



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
September 2026

From Father Chris

I love autumn, but never before have I wished August such an eager farewell! At home the August heat has battered our health (and the health of our dogs), and drought has made it hard to keep our garden alive – each day bowls of used washing up water have been carried down paths to refresh gasping hydrangeas. Thankfully cooler, damper weather has arrived just in time, but in this last week of August the carpet of fallen leaves warns that the display of autumn colours will be sparse this year.

In September we start to think about Harvest. Harvest doesn't just happen – it is the culmination of careful planting, timely tending, watering where you can, and praying that God will deliver the climate needed for your crop to do well. Harvest is a time to be thankful, take stock, and plan for the future. In June 2024 the Chaplaincy Council committed the Chaplaincy to a three year process to build up our viability, our ability to sustain ongoing ministry including a Chaplain. Three priorities were agreed, and we have been working on these since then. What did we agree, and how are we doing as we look towards Harvest? We agreed:

1 To build our income so that resources are sufficient to provide for a House for Duty Chaplain - a first year Stewardship Renewal was highly successful, the second was good but less focussed. The third Renewal is being planned for later this month.

2 To grow in numbers through better publicity, and by planting a new church. We have a few but very welcome new members but we have lost some older members: attendances are consolidating, at Avranches in particular. We have made massive progress with our online presence on Facebook and elsewhere. We have made a good start at Cherbourg, but that effort may need to be sustained for a while before we see a real impact on our overall numbers.

3 To deepen the discipleship of our existing church community. It's difficult to measure 'raising the temperature' of a church: we can only offer opportunities and hope people will take them up. Attending Sunday services can be a start to being a Christian, but it is only a start! Our 'Together on Tuesday' online ministry offers flourishing Bible Study and house group meetings, with discussions of real quality and insight. An 'Alpha Course' attracted existing church members (rather than new faces) but encouraged them in faith. Our prayer ministry – especially for the sick and struggling – has proved effective time and time again.

In this third year of the three-year plan, the Chaplaincy focus now needs to be on ensuring that our finances are robust to support the cost of a long-term Chaplain appointment once we reach the end point of the three year term. This month's Stewardship Renewal will obviously encourage the giving aspect of this process, but that probably won't be enough in itself: depending on the Stewardship response the Church Council will need to pull together other parts of the picture - fundraising, and our financial and physical assets - and ensure they are serving our priorities.

All this reflection fits with the themes of thoughtful Harvest celebration. We take stock of what has been planted, learn from what has flourished and what has struggled, recognise that hoped-for results have been affected by the unpredictable challenges of the climate, give thanks for what has been received, and plan how to reinvest all we can for the next stage, looking beyond this intense three-year 'transition ministry' phase towards the longer-term shape of our churches. This effort is too important to leave to the Chaplaincy Council – we all have our part to play!

What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe – as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labour. For we are fellow workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building. (1 Corinthians 3, vv5-9)

Love in Christ, Fr Chris



19h30 every Tuesday – a short service of Evening Prayer on Zoom.

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**' dates for September are 1st and 15th. On the first of these dates, Donna will be telling us all about her trip to Lourdes; this sure to lead into some fascinating conversations about pilgrimage, healing ministry and many other topics, so do come and join in. The Zoom link is to be found in Friday Focus.

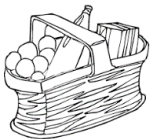
Meeting Malachi!

The Tuesday Bible Study Group recently completed a study of the Letter of James, so we are turning now to read the Old Testament book of Malachi. Most Christians have heard of James, but who on earth was Malachi? To get you started, here are five facts about Malachi and his book.



- 1 Malachi is the last of twelve brief Old Testament books known collectively as the 'Minor Prophets'.
- 2 Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament, and was probably the latest to be written (c400 BC?) unless your Bible includes the books of the Apocrypha/Deuterocanon.
- 3 Malachi was written in Hebrew (but contains some Aramaic), but the oldest manuscript of it, and the oldest complete text of it, is written in the Greek Old Testament – the Septuagint.
- 4 Malachi is extremely brief: the Hebrew Bible divides it into four chapters, the Greek into three (so most Bibles have some very confusing verse numbers!).
- 5 Malachi isn't a name, it's a title, meaning 'My Messenger' – the Greek version is called 'His Messenger'. The book is anonymous – there was no prophet named 'Malachi'!

One passage from Malachi is always read in Advent and Christmas – can you find it? It's time to open the Book of Malachi.



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



Do join us, with your picnic, on **Sunday 27th September**.

Agnès writes:

The association for the protection of the Hommèel church is holding its annual service on Saturday 5th September, in the Hommèel church, at 18h30. You are welcome to attend as representatives of our community which is a friend of this association.

Welcome guests ...

Amid gloomy statistics of widespread church decline, one type of service is bucking the trend and has seen attendance rise by over 60% in the last decade - cathedral choral worship, especially evensong. At Gratot on Sunday August 23rd we had a taste of why that should be with the fifth visit of the Cotswold Voices to enrich our worship and lift our hearts and minds above the everyday with sublime music.



The choir of sixteen, conducted by Ben Phillips, called us to worship with Bruckner's *Locus iste*, based on the words spoken by Moses as he encountered God in the burning bush. It speaks of every place being holy ground. The mass setting was Palestrina's *Missa Brevis* written in 1570. The texts we say or sing at every Eucharist - the Gloria, the Creed, the Sanctus and Agnus Dei - date back to the earliest centuries of Christianity and repeating them unites us with our brothers and sisters across time and space and holds together our differing expressions of faith around a central core. Quite apart from these lofty notions, beautiful music simply makes us feel better.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about the choir is that it doesn't actually exist. Look up Cotswold Voices online and all you find is a large amateur choir that sings pop songs for fun. Our visitors were basically a group of musical friends who live in and around Oxfordshire who enjoy singing and love Normandy. Many of them were choral scholars at Cambridge, including Ben who sang with the world famous King's College Choir as an undergraduate. His wife, Sarah, also a member of the choir, and editor of that estimable publication the *Church Times*, said, 'We are very much a scratch choir, only singing together over the Friday and Saturday before the Sunday in Gratot.'



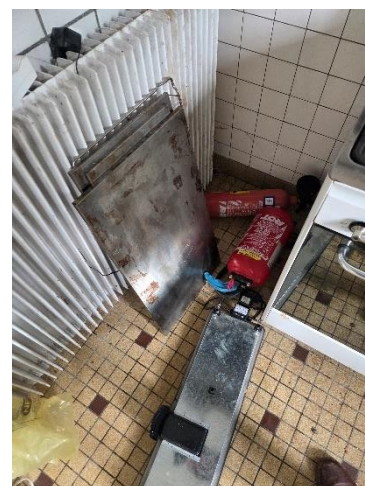
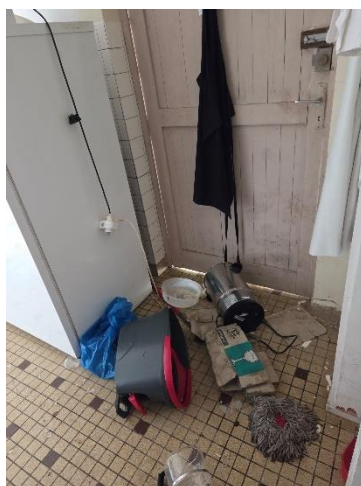
The quality of their music makes that hard to believe, but one thing is for sure. In the words of the communion anthem they chose, the 1892 composition *Beati quorum* by Charles Villiers Stanford with its multiple repetitions of the word *beati* meaning blessed, we knew ourselves to be blessed.

Revd Christine Smith

...and less welcome!

On the morning of the choir visit, when Agnès and François went into the hall to prepare the coffee for later, a great shock awaited them. It was clear there had been a break-in! Items from the kitchen shelves were strewn all over the floor, many of them broken. Oddly, there was no sign of a forced entry – all doors and windows were securely fastened – the only strange thing was a broken ceiling tile. As others arrived, there was a sudden movement and a tail appeared from under the oven. Michaela recognised it and the mystery was solved. Our intruder was an inquisitive weasel (*fouine* in French)!

A huge THANK YOU is due to Agnès, François and Michaela who did a great job clearing up all the mess.





Mgr Stanislas Lalanne Past Bishop of Coutances & Avranches

It was with great sadness that we heard of the sudden and unexpected death on the 17th August, of our friend Mgr Stanislas Lalanne. He had been Bishop of Coutances and Avranches for six years before being moved to Pontoise near Versailles. During that time he became a friend and supporter to our new chaplaincy and was instrumental in finding us a new home when we had to leave the school in Coutances. With his help he smoothed the path to us

having a permanent place to worship at the chapel of Our Lady at Homm  el in Gratot.

His funeral took place at Pontoise on Tuesday 25th and Wednesday 26th August, at which Bishop Cador passed on our condolences. A Requiem Mass subsequently took place on Friday 28th which I had the honour of attending on our behalf. Mgr Cador referred to him as the grandfather of the Diocese. His life, on listening to the testimonies about him, was one of service to others, a fact that we ourselves can testify to. The Cathedral was full and the music was spiritually uplifting. I pray that he is now at peace with our Lord, knowing that he had been a good shepherd to all those he came into contact with.

God Bless, Donna x

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.

Weasels Continued!

A reminder from childhood for our British readers. This is a scene from the much-loved children's classic "The Wind in the Willows" by Kenneth Grahame, in which Mole and Badger confronted the wicked weasels who had taken over Mr Toad's home, Toad Hall. "Our" weasel seems to have done even more damage!

This image was painted by the artist Ron Embleton for an illustrated edition of the story.



Just for fun.....

"A cannibal once took my sister to see a Russell Crowe movie." "Gladiator?" "No I really miss her."	I'm having an awful time at the moment. The back of my car fell off and you'll never guess what you can't buy at a car boot sale. (Anna Thomas)	Hamlet was an indecisive chap. He liked sketching but could never decide which pencil to use: 2B or nor 2B
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Minister's Message

Treasure in Heaven

We often hear people say 'You can't take it with you' and as true as that is most of us seem to live as though we can, saving for a rainy day, accumulating things that we often don't need and may never use. Reluctant to dispose of anything in case we need it or just because it is nice to have.

The issue isn't that earthly treasures are intrinsically bad, but they are of no ultimate value either. If this is the case, then it is wrong for the disciple of Jesus to dedicate his life to continually expanding his earthly treasures. (David Guzik)

"Jesus does not say it is wrong to possess earthly treasure. He does say it is wrong to lay it up for self. We are to hold it as stewards." (Morgan)

It has been wisely observed that a moving truck full of possessions never follows a hearse. Everything one might take with one to the world beyond is left behind. The pharaohs of Egypt were buried with gold and treasures to take into the afterlife, but they left it all behind. Even further, though gold is a precious thing on earth, God uses it to pave the streets of heaven. (David Guzik)

It all depends on our attitude, is this what we live and work for, is it what we strive to keep. Whatever we have in this life it will be far surpassed by what God has waiting for us in the next. "No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor. 2:9) and Jesus promised 'In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.' (John 14:2) and if the streets are paved with gold what must the mansions be like. If this is what God has got waiting for us why do we spend so much time worrying, working for and clinging on to the things of this life.

Jesus tells us 'Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. (Matthew 6:19-20) but what does that mean? The short answer is "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. (Matthew 22:37-39) In other words putting all we are, all we have and all we can do at God's disposal for Him to use to the benefit of His kingdom and of other people. This of course includes The Church of Christ here on earth and in our case particularly here in La Manche.

With our third annual Stewardship Renewal taking place in a few weeks, we will be asking everyone to consider again what they are doing for God's kingdom and what more they could do to build the Chaplaincy particularly in view of our need to be in a position to appoint a long-term Chaplain when the time comes.

All that we do for God and His work in this life is 'laying up treasure in Heaven' and I like to think that in this mansion that has been prepared just for me is a treasure chest and when I open it I don't want to find it empty.



Adrian Grainge

Pilgrimage to Lourdes

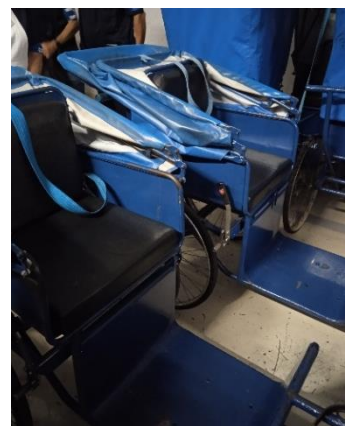


A recent visit with the Bishop of Coutances and Avranches on what else we could do together ecumenically brought about an invitation to join him and the invalids on a pilgrimage to Lourdes. At a briefing a fortnight before we left, I found out exactly what I had let myself in for. Looking at the programme it was going to be a punishing schedule with a lot packed in. Just how punishing was not appreciated until we got there. I have become very unfit and sedentary since Roger passed away but was determined to make the most of this opportunity. And what an opportunity it turned out to be.

After a 12-hour coach ride with a couple of pit stops, we arrived in Lourdes at the Hospital Saint Frai. There it was straight to work being assigned to the rooms and pilgrims we would be looking after. I was assigned to a room of six gentlemen with various infirmities. Having

worked in a nursing home in the UK and being an on-board first responder in the Royal Navy, it was nothing new to me, except now I was thirty years older, fatter, and unfit! Whilst our invalids had their supper we unpacked suitcases, arranged belongings in cupboards and made-up beds. Once supper was over it was washing, changing, and settling our invalids into their PJs for the night. Then off to our own hotels for a very late supper, collect room keys and collapse into bed. The forecast for the week had predicted several days of rain – but it lied as we only had one very heavy shower from God, the rest of the time we had scorching hot days and soaring temperatures.

The week settled into a pattern. Up at 5.45am, down for breakfast at 6.15, then back to Saint Frai hospital to wake up, wash and dress our charges and get them into breakfast. Once there it was back to their rooms to re-make the beds and change any dirty linen. After breakfast it was morning prayers and off we went although the first morning was slightly different. Whilst those who had been before stayed and watched a film of Bernadette's life we newbies were given a tour of the Sanctuary, visiting the different Chapels, Basilicas, the grotto and spring, the bathing area, finishing with a quick lesson on how to operate the 'voitures bleu'. They are in fact very similar to the rickshaw design only with three wheels for ease and stability for the rider and the person pulling it.



After lunch the pilgrimage began in earnest and it was off to the opening ceremony. It was an organised procession dealt with with military precision. Wheelchairs at the front and rickshaws behind, then an orderly procession through the town to the sanctuary and the designated place of worship. It was during this ceremony that each of the newbies, like myself, were presented with a chaplet or rosary. Not being a Roman Catholic I did not expect to receive one even though there is an Anglican rosary, so I was very surprised when my name came up and I too was given one. It's amazing how that small item became so comforting over the week. Having translated the words from our service book into English and memorised it I was able to join in. I had never really understood the reciting the rosary but the repetition put you in a place where the noises around you seemed to fade away and one was able to concentrate and completely focus on the prayers and responses. It was a moment of complete calm and connection to God for me. A practice I think I shall continue.

Continued on next page.....

So followed the daily routine. Up, breakfast, charges up and breakfasted, morning prayer, mornings activity, lunch, afternoon activity, supper, evening activity, charges to bed, quick update on the following day and to our own beds. At each of the activities in the different chapels or basilicas we were joined by the ordinary pilgrims of our group and the youngsters from Coutances who had arrived a few days earlier with Mgr Cador. He presided over all of our offices until he left for Paris and the funeral of Stanislas Lalanne.

The opening office in the church of St Bernadette included the '*gest de l'eau*', the ceremonial washing of hands and face and drinking from the cold spring water, cleansing you inside and out. Next was the international mass in the underground basilica which holds around 20,000 people. I had been invited me to take part and Chris had advised I wear an Alb and scarf instead of my usual cassock etc. as it would be cooler. Being the only female amongst so many priests, deacons, bishops, seminarists and acolytes, left me feeling very out of place and uncomfortable as eyebrows were raised. However Bishop Cador reassured me that all would be OK. With everyone in white and gold and me with a blue scarf, I sort of stuck out like a sore thumb, especially as I walked alone in between the seminarists and deacons with nowhere to hide. That evening was the 'Marial' procession, a procession of light where Mary is carried through the sanctuary on the shoulders of four men. This year it was Coutances who had that honour. As darkness fell the light of thousands of candles shone out. During the week came the stations of the cross, the chapel of light, the visit to the grotto for all to touch the walls and see the spring, the office of the chaplet of the rosary which, because we arrived early, we were able to do in both English and French! Divine providence?



Three events in particular had a profound effect on me. The first, the anointing of the sick. I requested to receive this as my back had been playing up since our coach journey. For some reason this opened a floodgate of emotions that I had been keeping in check. I started to cry and then couldn't stop. I don't think I've ever prayed so hard in my life as I did at that point.

Next was the bath in the pool of the spring water. I'm not sure what I expected but I had been forewarned that one goes in naked. This was true but is done so discreetly as a towel soaked in the spring water is wrapped around one to preserve one's modesty. Down the first step into what was icy cold water. A cooling balm to tired feet. The second step where you stopped to say your prayers. Then into the bath. Two assistants hold your arms as you are lowered back into the bath and then pulled back up again. It was over in seconds. I wanted to stay there it was so comforting. I did not feel cold even though it was icy cold water. I came out positively glowing, grinning from ear to ear, I felt light and pain free. (At least for a few hours.)



The final ceremony was the Eucharistic procession. Again Coutances was the honoured Diocese. The additional pilgrims from the Diocese took our places at the wheelchairs and rickshaws as we brought up the rear. Lining up in rows of four

we held hands, processing the central prairie and into the underground basilica. Looking at the ladies and girls in front of me and those behind I felt a huge sense of family. I felt that I had found a new family all with the same action and mindset to helping those who for whatever reason are unable to help themselves as they would like. We became their arms and legs. It was an absolute honour to walk beside and with these selfless people who give up a week of their annual holidays to put others before themselves. It has opened my eyes to the true value of servitude in the name of Jesus Christ and I wait with anticipation to experience it all again next year.

Love and blessings Donna x

DIARY DATES	
Tuesday 1 st September 10h30	Coffee Catch-up Poké Mi, Avranches
Tuesdays 1 st , 15 th and 29 th September 20h00	Something More on Zoom
Wednesdays 2 nd and 16 th September 10h00 – 12h30	The Baker English Library at Gratot
Saturday 5 th September 18h30	Annual service of the Association for the Protection of Hommêel Church
Tuesdays 8 th and 22 nd September 20h00	Bible Study on Zoom
Sunday 13 th September 17h00	Service in Cherbourg
Sunday 20th September	Stewardship Sunday

SERVICES IN SEPTEMBER		
<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
6 th September	Morning Prayer	Holy Eucharist
13 th September <i>17h00, Cherbourg service</i>	Holy Eucharist	Evening Prayer
20 th September	Morning Prayer	Holy Eucharist
27 th September	Holy Eucharist	Evening Prayer

READINGS FOR SEPTEMBER					
Date	Day in the Church Calendar	Psalms	1 st Reading	2 nd Reading	Gospel
6 th	Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity <i>Creation in Christ</i>	119:33-40 <i>Or</i> 96	Ezekiel 33:7-11 <i>Or</i> <i>Isaiah 55:12-end</i>	Romans 13:8-end <i>Or</i> <i>Colossians 1:15-20</i>	Matthew 18:15-20 <i>Or</i> <i>John 11:1-14</i>
13 th	Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity <i>Harvest Festival?</i>	103:8-13 <i>Or</i> 65	Genesis 50:15-21 <i>Or</i> <i>Deuteronomy 8:7-18</i>	Romans 14:1-12 <i>Or</i> <i>2 Corinthians 9:6-end</i>	Matthew 18:21-35 <i>Or</i> <i>Luke 12:16-30</i>
20 th	Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity Stewardship Sunday	<i>tba</i>	<i>tba</i>	<i>tba</i>	<i>tba</i>
27 th	Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity	25:1-8	Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-end	Philippians 2:1-13	Matthew 21:23-32

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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 September

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



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