

All Saints, Hérault: Priest-in-Charge's Report for 2017

Our chaplaincy is now five years old and I've been looking back at my previous four reports. In them I've gone on a lot about thinking the best of each other, about being honest and open, about unity in diversity, about working as a team, about spreading the load and about everybody 'owning' the chaplaincy. 'Owning' is probably by now an old-fashioned idea, but I like it!

I won't repeat it all again: but I do count these as important factors in everything we do. I don't think there is any magic formula for building up a chaplaincy. I think we have to start with faith, hope and love and then those Christian virtues should lead to the attitudes and working methods that I've been banging on about over these five happy years.

The unsettled times that I talked about last year have continued and have undoubtedly affected this chaplaincy. It is now a much harder thing for people, especially the British, to move to another EU country. We do not yet know whether this will continue or whether our political leaders will see sense, but we must continue to hope for that. You will see from our Chaplaincy Report that our numbers have dropped a little, but we should be encouraged that this is only a small dip and new people are still joining us to replace those who leave.

The 'occasional offices' continue to be occasional, with no weddings, a few funerals, but our first baptisms, twin girls in the church at Marseillan.

Steven Hopkins continues on his progress towards possible ordination. As I write he has just jumped the penultimate hurdle. The final one is the Bishop's Advisory Panel in April. Julie Johnson should finish her Reader training this year.

You will see from our Report that financial succession planning continues and that fund accounting should make this clearer to all. I said that I would think about when to retire as I approached my 70th birthday this July. The bishop will shortly renew my licence, which was for five years, for another five years. I have decided that I am willing to serve as your priest-in-charge for another three years from now, God willing, after which I shall think again. But I am getting older and would now like to spend more time with my family, my techy things and on exploring this

wonderful country in which we live, before I am too old to be so active. I shall be discussing with the Chaplaincy Council how we might achieve that.

Thank you to all those who have contributed to the life and fellowship of the chaplaincy over the year, especially Patricia, Nigel, Francis, Andy, Jenny, Chris, Alison, Bobbie, Carol, Julie and Delia. Thank you everybody for your practical and personal support.

Our policy is one of constant improvement!

Roger Smith
Priest-in-Charge

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