



# Christ the Good Shepherd

## Anglican Chaplaincy of Poitou-Charentes

It is a great joy to be here in Poitou-Charentes as the chaplain in this vibrant diverse and it has to be said large chaplaincy, all set in a beautiful part of France. We are feeling very blessed to be here and to have such great team of lay and ordained volunteers. My general first impressions have been of a chaplaincy that is prayerful and joyous in its worship, and committed to caring for its members and the wider community in France. I hope what follows will give you a taste of what has been going on this year in the Chaplaincy.

At the start of 2016 the Chaplaincy entered into an inter-regnum following the retirement of the Reverend Hazel Door on December 31st 2015. At this point the Chaplaincy was divided into three pastoral areas under the oversight of 3 of the retired clergy, the Rev'd Paul Knight, the Rev'd Irene Knowles and the Rev'd Nicky Marshall. The Rev'd Paul Knight also took on the role of Assistant Chaplain and our thanks go to all three of them for working so hard to maintain worship and pastoral care during the months that ensued. An extra workload also fell inevitably on the shoulders of the Administrative Assistant, Valerie Petry.

During the inter-regnum regular services were maintained in the 13 centres covered by this Chaplaincy thanks to volunteers: we are blessed to have a team of supportive retired Clergy and Readers with PTO, several experienced worship leaders, some excellent musicians and numerous others.

Throughout the year, as well as maintaining the regular worship of the Chaplaincy, there have been many social and fund raising events, notably the Summer Fete in Courcelles and the Christmas Fair in Savigne, a Burns lunch at Brizambourg, several "Super Troopers" musical productions and a few quiz afternoon/evenings. The Chaplaincy also runs a number of clubs which provide good opportunities for outreach.

Last Summer I applied for and was offered for the post of Chaplain, which after a late Summer visit with my family we accepted, and so moved in to Ruffec, a small town in the centre of the chaplaincy, on the 1st of November.



As the new chaplain, November was spent settling in and starting to get to know people and places, before Christmas celebrations started up in earnest providing an opportunity to meet the ecumenical partners in the region, and some of the wider English language community. The new year brought preparations for my licensing which was a wonderful occasion and the storms that raged across the area failed to put a dampener on the celebrations. It felt symbolic that we went in to a tempest and emerged to a bright and beautiful day.

At this years AGM I laid out a vision for the Chaplaincy based on the commands given to us by Jesus himself: to love God, to love each other as our selves, and to make disciples. However putting this into practice requires some planning as well as an openness to the Holy Spirit. In response to this the AGM has agreed to pick up the strategic planning process that was started a few years ago and take it forward. This involves setting a number of priorities for each year, and establishing a task group to put those into action and feedback ideas for the future. With this years focuses being on: Ecumenical relationships, Publicity and Welcome, and Financial sustainability.

All the activity and committees in this chaplaincy, are always at their best an attempt to co-operate with God's transformative work in the world. So we pray that we might be more alert to what God is doing here and how he is calling us to grow and flourish to his greater glory.

### **May 2017 Reverend Adam Boulter (Chaplain)**

