

## All Saints, Hérault: Priest-in-Charge's Report for 2015

The Chaplaincy Council's report for 2015 shows that our chaplaincy of All Saints, Hérault, now three years old, continues to grow and mature, like the best of our local wine. I believe that this is because we are a team in the true sense of the word, with people feeling empowered to "run with the ball" in whatever they take on. To change the metaphor, many hands make light work. I feel very privileged to be a part of this great team. This isn't the time for preaching, but I strongly believe that working as a team to spread the Gospel is not only the most efficient way, but also the theologically correct way and a reflection of heaven, no less!

As the report shows, we have tried our best over the year to cater for our diverse community, with a range of services and locations. Innovations include a Maundy Thursday service with washing of feet in the chapel at Puissalicon, a Pentecost contemporary worship service at St-Pargoire and a Eucharist in Margon church. The good range of other activities continues: Lent groups, prayer groups, Breakfast Club, the Harvest event. I think that it is important to be adventurous and to try new ideas, to take risks, as we go forward into 2016. Our policy should be one of constant improvement.

We have continued to consult the congregation as a whole, rather more than is normal in the Church of England, and I think this is the right thing to do, as a way to keep everybody in touch.

Although Richard has now made a good recovery from his accident just over a year ago, it is now unlikely that he will return to 'active duty' here. I have missed his good advice over the year and his encyclopedic knowledge of so many subjects. We all wish him and Carol good health for the future. We owe Richard a great debt for his part in getting the chaplaincy up and running.

Julie has made good progress on her Reader training course; she will be a real asset and we already look forward to her contributions, especially her sermons.

What are called 'occasional offices' are not as frequent as in England, but I was pleased to officiate at a wedding in the church at Mourèze, as well as one in Paris for personal friends. There have been a couple of funerals over the year; no baptisms at all yet for our chaplaincy.

The finances of the chaplaincy are very healthy: parishes in England would give their eye teeth to be able to give away 55% of their income. But at some point we must look to the future and what to do when I retire. You would be very fortunate to find someone who could afford to be priest-in-charge with no financial assistance.

As always I thank very much our brilliant team for their work over the year and for their personal support to me: Patricia and Nigel, our great churchwardens; Barbara our treasurer; Andy for the superb website; Jenny for looking after our safeguarding and running an excellent course in May. Thank you Chris (Marshall), Alison and Ros for your work on our events. Thank you music team, Alison, Bobbie, Ros and Chris (Payne) for your work on choosing our music: and special thanks to Chris, as she takes a break from the team, for her input over the last three years. Thank you Julie, for representing us at Synod.

I sometimes give the impression of being a good organiser. Please don't believe this impression! It's almost entirely due to Delia's support. Delia is a Synod rep too and writes the Chaplaincy Council minutes with breathtaking efficiency. My thanks to her, as always.

I think that we have a lot going for us and can look forward to 2016 with confidence.

Roger Smith  
Priest-in-Charge

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