



# ECHO

8TH JULY 2021

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

## One Down, Another 9,999 To Go

**This weekend, the General Synod of the Church of England will discuss a target proposed by the Archbishop of York to establish 10,000 new, predominantly lay-led churches by 2030.**

When the Parliament of the Church of England, its General Synod, meets 'virtually' this weekend, one of the items of business which it will discuss is an initiative called 'Myriad' to create 10,000 new churches which will be led not by clergy, which is the traditional approach, but by lay people. Archbishop Stephen Cottrell will outline more details of this to the meeting.

"Myriad" is led by the Reverend John McGinley, a priest in the Diocese of Leicester and it is hoped will enable another 1 million people to become disciples of Christ.

In other countries, including parts of Africa, it was lay leadership that was enabling rapid church growth, he said.

"But none of this will happen if we don't find a way of becoming financially sustainable. Finance does not make for good church but lack of it can destroy good ideas. Lay-led churches release the Church from key limiting factors."

"When you don't need a building and a stipend and long, costly college-based training for every leader of church. . . then actually we can release new people to lead and new churches to form. It also releases the discipleship of people. In church-planting, there are no passengers."

One of these new churches might have as few as 20 members, and it was hoped would reverse the continuing downward trend in Church attendances which had already fallen by 20% before Covid.

Archbishop Cottrell has spoken several times about 'hybrid' worship which combines both physical worship and online services, including celebration of Holy Communion.

Here in the Occitanie, ECO has already taken these thoughts to heart, and by establishing ourselves as an Ecumenical Online Church led largely by a team of (theologically qualified) lay people we may have already created the first of the 10,000 churches. Just 9,999 more to go then....

The General Synod of the Church of England ultimately deals with the overall management of its churches. Its clergy and its finances.

Meeting twice each year, it has members of clergy and also laity from the UK as well as from across Europe.

There are some very important items of business to be discussed this weekend.

You can watch the debates live on YouTube all this weekend from Friday 9th July until Monday 12th by going to the link

<https://youtu.be/XBlzPOVsz3o>



Reverend Partridge's Sermons were so boring that he famously once fell asleep himself while preaching on a Zoom Service



## 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 July 11th - Trinity 5 - Proper 9**

#### **10:30 am Online Morning Worship**

This Sunday we will be holding an online service on Zoom which will also be streamed live on both YouTube and Facebook Live so you can watch the service later if you prefer. Our preacher will be Reverend Neil Batcock.

### **Tuesday July 13th**

#### **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 July 15th**

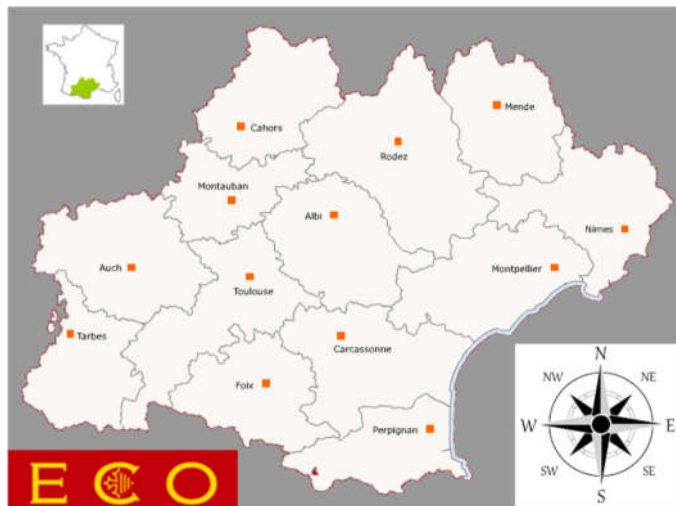
#### **19:00 - A Service of Prayer for Healing**

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.



Would you like to be kept informed about our future services and events ?

If you go to our website

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

You can find details of all our forthcoming services, copies of the orders of service which we will be using (where the words of the service will not be appearing on screen) and the readings

You can also subscribe to this newsletter, which will be sent to you via e-mail. You can, of course, unsubscribe at any time that you wish. Just follow the link on the front page of our website to subscribe, or send an e-mail to

**[echo@ourchurch.fr](mailto:echo@ourchurch.fr)**



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Look up:

**[@Ourchurchinfrance](#)**

**Watch us on Facebook Live next Sunday**

***Many thanks to everyone who is supporting us!***

***When you watch on Facebook or on YouTube, you remain completely anonymous and we are not given any of your details.***



## Methodists Agree To Same Sex Weddings in Church

The National Conference of the Methodist Church (which is a little like the General Synod of the Church of England) has voted this week 254 to 46 in favour of a resolution to allow Methodist Ministers to permit marriages of same-sex couples subject to this being in compliance with any requirements set by civil law in the jurisdiction where the marriage takes place.

The Canons (laws) of the Methodist Church now state that:

*"The Methodist Church believes that marriage is given by God to be a particular channel of God's grace, and that it is in accord with God's purposes when a marriage is a life-long union in body, mind and spirit of two people who freely enter it."*

"Within the Methodist Church this is understood in two ways: that marriage can only be between a man and a woman; that marriage can be between any two people. The Methodist Church affirms both understandings and makes provision in its Standing Orders for them."

While here in France all marriages must be legally conducted by the Mayor or another duly authorised State Official, churches are free to conduct blessings of relationships afterwards. There are no restrictions on where blessings can be performed and it is as likely to see a blessing performed in a chateau or a hotel as in a Church.

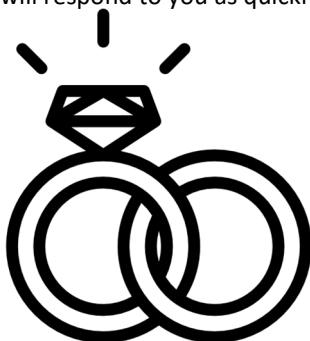
A few weeks ago the Anglican Bishop of Liverpool, the Rt Rev Paul Bayes, made a similar call for the Church of England to create a 'gender-neutral' law for marriage and blessings of same-sex unions. This would echo similar rules already in place in both the US Episcopal Church and Scottish Episcopal Church. It is likely to be some time, however, before the Church of England adopts rules such as this.

The **ECO** Ministers have already agreed that they are in principle willing and able to bless any relationship which is formally recognised by or registered under the laws of France. **Blessing ceremonies will be conducted free of charge** (apart from the expenses incurred by the celebrant to travel to the ceremony which will be charged at the rates published and approved by the French Government).

If you would like to discuss having a blessing of your relationship by an ECO Minister, please send an e-mail to

**[contact@ourchurch.fr](mailto:contact@ourchurch.fr)**

And someone will respond to you as quickly as possible.



## The Newcomer

*A poem by Colin Hammacott*

I recently moved house and home,  
After quite a lengthy search,  
And as soon as I was settled in,  
Joined the local Parish Church.

On Sunday I walked through the doors  
Where the people of God all meet  
To be told by a lady in a royal blue hat,  
"You are sitting in **my** seat!".

I turned up at the craft class,  
I said, "Shall I put up the tables?"  
They told me "Well that's kind of you,  
But that job is Fred and Mabel's".

Still, undeterred, I went along,  
To help at the Autumn Fayre,  
but I quickly go the feeling  
That they didn't want me there.

They said, "Each person has their task,  
and everybody knows,  
we just must not upset folk  
or step upon their toes".

Then at the Christmas pantomime,  
I looked to play my part,  
But they said, "You've only just arrived,  
Perhaps next year – you can start".

I asked if there was any way  
I could offer them assistance,  
But they said, "No thanks, we'll manage fine",  
Despite my strong persistence.

What is it with some 'Christians'  
That they make you feel dejected?  
You've got a long apprenticeship  
Before you'll be 'accepted'.

Our Lord was not so fussy,  
He took folks for what they were,  
And he welcomed them with loving smile,  
Not an 'ummm' and 'errrrr...'

So I'll just sit quiet each Sunday  
And blend in with the crowd,  
And when I offer to help in 2022,  
Maybe then I'll be allowed!