

## THE YEAR IN VIEW

# 2018 AT ST ALCUIN OF YORK IN TOURAINE

### OVERVIEW

This has been, by the grace of God, another year of growth for our chaplaincy, in spite of a death and people returning to live in Britain.

We continue our basic pattern of “the Lord’s own service for the Lord’s own people on the Lord’s own day” by celebrating the Eucharist monthly at each of our two worship centres, Tours and Savigny-en-Véron near Chinon. At Tours we use the protestant Temple and at Savigny, the parish church.

A detailed service sheet is provided for each Eucharist, as well as an outline order and the day’s readings in French.

The situation at Tours remains challenging, with our services having to be at 7 o’clock in the evening, but a faithful nucleus continues to maintain our presence. This is very important for our relationship with other Churches and faiths. We actively continue our search for premises we could use on a Sunday morning.

### THE YEAR BEGAN WITH LUNCH

Or, very nearly. At the end of January, Fr Meurig Williams, our archdeacon, paid us a visit. He preached at the Candlemas Eucharist and afterwards joined the Chaplaincy Council for lunch at a nearby restaurant. His brief stay in the Touraine included meetings with some of our local ecumenical partners: the Vicar General of the Diocese of Tours, the *présidente* of the Eglise réformée and the Baptist pastor of an English-speaking ecumenical Church.

### WE WELCOMED NORA INTO THE LORD’S FAMILY

On Easter Day we were delighted to welcome Nora into the Church through Holy Baptism. As it was in Tours, we thought it would have to be in the evening, the problem being exacerbated by the Eglise réformée requiring us to have our service even later than usual. However the Diocese of Tours and the curé of the parish where Nora and her family live, kindly made their church available. As the Eucharist was in the morning, people from a great distance were able to worship with us, some even coming from 70 km away. This led to a congregation of nearly 80, which shows our potential had we a different hour available to us. The downside of this is that Nora, her parents and her big sister have to travel 50 km to our Eucharist at Savigny, Tours being at an impossible time for small children.

### DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE

In June, we celebrated our second picnic in the grounds of the Château de l’Islette near Azay-le-Rideau. As before, this was a very happy occasion, including, this year, some boating on the river Indre, which flows through the grounds.



## THE TRUMPET DID SOUND

Our November worship at Tours was non-eucharistic and took the form of a Commemoration of the ending of the First World War a century ago. We were fortunate in being able to celebrate earlier than usual, which meant that we welcomed people from a greater distance than we normally can. We invited ecumenical partners to join with us and one of the lessons was read in French by a representative of the Archbishop of Tours. We were also fortunate in having a trumpeter from the regional Conservatoire of Music, who played the Last Post and Reveille before and after the two minutes' silence.



## AND WE CAME A-WASSAILING

Ever since the (re-)founding of our Chaplaincy in 2014, Carol Services in Tours have been bilingual and ecumenical, firstly just with the Eglise réformée, but now including Catholics, Orthodox and Evangelicals. The compact temple was packed—a spy even reported that the cathedral organist was there. As last year, a moving feature was the chanting of his reading by the Antiochene Orthodox priest. A new development was an ecumenical Carol Service in Chinon at the Roman Catholic parish church. The eighty-strong congregation included a number of anglophones we don't normally have contact with. The Catholics attending were relatively few, being not sure what to expect. After the service those from St Alcuin's were entertained to a reception in the presbytery. Also new this year, and sandwiched between the Carol Services, was a Christingle, the children making them at the time of the sermon—a new meaning to messy church! Altogether a busy weekend for the elderly chaplain.

## HAND IN HAND WITH OTHERS

The year saw us strengthening our ecumenical and interfaith relationships. In the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity the Eglise réformée allowed us to celebrate Midday Prayer each weekday. This we did in French and we were pleased to welcome clergy and laity of other Churches for a little taste of Anglican worship. We were also invited to a meal breaking the Ramadan fast by local Muslims and to the celebration of Hannukah by the Jewish community.

## READ ALL ABOUT IT

We continued to publish Alcuinews every quarter and were able to have further publicity, notably for our Carol Services courtesy of our bank, Crédit Agricole. We have a well-maintained website.

## THE WHO

As always in Church life, our activities represent a great deal of team effort. We are fortunate to have two excellent organists, both for the excellent organ in the Temple and for the different source of complexity which is the harmonium at Savigny. Many people help with readings and intercessions, we have a fully functioning Sunday school for our children (who now total twelve), young servers and an enthusiastic Chaplaincy Council.

We are much blessed. *Laudate Dominum.*