



The Marksman

The magazine of
St. Mark's Church, Versailles
and
St. Paul's Church, Chevry.

CHRISTMAS 2010

Welcome

Most of you will know that we had a very unusual morning service on 28th November, led by Joshua Turnil, when the themes were "Jews for Jesus" and "Hannukah and Advent". We also heard and watched a presentation by Dan Sered, the Israel director of Jews for Jesus. We have also recently adopted Jews For Jesus as one of our supported organisations, so the future of the Jews in God's plans might well be of growing interest to us all.

Jews for Jesus, and the whole complex relationship between the two faiths, are the leading subjects of this issue of the Marksman. You may disagree with some of the views expressed (they are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of St Mark's!) but whatever your point of view honest discussion is important.

We also have news from several former (you mustn't call them old) members of St Mark's, and reports on activities at St Mark's and in the wider Anglican community.

So here's hoping you can look back on a happy Hannukah and forward to a happy Christmas!

John Penhallow

Contents

3	A Word from Paul	16	REACHing beyond
4	PCC matters	17-19	Sunday School events and photos
5	Esti frumoasa - Report from Romania	20	The Magic Glasses (short story)
7	Download day	25	La Nonne et la CGT
9	Christmas message from the Bishop	27-29	News from former members
11-15	Jews for Jesus	31	Bible Quiz

HELP!

We need, rather urgently, a co-editor for the Marksman, capable of doing a little gentle proofing and page-setting (particularly photographs!). As you read through this issue you will see why!

A Word from Paul...



Christmas is nearly upon us, and the new year will soon follow. Where do the years go?!

The birth of Jesus marks the end of a long waiting process. For centuries the people of God had waited for their Messiah. Over the years the prophets had shared God's promise that he would indeed come. And yet when finally the day arrived it came so quietly that very few noticed: one small family, some shepherds on a hillside, three wise seekers, and a self-interested monarch whose only interest was in stubbing out any potential threat to his power. For the most part the world was busy with other matters.

Nevertheless the waiting was over.

I am writing this article the day after I have signed the first contracts for the building work of the REACH Project. I find it so exciting that the waiting is over and we are on the edge of a new beginning as we also approach 2011. The project has been launched, in January we expect building work to begin, and if everything goes smoothly we could see the outer shell of the church finished by the summer.

Personally I was eager to see things move ahead sooner but I trust that God has his perfect timing and it is always worth waiting for his moment. I am still aiming for a completion of the whole project by December 2012, with the expectation that we will celebrate at that time with all those who have helped (or been helped by) our REACH Project. Elsewhere in this edition of *The Marksman* you will see pictures of a Wayside Church in India which we have supported – it is just one of several projects around the world that have benefited from REACH as we build together.

Good things are worth waiting for. Clare and I have been anticipating the coming of Christmas this year for some very special family reasons. As you know, our "nest" has recently emptied with Nick and Toby both now studying in the UK. But this Christmas they will be home, and so also will our two older boys, Rob with his fiancée Louise, and, back from Singapore our eldest, Phil with his girlfriend Vanessa. It will be so good to be all together here briefly just before Christmas. Definitely worth waiting for! As a family we thank you for all your prayers for us and pray that you and your families too will be blessed with all the good things that God has in store in the coming year.

May the Christmas experience of "GOD WITH US" last well beyond the weekend of festivities. Indeed may it be for you an all-year-round experience of the powerful presence of God with you, enabling you to be all that He made you to be and do all that He has called you to do. There is much to look forward to – may you receive it all.

A very happy and blessed Christmas to you all.

Paul Kenchington

PCC Matters

Nathan has accepted a part-time post with Youth For Christ and from the 1st January this will become a full-time post. Therefore his contract with St.Mark's will finish at the end of December. The PCC agreed that hiring a part-time youth leader was not justified at the moment. Nathan has set up a team of volunteers to lead youth activities from January.

A proposal has been sent to the **Mois Molière** committee at the Mairie, asking for our English culture show "Shakespeare et Tout Ca" to be considered as part of the programme.

Hilary McCullough has officially accepted leadership of St.Mark's Children's Work and will be assisted by **Deborah Ferrero**.

Anne-Charlotte Tassin has reluctantly resigned as Treasurer owing to Philippe's job relocation to the UK. **John Ferrero** has succeeded her as the new Treasurer. **Barry Saunders** has taken on John's former role as Secretary.

Karen Kendall has stepped down from the role of Child Protection Officer. The PCC are happy to announce the appointment of **Carol Bodsworth** as the new CPO.

In the absence of any suitable "*jours fériés*" next year for a Church Weekend away; the PCC encourage people to support **New Wine Europe** instead – 8-12 August 2011 in Leuven, Belgium.

At the November meeting the council reviewed the suggestion of increasing the administrative hours worked by **Kevin Bodsworth**, when **Christina Galley** ceases to work in the Office as a paid staff member from January 2011. Hours worked by Carol Bodsworth will also be increased.

Generous gifts have now taken the **REACH** total to just over **600,000 euros**. Praise God!

At the PCC Meeting on Nov 11th, there was a unanimous vote in favour of going ahead with REACH Project Phase 3A – the building of the outer shell of the church "upstairs".

Contracts are being prepared for signing and it is hoped to begin work after Christmas. Rejoice! – but please continue to pray and to encourage giving where possible.

Esti Frumoasa !

Laura Simmons shares some of her experiences living and working with handicapped children in Romania

I travelled to the county of Bacau, Romania, with a British charity called Cry in the Dark (www.cryinthedark.org <<http://www.cryinthedark.org>>) this May. I stayed there for two and a half months, and seemed to have done more or less every small task they could possibly find for me to do, from emergency babysitting to extensive weeding, through face painting and visiting patients.

I learned a lot along the way. I spent time with children and young adults, both in their families and in orphanages, with disabilities such as aids, Downs syndrome, and the severe consequences of institutionalisation. I came to love many of the young people I was working with (their smiles are unforgettable), though as this charity's main work is in palliative care (care of the dying) I also had to face death. As many of you will know from my newsletters, a 10 year old girl named Roxana who I spent an afternoon playing with, died a few weeks after I had met her from the effects of a brain tumour. She was a young girl full of life, desperate to grow up before it was too late. Her first words to me (translated by one of CITD's social workers) were "Esti frumoasa", "You are beautiful".

Another young girl I will never forget is Andrea. 8, gorgeous and as glamorous as an 8 year old can be, I got to know her at the day centre in Casa Albert (where I was based). Once a week she would come with her younger brother and sister (both adorable, though much quieter than she was) to spend a day playing games, doing arts and crafts, listening to bible stories and singing songs ('Father Abraham' in Romanian was one of my favourites). I have a fantastic photograph of her with a giant monkey teddy over her shoulders, which she wore as you would a million-dollar fur coat. When our craft activity was cutting out and decorating a pair of hands, she coloured her paper nails pink on one hand, and green on the other, just as my nails were painted. I visited her home before I met her: little more than a wooden shack surrounded by a mud yard in which they kept turkeys and chickens, with electricity but no running water. It was only (and not very easily) accessible in a 4x4. We had a lot of fun together, and her smiles and laughs both eased and aggravated my sadness at knowing that she and her whole family are suffering from aids.

Maria is one of the 22 young people cared for at Casa Lumina, a home for life built by Cry in the Dark 10 years ago and kept up by them through UK sponsors. She is diabetic and although about 25, acts in many ways as a 4 to 9 year old would.

When we visited (I was with a few other students around my age) we would play music and he would fall asleep with his head on one of our laps - the image of perfect tranquillity.

What I've taken home from Romania isn't the love for a country - I find too many things too hard to understand to love Romania as a country - it's the love I felt for and from the people I met and spent time with there. I think it was there I felt the strongest understanding of Jesus' words when he challenged us to look after the poor and suffering of the world as we would look after him: in each one of these children I could see a piece of our Lord Jesus Christ: they are souls who needed company, who needed visiting, clothing, affection, time. And through Jesus, the people around me, whether Christians or not, were giving them just that.

Matthew 25:34-36

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'"



Laura Simmons

Can life be so tasty? (Download Day)

A whole life of physiotherapist sessions and daily exercise, so many times repeated all over the years that my whole being had classified all this as normal. Then on November 23rd at St Mark's a call for prayer on a Download day and wow ! my life has so much improved physically and energetically that it is a case of « pinch me Lord, please, is it true ? » ! The Lord has straightened my S-shaped spine !

I am more or less the risking all type with the Lord and I identify easily with the long time suffering woman who, in spite of ostracism, elbowed her way through the crowd to touch the Lord's coat and be healed.

I believe in 'kairos' moments, some of them I have already seized and have never regretted doing so, far from it. The first was when I responded to the call to give my life to Jesus in my favourite hotel on the Seine with the Full Gospel businessmen, that was nearly 30 years ago. The Lord then pulled me out from a state of despair due to living so far away from Him. The second was when I was asked a month later if I would like to pray in tongues, I just went for it and it was the greatest experience ever and to this day is a precious tool for me every day.

Since then, the Lord has already healed me physically several times and I am so grateful to Him. Yet I had never seriously asked Him to heal my back because I had accepted the fact that it was normal for me to suffer daily, which I realize now was a lie. Recently I have been working on the lies we all believe because of what people said about us or our life circumstances and events. It is necessary to ask the Lord to reveal them so that He can plant His truth and set us free in very precise areas. Well it certainly worked with my spine ! When He suggested I should ask for a straight spine, it was a shock because immediately the lie was exposed. The Lord wanted me to have a straight spine and to enjoy life to the full with more energy. Isn't God good ?

I cannot describe the first days when I discovered my new strength, meaning that instead of being exhausted when I came back from work - I have a demanding job, working long hours - I felt refreshed ! And my brain works better ! After three weeks it is still an immense surprise. My back feels straighter, my ribs do not hurt, I can breathe more freely and my morale is staying high, which boils down to the fact that I am even more crazy about the Lord !

I long for the day when I shall see all my friends suffering from cancer healed for example or those who are heavily depressed full of joy.

In all this I know that God's timing is perfect and that patience, perseverance, relying on His Word and trusting in Him balance 'kairos moments'. The Lord is never late, He is always on time.

PRAISE THE LORD

Anne-Marie Laidet

The Lighter side

Puns are widely held to be the lowest form of wit. Here are a couple you may not know:

A red indian chief gave a gift to each of his three wives: to the first, a bear skin, to the second, a moose skin, and to the third a hippopotamus skin. In due course, the first two wives each bore him a son. The third bore him twin boys. Which proves that....

(wait for it)

"The squaw on the hippopotamus is equal to the sons of the squaws on the other two hides"

(groan)

A Texan cattle rancher gave a ranch to his two boys so they could set up in business for themselves. He called it "Focus", because focus is where the sons raise meat.

(if you don't get it, try saying it out loud)



A Christmas Letter from the Bishop

Not long ago I came across a Christmas meditation by Michael Stancliffe, a fine preacher whose ministry encompassed time as Speaker's Chaplain in the House of Commons, and later as Dean of Winchester. In this meditation he points out that the Christmas story is concerned with small things.

'At the heart of it is a human being at its smallest, and that newborn child is surrounded by no greatness – no palace, no pomp, no grand people. Nor had the first to join that little group anything impressive about them – shepherds on night duty don't look princely – and it was only later that more imposing personages put in an appearance. Christians believe that what happened in that small setting was of cosmic significance.'

The birth of Jesus at Bethlehem which we celebrate at Christmas is the burning glass which concentrates in the vulnerable fragility of a new-born child the immensity of the Divine Love by which all things were made and which holds the vastness of the universe in being. What is God like? God is like – indeed God is – this totally dependent, tiny bundle of life. That bundle of life grew unseen in Mary's womb, and that unseen growth to birth was also where God was. In 'Once in royal David's City' we sing of the child of Bethlehem that 'day by day like us he grew' – but like us that growth was from the moment of conception, from before being born as well as the child growing to maturity. The real Feast of the Incarnation, of God emptying himself and coming down to the lowest part of our need, is not Christmas, the Feast of the Nativity, but the Feast of the Annunciation, of God taking our human nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin.

When Christians hail Mary as the *Theotokos*, 'the God-bearer', it was because it was her unique vocation to be the one in whose body God chose to dwell, to be one with us. As an ancient hymn puts it:

How blest that Mother in whose shrine,
The great Artificer divine,
Whose hands did frame the earth and sky,
Vouchsafed as in an ark to lie.

It is because God is with us as unborn life before he is with us as the child of Bethlehem, that we rightly are concerned to reverence unborn life, and to protest at the attitudes so prevalent in our society which regards such life as disposable.

William Blake saw eternity in a grain of sand. Julian of Norwich saw all that was made as a small hazelnut. We see the love of God in this vulnerable child, and, as a wonderful prayer puts it, 'knowing the love of God made visible, we are caught up into the love of the God we cannot see.' In our human experience of love we at one and the same time know most fully the person whom we love and who loves us, and at the same time know that this is a mystery which can never be fully known, never fully expressed in words. Charles Williams, the friend of C.S.Lewis and J.R.R.Tolkien liked to say that we ought to pause over how we so easily speak of 'being in love' and remember that in saying this we are saying no less that we are held *in* love. At Christmas as we come to adore the God who reaches out to us in the weakness and humility of a child, we are in an even greater way held in love, the love which came down at Christmas and which is far greater than anything that we can imagine or express. As so often the poets point us to the heart of the matter, as Richard Crawshaw does in his *Hymn of the Nativity*:

Welcome all wonders in our sight
Eternity shut in a span,
Summer in winter, day in night,
Heaven in earth, and God in Man;
Great little one! Whose all-embracing birth
Lifts earth to heaven, stoops heaven to earth.

And what is this about? Christopher Smart asks 'where is this stupendous stranger?' and finds his Lord and Saviour in a manger.

O most Mighty! O MOST HOLY!
Far beyond the seraph's thought,
Art thou then so mean and lowly
As unheeded prophets taught?

He comes at last to the truth and the mystery of Bethlehem.

God all-bounteous, all-creative,
Whom no ills from good dissuade,
Is incarnate, and a native
Of the very world he made.

This Christmas, as we come to worship and adore the Child who is Emmanuel, God-with-us, and receive him in the Eucharist may his love cry in the manger of our hearts, transform our lives and strength us to live and pray for the peace of the world and the unity of the holy churches of God.

May God bless you, and may you, and all for whom you love and care, have a holy and a joyful Christmas.

Geoffrey Gibraltar

Now is the Time

Now is the time to give favour to the Jewish people and to bring them back into the church by preaching salvation through Jesus Christ (Yeshua in Hebrew) in addition to praying for them. The Jewish people are the most love-starved people on the face of the earth. Jesus commanded us to love one another and this includes the Jews. Today more than ever as we are seeing Israel being attacked every day by the media and the politicians, the Jews can no longer avoid the Messianic character of Jesus.



In spite of the fact that the Emperor Constantine in AD 306 – 337 succeeded in separating Messianic Jews from Christian non Jews for almost 2,000 years because of his anti-semitic thoughts resulting in a lack of powerful miracles, God today is setting an agenda to restore what has been broken. In the early church, Jews and non-Jews worshipped together, keeping the Jewish feasts which speak in fact of Jesus and His Kingdom, and regularly experienced extraordinary miracles and power. This separation of Jews and non-Jews is going to be repaired so that the original Church, as it was at the time of the Apostles, can take its place again. Before Constantine's conspiracy, non-Jews in Jesus Christ used to worship with Jews on Saturdays in the synagogue in addition to Sundays as they do today. The one new man church really existed. Didn't Jesus say, I have not come to destroy the law but to accomplish it. Yes, now is the time for the Church which has been so blessed by the Gospel (which we could call "the fullness of the Gentiles") to give back the precious gift, the revelation of salvation through Jesus Christ to the Jews.

We know as Christians that when the Kingdom of God is advancing, the kingdom of Satan rages. This is exactly what is happening with Israel today. Israel is under attack but the purified Church, portrayed in the life of Esther, by interceding for Israel but also acting on her behalf must now reveal not without risk her Jewish roots (can a tree bear fruit without being attached to its roots?) As Esther defended her people, the Church must also enter into her destiny. We must stand up for Israel, stand by her side, preach the Gospel instead of just enjoying our life of royalty in the Gentile church and doing nothing for the Jews which would mean for us no relief and no escape in times of persecution because God said He would bless those who bless Israel and curse those who curse Israel (Gen.12:3). Blessing for us means by preaching the gospel to the Jews with whom God has made a covenant. It is our duty to remind the Jews of this covenant. The greatest revival in the world depends on this. We've got the key to open a new door that nobody can shut. This means we can't do anything without the Jews in Yeshua and they can't do anything without us.

Now is the Time (cont.)

We must stay focused on this and not pay too much attention to what the media and the politicians are saying.

As events are getting bigger and very impressive even emotionally, the devil will try to distract us from our purpose which is to stay focused on Christ and this spirit will become more and more powerful because Satan knows he is racing against time and that if Jews and non Jews are going to worship Yeshua together the Church will be very powerful. Now, more than ever, the clock is ticking away. It is costly to support Israel but we have more to win than to lose.

We can conclude on this God winning strategy as I personally believe that according to John 17:21 "they all (Jew and Gentile) may be one.... that the world may believe".

...Patrick Sauvage

Tit for tat

Sir Moses Haim Montefiore (1784-1885), a Jewish banker and philanthropist, determined defender of human rights and Sheriff of London, was once seated at dinner next to an important personality and an anti-Semite, who told him he had just returned from Japan where they "have neither pigs nor Jews".

Montefiore replied instantly: "Accordingly, you and I should go there so they can have a sample of each."

Opinion poll in Israel on Y'shua

Dan Sered, who spoke recently at St Marks on our "Jews for Jesus" Sunday, comments on the lack of understanding about Jesus amongst Israelis

The results of a first of its kind opinion poll on Israeli attitudes toward Y'shua have just been released. This fascinating survey was commissioned by Jews for Jesus and conducted by a well-known Israeli marketing company. It included questions such as "What is the meaning of the name Yeshu?" "What is the central message of Yeshu?" "Are Yeshu and Y'shua the same person?" The answers were startling.

The poll found that only 8% of the respondents knew that *Y'shua* is the name of the Messiah that Christians believe in. In Israeli society, Y'shua is known as *Yeshu*, an acronym for "*yimach sh'mo v'zichro*" (may his name and memory be blotted out). Though that curse was started by rabbis in the middle ages, the opinion poll showed that today only 2% of Israelis know that the name *Yeshu* is actually a curse. When Israelis hear the name *Y'shua*, 65% of them think that Moses' successor, Joshua ben Nun, is being discussed.

As to the person and message of Yeshu (Jesus), 35% see him as "a Jew who started a new religion," and when asked what his central message was, only 1% said "salvation" while 42% said they either didn't know or didn't want to answer. A higher percentage of Israelis (62%) know that he performed miracles. By far, the miracle mentioned most is his walking on water.

In contrast, only 5% of Israelis know that Y'shua rose from the dead. Examining the numbers more closely yields yet another surprise: while 13% of those under the age of 40 know that Jesus was resurrected from the dead, the poll showed that less than 1% of those older than 40 has knowledge of this important spiritual and historical fact.

In addition to the numbers—which provide the picture of a Jewish society in great need of accurate information about Y'shua—there are some stories behind the story, which amplify this reality. The marketing company hired to conduct the poll said that while they normally get six completed surveys per hour, they had a terrible time finding people who were willing to engage in a poll on the subject of Y'shua.

Opinion Poll (cont.)

For this survey they got a response rate of only two completed surveys per hour! When the subject matter of this poll became clear to people, two thirds of those approached refused to participate. Though the company had promised to finish the project in two to four weeks, it actually took over eight.

The president of the company acknowledged that this fact skews the results in a positive direction. When the poll reveals that 20% of Israeli society has a favourable opinion of Israelis who believe in Yeshua, that number would likely be much lower—and the number of those with a negative opinion (35%) would be much higher.

The final sample size for this poll was 981, with the average age being 39 (ranging from 14 to 91). Respondents came from a wide variety of professions. Educationally, 43% were at university level, while 47% were high school graduates. This is surprising in light of well-documented statistics that in Israel only 20% of the population goes to college and 70% finish their education at the high school level. Sixty-three percent of respondents described themselves as “secular,” while thirty percent said “traditional” and seven percent said “religious.”

The prophet Hosea said,

“Hear the word of the Lord, you Israelites, because the Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the land, because there is no faithfulness or kindness or knowledge of God in the land...My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. (Hosea 4:1, 6)



The lack of knowledge about Y'shua in modern Israeli society has staggering implications. May this survey be a call to prayer and action among all Messianic believers to become involved in some way to let our people in Israel know that the Messiah has come and that his name is Y'shua.



Jews for Jesus billboards are frequently defaced

Dan Sered

Christmas and Hannukah

So my son, Ilan, said to me, « Dad we should celebrate Christmas, because we're Jews and Jesus was a Jew; so we should celebrate his birth! » Ilan's logic seemed so simple and even though today many Jews feel exactly the opposite, history agrees with Ilan. Jesus was a Jew, the first to have been with him were Jews. Jesus himself claimed to be the Messiah of Israel. The New Testament writers (with the possible exception of Luke) were all Jews. The difficulty in the first century was not whether or not Jews should believe in Jesus, but whether or not Gentiles could !

That debate took such proportions that the first Jews for Jesus organised the first Church Council in order to decide once and for all whether or not Gentiles could join the Church. Of course, the matter was settled and pretty soon there were more Gentiles than Jews in the Church. This is one of the great beauties of our faith: that in Christ there is no Jew nor Gentile.

Yet, culturally the life cycle celebrations are very different between Jews and Christians. Especially this month of December, some go so far as to call it the « December Dilemma ». It is a month where Christmas is so contextual that many Jews don't know quite how to teach their kids why they don't celebrate Christmas in such a strong Christian context.

Many don't quite know what they believe and these times tend to highlight that lack of conviction. One conviction most do have is that « Jews don't believe in Jesus » and often when we are on the streets witnessing, we get comments that reflect that such as « You should be ashamed of yourself! » or « I'm a Jew for Moses ! » or even the comical, but seriously asked, « Does your mother know you're doing this ? » One of the more memorable events happened to one of my colleagues who was witnessing and heard the similar comments, but from someone wearing a Santa Claus costume!

Obviously, that man felt a difference between celebrating Christmas and believing in Christ. My sister-in-law said as much to me, when I asked her why she, as a Jew who does not believe in Jesus, celebrates Christmas . She replied, « Because Jesus has got nothing to do with Christmas ! » Many do feel, probably rightly so, (especially in the absence of Christian witness) that Christmas is nothing more than a national Holiday that allows for rest and family get-togethers... something in the vein of a winter solstice or a May 1st.

It was a blessing for me to share with you, on the first Sunday of Advent, the Jewish roots of the Christian faith. As a Jewish believer in Jesus, I see that all traditions, celebrations and festivals are all empty without Christ. Christmas without Christ is absolutely meaningless to me, just as Jewishness without the Messiah is paradoxical.

So I guess, Ilan and I agree. Jewishness and Jesus-ness makes sense and we should celebrate that at Christmas and at Hannukah.

Joshua Turnil

REACHing beyond

As we wait expectantly to see the first bricks of our new church begin to rise up on the second floor in January of next year, it is good to know that our REACH Project has already blessed others way beyond France. As we have gathered money for ourselves (...NB: THANK YOU for the tremendous effort and generous giving of those who have enabled us to reach the magic 600K euros), so we have also given away a tithe to other projects.

Below is the village church in Andhra Pradesh, India which our gift has made possible. Bujie, the pastor, and his mother and family have been supported for some years by my cousin, Nathalie, who let me know of their need. The church building is a lot simpler than the one we envisage here in Versailles - but clearly the joy experienced by those who worship in it, is something we share in common. Continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in India, that the Lord will bless them richly.



Paul Kenchingtonr

“We have had a great year!”

We have had a great year in our Sunday School programme at St. Mark's.

There have been quite a few changes and it has been really encouraging to see the children respond in such a positive and exciting way.

The launch of our new B.L.A.S.T. (Bible Learning And Sowing Truth) programme has been a great success and has allowed us the time to teach the children God's word in both a fun and interesting way. They not only learn the memory verse but what it actually means, and how it relates to them.

It is wonderful to see them also enjoying the lively worship where they sing, dance and have a great time praising God.

Our theme for Sept-Dec was based on “The Bible.” The children learnt why we have to know God's word (Psalms 119:11), where the Bible came from (John 1:1), how God's word directs us (Psalms 119:105) and how God's word is alive and can be used to cut through all the devils lies.. (Hebrews 4:12).



They also learnt that God's word is Truth and is all they need to know for what God has planned for each of them.

A Great Year (Cont.)

As part of the B.L.A.S.T and Sunday School programme the children are able to earn points each week, through attendance, bringing their Bible, knowing and saying their memory verse and bringing friends.

Their points are then used to redeem prizes from the prize table, the first of which took place in October. This has proved to be a great incentive for the children and is a positive way of encouraging them in not only learning the memory verses but giving them a great sense of achievement.

It has been so encouraging to see new families arriving at St Marks, this term we have welcomed 9 new children into Sunday School.

We have also been greatly blessed by those children who have requested Bibles, we have been able to supply 20 since the beginning of term.

We had a great end of term party where the children had lots of fun making crafts, playing messy fun games, enjoying a Christmas tea party and excited to spend their money at our mini-market. It was wonderful to see them having such a great time in Church.

None of the work we do with the children is possible without the dedication and faithful service of our teachers and helpers, so we thank God for them and for everything they do each week.

Everything that has taken place within the children's work is to God's glory
"This is the LORD'S doing; It is marvelous in our eyes." Psalm 118:23

We look forward to what God has in store for us in 2011!

Hilary McCulloch

Pictures from a Great Year

Party-time!



The children were advised not to try this at home

Christmas Mini-Market



The Magic Glasses

It was a particularly bright day in town and there were lots of people bustling in both directions along the busy High Street. This was not surprising because it was market day and lunch-time.

Charlie was out for one of his frequent little excursions past the shops. He liked to stroll down to the Italian restaurant to buy his habitual broth and a cheddar roll with a slice of raw onion. Never mind his office colleagues' usual and exaggerated complaints about his breath in the afternoon. He was the boss in that office and his lunch was sacred!

Something happened that day which was to have a very deep impact on the rest of Charlie's life, and make him miss his lunch as well. A man was holding a pair of sunglasses in his right hand as he walked along rather stiffly, only a few paces ahead of Charlie. 'Nothing really unusual', thought Charlie except that he wondered casually why the man was tapping them nervously against his trouser leg rather than wearing them over his nose, considering the glare. 'He must be preoccupied by some big problem, poor soul!' Suddenly and it seemed quite deliberately, the man stretched out the fingers of his right hand, let the glasses drop furtively onto the pavement beside him, like dropping a bit of litter, and carried walking directly on. They fell just in front of Charlie who had to make a last minute, acrobatic sidestep, to avoid crushing them.

Always well meaning, or at least when he did not have time to stop and think, Charlie hurriedly plucked them up from further peril and caught up with the owner to hand them over, almost apologetically. "Er, excuse me Sir, but I think you dropped these." Expecting the man to receive them gratefully, Charlie was rather shocked and confused when the man looked at him with panic, mingled with anger he thought and sharply but somewhat awkwardly denied all knowledge of the glasses. "But they look like a very nice pair of sun glasses and they seem in perfect condition. Don't you want them? They must have cost a bomb!" Charlie stammered. "Not mine! Mind your own business! Leave me alone!" was the rather plaintive response and the man turned determinedly and strode hurriedly away, as if desperate to distance himself from Charlie, or the glasses, as fast and as much as possible.

Bemused, Charlie stared at the back of the man disappearing through the crowd. Unthinkingly he slipped on the glasses as he squinted down the road and just caught the man's rather panicked thoughts, 'I don't want them anymore, they're far too big for me, horrid, can't cope, nothing but trouble! You keep them!'

Then, as if the man was collecting himself a safe distance away, 'whew, that was close, thought I might not have got rid of them again,' and to no-one in particular, 'sorry I lied.'

Astounded, Charlie leapt forward at the seeming injustice. 'They are yours', he thought, 'and I'm giving them back to you!' He almost crashed into a lamp post as he realized that in fact he could see nothing at all through the glasses as they were quite opaque, to normal light that is. 'Fat lot of use these!' he thought, as he ripped them off, stunned. He put them back on experimentally, facing toward the sun. Very comfortable, he admired. Stylish design, but where on earth would one need such black glasses?

He slipped them on again. They were physically so, so comfortable he hardly felt them on his nose. It was a bit like putting on soft slippers after a grueling walk in heavy boots, so soothing, quite heavenly! How very odd', he pondered, 'I wonder why he said they are far too big.' In terms of light, there was only blackness. But then oh, the build-up of sound was bewildering, it was like gradually turning up the radio on all channels at the same time. He fast became overwhelmed by a sheer cacophony of shifting, staccato sounds all around him and ripped them off again. He was now standing in the middle of the busy shopping square, people hustling and bustling all about. No-one seemed to really notice him, except those who at the last minute tried to dodge him, bumping into others. Others simply shoved straight into Charlie and few apologized. He was too taken aback to apologise himself. It was as if the world was brushing past him in every direction. He was discerning quite a lot of curses, mingled with few more polite thoughts of annoyance or disapproval and realised that the reason they were so clear was that they were directed against him! He stood his ground and like a child experimenting with a gift or a man testing a new pair of binoculars, Charlie removed and examined the glasses, then put them on again gingerly, aiming his face this way and that, as if focusing on people he could not see. He began to pick out distinct thoughts and then to tune more finely, as it were, so that the background interference would fade away. 'This is quite amazing', thought Charlie, 'wow, the power to read anyone's thoughts, fantastic!' He found he could only cope with one person at a time and began flitting about like a bee moving from flower to flower, catching snippets of thought like morsels to be sampled, forgetting each as another arrived. This was exiting, but it was also quite useless and Charlie was still obstructing in the eddying crowd. 'I must sit on a bench and focus on individuals that are not moving too much,' he reasoned and did just that.

Rather like zapping TV channels, Charlie flitted about from one person to another. He caught some good and some selfish thoughts, staying tuned a little longer when they enticed him. He saw some pretty nasty thoughts too.

He decided to grade people by their thoughts and then each time to take off the glasses to judge their looks.

It was strange to discover how peoples' outward appearances could be so incongruous with their minds. He had expected rather naively that the good or at least positive thoughts would be those of the bold, smiling and confident looking, and the negative to be those of the plain or simply ugly people, the crippled and the poor, but that was certainly not the case. In fact most people seemed harassed and frustrated though many clearly gritted their teeth, as it were, determined to put on a brave face. 'I must be positive, I have to be optimistic despite this,' was a frequent mental struggle, yet it was not really convincing to Charlie, but seemed rather like clutching at straws.

Charlie was gradually drawn down and down emotionally by the pain, anger, frustration and sheer negativeness that seems to pervade the atmosphere. It was as if a black stifling cloud was drawing around him, threatening, to smother him, to swallow him up. It was quite overwhelming.

He suddenly felt very guilty and wondered if anyone else might be looking into his mind in the same way, to discover all the fears and doubts and regrets that weighed his soul. He feared someone might see who he really was behind it all. He took off the glasses and for the first time began to empathize with the man who had dropped them, but it was already too late. He knew, and no one can erase that.

Wearily and somewhat automatically he put them on again and it was as painful with them as without them. He turned his head away from the crowd and became aware of a very different mental scene. There was a beautiful conversation between two people. The simplicity and trust of the one seemed as a child addressing her father, but her thoughts were too mature, too selfless to be a child. The other was talking with gentleness, with love and authority like a real father. He was, Charlie realized with awakened longing, like the father he wished he had. He noticed that the two were not moving along but actually quite close by and that they must be sitting on an adjacent bench. Charlie wondered if he dare take off the glasses lest he be disappointed. He did, expecting to see this amazing parent and child who seem to have such a perfect, open relationship, but saw only an elderly woman sitting quite alone, serenely, with her eyes closed. That certainly was a surprise. Where was the father then?

Charlie saw a man approaching him, but could not see his thoughts. He suddenly realized that he was wearing the glasses, yet the man was as bright and clear as his thoughts were nonexistent, to Charlie.

Bewildered, he ripped off the glasses but saw only very bright light and hurriedly put them on again, like a fearful child putting on the bed-side light in the middle of the night and he began to tremble. He wanted to hide! The man came, with confidence and grace and sat on the bench near Charlie, who wished he had had the sense to occupy the middle to discourage anyone from joining him. Yet by the natural authority of the man, he realized this would not have distracted him from his purpose. Strangely, Charlie felt very unworthy and unclean.

"I see you are watching people's thoughts and conversations", the man said quite simply to Charlie, without introduction. "Do you like what you see?" "Er no, I mean yes", stammered Charlie, "it all depends." Charlie felt rooted, but he was not trapped, he was free to leave, but it was as if the man's status demanded his full respect. It would certainly have been very rude for him to leave at that point and anyway, he didn't seem to have the strength or the will to go. The stranger had something so awesome about him, that he dared not look him in the face. This was not the arrogant domination of the haughty in powerful positions, but something quite above all that, yet Charlie did not feel threatened, but rather a sense of peace. It was the peace that he identified in the woman-child with the unseen father.

"Do you know that woman's father?" asked Charlie clumsily, thinking that to speak would deter any awkward questions the man may have. "Yes I do," the man answered. "Do you want to know him too?" It was a staggering question. "How, he just disappeared or something", uttered Charlie rather stupidly. "Yet he's right here, right now Charlie and he knows all your thoughts, your fears and hopes." "Does he have glasses like these too," asked Charlie, "and how did you know my name?" "He doesn't need glasses Charlie and you won't see him with them either, but you can speak to him just like that woman did, at any time and any place, but first you need to sort one or two things out with him." "Like what," stammered Charlie, "how?" "You must want to know him with all your heart Charlie and you must empty your sack, leave it with him and do what he tells you to do." "My sack? I don't have one! Oh, I see what you mean, it's in me, in my mind and in my heart, it's what I've done, isn't it?" "That's right Charlie, you have to give it up to him, the good and the bad, the lot, let Jesus his son deal with it. That's why he came and died on the cross, to take your load and put it where it belongs, if you will let him take it. Otherwise you are quite free to carry it with you until you die, but it will get heavier and heavier all the way." "That's wonderful! How can I ever thank him?" "Never enough Charlie, but keep on with all your heart and remember to obey him."

"What about these glasses?" asked Charlie, as he suddenly remembered them. "You won't need those anymore because you will simply have to ask God for guidance when you need to understand someone else's needs. That way you will be told only what you need to know and what you should or shouldn't do about it. Besides, you can't cope with seeing everything anyway, can you?" "You see Charlie, only God can give every individual and every situation his permanent, personal and undivided attention at all times and at the same time, because he loves each one as he loves you."

"Now Charlie, I think it is time for me to go, but first you must hand me those glasses, they don't belong to you." A little reluctant at first, Charlie relinquished them and suddenly felt much freer, better for being back on familiar ground, yet nothing would ever be the same again as he knew he had a new and so much better way before him.

David Logan

Remember : Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a mechanic.

Perfectionists please note!



La Nonne et la CGT - Se non è vero...

Here as in many other countries, strikes, street demos and social conflicts are the backdrop to our everyday life, and are mostly conducted in an atmosphere of intolerance and mistrust on both sides.

The following exchange of letters between a nun from Nantes, Soeur M, and Bernard Thibault, the General Secretary of the CGT, purports to be true. I would like to believe it is.

Lettre adressée par Soeur M. à la C.G.T.

Madame, Monsieur,

Religieuse cloîtrée au monastère de la Visitation de Nantes, je suis sortie, cependant, le 19 juin, pour un examen médical. Vous organisiez une manifestation. Je tiens à vous féliciter pour l'esprit bon enfant qui y régnait. D'autant qu'un jeune membre de votre syndicat m'y a fait participer ! En effet, à mon insu, il a collé par derrière, sur mon voile, l'autocollant CGT après m'avoir fait signe par une légère tape dans le dos pour m'indiquer le chemin. C'est donc en faisant de la publicité pour votre manifestation que j'ai effectué mon trajet.

La plaisanterie ne me fut révélée qu'à mon retour au monastère. En communauté, le soir, nous avons ri de bon coeur pour cette anecdote inédite dans les annales de la Visitation de Nantes.

Je me suis permis de retraduire les initiales de votre syndicat (CGT = Christ, Gloire à Toi).

Que voulez-vous, on ne se refait pas. Merci encore pour la joie partagée. Je prie pour vous.

Au revoir, peut-être, à l'occasion d'une autre manifestation..

Soeur M.

Réponse du secrétaire général de la C.G.T.

Ma soeur,

Je suis persuadé que notre jeune camarade, celui qui vous a indiqué le chemin, avait lu dans vos yeux l'humanité pure et joyeuse que nous avons retrouvée dans chacune des lignes de votre lettre.

Sans nul doute il s'est agi d'un geste inspiré, avec la conviction que cette pointe d'humour "bon enfant" serait vécue comme l'expression d'une complicité éphémère et pourtant profonde.

Je vous pardonne volontiers votre interprétation originale du sigle de notre confédération, car nous ne pouvons avoir que de la considération pour un charpentier qui a révolutionné le monde.

Avec tous mes sentiments fraternels et chaleureux.

Bernard Thibault, secrétaire général de la CGT

What Sunday School teachers have to put up with...

"Please Miss, if the people of Israel are Israelites, and the people of Canaan are Canaanites, why aren't the people of Paris called Parasites?"

(answer: some of them are)

Finding one of the boys in her class making faces at others, the Sunday School teacher stopped to reprove the child. Smiling sweetly, she said, "Bobby, when I was a child, I was told that if I made ugly faces, the wind might change and I would stay like that."

Bobby looked up and replied, "Well, you can't say you weren't warned."



...but look at what they helped to achieve!



News from near and far...

Former (and some present) members of Saint Mark's have sent us their news:

Karen, Richard and Nicolas Cheeseman write from Normandy:

I do hope all is well with you and the team at St Marks. It seems such a long time since we were there. Life here is treating us well. We are enjoying the quiet country living, the fresh air, gardening and outdoor pursuits. Nicolas is getting on fine at school and is enjoying many after-school activities. I am still a SAHM but do some volunteer teaching at Nicolas' school once a week. I do miss my Sunday school and Sparklers. We would like to be much closer to an Anglican church and a day trip to St Bartholomew's at Dinard is a welcome experience. We love going even if it is not as often as we would like - one of the disadvantages of being "in the provinces".

Martin Oram, former chaplain of St Marks, and his wife Buff, have seen big changes this year:

- We're retired! And loving it. Our final service was on April 18th; Martin's retirement started in May. We live 5 minutes from Imogen & co, 1¼hrs from Kyle & co. (in Halton), and 1½hrs from Brandon & co. (in Welshpool). We sold the Derbyshire cottage and got a 3 bed semi on the edge of a 1970s estate in Rode Heath, just off the A50. Very different, but more practical. The congregations of Hanford and Trentham gave us a wonderful send-off party, and their gift was the cost of return flights to New Zealand. We were overcome when this was presented, as you can imagine. Upshot – we leave UK on Jan 22nd, fly to Hong Kong to see old friends for 3 nights, then on to Melbourne for 3 weeks to visit family, then 4 nights in Sydney, then to NZ, to visit our daughter Lydia, who is expecting her third child in May 2011. Please note our new address: 12 Ash Grove, Rode Heath, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs. ST7 3TD. ☎: 01270 747271

Robert and Orinda Reeves (not really absent but living near Chartres so no longer able to come to St Marks every Sunday):

"This was yet another year when we have adapted our life to circumstances beyond our control. 2010 was going to be our year when we did all those things we dreamed about - but - Frances and Jonathan announced early in the year that Frances was pregnant with their third and so the year panned out in a quite different way. Orinda spent a lot of time in Germany helping Jonathan's family through the pregnancy after the problems with Adam.

However, it was an almost perfect pregnancy with the result that our fifth grandchild, Julia Louise was born on 1st October, quickly and safely.

Jonathan and Frances moved from Germany to Bedford (UK) on 1st August so their children have been born successively in France, Germany and the UK! Now we have 3 boys and 2 girl grandchildren, all growing fast. Our Christmas this year will be celebrated here in France where we will welcome Marianne with her family as well as her Colombian in-laws.

Prisca and Andrew Wiles (not really absent either)

Well are we really "absent friends"? We still come as often as possible living not so far away, near Chartres. And while we now worship at the Eglise réformée de Chartres, we still feel very much part of the family of St Mark's. Andrew is still working as an interpreter and I'm now "cent métiers" as we say in French. I spend most of my time doing written translation, and use my liberty to go and help members of the family who need it: mostly my aged in-laws, or recently our daughter Claire who had a baby girl.

Hello from the **Warren family** - We have been living in Divonne les Bains right in the heart of the beautiful Jura countryside now for 5 Christmases and St Paul's and St Mark's are especially in our thoughts and prayers at this time of the year. We attend the local La Cote Anglican churches on a regular basis and are finding our place joyfully in those Communities. We have had an eventful year. We are eagerly awaiting the arrival of Nicholas and Sarah's first baby in mid December. The family are well: Alexandra and family live in the Paris region, Katie and Yohann in London, Nicholas and Sarah in Edinburgh and they all moved flats this autumn and undertook extensive redecoration projects which were hard work. William is still working in Gloucester area but with a girlfriend in Pau in France spends a lot of his weekends in the air or waiting at airports!! Mark travelled to some exciting Far Eastern cities for his work. Christine was diagnosed with oesophageal cancer at the end of 2009 but after some testing and gruelling treatments she is on the way to a good recovery. The family spirit, prayers and support from friends has been much appreciated. A challenging year but also a loving and harmonious time.

Hi from **Mike & Rita Dimsdale** (1975 – 2002) – been retired for 10 years. Returned to UK and living in Sussex since 2003. We are living an active retirement – Mike is a deacon and Church Secretary at our Baptist/Congregationalist Church in nearby Heathfield and plays clarinet/saxophone in the church worship group. Rita is a governor at our local Community College and carries out a lot of pastoral visiting for the church. We are both members of Heathfield Choral Society where Rita sings soprano and Mike tenor. This is a very active choir of almost 80 members which gives 2-3 concerts a year.

We have established links with a French choir from Forges-les-Eaux in Haute Normandie which is twinned with Heathfield. We are also active members of the Twinning Association not the least because our own cottage in France is only 10 miles from Forges where we now have some good friends. Yes France is still important in our lives and we visit as often as we can. We do come to St Mark's whenever we are in the Paris area on a Sunday – St Marks too remains in our hearts with great affection. Our two daughters live up in Surrey an hour or so from us by car. We have five grandchildren aged from 17 to 5 all of whom are a source of great joy to us.

David and Heather Thorpe

Leaving St Mark's 3 years ago was quite a wrench after 16 years, but we are now settled into cold, snowy Manchester – wait! Versailles looks just the same under snow as Manchester – I knew there were similarities! Dave is still doing SAP with Brother, I am still selling Phoenix cards and running prenatal classes all over the place, including a regular group in my local prison, our eldest daughter Rachel remains living and working in Paris, Ian is in a campervan on a trip in New Zealand as we speak, Rebekah is now 14 and rather good at French in school and Joshua is almost 12 and he's pretty good too – funny that. Our new church is big, 500 people and rising and after the cosiness of St Mark's I think that has been one of our biggest challenges back in Blighty, but then again, for those of you that know us – shyness was never one of our issues...

John & Alice Halliday

We have moved to an 18th century cottage near Oxford, and are busy repairing and rebuilding. Our son James lives in Lille where he is a musical director, our daughter Anna, back from Cape town, is now in advertising in London, and Edward, recently graduated from Oxford is applying for a job in management consultancy

Julian and Mei-Hwa Brown, whom Saint Mark's supported during their mission in North Africa, are now back in UK where Julian is studying at Oxford. Julian's parents Sheila and Anthony, both pillars of Saint Mark's for many decades, are now actively retired in Bristol.

Loretta Bennison (Arizona)

Warren and I have been married now for over 13 years and have done much in that time. From boating through the islands and waters of Washington and British Columbia; to visiting a child in Ecuador; to a wedding in Colombia; to getting out of the rain and cold of winter and enjoying the sun and warmth of Arizona. Our children are all doing well, and another grandchild is getting married in February. We're thankful they all have good jobs. We keep busy in Arizona with church, friends, exercise, piano and a small remodeling project every year.

Pictures.....

Dedication of Leah Ferrero

John & Deb Ferrero dedicated their youngest daughter Leah in a moving ceremony during morning worship at St Mark's. Why not a baptism, the Marksman asked them. Their reply:

*""Of course we respect the choice of the many Christian parents who baptise their children as babies. However we believe that, as stated in scripture, baptism is a choice, in obedience to following Christ's example, a public testimony of personal faith, full immersion, representing death to sin & being risen to life. Not something that can be understood or decided by an infant. However, as parents, we recognise that all life comes from God & that children are a gift from Him. We therefore "give thanks" for "this life" & "dedicate" the child to God, hoping (& praying) that in due time, he/she will choose to make a personal profession of faith & follow in the example of Christ (including in full-immersion baptism as Jesus was baptised), seeking to live the life of a believer, otherwise known as being a *Christian*.*



Hamlet without the prince?



In our September issue we reported on Carol and Kevin's 25th anniversary celebration at St Mark's. We showed several photos, but none of the happy couple! Rest assured they were there, and here, belatedly, is the photo to prove it

Test your Bible knowledge.....

Your editor scored two out of twelve (and one of those was a guess). See if you can do better. Answers below – don't cheat!

1. How big was Og the King of Bashan's bed and what was it made of?
2. At least how many brothers and sisters did Jesus have?
3. What were the names of Jesus' brothers?
4. How many sons did Gideon have?
5. Which of King David's great and great, great grandmothers were heathen?
6. Who killed 600 Philistines with an oxgoad?
7. How did Samson get his strength?
8. How many times did Gideon put out the fleece and in what state was it each time?
9. Which bad lady was thrown out of her window by some eunuchs?
10. What is a Shibboleth?
11. Who gave his only daughter as a burnt offering to the Lord to fulfil a vow?
12. Who was second to Nun?

ANSWERS

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. 9 cubits by 4 ; iron | Deut 3 : 11 |
| 2. 4 brothers are mentioned | Matt 13 : 55 |
| 2 sisters at least are implied by the plural | Matt 13 : 56 |
| 3. James, Joseph, Simon & Judas | Matt 13 : 55 |
| 4. 70 | Judges 8 : 30 |
| 5. Ruth the Moabitess and Rahab (believed to be Rahab the harlot who helped Joshua's spies in Jericho | Matthew 1 : 5, Ruth 1 : 4 and Joshua 2 : 1 |
| 6. Shamgar, the judge of Israël | Judges 3 : 31 |
| 7. By the Spirit of God | Judges 14 : 19 |
| 8. Twice, first wet then dry. | Judges 6 : 36 - 40 |
| 9. Jezebel | 2 Kings 9 : 30 - 33 |
| 10. An old, formal belief or custom that is no longer held as being as valid as before.
A word, phrase or custom known only to a particular group and used by them to identify their real members. See also | Judges 12 : 5 & 6 |
| 11. Jephthah, the judge of Israël. | Judges 11 : 34 - 40 |
| 12. Joshua, the son of Nun | Joshua 2 : 1 |
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St Mark's Anglican Church, Versailles
In the Diocese of Europe
founded in 1814

St Mark's is a self-financing chaplaincy working in partnership with:
The Intercontinental Church Society, 1 Athena Drive, Tachbrook Park,
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“Reach out for God and find Him...”

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	Kevin Bodsworth	01 30 95 84 49
Youth Worker:	Nathan Lambert	06 88 35 51 97
Children's Programme Coordinator:	Hilary McCullouch	01 45 37 28 73
Evangelism Coordinator:	Kevin Bodsworth	01 30 95 84 49
Music Ministry:	Paul Kenchington	01 39 02 79 45
Churchwardens:	Alan Kendall	01 39 18 62 28
Deputy wardens:	Anne-Marie Laidet, Mike Hudson, H��l��ne Wilkinson	
Lay Council:	Elizabeth Coy, John Ferrero (Treasurer), Catherine Fourel, Davy McCullough, Mark Richards, Paul Simmons, Barry Saunders (Secr.)	
Archdeaconry Synod Representative:	Jim Watkins	

Worship:

St Mark's	9.00am	1st Sunday	Holy Communion (BCP)
	10.30am	1 st Sunday	Morning Worship (CW)
		2 nd & 4 th Sundays	Holy Communion (CW)
		3 rd Sunday	All-Age Family Worship
		5 th Sunday	Praise & Prayer
St Paul's Chevry	5.30 pm	1 st , 3 rd & 5 th Sundays	Holy Communion (CW)
		2 nd & 4 th Sundays	Evening Prayer (CW)

Association Culturelle D  clar  e (d'apr  s la loi de 1905)