

St Luke's Fontainebleau, FRANCE



Serving Jesus Christ through welcome, worship and witness in an international community

What a difference a year makes! Our previous report closed with prayer for “our new Priest-in-Charge – whoever he or she may be”. This 2018 version opens with praise and thanks for answered prayer in the person of our new Chaplain, Revd. Elisabeth Dean who, accompanied by her husband, Noël, will begin her ministry with us on 1st August 2018.

As the 5 year interregnum draws to its long-awaited close we have much to be grateful for. Our faithful locum help has supported and sustained us Sunday by Sunday, year in, year out, bringing fresh insights to our understanding of Christian truth and as much pastoral care as could be managed in the short periods available. They came to serve and became our friends and we are thankful to each of them and their spouses.

An enormous debt of gratitude is also owed to the Diocese, to Bishop Robert Innes and Archdeacon Meurig Williams, who have walked closely beside us during the past year of chaplaincy assessment leading to the careful recruitment process that was in itself a model of clarity, encouragement and efficiency. We thank Bishop Robert and Archdeacon Meurig for their presence, participation and wisdom which guided and reassured us at every stage.

It was Father Meurig's visit over a scorching May weekend that launched the new chapter for St. Luke's. He spent much time with the Council and congregation in various meetings and social gatherings and he preached at our service of Holy Communion, with our young people encouraging us all in a joyful liturgical dance. He was also able to visit the new chaplaincy apartment which had just been entirely furnished and equipped during three weeks of intensive activity by an inspiring team of 30 church members. Their tireless efforts to make the spacious, well-situated accommodation as attractive and welcoming as possible for our locums and eventually our new Chaplain were encouragingly successful, since all residents have reported most favourably.

Attendance and giving over the past year have been maintained satisfactorily, although filling all the slots on the rota of Sunday duties has sometimes been a problem for the long-suffering coordinators. Our recent ACM provided a seamless transition for the new Church Council, which is a good mixture of new and longstanding members, some of whom have taken a step back this year to enjoy a well-earned rest. Our fundraising arm, “Les Amis”, continue with their sterling efforts in taking care of our charitable giving and social agenda, a highlight being a church outing to EuroDisney – 50 of us present for the Buffalo Bill event, with our own Trent Vance in the star and title role. Trent sometimes dismounts to manage our new Website – a compelling resource that has improved our communications and enhanced our external visibility.

Thanks to the efforts of our Sunday School/Young People's coordinators, a backlog of 13 young people signed up for baptism and/or confirmation classes. Father Meurig approved a programme originally created by our friend and locum, Revd. Clifford Owen, and classes were given first by our January locum, Revd. Jan Jensen, and completed by Bishop

Emeritus Peter Lee up until Easter Sunday when he conducted the Easter Communion celebration including the sacraments of baptism and confirmation of our young people. The congregation numbered 200 on that glorious day when we celebrated well into the early afternoon as the kirs flowed and the sun joined the party. Several of our visitors commented that they had thoroughly enjoyed all aspects of the service – the human and the divine.

So as Easter people we continue to look forward with Resurrection hope to the new chapter opening before us, with our intention, trust and focus on the words of Psalm 127, 'Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watch-man waketh but in vain'.