



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
January 2026

Minister's message

Just another New Year?

How do you view this time of year, the start of a new year - with apprehension as to what this year will bring or as an opportunity, new resolutions, a new start, new plans or new goals, or do you think it is just going to be more of the same?

This can of course also be a time of looking back - did this past year turn out the way you hoped or expected? I know mine didn't exactly, some things were better and others more difficult and as always, I never got done all the things I wanted to do.

It has of course been a time of change within the Chaplaincy with the appointment of Fr. Chris as our Chaplain, the repairs to the Salle and finally paying off the mortgage. But what does the future hold for us? The answer to that of course is we don't know, we have our hopes and plans one of which is to plant a new Church in Normandy, perhaps in or near Cherbourg but ultimately that is in God's hands, we can and will do what we can to facilitate that but 'Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain' so we will have to proceed with much prayer to seek the Lord's guidance.

But what for us as individuals, what might our goals for this year be? I was reading Psalms recently and came upon these verses in Psalm 86:

- ¹¹ *Teach me your way, O Lord,
that I may walk in your truth;
unite my heart to fear your name.*
¹² *I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart,
and I will glorify your name forever.*
¹³ *For great is your steadfast love toward me;
you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.*

No matter how well we think we know God there is always so much more to learn, about who He is, what He has done for us and what He wants us to be like but we can only do this with His help. That is why King David could ask God to teach him, to unite his heart to fear God's name. He knows that one of the best ways to get to know God better is to spend time with Him, giving thanks to God with our whole hearts, glorifying His name. And why should we do that? Because God in His great love for us sent Jesus to be our saviour, to deliver us from the consequences of our sin and secure a place for us in heaven for all eternity.

So this New Year why don't we make our goal to resolve to spend more quality time with God, in reading and studying the Bible, in private prayer and with regular church attendance if physically possible. This is what God wants of us, He wants us to love Him and get to know Him better. Don't you think He deserves the very best we can give Him in return for all He has done and is doing for us? I do.

Adrian Grainge, Lay Minister

Please remember to pray daily for our church

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.

Carol Service at Gratot



The bilingual service of Nine Lessons and Carols was well-attended with a good mix of British and French people. The church had been beautifully decorated beforehand by Sue and Roger Edwards - to whom a huge THANK YOU is sent - aided by a small number of church members.



Passages from Psalms were spoken in both French and English by Donna and Fr Chris while bible readings were in one language, with the alternative language on the service sheet. The worship was much enriched by the presence of part of the choir Les Pinsons Chorale run by our organist Freddy, which really lifted the singing; from solo verses in the Calypso Carol, the charming “Hymn a la Nuit” to their “party piece”, Angels’ Carol by John Rutter (sung in French) their participation was very much appreciated by the congregation. Please come again!



After the service the congregation were invited to the hall to enjoy coffee, tea or mulled wine with – of course – mince pies.



Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2026

This important annual coming together of Christians from all denominations will take place from **January 18th to 25th**.

The theme for this year is **“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling”**, based on Ephesians 4:4.

At the time of writing, details of local services are unknown, so watch your emails or the church website for information nearer the start date.



Tuesday Evenings on Zoom



The Bible Study on Tuesday evenings returns on **13th January at 7.45** after the Christmas & New year break.

We will be studying The Epistle of James and if you are not already part of it and would like to join us follow the link below or in Friday Focus or let Adrian Grainge know and he will include you in the mailings. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible

Adrian's Email – Adrian.grainge@orange.fr

Zoom Link - <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86794128072?pwd=oH5KPhxImv3HbsyHtPWv6k4xzsqcyM.1>

Something More will meet on **6th and 20th January**.
The topic for the 6th is: “Why did they move Christmas?”

Everyone is welcome at either group, so do consider joining us.



What has the Church of England ever done for us?

'The Church of England is an institution: do you want to spend the rest of your life in an institution?'

For each person actually asking a question there may be ten thinking it! Before Christmas someone asked if we got much out of our C of E membership for the money we pay, and wondered if maybe 'they could put more into' our Chaplaincy as we struggle towards meeting the ongoing cost of ministry. This isn't a question about Anglican beliefs, or services (which matter to me and some others a *lot!*)— it's about the organisational side of things: a fair question (though not a proposal!).

To explain, the Church in England in Europe doesn't operate like a business with branches (unprofitable branches get closed down!), but more like a brand represented by locally organised franchises. Someone in a town recognises a gap in the local market, and aspires to fill it. A town needs a burger restaurant, a group of potential customers is recognised. The founders invest time and energy in the start-up: if they believe in their 'concept' and have done their homework, they are confident of a positive return in an established business.

One decision to be made is whether you will do better as an individual business or a national franchise. Belonging to a franchise hems you in: you pay them money, they lay down rules, standards and identity. On the other hand, the franchise offers you a widely recognised instant identity - a 'badge', it offers 'big name' publicity and marketing, it offers training and guidance, it offers your customers reassurance that what they find when they come through your door will be recognisable, properly prepared, and of healthy standard.

Forget for now the glories of the Anglican tradition and the richness of our worship and life – some of us value these things more than others, and even some of us who love them are driven nuts by some aspects and attitudes in the Church of England! The founders of our Chaplaincy apparently made a pragmatic decision to affiliate to the C of E: it does no harm to review big decisions in the light of changed situations. Each year we pay £3.8K in cash, plus a fair bit of administrative time/energy to 'the Church of England' – what do we get back? (Of course in England we'd get a share in a priest paid centrally, but then financial contribution to the diocese would be 10 times what we now pay!) What does belonging to this 'franchise' give us?

First is 'big-brand identity' – our 'brand' carries a world-wide recognition: 85 million members in 165 countries. The Church of England is widely recognised (if not understood!) by the majority of those we hope to attract through our doors. (The public image of the C of E has been damaged in recent years by scandals and perception of decline, but is it still overall more positive than negative? When I announce I'm the 'local C of E Vicar I'm usually welcomed.) Publicity? The internet offers the free-est means open to us – through the Church of England 'A Church Near You' site our Chaplaincy details were viewed by an amazing 25,000 people last year: it is the 'go to' English-language source for people looking for a church to visit! Other benefits? Belonging to the C of E offers things we would otherwise need to provide ourselves: training, structures for simplified legal registration and permission to use church buildings, uniform standards of safeguarding and accountability, the training recognition and validation of ministers, some assurance that when you walk through the door what is offered will be what the 'label' suggests!

What do people think? Do advantages outweigh costs? Which advantages would we be happy to do without? Which 'central' aspect would we then need to replicate in local form in order to avoid losing out on something important? It would be technically possible for us – our people, our mission – to exist outside the C of E. Would the effort involved in the change be rewarded? What do you think? Come to 'Soup Lunch' at Gratot on 11th January and have your say!

Fr Chris



Potage with the Parson recommences on 11th January.

See Fr Chris' article above.



DIARY DATES	
Tuesday 6 th January 10h30	Coffee Catch-up La Dinette, Avranches
Tuesdays 6 th and 20 th January 19h45 – 21h15	Something More on Zoom
Wednesdays 7 th and 21 st January 10h00 – 12h30	The Baker English Library at Gratot
Tuesday 13 th and 27 th January 19h45 – 21h15	Bible study on Zoom
18 th – 25 th January	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

SERVICES IN JANUARY		
<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
4 th January	Morning Prayer	Holy Eucharist
11 th January	Holy Eucharist	Evening Prayer
18 th January	Morning Prayer	Holy Eucharist
25 th January	Holy Eucharist	Evening Prayer

READINGS FOR JANUARY					
Date	Day in the Church Calendar	Psalm	1 st Reading	2 nd Reading	Gospel
4 th	Epiphany	72:1-15	Isaiah 60:1-6	Ephesian 3:1-12	Matthew 2:1-12
11 th	Baptism of Christ/ First Sunday of Epiphany	29	Isaiah 42:1-9	Acts 10:34-43	Matthew 3:13-end
18 th	Second Sunday of Epiphany/ Christian Unity Week	40:1-12	Isaiah 49:1-7	1 Corinthians 1:1-9	John 1:29-42
25 th	Third Sunday of Epiphany/ Conversion of Paul	67	Jeremiah 1:4-10	Acts 9:1-22	Matthew 19:27-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	



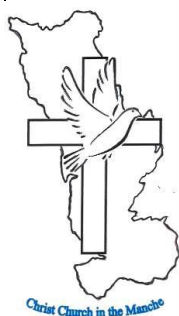
Useful websites

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 24th January

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

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