

PRAYERS AND SONGS FOR SEAFARERS

13 July 2016

On this past Sunday Mr Gérard Pelen, President of *l'Association Marseillaise d'Accueil des Marins* (AMAM) came to speak with us. He told us of the more than 1,000,000 sailors who come through our port of Marseille. He told us of their loneliness, their long multi-year contracts, and their fragile employment situations. It is difficult and isolated work.

It was SEA SUNDAY and our All Saints' Church in Marseille has been involved with ministry to seafarers for 168 years. Amanda, Tim, Gaston, Tony, Rhonda, Aidan, Helen and others regularly volunteer as hosts at the Seaman's Club. The club provides recreation equipment, Skype phone booths, coffee and tea and soup, reading material, free Bibles for take away, card tables and a listening ear. On occasion the volunteers are alerted to problems or dangers facing the sailors and they work with port authorities to arrange proper response or aid.

Gaston, from All Saints' is on the Executive Board of AMAM and is also their webmaster. It was through Gaston's good connections that we were able to host Mr Pelen and his wife at our worship service. We are very proud of all our All Saints' volunteers. All Saints', through all these benevolents, is making a difference and pulling its weight in hands-on practical charity.



Mr Gérard Pelen, President of l'Association Marseillaise d'Accueil des Marins (AMAM) speaks to the All Saints' congregation on Sea Sunday.

On Sunday our scripture readings told us how King Solomon built a fleet of ships to exploit the trade routes of the Mediterranean and out of the Red Sea. We heard how St Paul travelled by ship and was in such a storm that the crew threw the ship's tackle overboard to lighten the load in an attempt to keep from sinking. Times have been tough for sailors for thousands of years. Our gospel was about "Who is our neighbour" and "To whom do we see as those requiring our charitable love and response". The global population is our neighbour and Mr Gérard Pelen listed all the nations from where our sailor guests arrive and these nations circled the globe. Our Reader, Jane Quamby led us in extensive prayers for all those who work on the sea and in maritime industries including fishers, dockyard workers, and the crews of commercial tankers, cruise ships, and naval vessels. Amanda played the keyboard as Fr David led us in singing the bilingual version of "Spirit of Gentleness, wind, wind on the sea" and our closing hymn of "Eternal Father" the sailors hymn.