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ALCUI NEWS

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM SAINT ALCUIN OF YORK
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND CHAPLAINCY IN TOURAIN

All Good Gifts Around Us
Are Sent From God Above



Harvest Festival
Sunday 28th September

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HEROES OF THE FAITH

Isaac Watts

Hymn Writer

Born in Southampton in 1674, Isaac Watts was educated at the local grammar school and had the opportunity to go on to university, but declined because he preferred the dissenting academy at Stoke Newington. He received there an education of high academic standard and he went on to become the pastor to the Independent (or Congregationalist) Church at Mark Lane in London. Due to his deteriorating health, he resigned this post in 1712 and retired to Stoke Newington. Seven years later, he opposed the imposition of the doctrine of the Trinity on his fellow dissenting ministers, which led to the belief that he had become a Unitarian. Isaac wrote many collections of hymns and his own faith showed clearly through them: *When I survey the wondrous cross, Jesus shall reign where'er the sun* and many others still used in worship. He died at Stoke Newington on 25th November, 1748.

FR JOHN WRITES



HAVE YOU NOTICED HOW OFTEN GOD CHANGES OUR CAREFULLY LAID PLANS? I am sure we can all look back over our lives and realise that things have turned out better because of God's ideas for us. Our God is a God of surprises.

One such surprise was when Lesley and I moved to Tours in 2009 after thirty five years of ministry in England. I applied for 'Permission to Officiate', without which no priest can do anything in the Church of England. After all, you never know: my services might have been required on the Côte d'Azur. Some hopes! But God, through the Archdeacon of France, had other ideas. I was asked to try to initiate a Eucharist in Tours. And then, the following year, came Savigny-en-Véron.

In 2016 we placed ourselves in the care of the diocese, which meant that our future, particularly mine, was no longer in our own hands. I can only minister with a licence from the bishop,

Being the age I am, my licences have been short: three years instead of the usual five. More recently it was just a short extension so that I could celebrate my golden jubilee whilst still active.

So, real retirement finally beckoned. But then came the next surprise. At a meeting to discuss our future, the archdeacon invited me to stay on for one or two years, but with a particular task to perform.

At the moment we are just coasting, well within our comfort zone, both financially and in terms of activities. If we are to survive, we have to up our game and it is my task to try to achieve this.

But I can only do it if we are all singing from the same hymn sheet. For my part, I am prepared to give it my best shot—as long as I remain in tune with the rest of our community.

Fr John

AT THE HEART OF OUR LIFE



SUNG EUCHARIST with Junior Church

11.00 am
on the 4th Sunday of the Month
in the Parish Church of St Michel
Savigny-en-Véron

*Thus says the Lord who created
you, O Jacob,*

*He who formed you, O Israel:
'Fear not, for I have redeemed
you;*

*I have called you by name, you are
mine.'* Isaiah 43.1



THE ST ALCUIN CALENDAR

Our worship in the coming months

August 24th	<i>St Bartholomew (Trinity 10)</i>	11.00 am Sung Eucharist
September 28th	<i>Harvest (Trinity 15)</i>	11.00 am All-age Eucharist
October 26th	<i>Last after Trinity</i>	11.00 am Sung Eucharist
November 23rd	<i>Christ the King</i>	11.00 am Sung Eucharist

Bringing in the Sheaves

Celebrating God's Goodness



11 AM
SUNDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER

Our opportunity to thank God for his many gifts
and to show our gratitude
by our donations to a local food bank

Giving Thanks

GIVING THANKS FOR A SUCCESSFUL HARVEST CAN BE TRACED RIGHT BACK TO PAGAN TIMES. In a polytheistic society people thought it was particularly important to placate the gods who gave fertility to the earth by sacrificing the first-fruits of their crops. A successful harvest meant it was a very good time for public feasting with foods drawn from those crops.

The Old Testament, too, has much about harvest festivals, though the Jews had nomadic, rather than agrarian, origins. This meant their sacrifices were of animals, rather than crops, which they believed God found acceptable. The story of Cain and Abel bears witness to this.

There were several harvest celebrations each year, depending on the crop as well as the location.

The Feast of Pentecost was a harvest festival which came seven weeks after Passover. Although differences in the date of Passover and regional variations in climate meant that not all the crops might be gathered by then, it still celebrated the whole grain harvest. A celebration in England, which

is much older than harvest is Lammass (loaf-mass), held on 1st August. It is a festival in the liturgical calendar to mark the blessing of the First Fruits of harvest, with a loaf of bread being brought to the church for this purpose.

But now, fast forward to the post R.S. Hawker era (see below).

Celebrated in late September or early October, since they have become Church celebrations, Harvest Festivals have never lost their popularity. Not only are they seen as a time of communal celebration, but as an opportunity to give to the needy, nowadays often through food banks.



Today they have an extra dimension. Firstly, human beings are realising more and more how fragile our planet is. We cannot continue the disrespect which has often been shown by previous generations. Now, as part of our thanksgiving we add our prayer that we may recognise our responsibility in seeing that it remains a fertile place for the future. Thanksgiving in action.

R.S. Hawker who started it all

It was in 1843 that the Revd Robert Hawker, vicar of Morwenstow in Cornwall, celebrated the first Harvest Festival as we know it today.



Hawker was noted for his devotion to the pastoral care of his parishioners, but also for his eccentricity.

He was a colourful character, not least in his clothing: the only black things he wore were his socks.

And he not only once appeared in public dressed as a mermaid, but also excommunicated his cat for mousing on a Sunday.

Rest and Refreshment Not just a Food Bank

What if going on holiday changes more than we think?

Two-thirds of the people welcomed by Restos du Cœur have not had a holiday in five years. Yet, in 2024, thanks to donations and a small financial contribution from them, more than 5,600 people were able to go away. A rare, but precious break. More than just a break, a step towards rebuilding their lives. Because a few days away from everyday life hides more than just a stay: getting out of the house, regaining confidence, giving children a taste of feeling like others.

Holidays do not solve everything. But they do open a door.



Colour in the Church

THE JUBILEE EUCHARIST SAW DEACON PHILIP WEARING A DEACON'S VESTMENT—CALLED A DALMATIC—FOR THE FIRST TIME AT ST ALCUIN'S. But why were he, Fr John and the archdeacon wearing red? And how is it decided which colour to wear at each service?

The first thing to note is that the colour is not chosen by the whim of the person presiding. You are likely to find the same colour being used wherever you worship.

The Christian year is divided up into a number of seasons, each of which has its special flavour. And the use of different colours helps sets the atmosphere of each one. It is a kind of visual aid.

Four main colours are used and the two greatest days of the year, Christmas and Easter, have the colour white (or gold if the church has them) allocated to them. This tells us what wonderful events they are: the heart of the story of our salvation.

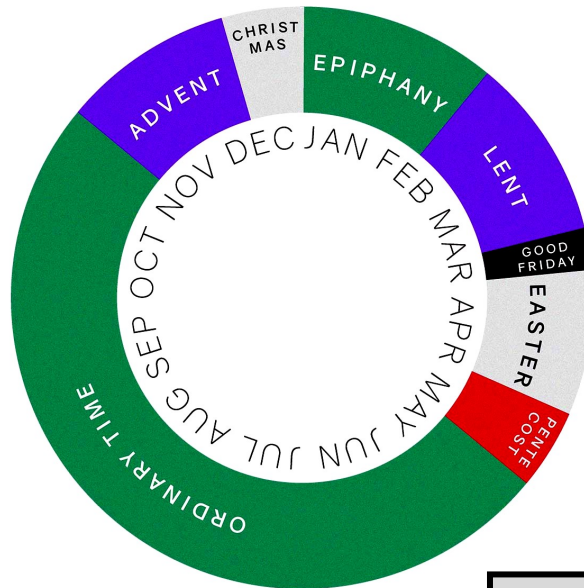
Such important events need us to be properly prepared to celebrate them, so we have Advent before Christmas and Lent leading up to Holy Week and Easter. The colour violet is used for preparation and penitence. In these two seasons it is usual to have less decoration, such as flowers, in the church.

Although it is the colour used least in the regular calendar, red comes next. Its main use is at Pentecost, when the Church celebrates the rushing flame of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Red is also used to commemorate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and has largely replaced black on Good Friday.

The colour we use the most, green, has deliberately left until last. The diagram on this page shows in just how much of the year this is. You may also notice the title of the biggest block is: 'Ordinary Time'. Although the Church of England has shied away from the public use of this title, preferring Sundays after Trinity, it is the title used in most of the world. The diagram was produced by the Anglican Church in New Zealand.

It is its very ordinariness which is the most important feature of this season and it is a shame that the Church of England had cold feet about using it publicly.

We have celebrated the great events of our salvation. We have marvelled at the



means, so it is good that we read them in some depth. Then, like green shoots, we can grow in our faith: ready to marvel in the events of our salvation when the time comes round again.

If you have read this far, you will notice that we have not answered the question of why Fr John and Deacon Philip were in red at the Jubilee Eucharist.

Like the choice of colours on Sundays, this was not mere whimsy.

As well as at Pentecost, red is the colour used when a martyr

WHY DO CLERGY WEAR ROBES?

The wearing of special robes by those ministering at the altar dates back at least to the time when Christianity emerged from being a persecuted sect to the official religion of the Roman Empire.

In the earliest days of the Church, the presiding bishop or priest made sure they were wearing their best clothes—the equivalent of jeans and trainers were just not good enough for God. This did not take long to evolve into particular clothes for the celebration.

The idea of special clergy liturgical attire survived the sixteenth century Reformation, though Protestants preferred to wear the black robe of a teacher.

Although in some parts of the Church people are now calling liturgical wear into question, this is not mainstream. Its use is preferable because it is a form of disguise. With the same vestments worn no matter who is presiding, it greatly lessens the idea of individual personality.

birth of the Son of God. We have rejoiced in our redemption through the suffering, death and resurrection of our Saviour.

Green is the colour of growth. We have learnt about, and rejoiced in, the major events of our salvation. Now it is time to roll up our sleeves and get on with things. We spend this time not so much in wonder but in working out what our salvation actually means in our daily lives.

We are the community of the saved not for our own comfort, but so that we can play our part in bringing about the Kingdom of God. And it is in Ordinary Time, particularly now that we share the thought of an individual evangelist each year, that we learn how to do this.

Matthew, Mark and Luke each had their different slant on what God's kingdom 'on earth as it is in heaven'



is commemorated, and that Eucharist was for Saints Peter and Paul, the two celebrated apostles who shed their blood in witness to their faith—the word 'martyr' means witness.

If we are commemorating a Hero(ine) of the Faith who was not martyred, we wear white. It is a matter of local interest that the first person to be canonised who had not been martyred was Saint Martin of Tours.

What's in a Name?

WEEK BY WEEK, OR, IN OUR CASE, MONTH BY MONTH, CHRISTIANS OF ALL TRADITIONS GATHER ROUND THE LORD'S TABLE TO CELEBRATE THE CHURCH'S HOLY MEAL. In June we thought about some of the names it has been given over the centuries and tried to match the name with particular words in the service.

We came up with these matches:

BREAKING OF BREAD

We break this bread
to share in the body of Christ.
**Though we are many, we are one body,
Because we all share in one bread.**

EUCCHARIST

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

HOLY COMMUNION

God's holy gifts
for God's holy people.
**Jesus Christ is holy,
Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

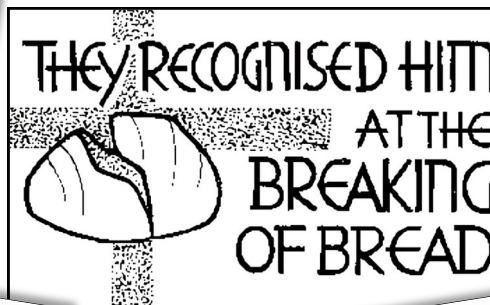
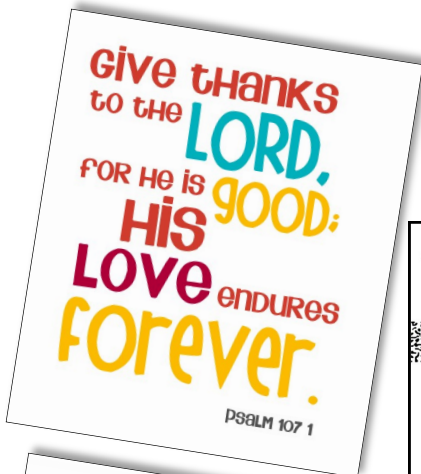
LORD'S SUPPER

On the night before he died,
when darkness had fallen,
Jesus took bread.
He gave thanks, broke it,
and shared it with his disciples, saying:
'This is my body, given for you.
Do this to remember me.'

MASS

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

It just goes to prove that no one title can ever be sufficient to describe this wonderful mystery, which is word and sacrament combined.



Gossiping the Gospel

AFTER A PARISH IN ENGLAND CHANGED THE TIME OF ITS CHRISTMAS MIDNIGHT MASS FROM MID-EVENING TO 11.30PM, THE NUMBERS ATTENDING GREW DRAMATICALLY. Later a regular worshipper at the Church, who did not like the change asked, “But how many of *our* people were there?”

It is tempting for those who are a regular part of a Church community to think that they have a prior claim on it. After all, they are the ones who keep the show on the road by their commitment and by

LIFE'S IMPORTANT EVENTS

Ministering to the wider community takes a number of forms. The first is what is usually known as the “occasional offices”, weddings and funerals.

For us, in an area where the Church of England is not well represented, it often means that substantial distances must be covered. Of the two weddings Father John celebrated in 2024, the nearer meant a round trip of nearly 100 kilometres. And, a few years ago, he turned a wedding down because it was near Nantes and would have been over 350 kilometres of travel. He was the nearest Anglican priest.

Funerals, too can cover a wide area. With the home visit, church service and committal in a crematorium in Le Mans, one involved nearly 300 kilometres and much of the day on the day of the funeral itself.

Often Churches have no further contact with newly-weds or the relatives of those who have died. But they need to remember that only a minority of weddings and a decreasing number of funerals are Christian celebrations. Therefore, the way a parish responds to requests for them is supremely important for its witness. Saying ‘yes’ is always better than saying ‘no’. It is our privilege that people feel that they can ask us to be involved in the significant events of their lives.

IN OUR PRAYERS

The shop window of St Alcuin’s, as well as of all other parishes, is our Sunday service. It is there that people come to find a community praying, hearing and

responding to scripture and recognising the risen Lord in the breaking of bread.

But a worshipping community has another dimension. It is a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2.9), which has a ministry far beyond those gathered at a particular celebration. It is a ministry of reconciliation and intercession: being the “leaven in the lump”. Prayer for others, especially those who are not present in person, is a part of bringing in the kingdom of God.



their financial contributions. Without them there might not even be a church for casual worshippers to use.

But, particularly under English law, a church exists for every resident who lives within the boundaries of its parish. The vicar is appointed to serve the whole parish, not just the church community.

Residents, Christian or not, have the right to have their weddings and funerals in church, though of course, they must use Church of England services. And everyone on the civil electoral roll may participate in the election of churchwardens—albeit it is a right not known to be exercised these days.

The situation is very different in France, where the Church of England is not the predominant Church and we only have a small presence. Added to that, we also mostly use a different language, but the principle remains the same. Like all Churches, we exist for those who are not members.

HOW LOVELY TO SEE YOU

At great festivals people make an extra effort to be with the community in person. Regular worshippers welcome them with joy, knowing the blessing of worshipping with them.

But the question needs to be asked: ‘What impression do they take away with them?’ Will they feel happy to have spent time with us? Might it even make them feel they would like to do it again sometime? Going back to the comment at the beginning of this article, are they helped to feel that they are *our* people?

Or, more to the point, that they, like us, are God’s people.

AN OUTDATED CONCEPT BEGGING FOR CHANGE?

The situation of the Church of England in Europe is confused by the clergy being called chaplains and the communities, chaplaincies. This is a throwback from the days when the Church of England in Europe saw its principal duty to serve expats, with many of its places of worship being attached to British embassies. St Michael’s, Paris, was the embassy Church in France, changing during the chaplaincy of Canon Eric McLellan in the 1970s.

But times are very different now and our Churches have become truly multinational places of worship. We are no longer just for foreign immigrants, but as much local Churches as our ecumenical partners.

This means the terms ‘chaplaincy’ and ‘chaplain’ seem outdated, with their idea of ministry being only for a specific group of people, as in a hospital or prison. Perhaps we should change to the term ‘parish’, which does not always have territorial connotations in France, and ‘rector’ a term already used in our official statutes.

FOR OUR YOUNGER READERS

Here is a word search for the « rentrée ». It's harder than usual to help you shake off the cobwebs in the brain at the start of a new year.



✝ Church is Fun ✝

Word Search

L	B	L	M	C	U	D	C	O	U	R	A	G	E	G	R	A	C	E	R
H	E	A	L	I	N	G	V	K	F	W	T	P	E	A	C	E	I	C	B
J	E	S	U	S	F	N	K	P	C	H	U	R	C	H	M	X	L	F	O
X	O	P	F	Q	L	U	H	O	L	Y	N	F	A	I	T	H	I	O	N
W	R	C	O	M	P	A	S	S	I	O	N	Z	D	H	A	A	K	D	E
I	Q	F	A	X	T	W	J	P	I	H	S	D	N	E	I	R	F	M	O
S	K	U	A	E	G	N	I	T	G	O	D	S	L	B	E	L	I	E	F
D	J	O	Y	I	T	M	A	B	N	Y	L	Q	F	G	U	Z	K	F	E
O	V	M	S	R	T	V	A	I	E	Z	Z	G	N	I	V	I	G	N	W
M	B	O	W	P	L	H	R	K	P	S	R	E	C	N	E	I	T	A	P
H	W	Q	O	A	I	L	F	Q	W	O	D	E	I	Q	X	J	L	Q	A
F	O	X	S	B	V	R	F	U	U	Q	G	L	A	N	R	E	T	E	F
G	N	T	V	A	E	U	I	Z	L	D	B	L	E	S	S	I	N	G	S
A	W	R	J	K	U	D	C	T	Y	N	J	W	V	U	F	Q	U	Q	T
M	K	T	L	O	V	E	I	N	S	S	E	N	E	V	I	G	R	O	F
G	U	I	D	A	N	C	E	E	T	H	P	S	T	S	I	R	H	C	X
M	U	Y	K	W	O	S	Y	U	N	N	N	B	S	Q	L	V	H	P	O
L	Y	Y	C	R	E	M	S	K	J	C	H	O	P	E	Q	F	U	F	I
O	N	E	V	A	E	H	D	A	J	G	E	J	M	X	U	L	K	S	Q
T	R	U	T	H	J	B	E	F	D	D	K	B	U	V	M	N	D	V	F

Word list:

BELIEF

BLESSINGS

CHRIST

CHURCH

COMPASSION

COURAGE

ETERNAL

FAITH

FAITHFULNESS

FORGIVENESS

FRIENDSHIP

GIVING

GOD

GRACE

GUIDANCE

HEALING

HEAVEN

HOLY

HOPE

JESUS

JOY

LOVE

MERCY

OBEDIENCE

PATIENCE

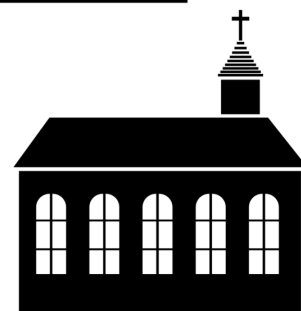
PEACE

SALVATION

SPIRIT

TRUTH

WISDOM



A Joyful Celebration

FR JOHN'S GOLDEN JUBILEE AT THE END OF JUNE WAS OUR OPPORTUNITY TO SHOWCASE THE BEAUTY OF CHURCH OF ENGLAND LITURGY. The celebratory Eucharist was held in the Temple in Tours, first used by the Church of England in 1827 (even before the Eglise réformée arrived), which was where we were re-inaugurated in 2014.

It was a very mixed group who assembled to give thanks to God. Not only were we anglophones and francophones, but people of many different traditions. A number of people had even come from England especially to be with us.

Notable moments were the reading of scripture, with the first two readings being proclaimed, in French, by our churchwardens' oldest children and the Gospel chanted by the Orthodox priest in his tradition. Music featured prominently, too, with some hymns having cello, as well as organ, accompaniment. And the organist, Alix, in his very Anglican cassock and surplice, finished his final voluntary with 'God save the King'!

In true French fashion, we continued our festivities with a delicious lunch at a local brasserie.



SOME COMMENTS ABOUT THE CELEBRATION

Today was a lovely celebration of a momentous occasion. You all looked splendid in your red robes—*Gilly Bromilow, St Alcuin's*

Une belle eucharistie bilingue suivie d'un bon repas fraternel à la brasserie Madeleine—*Dominique Péricard, ecumenical delegate, Diocese of Tours*

It was a wonderful event! I was particularly pleased with the choice of hymns and the organist did a stellar job at giving us all goosebumps throughout—*Louise Taylor, St Alcuin's*

J'ai été très heureux d'être avec vous pour votre jubilé. C'était une très belle cérémonie, priante et joyeuse—*Père Jean-Clément Jollet, Rector, Antiochene Orthodox Church, Tours*

The jubilee celebration was a very special moment and I was blessed to be a part of it—*Gwyneth Cairns, Pastor, Re-Naissance Community, Tours*

Quelle belle journée ce jubilé ! J'ai été très heureux de partager votre joie et votre action de grâce avec tous—*Père Jacques Legoux, Chaplain, St Martin's Basilica, Tours*

