

ARCHDEACONRY SYNOD REPORT



SAINT ANDREW'S CHURCH PAU 2017-2018

NEW PRIEST-IN-CHARGE

At the time of the 2017 Synod, St Andrew's had been in Vacancy for eighteen months and we had no idea how long this state would continue. But at Pentecost the Archdeacon told us that a new advertisement had



produced candidates and from then on hope gathered pace until we were able to appoint Canon Robert Dennis to be our new priest-in-charge. Canon Robert comes to us from South Africa via Manchester and then the Diocese of St Asaph. We welcomed him and his wife Diane just before Christmas and Canon Robert was installed by Bishop



Robert, assisted by Archdeacon Meurig Williams, in February.

Canon Robert quickly tackled the challenge of ministering to a parish the size of Wales; plans are being discussed as to how to extend ministry, especially to the northern part of our area. In Pau, we are looking at working with local agencies to help refugees.

BAPTISMS

Last year, we had our first Baptisms for some time and admitted some of our young members to Communion. Some families have left us having been posted abroad, but broadly our numbers have kept up and we are blessed with an active Sunday Club. We regard it as vital that we continue our ministry to young people, as well as considering the needs of our older members. One of the challenges always in our minds is that of giving discreet practical and friendly support to people who live far away from our two church centres



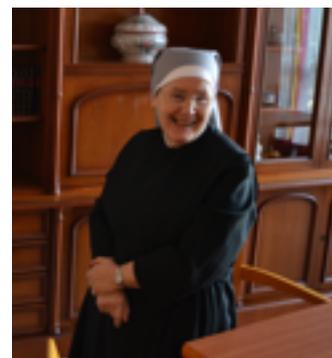
EVENTS

Events as well as services bring us together, and Festivals are an opportunity to have a meal together, often uniting both parts of the parish, as at Ascension Day in Pallanne, Easter near Pau, or Harvest - this year hosted by one of our Nigerian families, bringing a new zest to that occasion. Regular workshops and house groups led by our Reader continue up in the Southern Gers, and services are often followed by lunches, which bring a scattered community together and attract new members to worship. This group has also been supporting the Anglican Diocese in the Congo in their work in improving the lot of young women there.



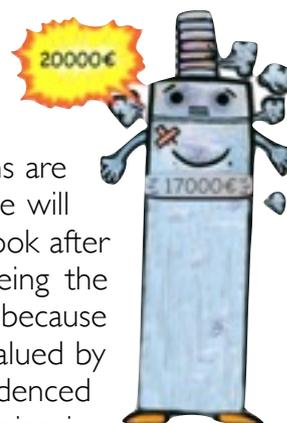
ECUMENICAL LINKS

St Andrew's is not a parish in isolation. We work with the local French churches in organising ecumenical services throughout the year as well as for the various World Days of Prayer. Our link with the local Little Sisters of the Poor has strengthened beyond our long-standing gift of food after our Harvest; our choir has made two visits to the centre and the Sisters are often represented at special services. The choir was also invited by the French Reformed Church to give a concert of Protestant music as part of the celebrations of the Luther quincentenary.



BUILDING CONSERVATION

Being one of the relatively few chaplaincies with its own church building is a mixed blessing: the congregation is entirely responsible for the upkeep of ageing fabric that shelters distinctive and beautiful artwork. The church is on the list of historic buildings, which has protected us from some of the demands of modern regulations, but the boiler and boiler room were the main reason for our failing a safety inspection and both had to be replaced. We launched an appeal and our members and friends were generous: we finished not far short of our 20 000€ target, the rest coming from our reserves. Plans are going ahead to restore the porch and install a handrail for the vestry steps, but these will be financed by our FOSTA organisation (Friends of St Andrew's) which helps us to look after the heritage of the building. We do ask ourselves questions about the church being the people rather than the building, but there are many who come to us, initially at least, because of the beauty of the building and the style of eucharistic liturgy it enables; it is also valued by the local people, very aware of the important anglophone history it stands for, as evidenced by the 100 or so visitors to the church Open Days during the Journées du Patrimoine in September.



FOSTA



Many residents of Pau gathered again this year at the Villa Hutton to support FOSTA and sample, thanks to the generosity of the current owners, something of the lifestyle of the English-speaking community in Pau in the early part of the last century. There was a clip of the event in a FR3 programme about the region.



HARVEST AND CHRISTMAS CAROLS



Our regular services for Harvest and Christmas Carols were as well-supported as ever by our regulars and locals alike. Indeed the Carol Service, while remaining true to the form of nine lessons and carols, was truly ecumenical, with readings and prayers in French and English, taken by lay and clergy and nuns from the local community as well as our own congregation.



THANKS

We thank again all those priests, including our Archdeacon, who kept worship going and encouraged us during the Vacancy, and pray that Canon Robert will be blessed in his ministry to breathe new life into the chaplaincy.

