



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
July 2026

From Father Chris

Anthony was a teenager who wore several 'labels'. His school file labelled him 'challenging', his teacher labelled him 'feral(!)', the school 'mentoring scheme' labelled him 'one for the Vicar!' An odd combination of qualifications equipped me for an unusual role in a large secondary school: a niche certification in the psychology of personality type won respect in the staffroom, the fact that I was expelled from my school at 14 gained me a hearing with my client group - teenagers such as Anthony - with whom I produced bespoke 'behaviour management plans' described by the headmaster as 'the most useful psychological input I've been offered in 20 years of headship!'

Anthony was a highly intelligent totally undisciplined rebel. That's why I was stunned when he came into one session and announced his perfect career: he was going to join the army as a sniper! I broke it to him gently, explaining to the crestfallen teenager that it didn't work the way he imagined: he would only be given the high-powered rifle, cool night vision glasses and shopping list of targets once he had first proved himself as a good soldier who obeyed orders. That would mean embracing all the things he hated: wearing uniform, following the demands of authority figures, and above all *getting up in the morning even when he didn't feel like it...*

The same kind of progression is needed in all sorts of activities. To join a choir you need to pass an audition: you may impress the director with your potential as an eventual soloist but still need to demonstrate the desire and discipline to sing in unison with the choir for the benefit of the shared performance. 'To contribute while fitting in' (making your own sounds while learning to listen and blend with others) is the aim of every good chorister: push yourself forward too often as a 'performer' and the director and the rest of the choir may wonder whether you actually want to belong to a choir at all. They may 'encourage you to pursue your career as a soloist'...*elsewhere!*

In a recent 'Something More' house-group we discussed an article offering an angle on the profound theme of whether being a Christian is primarily a call to 'be' or to 'do'. Some Christians believe that our usefulness is the key to our Christian belonging, and some churches encourage such thinking – they tell people they have been given extraordinary gifts in order to achieve extraordinary things, and challenge them constantly with the question 'am I doing enough for God?' This can all sound very spiritual: one regularly encounters churches which feel somehow 'busy....yet driven'. The trouble is, like political careers, such a model of Christianity invariably ends in a sense of failure: age or infirmity means we can no longer do what we once did, some get exhausted by the demands and simply walk away to find a less stressful life: let's face it, who wants to be haunted at the end of life by the nagging inner question 'did I do enough for God?'

The article pointed us back to the heart of Christianity as *belonging*. We belong to Christ: we belong to the Church of Christ. In traditional terms, it reminded us of the value of learning to be a 'parishioner' – learning to dwell embedded within a spiritual community, the spiritual equivalent of 'singing in the chorus' – learning with and from others, enjoying the unison and harmony of a community that listens as well as speaks, bringing the Gospel script to life helped by a conductor who 'knows the score'.

The article encouraged readers to re-learn the concept of '*ordinary faithfulness*' – you or I are not extraordinary in ourselves, but the Body of Christ *is* extraordinary, and we are part of it. 'Ordinary faithfulness' finding our meaning in the ordinary things of Christian living: in worshipping, in belonging – which the writer describes so simply as 'the choice to inhabit our baptismal vows' (have you looked at yours recently?), in bearing witness – telling others what we have found out from our own experience. As I get older, somehow I find this ideal of 'ordinary faithfulness' more appealing!

Contd.....

..... I moved on from that job, so I don't know what happened to Anthony. His angular personality made it hard for him to stay within the school community, but he needed help he could only find if he learned to belong in that community instead of constantly pushing boundaries of authority and expectation. Maybe in the end he was expelled after all – a decision already on the table if he needed help they could no longer offer, a pragmatic decision to protect the community from further damage. I hope he found his feet and a constructive career: though speaking personally I hope that career was more peaceful than the one he had chosen when I met him that day in school!

A Whistle-stop tour!



A weekend with our Chaplaincy was the climax of a Visitation of the Deanery of North West France by outgoing Archdeacon the Ven Dr Peter Hooper, and the Rt Revd Andrew Norman, Suffragan ('Assistant') Bishop of the Diocese. They arrived on Saturday lunchtime, three days into a trip that began at Tours and seemed to be majoring on a theme of 'the Chaplain is going: what will we do?' (*Tours, Vendee, Brittany....!*) Having made clear he was staying(!), Fr Chris

enjoyed a working lunch with the visitors giving time to discuss Chaplaincy plans and possibilities, as well as seeking advice on a current problem or two.



In the afternoon we were joined by Donna for a meeting at the home of Mgr Gregoire Cadot, Bishop of Coutances and a good friend of the Chaplaincy. This visit celebrated that relationship: both Bishops compared notes and found they were dealing with very similar challenges – helping local churches to adapt to change, moving towards a more missionary and less clergy-dependent future. Our visitors then headed off to Caen to meet with that Chaplaincy, and Fr Chris plodded home through the heat to prepare for Sunday.



Sunday dawned bright and *warm*: our visitors were in good form after a night in a Coutances hotel and a leisurely breakfast. Bishop Andrew celebrated our Eucharist, with a sermon drawing from the readings the theme 'do not be afraid!' In the final announcements Fr Chris thanked Fr Peter for his ministry of care and encouragement towards the Chaplaincy over recent years, and welcomed Bishop Andrew



with the hope that we will become good friends. Then came a special moment as Bp Andrew gave a blessing to Peter and Pat Williams on their 60th wedding anniversary, extending that blessing to include Peter and Wendy Woodley who had celebrated the same milestone a few weeks previously.



The well-attended service (had people come for the Bishop, or for the anniversaries? Both, of course!) ended with a photograph of the ministers at the church door along with the youngest member of the congregation, Arthur, in the arms of his doting grannie! There followed a happy and leisurely Bring and Share lunch, made



special by sparkling wine to begin, and a celebration cake at the end. Very many thanks to the little group of faithful workers who put in hours of work behind the scenes to ensure that all was ready, and that each aspect of the arrangements worked smoothly.

The final word belongs to Bishop Andrew, who writes:

Dear Chris, I much enjoyed my time with you all last weekend.....I appreciated the chance to get to know you and other members of La Manche chaplaincy, and look forward to building on that relationship in the future. I was delighted to be able to meet with Mgr Gregoire and encouraged to see how well embedded you are ecumenically....I'll be praying for the fruitful development of the chaplaincy in the months ahead, under your pastoral care and leadership.

Best wishes, + Andrew

So, how is it going?

A pattern for this new online ministry is starting to emerge – as few as two (once!) or as many as seven or eight, meeting each Tuesday at 19h30 for a simple online 'Evening Prayer', often linking to the celebration of any saint of that day. There will be a psalm or canticle, a reading, shared prayer ending with the Lord's Prayer and the Grace. Using the daily prayer form provided by the C of E helps our little group to tune our prayers to the worshipping heartbeat of the Church worldwide. It is fine to come for the service then either leave or else stay on for the 20h00 Bible Study or house-group.



Something More house-group

We've looked at so many topics over the years, and new people have joined us along the way. At the moment we're struggling to find the 'next great thing' (must be the heat!), while still thoroughly enjoying the discussions which bubble up when we do meet.

Fr Chris has received a new course at development stage for us to 'track test' – it is not yet publicly available. This is how it introduces itself: '*Deep Anglicanism Explored* is a flexible group study guide designed to introduce seekers, parishioners, and leaders to the depth, beauty, worship, doctrine, and missionary wisdom of the Anglican way.' Over our next couple of meetings we may use one or two selected units of this so that we can feed back to the writers whether we find the approach and content helpful and suggest improvements ahead of publication.

Together on Tuesday – some housekeeping notes!

'Zoom' have alerted us that links should not be published on the internet without precautions in place to keep out those we wouldn't welcome – there are some very odd people out there! There are two ways to solve the problem. The first and simplest is that we only publish Zoom links in Friday Focus, removing them when FF or anything else is put online. The second option is to publish Zoom links as now but introduce a 'waiting room' system, where the host must allow in, and can boot out if necessary, people who turn up to the meeting. For now we are trying the first option, but may need to try the second if it works better.

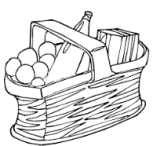


'Something More' dates for July are 7th and 21st.

The Bible Study will take place twice during July, on 14th and 28th continuing the study of the Letter of James.

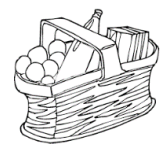


Alpha continues every Thursday evening finishing on 23rd July. Contact Mary or Helen to get the Zoom link.



Picnic with the Parson in July after the morning Eucharist service at Gratot.

Do join us, with your picnic, on **Sunday 26th July**



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.

Volunteers needed – Can you help?



The Hertford British Charitable Fund is an old and well-respected charity which exists to help British citizens living in France who may be facing difficulties or hardship. Key to their work is a network of volunteers who visit and work with applicants to make sure they get the help that best suits their needs.

The charity is keen to recruit one or more new volunteers to work in our area (and others). Volunteers must speak English – French would be helpful. IT skills and some knowledge of the French benefit system would be appreciated.

You can find out more from the website <https://www.hbcf.fr/> or by contacting jsgoatly@hbcf.fr

If you can't help, maybe you know someone else who might be ideal for the role? If so, please draw their attention to this appeal.



The service at 16h00 at Avranches on Sunday 12th July will take the form of a **Summer Songs of Praise.**

If you love music and praising our Lord in song, do come and join us.



More music in August

Cotswold Voices, the choir led by Revd Ben Phillips, will be singing at the 11h00 Eucharist at Gratot on **23rd August**. This year the choir programme will include the Missa Brevis, a masterwork of the 16th century Italian composer Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina.

Rather than being sung as a concert piece, the different sections of the Mass (Kyrie, Credo, Benedictus, etc) will be inserted at the proper moments during the service. It promises to be a real treat, so do note the date now.



The choir during an earlier visit to Normandy

Just for fun.....

<p>What starts with an "O" and ends with "nions" and sometimes makes you cry?</p> <p>Opinions.</p>	<p>I saw this bloke and he was shouting out, "Lambs for sale – were £10, now £5."</p> <p>I thought, that's sheep at half the price</p>	<p>What do you call someone who enjoys Mondays?</p> <p>Retired!</p>
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Minister's Message



As I write this, we are in the middle of a heat wave. Maybe things will have cooled down a little by the time you read this. We have certainly been reminded that summer is here, which seems to have a rhythm all of its own. For many of us, this month means a change of scenery - days out on the coast, quiet afternoons in the garden, visits to family, or a slower pace of life.

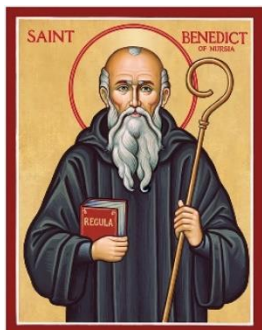
Sometimes our spiritual habits seem to take a holiday as well, but what if we looked at the summer months as a spiritual opportunity?

So often we have busy schedules. Yet God didn't create the Sabbath because he was tired; he created it because he knows we need space to remember who we are, not just what we do. Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Taking time to pause reminds us that the world will keep on turning because God is in control, not us.

This summer, let's challenge ourselves to look at the beauty around us and offer a quiet thank you, and to take the time we spend with friends or family to give them our undivided attention.

Wishing you a blessed, restful summer,
Mary Jackson (Lay minister)

Did you know? Europe has a patron saint!



Benedict was born in 480AD to noble parents in Nursia, a town in Umbria. Sent to study in Rome he became discontented, so fled to Subiaco to become a hermit. Drawing others by his example he went on to found twelve monasteries, shaping their community life by a written document, the 'Rule of St Benedict'. This soon became a Christian classic, and a model for many Christian communities in the following centuries. Benedict's 'Rule' has a timeless feel, and is marked by clarity, flexibility, common sense, and an awareness of human frailty.

Benedict died in 547 at Monte Casino, one of the monasteries of his Order. That Order continued to flourish and spread. Augustine of Canterbury the 6th century Roman missionary was a member; he brought the Benedictine way to England with such success that the Cathedrals at Canterbury and nine other places in England were established as Benedictine Abbeys and remained as such until the Reformation brought the Benedictine story in England to a (temporary) end. Today there are both Anglican and Roman Catholic Benedictines once more in England. The worship pattern of the Benedictine Order was so influential that it helped to shape the Book of Common Prayer, which remains, at heart, a book of Benedictine spirituality.

As well as being the founders of monasticism in the Christian West, Benedict and his order played a part in the conversion of every country in Europe. For that reason, in 1964 he was declared a Patron Saint of Europe (alongside St Bridget of Sweden) by Pope Paul VI. His feast day is 11th July.

Fr Chris

DIARY DATES

Wednesdays 1 st and 15 th July 10h00 – 12h30	The Baker English Library at Gratot
Thursdays 2 nd , 9 th , 16 th and 23 rd July 20h00	Alpha Course on Zoom
Tuesday 7 th July 10h30	Coffee Catch-up Poké Mi, Avranches
Tuesdays 7 th and 21 st July 20h00	Something More on Zoom
Sunday 12 th July 16h00	Summer Songs of Praise at Avranches
Sunday 12 th July 17h00	Service in Cherbourg
Tuesdays 14 th and 28 th July 20h00	Bible Study on Zoom
Sunday 23 rd August 11h00	Cotswold Voices will sing at Eucharist service at Gratot

SERVICES IN JULY

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
5 th July	Morning Prayer	Holy Eucharist
12 th July <i>17h00, Cherbourg service</i>	Holy Eucharist	Evening Prayer with Summer Songs of Praise
19 th July	Morning Prayer	Holy Eucharist
26 th July	Holy Eucharist	Evening Prayer

READINGS FOR JULY

Date	Day in the Church Calendar	Psalm	1 st Reading	2 nd Reading	Gospel
5 th	Fifth Sunday after Trinity	145:8-15	Zechariah 9:9-12	Romans 7:15-25a	Matthew 11:16-19, 25-end
12 th	Sixth Sunday after Trinity	65:8-end	Isaiah 55:10-13	Romans 8:1-11	Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
19 th	Seventh Sunday after Trinity	86:11-end	Isaiah 44:6-8	Romans 8:12-25	Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
26 th	Eighth Sunday after Trinity	119: 129-136	1 Kings 3:5-12	Romans 8:26-end	Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

MINISTRY CONTACTS

CHAPLAIN

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Wardens

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Churchwarden and Chaplaincy Treasurer

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Michaela Winterman
Churchwarden

07 88 38 33 93

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



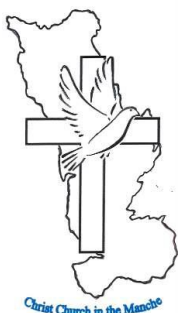
Useful websites

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 July

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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