



ECHO



JULY 2022 EDITION

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

MURDER BEFORE EVENSONG

The Reverend Richard Coles introduces his new clerical detective

In the June edition of **ECHO** we reported that the Reverend Richard Coles was swapping his pulpit for a typewriter as he retired to begin a new career as a murder mystery writer.

And now the first part of a trilogy of books which will relate the adventures of priest-turned-detective, Canon Daniel Clement, the rector of the picturesque country village of Champton, is on the bookshelves.

No summer afternoon is complete without a good murder mystery novel, and this is a good novel.

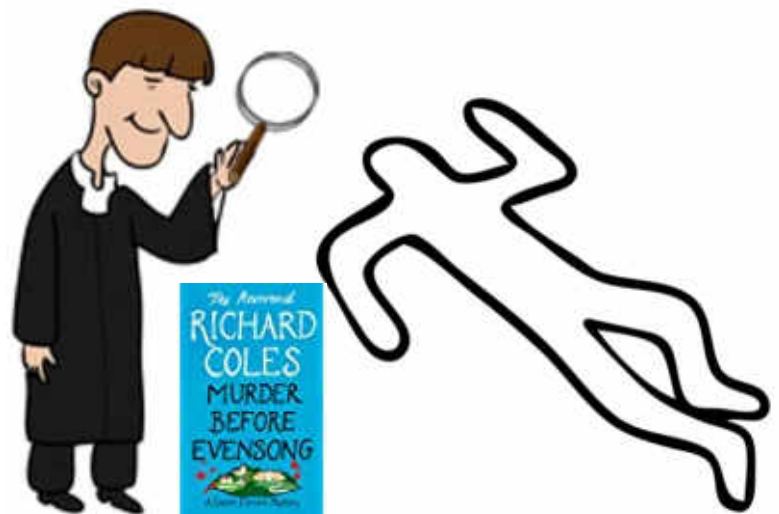
Many of the background events will be familiar to churchgoers. Tensions with the flower arrangers who regard the baptismal font as just an oversized vase. Proposals to take out some of the pews. And now, the last straw, a proposal to install a [GASP] toilet in the Church!

And then the first victim is discovered in the church. We all know from watching *Midsummer Murders*, *Murder She Wrote* and every episode of *Poirot* that murder victims never occur solo, and soon enough as the Flower Festival approaches, the village of Champton becomes more dangerous a place to be than 1920's Chicago.

Can Daniel solve the murders, assisted by his two dachshunds, Cosmo and Hilda, before the entire congregation are consigned to the churchyard ?

Who is depopulating the village ?

To find out, you will have to buy the book, or download the audio version of it from Amazon. Existing reviews of the book rate it as "well worth



a read", and many readers are now waiting with eager anticipation for the second book in the series.

After all, anytime there is a wedding in a Whodunnit, you know that there is bound to be murder afoot....

"Murder Before Evensong" by Richard Coles
ISBN 1474612636



UNFORTUNATELY NOAH HAD ONLY LEARNED THE METRIC SYSTEM AT SCHOOL, SO WHEN THE PHILISTINES RE-INTRODUCED THE OLD IMPERIAL CUBITS, HE ENCOUNTERED A FEW PROBLEMS GETTING THE DIMENSIONS RIGHT WHEN HE WAS BUILDING HIS ARK....



CHURCHES CALL TIME ON BULLYING

The last month has seen a surge of activity in multiple churches to oppose the bullying of both its clergy and its congregations.

An uproar arose in the Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church about how Bishops would be elected following the controversy over the election of the Right Reverend Anne Dyer as Bishop of Aberdeen & Orkney.

Bishop Dyer was subsequently accused of bullying and was recommended to be removed from office by an independent enquiry chaired by a leading academic, Revd Professor Iain Torrance. This recommendation had been rejected by the Church's 7 Diocesan Bishops who in October 2021 had instead opted for an independent mediation process which is still ongoing.

The SEC was now considering a new process for the appointment of its Bishops but this was criticised for 'a lack of professionalism' and 'an excessive influence' on the process by existing bishops. Despite opposition, with one-third of synod members voting against it, the new process was approved to move forward for further consideration in 2023. It is likely that there will be further controversy next year.

At the same time, the Methodist Church has released a new 80-minute video "Tackling Bullying, Changing Culture" along with a series of supporting resources including short videos showing bullying occurring and how to defuse potentially bullying situations.



In the Church of England, an independent group of ministers, medical specialists and researchers called ABEL (Against Bullying Encouraging Love) organised an online conference, introduced by former Archbishop Rowan Williams at which different aspects of bullying were considered.

Attended by over 100 people, including priests, Archdeacons, one Bishop and one Diocesan Secretary, speakers considered multiple aspects of bullying including homophobic bullying, cyberbullying and the bullying of women priests by members of their congregations. Many different ways of addressing and banishing bullying were discussed. ABEL will be giving a presentation to the General Synod of the Church of England in York in July.

At the same time, the Synod of the Anglican Diocese in Europe unanimously voted to adopt a ground-breaking, new anti-bullying policy which for the first time formally

recognised the connection between bullying and safeguarding issues where physical or mental harm was being inflicted. This would make it possible to impose new restrictions on bullies.

The Synod also confirmed that it would not prevent individuals, especially member of clergy, from taking legal action against people abusing them or their families. It also introduced new procedures for handling bullying complaints with new penalties - including removal of Bishops' licenses for lay worship leaders and Lay Readers and removal from membership of Church Councils for other congregation members.

At the same time, the Synod voted to support a new proposal originating in Blackburn Lancashire to come before the General Synod of the Church of England to change Church Law to add to the list of offences for which a Churchwarden can be disqualified from office the offence of bullying.

Members of ABEL were consulted about this new policy, as was former Anglican Chaplain for Midi-Pyrenees & Aude, Rev Dan Langdon-Griffiths.

And now a comment from UK solicitor David Pickup:

Those careless words

With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. ...My brothers and sisters, this should not be. (James 3:9-10)

Wise words from St James. He knew that it is easy to say the wrong thing and do a lot of damage. This happens in the home, at school or work or in church. Perhaps we sometimes think that people are too easily offended. 'Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never harm me.' Oh yes, they can!

Often a joke or what seems a light-hearted comment can do the most damage. Some places seem to attract a type of banter. I remember, with shame, some of the words that were used when I was at school to make fun of others. Comments about a person's private life, appearance, ethnicity, age or disability are most likely to cause offence.

French lawyer Maître Christophe Noel and the "Justifit" advisory website add:

In work or private life, French laws offer very strong protection against bullying, and especially against making false accusations against individuals. Penalties for bullying can bring severe penalties of up to 5 years' imprisonment and a €75,000 fine. For non-French nationals, there is also an option to deport a convicted person for breaching the Republic's principle of *fraternite*.

Civil and criminal charges can be brought when false accusations are made publicly against someone if no legal proceedings have taken place. This is why you cannot 'name and shame' poor tradespeople and why French newspapers rarely name people charged with a crime.

The European Commission funds the European Anti-bullying Network which is pressing for bullying to be treated as a crime of violence. The days of the bully may well be numbered.



STELLA MARIS



Sunday 10th July is Sea Sunday

Look around your home. How much of the contents in your cupboards, wardrobe, rooms, and even garage came to you over the seas, via the great merchant ships? What would your home be like without them?

Yet when did you last give a thought to the people who bring them to you?

It is a curious fact that seafarers are one of the most important, and yet invisible, people groups in our society. We all of us depend on them to fill our homes and businesses with an endless variety of goods, and yet we never see them, never speak to them, and rarely even remember their existence.

It suddenly makes Sea Sunday seem good sense: an annual opportunity to give thanks for the seafarers of the world, and to pray for their personal well-being. For going to sea is a lonely occupation. It separates families for months on end. It can sometimes be dangerous, and it is always physically demanding work.

So this month, on Sea Sunday, let's pause and give thanks to God for the seafarers of the world. Let's remember how their work so enriches our lives. Let's pray for them, for their families, and let's support the organisations that offer them care and support through their chaplaincy work.

In doing so, we will join with thousands of other Christians, from London to Lagos, Manila to Melbourne and Durban to Dunkerque, who each year remember the seafarers who make our prosperity possible.

Three organisations which dedicate themselves to the welfare of sailors around the world are The Mission to Seafarers, Stella Maris and the Sailors' Society.

The Mission to Seafarers operate port chaplaincy services which in 2021 visited over 34,000 ships and provided transportation to 1,000 seafarers every month. Personal support is provided in 121 centres around the world.

Stella Maris was founded in 1920 in Glasgow by the Roman Catholic Church and was at that time known as *Glasgow Apostleship of the Sea*. In 1922 Pope Pius blessed its constitution and commissioned Stella Maris to develop its mission across the world. They have 1,000 chaplains and volunteers in 330 ports across 60 countries around the world.

In 1818, following the Napoleonic Wars, the shipping industry plunged into a period of decline, and ports were filled with unemployed sailors struggling with extreme poverty. Sailor-turned-Baptist-Preacher George Smith was so provoked by the lack of support for seamen that he began preaching and holding prayer meetings aboard ships. On 18 March 1818 in the City of London Tavern, the **Sailors' Society** was founded.

A floating chapel was moored in the Port of London, known as the Ark, and Sir Robert Peel, as First Lord of the Treasury, made a grant of £500 to support them. Governed by the leaders of many churches, Queen Elizabeth II is now the Patron. The Society provides resources all over the world and also works with shipping companies to promote the wellness of seafarers, as well as operating a 24/7 Crisis Response Network to provide support after accidents, piracy and natural disasters.

ECO will hold a special online service on Sea Sunday which will celebrate the work of these, and all the other organisations around the world and will give thanks for the work of seafarers and also for all those who provide support and assistance when they are in need. If you would like to donate to one of these charities, we will put links to their websites on our service page

We hope you will join us.

On Retreat at Colomba le Roc

a personal account by Janet Varty



Colomba Le Roc is a place filled with charm and calm, a place of hospitality that refreshes and inspires.

A tiny Chapel for prayer, garden walkways and biblically themed prayer gardens. Reverend Joanne helps people to explore their spiritual needs.

It's possible to stay for a week but I attended a day retreat on the 9th June for the Feast Day of St Columba.

We focused meditation around cleansing through washing and the considered the Gospel story from Saint John when Jesus washed his disciple feet. There was a lot more to learn about St Columba and Fuller's Soap.

The liturgies were set apart by two soap making sessions and I came away with some sweet smelling hand made soaps.

The weather was glorious and we shared each others' hospitality at lunch time.

I for one look forward to another opportunity to visit.



Colomba le Roc is a place for Christian Retreat located in the Quercy Region of the Occitanie. It is a place of hospitality and sanctuary where all are welcome and where daily life is inspired by the Christian faith.

Run by Revd Joanne Evans-Boiten, a minister in the Church of Scotland, and her husband, Ian, Colomba le Roc is an Ecumenical-based Retreat which, like ECO, uses a liturgy inspired by the Celtic tradition.

The location of Ian and Joanne's retreat house was carefully chosen to be near one of the routes of the Camino de Santiago which all lead to Santiago de Compostela in North-West Spain.



The 15th July is St Swithun's Day - the Saint for a Rainy Day

St Swithun is apparently the saint you can blame for rainy summers. It is said that if it rains on his special day, 15th July, it will then rain for 40 days after that. It all began when Swithun was made Bishop of Winchester in 852 by King Ethelwulf of Wessex. It was an important posting: Winchester was the capital of Wessex, and during the 10 years Swithun was there, Wessex became the most important kingdom of England.

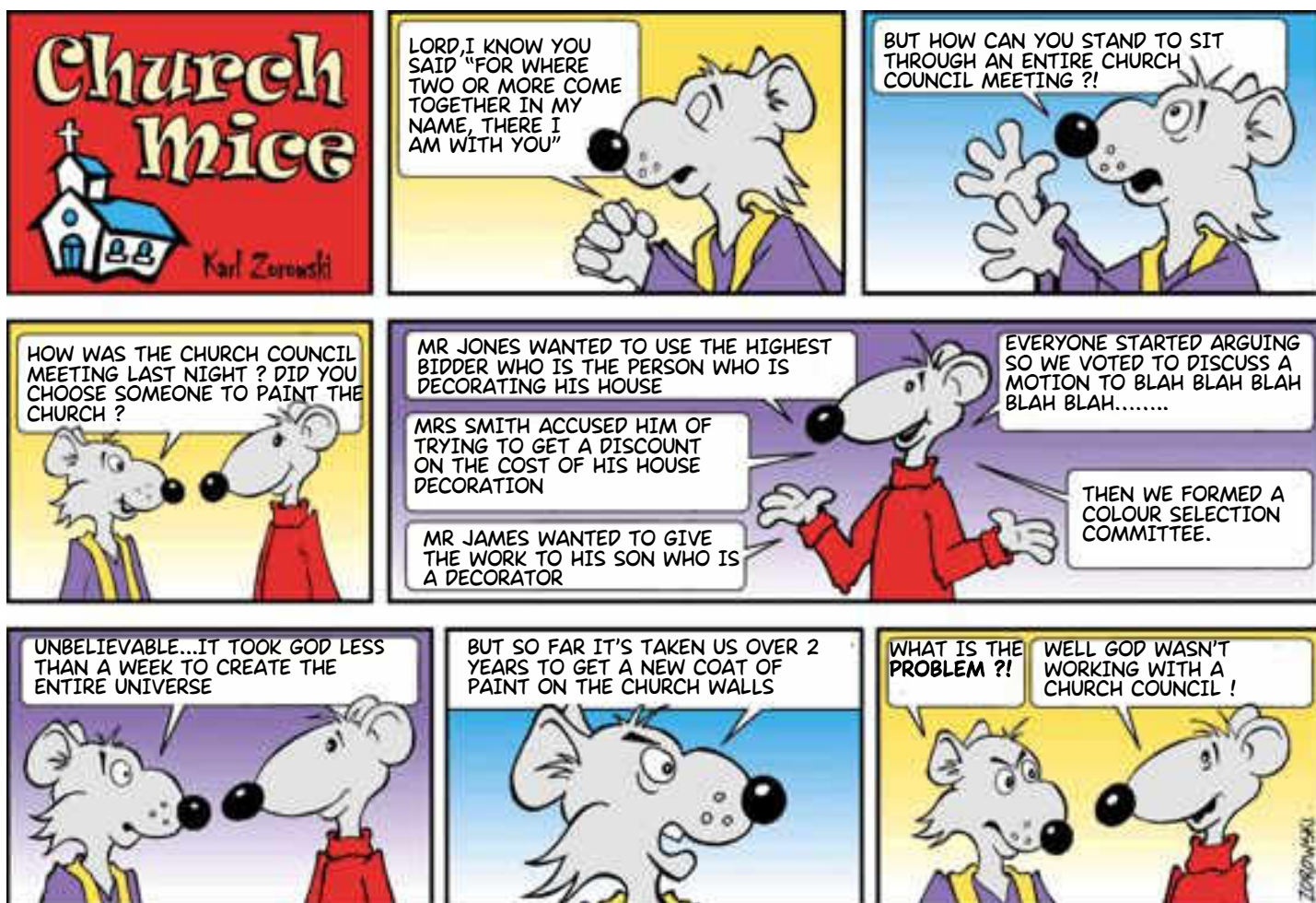
During his life, instead of washing out people's summer holidays, and damping down their spirits, Swithun seems to have done a lot of good. He was famous for his charitable gifts and for his energy in getting churches built. When he was dying in 862, he asked that he be buried in the cemetery of the Old Minster, just outside the west door.

If he had been left there in peace, who knows how many rainy summers the English may have been spared over the last 1000 years. But, no, it was decided to move Swithun. By now, the 960s, Winchester had become the first monastic cathedral chapter in England, and the newly installed monks wanted Swithun in the cathedral with them. So finally, on 15 July 971, his bones were dug up and Swithun was translated into the cathedral.



That same day many people claimed to have had miraculous cures. Certainly everyone got wet, for the heavens opened. The unusually heavy rain that day, and on the days following, was attributed to the power of St Swithun.

Swithun was moved again in 1093, into the new Winchester cathedral. His shrine was a popular place of pilgrimage throughout the middle ages. The shrine was destroyed during the Reformation and restored in 1962. There are 58 ancient dedications to Swithun in England.



Sophie Hacker (continued).....

Janet Varty

In our June edition, we featured the work of artist Sophie Hacker in creating wooden crucifixes.

Sophie works in other media as well, and is a renowned creator and restorer of church stained glass. She is an Artist Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Glaziers and Painters of Glass.

Sophie has been consulted about restoring stained glass in many locations.

One of Sophie's most famous recent creations is The Calling Window, commissioned by members of the family of Florence Nightingale to celebrate the bicentenary of her birth and installed in Romsey Abbey.

Florence Nightingale had a deep sense of Christian calling and the open Bible portrayed on her lap shows the words of Isaiah 6:8 "Here I am, send me" which reflects the main words in the window "Lo, it is I"

On the trunk of the tree are carved words based on Matthew 25:36

"I was sick and ye nursed me"

Sophie is currently working on a new commission to create 16 new stained glass windows to be installed in the interfaith room in HM Prison Bronzefield, the largest women's prison in the UK.

These windows will be created collaboratively by the staff and inmates of the prison and will be inspired by the stories of prisoners. We will feature them when they are unveiled.

To read more about Sophie's many creations, please visit

www.sophiehacker.com



GRAINS OF SAND

If you are fortunate enough to get to the seaside this summer, then you might like to wriggle your toes in the warm sand, and consider the following:

It has been said that there are more stars in the universe than there are grains of sand on all the beaches in the world. More recently, as the estimated number of stars has increased, then even the grains of sand in all the world's deserts have been added to the comparison!

The Sun, vast though it is, is a fairly ordinary star, 93 million miles away. It is not easy to grasp that sort of a distance, but here's a measuring stick: if you were to fly in a fast passenger jet at 600 miles per hour, then it would take you about 17 hours to fly from London to Sydney; about 17 days to reach the Moon, and about **17 years** to reach the Sun!

As for how long it would take to fly on to the next nearest star to us - Proxima Centauri - it would take about 4.2 light years, as the distance is more than 24 trillion miles! And that is just to the next nearest star after the Sun.

How many stars are there in the Universe? Astronomers recently estimated that there are about 70,000 million, million, million stars.

As you sit there you might care to pick up a couple of grains of sand. Let the first grain represent our Sun, the second grain the next nearest star to us. Then look at the whole beach and after that consider all the beaches on Earth, with every grain of sand representing a star then it gives some meaning to the phrase "God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

Revd Richard Higginbottom



church and peace

Church and Peace is the European ecumenical network of pacifist churches. It consists of communities, parishes, training centres, peace services and peace organizations. We contribute to the ecumenical dialogue on Justice, Peace and the Safeguarding of Creation and are the breeding ground for common initiatives and projects.



Church and Peace has only formally existed since 1977, but its existence is the result of the questioning at the hard awakening in 1945 - Europe in ruins - as it will be tomorrow in Ukraine, in Russia. Why were the churches unable to prevent two world wars? Why did they accept wars and even try to justify them? Shouldn't the churches offer another option, a path to peace? It is on this basis that the Church and Peace network was gradually formed.

Members are in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Italy, the United Kingdom and south-eastern Europe, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Kosovo. They come from the Mennonite Churches, the Quakers and the Church of the Brethren, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, and Orthodox, Reformed and Catholic churches.

Church and Peace aims to be a meeting place and a forum for dialogue from which common initiatives emerge. Standing for peace, working for peace gives the Church a face.

Our commitments are diverse: in the United Kingdom an in-depth reflection on racism and the role of churches in overcoming it; in Germany the Rethinking Security programme, led by the Protestant Church in Baden; in the Netherlands the sharing of expertise with the WCC on issues of ecology-economy; in the countries of South-Eastern Europe the interreligious network Believers for Peace; in France Stop Fuelling War etc.

Following this line, Church and Peace co-organized a European symposium on Saturday, June 11 in Paris, together with the French branch of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, Pax Christi France and Stop Fuelling War.



The theme was RETHINKING SECURITY. Faced with the war in Ukraine, and on the occasion of the biannual Eurosatory Arms Fair that has just taken place, it is our duty as Christians to engage in a reflection and practice that knows how to oppose war and everything that prepares it, and to commit ourselves resolutely to justice, the safeguarding of creation and peace.

More information is available at

[church-and-peace.org](https://www.church-and-peace.org)

and

https://www.ekiba.de/media/download/integration/201481/rethinking_security_abridged_version2019.pdf

(This is an English-language version)



More clergy from UK Minority Ethnic backgrounds join The Church of England's House of Bishops

Three clergy from UK Minority Ethnic/Global Majority Heritage backgrounds have recently been elected to serve on the House of Bishops. It is part of a drive towards making the leadership of the Church of England more representative.

Pictures above from left to right: The Revd Canon Arun Arora, co-chair of the Archbishops' Anti-Racism Taskforce, the Revd Canon Dr Chigor Chike, Chair of the Anglican Minority Ethnic Network and the Revd Shemil Mathew, Vice Dean of Emmanuel Theological College, have been elected to serve as 'participant observers' at the House of Bishops.

Their election brings the number of people from UKME/GMH backgrounds on the House of Bishops to 11, with eight bishops – one diocesan and seven suffragans - either members or participant observers.

29th July is the Feast of St Olaf, patron saint of Norway

If you led a 'wild' life before your conversion, then Olaf is the saint for you. Indeed, anything you have done could hardly match him, for he was a brigand and pirate who roamed the Baltic and Normandy around 1015 AD, maiming and killing, stealing and destroying, feared by all.

Then on one particular raid off Normandy, Olaf met his match: he boarded a ship with Christians on it and was converted to Christianity. The shock of this sent him inland, off the ships, to England, where he joined forces with Ethelred II for a time. But soon his entrepreneurial spirit was asserting itself, and an ambition was born: to return to Norway and convert the country to Christianity.

Olaf was never a man to do things meekly: he sailed for Norway and, helped by his own military ability and the flight of his rivals, seized power and became King. Once king, Olaf gave his subjects peace and security. He remade old laws, and insisted on their just enforcement, ignoring all bribes or threats.

Above all, Olaf began to convert the country. He was helped by a number of Viking converts and English monks who were missionaries to Norway. But the old paganism was strong in many places, and soon there was a rebellion. Olaf was exiled in 1029 and died the following year in a battle to regain his throne.

He was buried, but his story did not end there. For Christianity had established a foothold that would grow and grow. And it was soon reported that springs of healing water flowed from Olaf's grave, and miracles happened. So Grimkell, the English bishop of Trondheim, built a chapel on the site of his grave and declared him a saint.

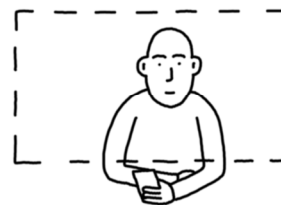


WORSHIP ON ZOOM – THE REALITY

APPEARANCE



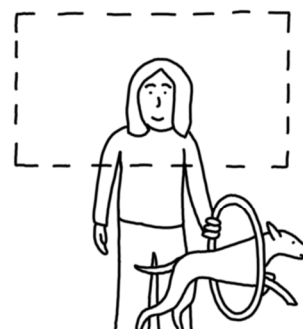
REALITY



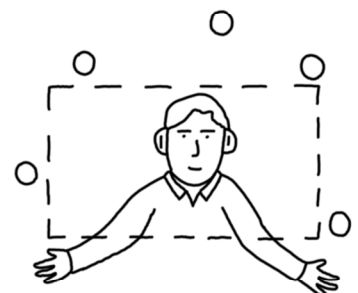
FOLLOWING
TWITTER AND/OR
THE FOOTBALL



HOUSEHOLD
CHORES



TRAINING
ANIMALS



CIRCUS SKILLS
(BASIC)

Celebrating 25 Years of Ministry

In last month's ECHO, we reported that Revd Neil Batcock would be celebrating 25 years in Ministry in June.....

On a hot and sunny afternoon at the beginning of June, a group of worshippers gathered at Les Marguerites in Alet les Bains to celebrate the Festival of Pentecost, the 1st Birthday of ECO and also the 25th Anniversary of Neil Batcock's ordination as a Priest in Lincoln Cathedral.

Members of the ECO team travelled from across the Occitanie to share this celebration.

Neil took at the theme of his sermon the letter "C" and spoke about 'Comfort, Community and Courage'.



Smile for the cameras please !

The sermon included references to Val Doonican, Covid -19 and the new Community of Faith created by ECO.

Unfortunately, Alet had just suffered a drainage emergency caused by a blocked pipe which carries spring water down into the village. As a result, the service was punctuated by the sound of earth-moving equipment as well as reversing lorries with loud reversing beepers and angle-grinders cutting up pipes.

Fortunately our cameras are fitted with microphones which (mainly) ignore background sounds.



Please note the 'offending' lorry in the background!

Unfortunately, just as Neil was leading the prayers of consecration for Communion, the driver of the earth-moving lorry decided it was time to go home for the day and slowly and painstakingly reversed his enormous, yellow (beeping) lorry down to park just outside Les Marguerites, so we had no choice but to pause briefly !

Happily, the damage to the pipe was located and repaired, and the waters are again flowing properly down the hill in Alet, and when we met last week for another in-person Communion Service, peace reigned once again !



Once the service was over, our President, Bob Carr, made a number of presentations to Neil including the beautiful piece of embroidery created by broderer Andrea Higginson. We then toasted Neil and Kathryn with tea and Blanquette de Limoux and enjoyed some of Antoinette Fairhurst's delicious home-made cake.



*Here's to the **next** 25 years of ministry !*

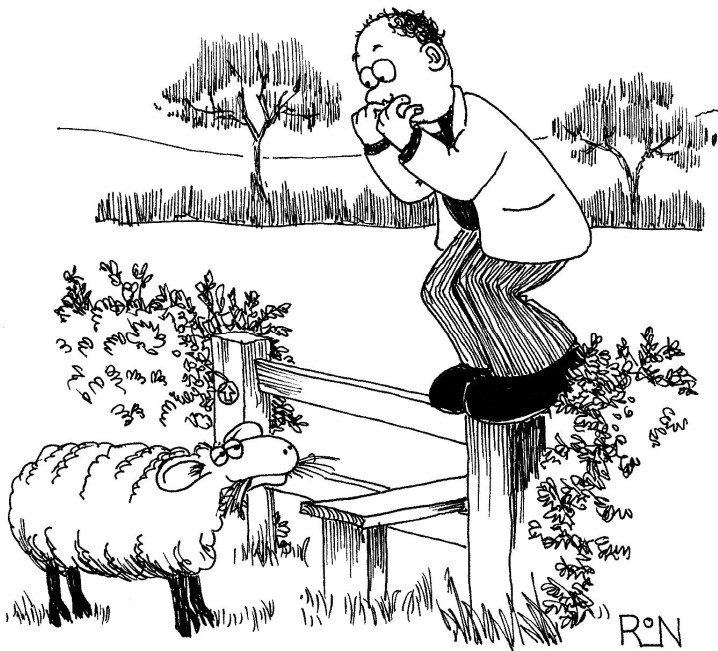


And finally—one resident of Les Marguerites was very happy when the worship and celebrations were over and they could resume their afternoon nap.

ECO WORSHIP CALENDAR JULY 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3 10:30 Online Morning Prayer	4	5 19:00 Online Service of Compline	6	7 No Service	8	9
10 10:30 Special Online Communion Service for Sea Sunday	11	12 19:00 Online Service of Compline	13	14 19:00 Online Service of Prayer for Healing	15	16
17 10:30 Online Morning Prayer	18	19 19:00 Online Service of Compline	20	21 19:00 Online Service of Prayer for Healing	22	23
24 10:30 Online Communion Service	25	26 19:00 Online Service of Compline	27	28 19:00 Online Service of Prayer for Healing	29	30
31 10:30 Online Morning Prayer						

ECHO CAPTION COMPETITION



Your editors are offering a bottle of Blanquette De Limoux to the person submitting the best caption to this cartoon by the **24th July**.

What is the vicar saying to the sheep ?
What is the sheep saying to the vicar ?

We leave it to you to decide !

Feel free to make our readers laugh out loud or groan with the pain of a terrible pun.

Please send your captions to

contact@ourchurch.fr

to arrive by **24th July**