



Moving Forward in Faith!

Pas-de-Calais Chaplaincy (Boulogne-sur-Mer, Calais and Dunkerque)

<http://www.anglicanspdc.com>



This year has been an exciting one as plans to appoint a full-time Chaplain move forward and begin to take shape. It will be a highly exciting appointment combining the mission of a chaplain for our three congregations with working as a refugee/Migrant officer in the Calais area. A number of meetings have been held over the year with Bishop Robert and Archdeacon Meurig, and the other partners in the project: the Diocese of Canterbury and Partners in the Gospel. Given the number of stakeholders (4) it is a more than usually complicated procedure, but the advertisement has gone out,

so if anyone knows of a possible candidate interested in “a ground-breaking, edgy, pioneering ministry without hard borders”, they should tell them to contact the Archdeacon!

Many members of the congregation have continued to be involved helping the migrants on an individual basis, and some migrants have attended worship in Calais. It will be wonderful to finally have a Chaplain who can coordinate this work.

Regardless of the distances between the three centres (Calais to Hesdin for example is almost 100 kms), the Chaplaincy is very much united as one and provides essential points of contact for English speaking Christians throughout the north-western half of the *département*. All three congregations join together in worship on the fifth Sunday in the month, or for special events. Our area dean, Debbie Flach, recently led us in congregational worship training and now that we have finally (!) got all the safeguarding paperwork up-to-date, each congregation has several members officially authorised as Congregational Worship Leaders for a three-year period.

Over the past year we have tried to improve our channels of communication. The website continues to bring in visitors and newsletters are sent to an ever-growing number of people. We feature in a “A Church near You”, the “The British Community in France” diary, and we have a Facebook page and a twitter account!

News from our three congregations ...



Calais continues to meet twice a month in the ‘Oratoire Notre Dame de la Misericorde’ on the second and fourth Sunday of every month. The monthly Eucharist is led by visiting clergy, often the Revd Sara MacVane who comes down from Paris. The

layed service is taken by our licensed lay reader, Mary Wood. The congregation is extremely faithful if small in number. As ever, Calais is active in ecumenical events including Women's Day of Prayer, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Good Friday meditation and the Easter Sunday sunrise service on the beach at Wissant, with music often provided by Clare Page. Other special events include the outdoor annual summer service followed by a meal, and, later in the year, the annual Christmas Carol service, which is held with other churches and which attracts a large number, both French and English speaking, who do not normally attend our formal services.

Boulogne's monthly Eucharist is taken by Chaplains from the UK, who either come over for the day or stay overnight. This has meant rich and varied worship and has also led to closer ties with the Diocese of Canterbury as both the Revd Canon Caroline Pinchbeck and the Archdeacon of Maidstone, the Ven. Stephen Taylor have crossed the Channel to lead us in our worship. A bible-study started in July and continues to meet on fortnightly basis at a congregation member's house, with discussions often



continuing into mealtime!

The layed service is now firmly part of our worship pattern and well-attended, as is the layed Maundy Thursday Supper and the annual Christmas carol service and nativity play held with the Catholic Church in Estréelles (we still have no donkey, but we did have a sheep on wheels this year!) Popular social events such as the strawberry tea, Quiz nights, coffee mornings have continued this last year, enabling us to make contact with other resident English-speaking families in the area.



Strawberry tea gardens with Estréelles church as backdrop

Hesdin's service pattern is similar to both Calais and Boulogne. Normally the first Sunday is a lay led morning prayer at 10.30am followed on the third Sunday of the month by an evening Eucharist. The time of the evening Eucharist was brought forward for the winter, so that visiting clergy did not have to drive back in the dark. Although the electoral roll is only 12 there are other regular worshippers and many people with second homes in the area increase the numbers at Christmas and Easter. There are many social events held throughout the year, and there are strong links with other local groups and organisations such as the First Tuesday Social Club and the Seven Valleys Social Group plus a walking group and patchwork group – and of course the Christmas pantomime!