



PAS-DE-CALAIS CHAPLAINCY REPORT FOR 2017

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2016 has been an exciting and challenging year for our three congregations in Boulogne, Calais and Hesdin. The current migrant/refugee crisis has continued to be high on the agenda, and various members of the congregations have been actively involved with helping in the “jungle” before it was dismantled. As a part of our involvement in reaching out to those who find themselves in Calais, but whose language is neither English nor French, especially if preparing for baptism, the Chaplaincy bought bibles in Arabic and Farsi. A highlight of the year was the baptism of a migrant at the chapel in Calais chapel in December.



In November, Bishop Robert and Archdeacon Meurig met members of our three congregations and pledged to assist in the scheme to appoint a full-time project coordinator/chaplain to work with refugees and migrants. The scheme will also be supported by Canterbury and USPG and the process is moving forward as we write.

Another exciting event was held in February this year when the three congregations met for a day of reflection, discussion and worship at the Arras Diocesan centre in Condette near Boulogne-sur-Mer. The day was led by our Archdeacon, Meurig, during which space was given to explore new possibilities for future ministry and to reflect on the words of George Herbert and R.S. Thomas as well as listening to music by John Taverner and James MacMillan. A wonderful way to start Lent and to face the challenges ahead. Referring to the Eucharist as the model of all Christian hospitality, Archdeacon Meurig pointed out that. “This is where we learn the real meaning of what it means to welcome others, to see ourselves as God sees us, and to see the world around us with clearer vision. If we make worship our priority, other things will flow from that.”

News from our three congregations ...

Calais now meets twice a month in the 'Oratoire Notre Dame de la Misericorde' on the second and fourth Sunday of every month. One of these services is a Eucharist, led by a visiting priest. We are also fortunate enough to have in our congregation a licensed lay reader who can take services on those occasions when we are without a priest. The electoral roll is just ten but although small in number, on the majority of Sundays, all are present. Apart from our regular services, during the year, we hold several special events. These include an outdoor summer service and meal, a Harvest Festival and lunch, plus a traditional strawberry tea. A Christmas Carol service is also an occasion that attracts a large number, both French and English speaking, who do not normally attend our formal services. Many of the congregation are members of the local 'Association Oecuménique du Littoral' and play an active part in organizing and participating in ecumenical events such as Women's Day of Prayer, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Good Friday meditation and the Easter Sunday sunrise service on the beach at Wissant.



Boulogne also holds two services a month, one Eucharist and one lay led. Over the past year, attendance at the lay led service has grown and we have explored new ways to worship, including for the first time a lay led Maundy Thursday supper

Our electoral roll now totals 30 and the congregation is drawn from a varied cross-section of the English-speaking population in the area; many are of course retired,

some working locally and others second home owners, therefore only part-time resident. A number of social events are held during the year, such as coffee mornings, barbecues, strawberry teas, bring and share lunches and quizzes.

Hesdin's service pattern is similar to both Calais and Boulogne. Normally the first Sunday is a lay led morning prayer at 10.30am followed on the third Sunday of the month by an evening Eucharist, conducted by a visiting priest at 5.00pm. We have an electoral roll of 12. In addition, there are four other regular worshippers who are not on the roll and many people who have second homes in this popular area and worship with us whenever they can, which swells the attendance especially at Christmas and Easter.

Throughout the year, several social events are held and there are strong links with other local groups and organisations such as the First Tuesday Social Club and the Seven Valleys Social Group plus a walking group and patchwork group. The Hesdin church always looks forward to welcoming visitors holidaying in the area and new permanent residents.

