



# ECHO

13TH AUGUST 2021

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
ECUMENICAL CHURCH OF OCCITANIE  
[www.ourchurch.fr](http://www.ourchurch.fr)

## A BARN SERVICE IN GLORIOUS SUNSHINE

In glorious sunshine and 33C temperatures, members of ECO gathered this week in the Lot Region to celebrate the Feast Of The Blessed Virgin Mary.

Courtesy of Margaret Cross, members of ECO this week met in her open barn to share communion and celebrate the Feast Day of the Virgin Mary (which will take place this Sunday).

With all Covid precautions in place and a cooling breeze blowing through the open-sided barn, our service was introduced by Janet Varty who presented a Reflection on Mary, mother of Jesus, after which Linda Billenness led our celebration of "Bubble Communion" where members of the congregation receive communion using bread and wine which they do not share with others, or share only with people in their own "bubble" - e.g. members of their own household. We were grateful to Ralph Worswick for providing the music to enable (restrained) singing.

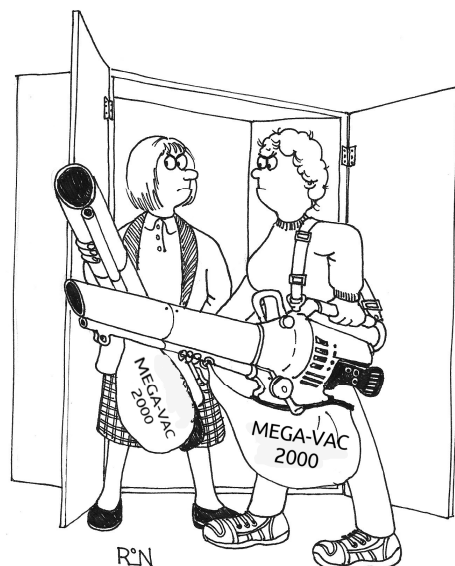
During the service, and in place of the hymn we normally sing before the reading of the Gospel, we were treated to a wonderful rendition of "Ave Maria" sung for us by Lisa Stanton.

It was lovely to be able to welcome friends old and new, and although the continuing Covid precautions meant that The Peace had to be shared in a socially-isolated manner (using the Sign Language Version) and smiles were harder to discern behind masks, there was a great sense of a worshipping community being re-united in the face of many adversities.  
The service will be broadcast via our website and



on Facebook Live this Sunday at 10:30am, followed by our usual Virtual Coffee Bar (*but see below !*)

You are welcome to take part in the Communion by having some bread and wine (or fruit juice) to hand.



It turned out that the biscuit crumbs dropped after a Virtual Coffee Bar after the service were even harder to pick up than those in a real Coffee Bar.....



## NEXT WEEK'S WORSHIP AT ECO

We have set out below our programme of worship for next week. For all details of our latest worship, always go to the Home Page of our website:

**[www.ourchurch.fr](http://www.ourchurch.fr)**

### **Sunday August 15th - Feast of Virgin Mary**

#### **10:30 am Online Sunday Worship on Zoom**

This Sunday's service will be a recording of the live Communion Service held this week in the Lot to celebrate the Feast of Virgin Mary. Please have some bread and wine (or fruit juice) to hand if you would like to participate at home while watching. The service will be followed by our normal online Zoom Coffee Bar at about 11:30

### **Tuesday August 17th**

#### **19:00 - An Iona Service of Evening Prayer**

This is a short service of prayer and readings from the Bible which is available as a video and also as a Podcast to download and listen to at the close of the day. We also provide the order of service in .PDF for you to download and keep so that you can follow it on your smartphone, tablet or computer if you wish.

### **Thursday August 19th**

#### **19:00 - A Service of Prayer for Healing**

Each week, we come together to pray by name for God's healing touch for those who are in special need at this time. We are happy to include anyone known to you in our prayers (we only refer to people by their first names)

Please send any names of people whom you would like to be included to

**[healing@ourchurch.fr](mailto:healing@ourchurch.fr)**  
by **Wednesday evening as usual** please.

## **DISPELLING SOME MYTHS ABOUT ECO**

At our service this week, while speaking to people who joined us and who also attend other churches, it became clear that somehow there are some serious misunderstandings about ECO being propagated. If any of these misunderstandings reach your ears via gossip or rumour-mongering, please do challenge them. As St Paul says in Ephesians 4:29: "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

### **MYTH #1 - ECO "competes with other churches"**

**FALSE.** ECO is an online mission initiative created by a group of English-speaking Christians who are active members of a number of other churches in this region. Because our services are all online 24/7, no one is prevented from attending worship in any other church if they wish to - and we would urge everyone to continue to be active members of any other churches that they belong to. Only by membership of as many worshipping communities as possible can we hope to build, cleanse and strengthen the Christian Community in this area. No church can forbid its members to worship in other churches, and indeed to do so in France may well be a criminal offence under the French religious laws.

If this suggestion is made to you, please point out the teaching of Jesus in Mark 9:40 that "Whoever is not against us is for us"

### **MYTH #2—ECO "is taking money from our church"**

**FALSE.** We were quite amazed to hear that ECO has been accused by one church of trying to harm it by taking money away from it. Those who attend our services are ***never*** invited to donate money to our Church. ECO is able to operate on a very modest budget as no one is paid for the work they do, and the Team who run ECO are therefore committed to funding it from their own resources—which is the model of the Early Christian Church.

As St Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 11:7 "Did I commit a sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted, **because I proclaimed God's good news to you free of charge?**"

We are aware of one Church where members have been encouraged to withhold donations by a very small group of its members, but this is in no way connected with ECO and dates back to before ECO was founded.

We encourage everyone to donate generously to charity, which of course includes supporting churches. Please do not allow this wicked slander to be circulated without correcting it.



### **Worship for the Young and the Young At Heart**

If you are joining us for worship with younger members of your family, each Sunday we are now also broadcasting a short video reflection on the readings for the day from our colleague and friend Margaret Pritchard Houston, who is a member of the Children's Ministry Team in the Diocese of St Albans. This Sunday's video is entitled "Stories Of Bread"