

Chaplain's Report for 2018 Christ Church Brittany



We exist to **'know Christ and to make him known'** primarily to English speaking people across Brittany.

Helping our mature believers 'to make Christ known' is our first responsibility. Paul in Romans summarizes the gospel imperative like this, *'If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, 'No one who believes in him will be put to shame.'* CCB has found that many people who retire to France have more time and a different perspective to really consider the claims of Christ for the first time.

Nurturing Christians to maturity is our second responsibility 'to know Christ'. Paul prays this prayer for the maturity of the young church in Philippi, the first Christian congregation in Europe. *'This is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God'.*



The backbone of the chaplaincy is the British people who have retired to France, but we also have regular visitors who might have a Maison Secondaire or holidaymakers who search out Christian worship. We have not as yet found many English speakers who are in Brittany because of work, study or are here as refugees. This may be because our existing congregations are all in central areas of rural Brittany (see map from west to east) Huelgoat, Rostrenen, Ploërmel and Redon. As yet we have no presence in the major cities.

All four of our worship spaces are provided by the kindness of the Roman Catholic community who have been very welcoming and generous in their hospitality. We have to remember that many of our regular worshippers and visitors are not Anglican and therefore we need to be open to a broader range of worship styles. Music which is critical to good worship, is very much dependent on the resources available in each congregation. We are blessed to have dedicated musicians at most of our locations and we use audiovisual technology to great effect whenever necessary.

The Rev. Jeremy Cross and Suzanne Cross served CCB during the 17-month interregnum and had a powerful ministry with the support of our 5 Readers, our wardens and the PCC, right through January 2018.



In February Donna and I arrived from the USA and we were heartily welcomed by the church. The installation happened in April when Bishop Robert was available after the French synod.

Because of the need to make CCB visible, our website Facebook and 'A Church Near You' sites were all redesigned in the spring. This has resulted in attracting a few additional visitors especially Huelgoat. Alfred Adgey has kept the membership diaspora informed through a monthly magazine and has managed the complicated GDPR issues.

Our outreach is carried out through two associations. **'La Source'** supports our community choir, English library and fun social events. **'Les Mains Ouvertes'** handles donations for giving outside the Chaplaincy to local and international charities. Outside giving is now about 10% of our total budget. Giving to CCB has increased significantly in 2018 but so have our expenses with the coming of the new chaplain. Brexit and the lower pound have been a major worry for our members and cast a shadow of uncertainty over future planning.



Ploërmel has a lease on a good building with a separate 70-seat chapel and fellowship space. Various improvements have been made to the building this year. We have space for an English library of

6,000 books and can host various social events in order to make contact with English speakers. Ploërmel has been blessed with the leadership of two Readers Guy Barnard and Alan Mason and an extensive music team. A new home group started in the Ploërmel area.

The other congregations must set up in borrowed spaces for worship or fellowship as needed, though some storage on site is permitted which helps. Each have their own pattern of worship, outreach and social activities organized by the local leadership. It is difficult to pull everyone together for united events because of the large distances.



In April we decided to expand the frequency of Sunday worship at **Rostrenen** and at **Huelgoat** from 2 Sundays a month to every Sunday. This was made possible with the initiative of dedicated lay leaders and the support of existing Readers Robin and Laura Hillman, a newly arrived Reader John Cullingford and The Rev Joy Dale who retired to Huelgoat with PTO. Later the Rev Malcolm Jones gave support.

The additional services make it easier for visitors to find a predictable worship opportunity. The style; prayer and praise, and location in the Salle Paroissiales, is complementary to the Communion services.



Redon: After a series of planning meetings in the summer we opened our fourth worship location in Redon, which is a mid sized town, located about one hour south and east of Ploërmel. We had several parishioners attending from that area already and now about half of the core group is new to CCB. Redon is a strategic business and vacation centre. Its river is on the canal and opens to the Morbihan and there is a train service direct to Paris. It is also commuter distance from Vannes and Nantes. Since October we have held worship on two Sunday mornings per month and now have a couple of home bible study groups started nearby.



Many thanks to our dedicated team of wardens, Chris Wilson and Janet Lageveen and a supportive PCC including Lena Linton our treasurer, who together bless every aspect of our work in Brittany.

As we look forward to a new year we have decided to use **S.M.A.R.T.** goals (**S**trategic, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant and **T**imely). Part of our challenge for 2019 will be for each congregation and the Chaplaincy as a whole to come up with SMART goals, to further our vision in 2019, which is 'to know Christ and to make him known.'

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