

Church of All Saints in the Vendée

“To know and to share Jesus Christ”

The Grapevine

January 2016

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Preface



I wish you all of God's blessings for 2016.

I appreciate that Christmas and New Year are difficult for some people for a variety of reasons, and my prayers are with you all. Whether we are aware of it or not, God is with us in the dark times, the painful times and the sorrow, as well as the times when we feel especially close in prayer or the joy of worship. Remember the 'Footprints' poem, where there are only one set of footprints it is because God is carrying us.

We have celebrated the birth of Christ, God coming to earth to live amongst us and show his face to us. The Incarnation that we have spent Advent preparing for, the precious gift that we have received, the time when we meet with God anew. This is a gift that lasts forever; we now have eternal life because the cross overshadows the cradle. Christ is our model of living, of how to have a relationship with the Father.

Paula Gooder in her book "Journey to the Manger" writes (about John the Baptist): 'John's calling is like so many others in the Old Testament and like none of them. John functioned simply as the one who would prepare God's people for God himself, born as a baby amongst us. It is worth reminding ourselves of this time after time. It is easy to slip into the assumption that the revelation of God in the world is entirely down to us; the success or failure of God's kingdom breaking in rests entirely on our shoulders. The reality is that we are called to be like John – not Jesus. We are called to turn people back to each other and back to God so that when they see Jesus they can recognise him to be who he is. We, like John, are called to be the warm up acts and nothing more.' p.50

A different concept perhaps, even the carols tell us to be more like Jesus, however it's an interesting point of view from one of our Theologians; we too, as the New Year starts, could think about how we are pointing others to Jesus. I don't think it contradicts Jesus telling us to love God and our neighbours, to forgive as we have been forgiven. After all we are frail human beings, imperfect in every way, but our words, actions and life should be about trying to help others to find God, to point towards Jesus as the one who reconciles us with God.

So, we have a chance to make a new start this year. We all have a way to go, a cliché I know, but a journey we are on, to grow with God. We all have a part to play in helping others along the path. We also need to remember that our way, our place on the path, may not be the only right one, not the one where everyone is. Nor is it our place to judge others in their style of worship. God created us all; we are one body of Christ. We are united by the sharing of the bread and wine.

None of us know what the New Year will bring, only God, and only then if we listen to him, but we do know how he wants us to be and that he wants us to point everyone to Jesus, our Saviour. Let us pray together that we will all hear what God wants from us, that we will obey him, and, as the Congregations of All Saints Vendée, we will grow in his love, grow in our knowledge, application and love of his word, that we will demonstrate that love to others and by our lives show that we are Christ's followers.

May God bless you all in 2016

Caroline

JANUARY CHURCH SERVICES WITH BIBLE READINGS

All Services start at 11am except where indicated

[We have also included the Psalms for each week, as they may inform your own reading at home]

3rd January	1100am	LCP	Holy Communion	Christmas 2 (We celebrate Epiphany)
Isaiah 60:1-6			Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14	Ephesians 3: 1-12 Matthew 2: 1-12
10th January	11.00am	PDS	Ecumenical Service	Baptism of Christ
17th January	11.00am	LCA	Holy Communion	Epiphany 2
Isaiah 62:1-5			Psalm 36:5-10	1 Corinthians 12:1-11 John 2:1-11
24th January	11.00am	PDS	Holy Communion	Epiphany 3
Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10			Psalm 19	1 Corinthians 12:12-31a Luke 4: 14-21
31st January	NO SERVICE			

(There may be last-minute changes to the readings so please check with Revd Caroline or the Worship Leader if you are a Reader)

*LCA = La Chapelle Achard; PDS = Puy de Serre; LCP = La Chapelle Palluau,
MW=Morning Worship; HC(CW)=Holy Communion (Common Worship); BCP=Book of Common Prayer;*



PLEASE JOIN US

*for Tea, Coffee & Biscuits after our services, followed by a Bring & Share Lunch.
Everyone is welcome to join us*

- even if you have not brought anything, there is always enough to go round!

(Unfortunately, when there is a service on the fifth Sunday in the month, the hall is not always available).



JANUARY FORWARD PLANNING

*This Forward Planning Rota displays those essential responsibilities which make our Services and Refreshments afterwards possible.
If you feel able to "fill in the blanks", please contact the Organiser concerned.*

Responsibility (Organiser)	3 rd January LCP	10 th January PDS	17 th January LCA	24 th January PDS	31 st January
Welcomers (Polly Ward)					NO SERVICE
Salle Setup/ Clearing away (Chris Green at PdS)		MILLER/ KENT		KENT/ GREEN	
Refreshments after the service (Jenny Wilkinson at PdS)		Ticia & Caroline		Jean & Ken	
Musicians +/- Organist (Polly Ward)		Stuart/French?		Stuart	
Readers (Polly Ward)					



NOTES FROM THE CHURCH WARDENS



Just a couple of items for your information.

- Most of you will have heard that Caroline suffered concussion and nerve damage when she was hit by a car door. She was checked out at hospital and returned home. As we write this report she is reporting feeling a little better with the help of pain killers and hopes to return soon. She is improving daily and hopes to take the Christmas services.

- You may recall that the organisation United Society (formally USPG) is supporting the work with refugees in the Diocese in Europe, particularly in Greece. They were given a remarkable gift of a painting, "Julia" by Joseph Wright. This has now been auctioned at Sotheby's and has raised around £550,000 to be applied to the refugee appeal. This means that a better, long-term strategic response can be made to this crisis which will continue for some years.

- A date has been set for the 2016 AGM of ASV, Saturday April 9th. Please mark the date in your diary. There will be a number of vacancies to be filled on Church Council and remember that Wardens are elected each year. Could you fill one of these positions?

We wish you all a happy and healthy 2016.

Doug and Barbara



Dates for your Diary



3rd January Sunday, 1100am LCP Holy Communion

4th January, and every Monday, **Deux-Sèvres Bible Study Group** (see details page 4)

6th January, Wednesday, 7pm for 7.30pm **The Filling Station** at Maison de Diocèse, La Roche sur Yon (see page 6)

10th January, Sunday, 11am, **Ecumenical Service** at Puy de Serre.

17th January, Sunday, 11.00am **Holy Communion** at La Chapelle Achard

24th January, Sunday, 11.00am **Holy Communion** at Puy de Serre

28th January, Thursday, 10.00, **Ministry Team meeting**

31st January NO SERVICE

...and looking ahead....

4th February, Thursday, 10.00, **Church Council meeting**

5th February, Friday, Quiz (see Polly Ward)

12th February, Friday, **Soirée Crêpes** at La Salle, Puy de Serre (See Polly Ward)

25th February, Thursday, 2.30pm 1st **Ladies' Circle** of the year – January's meeting has been cancelled.

9th April, Saturday, 14.30, **ASV AGM** at Les Essarts



A Thousand Gifts, a Thousand Blessings!



Don't forget your gifts on the 2nd Sunday of each month.

Bill and Carole will collect them and pass them on to Restos du Coeur in Coulonges-sur-l'Autize.

(See Bill's Christmas Letter)

For more details and updates of all these events, please visit our Website: www.AllSaintsVendee.fr

Deux-Sèvres BIBLE STUDY GROUP



We have recently finished an interesting and enjoyable study of JOHN'S GOSPEL and are now studying MATTHEW AND BECOMING A DISCIPLE.

We meet each Monday afternoon at 2.30pm at our house at La Barangerie, La Chapelle Thireuil (79).

Our phone number is 05 49 06 05 85.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

Please give us a ring if you would like to join us and we will give you directions to the house if you don't already know where we are.

Carole and Bill Stocking.

Coëx HOME GROUP



All are welcome to the next meeting at 2.30pm, Chez Suzanne,

109 La Maigrière, 85220 COËX,

where we shall continue our study of the BOOK OF ACTS.

If you would like to come and need directions, please call Suzanne on:

0244366290 or email: SiSuPatter@neuf.fr

SEE YOU THERE!

Names on our Prayer List.....

Please remember in your prayers:

Alasdair Anderson.		Peter Hutchinson.
Paul Brechet & Anne.		Lorna Inglis & family. (Lorna is the daughter of Richard and Marian Rackham)
Tony Calton & Maggie.		Jean Mylod & Mike.
Pat Darley & Roy.		Caroline Sackley & Bob.
Joelle Gosselin & Bernard.		Elizabeth Vine.
Celia Houghton.		

And please continue to remember all those whom we know and whose names do not appear here, who are in need of prayerful support at this time.

Our Prayer Co-ordinator is David Pearson.

Please let him have details of any folk you become aware of who need our prayers. ☎ 02 51 61 05 04 📧 david.sally@orange.fr

"Thank you all for your continuing prayers"

*You may sometimes hear of members or friends of our congregations who do not want to go on our Prayer List, but who are ill or in need.
In these cases, please let David Pearson, our Pastoral Organiser, know.*

Sunday Club

Sunday Club takes place at Puy de Serre.
If you know of any children who would like to join our Sunday Club
please bring them along at 11a.m.
They will be most welcome.

Barbara

*[Please contact Barbara if you require more information:
Phone 02 51 40 51 59, email: bandrkenyon@orange.fr]*



You are warmly invited to our next
"Faites le Plein" meeting
on
Wednesday 7pm for 7.30pm
The Filling Station at Maison de Diocèse, La Roche sur Yon

The evening starts at 7pm with refreshments
followed at 7.30pm by a time of
Sung Worship,

with
Chris Taylor, Pastor of the Rendez-Vous Fellowship.

Anyone who would like personal prayer ministry, offered by a qualified team
can receive that at the end of the meeting.

The meeting is held at the
Maison du Diocèse, 62 rue Maréchal Joffre
(the entrance to this site is opposite the Boulangerie Potier which has a red frontage,
through the large gateway, into the car park).
Look out for the "Faites le Plein" signs directing you towards the restaurant.

We hope that you may join us !
Liz JOND for the "Faites le Plein" team.
liz.jond@wanadoo.fr



**FAITES
LE PLEIN**

Faites le Plein/ The Filling Station



**THE
FILLING
STATION**

I understand that there are some misunderstandings about the work of Faites Le Plein/The Filling Station, especially as our patch is so large and people find the distances too much and the evening timing difficult to come along and see what it is all about. I will try and explain, but do come and talk to me so that I can hear your particular worries and see if they can be addressed.

The Filling Station organisation was started in the UK. It is NOT another church, but is intended to be a time of refreshment, fellowship, teaching, worship and development of faith for all denominations. Most people attend their own churches between the monthly meetings, so, in that way, it is similar to any other Bible Study/Home Group that happens, except it is often on a larger scale. As an organisation it is growing rapidly and there are now groups in other countries as well as the UK and France. Many Bishops are supporting it and that includes the Bishop of Luçon. Many of the original team are Anglican Priests and some of you will have met the Revd. Brian Streeter who oversees what is happening here in France.

All groups follow a similar structure for their meetings, a time for welcome, fellowship and refreshments, a time of praise and worship, of testimony and /or teaching and then prayer ministry. Our group 'Faites Le Plein' is different only in that it is bi-lingual hence the name change. We meet in the Maison du Diocese in La Roche sur Yon, which is kindly given free of charge to us by the Catholic Diocese. There are no costs involved for ASV. The other meeting for The Filling Station in the Vendée is hosted by The Rendezvous Fellowship with whom we work closely.

We have a leadership team, 6 of whom attend ASV services, but no one is the leader and it is a joy to work in such a way as a group. We pray together regularly and seek God's will on how to move forward regarding the planning of the meetings and believe that the fact that they take place is part of His will for the Vendée.

Apart from the translating (very specialist) we try to share the practical tasks. Financially we rely on donations on the night so that we can contribute to the travel expenses of our speakers. Because of this we are unable to afford many speakers from the UK. We have been blessed however in that we have had speakers who are in France for other reasons.

We intentionally have speakers who are francophones as well as anglophones, who are Catholic as well as Protestant. We have had composers and authors, missionaries and surgeons, ministers and business men, monks and charity workers. Many are local to our area of France, and are recommended by someone who knows them. Of course, some have a greater gift of public speaking than others, of course some have points that one doesn't agree with, but this is much like plucking a book off a shelf, some think it is wonderful others disagree. But it is about having thinking challenged, hearing new voices, seeing things from a different perspective.

These meetings are truly ecumenical, there is a mixture of Catholics, Protestants and those who are seeking or who had drifted away from the church. There are French and English attenders and speakers and we have built up relationships across the board. We are coming together to share God's love and his word. The meeting in December had nearly 60 people attending. This is a wonderful opportunity to help people know and love God, to help them find him, to help them learn more. Surely this is what all Christians are about in their ministry?

I will answer a question that has been asked by somebody and others may wonder about: " Have our congregation numbers increased because of this activity?" The short answer is no. But why would we expect French Catholics to come to an English speaking Protestant church? Although some, who speak good English, have visited occasionally because they know us. It is about working together, worshiping together, building relationships with God and each other, sharing God's love with everybody, including those who walk in off the streets of La Roche sur Yon, who come out of curiosity, or out of a need for food, drink, warmth and companionship. We are not to know how God is working in people, we do not know what his plans are, but we have faith in him. We believe he is present with us and will use us and these meetings for good.

As well as being opportunities to come together as Christians and relax in a non-church environment, (which is also warmer than our churches!) to worship God and enjoy fellowship, the meetings are valuable opportunities to invite people outside of any church to a place where they will hear teaching about the Gospel and understand the incredible love of the Lord for us all, hear more about his kingdom and how he works in our lives so that they become more meaningful when we look to him for guidance each day. This is reflected in many of the testimonies we have heard. It's about God's Kingdom coming on earth and how we can take part in that, so not aimed at increasing any particular church membership.

For many people these meetings have been a time of blessing, whether from the worship, the teaching or the prayer ministry and it is a part of God's work in the Vendée that I feel privileged to be part of. You are all warmly welcomed to come and see for yourselves and we pray that God will touch your lives and bless you

Revd Caroline Sackley

Do you **pay** French taxes?



If so, did you know that for every 100 euros that you give to our Church the taxman will reduce your tax bill by 60 euros thus a 100 euro donation will only cost you 40 euros (and you will be able to increase your donation!!!)

You simply need to make your donation in a recordable manner.

You can put your donation in numbered envelopes in the collection box, set up a standing order (virement) or send money to the planned giving officer (Mike Mylod) giving your name and address. At the end of the year your contributions will be totted up and a certificate issued. You enter this amount on your tax return (no need to send proof, just keep your certificate in case you are asked for it) and the taxman will reduce your tax bill by a figure equal to 60% of your donations.

Donations to the vicarage renovation can also qualify for tax relief if made through A S V.

Start planned giving now and let the taxman help our Church!

Contact..... Mike Mylod 02 51 51 07 36 (joseph.mylod@wanadoo.fr)
or..... Colin Grimshaw 02 51 98 67 91 (colingrimshaw@orange.fr)

.....To find out how easy it is!!!



Christmas Lunch at Bazoges

**PLEASE SEE THE WEBSITE
GALLERIES FOR
MORE PHOTOS**



Christingle service at Puy de Serre



I hope you have enjoyed this edition of "Grapevine".

*Thank you to all the Contributors and
I look forward to hearing from you next time*

SO.....

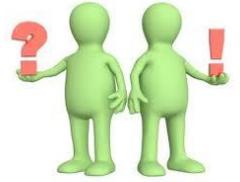
**send your contributions and comments to:
Jacqui at: sjfamily66@hotmail.com
before the 15th of January, please**



*Requests to be included on the emailing list should be addressed to:
Jacqui Stainton-James at: sjfamily66@hotmail.com*



Questions and Answers



These are YOUR pages.....

Once again, my thanks to all the Contributors of notices and articles for this month's "Grapevine" so, read on, and see what you can discover:

**Here you will find:
"Suggestions please" re. Quiz Menu,
Quilt News,
and editorials from Revds Caroline, Gareth and Martyn,**

*Please send your questions...and answers....and comments
to me, Jacqui, at : sjfamily66@hotmail.com*

For the next quiz, I am offering :

Chicken Pie (or Chicken & Ham or Turkey & Ham)
or
Lasagne

Menu suggestions please to Polly Ward
wardpolly@outlook.com

LADIES CIRCLE RAFFLE FOR AN HEIRLOOM QUILT



Completely handmade by members of
the Ladies Circle

Tickets 1 euro each

Proceeds to RESTOS du COEUR

Draw will take place at the end of
November

The draw for the Quilt,
hand made by members of the Ladies Circle,
took place at their November meeting.
The winner was a delighted Rita Parkin,
who lives in Menomblet.

Long may she cherish it!

The raffle raised 147 euros
for the Restos du Coeur.

God works in amazing ways.

Some of you will have heard me promise to tell you of how God helped my healing, without me being present, but involving ladies toilets! Here is the story.

As you all know I have been very ill in the last months with M.E. which has affected my life, from time to time and with varying degrees of severity for the last 25 years. As a result of this attack I missed time working with you.

I had also intended to go to a Filling Station Conference in the UK for the first weekend of October. Until a few days before I hoped I would be well enough to travel, however I eventually admitted defeat and cancelled my trip. Julie and Chris Taylor were also going and said they would report back and convey my apologies to people.

The Conference has about 200 people attending and was extremely good and this (*is*) what happened to Julie, in her words:

“Just before lunch on the Saturday, before 200 people descended on the toilet, I made a dash for the loo. While in the cubicle, I overheard two ladies talking about M.E. One said to the other, ‘.....that she had been suffering badly with M.E. off work from her job as a teacher and had thought she was not well enough to come to the conference, but became convinced God wanted her to. She had found a book on the internet which had helped her so much she had been able to go back to work recently.’ The other said ‘Can I come and see you later and get the name of the book?’ I popped my head out and said ‘Can I have the name too, my friend should have been at the conference too but was so unwell with M.E. she couldn’t come.’ The first lady gave them the name of the book and the author.

The afternoon session took place. We left the conference for the evening meal in town. I felt we needed to go back early in case someone wanted to talk to us. Chris said ‘Not yet it’s too early, let’s go for a walk.’ After half an hour I felt we needed to go back then, even though it was half an hour early.

There was hardly anybody there. I went to the toilet. Coming out of the cubicle the same lady was standing there. She told me God had told her to take her book to give to me for my friend. She had said; ‘Lord, there are 200 people there, and I can’t remember what she looked like, how will I recognise her?’ The Lord said ‘Go back at 7pm’ (half an hour early).

On entering the building she heard the lady in front of her say; ‘I must go to the loo first’, she thought ‘That’s a good idea’ and then thought, ‘What am I saying? I’ve just been at home’. The Lord said ‘Go to the toilet’. She went. And this is where we met for the second time! And no other ladies were there. Not only did she give me the book, but, by some mistake (!) she had received two lots of tablets and so gave me a set of tablets as she now knew why she had received a double set.

Julie and Chris brought me the book and tablets and they have made such difference, within a short time I and Bob noticed a change for the better, I was improving. I am now on my second set. Of course there has still been some backward steps and some plateaux, but the way is upwards thank God.

God heals, sometimes in unexpected ways and not always through an individual’s healing ministry, but he has relied, in this case, on people hearing his word to them, being obedient and having faith.

I am being healed by the tablets and the advice in a book, not by the laying on of hands. I have also had to be patient, as have you, as it was not instantaneous healing but has taken its course. I have also been surrounded and supported by people’s prayer and other material God has put before me.

The arrival in my life of the book and tablets has definitely felt miraculous but God has been very holistic in his healing, we cannot confine him to one way doing things, in the same way that we cannot contain him in the small things that our imaginations are capable of, he is bigger than that, nor does he always work in the way we expect.

I can only praise God and thank him for all he has done in my life at this time and I know I am meant to share this extraordinary story with others.

Revd Caroline Sackley

I have received this Christmas Message and Newsletter from Revd Martyn and Gini Crompton who are in Thailand:

Here's hoping you are well and that you and all our friends enjoy Christmas. We are really getting into the swing of it here with our Carol Service last night followed by mince pies and mulled wine. I've never been to a Carol Service where we needed the air conditioning on and went out in our shirtsleeves to sing the last Carol into a warm night.

With love from us both, Martyn and Gini



I requested a photo of them both and, look, here they are on their way to Church....!

We have searched around and realised how rarely we get pictures of us taken together, but here is one of us on our way to church in what has become perhaps our favourite means of transport, the Song Thaew, named after the two bench seats in the back, though often there are people standing on the back hanging on to the rails. Martyn & Gini

We have just returned home after our most demanding, yet interesting, week so far. We left in the early hours of Wednesday morning to fly to Mae Sot, about one hour to the north of here, where we were met by Nigel, a lovely New Zealander who has been living there for the last five years with his Thai wife. He took us, via a large Tesco, where we bought 200 toothbrushes for the pupils at Noh Bo school for Karen refugees which is supported partly by Christ Church. It was a two hour drive to get there through some lovely country – a very pleasant change after Bangkok. We saw water buffalo, goats, hump backed cows and, as we got nearer to Burma, some very large mountains.

We stayed in the school guest house with a lovely and amazing young Australian couple, Caleb and Katie, who have only been married for three years, but are spending the school year there, teaching English, befriending the students, some of them nearly as old as they are, and sharing their faith. Conditions were fairly primitive. No inside loos or hot water, ants and the possibility of scorpions in the shower and malaria carrying mossies all around, and no other native English speakers within miles. I earned Brownie points by being first up and first in the shower, thus washing the ants away before the next user arrived. The whole place reminded us forcibly of our trip to Tanzania. The students were immaculately turned out, attentive and smiling. The day began with the raising of the Thai flag to the playing of the anthem, followed by Assembly then breakfast. All the buildings were constructed around a large playing field, more than full sized soccer pitch with volley ball areas as well. All the buildings stood on wooden stilts and underneath were pits in which people used to hide whenever, only a few years ago, Burmese troops were firing across the border. We ate our meals outside on a veranda to the smell of incense coils which were used to deter the mossies. That and our mosquito nets, plus the products we used, ensured that neither of us got bitten, which made a pleasant change from here in Bangkok where most days begin with a bite count.

We did an assembly on the Christmas story in the afternoon and attended a Bible study in the evening led by Caleb and Katy.

Next day we visited one of the three huge refugee camps where the church sponsors three nursery schools and two churches, paying the staff and the clergy. Try to imagine houses made of bamboo, again built on stilts with no interior walls, floored with flattened out bamboo and covered with

the huge leaves of teak trees stitched together on the inevitable bamboo, clinging to steep hillsides, with narrow paths running between. They are so packed together that 50000 people live here and some have been here for up to 60 years. They have no other home, no legal status, no right to leave the camp and little hopes of anything changing for the better, even with the new government in Burma, for their homes have long been destroyed and it is unlikely that they will be able to return. And yet there was hope there. The people have built lives, planted crops on tiny bits of land. Ducks and poultry range freely under and around the huts. No one showed any bitterness, only warmth and generosity. We were all given presents whenever we visited. It was all a monument to the enduring qualities of the human race. And there was faith. I took a photo of Emmanuel church, another bamboo structure, same style only bigger, but standing behind a barbed wire fence. The name reminded me that Jesus would not only feel at home there, but has been there for years. As always when we visit anywhere there was an exchange. We went round telling the Christmas story, acting things out with Gini as a donkey and myself as a wise man, complete with camel whilst Tim told the story. We sang and we prayed and they smiled, shook our hands and gave us gifts. But as I left I felt I had received infinitely more than anything we had given. I think I will see this place in my prayers for the rest of my life.

Our last morning saw us back at the school for a two hour assembly during which Tim gave a short summary of the Old Testament and I gave my testimony. This is the story of the Bible, said he, and this is how it changed my life, said I.

We flew back to Bangkok, just missing an encounter with the Royal Princess whose helicopter arrived at the airport just before we did. She had been visiting the area and, like her father, whose birthday yesterday is being celebrated by two national holidays, yesterday and tomorrow, much loved. Her colour is purple, whilst her father's is yellow.

We went out for a meal last night and were surrounded by families celebrating his birthday which is also father's day here, all dressed in yellow in his honour. We were in the smart part of Bangkok, a huge shopping complex, with state of the art lifts, gardens, art displays and an amazing waterfall feature. It felt a million miles away from where we had been the day previously.

This is the contrast we are continually finding, but written in the largest letters so far. As we worshipped in our air conditioned comfort in a full church here, with the promise of lunch to follow for anyone who wished to stay and the freedom to leave when we wished I couldn't help but wonder what it was like in Emmanuel Church Behind the Wire. But, of course, the contrast is not so easy to make. We will be visiting members of our congregation this next week who have relatives in the Detention Centre we visit and could themselves be arrested and taken there at any time. What crime have they committed? None, unless fleeing for their lives to a place where they hope to find the freedom to practise their faith, constitutes one. But they are caught up in a process, to be granted refugee status involves a long period of waiting, During this period their visas run out, always assuming they had one in the first place, and then they are at risk. How many thousands share their fate in this modern world of ours, I wonder?

In the midst of it all we think, speak and pray about the love of God in Jesus who came into a world very similar to the one which we know, at least in its problems, to give us love and hope for a better future.



Visit to the border

Maryn and Gini



Christopher, the Vicar of St John's Church in Mae La Camp with Tim, the Vicar of Christ Church Bangkok.

Whatever – the weather !

As I write, snow is falling on London. Gales in the Channel mean the Brittany ferry (Plymouth/ Roscoff) has been cancelled. It's gusty rain here in Dinard where we've just marked the 110th anniversary of the shipwreck of the SS Hilda attempting in poor visibility to dock in St Malo around midnight (18th/19th November 1905) in a snowstorm whipped up by strong winds, pushing the steamer onto the rocks of la Pierre de Portes and costing the lives of 127 passengers and crew among whom were 70 Onion Johnnies from Finisterre. Just six were rescued, clinging to the mast around 9.00 that morning.

Why are we British so fascinated by, so taken with the weather ? I guess It's something to do with our temperament combined with how changeable the climate is in the UK. You never know next what might be the joys of Spring in early November or if we'll enjoy a St Luke's summer in mid-October. And why are Augusts generally so miserable nowadays ?

There is something about a sunny day that usually raises one's spirit. A cold, wet, gloomy day can be depressing if you're out in it. Seeing a rainbow, sign of the covenant between God and Man, invariably makes me smile. Writers can use 'pathetic fallacy', a literary device to help set the mood of a passage: sunset, sunrise, raindrops on a window can all tell you something about how a character is feeling.

I wonder if it was a sunny, cloud-free day when God breathed life into Adam. Certainly, darkness covered the earth when Jesus was crucified. At the Second Coming, Jesus will come again on clouds of glory.

One thing's for sure, our weather is changeable and we can do little about it. But we can do something about our attitude to the weather – we can as the poem says:

'whatever the weather
weather the weather
whether we like it or not !'



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