



The Grapvine



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

February 2026

Minister's message

What a privilege it was to be part of the special service at Avranches for the week of prayer for Christian Unity. It was a packed congregation with people representing every denomination you could think of in the Avranches area. And what a warm sense of fellowship was experienced there, despite the appalling weather through which we had to drive. There was a little bit of a risk too, as we were asked to share the peace with a lighted candle in one hand and an order sheet in the other!

But perhaps that is a picture for us. Working with people from other denominations can be a bit risky. It can take us out of our comfort zone, the tradition in which we've grown up, the one with which we are comfortable.

God doesn't call us to be comfortable. He calls us out of our comfort zones, as we see with the readings for January 25th, the last Sunday of the week of prayer for Christian Unity, which also happens to be about the conversion of Saul in the Anglican lectionary. Jeremiah, Saul and Ananias were all devout Jewish worshippers brought up in a particular tradition but who were called to do new things as part of God's big salvation plan for the world.

As believers in Jesus we are, by the grace of God, all part of that plan, which surpasses all the political comings and goings and changes that we hear about in the news. Through the scriptures God shows us how He acts by calling people to do specific tasks. And as individuals or as a congregation we should not be surprised if God calls us to step out of our comfort zones, engage with new people and perhaps do some new things that bring good news to our neighbours, family and friends.

My prayer is that 2026 will bring encouragement to both congregations, new people to move in to the area and work with us and new relationships to make. May we be willing to open our hearts and minds to hear what God wants of us for such a time as this and to respond without fear.

Revd Dr Helen Wordsworth

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.

Three important dates:

- Thursday 19th February – Lent course begins, on Zoom 19h45; see page 3
- 1st March – Open meeting starting 14h00 – see article on page 2
- Sunday 24th May – Annual Chaplaincy Meeting, after morning service at Gratot.

Make a note in your diary now and please join in all these important events.

Reporting back

Our elected Chaplaincy Council is more than an administrative requirement and more than a talking shop. CC members carry real responsibilities, and it's important that we report back to the people we represent. The recent meeting was delighted to welcome back two members who have been ill and in our prayers, Agnès and Wendy. We always begin with worship, this time with Evening Prayer in honour of Saints Timothy and Titus, then minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and approved.



Our main business is organised under two headings. 'Ministry and Mission' always takes first place. We discussed the forthcoming visit by the Archdeacon: what do we want to tell him? After discussion we agreed that recent difficult months have slowed us a bit, but plans and priorities remain the same: to build the Chaplaincy towards a ministry appointment in three years by encouraging generous giving and deeper discipleship, with outreach to make us better known and plant new congregations. Our increased presence in the media is already generating contacts and interest.

There is good news on church planting: appropriately in Unity Week, we received an invitation from a Cherbourg church to establish an English congregation. This is being followed up enthusiastically, and we have a similar possibility in view at Saint Lô. Adrian Grainge is our 'lead' in the Cherbourg initiative, with full support from the ministers and the Council. Planting new churches is a Gospel imperative – God wants our Chaplaincy to reach out, grow and live!

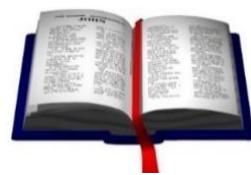
We need to make plans about our buildings. Our Hommël buildings are in good order, so now we need to (i) see how they can be used creatively to serve our mission, (ii) look for ways to broaden their use within the constraints of our legal registration – are there partnerships out there for us? and (iii) find ways of sharing the practical upkeep in a more sustainable way. **Please come to an open meeting to talk about ideas and possibilities in the hall at 14h00 on Sunday 1st March after a Bring and Share lunch following the Eucharist that morning.** (St David's Day – expect Welsh hymn tunes!!). This is a meeting for anybody who is interested – whether connected with the Chaplaincy or not – who would like to explore the potential of these buildings to do good for our wider community, so please invite friends from other organisations - it's an open meeting. At the end we hope to form a working group to turn good suggestions into practical realities!

The second major heading on our agenda is always 'Chaplaincy Administration'. Annual meeting time is on the horizon! We took a quick look at the draft 2025 accounts, were delighted to hear we may have found a new churchwarden for Gratot at last (!), and we fixed the date for the AGM following the 11h00 Gratot Eucharist on Sunday 24th May. Book the date now, and come and be part of today and tomorrow as the Chaplaincy moves forward with ambitious plans for the future.

Tuesday Evenings on Zoom



Something More will meet on **3rd February** for a final session on the topic of Forgiveness.



The Bible Study will continue the study of the book of James on **10th February**.

Both groups start at 19h45. Everyone is welcome at either group, so do consider joining us.

Please note that both groups will stop during the Lent course, which will take place on Thursday evenings from **19th February**.



Potage with the Parson

Sunday 8th February after the morning Eucharist service at Gratot. Come and enjoy a bowl of delicious home-made soup and some interesting chat.

This year's **Lent course** will focus on the impressions of five people who were close to Jesus during His lifetime, using the easy-to-read book by Bear Grylls, "The Greatest Story Ever Told". The course will run on Zoom on Thursday evenings and as last year, each session will be led by a different minister. We hope you will join in what should prove a very interesting course.

Avranches News

On Saturday 24th January our Church members and friends enjoyed a convivial lunch to mark the beginning of a new year. We met up at 'Chez Bruno', a small family restaurant in the village of St. Martin de Landelles, which was a fairly easy run for most people, widely spaced as we are. The menu consisted of French style home cooking and it was good to share fellowship in attractive surroundings.

Our monthly coffee mornings have now been held in Avranches over the course of a year and have given us the opportunity to establish links with local residents and religious groups. Our regular venue, 'La Dinette', is currently closed for renovation, so our next gathering on Tuesday 3rd February will be held in the nearby 'Prose Café', a combined coffee place and bookshop. This will be an experiment, to see if it might become a suitable meeting place in the future.

Our friend from the 'Chemin Neuf' community, François de Lagarde, has invited us Anglicans to join their group on a day visit to their centre on the coast at St Jean le Thomas. They will be holding a jam-making workshop and would like to have some 'British input'! Is anyone interested in joining us?!

Penny Feather



RENEWING YOUR WARP* ARTICLE 50 - TITRE DE SEJOUR

I was privileged recently to join Consular staff at a meeting with French Interior Minister M Laurent Nunez, to discuss the process and procedure for renewal of Residency Permits due for renewal. In 2021 over 145K permits were issued, both 10 year permanent, and 5 year permits. Over 1000 have already been renewed in 2025 for those whose permits were due to run out on the 1st January. Just over 40,000, permits 5 year or less are due to be renewed during 2026.

The message from the Interior Minister is 'don't apply too soon' - this will clog up the system and you may not get your permit renewed in a timely manner. The advice is to apply **TWO months before your expiry date, not before!**

In Manche department some 700 permits are up for renewal. Looking at the prefecture site the process appears quite simple. Log into Manche Prefecture and look up 'renouvellement titre de Sejour article 50', complete the online application form and upload the supporting documents. For those without internet or computer facilities a paper copy of the application is available for downloading and printing to be sent by registered mail along with the supporting documentation. I have downloaded this for anyone who needs it. Just let me know.

The documents required are:

- A valid passport
- A utility bill in your name less than 6 months old i.e. EDF or water bill etc.
- 3 identical passport photographs
- A copy of your current Titre de Sejour
- Change of situation 'justificative'. i.e. if you have divorced, remarried or become widowed, then a justification of the situation needs to be provided, i.e. copy of marriage certificate, death certificate etc. Please note that such documents must be in French. If produced in the UK then a translation needs to be provided by a Court-registered translator.

Once your dossier has been processed you will receive an appointment to visit the prefecture to receive your new card. Cards are renewable every 10 years, simply because this is the lifespan of the chip! Once registered as a permanent resident you are registered for life. I am available to answer questions should you have them.

*Donna DERRICK
Welfare Administrator – Hertford British Charitable Fund*

*WARP = Withdrawal Agreement Residency Permit

Communion and Unity – some thoughts looking back on Unity Week

Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. 1 Corinthians 10, v17



The aim of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is to heal divisions between churches, hoping to restore the unity for which Christ prayed (John 17, vv21-23).

Unity doesn't mean everybody being the same, or doing everything the same way: the hope is to become 'united but not absorbed'. Unity requires that we agree on essential beliefs, and accept one another wholeheartedly as Christ accepts us (Romans 15, v7). When churches find such a degree of unity, we say they are in 'Full Communion' with one other. The mention of Holy Communion isn't accidental: being able to gather together at the Lord's Table is the aim.

When we meet with other churches (God forbid that it's only for an annual service!), thoughtful Christians realise how much we have in common, and wonder sadly why we are still apart. The kind of high-level discussions needed to find unity are called 'conversations' – a good term, because we need to understand how sometimes we use the same word to mean different things, at other times different words turn out to mean the same thing! In the meantime, the sharing of Communion when we meet is a focus of hope and of tension. Can we share Communion before we find unity? Different churches take different views.

Our Roman Catholic hosts (like the Orthodox) believe sharing Holy Communion is the *goal of unity*, the aim towards which we pray and work. Individual RC priests and lay people may take a more relaxed approach, but officially there is between Anglicans what is technically called 'impaired Communion' – Anglicans recognise (have always recognised) RC ministries and loyalty to the fundamentals of the faith, but the RC Church is uncertain about Anglican ministries and commitment to key doctrines, so they limit how far Anglicans can participate in their sacraments. This is simplifying the issues a lot: ask me if you want more detail, but expect a long reply!



Other denominations believe sharing Holy Communion can be a *means to unity*, a step along the road to becoming fully united. The invitation to receive is extended to every disciple, regardless of church denomination. Anglicans moved from the first approach to the second in the 1970s, welcoming to Holy Communion guests who are committed members of other churches as long as they are baptised in the name of the Holy Trinity. Chaplaincies like ours in the Diocese in Europe welcome communicants as generously as possible, stretching the meaning of 'guest' to apply for as long as people worship with us. So our ministry is firmly Anglican (we are an Anglican Church!) but those who hold out hands to receive our Eucharist on a Sunday may be RC, Methodist, Lutheran, United Reformed, Baptist, all kinds of Anglican... - which is wonderful, and challenging!

So many different views and interpretations will be in those minds and hearts – does that mean we dare not talk about what we are doing, for fear that the picture of visible unity might turn out to be only skin deep? Or is it possible to find some common ground stronger than the different traditions we may belong to? As priest, I see this as our common ground in the Communion we share:

- 1 To look for meaning we start with the scriptures we share in common: the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper, the John 6 'Bread of Life' discourse, and the teaching of Paul in 1 Cor 10, 14-17 and 1 Cor 11, 17-end. We accept the authority of what the New Testament says about Communion, admitting that none of us understands it fully.
- 2 Communion, Eucharist, sacrament - whatever we call it - is important because it is something Christ commands us to do. The way we approach and celebrate it is a way of signalling that importance.
- 4 Because of that command, we come expecting the experience to be an encounter with the living Christ among His People.
- 5 We recognise the spiritual seriousness with which we should approach the Lord's Table in terms of 'discerning the Body' (1 Cor 11, vv27-29), seeking to live in love and unity with those around us, in order that we may live at peace with God.

That's why I'm here, and what I believe we are doing: do you feel the same?

Fr Chris

DIARY DATES	
Tuesday 3 rd February 10h30	Coffee Catch-up Prose Café, Avranches
Tuesday 3 rd February 19h45 – 21h15	Something More on Zoom
Wednesdays 4 th and 18 th February 10h00 – 12h30	The Baker English Library at Gratot
Sunday 8 th February	Potage with the Parson – soup lunch at Gratot after Eucharist service
Tuesday 10 th February 19h45 – 21h15	Bible study on Zoom
Wednesday 18 th February, 19h30	Short service for Ash Wednesday on Zoom
Thursdays 19 th and 26 th February, 19h45	Lent Course on Zoom
Easter Monday, 6 th April	Fund-raising afternoon tea
1 st March, 14h00	Open Meeting to discuss ideas for using the hall after Bring and Share lunch, Gratot
24 th May	Chaplaincy Annual Meeting

SERVICES IN FEBRUARY		
<i>Covid is still around. Please respect those who are being cautious.</i>		
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.		
Services may be subject to change depending on availability of ministers.		
DATE	GRATOT 11h00	AVRANCHES 16h00
1 st February	Morning Prayer	Holy Eucharist
8 th February	Holy Eucharist	Evening Prayer
15 th February	Morning Prayer	Holy Eucharist
22 nd February	Holy Eucharist	Evening Prayer

READINGS FOR FEBRUARY					
Date	Day in the Church Calendar	Psalm	1 st Reading	2 nd Reading	Gospel
1 st	Candlemas - Presentation of Christ Epiphany 4	24	Malachi 3:1-5	Hebrews 2:14-end	Luke 2:22-40
8 th	Second Sunday before Lent	136:1-9, 23- end	Genesis 1:1-2:3	Romans 8:18-25	Matthew 6:25-end
15 th	Sunday next before Lent	2	Exodus 24:12-end	2 Peter 1:16-end	Matthew 17:1-9
22 nd	First Sunday of Lent	32	Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7	Romans 5:12-19	Matthew 4:1-11

MINISTRY CONTACTS

CHAPLAIN

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Wardens

Adrian Feather, Churchwarden and Chaplaincy Treasurer	02 33 58 01 35 adrian.feather@orange.fr
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Chaplaincy Ministers - usually meet monthly with Fr Chris;
please share your questions, thoughts and ideas with the Team by contacting Chris

Fr Chris with:

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Mary Jackson, Licensed Lay Minister	02 33 48 94 15 maryjackson117@gmail.com
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Adrian Grainge, Licensed Lay Minister	02 99 20 38 60 adrian.grainge@orange.fr
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Revd Dr Helen Wordsworth	
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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 21st February

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



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