

ANGLICAN CHAPLAINCY OF ALL SAINTS MARSEILLE
WITH AIX EN PROVENCE AND THE LUBERON

NEWSLETTER 23RD JULY 2020

Church services

We are continuing to hold services in the churches both in Marseille and Oppède, and also providing a twice weekly “Zoom” service for those who find it difficult to get to either of the churches. Details are at the end of the newsletter.

New Archbishop of York

On 9th July, Stephen Cottrell, formerly Bishop of Chelmsford, became the 98th Archbishop of York and two days later spoke to the Synod of his experience of recent months of lockdown. He said:

“the church must learn afresh how to share the gospel.

“I hugely miss our church buildings and our liturgy, just as I also miss going to the cinema and eating in restaurants, or just having a coffee; and I grieve for the fact that I was not able to say goodbye to the diocese of Chelmsford in the ways I wanted, nor am I able to hug my new grandson without donning a mask, and I cry out for the pain of all those socially distanced funerals, the thousands of people who have died alone, the baptisms, weddings and ordinations that have had to be postponed; the economic misery which is around the corner and the devastating impact of this pandemic upon the whole life of our world.

“But neither can I deny, that it has forced me to encounter things about myself which I had allowed to remain hidden behind the security of the things I have had to relinquish.”

He spoke about a group he is leading to discern a vision and strategy for the church for the next decade. The vision, he said, is the easy part: “It is unchanging, it is what God has done for us in Jesus Christ and continues to do through the power of the Spirit. At the moment I am engaged in a very wide-ranging discussion with people from all over the church but with a particular determination to draw in and listen to the voices of younger Christians and those whose voices are not usually so easily heard in church.”

He concluded his opening address to Synod with these words; “So, dear General Synod, as we enter some turbulent times and some challenging decisions, we are just going to have to learn again how to love one another, love the world and love God, so that both individually and collectively we can be the place where God is revealed.

“We’ve not always been very good at this.

“We have allowed ourselves to become tribal and divided.

“We have allowed secondary things to obscure our belonging to one another.

“The Holy Spirit reveals Christ in us; and through us may we learn afresh how to share the gospel in the world.”

Masks

France has now made it compulsory to wear masks in enclosed public spaces.

170th Anniversary of our Chaplaincy

Part 2 - Plague and pestilence: This is not our first epidemic!

Conditions in Marseille in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were far from healthy: as well as the risk of mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria, poor sanitation led to regular cholera epidemics. Infected rats were responsible for continuing sporadic minor epidemics of bubonic plague, notably in 1903 and 1930; these were rarely notified as 'plague' as such, but the authorities were quick to carry out sanitising measures which were clearly out of proportion for anything other than a deadly disease such as bubonic plague.

Most deaths occurred around the port areas, where infected rats had easy access and the poor local residents lived in appallingly inadequate housing. The main concern was the spread of disease, especially to the bourgeoisie: passengers at St Charles train station were fumigated, and the isolation of suspected or confirmed cases was a common practice.



1884: Passengers at Marseille St Charles Station being fumigated against cholera

The chaplaincy registers clearly show the human cost to the British colony, which can easily be illustrated through the experiences of Marseille chaplains over the course of only thirteen years. In 1853 the Revd. Michael John Mayers had to bury his own little girl: the heartbreaking entry in the register reads "Lucy Sophia, aged 8, daughter of the Revd. M. John Mayers, was buried this ninth day of March 1853, by me, M. John Mayers, British Chaplain". And in 1864, less than a month after taking up the Marseille post, the 36-year-old Revd. Joseph Beaumont Hawkins lost his wife. The details were recorded in the consular registry rather than that of the church, but the chaplain added a memorandum to the burial register to the effect that "On the 13th February 1864, my beloved wife was buried, service being taken by Revd. Robert Jarratt, Rector of Bourton."

In August 1885, having already conducted three burials that month, the Consular Chaplain the Revd. Avidis Garboushian himself died, at only 35 years old and six months into his tenure. Presumably due to the sudden lack of an English clergyman, he was not buried until the arrival of his successor, the Revd. Thomas Charles Skeggs, two months later. And on 29 February 1886, the young Revd. Skeggs was burying his own father, Charles John Skeggs, a Shanghai-based merchant aged only 56 years.

It's noticeable that throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, outbreaks of cholera, typhus fever and plague led to those residents who could afford to resort to the "three-word remedy" – *vite, loin, longtemps* [go fast, far, and for a long time]. Those who couldn't relied on masks, kept their distance from others, and attempted to cleanse themselves and purify the "bad air." Does any of this sound familiar? Of course – *plus ça change*. Importantly, although we lost many parishioners, the chaplaincy continued to grow, and to minister to the very seamen whose ships sometimes brought tragedy. And our 170-year mission to seamen is the topic of our next instalment.

Our thanks to Amanda Haste for these articles.

Dates for Diary

26th July	10.00 a.m. Holy Communion at All Saints, Marseille 11.30 a.m. Holy Communion via Zoom
29th July	10.00 p.m. Compline (Night Prayer) via Zoom
2nd August	10.00 a.m. Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille 11.30 a.m. Holy Communion via Zoom
5th August	10.00 p.m. Compline (Night Prayer) via Zoom

Prayer

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low, that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Articles for the newsletter

If anyone has an item for the newsletter please send to Jane Quarmby on jane.quarmby0430@gmail.com or to Jamie Johnston our Chaplain on anglican.marseille@gmail.com. The newsletter comes out every 2 weeks.

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