



# 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*  
April 2026

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## From Father Chris

*The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.*

(Matthew 27, vv52-53)



Hearing Matthew's account of the Passion at the service on Palm Sunday, that unique verse stood out to me, and I found myself wanting to know more about what happened! Jerusalem on the first Easter morning, already full of Passover pilgrims, rumours of an empty tomb, appearances of angels, and then the events described in this verse – to call it a confusing picture would be an understatement! And what happened to these 'many' who rose from their graves and were seen walking about in Jerusalem? Only Matthew (the most Jewish gospel) mentions them – no gospel mentions them again!

This 'raising' seems to have more in common with the raising of Lazarus, the account from John we read on Lent 5. Lazarus was raised by the word of Jesus, these 'saints' were raised presumably by some strange burst of generalised 'resurrection energy', but in each case their resurrection seems more a resuscitation – restoring the person to the life they had lost. To put it plainly, they came back, continued their old life a while longer, then died again. By contrast, the resurrection of Jesus is not so much a return as a going forward – scripture tells us that once raised, he never faced death again. He returned to His disciples for a while, in a body so new that those disciples struggled to recognise Him, and after 40 days He returned to the glory of the Life Above.

Our Christian Hope is for a resurrection like Christ's resurrection, not like the return of Lazarus. Our hope is to go forward, to that place Jesus prepares for us (John 14), not to return to the earthly life just ended. That might seem academic and theological, but as a priest, bereaved people have often exclaimed that they wish they could have their loved one returned to them, only to fall silent, and add 'but only if he/she was well again, I wouldn't want him/her to go through that again'. Love helps us to recognise that our wish for their return is a selfish first thought: to lovingly want the best for them means we need to learn to let go, and entrust their future lives to Him who is our Resurrection and our Life.

This might seem a bit of a sombre note, but I'm writing to a church community which has been through a tough few months: we've all lost some loving Christian friends, in our church and in other aspects of our lives. When they have been ill and in our prayers, we've always wanted the very best for them: we have to believe that the new life they now enjoy is God's answer to our prayers for them. We may feel lost, but they are not lost – they are safer now in the hands of God than they have ever been. This is our Easter hope!

*With love in Christ, our Resurrection and our Life,  
Fr Chris*

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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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## Goodbye to old friends

With great sadness we learnt in March of the death of two friends who each in their own way had been very important to the life of Christ Church la Manche.

On 13<sup>th</sup> March our dear sister-in-Christ, Bronwen Underwood, died. Although a staunch member of The Salvation Army, she enjoyed worshipping in English and became an equally staunch member of Christ Church. She was often to be seen behind the coffee table after church or at any events, happy to be serving others – in fact, she often said she was “Saved to Serve” – and as a retired librarian, she was invaluable in helping to run the English Library in the presbytery. We miss her very much.



Just a few days later, on 24<sup>th</sup> March, came the sad news that Reverend Peter Hales had died. As many of our readers are aware, Peter was the first priest of Christ Church la Manche, leading us originally as Lay Minister, then undertaking training to become a priest. He worked hard at ecumenism and built up an excellent relationship with the then bishop of Coutances with Avranches, Bp Lalanne, leading to our permanent home in Gratot. The southern congregation, originally based in Vezins, also came about due to Peter’s enthusiasm. The early Christ Church owed him a great deal and those of us who were around in those early days remember him with affection.

Peter’s funeral will be at Precey church on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April at 10h30.

We hope to see many members of Christ Church there.

*We hope to have more comprehensive articles about Bronwen and Peter next month.*

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## Archdeacon Peter’s visit



The visit by Archdeacon Peter Hooper over the weekend of 21<sup>st</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> March passed off very well. It began with a meeting with the Ministers, followed by lunch at a restaurant in Coutances. At 14h30, the Chaplaincy Council convened in the hall and the notes below are from that meeting. On Sunday, Archdeacon Peter preached at the eucharist services at both Gratot and Avranches, (punctuated by a Bring and Share lunch at Gratot), before returning to Paris evidently happy with what he had seen.

Here are some of the points made by Archdeacon Peter to the Chaplaincy Council:

- Congratulations on having paid off the mortgage; we were now the owners of a building worth 160,000 euros – a sum which could be realised at some future time.
- A very exciting time within the Diocese due to an “intentional change” to put Diocese in Europe on equal footing to the other 41 Church of England dioceses, with a clear intent to grow.
- Despite being the largest diocese in the C of E, traditionally had the smallest back-up team and has always been regarded as “different” from the others.
- Twenty new priests have been licensed in France in the past three years. Generous financial gifts have enabled more creativity. A hardship fund can prevent chaplaincy bankruptcies.
- Funds can be applied for from SMMIB (Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board) towards church planting and other projects.
- 70 worshipping communities in France, only 15 in their own church building, so most do not have to conserve the building. A building not required to create a community – our worshippers form “gathered communities” Fellowship time very important to build relationships to aid pastoral care, companionship.
- Our three priorities now were: Grow our giving, Grow the chaplaincy, Grow discipleship.
- Four diocesan priorities: Church planting, young people, social responsibility, forming good leadership (including lay leadership).

The Archdeacon was very pleased with our intention to plant a new church in Cherbourg, only the second chaplaincy to try this recently. He feels we have made excellent progress since his last visit in 2024.

## Cherbourg Church Plant

The long-awaited northern “extension” to Christ Church is finally coming to fruition. Please share the information below with any friends you have in the north of la Manche, and please come along yourself to support and encourage this important new venture.

### *Christ Church (C of E) la Manche, Living the life of Christ – in English!*

*Easter praise and prayer in English*

**17h00, Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April**

**Église Evangelique Baptiste  
316 bis, Rue des Métiers, Tournaville,  
Cherbourg en Cotentin**



Come and be part of a new Christian family worshipping in English.  
If English is your first language, your second language  
or a language you are learning,  
if you are Christian - or just curious! this invitation is for you!

*What kind of church will this be?* – through reflection, prayer and conversation we believe God will shape the church he wants to see here!

*Who are we?* We are Christ Church, la Manche – members of the Church of England Diocese in Europe. We are Anglicans, but our church family includes members from other denominations.

Want to know more about who we are, what we believe? Visit our website

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/christ-church-manche-normandy> or find us on Facebook.

*With thanks to Église Evangelique Baptiste Cherbourg for their encouragement*

## Alpha Course – Coming soon

The chaplaincy’s first Alpha course will begin on **Thurs 16th April at 8pm on Zoom.**

This is a course of 15 sessions, for anyone interested in finding out more about the Christian faith, whether or not they have any church connections. Those who are just curious to know more will be very welcome to join us. We are grateful to Helen Wordsworth and Mary Jackson, both experienced Alpha leaders, who have taken on the big commitment of guiding the group through this period.



As this will be online to avoid people having to travel long distances, the usual Alpha practice of eating together and getting to know each other will be a challenge, but it would be great if friends could meet up, share some food, and take part in the course together.

If you would like to receive the links to join in the weekly sessions or have any questions then please contact either Helen or Mary (contact details on page 8) We hope you will be able to join us.

## Tuesdays at 8

Our regular Tuesday Zoom meetings re-start after a pause for the Lent course – **note new start time.**



*Something More* our fortnightly house-group resumes on **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April** to discuss 'What happened to the Quiet Revival?' A year ago the Bible Society published a report claiming increasing church attendance and spiritual interest among young adults. Recently that report has had to be withdrawn because the statistics were found untrustworthy! Where does that

leave the Quiet Revival? Where does that leave the Bible Society? It's an extraordinary story, one which has hit the national headlines.



Our fortnightly Bible Study resumes on **Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April** to continue our study of the Letter of James – an ancient and simple New Testament book full of profound Christian wisdom.

## A spiritual travelogue?

Religions all round the world encourage pilgrimages to their special places at important times, and Christianity is no exception. Of course Jerusalem – the location for the death and resurrection of Jesus – was always the most important place for Christian travellers to visit. Travel for us today is relatively safe and easy: it's hard to imagine the time and effort involved in making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem when one had to make days-long journeys on foot or by sea!

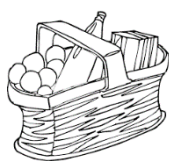
For this reason, we are amazed to be able to read all about the special services and ceremonies practiced in Jerusalem around 380AD, thanks to the account left to us by a doughty Spanish Roman lady named Egeria (or Etheria). It's wonderful that she made the journey, wonderful that she wrote an account of the experience for her Christian friends in Spain, and wonderful that her account was rediscovered in 1884 in a monastery in Italy, to be translated and published in order that we might get a glimpse of Jerusalem as a strongly Christian city and a magnet for pilgrims from across the Empire.



Egeria is especially interesting in her accounts of Holy Week and Easter, describing a sort of full-size Stations of the Cross, where pilgrims would trace the steps of the last week of Christ's life, visiting the places where events were believed to have taken place. You can imagine how powerful such an experience would be!

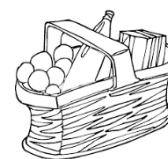
So what changed? In 1187 Christian Jerusalem fell to the army of Saladin: many Christians were killed, others fled, and those who remained 'went underground', no longer able to worship in public. No longer able to physically worship in Jerusalem, Christians turned to their local churches to provide them with the experience of a spiritual Jerusalem. This change is the origin of our Palm Sunday processions, Maundy Thursday re-enactments of the Last Supper, prayers at the foot of the Cross on Good Friday, and the revealing of the Risen Christ as light in the darkness at the Easter Vigil, which is supposed to end with finding the empty tomb on Easter morning. In our small and scattered Anglican community here we lack the practical resources to celebrate all these services, but your local Roman Catholic community will be following them, and will be glad to welcome you to share the experience with them.

However we follow this Holy Week – online, privately in our daily prayers, or with a Christian community local to us, may we be spiritually as blessed as we would be if we were able to do all these things in Jerusalem. May Christ overcome every darkness in our lives – for He is Risen Indeed!



### **Picnic with the Parson** resumes this month!

Bring your packed lunch and stay after morning worship at Gratot on  
**26<sup>th</sup> April**  
for some stimulating and often thought-provoking conversation.



## **Same place, Different name!**

Since its refurbishment, La Dinette, the café in Avranches where folk meet up for coffee once a month, has changed its name. It is now called Poké Mi and it serves poké bowls – traditional Hawaiian food! However, it still serves morning coffee, so do come along and join us.



Adrian Feather has prepared a quiz, which will take place on Zoom on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April at 19h45. If you would like to take part, please contact Adrian so he can send you the Zoom link.

## Our day at 'L'Etoile de la Mer' on the west coast of La Manche

On Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March eight of our congregation gathered at 'L'Etoile de la Mer' as guests of the *Chemin Neuf* community based in Avranches. About twenty of them were spending five days at their centre high above St. Jean le Thomas, with a distant view of Mont St. Michel. We were invited to what was billed as a 'So British' day, and we arrived wondering quite what this might involve!



We were warmly welcomed and were soon installed in a bright but small kitchen to embark upon the process of making marmalade. Nick Long, an Englishman living near St Pair, was our instructor, but he was also fluent in French so all the marmalade making novices amongst us could learn the ropes. At the same time a large pan of French style *confiture* was being made, involving a number of oranges and pumpkins. Both preserves were to be put in jars and sold in aid of a Mission that the community supports in Kinshasa.

At around midday, everybody gathered in a large salle up at the main building for a short Anglican service with the care of creation as its main theme, conducted by Adrian G, with Mary J providing musical support on her keyboard which she had brought with her for the purpose. Adrian had worked hard to translate the entire service into French and everyone sang the two 'British' hymns with great gusto. Our readings were read – in English – by the two German girls who are based at Avranches for a year as helpers with the Protestant Evangelical Church. Those who come to our monthly coffee mornings at 'La Dinette' will know them well.

There followed a delicious and convivial lunch provided by the resident catering team. Our little group dispersed among the tables and chatted with their neighbours of various nationalities who lived all over Normandy and beyond. Much 'Franglais' was spoken'!

All in all a memorable day. The week was advertised with the heading "Ora et Labora" (Pray and Work) and the group combined practical work, in the extensive grounds and fruit and vegetable gardens, with sessions of prayer and praise. In addition there were communal craft activities. For me it was a brief glimpse into how a close knit Christian community can organise its time. At present, when the international news is all about violence and aggression, it was a small insight into how harmonious human society could be!

*Penny F*

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## Good News.....

Our stall at the Montmartin Spring Fair raised the excellent sum of 170 euros. Our grateful thanks, as ever, to the faithful few.

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## Craft afternoon

The paper flower making workshop in our salle was a great success. We had a lovely time, with plenty to eat and great fellowship/company. Christine is a great teacher.

Three men took part... surrounded by a majority of ladies...but we survived!

In my opinion, an event to be repeated.

*Freddy Dhombres*



What a powerful -and precious - thought

# Both betrayed Jesus.

## Same sin...

# ...different ending.

Peter and Judas both failed Christ.  
One chose despair. The other chose repentance.  
The difference wasn't the sin... It was whether  
they they believed mercy was still possible.



Father Don  
Purdum

## DIARY DATES

<b>Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>EASTER DAY</b>
Easter Monday, 6 <sup>th</sup> April	Afternoon tea In the hall at Gratot
Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> April 10h30	Coffee Catch-up Poké Mi, Avranches
Wednesdays 8 <sup>th</sup> and 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 10h00 – 12h30	The Baker English Library at Gratot
Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup> April	Quiz on Zoom (See page 4)
Tuesdays 14 <sup>th</sup> and 28 <sup>th</sup> April	Something More on Zoom (See page 3)
Thursdays 16 <sup>th</sup> , 23 <sup>rd</sup> and 30 <sup>th</sup> April 20h00	Alpha Course on Zoom (See page 3)
Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> April 20h00	Bible Study on Zoom (See page 3)
Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup> April	Picnic with the Parson After morning worship at Gratot
24 <sup>th</sup> May	Chaplaincy Annual Meeting

## SERVICES IN APRIL

*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
<b>5<sup>th</sup> April EASTER DAY</b>	Holy Eucharist	Holy Eucharist
12th April	Morning Prayer	Evening Prayer
19 <sup>th</sup> April	Morning Prayer	Holy Eucharist
26 <sup>th</sup> April	Holy Eucharist	Evening Prayer

## READINGS FOR APRIL

Date	Day in the Church Calendar	Psalm	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading	Gospel
5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>EASTER DAY</b>	118: 1-2, 14-24	Acts 10:34-43	Colossians 3:1-4	John 20:1-18
12 <sup>th</sup>	Second Sunday of Easter	16	Acts 2:14a, 22-32	1 Peter 1:3-9	John 20:19-end
19 <sup>th</sup>	Third Sunday of Easter	116: 1-3, 10-end	Acts 2:14a, 36-42	1 Peter 1:17-23	Luke 24:13-35
26 <sup>th</sup>	Fourth Sunday of Easter	23	Acts 2:42-end	1 Peter 2:19-end	John 10:1-10

## MINISTRY CONTACTS

### CHAPLAIN

Revd Chris Probert (Fr Chris)

02 33 61 35 82

[frchris.christchurchmanche@gmail.com](mailto:frchris.christchurchmanche@gmail.com)

### Wardens

Adrian Feather,  
Churchwarden and Chaplaincy Treasurer

02 33 58 01 35

[adrian.feather@orange.fr](mailto: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](mailto:ddchristchurchmanche@gmail.com)

Mary Jackson, Licensed Lay Minister

02 33 48 94 15

[maryjackson117@gmail.com](mailto:maryjackson117@gmail.com)

Adrian Grainge, Licensed Lay Minister

02 99 20 38 60

[adrian.grainge@orange.fr](mailto: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*



<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 24<sup>th</sup> April**

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



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

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

Trained volunteers available

E-mail: [nord@cancersupportfrance.org](mailto:nord@cancersupportfrance.org) [www.cancersupportfrance.org](http://www.cancersupportfrance.org)

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