



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
October 2025

From Father Chris

We got there! - now what?

October 2025 sees us reach a goal many thought impossible – the final payment on the mortgage we have carried, month by month, for fourteen years. For all this time, the first €1050 of Chaplaincy income each month has gone towards repaying the cost of buying the site and buildings at Hommëel. We got there! – *well done everybody!*

The purchase wasn't made on a whim, but in pursuit of a vision embraced by the Chaplaincy at that time, a vision encapsulated in the sign on the wall: 'The Anglican Centre'. The vision had two facets. The first aim was to provide a physical base for the Chaplaincy, an aspiration expressed as wanting 'a place of our own'. The second was to provide a place of encounter and discovery, where people could meet these *unfamiliar Anglicans*, to find out more about how we express our faith and how we live it.

How has that vision fared during this long haul? Over the past fifteen years the Chaplaincy has changed, and the world has changed as well. Interest in organised religion has continued to decline, the world has become more pressured, society more fractured. We are more and more at home using the internet – sometimes it seems everybody (except me!) has a 'smartphone'. Our meetings were already starting to go online even before Covid forced us to do this to keep the church running. Online meetings lose in terms of personal contact, but save a huge amount in terms of travel time and expense. Then of course there was the social impact of the pandemic, while Brexit made life harder for second home owners and potential settlers. Every one of us has been affected by these issues.

The life of the Chaplaincy has certainly been impacted by all of these things. All new churches enjoy an early period of rapid growth followed by a time of consolidation: the purchase of the buildings marked the beginning of our consolidation stage. Lack of funds for ministry led to a formal leadership vacancy lasting more than ten years: vacancies often last a couple of years, but our vacancy was so long that we were in uncharted territory! Thankfully we had other ministers prepared to offer help and support through that time. Brexit and Covid struck our Chaplaincy as hard as any in terms of numbers and support, and the UK expat population of our territory has dropped by around 30% in seven years. Finally of course we endured a dreadful period when storm damage left us facing more than a year with an unusable wrecked hall still costing us €1050 a month just for the mortgage alone.

Visions evolve to meet the challenges of the time, and the times have changed a lot since we began the mortgage. We've been through a lot to get here! We have completed the mortgage, we have restored and reopened the hall, after 11 years we have a Chaplain in post. What are the plans – what are the prospects? How has the vision adapted? Shifting so much of our activity online inevitably means fewer physical meetings needing a hall. With this trend affecting so many activities in our communities, overall there are now too many halls on offer chasing too few users. One aspiration – that the old presbytery might become a home for a Chaplain – is not within the scope of our finances even if the idea still appeals to some.

Our little Chaplaincy here has some unique features – trust me, it is *not* normal for the local RC Bishop to attend the licencing of a new Anglican Chaplain! - and one of these unique features is the way our presence in the commune at Hommëel has become integrated as part of local village life. People love that the church is so alive and welcoming, and our use of the Salle and presbytery certainly contributes to that sense of integration. As we move forward we need to discover how the Anglican Centre can contribute to our wider mission, but at its heart it remains what it was conceived to be – *A place to meet Anglicans, and a place for Anglicans to meet.*

Father Chris' Licensing



After a very long wait, the licensing of Chris as our chaplain finally took place on Sunday 7th September in a lovely service in the Gratot-Homméel church. Many of our ecumenical partners were present and it was a particular delight that Mgr Cador, the Roman Catholic bishop of Coutances and Avranches, was able to attend and could give the final blessing. Sadly our archdeacon, Peter Hooper, could not be with us due to a family bereavement but his place was ably taken by the area dean of north-west France, David McLeod. Our lay ministers all participated and members of both congregations were present, so there was a real feeling of family.



A description of the form of the service was given in last month's magazine, so there is no need to repeat it here; suffice it to say that all ran smoothly, the singing was joyful (ably accompanied by Freddy Dhombres, our regular organist), the prayers were fervent, the departing music, Widor's Toccata played by Fr Ben Woodley, was uplifting – and the refreshments served in the hall afterwards were appreciated by all.

A very big "Thank You" to all who helped to make the afternoon such a memorable occasion – and to Fr Chris, of course, for being willing to take on the official role of Chaplain at last. We are so glad to have you.

Thank you from Fr Chris!

7th September was a wonderful day for all of us. I wish to offer my personal thanks to all who organised, worked for, and supported my Licensing as your 'new' Chaplain. Despite relatively short notice, and an unavoidable clash with another event, the service and reception went very well. One or two asked about the multicoloured stole I was wearing: it came from India!

Journées de Patrimoine – Portes Ouvertes at Gratot, 20th September

If at first you don't succeed...try something different

We had a disappointing outcome to our brave effort at a *Portes Ouvertes* as part of the annual heritage weekend in September. There were some positive contacts, but overall we had a poor reward for the effort expended. We are now pondering some less labour intensive ways of making ourselves visible, possibly using display boards, and looking to having a welcoming presence at Hommeel Church again next September but without trying to offer refreshments.

Stewardship and Gift Day 2025

Many thanks to Adrian Grainge, who planned and led our Stewardship Renewal Sunday recently. It's too early to judge the success of the event, but on reading the leaflet it was striking to realise how near we are to meeting our goal, to be able to fund a Chaplain long-term. From all sources we need to increase income by 10% this year, then a further 10% next year! This is so achievable!

Christ Church online

Our re-vamped online presence on *A Church Near You* continues to draw interest: in the past year our pages have been viewed more than 22,000 times, an increase from 16,000 a couple of years ago. Our primary communication route is our weekly Friday Focus, sent to all on our mailing list. Data Protection rules require us to keep these details up to date, and we have identified around 30 names where we need to seek consent to retain them in our lists: all have been contacted recently, and asked to respond within a month if they wish to have continuing contact.

Celebration of the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea



The ecumenical service commemorating the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed was held at Coutances Cathedral on Sunday, 28th September.

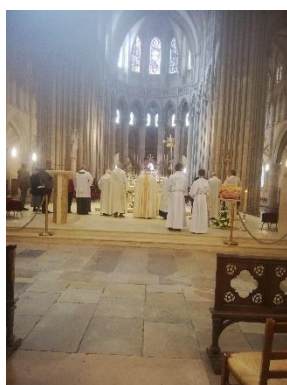


The event was presided over by Bishop Mgr. Cadore and led by Marc Hodara, who oversees ecumenism in the diocese, with representatives from various Churches in attendance.

Chris, the “brand new minister” of the Anglican Church, as described by Marc Hodara, was invited, along with Donna. Chris contributed to the service by providing, in French, a learned commentary on the Nicene Creed, focusing particularly on the Holy Spirit.



A number of members from each of our congregations also attended. The celebration closed with a hymn to the very familiar tune of “Thine be the glory”. Afterwards we all gathered in a nearby café for a celebratory cup of tea / coffee.



Article: Agnès Crompton-Roberts; photos: François Crompton-Roberts and Jacqueline Frost

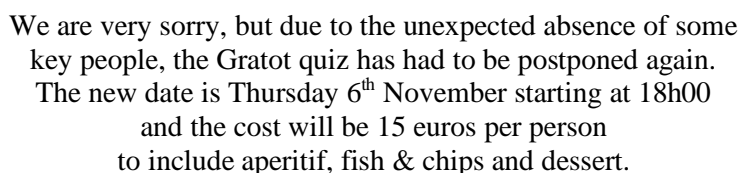


The next **Picnic with the Parson** will be on Sunday **12th October** after the morning service at Gratot.

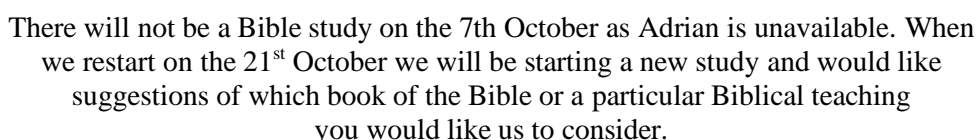
Just bring along your packed lunch and stay for some lively conversation.

Starting on Sunday 9th November, the monthly Picnic will be replaced by soup lunches. Look out for more details next month.





Tuesday Evenings on Zoom



We look forward to hearing from you, even if you don't regularly come to the Bible study.

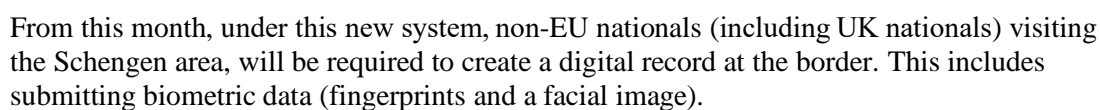
In the Something More house-group there is normally a new topic every week; the next will be “Forgiveness”. Feel free to drop in for an occasional session or to come regularly – whichever you do, you can be sure of an interesting evening.




Expressing our Care

Churches are so used to thinking of money as the scarcest resource, but for us the shortage is actually human resources of time and above all energy. The recent Chaplaincy Council had a very honest conversation and recognised that we lack the resources we need to be the reliably caring Church we aspire to be: honesty is always the starting point for good ministry. As Church Leader Fr Chris is assigned the formal duty to watch over the Church and care for it – for now he will be the co-ordinator for pastoral ministry and care enquiries, aiming to delegate tasks to other people wherever possible. This unexpected new role will obviously mean less time available for other work, and we are assessing how the change will affect our overall goals for these three years.

Information for travellers – New EU Entry/Exit system (EES)



 However, UK nationals with rights under the Withdrawal Agreement will be exempt from EES registration, provided they hold the correct documentation. To qualify for exemption, UK nationals residing in France must present a valid residence permit. If you hold a five-year permit, it may be coming up for renewal – renewals of such residence permits are currently being processed by local Préfectures.

You can find more information on:

EES - European Union (europa.eu) and EU Entry/Exit System - GOV.UK

Minister's message

What have you read today?

Obviously you are reading the Chaplaincy magazine but have you read anything else, or what else do you expect to read? To be more specific, have you or will you read your Bible? Do you read it every day, is it important to read it every day and if so why?

Well, clearly I believe it is or I wouldn't be writing this - but why?

One of the main ways we can get to know about God and to know God for ourselves is by reading His word, it is His main way of talking to us. If we want to know Him better, what He is like and what He wants us to be like, it is by learning from the Bible.

Jesus knew his scriptures very well and often quoted from them, the Apostle Paul also frequently quoted from what we refer to as the Old Testament and Peter, who was just an ordinary working man, still knew and quoted from God's word.

Daily bible reading is an extremely good habit to get into, along with regular prayer times, but where to start? You can read right through the Bible in one year and can find reading plans on line to help with this, which gives a good overview of the whole Bible, parts you may never have read before (how much do you know about Ezekiel or Titus or Philemon for example). This is strongly recommended if you have never done it before.

For regular ongoing daily reading there are a number of plans for this too, the advantage being that you read a short passage with notes to help explain it in more detail and to point out things you might have missed. I use one from the Good Book Company which I find helpful but there are many others; why not ask other people what they do?

Whatever path you choose I highly recommend that you get into the habit of reading your Bible every day and get to know our God and Saviour Jesus Christ better and to love Him more.

Why not start right now?

Adrian Grainge

*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

Our Avranches congregation holds a monthly **Coffee Catch-up** in 'La Dinette', 11 rue du Pot d'Etain, a cosy café not far from the chapel where we worship. This has become very successful, with a range of people coming along and the opportunity to converse in a mixture of French and English. Please join us!

Contact Penny Feather for further information.

STOP PRESS!

As we prepare to publish, the following news has come through:

The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally, Bishop of London, has been appointed as Archbishop of Canterbury following the resignation of the Most Revd Justin Welby last year.

So old, it's new!

For a long time now we've enjoyed two types of service - a Eucharist sticking closely to common worship, and individually planned Services of the Word where each leader of worship draws material together for each service working within the framework laid down by the C of E. One strand we've rather mislaid is the congregation celebrating the daily offices of Morning and Evening Prayer. As an experiment, on Sunday 5th Oct at Gratot the 'Service of the Word' will be Morning Prayer from Common Worship – it will be interesting to worship in this slightly different way.

Five Things People Coming Back to Church Are Really Looking For

A Real Encounter with God Not smoke and mirrors. Not hype. They're hungry for peace, grace, and the presence of the Saviour.

True Community Friends who know their names. A place where families can raise children together, and singles don't have to be alone.

Biblical Clarity In a world that's upside down, they want the Bible opened and explained. Not politics, not spin-truth.

Reverent Worship Services that feel holy. Preaching that takes God seriously. Music you can actually sing.

Healing and the Gospel: A safe place for the wounded. And clear, unapologetic preaching of the Good News - even for those already sitting in the pews.

from Leaderworks (Anglican Church of North America)

Charitable giving

On Sunday 5th October, the offertory collection (apart from planned giving envelopes) will be passed to our Charities Association. The next charity giving day will be on 7th December.

Calling all Crafters

Plans are underway for the chaplaincy Christmas Fair and as ever we will need plenty of gift items for sale. If you are a crafter, in any sphere, now is the time to get started, whether your gift is with knitting, crochet, card-making, sewing, patchwork, wood..... The more items we have to sell, the happier our customers will be – and the more money we will raise!



Banque Alimentaire

With Harvest Festival services this month in both churches, please bring along your gifts for the local Banques Alimentaires



Clock change

British Summer Time ends this year at 03h00 on Sunday 26th October, so do remember to put your clocks back one hour and time your journey to church accordingly!

JUST FOR FUN!

James Bond's secret agent number is 007. Or +447 when he's overseas.

When I was little, my mum used to feed me alphabet soup. She said I liked it.
I didn't really, I think she was just putting words in my mouth.

DIARY DATES	
Wednesdays 3 rd and 17 th September 10h00 – 12h30	The Baker English Library at Gratot
Tuesday 7 th October 10h30	Coffee Catch-up La Dinette, Avranches
Sunday 12 th October	Picnic with the Parson at Gratot after the morning service
Tuesdays 14 th and 28 th October 19h45 – 21h15	Something More on Zoom
Tuesday 21 st October 19h45 – 21h15	Bible Study on Zoom
Thursday 6 th November 18h00	Quiz with fish and chips
Saturday 15 th and Sunday 16 th November	St Nicholas Christmas Fair Montmartin sur Mer
Saturday 29th November 10h00 – 18h00	Chaplaincy Christmas fair at Gratot

SERVICES IN OCTOBER		
<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
5 th October	Morning Prayer	Holy Eucharist
12 th October	Holy Eucharist	Evening Prayer
19 th October	Morning Prayer	Holy Eucharist
26 th October	Holy Eucharist	Evening Prayer

READINGS FOR OCTOBER					
Date	Day in the church Calendar	Psalms	1 st Reading	2 nd Reading	Gospel
5 th	Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity	37:1-9	Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4	2 Timothy 1:1-14	Luke 17:5-10
12 th	Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity	111	2 Kings 5:1-3, 7-15c	2 Timothy 2:8-15	Luke 17:11-19
19 th	Harvest <i>To be confirmed for Avranches</i>	100	Deuteronomy 26:1-11	Philippians 4:4-6	John 6:25-35
26 th	Bible Sunday	119:129- 136	Isaiah 45:22-end	Romans 15:1-6	Luke 4:16-24

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 24th October

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



DIOCESE IN EUROPE
THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



Thank you for supporting our advertisers. Please note, the inclusion of an advertisement on this page does not imply that Christ Church in the Manche recommends that advertiser, or verifies that they are qualified or insured: customers should always verify these facts themselves before employing a contractor.

To advertise, please contact the editor on mmupjohn@live.co.uk for details.

Frances Hook

Professional singer



*Celebrate the life of your loved one
with beautiful music
for their memorial service*

frances@lavoixclaire.com

06 86 71 35 08

Siret : 51197809000021

WATTS Christopher

•PLOMBERIE • CHAUFFAGE •
•ELECTRICITE•

L'Odière

50450 MONTAIGU LES BOIS



Tel. 02 33 90 84 16

E-mail: chris@cwatts.fr www.cwatts.fr

Siret No.49147371600018



BUYING OR SELLING A PROPERTY IN NORMANDIE

**We are an internet-based estate agent,
advertising in The U.K., Europe
and World Wide.**

We have clients waiting to buy
and urgently need more properties to sell.

There are no charges to sellers and we
pride ourselves on our friendly service.

For more details ring Sheelagh Gorham

Tel. 02 33 61 92 70 or e-mail:

Sheelagh@agencenewton.com or www.my-french-home.com

No SIRET: 503 718 611 000 18

TELEVISION and COMPUTER SERVICES

Chris Hutt

Installation and Repair of English and
European T.V.
and Broadband Internet.

All work guaranteed

Telephone **02 33 91 69 29**

E-mail: chris@ashnormandie.com

www.ashnormandie.com

Siret No: 491 624 367 00018



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

ENGLISH-SPEAKING ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, 1 Place de Collegial, Mortain

Mondays 10h30 - 11h30, Fridays 18h00 - 19h00

Tel: 02 31 67 64 29, Email: deodar@aol.com