its largest ever street party, to celebrate The Queen's patronage of over 600 charities and organisations.

In June, I have been invited by Bishop Robert to attend Diocesan Synod in Cologne, for my Commissioning. He feels it is a good opportunity to highlight the work of the organisation in Europe, and elsewhere. I am amazed at the number of countries that the Diocese of Europe covers. (Geography never was my strong point!).

During my three years as President, I will possibly be visiting a few of the branches. We also have a number of Diocesan members, who like myself do not live near to a branch. We keep in contact with them by e-mail or telephone, to keep them informed of what is happening, and give them the opportunity to participate through prayer. We also have prayer links with EZO, South Sudan, THIKA, Kenya, JOS, Nigeria, AKOKO, Nigeria, and UNIÃO DE MULHERES EPISCOPALS ANGLICANAS DO BRAZIL (UMEAB), Brazil

Please keep me and the work of the Mothers' Union in your prayers.

Tonie



DIET – DIOCESE IN EUROPE TIMES No. 3

An e-bulletin of news, information and notes for clergy and lay leaders sharing in the ministry with in the Diocese.

MOTHERS' UNION ANNIVERSARY

The following was sent by the Mothers' Union central office and may be of interest in local church magazines and newsletters

Happy Birthday to Mothers' Union!

This year will see Mothers' Union mark 140 years of faithful Christian outreach to families of all faiths and none. Since 1876, when Mary Sumner first brought together parents in her own parish to build their confidence in bringing up their children, we have grown to an organisation of over four million women – and men – in over 80 countries of the world.

Why celebrate 140th, rather than wait for 150th? In the Old Testament of the Bible, in the first book of Samuel, there is the story of Samuel marking an unlooked for victory against the mighty Philistines by erecting a stone between Mizpah and Shen, naming it "Ebenezer" meaning "stone of help" as a permanent reminder of the leading and guidance of God "Thus far has the Lord helped us".

Over the past 140 years, Mothers' Union has faced, and will continue to face, many challenges. Family life is under increasing pressure and the call on our resources is higher than ever. But we can look at how we are meeting these challenges and say, like Samuel, "Thus far has the Lord helped us."

This year over 500,000 people will benefit from Mothers' Union's support for family life. Many more will know the support of our membership without any tally being taken – because not only our programme work but in their daily lives our members support families in prayer, in voicing their support for policy changes and in their practical support.

There has never been a more challenging, or more exciting time to be part of Mothers' Union. Our hope is to train more members to help more families; to encourage greater outreach across those countries and communities where family life is under greatest threat. To do this we need your help. Please support Mothers' Union in bringing positive change to family life through its work worldwide To find out how you can help Mothers' Union mark 140 years of faith in action contact our Supporter Care line on 020 7227 0620 or email communications@mothersunion.org

Carole and Bill Stocking have forwarded this letter describing how Restos du Coeur started back in 1985 and how we can all help today.....



RESTAURANTS DU COEUR-----RESTAURANTS OF THE HEART

The Restaurants du Coeur organisation was started by a French comedian Coluche on 26th September 1985 saying " I have a little idea, a bit like this.....if there are people who would be interested in sponsoring a free soup kitchen, we'd start first in Paris and then spread to France's big cities"

Now a nation-wide food bank who had hoped to give away 2,000 to 3,000 meals per day and 8.5 million were distributed the first winter alone.
France has a million more unemployed than the UK. The need is ever great.

Many people have said that they believe whoever uses food banks is a sponger. This is definitely not so. All who receive help from Restos are referred by outside agencies. Police, Doctors, Welfare. They are then interviewed by experienced trained volunteers and their needs carefully assessed. A husband who may have fallen on hard times might have a wife and 2 or 3 children.

Everyone who works with Restos food banks is one of 40,000 unpaid volunteers of all backgrounds with one point in common.....generosity devoid of political or religious points of view. They all go through a period of training enabling them to learn the techniques necessary for their missions. The joy of helping those in need is greater than wages.

I remember going to a Restos party given for the children at Christmas. The impression will never leave me, of seeing quite young children looking after badly disabled parents, helping with their every need.

The Anglican churches at Puy de Serre, Arcais and Parthenay, Craft Creations group of L'Absie, friends from England, all contribute generously. + Super U @ Coulances sur l'Autize
There is a constant need for donations of food, good clothing and money.

Thank you for coming
God Bless
Carole and Bill

Thank you for reading this

Revd Martyn Crompton has written to us updating us about his and Ginnie's work with Christian refugees in Bangkok. He writes:

We have just had a "cold snap" when temperatures fell to 15C during the night and remained just below 20C during the day! It felt incredibly cold after what we have become used to, though pleasant not to need the air con at night. We're back to normal again though now at 30C+ but the humidity is still better, even if we are told it won't be long until the hot season.

I hope all is well with you. Please pass on our love to everyone.

God bless,

Martyn

Letter from Bangkok

จดหมายฉบับหนึ่งจากกรุงเทพฯ

We have just returned to Bangkok after a wonderful visit to Vietnam where we stayed for a few days in the vibrant city of Hanoi and enjoyed three amazing days cruising on the waters of the beautiful Halong Bay, where Gini bravely swam and less courageous souls watched in admiration.

How fortunate we are. Our trip was made necessary by the fact that our visa needed to be renewed by our leaving and re-entering the country. Tim, the vicar, suggested we made this obligation into the opportunity for a holiday.

We returned refreshed and legal with many good memories. Many of our contacts here are with refugees who do not share our good fortune. They arrive and seek refugee status, but this is a prolonged process and when their tourist visas run out they are unable to leave and return as we did and so become illegal. This makes them liable to arrest and detention at any time.

Today we rejoice with members of one church family at the release of 2 of their relatives, but 13 others still remain in detention. Some of them have been in custody for 10 months already and are likely to remain so unless bail of £1000 each is paid for them. The waiting time of UN interviews for refugee status is currently between 2/3 years, partly because countries like Pakistan and Sri Lanka are not seen as places of persecution today.

We know there are huge problems, worldwide, and millions of people have fled their countries in the hope of finding a better life, putting huge strains on countries to which they apply for refuge. But we have met a young woman from Sri Lanka whose husband and two brothers were killed in fighting there and she herself was wounded in a bomb blast. She is here with two small children and unable to work as she has no work permit. She nonetheless appreciates being here and points out that the detainees are well fed and cared for and 'at least, no guards come into the centre at night and take the women out to rape them.'

We met the family of an eminent lawyer from Pakistan who successfully defended a Muslim girl from a charge of blasphemy, who then wanted to convert to Christianity for which he was blamed. The family was then forced to flee persecution, leaving home, education and careers behind. The lawyer himself died not long after arriving in Thailand. Another was attacked and so badly beaten that his leg was shattered leaving him unable to walk, simply for being a member of that Christian family. Highly intelligent young men and women are reduced to living idly in hiding, afraid of detention, not knowing what the future may hold, but certain that they are better off here than in the circumstances they have left behind.

Many of the refugees are Christians, just like us, but they have lost most of their freedom of choice. I don't know how their problems may eventually be resolved, though we all pray that they will, but in the meantime it is good to be involved in a church which offers, some practical support through food, love and friendship, visiting detainees and helping people learn English.

Jesus said in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, 'I was hungry and you gave me to eat, thirsty and you gave me to drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you gave me clothes, in prison and you visited me, sick and you cared for me.' To the incredulous question when was this? Jesus replied, 'in as much as you did it to the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.'

May God help us all to be channels of his love and peace.

Martyn and Ginnie



Here are a couple of photos. The first is of Haroon and his wife with the two of their children (*with Ginnie*). The two others belong to parents who are detained. 17 members of his family were detained but we are rejoicing that two adults for whom bail of £1000 each has been paid with four children who were released free of charge.

(Right) This is one of the buildings for Karen refugees at Noh Bo school which is supported by Christ Church. In the shadows on the

right below the buildings are trenches in which people sheltered when there was firing from across nearby Burmese border.



I'll also forward our prayer letter which people may be interested in.

God bless,

Martyn

As a result of a suggestion by some members of ASV, I am printing the words of Paul McCartney's song, "Let it be". The 2nd verse is particularly poignant today with families split and living apart.

"Although literally about his (Paul's) Mum, the link to his Christian roots and the Blessed Virgin Mary, is too strong to ignore." (Wikipedia)

*When I find myself in times of trouble
Mother Mary comes to me
Speaking words of wisdom, let it be.
And in my hour of darkness
She is standing right in front of me
Speaking words of wisdom, let it be.
Let it be, let it be.
Whisper words of wisdom, let it be.*

*And when the broken hearted people
Living in the world agree,
There will be an answer, let it be.
For though they may be parted there is
Still a chance that they will see
There will be an answer, let it be.
Let it be, let it be. yeah
There will be an answer, let it be.*

*And when the night is cloudy,
There is still a light that shines on me,
Shine on until tomorrow, let it be.
I wake up to the sound of music
Mother Mary comes to me
Speaking words of wisdom, let it be.
Let it be, let it be.
There will be an answer, let it be.
Let it be, let it be,
Whisper words of wisdom, let it be*

Please let me know if these words mean something to you and even suggest other lyrics which have an important place in your life and are, maybe, a source of inspiration today. Jacqui

Re Lent

Ash Wednesday was February 10th. Mothering Sunday is March 6th. Easter Day will be 27th. We're well into Lent now - forty days of spiritual discipline, six weeks minus the Sundays which don't count because they're feast days and so we can have a day off, one in every seven!

Lent and Advent are times of preparation: the latter to prepare for Christmas and the Second Coming; the former to prepare for the Crucifixion and Resurrection.

There are two different, contrasting ways to prepare. One is to give up something; one is to do something extra. This year, I'm trying to give up alcohol again. A great test of whether I'm an alcoholic or not! This year, an extra once again is to attend our weekly Bible Studies - which I guess I have to go to because I'm leading them!

So what, if anything, are you going to give up? What, if anything, are you going to do extra by way of spiritual discipline? And what, if anything, do you think are the benefits of doing either?

I'm sure Jacqui would be interested to hear !

Gareth Randall, Priest-in-charge, St Bartholomew's Dinard



Celia Houghton 1924 – 2016

It is with sadness that we have learned of the death of Celia. She was, for a time, the oldest member of All Saints Vendee and a regular attender at services in both the west and the east.

She was born between the wars in South West London and lived, for a while, on the south bank of the Thames. Later in life she moved to the Luton area where her husband was working for Vauxhall and then finally to Northampton.

She had come to live in the Vendee with her son, Ron, and his wife Linda – sharing a house with them near Mouilleron en Pareds. As she grew older, they thought it necessary that she live in a care home and she moved to the Maison de Retraite at La Chataigneraie and then to a care home in Louth, Lincolnshire when Ron and Linda returned to the UK. I went to visit her there as often as I could (which wasn't often enough) and on my last visit (June 2015) she was very fed up with the lack of company and poor stimulation in the place.

We heard last month (through some other friends) that Celia had died recently – although we have no more information than that.

I would like to leave you with a few photos of happier times and a request to remember her whenever you hear her favourite hymn which was 'Abide with me'

RIP Celia



Chez Jacqui and Stuart for the Jubilee celebrations – the crown was the prize for winning the quiz



Her last day out in the Vendee (with Polly and Evelyn) started in the Cafe Pause Gout at La Chataigneraie and ended in a 'domaine' at Mareuil choosing wine for her last Sunday at Puy de Serre.





Who needs a dish washer?

Our thanks go out to all those courageous souls who braved yet another “Rain at the Rackham’s” event and joined together for the gift to Bob and Caroline!

How enjoyable we found it, to have the various regions of our Church joined as one, without the pressures of fund-raising!

People were most generous with their gifts of “nibbles”, many far surpassing that title and it would appear from feed-back that a good time was had by all. Maybe this is something we can repeat later in the year, for no reason in particular apart from a meeting of the whole parish. Our house is always open if this suggestion is acceptable; we are reasonably central.

We were most grateful to all those people who tidied up too. We noticed that several people were washing glasses, but after all had departed, and we went to wash the stacked plates etc. we found that all of them were clean too. That was a wonderful surprise and a great help, much appreciated.

Who needs a dish washer? We didn’t. We had obviously had a team of them. Thank you all so much.

Marian and Richard

...and finally from our friends in Herefordshire...

“Out of the mouth of babes?” A true anecdote from Brian Tanswell at Weobley:



On Sunday, at the end of Mass, my five-year-old granddaughter, Sophie, tugged at my hand.

“Grandad,” she said, “You must always say “Amen” at the end of a prayer.”

“Oh yes,” I said. “Why’s that?”

She looked up seriously. “Because it’s like putting a stamp on a letter. Without a stamp, the letter won’t go. And without “amen” the prayer won’t go to Jesus.

So you must NOT forget to say Amen!”