

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



NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2021

Reflection from our Chaplain

For many, 2021 has been a year marked by waves of hope and despondency. From the point of view of the Covid-19 pandemic, the arrival of effective vaccines brought a widespread optimism that daily life might return to something like it had been before March 2020. By the autumn this almost seemed to have become a reality, but the arrival of the Omicron variant towards the end of November seems to have changed all that. The sense of disappointment is palpable, even among the optimistic. For some, this feels like a truly bleak midwinter.

One thing that people are once more finding it hard to come to terms with is the way in which rules on travel and social contact are apt to change without warning. Families and friends find themselves unexpectedly apart again at Christmas. Fears for the vulnerable have returned. Others face different concerns and pressures that are heightened by the pandemic waves. Yet, as we prepare to celebrate Christ's birth, let us take the opportunity to focus on the things that do not change - the things of eternity, the things of God. If we can concentrate not so much on Omicron but on the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, which for Christians have always stood for the incarnate God born in a stable at Bethlehem, we may begin to see our own uncertain times in a different perspective: the perspective of the one whose Nativity we acknowledge and proclaim. And let us find in Him a firm source for hope, a ground that does not shift under our feet, as we hear again the assurance of the Christmas Gospel that 'the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it' (John 1.5).

Each year at our Easter Vigil, the priest traces on the Easter Candle the sign of the cross and then the two Greek letters above and below it, saying the words:

Christ, yesterday and today,
the beginning and the end,

Alpha and Omega,
all time belongs to him,
and all ages;
to him be glory and power, through every age and for ever.
Amen.

May those words offer some comfort to all who are finding these times difficult. For this too will pass, but the eternal gift of Christ will remain. The darkness will retreat and the light will return. And, with it, the song of the angels.

I wish all of you, and those you love, a blessed Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

The Revd Jamie Johnston, Chaplain – December 2021

Christmas Fair

Thanks to all who have been involved in our online Christmas Fair this year - whether baking, brewing and packaging, ordering produce or sending donations. Our Curate Roxana Telemann, Elizabeth Bernasconi, Anne and Gaston Roumieu, Christine Portman and many others have been active in supporting the chaplaincy through this effort, which is greatly appreciated. Details of the total raised will follow when the last mince pie has been baked!

Christmas Charity Appeal

Our Christmas Charity Appeal this year has enabled 50 families in two of the toughest neighbourhoods in London to receive extra support at Christmas. The distribution has been made via two primary schools, whose head teachers met our Chaplain Jamie online this week with Gladys Sheriff, our congregation member coordinating the work. One of the schools has a group of Afghan refugee children whom they have welcomed into their classes over the last few weeks. The appeal proceeds will make sure that some of their families in greatest need will have extra food at Christmas, and the schools are also making sure that every child receives a present. Thanks to all who have contributed to the appeal.

Concert at All Saints Marseille

The Chorale Sainte-Victoire, the choir which rehearses at All Saints', put on a concert for us in the afternoon on 12th December which was much enjoyed by all who attended.

Dates for Diary

24 th December	Holy Communion at the Eglise Protestant Unie, Aix at 4 pm Midnight Mass via zoom at 11 pm
25 th December	Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille at 10 am, which will be streamed

26 th December	Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille at 10 am Holy Communion via zoom at 11.30 am
29 th December	Compline service via zoom at 10 pm
2nd January (Epiphany)	Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille at 10 am Holy Communion via zoom at 11.30 am
5 th January	Compline service via zoom at 10 pm
7 th January	Evening service with prayers for healing via zoom at 6 pm
9 th January	Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille at 10 am Holy Communion at Eglise du Sacre Cœur, Oppède at 10.30 am Holy Communion via zoom at 11.30 am
12 th January	Compline service via zoom at 10 pm
16 th January	Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille at 10 am Holy Communion via zoom at 11.30 am Holy Communion at Temple Protestante Unie, Manosque at 4 pm
19 th January	Compline service via zoom at 10 pm
23 rd January	Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille at 10 am Holy Communion via zoom at 11.30 am Holy Communion at the Eglise Protestant Unie, Aix at 4 pm
26 th January	Compline service via zoom at 10 pm
30 th January	Holy Communion at All Saints Marseille at 10 am Holy Communion via zoom at 11.30 am

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Articles for the newsletter are always welcome. Please send to Jane as above