

St Luke's Fontainebleau, FRANCE



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

The twelve months since the last SYNOD report have been both eventful and challenging for St Luke's. Together we have experienced a range of emotions – from the excitement of appointing a new Priest in Charge after a long interregnum period and recruitment process to the sadness and disappointment when it did not work out, followed by the joy of celebrating the 25 year anniversary of the founding of God's Church here in Fontainebleau.

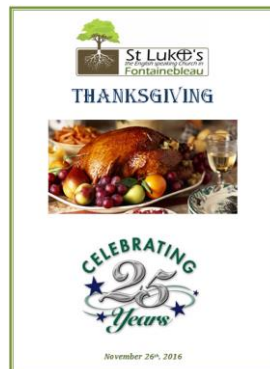
At the end of May we celebrated the licensing of Chris Seitz as our new Priest-in-Charge in the presence of Bishop Robert Innes who travelled from Brussels to be with us. It was a wonderful occasion and we were excited to welcome Chris to St Luke's. Sadly, at the end of August Chris decided to step down. It was a terribly sad moment for us but we respected Chris' decision and offered him and his wife Elizabeth our best wishes for the future.

So we end this last 12 month period as we started it, in a period of interregnum with locum support for our Sunday services. Our good friend Rob Varty has been tireless in his endless support to us. We have welcomed David Mumford, Tim Bravington, Margaret Sylvester-Thorne, Jan Jensen, Paul Skirrow and at the time of writing, Peter Hales to lead our worship. How blessed we have been. We give thanks to them and their partners for having been with us and for all that they have given to St Luke's. We give thanks also to the Diocese for their support in finding locums.

In November we celebrated the 25 year anniversary of the founding of the original Anglican Church in Fontainebleau. What a wonderful occasion the dinner was! Around 70 people enjoyed a combined Thanksgiving and 25 year anniversary dinner which took place in a local hotel. With God's hand at work, Margaret Sylvester-Thorne – who had been a member of St Luke's for so many years and a former President of our Church Association was our locum that week. How appropriate it was, as Margaret was able to talk through the history from those early days starting as a small home group, to God's Church at St Luke's as it is today. It was an opportunity also to acknowledge the amazing Rob Varty and all that he has done for us during our interregnum period. During the evening everybody was able to write something for which they gave thanks, and pin it to a specially made "Tree of Gratefulness". It was a memorable celebration thanks once again to an incredible amount of hard work from many people behind the scenes.



Tree of Gratefulness



In 2016 we welcomed over 2 500 worshippers to our services of all ages and nationalities the services with average attendance now stabilizing after a few years of decline. The “Friends of St Luke’s” Association, which organises social and fundraising events to support our charitable giving, continues its amazing work. In 2016 donations to local, national and international causes reached just under 5 700 euros, and since its creation total donations exceed 67 000 euros, an incredible achievement. Our thanks go to the dedication and commitment of the team. Table top sales, music quiz nights, sponsored runs, and classic car displays in the magnificent grounds of a local Château (see below for some photos !) all making a contribution.

Other highlights since last year’s Synod: a strong Sunday school with some youth led services, Songs of Praise services, Bible study and home groups, welcoming new families, the re-launch of “Sweet Friday” as an outreach activity with the local community, a memorable Christmas nativity play together with our usual wonderful service of carols and readings at Christmas followed of course by the traditional mulled wine & mince pies). We were delighted to welcome over 300 people to worship with us during in the Christmas services and over 150 people for the Easter services. At the beginning of this year we signed a new 10 year convention with the college of Saint-Aspais allowing us the use of their Chapel.

For the rest of 2017, we look forward to a visit to Fontainebleau from Archdeacon Meurig Williams in the not too distant future. As we turn our attention once again to our search for a Priest-in-Charge we have recently signed for a new apartment for use by (initially) our locums and ultimately by our new Chaplain and we are busy furnishing it. We continue to be grateful to all our locums that have been called to serve St Luke’s in 2017 and we look forward to their presence with us.

We pray that God’s will for St Luke’s will be done, we pray for our locums and their partners and we pray for our new Priest-in-Charge – whoever he or she may be.



Scenes from the classic car fundraising event, September 2016