



## ANGLICAN CHAPLAINCY OF MARSEILLE, AIX-EN-PROVENCE AND THE LUBERON

### NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2019

#### Christmas

Recently I was asked what difference I thought Christmas makes. It occurred to me that one difference is that it helps us reconnect with what matters most. For some that means family. For others it means goodwill, the generosity of spirit often encountered at this time of the year. For others it means meeting those we don't usually meet - relatives or friends we see only rarely but who are part of a Christmas tradition, without whom it wouldn't be the same.

Yet for every family happily reassembling around a Christmas table, there are others for whom there will be little joy. Any number of things can make this time of year feel bleak and alienating - bereavement, illness, loss of relationship, work or home, or simply the grinding struggle to make ends meet. Some Christmases are endured rather than enjoyed and, as always, our hearts are with those for whom this year will be especially hard.

One thing that unites us in our joys and struggles is the assurance that, however little we may understand it, somehow we matter to God. So much so that in love God came among us, suffered, died and rose for us, is with us now in Spirit and will be with us until the end of time. That's what makes the difference.

For many of us, last week's General Election result in the UK brings the prospect of Brexit uncomfortably close. The New Year will bring apprehension and, for some, life-changing decisions. The message which sounds insistently through the Christmas Gospel, which we hear each time the story of our redemption is retold, is 'Fear not'. It will be a good message to take with us into the New Year and to hold close in the months ahead.

What matters most is love. As the Letter of John reminds us, perfect love casts out fear. Perfect love was revealed in Bethlehem, incarnate in a manger.

May I wish all of you a blessed and peaceful Christmas, and a hopeful New Year.

Almighty God,  
you have given us your only-begotten Son  
to take our nature upon him and as at this  
time to be born of a pure virgin:  
grant that we, who have been born again  
and made your children by adoption  
and grace,  
may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
Amen.





## Chaplaincy news

### Christmas Fair

*Jane Quarmby writes:*

The Chaplaincy Christmas Fair on Saturday 30th November 2019 at All Saints was a great success. We raised nearly 1400 euros thanks to the generosity of those who gave cakes, bottles, handicrafts, brocante, Christmas cards and mulled wine, and the hard work of the team who organised the event and helped out on the day. It was a lovely atmosphere and many people came to support us.

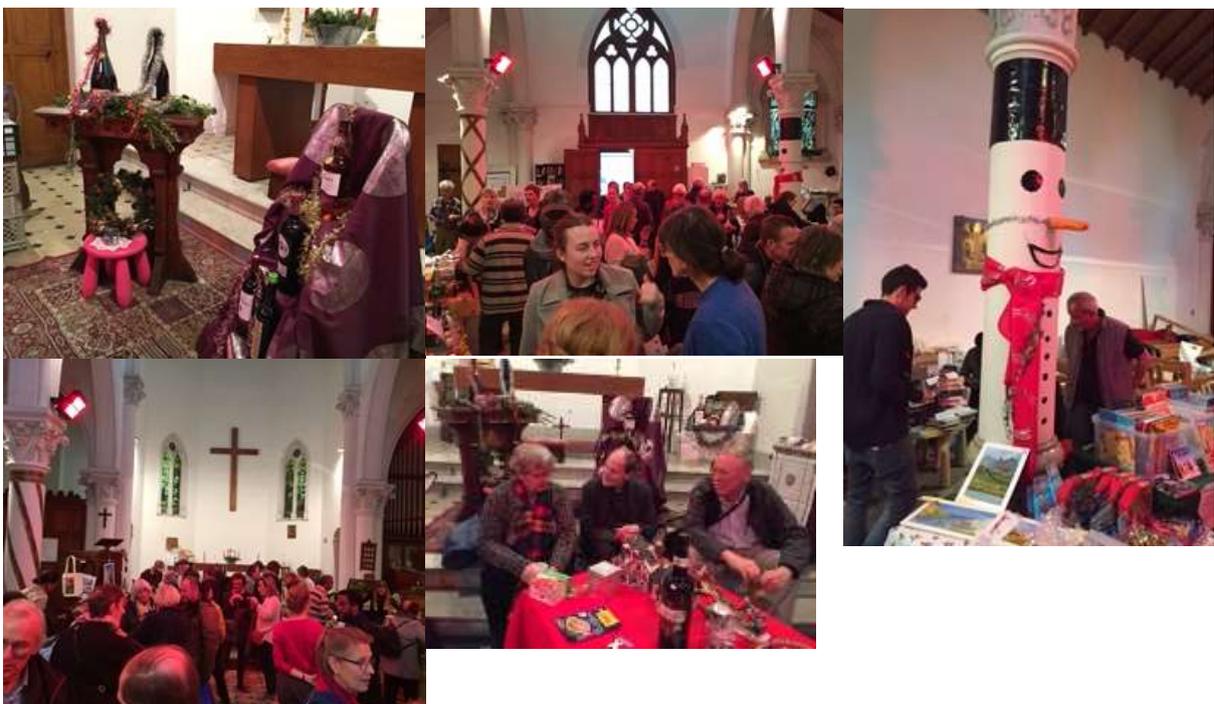
Particular thanks to Helen Brooking for overseeing the planning and organising, ably aided and abetted by many volunteers. In addition to the active participation of many members of the congregation, special mention must be made of the involvement and attendance of two separate groups of people:

- AAGP (Anglo American Group of Provence) with its Marseille based members, coordinated by Lydia Arnold, and

- Marseille Autrement, an association providing social and cultural activities to its members. Thanks to Nicole Cadilhac, who belongs to both associations, we had the pleasure of welcoming more than 30 members of Marseille Autrement.

And we also had the visit of several members of Marseille Seamen's Club.

A magnificent example of how people can mix when they are united by a common interest.





## **Carol Service**

The Carol Service in Marseille was held on Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> December at 4.00 pm. A large group of regulars and visitors gathered to sing carols and hear readings in English and French, and the service was followed by mulled wine and mince pies. Thanks to all who took part and helped to prepare the church.

## **Ecumenism at ground level**

*Christine Portman writes:*

For well over 40 years we Anglicans have been made welcome at Roman Catholic worship in France. Knowing that many of us find ourselves far from our nearest Anglican church, they have been more than happy to see us join them. Since our arrival in a tiny 'village perché' in the Grand Luberon, David and I have been happy to continue worshipping at Marseille, Aix and Oppède, but there are weeks when we stay at home and worship locally.

Like many small villages, ours sees only occasional services these days: clergy find themselves spread very thinly! But we are blessed with being only a few minutes away from a very special community where there is Sunday worship every week. Founded by Franciscan sisters many years ago, Berdine is a community which lives and breathes practical Christian service. People who have lost their way in life – whether through alcohol, drugs or a time living on the streets - make a positive choice. They come to Berdine to be a part of the community, renouncing any previous addictions. Living a simple life far away from malign influences, they become part of a working community, in the process rediscovering a sense of self-worth.

We have been privileged to worship with those who live in or support Berdine for ten years now, but sadly at the end of the summer their priest, Jean-Michel left us. One of the Petits Frères, he was a truly wonderful man, at the heart of the community and its spiritual strength. He is sadly missed by all, not least because as yet the local Catholic church is unable to offer a priest to lead Sunday worship. Our friends at Berdine have therefore invited us to lead Anglican Holy Communion services on the Sundays when we're not leading worship with our own congregations. Our Archdeacon is happy with the arrangement and we feel it's important to offer them our support at this difficult time. Jean-Michel's big shoes will take some filling, but please pray for the wonderful work of this community and that soon God will send a new leading light to support them as they expand their priceless work.

## ***Réveillon solidaire***

Our neighbours at the Eglise Protestante Unie in Marseille have invited us to join them in supporting an ecumenical project taking place over Christmas in the rue d'Aubagne, the street in which two apartment buildings collapsed just over a year ago.

A Christmas meal is being organised at a local school for residents who would otherwise be spending the evening alone. If anyone is interested in taking part in the event, or has time to spare on 26<sup>th</sup> December to help with the clearing up, please get in touch with the Chaplain who has details of who to contact.



### Fr Patrick's (almost) birthday



On 8<sup>th</sup> December we were delighted to celebrate Fr Patrick Cassidy's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday after the Sunday service in Marseille. This was slightly in advance, as he wasn't due to be in church on the actual date, but the congregation were determined this shouldn't deprive them of cake...



### Dates for your Diary

#### ***Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> December***

3.30 pm Christmas Carol Service at the Eglise Saint-Sébastien, Goult, followed by a reception

#### ***Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> December – Fourth Sunday of Advent***

10.00 am Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille led by The Revd Jamie Johnston

#### ***Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Eve***

3.00 pm Holy Communion at the Oratoire, Aix-en-Provence led by The Revd Jamie Johnston

#### ***Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Day***

10.00 am Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille led by The Revd Jamie Johnston

#### ***Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> December – First Sunday of Christmas***

10.00 am Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille led by The Revd Jamie Johnston, with Reader Jane Quarmby preaching

#### ***Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> January – Epiphany Sunday***

10.00 am Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille led by The Revd Jamie Johnston, with Reader Jane Quarmby preaching

11.00 am Holy Communion at the Oratoire, Aix-en-Provence, led by The Revd Canon David Pickering with Reader Christine Portman

#### ***Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> January – First Sunday after Epiphany***

10.00 am Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille led by The Revd Canon David Pickering

10.30 am Holy Communion at the Eglise Sacré Coeur, Oppède led by The Revd John Smith, with Reader Jane Quarmby preaching

#### ***Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> January – Second Sunday after Epiphany***

10.00 am Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille led by The Revd John Smith

#### ***Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> January – Third Sunday after Epiphany***

10.00 am Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille led by The Revd Canon David Pickering

#### ***Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> February – Candlemas***

10.00 am Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille led by The Revd Jamie Johnston

11.00 am Holy Communion at the Oratoire, Aix-en-Provence, led by The Revd Canon David Pickering with Reader Christine Portman

With every blessing,

The Revd Jamie Johnston, Chaplain