Spire
The Beacon on the Seine
April 2014

Running devotional
200th anniversary
Painting in Pune
Why the cross?

The American Church in Paris
www.acparis.org 65 quai d’Orsay, 75007 Paris, France
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On the cover:
This Celtic Cross was designed and painted two years ago by Lionel Montoliu and Monica Bassett-Montoliu. It started out as a symbol of the cosmic crossroads to which we have come as planet earth. It was not originally designed to be a cross or any kind of religious symbol, in fact, this is what Lionel and Monica created, and they know this was an inspired piece of work. It hangs on the left side of the Sanctuary. Photo by Monica Bassett-Montoliu

Belated but grateful thanks to Fred Gramann for providing the photos for the last two covers of the Spire.
Dear Members and Friends of the ACP,

As we are moving through this season of Lent into the commemoration of the Passion and the celebration of the Resurrection, it is a good time to reflect more deeply on the significance of Easter. Just as it could be argued the Exodus was the foundational event in the formation and identification of the Jewish community, so it can be argued the resurrection is the foundational event in the formation and identification of the Christian community.

The apostle Paul writes in I Corinthians 15:3-8, around 50 A.D., “For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.”

Paul goes on to argue, “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.” Paul indicates the resurrection to be not just a foundational idea but transformational event the first disciples and many others, including himself, had experienced.

I have been interested in the genre of historical Jesus literature since studying with James Charlesworth, Director of the Dead Sea Scrolls project at Princeton Theological Seminary. I recently read Reza Aslan’s book Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth. It stands in a genre that has been around for about 200 years, employing the assumption that historians can separate out the “Jesus of Nazareth” (the “historical” Jesus) from “Jesus the Christ” (the “Jesus of faith”). I have never followed this logic, for the simple reason that the primary historical sources for Jesus are written by the gospel writers who proclaim him to be “Jesus the Christ.”

Aslan admits how witness to the historical fact of the resurrection was defended by the disciples even under threat of death. “The first followers of Jesus were not being asked to deny something they themselves personally, directly encountered. The disciples were themselves fugitives in Jerusalem, complicit in the sedition that led to Jesus’ crucifixion. They were repeatedly arrested and abused for their preaching; more than once their leaders had been brought before the Sanhedrin to answer charges of blasphemy. They were beaten, whipped, stoned, and crucified, yet they would not cease proclaiming the risen Jesus. … Perhaps the most obvious reason not to dismiss the disciples’ resurrection experiences out of hand is that, among all the other failed messiahs who came before and after him, Jesus alone is still called messiah. It was precisely the fervor with which the followers of Jesus believed in his resurrection that transformed this tiny Jewish sect into the largest religion in the world.”

But strangely, after arguing that the resurrection stories of Paul and the other disciples are clearly the earliest attestations of a faith formed from experience, Aslan rather abruptly concludes (with no supporting facts), “Nevertheless, the fact remains that the resurrection is not a historical event.” Isn’t this a priori reasoning masquerading as historical “fact”?

More intellectually palatable is the logic of Professor Richard Baukham, Senior Scholar at Ridley Hall, Cambridge, who argues that “the period between the ‘historical’ Jesus and the Gospels was actually spanned, not by anonymous community transmission, but the continuing presence and testimony of eyewitnesses, who remained the authoritative sources of their traditions until their deaths... Gospel traditions did not, for the most part, circulate anonymously but in the name of the eyewitnesses to whom they were due.”

This is an important point to consider, that while the gospel writers did compose their texts years, even decades after the historical events of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, they nonetheless were accountable to eyewitnesses who were well known to them and their communities. And as a student of history myself, I am more interested in the original testimony of eyewitnesses to Jesus’ life, death and resurrection rather than the hackneyed deconstructions of Jesus by so-called scholars millennia later.

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Thoughts from
The Rev. Dr. Scott Herr
Senior Pastor
hackneyed deconstructions of Jesus by so-called scholars millennia later.

The fact remains that all the gospel accounts, however uniquely they present their case, point to an extraordinary event that changed the first disciples from fearful cowards into bold evangelists who gave their lives for the gospel of Jesus. The most plausible explanation in my humble opinion is not that the post-Easter communities fabricated a wild tale and stuck to the lie they contrived, but that something outside of themselves, someone outside of themselves, altered their reality to such an extent that they were willing to give their ultimate allegiance to this reality, this truth, this Risen Lord whom they had experienced.

While I am not trying to prove anything here (no history can be “proven”), I am arguing for a more thoughtful and reasonable approach dealing with the testimony of those first century witnesses who actually died to verify the truth of their claims. Very simply, their testimony is so much more plausible and compelling!

Ironically, though we differ greatly in how we get there, I do agree with Aslan’s closing words: “Jesus of Nazareth – Jesus the man – is every bit as compelling, charismatic, and praiseworthy as Jesus the Christ. He is, in short, someone worth believing in.” I just prefer the full, not reduced version of Jesus.

May we all take time to read and wrestle with the strangely mystifying and wonderfully compelling testimony of the Gospel eyewitnesses to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and join together on Easter, 20 April, to celebrate and commit again our lives in witness to Jesus the man… who is also Jesus the Risen Lord!

With Easter faith, I remain sincerely yours,

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2. Ibid., 175.
4. Aslan, 216.

ACP collective run to Jerusalem

The ACP Running Team is on their way to Jerusalem and we need your help in reaching our destination. We’ll leave Paris, head down the east coast of Spain, pass through Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt before arriving in Jerusalem. Join us by keeping track of the kilometers you walk or run. Your individual distance will help us reach a group goal of 6,000 km.

Who can participate? Anyone who likes to run or walk including men, women and children. The more people who are involved, the fewer kilometers we each have to log!

How long will we run? Log your miles starting on Ash Wednesday 5 March through Pentecost 8 June.

How does it work? Register to participate by sending your name to running@acparis.org and then each week, report the distance you complete for that week. Watch our group total increase on the ACP website.

Help us reach our goal and get fit at the same time!
Most runners training for a long race (like a Semi-Marathon or Marathon) are not going to “win.” As I was preparing for my last marathon, I remember my son, Connor, asking if I was going to “win.” It felt like a let-down to tell him that not only would I not win the race, I would not even be close! In fact, I would take twice the time to complete the race than the winner.

Not wanting to feel like a complete failure, I explained to Connor about how difficult it was to train for a marathon, noting that most people who train simply want to finish. It was hard to articulate to my toddler why I was running a race I knew I wouldn’t win. It’s easier to talk to other marathoners about their goals and aspirations. Runners respect other runners of varying levels because of the unity, excitement, and challenge that comes with the race itself. Toddlers, however, do not respect such things and inquire why you would enter a race you knew you would not win.

I wanted to be able to give Connor a genuine answer to his “why” question, but needed an answer concrete enough to make sense in his black and white toddler mind. As I was thinking about it, I was side-tracked into thinking about the amazing array of running t-shirts seen on race day. Some are hilarious and just give a little boost at mile 22, others shirts point toward individual goals, birthday celebrations, wedding anniversaries and other human milestones. Still other shirts point directly toward the “reason” someone is running the race: raising money for charities, running for sick friends and relatives, or because they themselves are survivors marking a victory.

It occurred to me that so many of the t-shirts explain the motivation for those individual runners, and that they even reflect the “prize” of many of the racers. A runner running to raise money for a charity has worked hard not only to train for the race but also to raise funds for a cause in which he/she believes. Those running to celebrate a particular event have set the race as a prize for achieving their milestone. Those running simply for fun and donning hysterical running shirts are often the most encouraging runners on the course.

Among the sea of t-shirts, you see some that are the same (for a particular organization, cause or person), some that are brand new, some very old and clearly worn before, some that don’t make any sense to you, and some that warm you heart with feelings of solidarity. Some t-shirts whiz past you, others linger for long enough to read. In the tapestry of colors around you what is recognizable is that every t-shirt reflects a goal (or maybe several); the person wearing the t-shirt trained with a goal in mind and in that moment is running for the prize and even declaring it by way of a t-shirt.

Perhaps that is part of why “race day” is so inspiring to me. To be among tens of thousands of other people joined by the unity of pounding feet, racing toward a prize, is incredibly exciting. While it’s true that my goal is likely different than that of the person running next to me, it doesn’t matter. It is simply the fact that I am there. I am running beside so many others who have also trained, endured, and now race toward a prize. The ACP running team has t-shirts as well, they read, “Running with perseverance.”

Running with perseverance is an amazing prize that I am proud to declare on race day. It can be a lofty goal after months of training wrought with aches, pains, injuries, illnesses, and mental fatigue. And yet, perseverance is what keeps most of us runners running (and why we might boldly enter a race we know we won’t win). It is also, I believe, the mark of a faith that trusts and hopes. For as we persevere, we run in a way as to get the prize – we trust that the prize is set for us and we hope for it, even if we cannot see it or it seems very far away. In faith, we run toward the one in whom we can completely trust; the one who brings ultimate hope. These are prizes worth racing for – with every single one of my footsteps of faith.

If you want to find out more about the ACP running team, please contact: running@acparis.org.

Bénédictions,
Michelle
With almost 200 participants at our congregational meeting on 23 March, it was the biggest turnout we’ve had as long as anyone can remember. The congregation discussed, voted on and passed six important resolutions with everyone in favor of each of them. The first two were simply ratification of the annual audited accounts and reserve transfers in accordance with by-laws and council directives. These passed quickly, thanks to the clear and informative presentation by Stan Marcello, head of the Finance Committee.

Resolution 1: RESOLVE AND AGREE TO APPROVE THE 2013 YEAR END RESULTS OF €48,785.39.

Resolution 2: RESOLVE AND AGREE TO APPROVE THE ALLOCATION OF THE 2013 YEAR END RESULTS OF €48,785.39 AS FOLLOWS:

- 11,442.96€ to MOC
- 10% of Recurring Surplus 6,077.97€
- Net designated gifts 5,364.99€
- Designated to Youth Ministry 1,713.01€
- Designated to Music Ministry 3,612.38€
- General Reserve 32,017.04€

I believe that unanimous support for the third resolution, a stretch budget, reflected overwhelming support for all the great things Pastor Scott highlighted in his "Looking Forward" presentation.

Resolution 3: RESOLVE AND AGREE TO APPROVE THE 2014 ACP BUDGET AS PRESENTED.

The next three resolutions all got a round of applause. First we wholeheartedly extended Pastor Scott’s contract for another three years. Then we changed the position of Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries to that of Associate Pastor of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, which means that this position is no longer targeted at recent graduates of seminary, but ordained pastors. The last resolution called Reverend Dan Haugh to serve in that post.

Resolution 4: RESOLVE AND AGREE TO RECOMMEND TO THE AFCU THAT THE TERM OF REVEREND SCOTT HERR’S CONTRACT TO SERVE AS SENIOR PASTOR BE RENEWED FOR AN ADDITIONAL THREE YEAR TERM.

Resolution 5: RESOLVE AND AGREE THAT THE POSITION OF DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES BE CHANGED TO ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES.

Resolution 6: RESOLVE AND AGREE TO CALL REVEREND DANIEL HAUGH TO SERVE AS ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES FOR A TERM OF THREE YEARS.

Passing these resolutions is a strong indication that the congregation is eager to invest in the future and continued growth of ACP. These two positions, along with our very important Associate Pastor, Michelle Wahila, form the basis for a solid pastoral team, supported by our visiting pastor for weddings and our two parish associates, as well as the Youth Intern and the Director of Children's Worship.
...AND CONGREGATIONAL SERVICE

Photo collage by Fred Gramann (although no one knows how he managed to take these photos!)

The Children and Youth sing and ring!

A full sanctuary and the chapel and theater were also packed.

Still Point sings up a storm.

The Bronze Ringers show off their new green gloves!
What is prayer? How would we define prayer? When we pray, who are we talking to? How do we picture God in our mind? Do we only pray to “God, the Father”? Or is it also okay to pray to Jesus or the Holy Spirit? Should we name all three when we pray? Does God always “hear” our prayers? Does God always “answer” our prayers? Is it possible to pray for the wrong things? Does God ever get angry because of our prayers? Does God get angry if we don’t pray? Where is the God to whom we pray? Up in heaven? All around us? Inside our hearts? When should we pray? Where should we pray? How should we pray? What should we pray for? Is it okay to pray for the same thing over and over again? Will God ever get tired of hearing our prayers? Why do we pray? What is the point of prayer?

In March, we spent three evenings together at Thurber Thursdays talking and thinking about prayer. We considered many of the questions voiced above. And one of the things that we discovered is that everyone can learn to pray; especially when we understand a few key things about prayer.

**Prayer is an attitude of the heart.**

The fundamental purpose of prayer is to deepen our intimacy with God and this requires entering into prayer with a proper attitude. With humility and love, we open ourselves up to God and we turn our heart’s attention toward God seeking to know God and to be known by God.

**Prayer is communication.**

Prayer is more than just speaking to God. Prayer is also listening. In prayer, we pour out our heart to God and God pours God’s heart into us. Prayer involves listening with the heart. Through intimate conversation about what matters to us most, with the living God who loves us, we are drawn closer to God — we are drawn deeper into relationship with God. As we listen in prayer, God reveals God’s deepest desires, God’s greatest truths, our darkest sin, and God’s amazing grace.
Prayer is communion with God.

Prayer is how God relates to us and how we relate to God. It involves being present and attentive to God as God is present and attentive to us. As someone once said, “It is more about seeking Him than seeking help.” It is about becoming attuned to God and God’s way of life.

Prayer is an act of faith, hope, and love.

There is something mysterious about prayer. We will always have questions that are difficult to explain or answer. And we will never fully understand the outcomes or answers to our prayers, yet we still pray, we still call out, we still reach out to God in faith and hope and love, we still say to God, “Here I am.” Prayer hopes and trusts that God cares, that God listens, that God is and will continue to be present and active in our lives and in our world.

Prayer is about God. It is being with God. It is speaking to God. It is listening for God. It is living and seeing life while recognizing and acknowledging the presence of God.

If you would like to learn more about prayer, I would invite you to go to the church website and download An Introduction to Prayer, a free resource designed to help you learn more about prayer — to deepen your life of prayer.

My prayer is this:

That the God of love, who desires to be in relationship with you, will draw you near and remind you of His love, so that when you turn to God in prayer, you can speak with confidence, sharing your deepest needs as well as the needs of those around you, knowing that God cares, that God listens, that God is active in our world. Amen.

Sunday Morning Bible Study

Rev. Brent Anderson
ACP Parish Associate

The goal is to stir the soil — to scratch below the surface and familiarize ourselves with the text, so that we can better receive its message the next week in worship. This is a great to begin preparing for worship — it helps you to not only give more of yourself in worship, but to get more out of it.

Most recently the Rev. Brent Anderson served as the senior pastor of Steel Lake Presbyterian Church in Federal Way, Washington (near Seattle); a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Since then he has followed his wife around the world: first to Sweden (where Valérie was a post-doctoral fellow in New Testament at the University of Uppsala) and then to Paris (where Valérie is the new Professor of New Testament at the Institute Protestant de Théologie, Eglise Protestant Unie de France – Communion Luthérienne et Réformée).

This Bible Study is open to everyone, beginner and Bible scholar alike. Drop-ins and occasional visitors are always welcome! For more information, please contact Brent at brentaanderson@me.com

Upcoming schedule for April 2014:

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<th>Sunday, 6 April</th>
<th>Matthew 21:1-11</th>
<th>An Instrument of Giving</th>
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<td></td>
<td>“The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’ Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven.” Matthew 21:9 (NRSV)</td>
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<th>Sunday, 13 April</th>
<th>John 20:1-18 or Matthew 28:1-10</th>
<th>An Instrument of Life</th>
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<td></td>
<td>“But the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said.’” Matthew 28:5-6 (NRSV)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Sunday, 20 April</th>
<th>John 20:19-31</th>
<th>An Instrument of Prayer</th>
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<td>“Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” John 20:21 (NRSV)</td>
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<td>“When [Jesus] was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight.” (Luke 24: 30-31 NRSV)</td>
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Evidence exists of widespread crucifixions as far back as the ancient Persian Empire. The Greek historian Herodotus wrote that the emperor Darius crucified 3,000 defeated Babylonians in 519 B.C. Roman historian Curtius Rufus described Alexander the Great’s crucifixion of 2,000 citizens of Tyre, Syria, in 332 B.C.

Known by the Romans as the “slave’s punishment”, crucifixion was considered the most dishonorable death imaginable, inflicted for treason, desertion, piracy and assassination. It was designed to be public and shameful, and generally reserved for non-Romans, except for robbers and violent criminals.

Cicero called it “the most cruel and disgusting penalty” and the Jewish writer Josephus said it was “the most wretched of deaths” after witnessing 500 per day after an insurrection in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Even Seneca, the tutor of Nero, observed that it was “the worst of capital punishments...wasting away in pain rather than expiring once for all.”

Each Roman town had a place for crosses outside its walls, including Golgotha at Jerusalem.

Furthermore, the vertical poles of the crosses were often left standing as a reminder to potential offenders. Following the slave rebellion of Spartacus in 71 B.C. 6,000 prisoners were crucified and left, lining the Appian Way from Rome to Capua.

After trial and before crucifixion, the prisoners were flogged by a Roman soldier. If the prisoner survived the flogging, open wounds made it more difficult to carry the cross-beam to the pole, beams that weighed between 75-125 lbs. Once nailed to the beam and pole, it was nearly impossible to breathe and speech would have been very difficult.

While crucifixion continued for centuries, we know that Jesus’ death changed its meaning forever. Among Christians, the cross became an emblem of hope rather than disgrace. The Romans taunted Christian leaders with variations on the martyr’s death. As we know, St. Peter died on an inverted cross and St. Andrew on one shaped like an X. In Christian defiance, these became holy symbols in their own right.

When Emperor Constantine converted in 313 A.D., he banned crucifixion as “an insult to Christianity”. Legend declares that his conversion was accompanied by a vision of a cross in the sky. He called the Council of Nicaea in 325, from which comes the Nicene Creed. “…for our salvation (he) came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us.”

Prayer Concert, 5 April

In connection with the current crisis between Russia and the Ukraine, a time of music and silence will be held in order to pray for peace, reconciliation, and Christian unity. Selections will be played from the meditative piano works of Ukraine's leading living composer Valentin Silvestrov (1937-present), an Eastern Orthodox Christian. In partnership with the ecumenical Catholic St. Clement's Center in Kiev, the Eastern Orthodox Church has been promoting dialogue with Russian cultural and intellectual figures seeking alternatives to armed conflict between the Ukraine and Russia. ACP member Peter Bannister will play and introduce Silvestrov's music.

It will be held in the Sanctuary on Saturday, 5 April at 15h00.
Celebrating Holy Week and Easter at ACP

Palm/Passion Sunday, 13 April
Worship Services at 9h00, 11h00 and 13h30

Holy Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, 14-16 April
Holden Evening Prayer Services at 19h00. The Holden Evening Prayer is a lovely setting of vespers, following the traditional form while using contemporary and inclusive language.

Maundy Thursday, 17 April
Worship Service with communion at 20h00 in the Sanctuary.

Good Friday, 18 April
Tenebrae "shadows" Worship Service at 20h00. During the service you will hear portions of the Passion narrative from the Gospels as we move towards darkness and silence.

Easter Sunday, 20 April
Sunrise Service at 7h15 on the quai d’Orsay in front of the ACP
Easter Fellowship Breakfast at 8h00 in the Thurber Room
Traditional Worship Services at 9h00 and 11h00
Contemporary Celebration of the Resurrection at 13h30
ALPHA FOR EVERYONE

Alpha explores the big questions about life and the Christian faith, in an informal and friendly environment...and it's free!

Do you want to explore the meaning of life?
Join us at the Launch party:
**Thursday, 3 April**
19h30 to 21h00
in the Catacombs
and then every Thursday (except 17 April) as we discover if there is more to life than this.

Go to [www.acparis.org](http://www.acparis.org) for more information.

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**From Your ACP Council ~ What’s Going On**

Greetings to the members and friends of the ACP!

The coming of spring to Paris has inspired people to come out in droves to soak up the light and warmth of the sun and feel the breezes of the season. We have so much to be thankful for as brothers and sisters in God’s kingdom experiencing the season in this beautiful city and sharing our faith together at ACP.

It feels like spring has sprung here at ACP too. There are so many opportunities to come together for culture, fellowship, learning and worship. I am personally thankful to be able to study the Bible on Sunday mornings with a very diverse group of seekers.

We have numerous other new and growing possibilities for learning together with special Bible studies for men, for women, youth confirmation classes, Children’s Sunday School, Alpha courses for youth and for young adults and a third Alpha course for everyone, Thurber Thursdays, Lenten Lectures, and many other small group Bible studies. I am amazed at the number of learned Bible scholars who devote their time, talents and energy to making all these opportunities to study the Bible possible for our congregation.

In addition to these wonderful options for personal learning and enrichment, our Mission Outreach Committee shepherds ACP’s giving of financial support as well as time and talents to enrich the lives of others both in Paris and around the world. Locally, there are opportunities to serve food to the hungry, provide music to those confined to hospitals and prisons, provide a listening ear in cooperation with SOS Help, or provide Christmas cheer to the needy. Abroad we support our Habitat for Humanity teams in Europe and missions in Africa, India, the Middle East and Asia.

I hope you will prayerfully consider how the spring inspires you to either join a study group or get involved in a mission, or both! Have a look on the web-site to see all of the great opportunities there are to learn and serve.

With warm spring blessings,

Pam Bohl, ACP Council Moderator
Can you help open the windows?

By Anna Zwede

The magnificent stained-glass windows designed for the American Church by Louis Comfort Tiffany in 1925 were set into the walls of our sanctuary, permanently closed. Yet, you can help open them! What does this mean?

Think about the amazing music that is made here at ACP. Piano, handbells, flute, clarinet... a band, vocal choirs, soloists... Gospel, contemporary praise songs, classical and operatic repertoire, hymns... Those of us who come to ACP Café, concerts or worship services are blessed to be able to hear it.

But not everyone can come to church. Some people are in prison. Others are hospitalized or housebound. Many people have no idea that our church exists at all, let alone the music that regularly fills it. For them, the windows are indeed tightly shut, locking that beauty away from them.

Tiffany Musica, an outreach ministry of the ACP, takes our music on the road. The program of each Tiffany Musica moment is arranged according to the venue and the participants, as there is neither a predetermined repertoire nor a set group. Since its start less than a year ago, Tiffanists have had the privilege of bringing music to several hospitals, two prisons, a Chinese Community Church music fest and the Foyer de Grenelle. The listeners were delighted, and all the musicians were truly blessed.

Do you know of an institution or organization that would be interested in a visit from Tiffany Musica? Would you like to participate in this ministry? Drop me a line at a.zweede@numericable.com or catch me at coffee hour. Let’s keep those windows open, with light and beauty, grace and love, flowing through them and through our music!

Rest in Peace

Francis Cobbinah

Francis Cobbinah, our missionary in Ghana, was taken to be with the Lord on 11 March 2014, after a sudden stroke. He is survived by his wife and ministry partner, Anna, and their 4 children.

Francis founded The Living Truth Foundation in 2004, and has been a blessing to many people in the prisons, hospitals and schools in Ghana over the past 10 years.

His funeral is being held in Ghana on 11-13 April, which Michelle Whila and Carolyn Bouazouni will attend. A memorial service will be held in his honor in the ACP Sanctuary on Wednesday 23 April at 19h.
Jerusalem: City of Passion
by Dr. Ron Tappy

Dr. Ron Tappy, world-renowned archaeologist, and professor at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, leads our Lenten Lecture series this month, integrating history and the Bible.

He began excavating at various sites in Israel more than 30 years ago, and his current field research at Tel Zayit involves a full-scale field exploration of a Late Bronze–Iron Age town in the Shephelah (“lowlands”) region of biblical Judah. During the 2005 season of excavation, his team discovered an inscription incised in stone of the earliest known, securely datable Hebrew alphabet.

Dr. Tappy has written articles on a variety of topics, including subjects in biblical archaeology, ancient Israelite burial customs and beliefs about the afterlife, the 23rd Psalm, and the Ten Commandments. He is a leading authority on the archaeology of Israelite Samaria and has written two books on that subject.

His teaching focuses on the life and literature of the Old Testament period, biblical archaeology, and the history of Israel. His teaching method examines ways in which the broader cultural context of biblical Israel shaped both the world of the biblical writers and, by extension, their theological outlook.

Build your faith and expand your knowledge during the Lenten season at his lectures on Tuesday 8 April, Thursday 10 April and Tuesday 15 April

For more information about Dr. Tappy, see www.pts.edu/tappyr

Meeting God through Scripture
Rev. Brent Anderson

Are you hungry for greater depth in your relationship with God? Do you wish to encounter God in new and transforming ways? Then consider joining us for Meeting God through Scripture. In this 2-session Thurber Thursday event, the Reverend Brent Anderson will share with us his insights and experience in meeting God through reading scripture. He will show us simple and effective ways to make Bible reading a regular part of our lives. And he will teach us how we can dig deeper through in-depth Bible study.

He will bring a wealth of resources and helpful handouts, including: A Method for Reading the Bible Devotionally, A Method for Studying the Bible In-Depth, A List of Recommended Bible Commentaries on Each Book of the Bible, A List of Helpful Online Tools, Top Five Bible Reading Plans, and Bible Study Tools and Resources Everyone Should Have.

27 March: Meeting God through daily readings 3 April: Going deep: Studying the Bible in-depth

The Reverend Brent Anderson has been serving in full or part-time ministry for the past 27 years. An ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA), Brent has served churches in the United States (in Washington, California, Arizona, Georgia and New Jersey) and Switzerland (in Geneva and Lausanne). He is married to Dr. Valérie Nicolet Anderson who teaches the New Testament at the Institut Protestant de Théologie. They have two children, Gabriel (age 11) and Miriam (age 8).

Thurber Thursday is an adult community gathering and growth time, that is open to all. The program begins at 19h30; reception to follow.
The slave trade in France
By Amit Pieter

The Academy Award-winning “12 Years a Slave” portrays the injustice and cruelty of American slavery, but it was hardly the only country in the world to profit from the African slave trade. The European colonial powers of Portugal, Spain, England and the Netherlands actively pursued the African slave trade from 1520 until the 19th century.

As for the French, while they did not use black slaves for domestic agricultural or household duties, they did profit from the trade as a colonial power, starting from the mid-17th century. Jean-Baptiste Colbert, finance minister of Louis XIV, created the French East Indies Company and exploited slave labor in sugar cane fields of the French colonies, particularly in the Antilles.

Colbert was, however, troubled by religious and humanitarian concerns for the administration of slavery. Prior to his death in 1683, he drafted “The Code Noir”, which became law in 1685. It contains 5 essential points. First, masters were entreated to save the souls of slaves. Second, masters could guarantee submission by use of force. Third, the aggression of masters was limited and, fourth, conditions of sale and the breakup of slave family units were defined. Lastly, there was a codification for liberation of slaves.

While slave trade was at its busiest in the 18th century, with the “Triangular Trade” from Africa to the Antilles to France and to Africa again, views were changing. In 1776 in Philadelphia, the Quakers forbids its members from holding slaves, and made their views known worldwide. During the French revolution, the French “Lumières” view of universal liberty and especially Rousseau’s image of the “good savage” led to the abolition of slavery, if only for a couple of decades.

This was partially driven by the successful slave revolt in 1791 in the Antilles, led by the charismatic Toussaint Louverture, with the conquest of St. Domingue and the creation of Haiti in 1804. It is known as a “defining moment in the histories of both Europe and the Americas.”

Eventually, humanitarian considerations made slavery repugnant, and the industrial developments of the 19th century made slave labor almost redundant. While French factories may have profited from the raw materials of foreign slavery, such as cotton and tobacco, republican pamphleteers such as Victor Schoelcher convinced electors of the Second Republic to abolish slavery in 1848. Fifteen years later, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863.

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Events to celebrate the 200th anniversary

8, 10, 15 April
Lenten Lecture Series with Dr. Ron Tappy, archaeologist, professor and museum director at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary speaking on Jerusalem: City of Passion

Friday 11 April
Habitat for Humanity Benefit Concert

Friday 25 April
Gospel Worship Service

Sunday 27 April
Dr. Neal Presa, Moderator of the PCUSA, preaches at ACP

Thursday 15 May
ACP and the American University of Paris welcome Jane Goodall, primatologist, ethologist, anthropologist, and UN Messenger of Peace.

Tuesday 10 June 10
Makoto Fujimura, public opening of QU4TETS: "An exhibit of art and music reflecting on T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets"

Saturday 6 September
Garrison Keillor and Prairie Home Companion broadcasts live radio show from ACP Sanctuary

Saturday 11 October
Commemoration Service for all English-speaking churches with Dr. Mark Labberton, President of Fuller Theological Seminary, at the église de la Madeleine

28 – 30 October
ACP hosts the City to City Europe Church Planting Conference, featuring Dr. Tim Keller, Senior Pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church of New York

ACP Spire, April 2014 15
This year marks the 200th anniversary of English-language worship in Paris. Each month we will tell the history in 15 to 25-year increments, from the point of view of the American Church in Paris, the first established American church overseas. This month: 1860-1875. By Alison Benney

A house divided

The history of English-speaking Protestants in France was shaped not only by Christians of strong character, but by dramatic historical events. In 1858, a young Illinois senator warned in a campaign speech, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." It was the same year in which the American Chapel in Paris was dedicated by its first pastor, Reverend R.H. Seeley. The motto of the city of Paris, "Fluctuat nec mergitur", could have been the church's for the next 15 years: "Buffeted but never sank".

When the American civil war broke out in 1861, its moral and economic conflicts were also hotly debated overseas. Methodist John McClintock, pastor at the American Chapel from June 1860 to April 1864, was a Union supporter, but preached Christian love over sectional animosity.

It was also a delicate period diplomatically, as the British and French deliberated over support of the north or the south. Reverend McClintock helped to mold public opinion in Europe, while reporting European sentiment back to the US. Court dentist Thomas Evans urged Napoleon III to support the Union, but international concerns were focused more on commerce than on slavery, due to the Union’s blockade of cotton shipments from reaching European textile mills. Dr. Cochran’s Friendly Adventurers states that the Confederacy was supported by conservative backers of Napoleon III, Bourbon legitimists and Roman Catholic interests, and Union support came from republicans and Orleanists.

When the war ended in 1865, Americans flocked back to Paris, many to study art or medicine. Hundreds came simply as tourists to visit the 1867 World Fair. There they could see railroad locomotives and steam engines, hear Adolphe Sax's recently invented saxophone, attend the first performance in Paris of Johann Strauss' “The Blue Danube,” conducted by the composer himself, stand in line for a drink from the revolutionary American soda machine, and sightsee on the Seine aboard one of the new Bateaux Mouches.

In 1866 Reverend Azaria Eldridge arrived at the American Chapel to find the congregation “with an income less than the running expenses, and under a mortgage for an old debt of 60,000 francs.” Yet he paid the debt, and was able to organize a Sunday School, a Sunday School library, and a Sunday concert and prayer meeting. The American Chapel rapidly became a popular spiritual

History in context

1861 Start of the American Civil War.
1863 US President Abraham Lincoln designates last Thursday in November as Thanksgiving Day.
International Committee of the Red Cross is founded.
1864 Geneva Convention signed by 12 nations, establishing the standards of international law for the humanitarian treatment of war.
1865 The American Civil War ends. John Wilkes Booth fatally shoots President Abraham Lincoln.
1866 Alfred Nobel invents dynamite.
The Atlantic Cable is successfully completed, allowing transatlantic telegraph communication for the first time.
1867 US buys Alaska from Russia.
1868 14th Amendment giving civil rights to blacks is ratified.
1869 First US transcontinental rail route completed in Utah. Suez Canal opens.
1870 Franco-Prussian War; Revolt in Paris; Third Republic proclaimed.
1871 France surrenders Alsace-Lorraine to Germany; war ends.
The Chicago Fire, with 250 deaths and $196-million damage.
Stanley meets Livingstone, missionary in Africa.
1872 Yellowstone National Park created.
1874 La société anonyme des artistes is created, later to be known as the Impressionists.
1875 Construction of the Sacré Coeur Basilica on Montmartre.

1876 As the Statue of Liberty wasn’t finished until 1886, the torch-bearing arm was displayed at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876.
and social center for American and English-speaking expats.

Artist and inventor Samuel Morse was a frequent visitor to Paris, first as a painter, then as inventor of the telegraph, and finally with his family from 1866 to 1867, when his daughter helped to take charge of the first “infant class” of the American Chapel Sunday school.

Morse, a defender of slavery, was a fervent Protestant and good friend of Reverend Edward Kirk, who encouraged his work on the telegraph.

In 1868 Presbyterian pastor Charles S. Robinson organized the ACP into a Union Evangelical church, with its own constitution, officers, statement of faith, and forms for administration of the Sacraments and admission of members. A few months later, he recorded that the congregation consisted of 49 official members: 22 Presbyterians, 11 Congregationalists, 5 Dutch Reformed, 3 Episcopalians and 1 German Reformed.

Then in 1870 Napoleon III declared war against Prussia, and the American Chapel closed its doors for a year, although a few Americans still played key roles.

Dr. Thomas Evans aided in the dramatic escape of Empress Eugenie from Paris as the Second Empire fell, in September 1870. The last official dinner at the Tuileries palace was given on 7 June 1870, in honor of the US Minister to France, Elihu B. Washburne. A friend and supporter of both Presidents Lincoln and Grant, and a member of the American Chapel Prudential Committee (today called the Council), Minister Washburne remained in the city during the Franco-Prussian war, the siege of Paris and the Commune. He acted as intermediary on behalf of English refugees, arranged the safe departures of Americans, and took responsibility for the safe emigration of hundreds of German residents, who were suddenly seen as the enemy.

Members of the congregation, including Dr. Evans, helped create the first American field hospital in France, on what is now avenue Foch, halfway between the Arc de Triomphe and the Bois de Boulogne.

Short but terrible, the Franco-Prussian war lasted from July 1870 to May 1871, including the four-month siege of Paris, with over 4,000 residents dying from disease, starvation and the cold. Following defeat, the Insurrection known as the Paris Commune produced even more suffering and atrocities, along with the destruction of the Tuileries palace and the Hotel de Ville.

Meanwhile, the US economy grew at the fastest rate in its history. This was the period that Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner coined as the Gilded Age, because the gilding of prosperity covered up serious social problems.

There was also a surge of missionary activity, and in 1872 Dr. Edward W. Hitchcock began his pastorate in Paris for 11 active years, during which the American congregation grew by an average of 35 new members a year. With the help of Reverend Stephen Tyng Jr, church finances were boosted and the ACP became self-supporting. Pastor Hitchcock added two paid staff, supported a medical mission, and renovated the building. He was also involved in French mission groups, including the Société Populaire Evangélique.

At the same time, sculptor Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi was working on the Statue of Liberty, to coincide with the centennial in 1876 of American independence.

As the Third French Republic had removed the restriction against the use of the term “church” by Protestant groups, we were now able to proudly call ourselves the American Church in Paris. Next month, our history will turn to the “golden age” of the ACP and start some serious name-dropping.

The Washburne Award for Innovation in Diversity

Elihu Benjamin Washburne was a leading 19th century proponent of racial equality in the US. As a Congressman, he served on the Joint Committee on Reconstruction which drafted the US Constitution’s 14th Amendment, and later served as Secretary of State and, from 1869-1877, US Minister to France (see above).

This award was created in 2012 to advance shared Franco-American goals that promote diversity, to promote employment opportunities for disadvantaged youth in France, to encourage entrepreneurship and increase Franco-American exchanges of information and ideas. Two awards will be granted, to an American firm operating in France and to a French firm, for their exceptional contributions in this field.

Applications should be sent before 30 April 2014 to:
US Embassy Paris, Public Affairs Section/Washburne Award, 2, avenue Gabriel, 75008 Paris

For more information: http://france.usembassy.gov/washburneaward2014.html
Fundraiser CONCERT
“Habitat for Humanity”
April 11, 2014 at 8 PM

Entrance: 30€ (includes after concert cocktail party)

Come and join us for an evening of music & inspiration and help us raise funds for “Habitat for Humanity”:

First half, the choir “la Manufacture Vocale” led by conductor Aurore Tilliac will present works by Poulenc, Duruflé, traditional Corsican, Italian and Gregorian songs.
Second half, internationally known pianist, Nathalia Romanenko will perform excerpts from her new program “Kaleidoscope” including works by Leybach, Chopin, Chostakovitch, Tchaikovsky and Godard.

More info and sale of tickets:
www.concerthabitat.com
American Church in Paris

American Church in Paris 65, Quai d’Orsay 75007
RER C: Pont de l’Alma or Invalides / METRO: Invalides or Alma Marceau / BUS: 80 (Église Américaine) or 80 (Bosquet-Rapp)
Hotline: 01 40 62 05 00
Habitat for Humanity at the ACP
By Teteh Atikpo, Daniel Grout & William Johnston

The American Church In Paris has been involved for more than 20 years in support for Habitat for Humanity. Each year, a group of volunteers raise funds and choose a project to go and work with Habitat for Humanity. We have gone mainly to Eastern Europe and also to South Africa. The Habitat group is a main part of our Mission ministry.

In 2008 William Johnston established a partnership with the Rotary Club PCE by creating an annual fundraiser concert which is presented at the ACP. The proceeds of this concert, plus an additional stipend, enable the ACP to finance two mission trips each year with 8-10 volunteers. This is in the spirit of the Rotary motto “Service above Self” fitting appropriately into one of the five areas of Rotary action: the fight against poverty. The concert is of high professional quality and 100% of the proceeds are donated to the ACP Habitat program.

This year the Youth and Young Adults’ trip will be traveling to Hungary in June with a second trip, open to the whole church, leaving in August for Bulgaria.

Different opportunities are available for people to support the Habitat mission trips.

1. Attend the Rotary Habitat concert on 11 April
2. Participate in the Easter Bake sale held in the Theater after each service
3. Organize a bake sale at your school
4. Some students will bake cookies and sell them at school to raise funds for the trips
5. Attend the Habitat for Humanity dinner (more information coming soon)
6. Online donations on the Habitat website for our mission

If you would like to make a $US tax-deductible donation towards the cost of your friend or family member volunteer, you can donate on the H4H website. Please go to the link below, our ACP team home page, and then click on the link “donate online”.


If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation in France, please make a check out to “The American Church in Paris - Habitat for Humanity” or make a donation on the website: http://concerthabitat.com
Family Communion class
Allison Wheeler
Director of Children’s Ministry

Why do we take communion?

What does it mean to us as a community, to me as an individual?

And does someone need all the answers before they are ready to partake?

If you had difficulty answering these questions for yourself, imagine the difficulty that parents can have trying to answer these questions in a way that their young children can understand. On 9 March Pastor Michelle Wahila took some of that burden away from parents when she led a communion class for families.

Over 40 people of all ages were in attendance. The younger children sat coloring thematically appropriate coloring sheets up front at little tables while the parents and older children listened intently to Pastor Michelle explain the concept of “open table” that we practice at the American Church, how everyone with but a mustard seed of faith is welcome at the Lord’s table. The event was such a success that plans are already underway to host another communion class next year.

The purpose of the class was not to replace confirmation classes, but to give parents the tools to talk with their children about communion, as well as a chance for them to ask any questions that they may have.

One question that Pastor Michelle and I both receive often is whether or not it is appropriate for children to take communion. Pastor Michelle answered this question during her talk by describing communion as a journey: the ritual of the Eucharist means something different to us at 13 than it does to us at 30, and again something different when we are 70. And no one, no matter their age or how deeply they have studied, will ever fully understand the mystery of this sacred rite. Therefore, unless parents wish their children to wait to take communion due to their own beliefs or the traditions of their particular denominations, there is no reason for children not to participate.

After the question/answer session, Pastor Michelle served communion to everyone. It was a beautiful thing to see so many children taking communion for the first time, to witness their excitement dipping their bread into the wine, practicing saying “thank you” or “Amen” to the pastor serving them.

It was a powerful reminder that Christ died not just for those able to read, or to sit still through a worship service. Jesus died for all of us. And we are richer as a community when everyone participates in communion, in this shared remembrance that we are united in Christ.

Regular Children’s Worship takes place every Sunday (except school holidays) at the 11h00 and 13h30 services. If you would like your child to be a part of Children’s Worship at the American Church in Paris, please register them on our website: www.acparis.org.

In order to keep this wonderful program up and running at full capacity, we are always in need of volunteers. If you would like to consider offering your time or talents to the Children’s Ministry at the church, please contact me at childrensworship@acparis.org.
Two years ago, a team from the American Church in Paris departed for Romania on Easter Monday. We left Paris on this national holiday and traveled to Cluj, Romania, to work with Habitat for Humanity.

Our actual work days had to be rescheduled because, while we were on Easter holiday, the country of Romania had not yet celebrated Easter. Team members were rather confused, believing that all countries and Christians around the world celebrated Easter on the same day. While this is indeed true for Protestants and Catholics, Romania is an Orthodox Christian country and therefore follows the tradition of the Orthodox Church.

The Orthodox Church, also known as the Eastern Orthodox Church is the second largest Christian church in the world (after Roman Catholicism) with an estimated 225-300 million adherents. It is primarily located in Eastern Europe and the Middle East and is the religious affiliations of the majority of the populations of Belarus, Bulgaria, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Russia and Ukraine.

This particular branch of Christianity use the term "orthodoxy" (from the Greek orthos + doxa, meaning correct belief) to express its belief of having an unbroken connection to the faith, doctrine and practices of the ancient Christian church.

The Orthodox Church traces its development back to the earliest church established by the Apostle Paul and the Apostles. In non-doctrinal, non-liturgical matters the church has always shared in local cultures, adopting or adapting traditions from among practices it found to be compatible with the Christian life, and in turn shaping the cultural development of the nations around it.

Four stages of development can be traced in the history of Orthodox Churches. Early Christianity, which is around the first three centuries through Constantine the Great, makes up the Apostolic period. The Byzantine period, beginning with the first seven Ecumenical Councils, comprises 11 centuries from the First Council of Nicaea in 325 to the Fall of Constantinople in 1453. The Ottoman period starts in the 15th century and ends in about 1830, marking the Greek and Serbian independence from the Ottoman Empire. The last stage, which we are in presently, is the modern period.

With the world’s focus now on the political crisis between Russian and Ukraine, it is helpful and important to understand the faith traditions of these countries and to pray for our brothers and sisters. Every few years, “Western” (Catholic and Protestant) Easter coincides with “Eastern” Orthodox Easter. It happens to occur this year on Sunday, 20 April.

As we continue our Lenten journey, may we be mindful of the situation in the Ukraine and God’s desire for peace, unity and reconciliation. May we join with our Christian family in fasting and praying for that region and be thankful for the witness of Jesus Christ in and through the Orthodox Church.

Psssst! Did you notice Dan’s new title? At the Congregational Meeting on 23 March, we voted to change the post of “Director of Youth and Young Adults” to “Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adult Ministries,” and we voted to give Dan the job! Welcome to our new Associate Pastor!
ACP Youth Group (13-18yrs)

Bienvenue to the new Youth Intern
Antonin Ficatier

Hi everyone! My name is Antonin Ficatier, I am 25 years-old, French and - even better- Parisian! I moved to Paris at the age of 11. I have completed a Master Degree in International Business and right after my graduation I decided to build-up my own business. I founded the Chinese Institute, which aims to teach Chinese.

At the same time I started to study theology as I felt deep inside of me that God was calling me for a greater task: the pastoral ministry! I have spent the last 3 years developing my company but ultimately I decided to leave my role last January. I am now a full time student at the Institut Protestant de Theologie de Paris.

Do you have any hobbies and what do you enjoy doing in Paris?
I am a real sports fan. I do play soccer, tennis, golf, basketball and I also love running! Other than that I enjoy spending time with my friends in Parisian “cafés”. One of my favourite places in Paris is nearby the Notre-Dame de Paris Cathedral. I love this place, especially in Summer. If you’re in Paris in August, just go there!

How did you hear about the ACP Youth Intern position? What made you want to apply?
Andrea, the previous ACP Youth Intern, posted the Youth Intern offer at our school. When I looked at it, I thought that it had been made for me! I promptly applied for the position and met-up with Dan. Oh and I forgot to tell you that I will move to the United-States next August in order to pursue a Master of Arts in Theological Studies. So I thought that the Youth Intern position would be a very good opportunity for me to get to know more about American culture.

Do you have any expectations and hopes for your time as Youth Intern?
First of all, I expect my time here to be a cross-cultural experience. ACP is such a melting-pot! I really want to learn from the diversity which can be found here. I believe diversity is a valuable asset for our churches and for the world. Spiritually speaking, I am looking forward to spending some time with the Youth talking about God. I think talking about God together is a very good way to get to know him. Sometimes it may be difficult for the Youth to talk about God. I am here to help them understand their faith. I also would like to be an helpful resource for the Youth Leaders. They are doing a fantastic job with the youth and I would love to help them grow in their own Christian journey.

What do you hope to offer/bring to the ACP community during your time with us?
I have some experience in managing youth groups as I have been a Scout Leader for the last 9 years. For example, I hope to bring this asset to the Youth Group by organizing a camping session next June! As a Theology student, I think I can bring knowledge about the study of the Bible as well as new ideas and new points of view to ACP.

For more information about ACP’s Youth Group please contact youthintern@acparis.org
and don’t forget that you are welcome to invite your friends!

For more information about Youth and Young Adults events at ACP, please contact youthpastoraecparis.org for more information and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.
From mid-January to mid-March the Young Adults spent seven weeks exploring the meaning of life through the Alpha Course.

Described as a practical and interactive introduction to the Christian faith, Alpha provides the opportunity to ask questions and delve deeper into the fundamentals of faith in a relaxed, no-pressure environment. Alpha was started in Holy Trinity Brompton Church, London, by Rev. Nicky Gumbel, in 1990. Since then, over 20 million people around the world have heard about Jesus through Alpha with the course currently running in 169 countries and in 112 languages. Alpha runs in schools, churches, workplaces, prisons, homes and cafes around the globe.

Every week the Young Adults welcomed more than 70 guests who ate a meal together, watched the video talk and then shared their thoughts and questions in a small group discussion. With topics such as *How can I have faith?*, *How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?* and *Does God Heal Today?* guests were able to ask the big questions of life and discuss their thoughts openly. It was exciting and thought-provoking to discuss aspects of the Christian faith with Young Adults from such diverse cultures, backgrounds and experiences. It never failed to amaze the Group Leaders how week after week the small groups really delved into the topics which challenged our ideas about the Christian faith and helped you to develop your personal relationship with Jesus. There was always something that was relevant to every single guest – whether it was hearing about God for the first time or thinking about an aspect of the Christian faith in a new way. By not being afraid to ask questions and discuss the topics we were all able to learn from each other and grow in our understanding and relationship with God.

Alpha is a fantastic opportunity to invite friends, family and colleagues who have questions about Christianity to come and see what the Christian faith is all about. Whether you’ve never heard of God, you’re someone who has recently come to faith or you have been a Christian all of your life, this course is for you!

Is there more to life than this? Do you want to explore the Christian faith and quite possibly have your life turned upside in an amazing way by Jesus? The Young Adults did and would definitely recommend it…so what are you waiting for?

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**Young Adults Alpha report**  
**By Lisa Prevett**

“I wasn’t sure how to pray but the video [on prayer] was extremely useful. There were eye-openers every week. I loved it!”

“The videos were theologically rich and stimulated great discussions”

“I came here as a non-believer and now I think that life without God and faith makes no sense”

“Since doing Alpha I have started Bible reading. Using the verses spoken about it has been great to go away and read them for myself…work at them with a deeper understanding”
Painting in Pune

By Monica Bassett

Here I was on a plane in mid-February headed for India with a sparse selection of clothing, make-up, and panoply of possibly needed medicine all piled into a black and navy blue back pack, my carry-on luggage. My checked luggage included only art supplies: rainbow colors of acrylic paint, palette knives, and four large, 2mX1m white canvases rolled up in a long, narrow tube.

I have to admit that I had made a rather spontaneous decision to join the other seven volunteers in the ACP group going on an exploratory trip to discover Deep Griha Society, an NGO helping the under privileged in the slums of Pune, India. Spirit often nudges me when it’s time to move outside my comfort zone, and so here I was indeed.

We all had slightly different reasons for being part of this mission, whether it was to help kids learn English, teach Bible study, explain aspects of French and American culture or contribute in the aim of women’s empowerment. As an artist, I felt called to bring my passion of creativity and art to the Indian women and children. I didn’t want to teach an ordinary painting class but rather share a cultural experience involving painting with the Spirit. I often find Spirit walking in the woods, meditating, praying, or dancing.

I actually love to dance but knew nothing about Indian dance. I imagined that if the women or children at Deep Griha could share their way of (what turned out to be Bollywood) dancing with me, I could share my particular way of painting using large palette knives and spatulas with them. And together we could create a collective, abstract painting.

How grateful I was to have a wonderful, Indian interpreter who speaks both English and Marathi, the local Hindu dialect, and who told me how thrilled he was to be part of this project because it resonated so deeply with him.

The goal became what I call a prayer painting. For me, each painting is like a voyage that tells a story or relates emotions in the present moment. It’s a spiritual journey, an active prayer. So I asked Niranjan, my interpreter, to explain the process of using the physical act of painting in order to give up all hopes, dreams, sadness, joy, fear, pain or even happiness to the Lord. I often use this method in my own studio when I work. By letting go of all my thoughts and desires on the canvas and handing them over to God, I construct a visible way of letting go of expectation and trusting that I will be guided on my path. After painting, I often feel more clear and focused. Each stroke, then, was to become an intention, prayer, or emotion to be laid out in a collaborative work of art.

A process that started out as dancing to music became a means to dancing with color on the canvas. After the canvas was filled, I suggested doing improvisational performance art to show them my style of painting and pulling the piece together to the finish.

The first two paintings were created in the Ramtekadi center with a small group of Indian women who were eager to participate. The surrounding slums house about 30,000 people who take advantage of childcare, HIV awareness, education, and women empowerment programs at this facility.

The third painting was created on an outdoor patio floor with six young boys at a rural facility about 45km outside of Pune, called City of Knowledge, and where Deep Griha provides schooling, community health awareness, and agricultural and development training.

The last painting was created in the sun-filled chapel of City of Child just as the sun started setting and with the help of a handful of orphaned or single-parent boys that live and are educated in this residential facility.

Being exposed to life in India is a very intense experience.
The overwhelming number of people, noise pollution, spicy food, litter, dust, questionable driving skills, beautiful silks and fabrics along with elegantly draped sarees, heat, and extreme poverty can be perceived as an enormous assault on the senses. Curiously enough, I found myself appreciating a kind of simplicity, grace, gratitude and kindness among these people during my two weeks.

I was overjoyed that this project came to fruition as well as by the final pieces of art on which amazing energy flowed onto the canvases as a result of our dancing and painting and trusting Spirit. Painting this way seemed to give us a universal voice. Each of us was able to speak with each stroke, color choice and movement to honor God and give thanks for the moment we were sharing together.

It was especially meaningful to realize that those who participated together were Hindu, Muslim and Christian. Beyond the intellect and beliefs among our different religions, contributing together was a kind of communion in the movement, in the emotions and in the joy of creating. We all seemed to be looking in the same direction which is that of love.

As I continue to process my visit, I am working on putting together a montage video from photos and film taken during these dancing/painting performances. I would be completely satisfied with my visit if a video could shine some light on the beautiful and dedicated work that Deep Griha Society is doing for the betterment of its people in Pune, India.

**Mission trip to India**

By the Rev. Dan Haugh

Last month, members from ACP travelled to India in partnership with the Deep Griha Society.

Deep Griha, which means "lighthouse," is an independent charitable organization that works to better the lives of persons living in the slums of Pune, India.

During my sermon on 9 March, I shared briefly the inspirational story of the organization’s humble beginnings. In 1975 medical practioner Dr. Neela Onawale and her husband Rev. Bhaskar Onawale started a one-room clinic to treat the residents of Pune’s disenfranchised and forgotten living in the slums. Having returned from the United States with a pledge of $100 and prayer, Deep Griha Society (DGS) was founded in July of that year, and within a further two years was serving more than 100 people a day.

From treating patients, Dr. Onwale quickly realized that many of the medical conditions affecting the slum community were caused by malnutrition and lack of education. As a result, she began programs to support community members, as well as to educate them on how to maintain good health. Since 1975, DGS has constantly expanded and adapted its services to empower the disadvantaged community through support and education, giving people the skills and confidence they need to improve their lives.

Today, Deep Griha provides medical programs in four slum areas in Pune with a total population of 52,000 people, rural medical clinics in four rural villages with a total population of 20,000 people, pre-school nurseries for three-to-five-year-olds at 56 locations with approximately 2,000 children enrolled and coaching classes for about 1,200 children in the first to seventh grades. DGS also provides special classes for slow learners, technical training courses for school drop-outs after seventh grade, adult education for men and women, and training for home nursing and housekeeping.

For more information, please visit the website at [http://deepgriha.org](http://deepgriha.org)

Additionally, we hope you can attend the **Youth Talent Show & India Night on Saturday evening, 10 May** at ACP as the India team shares stories, photos and videos about their time working with Dr. Neela and the amazing staff and volunteers of Deep Griha Society.
Keeping up with Patti at Rafiki Village in Uganda

In September 2011, Patti Lafage flew to Uganda to join the Rafiki Village

Here are some numbers

Can you imagine that, here in Uganda, God touches more than one thousand lives through the work that your support makes possible?

Our 104 Resident Children here at Rafiki Village are the first ones we think of. An unknown number of grandparents and other relatives are blessed by the knowledge that children they had no means to support are well cared for and learning to love God. Many of our resident children were abandoned in infancy, while others receive visits from approximately 60 “extended family” members once or twice a year.

Add to that number the 111 community children who attend Rafiki School as Day Scholars, many of whom would not be able to attend even “free” government schools. These overcrowded, understaffed schools charge no tuition but require payment for even the most essential supplies like paper, pencils and porridge for lunch. Their parents or guardians (many are orphans living with extended families) show their appreciation by regular attendance at Parent/Teacher conferences and by encouraging these children to do their best. Estimated number? 100 to 150 people.

God touches more than 1,000 lives through the work that your support makes possible.

The 54 regular full time Rafiki employees (25 teachers, 15 Rafiki Maamas and 1 Dad, 9 kitchen staff, guards and gardeners) earn a decent living and serve as loyal, loving role models to our children.

Our four part-time music teachers from the classical music school in Kampala teach individual and group music lessons, orchestra and choir.

Three cleaners, a plumber, a carpenter, a mechanic, and a painter work for us regularly. Rafiki is their principle source of income.

Two tailors make our school uniforms. We are a “key account” to local businesses (village market, photocopy shop, print shop, book sellers, wholesale and retail food suppliers...).

Over the past two years, up to 50 construction workers have been on our site building new schools and residences and are now completing our new Advanced Learning Institute building.

How many lives does that make? Let’s keep counting:

Our pharmacist procures and sells - at her cost - the expensive medicines needed by a few of our children, as well as the normal but huge amounts of cough/cold, flu, headache, itch, and wound treatments, malaria tests and treatments.

Doctors at “The Surgery” clinic in Kampala give our children expert care but do not charge for consultations.

Our dentist comes to Rafiki twice a year with his young team and his dental chair to check and clean 2200 teeth, then treats the children who require dental work in his Kampala clinic.

A child psychologist has begun working, free of charge, with a few of our resident children.

About 20 craftswomen, widows or other needy women, support their children by making and selling the beautiful craft items that you can see and buy online at “The Exchange”.

Hundreds of members of the various churches our children attend regularly testify their love and appreciation of the Rafiki kids.

Each year, an average of about 8 to 10 people, of all ages, come to Rafiki Uganda as “Mini-Missionaires”. They help with special projects, vacation activities or just lend a hand, staying a month or several months. Invariably, they are blessed in their turn for the work they do here.

Cottage One girls and Maama dressed for church
Rafiki, built in 2003, is home and school to orphans and local children. Patti shares stories of how God has been working to help her contribute to His transforming love in Africa.

Praise God for our many donors and for about 300 “sponsors” who contribute monthly to the share the cost of care for specific children. Most sponsors correspond regularly with their special child and, occasionally, visit. We pray daily for their continued faithfulness and for more sponsors.

All of these people know that Rafiki is a very special place and that we depend on them to do God’s work.

I’ve probably missed some, but all of the above add up to well over one thousand. And there is one more person – me - who is far more blessed than any just to have the privilege of working here for the Lord. The children’s ready smiles tell it all.

Mathias, Micheal, and Nicholas, three of our new 3-year-old Day Students

Cottage Ten boys and Maama clean up

From our Prayer Chain Team

Do you have a prayer request for our Prayer Team?
If so, please forward your prayer by e-mail to prayerrequests@acparis.org.

Your prayer request will remain strictly private and confidential.
Prayer is powerful. We are here for you.

James 5:13-16 (NIV)
Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

If you would like someone to pray with you after services, there will be a Prayer Team member available. Meet in the chapel next to the theater.
Follow our Destiny!

By Destiny E. Ryales

Greetings to you all from Ghana! I pray that Paris has in finally welcomed Spring into its midst and people are more joyful.

As I prepare for my April trip home, Paris and Chicago, my thoughts are focused on bringing my students wonderful software, education games, toddler toys and children clothes when I return in May. My children love to learn and I don’t have access to educational items here in Ghana.

Have you got any computer items that you would like to donate?

I humbly ask if you could gather any student or computer items for me that you are storing but currently not using and I will quickly give them to the village students on my return. I cannot wait to be with you all again soon!

JoAnn Neal has been working with the Rafiki Foundation in Africa for more than a decade and has been supported throughout this time by ACP. JoAnn will be writing regularly for the Spire and keeping us updated with life as a missionary in Tanzania.

Greetings from Tanzania

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” 1 Peter 5:7

March was a month of madness with increased responsibilities in the kitchen, processing ten new children to come to Rafiki in the near future, trying to complete a myriad of reports due, and taking care of some very sick children (including one who had to be hospitalized). There is no way I could handle all of these things, but I am SO thankful that it is not up to me, it’s up to our Lord.

The Rafiki children are becoming partners with me in prayer in so many ways and we would especially value your prayers for Victoria who vomited blood and had to be admitted to the local hospital. The bleeding stopped and she was discharged with an appointment for an endoscopy. She is on medication, but still vomits small amounts of blood. The children are all praying for Victoria and for wisdom for the doctors. How rewarding it is to see the children coming to faith and truly casting their anxieties upon the Lord, knowing that He cares for them.
Stewardship focus

Missions and Outreach ministries

Your support, stewardship, tithes, and offerings contribute to the Missions and Outreach Ministries of the American Church in Paris

Over the last year your contributions have:
- Served over 3,328 meals to the homeless in our community – Friday Mission Lunches
- Assisted 180 refugees – Refugee Ministry
- Performed live music for 400 people in rest homes, hospitals, and prisons; institutions where live music is seldom heard – Tiffany Musica
- Taught 290 African children essential computer skills – Excellence Computer Technology Foundation
- Ministered and served 12,000 inmates, officers, patients, and youth in Ghana – The Living Truth Foundation

Adult Christian Education ministries

Over the last year, your contributions have:
- Permitted us to welcome over 15 different theologians and academics to speak to 700 people about the love and mystery of God – Thurber Thursday Ministry
- Welcomed Nobel Laureate Leymah Gbowee to speak to 800 people about her professional social work and how to facilitate discussions on peace – Lecture Ministry
- Supported a place to discover, read, and borrow from a selection of 1,800 English Christian books and DVD’s - Annie Vallotton Christian Lending Library
- Held 2 refreshing retreats in spring and fall with 100 participants - Retreat Ministry
- Sustained our diverse bible studies and small groups - engaging 190 people weekly to better know God and His Word - Bible Study Ministry and Bible Study Fellowship

This is just a sampling of the impact your giving at the ACP has in our community and in our world. On behalf of all the people who are touched by your giving - THANK YOU!

For more information on the Adult Christian Education Ministries of the ACP, please visit www.acparis.org/prayer-learning.

To find out how you can participate in our work to build God’s kingdom and your time, talents, and financial resources, please visit www.acparis.org/stewardship.
## Special Events and Monthly Meetings and Concerts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Organizer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thurber Thursday</strong>&lt;br&gt;Speaker: Reverend Brent Anderson leads two-part event on Meeting God through Scripture. Session 2: Going deep: Studying the Bible in-depth</td>
<td>Thursday 3 April</td>
<td>18h30 - 22h00</td>
<td>Thurber Room</td>
<td>Michelle Wahila associatepastor @acparis.org</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Alpha for Everyone launch party</strong>&lt;br&gt;Alpha course will run every week (except Holy Week) until 12 June</td>
<td>Thursday 3 April</td>
<td>18h30</td>
<td>Thurber Room</td>
<td>Elodie Lasserre youngprofessionals @acparis.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multicultural Couples Potluck</strong>&lt;br&gt;Fellowship and discussion on topics such as raising bicultural/ bilingual children and cultural differences. Bring a dish to share.</td>
<td>Friday 4 April</td>
<td>20h00</td>
<td>Thurber Room</td>
<td>Monica Bassett &amp; Anja Wyss multicultural @acparis.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breakfast Ministry</strong>&lt;br&gt;Preparation: Friday 19h30 at ACP Distribution: Saturday 8h00, meet at ACP</td>
<td>Friday 4 April</td>
<td>19h30</td>
<td>Thurber Room</td>
<td>Jurie Ane Feleo homelesssandwich @acparis.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writers’ Group</strong></td>
<td>Saturday 5 April</td>
<td>14h00 - 17h00</td>
<td>Room G2</td>
<td>Laura Kerber writers @gmail.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Member Orientation</strong></td>
<td>Sunday 6 April</td>
<td>12h30 in the 2nd Floor Library</td>
<td></td>
<td>Camilla Radford-Furman <a href="mailto:communitylife@acparis.org">communitylife@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Atelier Concert</strong> - Free admission, with free-will offering Nathalia Romanenko - piano</td>
<td>Sunday 6 April</td>
<td>17h00</td>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
<td>Fred Gramann <a href="mailto:music@acparis.org">music@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACP Today: Faith Talk in Paris radio show</strong>&lt;br&gt;Tune in for inspiring music, interviews, and sermon highlights.</td>
<td>Monday 7 April</td>
<td>20h45 - 21h30</td>
<td>100.7 FM Radio Fréquence Protestante</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lenten Lecture 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;Dr. Ron Tappy, archaeologist, professor and museum director presents three lectures on Jerusalem: City of Passion. Lecture 1: The Way to Jerusalem</td>
<td>Tuesday 8 April</td>
<td>19h30 - 22h00</td>
<td></td>
<td>Michelle Wahila associatepastor @acparis.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lenten Lecture 2</strong>&lt;br&gt;Dr. Ron Tappy, Lecture 2: The Truth at the Temple</td>
<td>Thursday 10 April</td>
<td>19h30 - 22h00</td>
<td></td>
<td>Michelle Wahila associatepastor @acparis.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Habitat for Humanity Fundraiser Concert</strong>&lt;br&gt;The choir “la Manufacture Vocale” led by conductor Aurore Tilliac and Nathalia Romanenko internationally known pianist and ACP member.</td>
<td>Friday 11 April</td>
<td>20h00</td>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
<td><a href="http://www.concerthabitat.com">www.concerthabitat.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth Disneyland Paris Outing</strong></td>
<td>Saturday 12 April</td>
<td>8h45-23h00</td>
<td></td>
<td>Antonin Ficatier youthintern @acparis.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Holy Week: Palm/Passion Sunday services</strong></td>
<td>Sunday 13 April</td>
<td>9h00, 11h00 &amp; 13h30</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Atelier Concert</strong> - Free admission, with free-will offering Hélène Latour - cello, Guillaume Latour - violin, Jacques Perez - cello</td>
<td>Sunday 13 April</td>
<td>17h00</td>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
<td>Fred Gramann <a href="mailto:music@acparis.org">music@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Special Events and Monthly Meetings and Concerts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>Time(s)</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holy Week: Monday—Holden Evening Prayer Service</td>
<td>Monday 14 April</td>
<td>19h00</td>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Holy Week: Tuesday—Holden Evening Prayer Service</td>
<td>Tuesday 15 April</td>
<td>19h00</td>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lenten Lecture 3 Dr. Ron Tappy, Lecture 3: The Life from the Tomb</td>
<td>Tuesday 15 April</td>
<td>19h30 - 22h00</td>
<td></td>
<td>Michelle Wahila <a href="mailto:associatepastor@acparis.org">associatepastor@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Week: Wednesday—Holden Evening Prayer Service</td>
<td>Wednesday 16 April</td>
<td>19h00</td>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Holy Week: Maundy Thursday Service</td>
<td>Thursday 17 April</td>
<td>20h00</td>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Holy Week: Good Friday Service</td>
<td>Friday 18 April</td>
<td>20h00</td>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwich Ministry Preparation: Friday 19h30 at ACP Distribution: Saturday 13h30, meet at ACP</td>
<td>Friday 18 April Saturday 19 April</td>
<td>19h30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jurie Ane Feleo <a href="mailto:homelesssandwich@acparis.org">homelesssandwich@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Week: Easter Sunday Sunrise Service on the quai d’Orsay Easter Fellowship Breakfast Traditional Celebration of the Resurrection Contemporary Celebration of the Resurrection</td>
<td>Sunday 20 April</td>
<td>7h15 8h00 9h00, 11h00 13h30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Note: No Atelier Concert on Easter</td>
<td>Sunday 20 April</td>
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<tr>
<td>Easter Monday (church building closed)</td>
<td>Monday 21 April</td>
<td>All day</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACP Today: Faith Talk in Paris radio show Tune in for inspiring music, interviews, and sermon highlights.</td>
<td>Monday 21 April</td>
<td>20h45 - 21h30</td>
<td>100.7 FM Radio Fréquence Protestante</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Meeting</td>
<td>Tuesday 29 April</td>
<td>19h30</td>
<td>Thurber Room</td>
<td>Pam Bohl <a href="mailto:councilmoderator@acparis.org">councilmoderator@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movie Discussion Group This month: Her; Aimer, boire et chanter; Nebraska; and Pelo Malo. View any or all films in the cinema, and then discuss with the group.</td>
<td>Thursday 24 April</td>
<td>19h30</td>
<td>Room G2</td>
<td>Rebecca Brite <a href="mailto:movies@acparis.org">movies@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gospel Worship Service</td>
<td>Friday 25 April</td>
<td>20h00</td>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Worship, Neal Presa, Moderator of the PCUSA preaches</td>
<td>Sunday 27 April</td>
<td>9h00, 11h00 &amp; 13h30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Atelier Concert - Free admission, with free-will offering Raj Bhimani - piano</td>
<td>Sunday 27 April</td>
<td>17h00</td>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
<td>Fred Gramann <a href="mailto:music@acparis.org">music@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jerusalem: City of Passion

**Tuesday 8 April** at 19h30: The Way to Jerusalem
**Thursday 10 April** at 19h30: The Truth at the Temple
**Tuesday 15 April** at 19h30: The Life from the Tomb

Open to all, at the American Church of Paris