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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

Cover photo ©Fred Gramann
Thoughts from
The Rev. Dr. Scott Herr
Senior Pastor

Dear Members and Friends of the ACP,

Happy Epiphany to each of you and your loved ones! The season of Epiphany follows Christmastide, begins on 6 January and continues until the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday (a.k.a. “Shrove Tuesday,” “Fat Tuesday” or Mardi Gras!) which this year is 5 March. Epiphany is the holiday remembering that Christ was first “revealed” to the gentiles and how the mission of the church continues to be humbly sharing more the light of Christ’s self-giving love.

This is the season when the days are growing longer and we thankfully are seeing more and more light in the natural world as we move away from the Winter Solstice. But it is also a time when in some ways we are seeing a thickening of “this present darkness.” It’s a perplexing time in history, full of ironies and ambiguities, whether it be around destabilizing power politics in Washington, unsettling demonstrations of the Gilets Jaunes here in France, or more violent ongoing conflicts in places like Syria and Yemen. There are still tens of millions of refugees around the world. How will the light continue to shine in the darkness?

The Christian understanding of human nature and life points toward an ironic view of history. Reinhold Niebuhr writes, “The Christian faith tends to make the ironic view of human evil in history the normative one. Its conception of redemption from evil carries it beyond the limits of irony, but its interpretation of the nature of evil in human history is consistently ironic. This consistency is achieved on the basis of the belief that the whole drama of human history is under the scrutiny of a divine judge who laughs at human pretensions without being hostile to human aspirations. The laughter at the pretensions is the divine judgment. The judgment is transmuted into mercy if it results in abating the pretensions and in prompting men (sic) to a contrite recognition of the vanity of their imagination.”*

Perhaps as we reflect on our own journey and calling during this Epiphany season, we might find encouragement and direction in Malcolm Guite’s poem, “Epiphany”:

It might have been just someone else’s story,  
Some chosen people get a special king.  
We leave them to their own peculiar glory,  
We don’t belong, it doesn’t mean a thing.  
But when these three arrive they bring us with them,  
Gentiles like us, their wisdom might be ours;  
A steady step that finds an inner rhythm, A pilgrim eye that sees beyond the stars.  
They did not know his name but still they sought him,  
They came from otherwhere but still they found;  
In temples they found those who sold and bought him,  
But in the filthy stable, hallowed ground,  
Their courage gives our questing hearts a voice  
To seek, to find, to worship, to rejoice.

May God grant us less pretention and more aspirations for light and mercy as we travel together through the year ahead...

In Christ,

Bible readings for January

6 January  Epiphany
Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
Ephesians 3:1-12
Matthew 2:1-12

20 January  2nd Sunday after the Epiphany
Isaiah 62:1-5
Psalm 36:5-10
1 Corinthians 12:1-11
John 2:1-11

13 January  Baptism of Jesus
1st Sunday after the Epiphany
Isaiah 43:1-7
Psalm 29
Acts 8:14-17
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

27 January  3rd Sunday after the Epiphany
Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6 8-10
Psalm 19
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a
Luke 4:14-21

Monthly Sunday Women’s Bible Study
13 January, 12h15-13h15, Room F2
This study of The Lord’s Prayer is led by Teri Lee Valluy. The focus for this month's study is "Give us this daily bread." All women are invited to attend. Childcare is provided.

Thurber Lecture

Redemptive Presence Among Today's Excluded

Wednesday 16 January, Thurber Room, ACP
Meal at 19h; Presentation 19h45-21h15

Bob and Gracie Ekblad are founders and co-directors of Tierra Nueva (New Earth) in Burlington, Washington. Together they minister at Tierra Nueva and at their home-based retreat center New Earth Refuge in the Skagit Valley. They have three adult children. Bob is ordained in the Presbyterian Church (US). He holds a ThD in Old Testament and is known internationally for his courses and workshops on reading the Bible. Gracie is ordained in the Presbyterian Church (US) and holds a Masters in Theology. She pastors and teaches at Tierra Nueva and beyond, emphasizing discipleship, holistic healing and liberation.

Thurber Lectures is an adult community gathering and growth time that is open to all.
Gratitude Unchained

by Rev. Tim Vance
Associate Pastor

I’ve probably mentioned this moment multiple times before, but it was the day after Thanksgiving, three years ago, that I received a phone call. The caller ID said “The American Church in Paris.” A rush of energy and anxiety filled my chest as I answered. When I heard that the committee had voted to call me as the next Associate Pastor of ACP, I was speechless. I was filled with so much excitement and thankfulness and surprise that I didn’t know what to say or how to say it.

On this side of that phone call, I remain thankful but now my voice has recovered a little bit. Looking back, I was thankful that day because I was a tired pastor who was energized by what I saw Jesus doing here. On that day I was thankful because I was a person struggling with how divided the church in the United States seemed to be, but here I caught a glimpse of a diverse community united in Christ. I was thankful that day because I was a person whose experience of church too often felt more like conforming rather than belonging and I had a hard time reconciling that with the unconditional love and welcome of Jesus.

Now you might think that a job interview is not the ideal place to “stop our frantic efforts to earn our way through life,” but during that interview weekend with Pastor Scott and the committee I encountered a grace that invited such freedom.

For all of that and much more I am genuinely thankful. Now, of course, three years into life together we have all likely discovered that this is not a perfect church and that I am not a perfect pastor and that life in general is not perfect. But what I’m learning along the way is that maybe grace and gratitude and the goodness of God are not chained to perfection.

Dale and Juanita Ryan write, “Sometimes we try to force gratitude on ourselves. Sometimes other people try to force it on us. But it cannot be coerced. It will not come from pretending. It will not come from telling ourselves that some people are worse off than we are. But it does come. And when it comes, it breaks through our pain and surprises us with joy” (from Rooted in God’s Love).

This is the beauty of grace. It is not forced. It is not a demand. It is free, and it sets us free from our frantic striving for perfection. I, therefore, remain especially thankful for this imperfect church filled with imperfect people and at least one imperfect pastor. So as we move from the holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas, may you know that you are already loved and that you already belong. And if gratitude happens to come along may you welcome it with joy.

Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise God’s holy name. – Psalm 103:1

Note: Dale Ryan was one of my professors at Fuller Theological Seminary who taught classes on recovery. These classes had (continue to have) a profound impact on my life in a number of healing ways. It all started with realizing that recovery is not just for people who struggle with addiction, but for anyone and everyone who has ever been wounded and/or wounded others.
Are you willing to host a Welcome Dinner as we prepare for the birth of Jesus?

Breaking barriers by breaking bread

by Rev. Odette Lockwood-Stewart
Visiting Pastor

Welcome Dinners were launched by the ACP’s Refugee Task Force. The project was created as a way to help us “break barriers by breaking bread with refugees.” We aim to have 12 dinners (96 participants) blessed by this ministry project in the first year. The hope is for members of the American Church in Paris to get to know one another better, and to meet and get to know refugees. In one evening, you can experience the blessing of extending hospitality, meeting Christ in the stranger, and forming new relationships in the breaking of bread.

This is a wonderful and simple way to make room for Christ in our hearts, especially during the seasons of Advent and Christmas. Volunteers are asked to host a meal for three other ACP members that you invite, and four refugees or asylum seekers who are invited through the Jesuit Refugee Service and other NGOs. The dinner would take place in your home, or possibly at the church.

Hosting a dinner is not an act of charity, but a spiritual practice in community. Some of our congregation have been surprised by the length of time the guests have been seeking refuge, and by the resources that these resilient brothers and sisters have developed as they seek a permanent home and status.

Christ tears down the dividing walls and sometimes this means tearing down the images we carry about one another. Expect illumination. At one Welcome Dinner, each of the eight guests was from a different country: the US, Germany, France, Madagascar, Anatolia, Senegal, Afghanistan, and Côte d’Ivoire.

Four dinners have taken place and three more are scheduled. While many people support the project, few of these are able to host a dinner. If you are willing to host a dinner either soon or in the new year, please contact Ursula at ursulaperrier@gmail.com. She can provide guidelines and tips for hosting, and a list of ACP members who would like to attend a dinner. And of course, further advice can be provided by those who have already hosted.

We hope you will pray about this and accept to host a Welcome Dinner.

100 Nights of Welcome

Help us to provide a safe place for refugees to shower and sleep here at the ACP, from 9 December through 20 March. All guests will be recommended to us by the Jesuit Refugee Service. Please consider donating double sheets, blankets, pillows, pillowcases, and towels. We also need male volunteers to help with hospitality while our guests are here in the gym, from 22h00 to 7h00, and to ensure that the linens are cleaned regularly.

If you are able to volunteer, please email Daniel Tostado at danieltostado1@gmail.com.

Please donate!

The Refugee Task Force makes recommendations to the Mission Outreach Committee on ways to motivate members of our congregation to help alleviate the refugee crisis in Paris. The task force is looking for new members. If you would like to join or see what we do, please contact Ursula Perrier at ursulaperrier@gmail.com.
Welcoming refugees

By Vanessa Watson,
ACP Refugee Ministry

The Jesuit Refugee Service, a Christian organization that screens refugees and places them in host families for 6-week periods, presented their program to ACP in the spring of 2018. Though many church members attended the session and were moved and inspired by the organization’s work, no one, not a single person signed up to host a refugee. Oh la la! Maybe this was too big a first step. Maybe the ACP community needed a middle ground between hearing about refugees on the news and having one in their homes. Like getting to know a new friend, potential romantic partner or coworker, maybe sharing a meal is a good place to start.

This is exactly the idea behind ACP’s new program, the Welcome Dinner. The aim is to invite church members to host dinners in their homes in order to bring together refugees living in and around Paris and fellow ACP-goers in a warm, casual setting. Dinners typically include eight people: the host plus three local people, and four refugees under the auspices of the Jesuit Refugee Service.

The invited refugees are single males, generally in their 20s and 30s, who are in different stages of the immigration process – seeking asylum or refugee status, having arrived in France recently or several years ago, working or unemployed. The program seeks to encourage getting to know “the refugee,” giving him a name, a face, a place at the dinner table, and a chance to interact with courteous and open-minded people who may personally know what it is like to navigate being an outsider in France.

I recently attended the third of four Welcome Dinners that have taken place since the program was launched in September. Paula Taquet and her husband, Jean, already involved in the Refugee Ministry at ACP, graciously hosted the meal in their home. I was the first guest to arrive and had never met Paula, but enjoyed getting to know her as we set the table and prepped the first course. We were joined by another young woman from ACP and Jean, and soon welcomed the four refugees, all from Afghanistan.

I’m not sure who was more nervous. The timid but sincere-looking young men introduced themselves and we sat down to a plate of raw vegetables and drinks. The program guidelines indicate that one should not be too intrusive by asking specific questions about their journey to France or what made them leave their home countries. Instead, we began to talk about their impressions of France and French people, what sports they liked, what music they listened to (to which the young man next to me replied “I like anything, as long as it’s loud!”).

As Paula served several delicious courses, I felt that getting to know the refugees was much like talking to other expats I had met. Their circumstances may be vastly different, but there were many commonalities like navigating a new language, getting used to a different cuisine, experiencing small victories and setbacks each day. It struck me that, as many of us are foreigners ourselves, we are uniquely positioned to relate to the refugee community and find empathy and solidarity in our shared experience of finding our way in Paris.

As the dinner wound down, I wondered what the coming weeks and months would hold for the four young men we had met. I wondered when they were last in touch with their families and if they would ever return home. While I didn’t know the answers to these questions, I did know that we had helped to show warmth to people whom politicians and the media often stigmatize, making many individuals fear and distrust them. The act of welcoming these four previously unknown men, eating alongside them and showing genuine interest in them as people, would not change their situations. It would, however, show that there are four more decent people in the world who wished them well.

If you are interested in hosting a meal or participating in the Welcome Dinner program, please contact Ursula Perrier at ursulaperrier@gmail.com.
God’s Spirit on the Margins
Redemptive Presence Amongst Today’s Excluded
Wednesday, 16 January | Bob & Gracie Ekblad

Paris Noir
African Americans in the City of Light
Wednesday, 13 February | Joanne Burke

Bonhoeffer’s Black Jesus
Harlem Renaissance Theology & an Ethic of Resistance
Tuesday, 19 March | Reggie Williams

The American Church in Paris
Dinner, lecture and conversation | 19h00 - 21h15
James Baldwin and Advent

A letter to the Young Adults:
The White God and White Christianity

by Victor Andre Greene
Associate Pastor, Youth & Young Adults

Obvious to me and perhaps obvious to many of you who have attended our Tuesday night gatherings, is the fact that we have yet to discuss “race” as a subject by itself, despite race/racism being the haunting muse for James Baldwin’s writings. More specifically, the single talking point we have glossed over and what is prominently featured is the subject of the “Black Christ” vs the “White Christ.” To say it in the form of a question: What is the impact the two Christ’s have had on Christianity and the historical and contemporary Western situation? Extending this question further, in what ways has race marked the differences between Christianity and Islam (particularly and contextually the Nation of Islam as a movement among Black communities and in response to Christianity and white supremacy.)

As James Baldwin himself reflects and offers a critical analysis in response to these questions, he does so by centering race – that is, his experience as a black man – inside the workings of Christianity and the Christian life. By making race and Christianity exchangeable ideas and borderline synonymous terms, he presents race/Christianity as though they were a married couple who became one, swore a covenantal vow at the altar of colonialism, and whose lovemaking, world-discovering honeymoon, is the womb marking his childhood, giving birth to the American condition, and epitomized in the creation of the globally so-called “nigger.”

For Baldwin, the problem of race, racism, and the evils persistent in the laws, lands, and love in Western societies (especially America), is a historical phenomenon caused by the worship of the White God constructed inside White Christianity and whose dwelling place lives inside the White Church. Moreover, Baldwin sees the “nigger” caused precisely by the Christian call to love God and to love neighbor, but whose divine command led those in savage darkness into a bright-white-light and whose discipleship was a fatal death.

We could and should at some point talk about these matters more, since the categories of race –especially “Black” and “White”– are not confined to the American story or Christianity. Aligned with Baldwin, “White” is a socially-politically charged term. “White” means to become “civil,” “reasoned,” “intellectual,” “cultural,” and so on. As a theologically charged term, “White” means to be “saved” and “pure.” Baldwin sees “White” as the engine for the European story and its European reach into the rest of the globe because it influences how we understand ourselves, our homes, our histories, and our deepest, unrealized convictions. Nowhere more is this evident than by the Algerian, the American Negro, and those whose lives are engraved as the colonized: sufferers under the weapons of “Whiteness” and the “White God.”

At the risk of oversimplification (or worse, moving too broadly around the subject of race), we might hear Baldwin’s comments and critiques raising the important themes we reflect on in a season of waiting in darkness and what we call Advent: love, joy, peace, hope. Or tangentially, identity, belonging, justice, and reconciliation. We might hear in James Baldwin both a refusal to be consumed by anger, hatred, or denial, just as he is inviting us to ask important questions:

Do I have to turn against myself and turn into someone else in order to be loved?
Do I have to convert into someone else in order to receive justice?
Do I have to kill myself in order for God to save me?

This is why – in part – when Baldwin suggests that whoever God is must “make us larger, freer, and more loving . . . [and] . . . if God cannot do this, then it is time we got rid of Him,” he is challenging us to look closer at who we think God is; who we have made God to be in our minds, in our places of worships, through our creeds and confessions; who God has been and who God can or even should be. He is challenging us to be courageous; to look continued, next page.../...
Please help keep our children healthy

Because we want to keep the ACP nursery and toddler rooms safe and hygienic places to play and rest, children who are sick will not be admitted to the nursery and toddler rooms. This is to protect all of our children from communicable illnesses. We also assume that a child who is unwell will prefer to be at home with their parent(s) or caregiver(s) rather than at Sunday nursery. Thank you for your consideration and cooperation. If you have any questions, please email Allison Wheeler at childrensworship@acparis.org.
What’s up in Paris

January event listings

by Karen Albrecht

Creature features

Bundle up when night falls and head to the Jardin des Plantes, where you will be in for some scintillating company. “Espèces en voie d’illumination” features brightly lit animal figures, from soaring sea turtles to a roaring tiger, from brightly plumed parrots perched in trees to blindingly white polar bears perched on an iceberg. The display adds sparkle to the long winter nights, while shedding some much-needed light on the plight of endangered species.


The old song and dance

The “Comédies musicales” exhibit at La Philharmonie pays tribute to Hollywood musicals, saluting the madcap creative energy behind “Singing in the Rain” and the technical wizardry underlying Fred Astaire’s gravity-defying on-screen magic. The show also traces adaptations of the genre in other countries (France’s Jacques Demy and Bollywood are prime examples), and in other eras, including “West Side Story” and 2016 hit film “La La Land.”

Until 27 January, philharmoniedeparis.fr

Miró, Miró on the wall

Catalan artist Joan Miró (1893-1983), a contemporary of Picasso, Matisse, and the Surrealists, invented a highly poetic personal style, mixing bright colors with abstract symbols often rendered in black ink. The retrospective at the Grand Palais features seminal canvases from throughout his long career, including the vibrant and hypnotic 1961 triptych “Bleu I,” “Bleu II,” “Bleu III,” displayed together for the first time and to great effect, as well as fanciful sculptures in ceramic and bronze.


Instant grata-fication

Is there hope for mankind’s legacy of hospitality, in an era of increasing hostility? “Persona grata,” meaning, literally, “welcome person,” at the Musée de l’Histoire de l’Immigration (with a sister exhibit at MAC VAL in Vitry-sur-Seine) uses the lens of contemporary art to rediscover a sense of human worth and welcome in a world hemmed in by closed borders and closed minds. Installations, photos, and videos explore the paradoxes of immigration, perhaps best exemplified by the glowing neon sign announcing “eldorado” but which in reality adorns an impenetrable black wall.


Latin Quarters

The Fondation Cartier’s refreshingly offbeat “Southern Geometries, from Mexico to Patagonia” showcases the ebullient art and architecture bubbling up across Latin America, giving new voice to the region’s richly varied cultural roots. Most striking, the whimsical, “neo-Andean” urban palaces of Bolivia’s Freddy Mamani are celebrated in a multicolored ballroom specially constructed in his signature style. Pre-Columbian art and elaborate indigenous designs provide context for the contemporary creations.

Until 24 February, www.fondationcartier.com

Photo: Karen Albrecht

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ACP Spire, January 2019 11
Medicare for all!

Attention expats and visitors, help make a difference. Share your experience with the French universal healthcare system and build support for a single-payer health care program that provides comprehensive coverage for all Americans.

Contribute your testimony to the cause! Send your testimony to: franceourrevolution@gmail.com (make sure that you identify the state in which you vote).

Learn more at Facebook.com/OurRevolutionFrance

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

Weekly Tuesday Morning Women's Bible Study

10h30–12h30, Catacombs

Beginning in January we will be using the Navigators Life Change series on the book of Galatians.

8 January Distribute the books, read through Galatians
15 January Lesson 1
22 January Lesson 2
30 January Prayer Tuesday with shared potluck lunch

All women are welcome to attend. If you are in need of childcare, please email women@acparis.org at least a week in advance.

The American Church in Paris

100 NIGHTS OF WELCOME

Housing for homeless refugees from 09/12/2018 to 20/03/2019

WE NEED

• MALE OVERNIGHT VOLUNTEERS
• ON CALL VOLUNTEERS
• COORDINATING VOLUNTEERS

For questions/concerns about the project email: danieltostado1@gmail.com

65 quai d'Orsay, 75007 Paris, France
Tel: +33 (0)1 40 62 05 00
www.acparis.org
ACP Men’s Retreat
by Dominique Grelet

Calling all ACP men – join us for our Men’s Retreat, **25-26 January**. It will be led by Pastor Tim Vance, exploring how we can, as men, be engaged witnesses and contributors in our world today. This will be a special 24 hours of sharing, praying, laughing, and celebrating what God is doing in our lives as friends, mentors, sons, fathers, grandfathers, and husbands. Every man is invited to be part of this special time together. This is a fantastic opportunity to connect while learning, worshipping, and relaxing together.

**Location**
Orsay Clarté Dieu retreat center in Orsay (91), a 30-minute RER ride from Gare Saint Michel Notre Dame to the Orsay-ville station.

**Schedule**
Participants will be greeted at the station on Friday evening and taken to the Clarté Dieu by shuttle starting at 18h where we will have a potluck welcome apéritif. After dinner, we will have a time of teaching, followed by an evening of fellowship, music, and songs around a bonfire, or games depending on the weather.

Saturday morning we’ll begin the day with an open-prayer time, before a hearty breakfast and launching into a morning of teaching and small groups.

After lunch, there will be time for games (including our much-acclaimed pétanque contest) and walking in the nearby forest. This is also a time to simply rest, meditate, and relax in the park of Clarté Dieu or in its cloister. We will then join for further teaching and reflection time, before we close our retreat in worship together.

Shuttles will be available from 18h to transport participants from the Centre to the Orsay-ville station.

**Cost**
The retreat costs €75 for each participant. Please do not let money keep you from joining us for this retreat. Scholarships are available; please contact the ACP pastoral staff for further information.

**Register**
Visit the ACP website ([www.acparis.org/retreats](http://www.acparis.org/retreats)) for online registration. For more information about the weekend, please contact mensbiblestudy@acparis.org.

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**My experience**
by Tom Wilscam

Four years ago, the ACP held a men’s retreat at the Orsay Clarté Dieu retreat center in Orsay. When I found out earlier last year that Scott and Tim were organizing other men’s retreat this January, I was eager and enthusiastic to sign up.

The last men’s retreat left many amazing memories that I still remember vividly today. It also helped me bond new and existing relationships with other men at ACP. It was the first opportunity to get away with the men from ACP in an environment where I could get to know them, learn about their lives, and share my experiences with ACP, God, and my life in France.

The setting at the Clarté Dieu couldn’t be more perfect. It’s private and in a beautiful area just outside Paris with a lake, comfortable facilities and an overall spiritual environment where we were able to reflect on our lives together and individually. The good French cuisine at Clarté Dieu was also a pleasant surprise.

I was also excited to hear that the activities which were so memorable before, would be organized for this retreat. We had an unforgettable game of Pétanque, where we as men were able to express our competitive side (as an American, the closest sport I’ve played compared to this famous French game was bowling). There was the “bond fire” in the forest where we were able to express our animal side. Then there were the collaborative workshops led by the pastors, where we were able to express our spiritual side and talk about subjects relating to our current lives back in Paris and our relationship with God.

Even though the trip was only one evening, it was astonishing how the experience affected the months and years following. “Down time” or “away time” with a group of men is like chicken soup for the soul. Especially when a group of men have something special in common. There is a comradery that men share together, and I believe this relationship is very important in every man’s life. I truly look forward to the retreat in two weeks and I hope to see all my ACP comrades there too.
Please join us as we hear Sharon Martin speak about "Seeing the Miracles." Sharon’s life changed dramatically 27 years ago, when her best friend died of breast cancer. She took a hard look at her priorities, changed her career, met her husband, sold everything, bought a sailboat, and set out to explore the world. She and her husband visited more than 20 countries and lived in seven of them. Her life has been filled with miracles. Recognizing and experiencing those miracles has brought her closer to God. Come hear about these miracles and be inspired to reflect on God's miracles in your life.

Childcare is provided in G1. All women are invited to attend.

Curious about Christianity? Got questions about the meaningfulness of life? You’re not the only one.

**Find out more at the Alpha Launch Party**

**19h30, Thursday 17 January**

American Church in Paris, 65 quai d’ Orsay, 75007 Paris

Alpha is a 10-week course exploring different aspects of the Christian faith. No question is too simple or too tough, and everyone is welcome. For more information, contact alpha@acparis.org connect with us on Facebook or see our website at www.acparis.org
Reflections on the AICEME youth conference

by Natalie Ziyi Scherer

English-Speaking United Methodist Church of Vienna

The following reflection was shared during worship at the English-Speaking United Methodist Church of Vienna on Sunday, 11 November 2018.

Last weekend four youths from our church were fortunate enough to attend this year’s AICEME Youth Conference in Paris. The theme this year was “Unite”. On the first evening we heard a talk from Pastor Victor from the American Church in Paris. He reminded us that God calls us to pay attention and to open our eyes to see the people in need all around us. Every morning we packed an extra sandwich which we gave to a person in need while we were out doing various activities. Another day we learned how difficult it is being a refugee and applying for asylum. We played a game designed by refugees where we were forced to go back when we landed on certain tasks. The whole weekend was very rewarding and we got to meet many young Christians from around Europe.

What resonated with me the most during the conference was the talk we heard on serving God. We heard the passage from Matthew 20:20-28.

Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. “What is it you want?” he asked. She said, “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.” “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said to them. “Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?” “We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.”

When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

The point of the talk was to tell us that we should be asking ourselves “what can I do to serve God”. We should sacrifice everything and serve, just as Jesus did when he came to serve and to give his life as a sacrifice for us. The question “what can I do to serve God?” has stuck with me ever since I first heard it. After pondering on this statement for a while, it reminded me of something else I learnt a while back. I learnt that all of our relationships are centered around what these relationships can do for us. But we should love everyone equally and not just because of what we can benefit from them. We are always searching for a way that others can help us. Instead, we should be helping others. The statement “what can I do to serve God?” serves as reminder that we should make our decisions in life based on how they can help us serving others and not on how others can serve us. As we experienced last weekend it is not difficult helping others.

And the end of the conference everyone had the opportunity to share their testimonies and reflections on the weekend. Many spoke about how rewarding just handing out a sandwich to someone in need was and that all it took was one extra minute in the morning preparing a second meal. I always thought that helping those in need was a big thing that was super difficult and took a lot of time and energy. In reality, it is really simple.

I am very grateful for the opportunity we had in Paris. We learnt so much about God and how we can become better Christians. We met other like-minded young people from around the world and came together to worship. It was very rewarding and has strengthened my faith. I am thankful for ESUMC enabling us to take part in this year’s conference. I hope those taking part in the coming years will find it as rewarding as I did.

AICEME is the Association of International Churches in Europe and the Middle East. ESUMC is an AICEME-member church, located at Sechshausser Strasse 56, 1150 Vienna.
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 7 and 21 January. 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 house-bound 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.

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 after each service.

The Movie Discussion Group

19h30, Thursday, 17 January
Salle G2

This month’s movies to see beforehand:
Shoplifters/Une Affaire de famille
Wildlife
Sir/Monsieur
Border

Contact: movies@acparis.org

Did you know you can follow the American Church in Paris on social media?

@AmChurchParis /AmericanChurchParis
A MiniMissionary in Africa: Why not you?

by Patti Lafage,
ACP Missionary in Uganda

Kathy Boyett, an attorney, and her husband David, a business consultant from Dallas, Texas, spent two weeks as MiniMissionaries at Rafiki recently. Their “day job” assignment while there was to help out at RICE, Rafiki Institute of Classical Education. Since 2014, Rafiki Foundation has built the RICE teacher-training program to maximize the impact of our Christian Classical educational methodology. Each RICE graduate will be teaching scores then hundreds of Uganda children to love God, to love to learn, and to love to think.

Since it was midterm exam week, Kathy and David proctored exams, then graded them using the answer keys. Material ranged from simple arithmetic and grammar to discussion of the five vectors of disease communication, reading instruction and assessment, early church history…. Kathy gave spelling tests, David discussed current world affairs, and both worked with individual teacher trainees on specific areas where help or encouragement was needed. The Boyetts clearly modeled Rafiki Classical Education’s goal to create lifelong learners – people who know how to “learn just about anything.”

Both participated in the celebration of the end of midterm exams, which included lively games of dodgeball, special “eats” (pictured) and a ululating contest.

Kathy took on a special project of collecting testimonies from the students on the impact of RICE in their lives. Here are a few examples of what they have to say:

“I didn’t know about classical education because in our village we only went to school to study and pass exams – that’s all, but RICE has really taught me different classical contexts which are interesting even to share to others.” – Shalom, third term student

“I am grateful because we are provided with many things – computers, music and art classes, and Bible study every morning which has strengthened my faith in God.” – Shanitah, first term student.

“The benefits I have experienced here at RICE are both physically and spiritually immense, hence I have confidence and freedom to face the future.” – Splendor Jane, third term student

David, who doesn’t mind getting dirty, also helped the Rafiki groundskeepers swap a motor from a broken lawnmower to repair another one. He spent time with the older boys, who so appreciate a chance to discuss anything from Christian doctrine to sports, career goals, and “girls.”

Particular skills, knowledge, or experience are not really what it’s about to be part of the Rafiki MiniMissionaries. Come with love and a desire to share yourself (1Thessalonians 2:8). The rewards are amazing.

Rafiki will offer an all-day MiniMissionary information/training session at the beginning of 2020 at the American Church in Paris, to enable you to understand how you can serve with them, and whether this is a good opportunity for you.

If you're interested in joining us, please contact Patti Lafage at plafage@gmail.com.

For more information on Rafiki and their work in Africa: www.rafikifoundation.org.
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 13 January 17h00
Mirror Visions Ensemble
Mireille ASSELIN - soprano; Scott MURPHREE - tenor; Mischa BOUVIER - baritone; Margaret KAMPMEIER - piano

Oeuvres de
Josquin des Prez, Handel, Tchaikovsky, Glinka, Saint-Saëns, Ravel, Shostakovich, Bartók et Caplet

Sunday 20 January 17h00
Genaro PEREIRA - piano

Soler
Fandango
Respighi
Ancient Airs and Dances
Rachmaninoff
Sorrow in Springtime op 21 no 12 (trans. Earl Wild)
Medtner
Sonata Reminiscenza
Tchaikovsky
Paraphrase on the Flower Waltz (Percy Grainger)

Sunday 27 January 17h00
Rupert MARSHALL-LUCK - violin

Oeuvres pour violon seul de
J.S. Bach
Sonate en la mineur BWV1003
Partita en si mineur BWV1002

French language classes

French classes are held on Tuesdays at ACP, from 18h30-20h, taught by Francois Pierre and Yasmina Rezkallah. The class is intended for beginners who are committed to learning French. Attendance is limited to 20. The annual fee is €80, and a book purchase is necessary. There is no age or nationality restriction, and no pre-requirements.

Remember, learning a new language requires significant work. There is no such thing as “French made easy.” Therefore, weekly attendance is a requirement and ongoing progress is expected. If you are interested, please come along to a Tuesday night class for a sample class.
# ACP Spire Diary – January 2019

## Events, meetings and concerts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact Email</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women’s Fellowship</strong></td>
<td>Sunday 13 Jan</td>
<td>12h15-13h30</td>
<td>Thurber Room</td>
<td>Kim Herr <a href="mailto:women@acparis.org">women@acparis.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ladies are invited to hear Sharon Martin speak about &quot;Seeing the Miracles.&quot; Childcare available on the garden level of the church house.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Atelier Concert</strong></td>
<td>Sunday 13 Jan</td>
<td>17h</td>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
<td>Fred Gramann <a href="mailto:music@acparis.org">music@acparis.org</a></td>
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<td>Free admission, with free-will offering</td>
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<td>Mirror Visions Ensemble: Mireille ASSELIN - soprano; Scott MURPHREE - tenor; Mischa BOUVIER - baritone; Margaret KAMPMEIER - piano</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thurber Lecture - Bob and Gracie Ekblad will speak on “Redemptive Presence Amongst Today's Excluded.”</strong></td>
<td>Wednesday 16 Jan</td>
<td>19h meal; 19h45 program</td>
<td>Thurber Room</td>
<td>Tim Vance associatepastor @acparis.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob and Gracie Ekblad are founders and co-directors of Tierra Nueva (New Earth) in Burlington, Washington. Together they minister at Tierra Nueva and at their home-based retreat center New Earth Refuge in the Skagit Valley.</td>
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<td><strong>Alpha Course launch party</strong></td>
<td>Thursday 17 Jan</td>
<td>19h30</td>
<td>Thurber Room</td>
<td><a href="mailto:alpha@acparis.org">alpha@acparis.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Alpha Course is an opportunity to explore the meaning of life, ask questions and learn more about the basics of the Christian faith in a relaxed, informal and friendly environment. This 10 week course is free and open to everyone, and kicks off with a launch party.</td>
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<td><strong>Movie Discussion Group</strong></td>
<td>Thursday 17 Jan</td>
<td>19h30</td>
<td>Room G2</td>
<td>Rebecca Brite <a href="mailto:movies@acparis.org">movies@acparis.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Movie selection: Shoplifters/Une Affaire de famille, Wildlife, Sir/ Monsieur, Border. See any or all at your leisure; join the group for discussion.</td>
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<td>Monday 21 Jan</td>
<td>20h45-21h30</td>
<td>100.7 FM, Radio Fréquence Protestante</td>
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<td>Tune in for inspiring music and interviews.</td>
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<td><strong>Men’s Retreat</strong></td>
<td>Friday-Saturday 25-26 Jan</td>
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<td>Clarté-Dieu, Orsay</td>
<td>mensbiblestudy @acparis.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men, join us for 24 hours of fellowship, teaching, music, prayer, and fun. The retreat will be led by Pastor Tim. Registration at acparis.org/retreats, last day to register: 20 January.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>New Member Orientation</strong></td>
<td>Sunday 27 Jan</td>
<td>12h15</td>
<td>Thurber Room</td>
<td>membership @acparis.org</td>
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<td>Please RSVP to <a href="mailto:communitylife@acparis.org">communitylife@acparis.org</a> to join the class. All are welcome!</td>
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STILL POINT PRESENTS

ACP CAFE

8 FEBRUARY 2019

FREE ENTRY
Friday | 19h30
The American Church in Paris Theatre
65, quai d'Orsay, 75007 Paris