



**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
ECUMENICAL CHURCH OF OCCITANIE**
www.ourchurch.fr

SPECIAL SERVICE OF PRAYER FOR UKRAINE NEXT TUESDAY EVENING AT 7:00 pm

In place of our normal evening worship next Tuesday evening, we invite you to join us for an online service of prayer for the people of the Ukraine.

The liturgy for the Order of Service has been prepared by the Iona Community, from whom we draw much of our worship material, and will include the Ukrainian Kyrie Eleison, Bible readings and prayers as well as hymn music from around the world.

We hope you will be able to join us, either live at 7:00 pm or whenever it is convenient for you later on.

All our services will continue to include prayers for an end to suffering and a just and peaceful resolution to the attacks on the Ukraine by Russia.

HOW TO HELP THE UKRANIAN PEOPLE

The French Government have published a long list of organisations who are able to accept gifts of money, medical equipment and essential items such as camp beds, sleeping bags and tinned food.

The French Government have also created a website to help people willing to offer temporary accommodation to Ukrainian refugees.

Full details of all these ways of helping can be found at the French Government website:

<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/actualites/A15542>



**THE SURFERS' TALES OF DRAMATIC ENDINGS
OFTEN PALED INTO INSIGNIFICANCE WHEN
JONAH SHOWED UP.....**

ENTER MY REST

Rev Michael Burgess has shared with us this reflection on the famous painting "The Potato Planters" by Jean-Francois Millet

At this time of the year, we are planning our gardens for the Spring and Summer ahead. The book of Genesis opens with a glorious account of God's work of creation, and it also tells us that God rested on the seventh day.

We all need to find that balance of work and rest, of activity and slowing down in our lives. And we are not always good at that because our world seems to be in the fast lane. We rush everywhere, we rush out of habit, and we rush because everyone around us is rushing.

'The Potato Planters' by Jean-Francois Millet, a 19th century French artist, portrays two peasants at work. They don't seem to be rushing, but Millet has certainly portrayed the hard toil of their work, digging in the earth from sunrise to sunset to eke out a living.

Millet was the son of a farm labourer and many of his paintings convey the severe realism of peasant life. We can sympathise with the couple working on the land, and our eyes focus on them as they dominate the canvas.

But in the corner under the shade of a tree there is a donkey and a sleeping child. The donkey knows only too well the reality of toil and work, but here he is resting, enjoying the peace and the shade.

Andy Merrifield, an American philosopher, has just published an account of his travels with a donkey, Gribouille. As they journey together, the donkey teaches him the value of patience, the importance of going slowly through the world, and the preciousness of tender friendship between humans and animals. They are all caught up in the little donkey in this painting.

The man and woman in the foreground may reflect our own lives with the duties, the expectations and the demands called of us at work.

Take time to focus on the donkey, enjoying his rest. Take time this Spring and Summer to find relaxation and recreation. The world may carry on spinning around us, but we can stand apart, and enter into the rest that God enjoyed after His work of creation.



We hope that you enjoyed our new form of evening Compline worship last Tuesday. Apart from when there are special services on Tuesdays, such as next week, we will be worshipping using this liturgy regularly on Tuesdays, intermixing it with our other Evening Prayer service. Our online diary will keep you informed when it is to be used.

This Sunday we will be worshipping using a new liturgy for a Celtic Morning Prayer Service.

Please do let us know how you like these new liturgies by sending an e-mail to

contact@ourchurch.fr

Please also keep your diaries free for **Thursday 31st March**, when, at the kind invitation of Antoinette and Keith we are planning a service of communion in Les Marguerites in Alet les Bains starting as 3pm as usual. This will be a 'Bubble Communion' as usual, so please bring your own bread and wine or fruit juice. The service will be filmed and then broadcast on Sunday 3rd April (Lent 5). Watch out for more details nearer the time.

Church Mice

Karl Zorowski

