



ECHO

9TH SEPTEMBER 2021

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



Church and Peace Conference 2021

*Janet Varty attended this online event
last weekend*

Church and Peace is the European network of pacifist churches. It contributes to the Ecumenical dialogue on Justice, Peace and the Safeguarding of Creation and is the breeding ground for joint initiatives and projects.

Over the weekend 2nd -5th September they held their Annual General Meeting and Conference. A choice of workshops and lectures were available.



Most dynamic was the lecture 'Blessed in God's Image: Radical Equality of Men and Women in Genesis 1 and 2.' by Dr Kjeld Renato Lings who has written two books on this subject '**Lost in Translation**' and '**Holy Censorship or Mistranslation**' (both published by Harper Collins.)

These challenge our understanding of male-female relationships that have become ingrained in our theology. He suggests for example that more accurate translations from Hebrew show that Adam's little helper (woman) was indeed intended as his defender, protector and liberator.

Other equally important contributions came from a variety of keynote speakers, on wide ranging subjects:

- 'Images of God and non violence' a critique of language about God that has led to violence in all religions including Christianity.
- 'Patriarchy: Sexism and the Churches'.
- 'Anti racism: from awareness to Action' was led by Beverly Thomas who spoke movingly about

her own experiences of racism in Churches and developed themes from the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Equally challenging was Lana Bobic's presentation on domestic violence and how some church leaders condemn victims to stay in the home danger zone because divorce is discouraged.

All these topics were available on Zoom, delivered in French, German and English and over 50 people from European countries had joined the conference.

I was an invited guest and represented ECO. There was plenty of time for discussion in smaller groups. It provided a real opportunity to deepen ones understanding of issues discussed and a desire for further study.

The closing event was an act of worship led by team members from The World Council Of Churches.





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

Sunday September 12th-Trinity 15 -Proper 19

10:30 am Online Communion Service

This Sunday's service will include Communion. Our preacher and celebrant will be Janet Varty. This service will be pre-recorded and broadcast on YouTube and Facebook Live, and will be followed by our usual Zoom Coffee Bar at about 11:30am. Full details will appear on our website as usual. If you wish to join in the Communion, please have a piece of bread and some wine or fruit juice to hand.

Tuesday September 14th

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 September 16th

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

by Wednesday evening 15th September please.

WHY A FISH AND NOT A CROSS ?



We received an email after last week's Sunday service asking why Clive was wearing a fish and not a cross when he was leading the service. He explains below:



"In the story of the Miraculous Draft Of Fish, told in Chapter 21 of the Gospel of St John, Peter, James and John let down their nets at Jesus' instructions and caught 153 fish.

At that time there were only thought to be 153 species of fish in the sea so the number was meant to symbolise that everyone in the World could be saved through Jesus.

I was a Foundation Scholar at St Paul's School, and when it was founded by Dean John Colet in 1509, he intended it to educate 153 children of 'all nations and countries indifferently'. The School now has 153 Scholars who wear a silver fish in commemoration of Dean Colet.

In the Christian tradition, the symbol of the Fish, for which the Greek word is "Ichthus", was the secret sign of being a member of the early Christian church symbolising "*Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour*"

I wear my fish as a sign of my faith and to symbolise that I have been metaphorically 'caught' in God's net and therefore saved through Jesus' redeeming power."



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 "Who Do You Say That I Am ?" and will be on the web page for our own Sunday Service.