



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
June 2026

From Father Chris

Fifty years ago I was in the middle of a four-year stint in a College training for ordination as a priest. A friend was training at the same time for a different full-time ministry, as an Evangelist in the Church Army. His training was equivalent to mine, but carried out in a very different way. Where we future clergy spent years in study before being let out to get with the job, his Church Army training involved blocks of time living in College, interspersed with blocks of time working alongside experienced Officers on one of the many Church Army projects, usually local church mission or social care.

We had several discussions over the years about which was the most effective means of training: immersion in a resident community, or times of study followed by practical jobs. There was a fair rate of 'drop out' from both methods of training, but whereas people completed ordination training and went into parishes before then leaving to do something else, the 'blocks of time' pattern of training in the Church Army meant that candidates found out far sooner whether this was the life for them!

The pattern followed by the Church Army is now dignified with a grand title: it's called the 'Action – Reflection Model'! The clue is in the name – learn something, go out and use that learning, come back and reflect on what you have learned and experienced, build on the learning, then go out once more and repeat, building on your fresh knowledge. This approach was Christian long before it was trendy - you can see it at work in the New Testament as Jesus trained His disciples to go out as apostles.

Churches like ours which follow the pattern of the Christian Year are offered a similar pattern in a worship year which falls into two distinct halves.

The first half of the year is definitely the most exciting: from Advent onwards we are reminded of the key facts of our faith, the life of Christ, His ministry as teacher, example, crucified and risen Saviour. Those who prepare our churches for worship are kept on their toes: 'are we purple, white, red this Sunday'?! All of that comes to a climax on Trinity Sunday – summing up our experience of God in a celebration that can seem to both dazzle and baffle.

And then...the second half of the year, where everything seems a bit...routine. No need to ask the colour, it's green! The temptation is to let our religion 'coast' through the summer months while we are so busy with other things. If we miss church one week, we know that the next week it will 'feel' much the same anyway. This is not how it is supposed to work!

Imagine the Church – the Body of Christ – training new disciples (us!) as Jesus trained the first disciples. Those disciples walked with Jesus through His life and ministry, learning from Him along the journey: they saw and heard it all, and He was with them to help them to reflect on what it all meant. Then came the time for them to put all their learning into action.

What about us? In the first half of the year our heads have been filled with the great truths of the Christian message: in this second half, beginning now as the seasonal colour turns green, it's time for our hearts to be filled as we respond to those truths in love and in action. It's a time for growth: for each of us to grow as followers of Jesus, and for the church to grow in courage and confidence, as we test God's promises and find them to be true.

Chaplaincy Annual Meeting report

The meeting was well attended, with 35 people present. It was extremely brief – apparently a “Probert Personal Best” for speed, so I shall aim to keep this report brief too! There were two nominations for the two offices of churchwarden, **Adrian Feather** and **Michaela Winterman**. A quick vote approved an extension of Adrian’s period of office (6 years is the usual maximum) and no further vote was required.

Last year’s minutes were accepted, then **Donna Derrick** and **Alan Wellstead** were returned as our lay representatives on the Archdeaconry Synod and **Margaret Upjohn** and **Barbara Hames** filled the two available places on the Chaplaincy Council. Thanks were expressed to Graham Boyd who was standing down on completion of his three-year term.

The treasurer recommended that we continue to use **Revd Martin Dryden** as auditor for the church accounts, as he is willing to continue – this was accepted unanimously.

All the reports had been circulated to be read before the meeting. Questions were invited but none were forthcoming. The formally required reports (Electoral Roll, Council report on the past year and Financial statements) were adopted. There was no other business and the meeting was closed with a blessing.

The Charities Association AGM which followed was also brief, accepting the last AGM minutes and receiving the report.

The new Chaplaincy Council met briefly to determine its officers: President Revd Chris Probert, Secretary Agnés Crompton Roberts, Treasurer Adrian Feather, Lay vice-chair Michaela Winterman, Electoral Roll officer Alan Wellstead.

Michaela writes:

As the newest Churchwarden to our Chaplaincy, let me introduce myself.

I was born and brought up in Suffolk, a regular Anglican church attendee as my mother was the organist and my father served as Churchwarden for several years. Sunday afternoon attendance at the Baptist Sunday school situated at the end of lane, aided my knowledge of the Bible with yearly Scripture Union exams. My grandmother attended a ‘High church’ in London and regular stays with her enabled me to experience a kind of service different from our small country church.



After qualifying as a teacher, I spent a large portion of my adult life in Sheffield. Not only did I learn a new dialect but also joined an inner-city ecumenical church, joint Anglican & Methodist. I enjoyed the lively services, the family atmosphere – ideal for each of my 3 sons, as well as our yearly church holidays with ages ranging from babies to great grandmas. It was in this church that my faith developed and deepened, thanks to small house groups, regular Bible study and caring Christians with a wide range of maturity and knowledge, keen to serve God and develop new disciples.

When my husband, Jeff, suggested moving to France, one of my biggest concerns (aside from the language) was where I could continue to worship as an Anglican. God provides. We arrived in 2005 with Christ Church in its early developmental stage. Initially there were fortnightly services held in the Catholic school chapel in Coutances, now we have use of a permanent church in Gratot, our site in Avranches and the early days of a new ‘planting’ in Cherbourg.

I have been an active participant in most of our journey thus far. At present, I am a member of the Chaplaincy Council, a Worship Leader, a regular attendee at Adrian’s zoom Bible study, and, as one of our younger congregants, an active participant in many of our fund-raising ventures.

It’s all very well being an active Christian, but what can I offer the Chaplaincy as Churchwarden?

30 years of teaching, several as head of department have enabled me to be organised; lead, guide and work within a team; recognise and understand different personality types and how my own fits with them. I feel that I have a good relationship with our Ministry team and look forward to continuing to work alongside them and our council, as we pray about and listen for God’s word to move Christ Church along His path to thrive and grow in our Anglican mission here in La Manche.

Introducing.....



'Together on Tuesday' is a very simple idea with potential to do a lot of good. *ToT* takes our well-established Tuesday 'Bible Study' and 'Something More' online groups and wraps them into an enhanced online ministry without significantly adding to the workload of the ministers. This is how it will work:

- 19h30 Evening Prayer – a brief 25 minute act of prayer and worship. Log in for this, then stay for what follows, or leave at the end to do other things. This online worship may extend the Sunday theme, or link to something different, such as the saint of the day. This less formal service will include a Bible reading, and will offer opportunity to ask for prayer for a particular need.
- 20h00 Either our fortnightly Bible Study led by Adrian Grainge, or otherwise our 'Something More' housegroup: the aim will be to finish around 21h00 – sometimes we manage it! If you can't join us for Evening Prayer simply log in for the 20h00 meeting exactly as you do now.

This move ticks a number of positive boxes in terms of developing the life of our Chaplaincy, a step towards our aim of deepening our discipleship by offering opportunities for spiritual development. Many Chaplaincies since Covid have been offering forms of 'mixed mode' worship – online as well as in person – making the best of the opportunities offered by now-familiar video technology. A midweek act of worship is an invitation to find time for God in the midst of our daily routines, meeting with other Christians to join in prayer. It will also offer a more rounded time of prayer before we join in the learning and fellowship in the group meeting which follows.

We believe this new pattern may be a particular blessing to people who struggle to attend a Sunday service regularly, possibly because of illness, age, caring responsibilities, absence or other factors: you can join in from anywhere in the world, whether you are a member of our Chaplaincy or not. We hope you will encourage this new ministry, and tell other people about it.



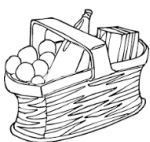
The next 'Something More' house group, on 9th June, will continue the discussion of “How did Christianity come to Britain?” The first part was extremely interesting and informative, so why not come along and join in the next session?



The Bible Study will take place three times during June, on 2nd, 16th and 30th, continuing the study of the Letter of James....



....and Alpha continues every Thursday evening throughout the month. If you haven't yet joined in, there is still much of interest, so contact Mary or Helen to get the Zoom link.



There will be no Picnic with the Parson in June, as we will be having a Bring and Share lunch with Bishop Andrew after the morning Eucharist service at Gratot.



Don't forget the date: **Sunday 21st June**

Please don't forget 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.

Saints and Synods

Once every three years, the Annual General Meeting of the Chaplaincy has an extra duty, the election of two lay representatives to serve on the Archdeaconry Synod.

'Synodical Government' (the word Synod is Anglo Saxon, and means 'Council') is the system by which Anglican Churches in most parts of the world govern themselves. The base level of this in Europe is the Chaplaincy Council, elected by those on the 'Electoral Roll'. Thankfully in Europe we do not have the next level, the Deanery Synod (once defined as '30 Anglicans waiting to go home!'). The Archdeaconry Synod is the main administrative body for the Church of England in France, and usually meets (on Zoom) two or three times per year. We are represented by Fr Chris, together with elected members Donna Derrick and Alan Wellstead. Beyond the Archdeaconry Synod are further layers – Diocesan Synod, and General Synod serving the whole of the C of E.

Synods are a way of making church government more representative. They look democratic but are not entirely so – for example our lay representatives are elected, but as Fr Chris was officially retired he was unable to be a member (though he could attend meetings) until he became Chaplain: now he is unable *not* to be a member! Most of the time the business is administrative and fairly pedestrian, but the Standing Committee work hard to organise meetings which offer Chaplaincies a real input on matters which are relevant and interesting. We have enjoyed interesting speakers, and discussion in the 'break out rooms' (small groups off a Zoom meeting) can be very lively.

The Synod system doesn't please everybody. What one person sees as 'essential involvement' another sees as 'just a talking shop'! When the present pattern started in the 1970s the waspish poet priest Fr S J Forrest summed up his view of Synods in a crisp limerick.

*If the Church must be governed Synodically,
and ruled by a Synod, methodically,
It might prove essential
to trim its potential
by shooting the lot periodically!*

Fifty years on, I wonder if he would still say the same?

A musical treat in August

We are delighted to hear that Cotswold Voices, the choir led by Revd Ben Phillips, will be joining us for the 11h00 Eucharist at Gratot on **23rd August** – book the date now! This year the choir programme will include the Missa Brevis, a masterwork of the 16th century Italian composer Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (usually known simply as 'Palestrina', though this is actually the name of the town of his birth).

This work will be a centrepiece of their concert programme, but in our service we plan to use it as the composer intended, in the musical portions of a Sung Eucharist service. The 'feel' of this will be very different from a concert performance where the different movements follow each other in sequence, rather than at intervals in the course of a full act of worship.

A big hymn for Trinity Sunday

Some great powerful hymns are sadly too 'big' for smaller congregations or simple services. Sometimes the tune is the problem: at other times the words are just too complicated. One such hymn, still used and loved, though I haven't encountered it in a service for 20 years, is the great Trinity Sunday hymn known as 'St Patrick's Breastplate'. It's a translation of an old Irish verse prayer – the name of St Patrick is attached to it, but boringly language experts now think it is a later text, maybe from as long as 500 years after St Patrick himself. I hope they are wrong!



As with so many great hymns rediscovered from our Christian past, two geniuses were involved in bringing St Patrick's Breastplate back into circulation. The first was Mrs C F Alexander, wife of William Alexander, a Victorian Primate (Archbishop) of All Ireland. She wrote many well-known hymns such as 'Once in royal David's City', but translated this Irish poetic text into singable English.

The second genius was the Anglo-Irish composer C V Stanford, who married these words to traditional Irish hymn tunes – no easy task, because, uniquely, this hymn employs two tunes – his thunderous arrangement of 'St Patrick' for the powerful main body of the text, and a completely different, quieter tune for the two meditative verses towards the end of the hymn before a return to the original tune for the resounding final verse. No wonder this hymn needs a good choir, or a very confident congregation!

The hymn begins and end with this invocation of the Holy Trinity:

*I bind unto myself today
the strong name of the Trinity,
by invocation of the same,
the Three in One, and One in Three.*

The verses of the hymn reflect some of the eleven themes of the original prayer, and celebrate God's presence and power revealed in creation. The fourth of the five verses has a very different mood (and a different tune), and is a simple personal prayer for Christ's protection: it makes a beautiful personal prayer maybe we should all learn and know?

*Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me;
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.*

This kind of 'shield' or 'breastplate' prayer is incredibly ancient, with the oldest examples being found in 3rd century Egypt – how on earth did this tradition of prayer find its way to early Christian Ireland? Thanks to seaborne trade, the ancient world was far more 'connected' than we imagine: ideas, beliefs, stories and artefacts may have moved a bit more more slowly, but they still travelled immense distances!

If you've never sung this wonderful hymn take a look on YouTube, where you will find several videos of it being sung as it should be, by confident joyful congregations. Don't just enjoy the music: pay attention to the words as well. Maybe consider taking the 'Christ be with me' prayer and making it your own. And thank God for those who bring these spiritual treasures back to life for us, so that they can be part of our own Christian experience today.

DIARY DATES

Tuesday 2 nd June 10h30	Coffee Catch-up Poké Mi, Avranches
Tuesdays 2 nd , 16 th and 30 th 20h00	Bible Study on Zoom
Wednesdays 3 rd and 17 th 10h00 – 12h30	The Baker English Library at Gratot
Thursdays 4 th , 11 th , 18 th and 25 th 20h00	Alpha Course on Zoom
Tuesdays 9 th and 23 rd June 20h00	Something More on Zoom
Sunday 14 th June 17h00	Service in Cherbourg
21st June	Visit of Bishop Andrew Followed by Bring and Share lunch

SERVICES IN JUNE

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
7 th June	Morning Prayer	Holy Eucharist
14 th June <i>17h00, Cherbourg service</i>	Holy Eucharist	Evening Prayer
21st June	Holy Eucharist Bishop's Visit	Evening Prayer
28 th June	Holy Communion by extension	Evening Prayer

READINGS FOR JUNE

Date	Day in the Church Calendar	Psalm	1 st Reading	2 nd Reading	Gospel
7 th	First Sunday after Trinity	50:7-15	Hosea 5:15-6:6	Romans 4:13-end	Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26
14 th	Second Sunday after Trinity	100	Exodus 19:2-8a	Romans 5:1-8	Matthew 9:35-10:23
21 st	Third Sunday after Trinity	69:8-11	Jeremiah 20:7-13	Romans 6:1b-11	Matthew 10:24-39
28 th	Fourth Sunday after Trinity	89:8-18	Jeremiah 28:5-9	Romans 6:12-end	Matthew 10:40-end

MINISTRY CONTACTS

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Churchwarden

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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

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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

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 22nd June

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



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

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