In this issue

Thoughts from The Rev. Dr. Scott Herr
Bible readings for April
A warm and colorful sense, by Victor Greene
Set my people free: Paris Prison Ministry, by Patti Turquet
ACP welcomes Pastor Odette Lockwood-Stewart
Sunday Atelier concert series, April
April in Paris, by Rebecca Brite
Thurber Lecture: The Whole Gospel, by Rev. Tim Vance
What's up in Paris: April event listings, by Karen Albrecht
Reflections from Pastor Lewis Poag
News from Pune, India, by Pascale Deforge
A MiniMissionary in Africa: Why not you? by Patti Lafage
Volunteer opportunities
Mary Cassatt: An American Impressionist in Paris, by Karen Marin
The sky is no limit, by Virginia Isbell
April ACP calendar, by John Newman
A thousand words

Please help recycle this publication. When you’re through reading it, instead of tossing it in the bin, return it to the Welcome desk or Foyer.
Thoughts from
The Rev. Dr. Scott Herr
Senior Pastor

Dear Members and Friends of the ACP,

With all of the chocolates, baskets, bunnies and flowers, Easter has become rather domesticated. It has become familiar enough so that for many of us it’s “just another holiday…” This predicament is both a positive and negative. I love G.K. Chesterton’s confession,

I have often had a fancy for writing a romance about an English yachtsman who slightly miscalculated his course and discovered England under the impression that it was a new island in the South Seas...There will probably be a general impression that the man who landed (armed to the teeth and talking by signs) to plant the British flag on that barbaric temple which turned out to be the Pavilion at Brighton, felt rather a fool. I am not here concerned to deny that he looked a fool.

But if you imagine that he felt a fool, or at any rate that the sense of folly was his sole or his dominant emotion, then you have not studied with sufficient delicacy the rich romantic nature of the hero of this tale. His mistake was really a most enviable mistake; and he knew it if he was the man I take him for. What could be more delightful than to have in the same few minutes all the fascinating terrors of going abroad combined with all the humane security of coming home again?”

Chesterton’s essential question is simply this, “How can we contrive to be at once astonished at the world and yet at home in it?” If we truly grasp the reality of the Easter event, and indeed begin to live into that same post-Resurrection reality, I believe it will be on the one hand like “the fascinating terrors of going abroad” and on the other hand like “coming home again.” Easter for the Christian is at once astonishing and perfectly au fait. As Karl Barth mused, the point is not so much that we believe in the empty tomb as that we believe Christ is alive and present in our world.

Jesus’ closing act is very much like his opening act. Easter is a more glorious reprise of the Christmas story. God is with us. And this is both comforting and afflictive, if we understand the implications of this gospel. It is both affirming and disorienting, if we are to have our eyes, hearts and minds opened, like those early disciples on the road to Emmaus.

It was said of the early Christians that they were turning the world “upside down.” Well, I believe (as Chesterton later more eloquently states at the end of his book), that “Christianity satisfies suddenly and perfectly man’s ancestral instinct for being the right way up; satisfies it supremely in this; that by its creed joy becomes something gigantic and sadness something small and special.”

The comforting part is that this good news is true for us and we have been given the grace to believe. The affliction comes in realizing that our purpose in life is to live our lives in a new way so that all people can also receive and share in this Easter hope and joy.

I am so thankful for Virginia Isbell’s art that is displayed in the sanctuary, and hope you’ll enjoy Tim’s explanation of why the heavenly vision is so important as we anticipate the Ascension. How we experience God’s presence and activity in our own lives, and how we collaborate with the Holy Spirit to be the Body of Christ for our neighbors and those who are displaced and dismissed by the world will reveal whether we rightly hold this tension of both the comfort and the affliction of Easter.

Perhaps Eugene Cho, speaking about the “whole Gospel,” can help us wrestle with what it means to be an Easter people? Or perhaps our newest pastoral team members, Victor Greene and Odette Lockwood-Stewart, can open up new perspectives on what Resurrection Life looks like lived out? Or maybe you might take some time to volunteer at the Friday Mission Lunch, or help out with Children’s Worship, or join the Youth Leadership Team or Young Adults Leadership Team? Or perhaps you are called to serve on one of the Council committees of the ACP? Or perhaps there is an organization in your arrondissement, or a service group in your office that needs volunteers? Or perhaps you are called to start a new way of embodying the gospel of God’s love and compassion for all people?

Perhaps a good litmus test for discerning God’s will is that it involves experiencing both “the fascinating terrors of going abroad combined with all the humane security of coming home again”? Either way, I invite you to reflect and pray with me more about what it means to be an Easter people, so that this season of Eastertide is not “just another holiday” for us. May God’s presence give us all enough disturbance, disorientation and disruption so that we experience truly renewed faith, hope, love and much joy!

In Christ,

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ACP Spire, April 2018 3
Bible readings for April

1 April   Resurrection of the Lord (Easter Day)
Acts 10:34-43 or Isaiah 25:6-9
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
1 Corinthians 15:1-11 or Acts 10:34-43
John 20:1-18 or Mark 16:1-8

Luke 24:36b-48

22 April   Fourth Sunday of Easter
Acts 4:5-12
Psalm 23
John 3:16-24
John 10:11-18

8 April   Second Sunday of Easter
Acts 4:32-35
Psalm 133
1 John 1:1-2:2
John 20:19-31

29 April   Fifth Sunday of Easter
Acts 8:26-40
Psalm 22:25-31
John 4:7-21
John 15:1-8

15 April   Third Sunday of Easter
Acts 3:12-19
Psalm 4
John 3:1-7

Prayer Chain Team

Do you have a prayer request for our Prayer Team?
If so, please forward your prayer by email to prayerrequests@acparis.org.
Your prayer request will remain strictly private and confidential.
Prayer is powerful. We are here for you.

If you would like someone to pray with you after services, a Prayer Team member is available.
Meet in the chapel next to the theater.
A warm and colorful sense

by Victor Greene
Youth and Young Adults Pastor

It was some Friday afternoon when the sun set over some park. I was somewhere on some bench facing the Eiffel Tower. Next to me, two lovers kissed. A family of four – I think they said they were from Kentucky – scurried along, planning their dinner, hoping to take it all in before their morning departure. A photographer let his camera dangle from his neck, giving it a rest, and letting his eyes see beyond a lens. I took a deep breath and knew, I was here. Finally. Paris. And I thanked God.

Most of my days have been like this. I wander neighborhoods and places I can describe as “that” and “some.” “That one” I might say or “some neighborhood” I might explain. I try to muster the courage to walk into shops despite knowing no French. I call family and loved ones as I walk and usually after I send a few pictures that stir their jealousy. We laugh. We joke. We share our disbelief. They make vacation plans. I say ok. I eat bread. I drink coffee. And I write. I’ve written a lot. A sermon. Speeches (emphasis on that being plural). Thoughts for creative writing ideas. Emails. Things noticed. Blog stuff. Poetry. I return to my apartment and settle in. Go to church. Start over. One day, when it was snowing, I opened the window to my apartment, turned on Josephine Baker, and sat there thinking about all those black folk who crossed over the Atlantic. It was a dangerous road, even as it was romantic. I turned off Jo, pulled out Baldwin, and let faint organ sounds pedal into my apartment. The music carried the notes of a long history and swelling song of this place.

Long and deep.
And I was happy.
To be here.
To offer what I can.
To learn.
Grateful.
For this season.
For this community.
For this opportunity.

And perhaps that’s the best way I can describe my first weeks.
Lists of gratitude and moments of being humbled.
I’ve felt welcomed after each service.
Humbled to preach.
Encouraged to march....
Honored to speak...
In all my meetings...
In all my planning...
There is a warm and colorful sense I feel.
It melts the snow and brings in spring.

By the time this is published, Thursday will have come and gone. I will have stood behind Dr. King’s pulpit again. I will have offered him and those gathered to recognize the 50th year of his assassination my own words to commemorate him. I will have reflected on my visit to the Civil Rights Museum. His final speech. And what it means to be a preacher. What it means to climb. And I will have said to him, to those in the audience, what I say to you all reading: here I am. Thank you.

In Christ,
Victor Andre Greene
The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. John 8:31

This scripture seems appropriate for me, as when I got God’s call to go to the women’s prison in Fleury-Mérogis, I went with no apprehension. I had prayed about it and all was well. I was with Carolyn, who had been going there once a month, translating the message during the worship services from French to English for the English-speaking inmates. In time I would take over from her to do that as well, along with Paula Taquet-Woolfolk.

Here is how a typical day for our prison mission works. On arriving at the prison, you walk up to a reception desk where they ask for your papers and check if your name is on the list; then you proceed to empty your pockets of all coins, sharp objects, phones, etc and put them in a locker outside the prison doors. Then in you go through the metal detector like when you take a plane, letting your purse go through the screening device. And the clanking noise begins from all the prison barred doors closing behind you and you know where you’re going... When we get to where the worship service is held, you can look out the barred windows and see that you are indeed behind walls and fences.

Women of many nationalities attend the Saturday morning worship services: French, Portuguese, Spanish, Chinese, German, Nigerian, Romanian... The Lord is good and he shepherds between 30 and 40 women to the weekly services. We don’t ask what they’ve done when we speak to them or greet them, we just pray for them and help them feel at home and safe in the Lord’s presence.

It makes me think of the feeling I get when I’m standing in a meadow safe from all the hurts in life. But am I really safe in this place? Yes, I know this is His safe place behind these walls, where the women are free to sing their hearts out to the Lord - and they do! We start by centering them on the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ is indeed present and that they are here to pray, sing and listen to the Word of God. They sing songs like What a Friend I have in Jesus; He was Nailed on the Cross for Me; Do Something New in my Life; or their favorite, Kumbaya my Lord. The songs are translated in several languages so the women can sing the songs in their own language.

Many people still think, as Pastor Scott reminded us in the sermon at Easter, that you are a fool if you believe that Jesus is the son of God. That is also true for the prisoners as they pay for their crimes behind those bars and struggle with the guilt and consequences of their acts, and the reality of what that means: being separated from their children, babies, husbands, dying mother or father, the shame that they’ve caused to their families... Nevertheless, they carry the hope that they have been “set free” even as they still walk behind those walls, and they have the joy in their hearts that they’ve been given a second chance and that they can shed their old selves and put on the new.

As the weeks and months go by for us who choose to serve in the prisons or juvenile detention center, it brings tears of joy to my heart as I see hardened hearts being transformed into a new way of thinking and knowing that they need never feel alone again because they have the Son of God on their side; that they may be judged guilty by man but that in the eyes of God, they are the Lord’s chosen people.

I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you. 2 Kings 20:5b

Never doubt that your prayers matter, and remember, God can do more than we can ever imagine!
ACP welcomes
Pastor Odette Lockwood-Stewart,
Visiting Pastor

In 2016, from January to July, Jim Lockwood-Stewart served as Visiting Pastor while his wife Odette was engaged in a research and writing sabbatical from teaching seminarians in Berkeley. During that time Reverend Odette participated in the life of the congregation, and she and Jim led the ACP Spring Retreat at Abbaye de Fleury. They are grateful for the call to return to the Christian community at ACP. Rev. Odette will be Visiting Pastor for one year, until April 2019.

Odette grew up in Connecticut and California, receiving her Masters of Divinity summa cum laude at Boston University School of Theology. She is an ordained Elder in the United Methodist Church.

Over 40 years, Reverend Lockwood-Stewart has pastored congregations and campus ministries and has given leadership at international, national, regional, and local levels of church and ecumenical associations.

She served as Pastor of United Methodist congregations in Berkeley, San Leandro, and Santa Fe Springs, California, and as University Pastor at UCLA, University of California, Berkeley, San Diego State University and University of California, San Francisco. She taught for nine years at the Pacific School of Religion, as Faculty Director of Community-Engaged Learning.

She has published devotions, curriculum, sermons, and poetry as well as papers in social religious history and experiential learning as a path to spiritual formation. She currently serves on the Advisory Board of the Student Christian Movement USA, the Trustees of the Glide Foundation in San Francisco and the Dean’s Advisory Board at her alma mater, Boston University.

Odette and Jim have four grown children and eight wonderful grandchildren who live in Maryland, Oklahoma, and California.

Women’s Fellowship
Sunday, 8 April
12h15-13h30, ACP

Ladies, please join us as we welcome Felicia Henderson, speaking on Ears to Hear: Learning to Listen to God and to Each Other. Listening is essential for deepening our relationships and our obedience to God. Yet, good listeners are a rare breed. Felicia will speak about barriers that keep us from truly hearing and about practices that can allow us to be better listeners.

Our fellowship begins directly after the 11h00 worship service in the Thurber Room. There is a time for coffee and conversation prior to Felicia’s talk. Please feel free to bring something sweet or savory to share. Childcare is provided in G1. We look forward to seeing you there.

Felicia A. Henderson is a leadership development consultant, working with business leaders to improve organizational and team dynamics. She is also an adjunct professor at Sciences Po where she teaches courses on corporate law and governance, comparative equality law and organizational behavior. Felicia is very interested in women’s leadership potential and one of her favorite programs is her workshop on Challenges of Women’s Leadership for women business leaders. She is currently writing a journal article on gender and law. Prior to transitioning to leadership consulting, Felicia worked as a corporate lawyer for a dozen years in New York and Paris. Felicia has lived in Paris since 2001 and is an active member of the ACP congregation.
Sunday Atelier Concert Series

Originating in Left Bank studios in 1895, the Atelier Concert Series became part of the cultural activities at the American Church in Paris during the early 1930s. These concerts provide a performance opportunity in Paris for talented musicians of all nationalities.

A different program is offered each Sunday evening at 17h00, September through November and January through June. There is no admission fee, but a free-will offering is taken at the door to support the series. For the schedule of concerts, see http://acparis.org

Sunday 8 April 17h00
Raj BHIMANI - piano

Claude Debussy
Préludes, Livre 2 (1912-13)
Thérèse Bremet
Océanides (Etude pour la main gauche) (1986)
Franz Liszt
Sonate en si mineur (1853)

Sunday 15 April 17h00
Renata BITTENCOURT and Diego MUNHOZ

Franz Schubert (1797-1828) Fantaisie en fa mineur, D 940
Emmanuel Chabrier (1841-1894) Cortège burlesque, Bourée fantasque
Ignacio Cervantes (1847-1905) 3 Danzas Cubanas
Ernesto Nazareth (1863-1934) Duvidoso, Escorregando
Chant traditionnel brésilien Casinha pequenina
Jayme Ovalle (1894-1955) Azulão
Francisco Mignone (1897 - 1986) Congada

Duo Aurore
Renata Bittencourt et Diego Munhoz
piano à quatre mains

Check Your Heart: Reflections on the Lord's Prayer Paperback – March 28, 2018
by TL Valluy (Author)

The Lord's prayer. When Jesus' disciples asked Him how to pray, He gave them this prayer. Almost every Christian knows it, many pray it weekly or even daily. But what does it really mean? How should it affect our walk with Jesus? TL Valluy looks at the Lord's prayer in detail, how it can help us in our everyday lives and draw us ever closer to God. Check Your Heart encourages us to do just that, to examine our hearts so that we can give our all to Christ.
April in Paris…

by Rebecca Brite

“…chestnuts in blossom, holiday tables under the trees”? Only if we’re very, very lucky.

This perennial favorite, written in 1932 for a now largely forgotten revue, Walk a Little Faster, has always been more emotionally than meteorologically accurate.

The man who wrote the words, E.Y. “Yip” Harburg, famously had never visited the city. Two Ukrainian-born friends of his were at least as responsible as he for the song.

Vernon Duke, its composer, was born Vladimir Dukelsky to a family of minor Georgian-Russian nobles in Kiev. They fled the Russian civil war in 1919 and ended up in New York, where the rising Broadway songwriter George Gershwin (born Jacob Gershowitz) advised Vladimir – who had been one of the youngest composition students at the Kiev Conservatory – to Americanize his name.

Duke knew Paris well: he moved here in 1924 and soon received a commission from the impresario Serge Diaghilev to compose for the Ballets Russes, which he did under his birth name. Zéphyr et Flore, his first production for the stage, was very well received, drawing attention from such famed musical émigrés as Prokofiev and Koussevitzky.

Vladimir Dukelsky would stay in Paris composing classical works for several years, but at the same time Vernon Duke occasionally skipped across the Channel to write West End musicals (a double act he would repeat after WWII). Musical theater won in the end: he returned to Broadway in 1929.

One springtime a few years later, the story has it, he was dining with friends when someone, paraphrasing Robert Browning’s ode to England, exclaimed, “Oh, to be in Paris now that April’s there.” As Duke would recall it, he began writing the tune on the spot.

Once Harburg added the words, the song found a place in that 1932 revue, Walk a Little Faster. Harburg’s main inspiration for the lyrics, though, was a set by the show’s production designer, Kiev-born Boris Aronson, a rabbi’s son who worked primarily in Yiddish theater after emigrating to New York in 1923.

Aronson, who spent his youth in Berlin, had done a Paris set for Walk a Little Faster. Harburg would recall that Aronson was “in love with Paris” and did “one of the most beautiful, sensitive sets that ever was seen.” The producer wanted a song to match, and Harburg rose to the occasion.

Harburg, himself the son of Russian Jewish immigrants, and a longtime friend of George Gershwin’s lyricist brother, Ira, would soon win worldwide fame as the lyricist of the 1939 film The Wizard of Oz. “Over the Rainbow,” with music by Harold Arlen, won the Academy Award for best original song and soon became ubiquitous.

Of course, some say the best song about Paris is Cole Porter’s “I Love Paris” from the 1953 musical Can-Can. Some even argue that the lines “I love Paris in the springtime ... in the fall ... in the winter when it drizzles ... in the summer when it sizzles” are really about April in Paris, as the weather changes so often we seem to get all four seasons at once.

Rebecca Brite taught English-Language Musical Theater at the Sorbonne Nouvelle from 2014 to 2017.

Looking for help with your French or your English language skills? Join the ACP Conversation Course every Thursday night, from 18h-19h30, at the ACP. Just show up. Or, for more info, contact: Haig Gorton at haiggorton@yahoo.com
What does it mean to teach, live, and embody a faith that reflects both the Great Commandment and the Great Commission? Evangelism and Justice are not competing agendas but rather, equally important to our discipleship.

Eugene Cho is the founder and Lead Pastor of Quest Church, an urban, multi-cultural and multi-generational church in Seattle, Washington. He is also the founder and visionary of One Day’s Wages (ODW), a grassroots movement of people, stories, and actions to alleviate extreme global poverty.

For his entrepreneurial work and spirit, Eugene was recently honored as one of 50 Everyday American Heroes and the recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Eugene recently released his first book, Overrated: Are We More in Love with the Idea of Changing the World than Actually Changing the World?

Eugene and Minhee have been married for 21 years and have three children. Together, they live in Seattle, Washington.

- Rev. Tim Vance, Associate Pastor

Note: Eugene is also preaching at ACP on Sunday, 8 April.

Did you miss any of ACP’s Thurber Lectures this year? You can still enjoy our amazing speakers and discussions. The archived videos are available on the ACP website at acparis.org, under “Prayer & Learning.”
Mo’ better blues
The Banlieues Bleues music festival continues this month, bringing yet more wonderfully eclectic musical acts from around the world to venues across suburban Seine-Saint-Denis. After the sounds of South Africa, Algeria, Slovenia, Brazil and even Dutch punk, a moving grand finale will celebrate the acclaimed Éthiopiques record series. Its 30 volumes have brought the fascinating but obscure heritage of Ethiopian groove to listeners in France and around the world, and the 20th anniversary concert will feature the series’ star artists Mahmoud Ahmed, Girma Bèyènè, Éténèsh Wassié and Akalé Wubé.

Ends 13 April, http://banlieuesbleues.org

April event listings
by Karen Albrecht

What’s up in Paris

A tantalizing whiff of... philosophy
Brainy French actor-director Hervé Dubourjal has dreamed up a fun and thought-provoking new play, based on philosopher Ruwen Ogien’s book Kindness and the Smell of Warm Croissants: An Introduction to Ethics. Three men and a dog in a sinking lifeboat, a pleasure machine, victimless crimes, that coin lying there on the sidewalk... They toss around a series of zany situations designed to tease out assumptions, intuitions, contradictions and, hopefully, a few precious nuggets of understanding. The audience is encouraged to participate.

Until 22 April, www.reineblanche.com

A doll’s house
Quirky Bastille art space La Maison Rouge hosts a fascinating exhibit of 200 black dolls created by African-Americans between 1840 and 1940, from the unique collection lovingly assembled by US lawyer Deborah Neff. Figures handcrafted out of fabric, leather and wood are dramatically displayed and hauntingly lit, radiating love, whimsy and beauty, and framed by back-stories reflecting oppression, slavery and roots in African ritual. Perhaps most intriguing, the “topsy-turvy” dolls featuring a black figure and a white figure joined at the waist, an enigmatic symbol of the troubling paradoxes of race in America. Period photographs of black and white children with dolls add both context and achingly evocative glimpses into the not-so-innocent past.

Until 20 May, lamaisonrouge.org

The whole enchilada
For its third year, the multimedia festival “100%” has taken over the entire La Villette complex for an art exhibition and a slew of live performances, some free. Highlights of the final week include cinema-photo-theater mash-up “El Agitador Vórtex” and the energy-packed “Golden Stage 2018” with top hip-hop dance crews, including coed French posse DC Vortex, flying Dutchmen The Rugged, and the amazing glow-in-the-dark antics of Japan’s Wrecking Crew Orchestra. A kiddie event entitled “100% Jouer” promises oodles of the latest toys to play with, plus blessedly short films geared for kids’ (and parents’) addled attention spans.

Ends 8 April, lavillette.com

Mo’ better blues
The Banlieues Bleues music festival continues this month, bringing yet more wonderfully eclectic musical acts from around the world to venues across suburban Seine-Saint-Denis. After the sounds of South Africa, Algeria, Slovenia, Brazil and even Dutch punk, a moving grand finale will celebrate the acclaimed Éthiopiques record series. Its 30 volumes have brought the fascinating but obscure heritage of Ethiopian groove to listeners in France and around the world, and the 20th anniversary concert will feature the series’ star artists Mahmoud Ahmed, Girma Bèyènè, Éténèsh Wassié and Akalé Wubé.

Ends 13 April, http://banlieuesbleues.org

Mother and child reunion
The American Impressionist painter Mary Cassatt (1844-1926) is best known for her portraits of women and children. Tender yet playful, emotionally charged but not maudlin, Cassatt’s colorful scenes radiate a warm humanity that her male counterparts rarely rival. The show “Mary Cassatt, an American Impressionist in Paris” brings together 50 works from top museums and private collections in the US and across Europe, shown together for the very first time, in the appropriately intimate setting of the Musée Jacquemart-André, a gorgeous Second Empire mansion. (See page 17.)


A really big show
The dazzling moves of the Shen Yun dance company draw from the rich repertoire of Chinese classical dance, featuring highly acrobatic stunts along with carefully choreographed chorus lines. Shimmering scenery and swirling, multicolored costumes form a glittering backdrop for numbers portraying themes drawn from 5,000 years of Chinese history. Founded in New York and rumored to have ties to the Falun Gong movement, the company may not be welcome in China, but is regularly billed in Las Vegas and other major-league entertainment venues, including Paris’s massive Palais des Congrès. Tickets are pricey, but you can expect a whole lot of razzle-dazzle for your money.

6 April-6 May, fr.shenyunperformingarts.org
Reflections from Pastor Lewis Poag

Pat and I have had a great time renewing friendships from our precious sojourn at the ACP, and making new ones during the current one. We stand amazed at the ongoing strong ministries of this congregation, with people from all over the world. I am so impressed with the talent, cooperation, and welcoming spirit that is shared by the staff and volunteers, with all who come to the church. The ACP is a unique place with many dedicated persons who seek to live out the Christian faith in a variety of ways. We are thankful for being included in your fellowship. We will keep you in our hearts, remember you in our prayers, and hope that you may do the same.

Grace and peace to you all,
Lewis Poag

The Movie Discussion Group

19h30, Thursday 19 April
Room G2

This month’s movies to see beforehand:

*The Captain: L’usurpateur, The Rider, The Death of Stalin/La Mort de Staline, Isle of Dogs/L’île aux chiens*

Contact: movies@acparis.org

Sunday Worship at the ACP

09h00:

*Traditional Service*, with weekly communion

11h00:

*Traditional Service*, with choirs, children’s worship service; communion first Sunday of the month

13h30:

*Contemporary Service*, with children’s worship service, and live band accompanying sung worship
News from Pune, India
by Pascale Deforge

One year in the slum: challenges & blessings

The Deep Griha women empowerment Income Generation Program (IGP) started the School Uniform Project in February 2017, when I moved back to Pune. So the Deep Griha Bibvewadi center celebrated the anniversary with cakes and prayers in February 2018. Here’s where we are now with the project.

Training classes on sewing boys’ shirts and pants have been completed, with six Indian Bibvewadi slum ladies attending regularly, despite their busy family responsibilities. These courageous ladies want to be part of fulfilling the first order that we have received by Deep Griha Academy, as they need to earn money for their family.

Many thanks to the ACP, friends, and families whose donations have allowed us to buy training materials and the first two machines that make it possible to create an acceptable quality of stitching, both for straight-sewing and interlock-stitching. We have also set up two brand new electricity boards, three new tables to cut our 20 uniforms on order, as well as a cupboard to store all items. This is a step-by-step process and each step counts and fills us with joy. When you have nothing, you appreciate a tiny new tool or a sewing accomplishment.

While the ladies were practicing and producing their first shirts and pants, we realized that we needed at least two more sewing machines. So I asked ACP Mission Outreach Committee to send us the last donation by one member of our congregation, despite the transfer costs. And a miracle happened: Deep Griha received enough to buy more than one machine! Enough has been donated for the School Uniform Project and what had been missing up to now: protein diet food for the boys in the City of Child. Thanks be to all of you who have made it happen, and thanks be to God!

We are now waiting for the new machine to be delivered, along with some furniture. Meanwhile, Deep Griha has decided to improve our space before the rainy season, so we now both have to keep our production up and to empty our workshop! Maybe God has a plan.

I went to the Union Biblical Seminary near our slum to ask for a space for our sewing workshop. We are praying and waiting for their answer...to be continued in the next episode. Please pray with us that God will open this new adventure: our slum workshop directly near His Sanctuary.

This year has been challenging because our space is not a workshop like you may imagine. There are no windows that can be closed to the wind, rain, cold, hot weather, and street noise. The roof leaks, there is no running water, and the electrical wiring is ancient. Mice and pigeons visit frequently. The Indian culture sometimes disrupts as well, considering the power of the mother-in-law, a culture in which men oblige women to do all the work, the “elastic” disorganized time mentality, filth and lack of hygiene, plus violence and crimes in the slum, and finally, strict religious vigilance.

Recently, I have realized that in addition to physical disease, our ladies also suffer from mental and emotional issues like depression or insecurity. They face a difficult choice between staying with a child or going to work. They face cultural challenges like unwanted arranged marriages. Often, they may need to make a choice to abandon their familiar lives and to jump into this unknown business that requires punctuality, consistency, commitment and confidence.

God has encouraged me each time it was difficult by giving me surprises: the shopkeeper family who keeps my daily lunch in their fridge is Christian. The man who repairs our old machines is Christian. One Christian lady joined the training, and another woman has shared her desire to convert, which is very difficult in India. You have to go to court to testify that you are freely converting. I have met several people who shared secretly with me that they have to hide their Bible from their own family. Plus, recently a friend of a Deep Griha director came to visit us with a group of American Mennonite visitors. One woman’s last name was Herr!

Thanks to the ACP, these courageous and underprivileged women can work daily and faithfully toward their dream: sustainable financial support for their family. Please pray for them and for us to help them in an appropriate way.
Did you forget your copy of the Bulletin in the pew?
Want to find the email of one of the pastors?
Confirm the date of an event? Do it with the ACP app!
1. Download the app, and launch it.
2. Click on “messages” at the bottom.
3. Click on “Bulletins” at the top.

The Heritage Society

The American and Foreign Christian Union (AFCU), our US partner in ministry, has established endowment funds to help sustain our long-term ministry. Gifts from estates are a fundamental way these endowments are funded. If you would like to participate in growing these endowment funds, please contact the AFCU at AFCUHeritage@AFCUBridge.org.

What’s going on?
Tune in to ACP Today radio

Have you ever listened to ACP Today, the American Church in Paris’ radio show? Join us on Mondays at 20h45 – this month on 2 and 16 April. The 45-minute program is an exciting and inspiring mix of music, interviews, sermon highlights, and discussion on hot topics.

We’re at 100.7 FM, Radio Fréquence Protestante, and we broadcast especially for friends who may be housebound or who would simply like more devotional time on a Monday evening. Don’t like the radio? Listen online at http://frequenceprotestante.com or tune in at your leisure via the ACP website, at www.acparis.org/ACPtoday, or the ACP mobile app.

Friends and visitors, what better way to keep in touch with the ACP family and learn about the latest ACP news? All our shows are available on our website, at www.acparis.org/ACPtoday. Faith Talk from Paris – it’s a kind of souvenir that never gets old.

If you have any questions, comments, ideas or would like to contribute to the show, be sure to contact us at acptoday@acparis.org.
Looking for fellowship with other young adults, between 19 and 30 years old? Join the Young Adults group every Tuesday evening at 18h30, at the ACP. For more information, contact interimyouthpastor@acparis.org

A MiniMissionary in Africa: Why not you?
by Patti Lafage,
ACP Missionary in Uganda

Is God calling you to serve in Africa for a short-term or “MiniMission”? Rafiki Foundation is eager to host you for a few weeks or more during your next vacation time. We asked Janelle Hobson, a nurse from Indiana, to tell you personally about her experience as a short-term “MiniMissionary” with the Rafiki Foundation.

I started travelling overseas for mission trips when I was 16 years old and found that there are three things I loved. First, I loved the kindness and love shown unconditionally by the people of other cultures. They have this beautiful ability to make you feel welcome when you are an alien to their country.

Secondly, every time I travel, I am reminded how big the world is and that God is mighty to be working in all those different places simultaneously without tiring.

Thirdly, God has given me skills and a passion to share my knowledge and abilities. Sometimes in my home country I can take the blessings of my education for granted.

I have just completed my sixth trip overseas for missions since I graduated from college eight years ago, and this was my third trip with Rafiki. I am a nurse and have been very blessed that my coworkers support what I do. The more I speak with them, the more they ask what I need or how they can help me go.

So, each year I take two weeks’ vacation, then I ask some coworkers to pick up a few shifts for me, which allows me to have about four weeks off. By planning ahead, I can save my vacation time and arrange work around my trip. My manager also supports my trips and allows me to go as long as I keep everything in order.

Every trip grows me, especially when I think I don’t need to grow. Traveling in Africa teaches patience and contentment. Uncomfortable circumstances give me the opportunity to depend on God. My life is changing because I am learning to trust God with circumstances and the details. The more time I spend in Africa, the more I want to go back again and again.

In the United States I am a hospital neonatal nurse and have also worked with older children in a hospital setting. With Rafiki, the work is entirely different. I travel each year with a physician to three of the Rafiki Villages. We do yearly check-ups and evaluations of all the children, their Rafiki mamas, the local service staff, and some of the teachers. I especially enjoy teaching them physiology and how God designed their body to work. It never fails that I get a hard question and have to look it up.

We spend long days in the village clinic, then we thoroughly enjoy our evenings in devotions and dinner with the children, and our weekends having fun with the kids. They love to ask questions about you and your life. In this, you feel so loved that you can’t imagine wanting to leave. You have many opportunities to learn their culture and their language.

Africa feels like home to me; I can’t imagine not going every year.
Volunteer opportunities

One of the core values of ACP is to be a beacon of light and life on the Seine, calling out to our community to come in and be a part of the mission of Christ. There are multiple points of entry for members of ACP and our Parisian neighbors to serve those in need and our community through volunteer opportunities. If you are looking for a way to contribute, here is a list of opportunities.

Nursery/Children's Fellowship
Looking for volunteers who love children, enjoy playing with them and are comfortable holding and caring for infants. A letter of reference can be provided for qualifying volunteers. Volunteers are needed for the following time slots:
- 11h and 13h30 Sunday services,
- Sundays for women’s fellowship, 12h-14h
- Tuesdays 10h-13h30
- Second Fridays 9h30-12h30
Contact Pamela Gonder: gonder.pamela@gmail.com

Contemporary Worship
- Slide Projection Coordinator: Coordinate the projection of the slide presentations during the 13h30 service. Help recruit and train people to set up the projector and run the slides in the weekly contemporary worship service. We would like to build a team of 10 people so that each person can serve once every 2 months running slides during the service.
- Tech Support: Install and break down sound equipment during the 13h30 service. Training will be provided, no experience necessary. Volunteers will need to arrive at 12h15 the weeks they are scheduled for set-up and/or stay until 15h for breakdown.
Contact Daphne: communitylife@acparis.org

Bloom Where You Are Planted 2018
- Bloom Book Updaters: Help update the information in the new Bloom Book. This work can be done from the comfort of your own home.
- Onsite: Volunteers will be needed to help before, during, and after the event on Saturday 6 October.
Contact: associatepastor@acparis.org

Survival Guide Update
The Survival Guide is a 12-page document full of information for people seeking food, shelter, and help of any kind. It is a wonderful tool to give to those seeking help from the church. It has also become a great resource for the US Embassy. We need someone to go through the document to make sure that all the information is still accurate and up to date.
Contact: associatepastor@acparis.org

Worship Liturgists
Read Holy Scripture passages aloud to the congregation during our 9h, 11h and 13h30 services. If interested, please contact:
secretary@acparis.org

Weekday Sanctuary Tidying
Twice a month during the week tidy the pews and make sure each pew has the correct accoutrements (bibles, giving envelopes, pencils, etc.)
Contact Emma Barton: admin@acparis.org

Community Life
The Community Life ministry is responsible for the organization of community events such as Thurber Lecture dinners, the Thanksgiving dinner, Easter breakfast, and more. We welcome new, extra hands who enjoy being a part of creating a welcoming and hospitable environment.
- Help decorate and set up and/or tear down our events.
- Help with food preparation (washing, peeling, cutting, and chopping) as well as baking or preparing desserts, cookies, preparing cheese platters, and other small buffet-style snacks. If you’re a cook (non-professional is ok) who doesn’t shy away from helping prepare a basic meal to fill over 50 plates, be sure to contact us!
Contact: communitylife@acparis.org

Friday Mission Lunch
Cook, clean, and serve hot meals to the hungry and homeless in Paris every Friday from 9h30-14h as part of the Friday Mission lunch, at The American Cathedral, 23 Avenue George V, 75008 Paris.
Contact Kristie Worrell: fridaymissionlunch@gmail.com

Breakfast and Sandwich Ministry
- Prepare sack meals for the homeless, as part of a team every Friday evening (19h-20h) at ACP (room G2).
- Distribute sack meals for the homeless, as part of a team Saturday mornings, 8h30, on the first two Saturdays of the month, and 13h on the last two Saturdays of the month.
Contact: sandwichministryacp@gmail.com

Serve the City Paris is always looking for volunteers:
- Homeless: Immediate relief, food services and clothes drives
- Youth and Children: Concrete solutions with local partners to ensure long-term growth and a successful future
- Migrant and Refugees: legal aid and language-based opportunities
- Victims of Abuse: Solutions and resolutions to dignify all individuals
- Elderly: special care projects for the elderly in need
- Green Initiatives: varying in size and scope to ensure a better planet earth
For more information, see: servethecityparis.com
This is shaping up to be the year for women to get credit for who they are and what they have accomplished. So kudos to the Musée Jacquemart André for organizing an impressive retrospective of the works of American Impressionist painter Mary Cassatt, the first in France since her death in 1926.

Cassatt spent most of her childhood in Europe, then studied classical art in her native Pennsylvania before coming to France in 1866 while in her early 20s. Women were not allowed to attend L’Ecole des Beaux Arts, so Cassatt frequented the studios of contemporary masters, including Jean-Léon Gérôme, and she visited museums to study technique.

In 1868 “The Mandolin Player” (on display) was accepted by the Paris Salon, a coup for Cassatt as she was one of two American women who were accepted to join the exhibit. Her style evolved, and attracted the attention of Edgar Degas, who befriended her and invited her to join his coterie, that included Camille Pissarro, Edouard Manet, Gustave Caillebotte and Berthe Morisot. Cassatt’s “Little Girl in a Blue Armchair,” the painting which is featured on the exhibit poster, marks a high point in her career. Even though it was rejected for the American pavilion of the Universal Exposition, it was submitted and accepted to the Independent Salon, marking the moment Cassatt was considered to be an Impressionist painter.

Mary Cassatt worked with oils and pastels, she made engravings and drawings, and she experimented with dry point and aquatint after seeing an exhibit on Japanese woodblock prints. She was a very accomplished artist, yet she lived with frustration and prejudice, both for being a woman and for being an American. She was faced with chauvinism and criticism. As an American in Paris, were her works French or American? How to classify her? Renowned art dealer and longtime friend Paul Durand-Ruel claimed Cassatt had created a category of her own. It is sad, however, to note that even today many people have never heard of her.

Cassatt felt that, as a woman painter, she should not just follow in the footsteps of her brother painters, but she should capture the feminine side of life, and let “men paint men.” Indeed, her paintings are living documents of the lifestyle and fashion trends of women in the second half of the 1800s.

Two works of note are “In the Loge” and “Cup of Tea.” The first painting captures a moment at the theater when a solitary woman watches the stage through her opera glasses. She is soberly dressed, as opposed to what painters normally depict. Why? Because during the day women were allowed to attend the theater unchaperoned. Although her day dress is modest it doesn’t protect her from the obvious gaze of a man seated in the loge across the way. The second painting captures a reflective moment of tranquility. The woman is beautifully dressed in pink with a lavish white ruff at her neck, lace cuffs at her wrists, topped off by a luscious pink hat. This is truly a high-fashion moment.

Cassatt believed women had a particular gift to accurately represent children on canvas. Although she never had children of her own, she had an affinity for portraying the close bond between mothers and their children. When making individual portraits of children she preferred to use pastel, which allowed her to work faster, in pace with the patience level of the young sitters.

Sadly, Cassatt’s final work has not survived, but studies depict elegantly dressed young women gathering fruit from the Tree of Knowledge.

Recent talk has revived the question “Why have there been no great women artists?” After seeing this exhibit, it is clear there have been, they just still need to be put in the spotlight.

Until 23 July at the Musee Jacquemart Andre, 158 Boulevard Haussmann, 75008 Paris

by Karen Marin
The sky is no limit
by Virginia Isbell

This painting was born in a storm.
A year ago late December a tornado hit our home in Uruguay. It was the first time this sleepy small country succumbed to such an event. The roof was ripped off the house, and the floor to ceiling windows in the living room caved in. My husband, who had stood there moments before, was miraculously spared.

We were boarded up for more than a month, so I painted my first large cloudscape to recreate a view from inside. Until then, I’d been painting small, 19x24 cm oil on cardboard, _plein air_ like the impressionists. When Pastor Scott Herr proposed that I show at the American Church, I immediately thought of this new “oversize” line of work.

I was excited to create a new piece — my largest ever — where I wouldn’t feel the pressures of my last 20+ years of showing in galleries. Freed from commercial constraints of how much gallery space is occupied, and how unlikely such a big piece is to sell in a city of small flats, I let the skies rip and rift from my paintbrush.

I keep a painting diary of what I feel when I’m painting, and as I was painting “sky is no limit” I felt a mixture of grace and hubris. Among my painter friends in France, we use that expression, _le moment de grâce_. I’d say it’s mystical rather than properly religious. You feel animated by something beyond you, what comes from your hand is surprisingly _juste_ (just, balanced, well-said without being overspoken). When you take a few steps back and look at it, you’re not sure you even painted it.

There’s a humility in that feeling that seems incompatible with the hubris involved — what, who do I think I am, Michelangelo painting thunderous skies? Which God(s) am I defying? Will my painting be ripped to pieces like the roof of our house was?

An artist friend of mine describes the two ingredients necessary to good painting are pleasure and humility. I’d say joy and humility and maybe gratefulness, too. Those are also the feelings I get when I walk along the Seine coming to the American Church. I look at the skies of Paris and feel grateful to be here and to be able to appreciate the wondrous skies. I feel eternity in those very instants. I feel something you might call grace as I peer into the clouds, a Presence beyond the skies.

The sky is no limit.

_Virginia’s Painting, The Sky is No Limit, will be on display in the sanctuary of the American Church in Paris from Easter through to the end of April. We hope this painting will inspire you to think and reflect on your own moments of grace._

Mark your calendars for the semi-annual congregational meeting to be held on Sunday, 3 June, at 12h15.

Would you like to propose articles, write, proofread, do layout or take photos? Contact Alison Benney at Spire@acparis.org.

*Note: Deadline for the May edition of the Spire is Thursday, 19 April.*
**Special Events and Monthly Meetings and Concerts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Organizer/Contact Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concert</strong></td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>19h30</td>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
<td>Fred Gramann <a href="mailto:music@acparis.org">music@acparis.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Choeur d’Enfants Sotto Voce</strong></td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>12h15-13h30</td>
<td>Thurer Room</td>
<td>Kim Herr <a href="mailto:women@acparis.org">women@acparis.org</a></td>
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<td><strong>Women’s Fellowship – Felicia Henderson will speak on “Ears to Hear: Learning to Listen to God and to Each Other”</strong></td>
<td>Sunday</td>
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<td>Sanctuary</td>
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</tr>
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<td><strong>Thurber Lecture - Pastor Eugene Cho will speak on “The Whole Gospel”</strong></td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>19h meal; 19h45 program</td>
<td>Thurer Room</td>
<td>Tim Vance <a href="mailto:associatepastor@acparis.org">associatepastor@acparis.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Friday Mission Lunch (volunteers needed)</strong></td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>10h-14h</td>
<td>The American Cathedral</td>
<td>If you are interested, please first contact: Kristie Worrel <a href="mailto:fridaymissionlunch@gmail.com">fridaymissionlunch@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td><strong>ACP MOPS (mothers of children ages newborn-18)</strong></td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>10h-12h</td>
<td>Thurer Room</td>
<td><a href="mailto:monica@acparis.org">monica@acparis.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Multicultural Couples Potluck Dinner</strong></td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>20h</td>
<td>Thurer Room</td>
<td>Monica Bassett &amp; Anja Wyss <a href="mailto:multiculural@acparis.org">multiculural@acparis.org</a></td>
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<td><strong>Writers’ Group</strong></td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>14h30 - 16h30</td>
<td>Room G2</td>
<td>Tendayi Chirawu <a href="mailto:writers@acparis.org">writers@acparis.org</a></td>
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<td>Monday</td>
<td>20h45-21h30</td>
<td>100.7 FM, Radio Fréquence Protestante</td>
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<td><strong>Movie Discussion Group</strong></td>
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<td>19h30</td>
<td>Room G2</td>
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A thousand words

Dedication ceremony for the new ACP lift, Sunday 25 March

Photos: Charlie Gay

Easter choir

Photo: Francois Pierre