



# 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*  
March 2026

## Minister's message



### It's Lent

In our chaplaincy, we have people from different religious backgrounds, who may have very different reactions to the season of Lent. Some of us have grown up in churches where Lent was observed, but never really explained. If we see Lent simply as a time of austerity or just as a time of foregoing a few simple pleasures, Lent may have become a meaningless ritual for us. On the other hand, some of us may have grown up in church traditions where Lent is not observed at all.

Perhaps some of us think of Lenten observance as a hollow custom, or even something which doesn't have much to do with authentic Christianity. In fact, many who grew up in church have the same the question as those who didn't: "What is Lent, anyway?"

Lent's origins are hidden in the early centuries of church history, but we do know that it was a time of preparation for Easter. From the church's earliest days, the resurrection of Christ was celebrated not only each week, on Sunday, but also on Easter Day. Lent is traditionally focused on repentance. To repent means to make a change in our attitudes, words, and lifestyles. The entire Christian life is a life of repentance. So how can we observe this season so that it becomes for us a truly Holy Lent?

Traditionally, Lent is observed in four basic ways:

1. **Self-examination.** In Christ we are accepted and forgiven. We can use this time to ask ourselves some hard questions about our spiritual health, while keeping our focus on Jesus.
2. **Self-denial.** We remind ourselves that we do not live by bread alone. Rather than just giving up chocolate, why not partake of the Eucharist, which reminds us that Jesus is the true bread of life? Lent would also be a good time to cut back on other activities and spend time worshipping, praying, and learning, read a Christian book, or join our Lent course.
3. **Acts of compassion.** This can take many forms. Some Christians give up a meal once a day or once a week during Lent, and give the money saved to charity. Or maybe you know someone personally who could use your help in a practical way.
4. **Using the means of grace.** Lent is a time for receiving from God through the Scriptures, prayer, and sacrament. This makes Lent a good time to begin the habit of regular prayer and Bible reading. If you need help with this, ask one of our ministers to point you in the right direction.

As we journey through Lent this year, I pray that each one of us will have a truly holy and blessed Lent.

Mary Jackson  
Lay Minister

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### *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.

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## Cherbourg Church Plant

As you may be aware it has been the desire of the leadership of this Chaplaincy to plant another Church within la Manche and there were reasons why it was felt that Cherbourg would be a possible place to start looking. With this in mind I joined Donna at the ecumenical service in Cherbourg during The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. At that event we met with the Pastor from the Baptist Church and when we told him of our plans he immediately offered us the use of his Church, subject to the agreement of his elders.

There was meeting between Pastor Samuel Alonso and myself and I reported back to the ministry team when it was unanimously agreed that we should take up this offer and move towards setting up a Church there.



It is situated in a commercial area of Cherbourg on the southern edge of the town. It looks as though it was originally intended as a commercial unit and probably built in the 1960-70s.

The accommodation consists of an entrance hall leading into the main hall that will seat up to about 100. There is a kitchen which will provide adequate facilities for making tea, coffee etc. and a rather small toilet. It basically has all the things we need including ample parking on a Sunday when adjacent units will be closed.

The offer from the Baptist Church has now been confirmed and it is our plan to hold our first service there on **Sunday 19th April at 17h00** with the intention of initially having a service once a month but with the ambition for it to become a weekly service.

**Our task now** is to get the message out to the English speakers in Cherbourg and the surrounding area. We have some ideas about doing this and one of our main tools will be social media although there are other ideas as well but if you think of anything we could do to help with this please let Fr Chris or me know.



When we do get going if anyone is able to join us it will be much appreciated.

Please pray for this whole project because without God's blessing and help we will not succeed.  
**Psalm 127 - Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain.**

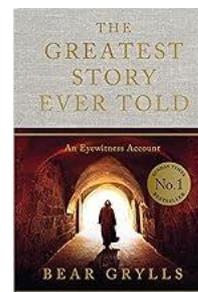
*Adrian Grainge*

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## Tuesday Evenings on Zoom .....have become Thursday Evenings

as the Lent course gets underway,  
using the book by Bear Grylls entitled "The greatest story ever told" which takes the reader through the life of Jesus in a new and refreshing way – through the eyes of five people who were there.

Each session is led by a different minister and you can join in at any point.  
The start time is **20h00** each Thursday during March.



There will be no **Potage with the Parson** in March,  
as we have two post-service events at Gratot during the month.



## Looking forward to a special visit



We're looking forward to the weekend of 21st-22<sup>nd</sup> March, when we welcome the Ven. Dr Peter Hooper, Archdeacon of France and Monaco, for a pastoral visit to our Chaplaincy. The Archdeacon represents the Bishop – with a diocese covering 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the world's land mass the Bishop is spread rather thinly! The term 'Archdeacon' is unknown in France today, but say '*Vicaire Generale*' and his role is immediately familiar. A family crisis prevented him from visiting last September for the Licencing Service, so this is a six-months-in 'how is everything going?' type of event.

The provisional timetable for the visit is this:

### Sat 21<sup>st</sup> March

Morning – meeting with Chaplaincy minsters

14h30 meeting with Chaplaincy Council at Hommèel to discuss progress on our three-year plan towards long-term viability: Are we on target? How have our priorities evolved?

### Sun 22<sup>nd</sup> March

11h00 Eucharist at Hommel– Fr Peter will preach. To be followed by 'Picnic with the ParsonS'(!) (or a bring and share lunch?) Everybody welcome – a time for honest talking and listening!

16h00 Eucharist at Avranches – Fr Peter will preach. To be followed by 'Cake avec les Curés' – conversation around the table with Frs Chris and Peter.

So what is this all about? Is this 'an inspection to make sure we are doing it right'? Obviously the Archdeacon represents 'authority', but equally he brings the gift of a wider perspective – of seeing the bigger picture. Perhaps it's best to think of him as a 'critical friend' in the correct sense of the term – 'on our side' but able to ask questions to clarify our ideas. It would be natural – but pointless! - to carefully 'stage manage' this event to show him how wonderful we are(!): instead we are setting up this weekend to provide the fullest opportunity for everybody to voice their thoughts and be heard.

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## International World Day of Prayer 2026

Traditionally, the World Day of Prayer takes place on the first Friday of March, with the worship materials prepared each year by women from a different country. This year, it is the turn of Nigeria and the theme for the service is:



**“I will give you rest, come”**

based on Matthew 11, vv 28-30, an invitation to find spiritual rest in a weary world.

The art-work shown here is entitled “Rest for the weary” by Gift Amarachi Ottah.

Locally, there will be a service in St Lô in the Salle Briovère in the Presbytery at Saint Lo. This is the building behind the Old Church of Notre Dame up in the old part of the town near the Prefecture.

It will start at 18h00 and will be followed by a time of fellowship. Do come along if you can for what will be both an uplifting and a convivial occasion.

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## Making progress!

Over the winter we've been heightening our impact on social media, learning from other churches how to make best use of our presence on 'Facebook'. During this period we have grown from 31 to 48 'followers', as well as making an impact on several 'Normandy' pages by raising the possibility of English services in other places.

## Getting the best from our buildings



**Open meeting:** 14h00, Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March after a bring and share lunch

Since 2011, when they were purchased, our buildings at Hommeel have been an asset, a headache, and sometimes both at the same time! They have been the scene of triumphs, and the crashing disaster of the destruction of the hall roof leaving us stranded for over a year paying for a building we couldn't use. But now that long slog is over – the buildings are paid for!

Why were they bought in the first place? The clue is in the name on the Presbytery wall: 'Anglican Centre'. The guiding vision was of a place where a rapidly growing church could gather for social activities, a place where a future Chaplain could live, a place where outsiders could meet these unfamiliar Anglicans in their 'native habitat'.

An awful lot has changed since 2011: the rapid early growth of the church levelled out, then like all Chaplaincies we were hit by the impacts of Brexit and the Covid pandemic. So many of our activities have shifted on-line: this saved our Chaplaincy during the pandemic, but in the aftermath our need for a physical meeting place has been reduced. The Presbytery is a long way from being a suitable home for a Chaplain. Visions have to adapt to changed situations: how might the buildings serve us best in 2026 and beyond?

The buildings are a great asset: we need to find ways for them to work harder for us. A few years ago we considered turning this asset into funds to pay for a Chaplain: the view then was that the buildings were a tool for the next stage of our mission, as well as being an essential base for what we do now, providing parking for services, toilets, meeting space. We are now at that next stage in our mission, so we need to come up with a practical plan for expanding the use of the buildings in line with that mission.

We need creative answers to three overlapping questions, and we suspect the answers will overlap as well.

- How can we use the buildings to help us to grow this Church – in numbers, faith, commitment and service?
- How can we share the buildings with others to enhance the life of the wider community, local and French, wider and English?
- How can we find wider practical help to care for and develop the buildings to keep them in good order, and to enhance their usefulness in the future?

It's important to understand that our options are constrained by several factors. We are an older community and don't always have the energy to do what we would wish to do – as a Christian family buildings cannot be our top priority for energy or funds. The buildings are no longer registered for public use: re-registering so that other groups could come and use the buildings (whether paying rent or not) would require expensive upgrades which we couldn't expect them to pay for. Commercial letting would put us into competition with other nearby venues offering better facilities. So activities would need to be in partnership with the Church: building and enriching community in the widest sense is a firmly Christian aim, and can lead churches into all sorts of unexpected avenues – providing an English lending library is just an example!

So please come to our meeting (and bring along others, individuals or organisations) with a realistic picture of the current situation but above all with ideas for how to move forward. I hope we can come from the meeting having shared our thoughts and ideas, and having formed a group who will focus on exploring these ideas and seeing which of them can be turned into action.

*Fr Chris*

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### Thank you! - from Fr Chris

February for me was marked by a couple of unwelcome health 'surprises', including a week off being treated with elephant-size antibiotics! I want to thank my ministerial colleagues for acting so promptly to make sure everything continued smoothly without me, and I'd like to thank everybody for their thoughts, good wishes and prayers. I need to take care of some on-going health issues, but I am delighted to be back at work as our plans move forward into spring.

<p><b>A Hymn for Lent?</b> <b>Hmmm, maybe not.....!</b></p>	<p>The funeral of the man who invented Tupperware has been postponed while they try to find the right lid for his coffin.</p>
<p>Father, when we look at thee, Then we bend our creaking knee; In your Lenten vestments clad, Just the sight to make us glad;</p>	<p>The inventor of the USB plug was buried twice yesterday: the first time they had to pull the coffin out in order to try again the right way up.</p>
<p>O, the cloth is roughly sewn, Coarse enough to make us moan, Gone is all the silk and lace, Dust and ashes in their place.</p>	<p>My mate was hit by a truck carrying Omega 3 cod liver capsules. The hospital said he had "super fish oil injuries".</p>
<p>Forty days and forty nights, Dimmed are all the vestal lights; In their place just deep'ning gloom, Making drear the vestry room; All the weary hymns ahead, Will not even stir the dead; Weeks of choral misery, 'Til thy Holy Week we see.</p> <p>Study courses are required, All that work just makes us tired; Bible study then a talk, Flipcharts 'stead of board and chalk; Coffee served in plastic mugs, Milk poured out from china jugs; Soggy biscuits on a plate, This is Lent, and ain't it great!</p> <p><i>Tune – Aberystwyth</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Anon</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Afternoon Tea</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">In the hall at Gratot on Easter Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> April.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div data-bbox="833 631 1008 779">  </div> <div data-bbox="1248 676 1433 712"> <p>14h30 – 18h00</p> </div> </div> <p style="text-align: right;">Cream teas served from 15h00</p> <p>Easter bonnet competition How creative can you be?</p> <div data-bbox="1248 824 1423 967">  </div> <p>Tickets <b>10 euros</b> per head, payable in advance.</p> <p>Hoping to see you there!</p>
<p><b>FISHY</b> The rules that govern ABSTINENCE are certainly bizarre, If I can sin with sausage-meat and fast with caviar!</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Fr S J Forrest</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>François' Marvellous Marmalade</b></p> <div data-bbox="967 1146 1257 1532">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Now available to purchase. All proceeds to church funds.</p>

**A mad idea – what do you think?**

Especially (but not only) for those unable to get to church on Sunday, how about 'Sunday on Tuesday'? Before the Zoom Bible Study or House-group: a simple half-hour act of worship at 19h00 each Tuesday based on what was done the previous Sunday, including a reading or two and an address (all based on the previous Sunday's service), and an opportunity to share prayer? It could be set up very simply, and might help a number of people for a number of different reasons. What do you think? Tell Fr Chris.

## DIARY DATES

1 <sup>st</sup> March, 14h00	Open Meeting to discuss ideas for using the hall after Bring and Share lunch, Gratot
Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 10h30	Coffee Catch-up La Dinette, Avranches
Wednesdays 4 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> March 10h00 – 12h30	The Baker English Library at Gratot
Thursdays 5 <sup>th</sup> , 12 <sup>th</sup> , 19 <sup>th</sup> and 26 <sup>th</sup> March 20h00	Lent Course on Zoom
Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> March 18h00	World Day of Prayer service at St Lô <i>(See page 3)</i>
Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup> and Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March	Archdeacon's visit <i>(See page 3)</i>
Easter Monday, 6 <sup>th</sup> April	Fund-raising afternoon tea <i>(See page 5)</i>
24 <sup>th</sup> May	Chaplaincy Annual Meeting

## SERVICES IN MARCH

*Covid is still around. Please respect those who are being cautious.*  
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 <sup>st</sup> March	Morning Prayer	Evening Prayer
8 <sup>th</sup> March	Holy Eucharist	Evening Prayer
15 <sup>th</sup> March	Morning Prayer	Holy Eucharist
22 <sup>nd</sup> March	Holy Eucharist	Holy Eucharist
29 <sup>th</sup> March	Holy Eucharist	Evening Prayer

## READINGS FOR MARCH

Date	Day in the Church Calendar	Psalm	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading	Gospel
1 <sup>st</sup>	Second Sunday of Lent	121	Genesis 12:1-40	Romans 4:1-5, 13-17	John 3:1-17
8 <sup>th</sup>	Third Sunday of Lent	95	Exodus 17:1-7	Romans 5:1-11	John 4:5-42
15 <sup>th</sup>	Mothering Sunday	34:11-20	Exodus 2:1-10	2 Corinthians 1:3-7	Luke 2:33-35
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Fifth Sunday of Lent	130	Ezekiel 37:1-14	Romans 8:6-11	John 11:1-45
29 <sup>th</sup>	Palm Sunday	118: 1-2, 19-end	tba	tba	Matthew 21:1-11

## MINISTRY CONTACTS

### CHAPLAIN

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### Wardens

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Churchwarden and Chaplaincy Treasurer

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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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Adrian Grainge, Licensed Lay Minister

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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*



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

**NEXT MONTH'S DEADLINE for articles and photos is 23<sup>rd</sup> March**

Please send articles and photos to: [mmupjohn@live.co.uk](mailto:mmupjohn@live.co.uk)



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