



The Grapevine



The magazine of Christ Church la Manche
A Chaplaincy within the Church of England Diocese in Europe
Walking together with Christ: Companions on the Way
September 2025

An invitation to members of Christ Church and to our wider community

At 16h30 on Sunday, 7th September, at Homm el Church Gratot
in the presence of Mgr Gregoire Cador, Bishop of Coutances and Avranches,
of fellow clergy, and representatives of other Christian communities in la Manche,
the Venerable Dr Peter Hooper, Archdeacon of France, Monaco and Switzerland
on behalf of The Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes, Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe
will license Revd Fr Chris Probert as Chaplain of Christ Church la Manche.

The service will be followed by a reception in the hall
RSVP by 1st September if possible, to help with the catering

What happens at a Licensing and Installation?

After opening preliminaries Fr Chris is presented as new Chaplain. Two Bible readings (chosen by Fr Chris) are read, one in French and one in English, and the Archdeacon preaches a sermon. Here and throughout the service we sing carefully chosen hymns – we've been practising the tunes, and, in the case of the one hymn in French, practising the words as well!

The legal formalities are now completed: Fr Chris makes the Oaths and Declarations required by Church Law – that he is loyal to the teachings of the Church of England, and accepts the authority of the Bishop. The Licence, signed by the Bishop, is read aloud, then handed to Fr Chris as a sign of the authority conferred on him as Chaplain.

The service then becomes a celebration of Ministry – not just of the priest, but the ministry of the whole Christian community. During this part of the service the new Chaplain is presented with symbols of his responsibilities – keys, a Bible, water, bread and wine.... Prayers of intercession follow, ending with the Lord's Prayer (printed in French, but can be said in either language). Mgr Cador will give the final blessing, then after a final reading and dismissal we hope to persuade Fr Ben Woodley to send us on our way with musical fireworks!

It has been a long time!

Christ Church has been without a licensed priest in the role of Chaplain since the summer of 2014, so this service marks an important step forward towards our future as a vibrant family of faith serving this part of Normandy. We hope every member, friend and supporter of our community will wish to be present.

A message from the editorial team

Following Father Chris' request for suggestions for a new title for our chaplaincy magazine, The Grapevine was chosen from the handful of suggestions received. It serves as a regular reminder that "He is the vine, we are the branches". We hope you like it!

Stewardship and Gift Day 2025

This time last year the Chaplaincy held its first Stewardship Campaign. The prospect of being in the position to appoint a House for Duty Chaplain in three years' time meant we needed to start raising the funds to ensure we were in a financial position to do this. The response was very encouraging for which we thank all of those who gave whether it was a large or small contribution.

That however was just the beginning and we will need to continue to build our financial base over the next couple of years. For this reason, it has been agreed that we will again have a Stewardship and Gift Day on 21st September.

Please prayerfully consider what it would be right for you to contribute to God's work here at Christ Church in the Manche.

Adrian Grainge

Journées de Patrimoine – Portes Ouvertes at Gratot

On Saturday 20th September, our church at Hommêel will be open from 13h00 – 18h00, as part of the French national heritage weekend. Visitors will be welcome to look around the church, find out about its history and learn a little about the presence of the Anglican church in La Manche. Afterwards, they can proceed to the hall for typically English refreshments of tea and cake.

We hope to see you there!

1700th Anniversary of the Nicene Creed

All through 2025 Christians everywhere have been paying fresh attention to the Nicene Creed as we celebrate the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea which brought it into being in 325 AD. With others throughout the Diocese we made the Creed our special study for our Lent course, learning a great deal about the issues and ideas that led to the Council being held.

Now we are invited to a wonderful climax to those celebrations, led by the Bishop of Coutances, supported by leaders of the other Manche Churches, at 15h30 on **Sunday 28th September** in Coutances Cathedral. We will be represented by Fr Chris and Donna, but please strengthen our representation by joining us at this service (in French) if you are available that afternoon.



Due to the very busy September – Fr Chris' licensing, the *Portes Ouvertes* and the Stewardship/Gift Day, the promised next quiz with fish and chips has been delayed until 16th October.

Full details will be announced shortly and tickets will go on sale very soon, so please tell all your friends.

Tuesday Evenings on Zoom



The Bible Study will continue the study of Acts on 9th and 23rd September while Something More will meet on 2nd, 16th and 30th September.



In the Something More house-group there is normally a new topic every week, so feel free to drop in for an occasional session or to come regularly – whichever you do, you can be sure of an interesting evening.



The next **Picnic with the Parson** will be on Sunday 12th October after the morning service at Gratot.

Just bring along your packed lunch and stay for some lively conversation.



Minister's message



Wow, is it really September already? The year seems to be flying past. I don't know if that is an age thing or the fact that as our lives fill up we become more conscious of the time that has passed. The fact that there is more of it behind us than there is in front of us. Our lives are like seasons. Me, I think I am entering the Autumn years. Spring has long gone and summer is waning as Autumn takes priority.

This year our summer has been long and hot starting way back at the end of Spring. Autumn is looking a little similar although the temperatures have dropped and there is a little more rain. A much needed commodity to enable a good harvest. And talking of harvests, normally the field behind my house grows corn, however this year the farmer planted wheat. It survived well during the long hot summer, and drought like conditions and produced a good crop. Already it has been gathered in, the fields have been treated, ploughed and tilled, and mustard seed planted. A plant that come spring, will be stop the weeds and be ploughed back into the ground to provide the soil with much needed nutrients. In the years since I have lived here I have noticed that the timings for harvesting have changed as our weather patterns have changed. The farmer plants according to the seasons and adapts accordingly as those seasons change.

It's the same with our lives. As I look back on what I consider the summer season of my life it has been one of great drought at times, and at others growth, when life has become fertile again. New life has erupted with a little watering and nurturing. God has a habit of turning round what we think of as negative into something positive to the point that I am looking forward to my autumn years with, yes trepidation, but also excitement as new opportunities appear. And our church life is no different. We are entering a new phase with the licensing of Father Chris as our Chaplain. He has been with us for many years, guiding and nurturing in the background but now, he is taking the helm. This marks a significant change in leadership and authority. We are going to change. There will be old issues that still need dealing with, but there will also be new challenges and new growth as we look to planting for the future. Building a new harvest for God's kingdom. And that's the exciting thing about being a Christian. Like the weather, we have no real idea of how that seed sowing will develop, we can only watch, weed, and water, as the weather dictates, being vigilant to the signs. In the same way we have no real idea of what God has planned for us.

As we develop our 'social media' presence, already it has had positive results with visitor numbers up on last year. We have become a small beacon of welcome for those whose second language is English. It reminds me of Pentecost when everyone heard the Word of God in their own language. Unfortunately we can't offer that, my French might be good, but my German is almost extinct from lack of use. As for my Greek, well that's another story.

We have survived a long period of vacancy, of drought if you like, but even that has not stopped us from planting seeds and growing. With Chris at the helm, a great nurturer of little seedlings and plants, we can look forward to a new season of growth, giving thanks to God for all he has done for us, for all that we have achieved through his Son Jesus Christ (and a little bit of hard work on our part). We can look forward with renewed hope to an exciting long and colourful Autumn of praise and thanksgiving.

*Love and blessings
Donna x*

***Please don't forget to pray daily for our church
and especially for Father Chris as he takes up the reins as our Chaplain***

Lord Jesus Christ, thank you for calling us to be a Church under the banner of your Name:
may we look to you today and find clear vision for tomorrow.

May our life together bring you glory,
as you make of us a living invitation to enter the joy of your Kingdom. Amen.

Avranches Get-togethers

The idea of an informal weekday gathering was discussed in November of last year, the hope being that we would have the chance to meet a diverse group of people from our local area. So from this February onwards we have held a monthly **'Coffee Catch-up'** in 'La Dinette', a cosy café in the historic centre of Avranches, not so far from the chapel where we worship. After an uncertain start it has proved successful; we have met up with members of different local church groups and various friends, and have had the opportunity to converse in a mixture of French and English!

It all helps us become better known within Avranches.

Penny Feather



The (Hertford) British Charitable Fund

Helps British residents throughout France who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress. It assists people of all ages and from all walks of life to put food on the table and a roof over their heads. The Charity's main aim is to keep elderly beneficiaries secure in their homes and to provide assistance to younger families and individuals until they can become self-sufficient again.

The British Charitable Fund (BCF) was founded in 1823 by the then ambassador Viscount Granville following the lead of General Lord Wellington after the Battle of Waterloo, and later Sir Richard Wallace.

In continuing these works we have recently merged with the Hertford British Hospital Charity founded by Sir Richard Wallace to become the Hertford British Charitable Fund (HBCF)

The BCF is a U.K. registered charity, N° 243880 and a French registered association.

For information and advice please contact the Welfare Administrator on 0147 590769 / 0784172511 or email: office@bcfparis.org. The office is open from 10h00 – 17h00 from Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays.

JUST FOR FUN!

New dog cross-breeds are now recognised by the
Kennel Club – allegedly!!

Collie + Lhasa Apso:

Collapso, a dog that folds up for easy transport

Pointer + Setter:

Poinsetter, the traditional Christmas pet

Pekingese + Lhasa Apso:

Peekasso, an abstract dog

Terrier + Bulldog:

Terribull, not a good dog

Irish Water Spaniel + English Springer Spaniel

Irish Springer, a dog fresh and clean as mountain air

Collie + Malamute

Commute, a dog that travels to work

And one for the sesquipedalians amongst our
readers:

In an attempt to annoy me, my daughter has
started repeating everything I say.

Rather than taking the bait and getting
frustrated, I've just started reciting the Nicene
Creed.

I call this copycatechesis.

Jordan Hillebert

A saint to inspire us

There are so many big important days this month – Feasts of the Church or locally important days like 7th September and our Stewardship Renewal Sunday on 21st September, that I thought I'd talk about a seemingly minor figure in Christian history, yet one whose influence is still felt today. I'm talking about St Jerome, whom we remember each year on 30th September.

Jerome was born *Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus* around the year 342 in Dalmatia, in modern Croatia. He first encountered Christianity as a student in Rome: Christianity terrified yet fascinated him – he worked through his fears and was baptised. At that time Church leaders in Rome were concerned that the flood of new Christians after the Freedom of the Church under Constantine had led to a disastrous lowering of spiritual standards - more Christians hadn't meant better Christians! With the zeal of the convert, Jerome immediately embraced the strictest form of his new religion, and soon became an inspiring Christian writer and spiritual guide.

Like every true Christian, Jerome consecrated his own gifts and abilities to the service of God. Jerome's natural 'bent' was as a linguist, and in 382 he moved from Rome to Bethlehem, there to begin the greatest and most lasting project of his life.

The Church at Rome at that time was changing: services were still in Greek, but Latin was becoming the daily language for Roman Christians. North African Christians worshipped in Latin from the beginning, but there had never been a single consistent translation of the Bible into Latin. Different books had been translated by different people, but the quality was a bit patchy. Since Latin was clearly 'the language of the future', Jerome was given the important task of producing a complete accurate Latin Bible. Jerome was no dry academic – his passion and longing was for ordinary (literate) Christians to be able to study the scriptures for themselves.

Jerome started off from the existing books (*Vetus Latina* – 'Old Latin') to create his 'Vulgate' ('common' Bible), but he soon realised he needed to go back to the original language to be certain that his version was the most correct form possible. For the New Testament he turned to the oldest Greek manuscripts he could find, and where necessary he compared them with other ancient translations such as the Aramaic New Testament, called *Peshitta*. He had finished the four Gospels within two years, though it's not clear how many other New Testament books he translated himself.

Jerome's biggest challenge was the Old Testament, where he had a much more complicated problem on his hands. Up until then Christians had always used the Greek version of the Old Testament, called the *Septuagint* (named after 70 scholars involved in translating it). To be consistent to his principle of going back to the original language, Jerome needed to learn Biblical Hebrew (easier in Bethlehem than Rome!) and translate from the Hebrew versions he believed were older than the Greek. Just to add to the challenge, the Greek Old Testament contained books beloved by Christians, not accepted by the Jews of the 4th century AD, and with no Hebrew originals from which to translate! He was flummoxed, so he went back to Pope Damasus to ask what to do with these books.

The books stayed in the Latin Bible, but there has been slight uncertainty ever since about these 'extra books' in the Greek Old Testament, and in some Bibles today you find them put together in a section called 'The Apocrypha' (meaning 'hidden').

Jerome was a 'difficult' personality, but he found a place where God could use his skills and talents to be a blessing to others. As we remember Jerome we thank God for all who work tirelessly to enable the spiritually hungry to be fed by the Holy Scriptures. We pray for those workers, for Bible teachers and for all who encourage ordinary Christians to explore the Bible for themselves. As we recognise their dedication, may we never take for granted the privilege of having the Bible in our own language and the freedom to share the Bible and its message with others!

Fr Chris

DIARY DATES	
Tuesday 2 nd September 10h30	Coffee Catch-up La Dinette, Avranches
Tuesdays 2 nd , 16 th and 30 th September 19h45 – 21h15	Something More on Zoom
Wednesdays 3 rd and 17 th September 10h00 – 12h30	The Baker English Library at Gratot
Sunday 7th September, 16h30	Service at Gratot to licence Father Chris as Chaplain of Christ Church in la Manche
Tuesdays 9 th and 23 rd September 19h45 – 21h15	Bible Study on Zoom
Saturday 20 th September 13h00 – 18h00	Gratot Church and Hall <i>portes ouvertes</i>
Sunday 28 th September 15h30	Celebration of the 1700 th anniversary of the Nicene Creed Coutances cathedral
Sunday 12 th October	Picnic with the Parson at Gratot after the morning service
16 th October (Date and time to be confirmed)	Quiz with fish and chips

SERVICES IN SEPTEMBER		
<p><i>Covid is still around. Please respect those who are being cautious.</i></p> <p>In particular, please think of others and wear a mask if you come to church while you have a cough or cold or feel unwell.</p> <p>Services may be subject to change depending on availability of ministers.</p>		
DATE	GRATOT 11h00	AVRANCHES 16h00
7th September Gratot 16h30	Licensing of Father Chris as Chaplain of Christ Church in la Manche	
14 th September	Holy Eucharist	Evening Prayer
21 st September Stewardship Sunday	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion by extension
28 th September	Holy Eucharist	Evening Prayer

READINGS FOR SEPTEMBER					
Date	Day in the church Calendar	Psalms	1 st Reading	2 nd Reading	Gospel
7 th	Twelfth Sunday after Trinity	tba	Tba	tba	tba
14 th	Holy Cross Day	22:23-28	Numbers 21:4-9	Philippians 2:6-11	John 3:13-17
21 st	Stewardship Sunday	tba	Tba	tba	tba
28 th	Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity	146	Amos 6:1a, 4-7	1Timothy 6:6-19	Luke 16:19-end

MINISTRY CONTACTS

CHAPLAIN	
Revd Chris Probert (Fr Chris)	02 33 61 35 82 frchris.christchurchmanche@gmail.com
Wardens	
Adrian Feather, Churchwarden and Chaplaincy Treasurer	02 33 58 01 35 adrian.feather@orange.fr
Chaplaincy Ministers - usually meet monthly with Fr Chris; please share your questions, thoughts and ideas with the Team by contacting Chris	
Fr Chris with:	
Donna Derrick, Licensed Lay Minister	02 33 17 19 52 ddchristchurchmanche@gmail.com
Mary Jackson, Licensed Lay Minister	02 33 48 94 15 maryjackson117@gmail.com
Adrian Grainge, Licensed Lay Minister	02 99 20 38 60 adrian.grainge@orange.fr
Revd Dr Helen Wordsworth	



Useful websites

If you know of any other websites which might be of use to our readership, please let us know

https://europe.anglican.org/	The main Diocesan website
http://anglicanfrance.fr/	Anglicans in France
https://www.achurchnearyou.com/christ-church-manche-normandy	Our Chaplaincy website
www.rfi.fr/en/	French news and current affairs public radio station, good for latest news in English

NEXT MONTH'S DEADLINE for articles and photos is 22nd September

Please send articles and photos to: mmupjohn@live.co.uk



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Contact us for support if you or a loved one is affected by cancer.

Meetings on 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month in the salle at
Notre Dame du Touchet, 50140; 10h00 – 12h30

Trained volunteers available

E-mail: nord@cancersupportfrance.org www.cancersupportfrance.org

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