The Spire
The Beacon on the Seine
July/August 2013

The American Church in Paris
www.acparis.org  63 quai d’Orsay, 75007 Paris, France
Dear Members and Friends of the ACP,

Despite the intractably inclement weather this year, the tourists are beginning to fill the streets of our fair city and many are dropping by for a visit. Often our guests remark that “The American Church in Paris is such a welcoming congregation!” I love to hear that comment.

Recently I attended a recital of one of our members. She was playing the organ at a church that I had never been to and I lingered a while in the narthex to ponder the baptismal font you see in the photo. Notice the brass cover over the “holy water” which I supposed was under the lid... I didn’t dare to try and open it because if you look closely you will see a sturdy lock on both of the lids to the baptismal font. I must admit that I’ve never seen locks on a baptismal font before! It was startling to me at first. It looks like a Christian baptismal font. It has eight sides, the normal numerological symbol for the “new creation” that we are in Christ (remember the old creation process, including rest, was finished in seven days). It is in a Christian church... But locks? It never occurred to me that a baptismal font would need a lock on it, as though the waters of baptism need protection... What a contrast to the beautiful love locks on the Pont des Arts a little further up river?

I will ponder this baptismal font for a while, but I’m quite sure that if the Christian community should err, it should not err on the side of locking people out of the community! Quite the contrary, if we err, I believe it should be on the side of open welcome and inclusion! Luke writes about those who criticized Jesus: “…The Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, ‘This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them’” (Luke 15:2).

In fact, we make it a point during our worship at the Lord’s Table to explain before celebrating that “all who come with but a mustard seed of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are welcome to receive from this table, without exception.” The apostle Paul admonishes the church in Rome, “Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God” (Romans 15:7). I think welcome is good theology! It’s a practical way we can give glory to God and share the good news of God’s grace with our guests from around the world, from all cultures, classes and walks of life...
But there is a deeper spiritual discipline behind welcome that has been explored by Father Thomas Keating, a Benedictine monk at the monastery in Snowmass, Colorado. It was during the ACP Spring retreat held at the St. Benoit sur Loire Abbeye de Fleury that some of us practiced centering prayer and the idea of “letting go” to what life deals us, and practice a more welcoming attitude. I shared this prayer in a sermon just after the retreat, and many of you have asked to see a copy of it. I share my version of the “Welcoming Prayer” with you in the hopes that in these days of summer “ordinary time” you might experience some extraordinary spiritual insights...

The Welcoming Prayer

Welcome, welcome, welcome.
I welcome everything that comes to me today
because I know it's for my healing.
I welcome all thoughts, feelings, emotions, persons,
situations, and conditions.
I let go of my desire for power and control.
I let go of my desire for affection, esteem,
approval and pleasure.
I let go of my desire for survival and security.
I let go of my desire to change any situation,
condition, person or myself.
I open to the love and presence of God and
God's action within, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Summer is a great time to practice the spiritual discipline of welcoming all people, newcomers to Paris, tourists and traveling business people alike. I hope and pray that we will all do our best to share with our guests simple signs of the openness and unconditional love of God. Smile and say hello to a stranger at church! Shake their hand and say, “Welcome!” I think you’ll agree, there are no locks on God’s love!

Have a wonderful summer.

In Christ,
Dear Friends,

Every month, I begin my letter with the greeting “Dear friends.” This greeting is not by chance – as I consider you all friends through faith in Christ and participation in this community. Interestingly, “friend” was one of the first Creole words I learned on the beach as I played with the children in Haiti. Perhaps that is why I have always felt that I have true friends in Haiti, and have maintained strong connections with people there. In John’s gospel, Jesus calls his disciples friends. He upsets the usual teacher-pupil relationship, breaking boundaries and adding a new dimension to their relationship.

In Jesus’ time being a “friend” meant being in a place of honor. Being a friend meant looking out for the welfare of the other. It also meant investing in that person. Jesus invested in the disciples by passing on what the Father revealed to him. So, not only were the disciples loved as a parent loves a child -- without reservation, without expectation for anything in return, but they were also held as friends -- not as children, not as servants, but as chosen ones who could be relied on, counted on, trusted. In fact, they were entrusted with the task of going out and sharing the good news with the world.

As “friends” we are blessed by seeing the face of Christ in those who care for us – we catch glimpses of the kingdom in the relationships we have with our friends. We are also challenged to expand our circle of friends and to be intentional about our relationships. May we reach out in friendship to those around us in this community of faith. May we care about each other’s hurts and pains without regard for ourselves and without expectation. May we expand our circles to include those who are not like us and may we see Christ in the face of all those we come to call “friend.”

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other.” (John 15:9-17)

Bénédictions,

Michelle
Gaining Ground in Gabon

On 6 July a team of 13 lycée students and leaders will leave the comforts of Paris and venture to Gabon, Africa. This year we are blessed to have a group from New York join our team for these two weeks of service. This year’s trip will mark my third summer in Gabon and I am amazed to see what God has accomplished during these years. There have been uncertainties and difficulties but all along the way God provides and proves faithful. When I first arrived with my youth group from New York back in the summer of 2011, our team was overwhelmed at the sheer size of the task ahead of us. We spent one week with the Hope House trying to develop relationships with these forgotten children and teenagers whilst the second week consisted of clearing land in a jungle and preparing trenches for the cement that one day would begin the foundation of a new church for the village. We worked hard and shed many tears and drops of sweat.

Last year, a dynamic group from ACP traveled back to these same sites to continue the work. Being French speaking, our team was able to truly connect with the Hope House and establish strong personal connections. Wonderful ministry was accomplished through a Vacation Bible School program, shared interests and hours of dialogue. In the village of Ebel Abenga, our Parisian party began and completed the actual foundation of the building!

And now the two teams unite in a combined effort to gain even more ground in Gabon. The combination of experience, fluency in French, and passion for the people of Gabon is exhilarating as we are only days away from departure. Due to an unattainable increase in rent, Pastor Israel had to leave the Hope House and is beginning the work of constructing their very own building that will better accommodate the needs of the children. Through God’s provisions, an angel from ACP requested his company’s help to provide 100% of the materials need to complete the construction! And so our teams will spend the first week with the children of Hope House running a VBS program again and helping build their new home. Our second week will be back in the village beginning construction of the walls that one day will house a church, school, and medical clinic.

I am thankful for the support of our ACP community in proving for these trips and grateful for the hard work and dedication of our team members as we embark on God’s calling to Africa.

in Christ

Dan Haugh
Reflections of a Visiting Pastor

By Bruce W. Morgan

When Nancy and I arrived in Paris in late December, to begin my ministry as Visiting Pastor at ACP, we anticipated having a grand adventure in meeting new friends, growing the church’s wedding ministry, worshipping with a multi-national congregation of Believers, working with a capable and engaging pastoral staff, and exploring the sights of Paris and environs. Now that we are preparing to say a reluctant “farewell” to Paris and ACP at the end of June, we realize that our dreams for our time with you have been realized ten-fold. Everything about our six months in Paris has exceeded expectations and filled us with gratitude. We have grown to love The American Church and its entire staff, as well as the city of Paris, in ways we had not imagined. Thank you for welcoming us, including us, affirming us, and giving us a place of Christian service in your midst. Thank you for providing enough memories to last a lifetime.

By the time I finish my wedding ministry on June 28, I will have officiated at about 165 weddings. This is an increase over the same time period in 2012. Ilinca and I now share Pastor Michelle’s former office in the lower level, where we work together to plan, manage, and build the church’s wedding ministry; and Ilinca is devoting her energy to her new role as wedding coordinator, without having to manage the church office simultaneously. I anticipate this will serve the church’s wedding ministry well for the future. I am proud of the personalized and deeply spiritual nature of ACP’s wedding ministry, where couples feel genuinely valued and respected and cared for. We have begun to offer a new service in 2013, with Pastor Jean-Christophe Bieselaar’s five-session pre-marriage counseling services to couples wanting a strong foundation to begin their married life. This is a growing edge to our wedding ministry at ACP.

I am indebted to the ACP pastors for their gracious welcome when we arrived in Paris, and I am grateful for their collegial style and spirit. I am thankful that we discovered early in our stay, the uniquely talented and gifted Fred Gramann, whose music ministry at ACP has been such a gift to us. I am honored to have preached from the ACP pulpit, sung The Great Alleluia communion liturgy with Scott on multiple occasions, assisted in worship weekly, and provided leadership throughout the church, as needed. We have loved living in the Church House, and we have loved learning to know the city of Paris in a thorough, enjoyable way. Finally, I have loved every wedding where I’ve been privileged to officiate, and my photo gallery tells the tale! We are truly blessed by our six months with you at ACP, and we thank you for everything.
“Au-revoir” from our Youth Intern

Dear Friends,

This summer edition of the Spire coincides with the end of my internship at the ACP. I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on what an amazing experience this internship has proved to be.

I remember reading the job description at my theology school in Paris (l’Institut Protestant de Théologie de Paris) while I was waiting for a book I ordered at the library and thinking: “wow, this could be me”! And almost a year later I certainly feel that my spiritual journey has taken a huge leap forward. Being part of an international and interdenominational congregation showed me how fulfilling it was to fully embrace and celebrate the beauty of Christian diversity.

This diversity is reflected in the ACP Youth and Young Adult community, which was my main focus as Youth Intern. I could not believe how lucky I was to work with such bright, multicultural and friendly young people. But I could not have fully enjoyed this experience without the support of our amazing Youth and Young Adult leaders, and I would like to thank them all for their amazing work. Nowadays, young people in secular France tend to see religion as something negative and “uncool”, but I am positive that a visit to our Youth and Young Adults meetings would make them change their mind! All these young people (between 11 and 30) are the face of future Christianity and they are striving to walk in Jesus’ footsteps. They have been an example of enthusiasm and joyous faith to me.

My work here also allowed me to meet other members of the congregation through Sunday services and various events. Thank you all so much for your warm welcome, I have truly felt part of the community. It has been very enriching for me to explore various traditions that sometimes differ a lot from my European background and it helped me grow in Faith.

I cannot thank the pastoral team enough for trusting me, for their help and their patience. I have learned so much by watching them serving and ministering to all those that God put in their path. I have been very fortunate to serve alongside you and it has been a source of joy and a blessing.

Even if I am very glad and looking forward to studying in Geneva, there is always loss in change, and I pray that what awaits me on the other side of the Alps will be just as wonderful an experience as my internship at the American Church in Paris.

“I thank my God every time I remember you” (Philippians 1:3)

Many blessings, et à bientôt,

Hanna.
Welcome Dan and Betty Thornton!

The Rev. Dan Thornton and his wife Betty have now arrived in Paris and Dan will be serving as the new Visiting Pastor in charge of the wedding ministry from 1 July – 31 December of this year. Dan writes:

Betty and I are excited that the Lord has brought us here to be with you at the American Church in Paris! Paris has been Betty’s favorite city since studying French in high school and has been my favorite city since our visit here in 2010. We visited the American Church in Paris when we were here in 2010 and fell in love with the church. I am looking forward to a fruitful ministry here.

I was born and reared in West Columbia, South Carolina. Growing up I was very active in my church and in the Boy Scouts. In high school I enjoyed history, math, science, and music. I was the band captain and our band represented South Carolina in President Kennedy’s inaugural parade and we were the half time show of the nationally televised Washington Redskins vs. Cleveland Browns football game. My education includes Furman University, B.A., Southeastern Theological Seminary, M.Div. and Columbia Theological Seminary, D.Min. I served churches in South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Iowa, and California and retired from the First Presbyterian Church, Marion, NC. My interests include singing, concerts, plays, museums, and playing the tuba.

Betty was born and reared in Marion, North Carolina. Betty also was very active in her church. She helped her parents on the farm. Betty graduated from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, B.S.N. Betty served in many areas of nursing including hospital, public health, and teaching. Betty also enjoys concerts, plays and museums as well as sewing and crafts.

We have two children. Our daughter Caroline is married to Felix and they live near Dijon. During the week Caroline works at Mondelese, Inc. (formerly Kraft Foods) in Zurich. Our son Daniel is married to Ashley and they live in Marion, NC. They have 5 year old twin sons, Davis and Jack. Daniel is a property owner and Ashley teaches first grade.

We are looking forward to being with you this year. The Lord is good!

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

Dan and Betty
From Your Council ~ What’s Going On!

Thoughts from Your
Moderator and Vice Moderator
Radford Laney and Pamela Bohl

The ACP council wrapped up its work for the 2012-13 year with a special “hand off” council meeting on 18 June. Both the incoming and outgoing members joined together to hand off the activities, projects and vision to the incoming council. The incoming members also received a packet of “equipping documents” that will help them understand how the council works within the larger framework of the ACP. The council will re-convene in late August for the 2013-14 church year.

We had a very effective and productive 2012-13 council year; much was accomplished by each of the committees. It has been a wonderful privilege to serve together leading ACP throughout the year. I would like to give special thanks to the outgoing council members for their faithful service and dedication:

John Newman (Communications), William Johnston (Development and Property), Megan Staley (Finance and Stewardship), Pierre Lisbonis (Human Resources), Ann Mildred Gontard (Mission Outreach), Ursula Perrier (Nominating), Jonathan Wheeler (Nominating), Paul Grayson (Assistant Secretary), Bettina Skaff Chéhab (Secretary).

The commitment of these brothers and sisters in Christ along with all the other volunteers at ACP is part of what makes the congregation special. As we read in 1 Corinthians 12 (NIV):

4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work......12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Let us remember these words as we adjourn for the summer for some much needed rest.

In Christ,
Peace Cranes: An Update

By Yoshiko Okubo

Over a year ago, some ACP members made over a thousand origami cranes to encourage a friend battling cancer. The cranes were then used to decorate the sanctuary for Easter, 2012. After taking the cranes down, instead of throwing the beautiful pieces of art away, Yoshiko Okubo thought it would be a blessing to send the Peace Cranes to Japan to encourage the victims of the tsunami. On 25 April 2013 our cranes were brought to Ishinomaki city in Miyagi Prefecture, not far from Sendai, exposed directly to the sea. This city of 163,000 inhabitants lost 3,170 lives and 759 people are missing whilst 22,419 houses were destroyed in the 2011 Tsunami catastrophe. The cranes are now hung on a wall in a (once) trading company situated in front of the Ishinomaki train station with a label saying “from the ACP”. Ishinomaki people seemed to appreciate that they came all the way from France and that each one of them were folded by “foreigner’s” hands.

The person who brought the cranes told me the shock they had seeing the aftermath of the Tsunami. The reason she could not let me know right away that the cranes were brought to the city was simply because of the shock of destruction. It was too great that it took some months to digest all she had seen. Even though she herself was a victim of the earthquake, she said the Tsunami effect is inexplicably outrageous. “It is as if we were right in the war period”.

She apologized that she could not take the picture of the cranes hung. She just couldn’t pull out her camera and say “let’s take a picture” or do anything that would appear like a tourist, full of curiosity about what had happened. So the pictures she has sent are just showing (if they do show something) her astonishment and bewilderment.

The 2 people in this picture are the receptor (man) and the carrier (woman) and our cranes are in the bag the man holds. The other picture shows a building which used to be a primary school. Those who were able to climb to the hill behind were able to survive. The other photos show that the city is as bare as you see there, everywhere.

We continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in Japan, still suffering from the devastation and loss of over two years ago.
ACP Front Porch Café

26 July, 19h30-21h30

Join the musicians of Still Point for a relaxing evening of great live music and pulled pork BBQ by Kent’s Catering. This is the last ACP café before the rentrée...so be sure not to miss out on a wonderful evening!

New to Paris?

The BLOOM Program helps English-speaking newcomers settle in and make new friends.

This exciting day includes speakers who will offer tips and information to help you set up your new home and enjoy the City of Lights, an exhibition hall where you can make contact with organizations and businesses that serve the English-speaking community, time for networking, laughing, and celebrating the beginning of a new season in your life.

Not so new to Paris?

Come share your savoir-faire and help welcome newcomers. Find out how you can help make this important day a success.
Christian Education

Anne Speicher and Lori Kolodziejczak

A Call to Live—Small Group Studies

To further the aim of widespread participation in Christian education, small groups are being organized throughout the city, on different days and times at individual homes or at the church. The groups combine Bible study, community, and everyday application. To join a group, please contact the leaders directly.

Saturday Morning Brunch Circle led by Felicia Henderson.

Community Bible Study International will continue an in-depth study entitled God’s Amazing Book, led by Ariel Brown. Contact Ariel for more information.

Would you consider being a Group Leader?

If you would like to be a group leader, please contact Anne at christianeducation@acparis.org or Pastor Wahila at associatepastor@acparis.org. All group leaders will be given a short training by Pastor Wahila.

ACP Filipino Fellowship Bible study will be on vacation during July & August and will re-start in September. Contact Virginia Jacinto for more details.

AFACP Bible Study meets on Sundays in G7 at 12h45 (Please note, there is no Bible study on the first Sunday of the month).

ACP Tuesday Morning Women’s Bible Study will not be meeting in July & August due to the school holidays. We will be starting up again in September with a new study. We meet from 10:30-12:30 every Tuesday and Childcare is available for a minimal fee. Please contact Jennifer for more details.

ACP Men’s Group

Come for coffee, conversation, prayer, and fellowship. Any men interested in further information should contact Ed Hyslip.

Young Professionals

Are you between 25 and 39 years old? Experiencing the corporate world in Paris and surrounding areas? Then come and share your experiences with us.

The group is on summer break in July and August. Join our ACP Young Professionals Facebook group and stay connected over the summer.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Elodie.
Vacation Bible School
26-30 August

Vacation Bible School will run from 9h00 to 13h30 (lunch is included) and is open to children aged between 3 and 9 years old. 10 to 11 year olds are also welcome to come and be "farm helpers" this year!

Cost: €20 per person, payable on the first day.

(A discount for multiple children is available, please contact Pastor Michelle for more information)

Pre-registration is strongly encouraged for planning purposes! Registration forms are available on Sundays and online at www.acparis.org/vbsregistration

Volunteers are also needed for music, crafts, games and bible stories. If you would like to get involved please email associatepastor@acparis.org
ACP hosts the French premiere of *It's a Girl*

On the evening of Thursday 27 June, ACP welcomed film producer, Andrew Brown, and nearly 150 guests to view and discuss *It's a Girl*, a powerful documentary about gendercide in India and China. Andrew introduced the film and led a time of questions and answers after the screening. The film was shown in the Sanctuary and was followed by a wine, cheese, and hors d'oeuvres reception in the Theater.

*It's a Girl*, released in September 2012, reveals the cultural traditions and government policies that have led to as many as 200 million missing girls in the world. The horrific story is told through gripping personal stories of victims, families, global experts, and grassroots activists. The film focuses on the situations in India and China, but similar conditions exist in other parts of south and east Asia and elsewhere, albeit on smaller scales.

Gendercide refers to the systematic elimination of a gender group, usually female. This gender-based killing takes several forms, including selective abortion, infanticide, severe malnutrition, medical neglect, abandonment and dowry-related murders. Because this type of crime often takes place within private households, it is often not widely recognized or acknowledged.

The mass killing of girls and women is a complex issue, but at the root is a strong cultural preference for sons. Often, families view daughters as an economic drain, whereas sons (and wives of sons) provide social insurance for parents in their old age. Many families want a son or a daughter-in-law, but not daughters.

In India, the top culprit is a reported 1 million sex selective abortions annually, even though sex determination in ultrasound tests are illegal. This means of gendercide is followed by female infanticide. Midwives in certain states within India have admitted to being paid to kill almost 50 percent of the baby girls they delivered. These two causes are followed by dowry-related murders and preadolescent mortality.

In China, the One Child Policy limits families in urban areas to one child requires a permit from the government in order to have any additional children. The strong cultural preference for sons in combination with China’s strict family planning policies leads many families to abandon, abort or hide their girl children. The gender imbalance in China has led to an increase in sex trafficking, child brides and prostitution as a growing number of men are unable to find women to marry.
Andrew discussed various ways to get involved in stemming gendercide. One involved partnering with groups already active in the issue. He mentioned that the It's a Girl Social Action campaign has partnered with Women's Rights Without Frontiers, Women's Rights in China, the Invisible Girl Project, and the 50 Million Missing Campaign. The ACP, for its part, is looking into supporting Deep Griha Society, a group with which Pascale Deforge has become involved since relocating to India earlier this year.

If you missed the screening, you can see the It's a Girl trailer at www.itsagirlmovie.com. The dvd will be available later in the year.

**An Update from the Property & Development Committee**

The summer months are one of the few periods during the year when we can undertake major maintenance work on the Church building.

This summer we will be launching the last major projects to be funded by the "Faith into Action Campaign" the Capital Funds Campaign which enabled the Church to raise 3.7 million USD of which 2.5 million USD in cash pledged by our members and alumni over the 5 year period 2007-2012. Thanks to these funds we have accomplished much more than expected and the Church programs & facilities have received a new lease for the future. This last phase of major work includes:

- the repair and partial replacement of the Sanctuary roof
- the replacement of all the rain collector pipes in the gymnasium and the Spire
- water proofing and insulation of the metallic structure of the Spire
- installation of a handicapped access
- restoration and cleaning of the Sanctuary facades front and back (this implies the use of scaffolding which will not limit the use of the Church but will be unsightly).

We will endeavor to limit the disturbances as much as possible particularly towards our wedding ministry.

Please bear with us in the knowledge that the end result will be nothing less than spectacular which all ACP members will be rightly proud of.

The work will begin early July and finish mid-November assuming that there are no unforeseen obstacles.

Please pray for us in the knowledge that we work to preserve the Lord's Church and Beacon on the Seine!

William Johnston, Eric Sadoux and Daniel Grout

(ACP Property & Development Committee)
Following our Destiny!

by Destiny E. Ryales

I have some excellent news to share with you all this month! The Register General has approved my project and issued us the Certificate of Incorporation and Certificate to Commence Business, the students are displaying an increasing level of computer literacy, there are additional changes in ECTC staff and lastly, the classroom has been painted!!

The ECTC is one step closer to receiving a NGO, non-governmental organization, (same as not-for-profit) status in Ghana! Last week the Register General issued me the first two certificates making ECTC 100% legal. YAY! The process has taken much longer than expected with over a month’s worth of trips to the capital to “pick up” the certificates. Each time there was some type of delay and I just wanted to cry because traveling to Accra is a minimum of 2 hours by bus and quite expensive. The next step is to ask for the tax-free NGO status from the Department of Social Welfare, which is located closer to my home. They will do all the legwork for an additional fee but I will be able to keep my sanity this time!

The students are stepping up and answering the teacher’s questions correctly, unlike before when they were just totally silent. This would be their sixth full month of hands-on computer science lessons with us. Each class has always had two or three excellent students who were focussed but now I am happy to say that the quantity has increased to over three-quarters of the class. They are now at the stage where the excitement has merged with learning and a beautiful rose has bloomed.

My teacher who started this journey with me, Abraham Waters, has decided to become a full time pastor instead of teaching computer science classes with us at the center. I took this opportunity to find an experienced computer science teacher and I am very happy to announce that Ebenzer Arhin has joined us since 1 May and the kids love him. Needless to say, this is a blessing in numerous ways and now I can focus my energy on looking for more funding. My time should be more on maintaining the project financially and raising the funds for our many goals that God has set in my path to accomplish.

I have been welcoming various individuals who wish to volunteer as the teaching assistant. The last one was well equipped with the computer knowledge to help the students who are too focused on other things and not on the teacher in front of the class. He is fluent in Fanti and I believe the students enjoyed his presence more than the previous assistant.

The classroom received a facelift during the Spring Break period! Our amazing students, a few parents, fellow friends and myself joined together for a couple days of painting. White walls were turned royal blue, rusty brown security bars are now white and a boring concrete floor is now beautifully red. I love the combination and the students are very happy when they enter the classroom for their lessons. During each class period, I notice them checking out the new room more than their computer screens. I love it!!

As the summer approaches, I am praying about offering classes during the break to the students who wish to continue to learn or just keep up-to-date with the knowledge they acquired throughout the school year. Numerous students have been stopping by the center in the afternoon for computer time but I am thinking about offering official classes. The teacher might be available
and interested in making some cash during the summer break. So we shall see!!

The funding for a school bus is always a high priority, however, I also need a vehicle for myself so the two ideas will be merged into one. Minivans are widely available in the neighboring towns and I am going to start researching the cost. Very soon I am going to start applying for corporate grants abroad which could possibility cover the purchase cost. In my heart, I believe God is going to bless me with one or two grants by the end of the year.

Lastly, I am excited about welcoming friends from ACP this month! Everyone is praying about having a missionary trip to Ghana for Francis Cobbinah of The Living Truth Foundation in Elmina and myself at ECTC in 2014. God is really building his missionaries in this fallen world. And ACP has the right fuel to feed that flame inside. I am enormously thankful to the Mission Outreach Committee for their guidance, support and fuel while I was in Paris! I went from being part-time missionary during work vacations to full-time missionary living in another country on donations. I can do all things through God who strengthens me.
While you’re enjoying yourself at this year’s ACP Fourth of July party, take a minute to reflect on the great tradition you are part of: it’s not widely known, but the very first Independence Day party in history took place in Paris.

The first anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence was marked by official ceremonies in Philadelphia. One year later, in 1778, the new nation was fully at war and parties weren’t on the agenda, though General Washington doubled his troops’ ration for the occasion. Things were quite different on the other side of the Atlantic, however.

Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, leaders of a delegation wooing France to the American side, marked 4 July 1778, with a dinner for all Americans in Paris. It was held at the Hôtel Valentinois, a large estate where a rebel sympathizer, Jacques-Donatien Le Ray de Chaumont, had lodged them in a pavilion. It was located in Passy, then a village outside Paris, convenient to the court at Versailles.

Adams wrote later that day: “This being the Anniversary of the Declaration of American Independence, We had the honour of the Company of all the American Gentlemen and Ladies, in and about Paris, to dine with Dr. Franklin and me, at Passi, together with a few of the French Gentlemen in the Neighbourhood.”

Next time you’re in that part of “Passi,” look for the plaque at 66 rue Raynouard, roughly the spot where the Franklin-Adams pavilion stood until early in the 20th century. To the northeast, across the Place du Costa Rica, Rue Raynouard becomes Rue Benjamin Franklin. Keep following the street toward Trocadéro and you’ll come to the tiny Square de Yorktown, named for the 1781 victory over the British by French and American troops.

The square is tenanted by a bronze statue of Ben himself, seated in an armchair and holding a copy of the Declaration of Independence. Installed in 1906, the statue is a copy of the 1896 work by John Boyle at the University of Pennsylvania.

Franklin arrived in Paris late in 1776. He was then 70 years old and one of the most famous men in the world, known especially as a scientist. Speculation about why he had come was rife – some said he was on his way to Switzerland to retire, others that he was in France for his health. The truth was that he was here to seek an alliance, funding and weapons.

In fact, one reason the American colonies had declared outright independence from Britain earlier that year was to attract foreign support for their cause. And what more natural ally than Britain’s ancient foe, France? Hence the presence of Franklin and, from April of 1778, John Adams, hosts of the first 4 July party.

Hear more about Franklin, Adams, Thomas Jefferson and other American heroes in Paris at the annual Founding Fathers in Paris tour on Sunday, 7 July at 14h00. Call Rebecca at 06.22.50.71.29 for more info.
Paris Promenade

By Pastor Scott

There is a new front yard to the American Church in Paris... Just out the main doors of the church, you can take a walk across to the quai d’Orsay greenbelt, and then walk down some beautiful steps to the new waterfront promenade along the Seine River. Mayor Bertrand Delanoë and Deputy Mayor Anne Hidalgo inaugurated the new banks of the Seine on 21 June and there are now 2.3 km of renovated quayside between the Pont Royal and the Pont d’Alma. The Mayor has taken some political flak for the millions of euros invested in this public works project, but I think judging by the thousands of citizens enjoying the waterfront on a daily basis, it will be judged for years to come as a tremendously successful project and a boon to the city’s tourist industry!

A haven of sunny terraces, floating gardens, games for children, an athletics track and a gigantic set of steps leading down to the Seine, a lot of thought was put into how this park would attract and serve the general public.

There are park benches and plants that add some green to what used to be a rather dirty and noisy underpass that kept many of us away from the river. Now it is just a quick walk from the church and you are transported into a clean and beautifully designed parkway. The best thing about it: You can stroll along the banks of the Seine and admission is free! And there are cafés and restaurants along the way! There are some playgrounds for the kids, and a skateboard half pipe, amongst other things. It’s great for an early morning jog or an afternoon stroll with friends. We will be thinking of ways to reach out to our guests along the quayside and hopefully be creative in how “La Nouvelle Rive Gauche” can be an opportunity for ACP gospel ministry and mission! See you by the Seine!!
I was made redundant two years ago. It was a difficult time and a very bitter pill to swallow, especially after 38 years of working in the same place. As I began to try to adapt to unemployment my mother, who lives in the UK, was diagnosed with colon cancer. A grey cloud descended on me and my family and I spent many a sleepless night wondering how we would cope especially as I have no brothers and sisters to help out over there. I prayed that God would protect and guide us and I asked Him to shower His love on my mother at this difficult time in her life. I have always been close to God and I have often reflected on how He has been working in my own life and I knew that He and I would now be going on another long journey once again and prayer would be very important. I asked friends at the ACP to pray for Mum. I prayed especially for peace, strength and support for this difficult time. It was reassuring to know that others were praying for her. Friends at the Women's Bible Study group prayed regularly for us and sent me emails of encouragement and it meant a great deal to me especially when I was in the UK and away from my home.

As the months went by Mum's health began to deteriorate and I knew that time was now a very important word for us. I needed to spend as much time as I could with her to help and support her. It did mean my going very often to the UK and even though it was very tiring travelling for many hours each time I was determined to do it. I knew God would always help me and not be too far away. It was interesting to note that throughout the journey no trains were cancelled despite bad weather sometimes in both countries. God does provide for His children. Taxi drivers too were kind and somehow seemed to say the right words each time to make me smile as I thought about what lay ahead at each visit. I knew that God would provide for my trips there because He knew what was happening and He cared for us.

When Mum was admitted to hospital for her operation a member of the palliative team introduced herself and I immediately felt that his person would be a great help to us. Strange feeling but as it so happened I was absolutely right. She was wonderful and made it possible for Mum to go into one of the best hospices for respite care. One day she suggested that I visit the hospice to take a look. I was very nervous because I had heard so much about hospices and homes but as soon as I stepped into the main door I knew that it would be the right place for Mum and I prayed that a bed would become available for her. There were only 16 beds in all and many people have cancer sadly and desperately need a bed. But I prayed that God would bless Mum and do all He could to send us the right people now.

God answered another prayer. The nurse I met at the hospital told me one morning as I came to visit Mum that she had gone ahead and made the necessary arrangements for her to be given a bed which had just become available the day before and Mum would be transferred the next day. I closed my eyes and thanked God. What a wonderful moment. He knew that Mum badly needed to be admitted. The next six weeks were unforgettable for Mum and indeed for me. The hospice was lovely. It was peaceful, welcoming and everyone there was so professional and kind. In fact there are many volunteers and they do a wonderful job comforting the families but especially making the patient feel well, important and safe. It is almost as though they choose to ignore that the patient is ill and is no different from anyone else. My mother loved her time there. Nurses came to chat to her and nothing was ever too much trouble. Mum's friends and family often smiled because it was almost as though she was on holiday and really enjoying her time away for a short while. I prayed to God that she would be able to stay in that hospice for as long as they could keep her. She was happy, her illness seemed to have been pushed into the background and she was enjoying life once again. She was very positive and definitely felt that she would get better here and be able to leave one day soon.

One afternoon when I was about to leave the hospice a member of the staff suggested I visit a nearby nursing home. I felt sad because I knew that the time was coming for Mum to be discharged. I thanked him and decided that I would visit it the next day. As I got near to the nursing home I felt as though I was going to be sick. I was nervous and upset at the thought that Mum would have to change and leave
the place she had come to love so much. People had often said that homes can be very sad places and I would have given anything to keep Mum in the hospice where she had been so happy but it was time to move her and I knew that I had to make the right decision for us both. As I walked in the main entrance I prayed to God that it would go well and that Mum would be safe there. As I looked around I immediately knew that I wanted Mum to go there. It was similar to the hospice in decoration. It was modern and sunny with lots of light streaming through the windows. The patients were sitting in chairs talking and there were different activities going on down the corridor. People seemed very content there. The Manager showed me around and when I was outside I prayed that God would once again help us to find the right place. Finding homes in a short space of time can be a daunting experience and I was very worried that time was not on our side now and I must not make a hasty decision which I would later regret. I needed to trust God for the next step.

As it so happened Mum was given two options: to return to her own home or to go into a nursing home. I felt a knot in my stomach when she said that she wanted to go home. She had always loved her home so it was natural that she would want to give it a try but I think she probably knew that it would be short-term. I respected her choice and we went ahead. Sadly it did not work out and she fell and had to be re-admitted to hospital shortly after her discharge from the hospice. Another difficult moment for us. I prayed for strength, patience and peace again. It was very difficult to travel to and fro to the UK and know what I had to face each time and especially to see my mother deteriorating each time. Once in the hospital we were told that there were no beds at the home I had visited and I closed my eyes. Life was so hard just now and we badly needed her to go into the home. I knew God would not let me down but I could not see the next step. Mum was convinced that she would be admitted to the home and I simply did not want to disappoint her. Not now. Two days later I received a telephone call from the hospital to tell me not to visit Mum that afternoon because she was being transferred to the nursing home - a bedroom had become available. I looked up to the ceiling. I wanted to hold God's hands and thank Him. He was indeed guiding us for every step we were to take. He was sending the right people at the right time and I was overwhelmed. I knew there and then that God does hear our prayers and He cares for us and wants us to trust Him.

Mum was made very welcome right from the beginning. The staff were friendly, kind and often came into her room to sit with her and talk to her and they made her feel very comfortable. What amazed us most of all was her positive attitude. She was convinced that it was just a question of time before she would be up and walking around the home and even be ready to come out. We all used to smile at her when she said this because we all knew that she would never leave the home but I knew that God was strengthening her every day. Her room was a very pretty room. It was very light room and she had a lovely view which is what she wanted. Most of all she was warm. She hated the cold. Each patient also had the pleasure of seeing little birds outside their windows each day because the kind maintenance man used to hang birdseed on a hook above each window. Mum was fascinated by her tiny visitors who pecked away at the food which had been provided. She used to lie for hours and watch them nourish themselves and tell me about them at each visit.

In November she was experiencing more pain and had lost a lot of weight and her breathing was deeper than usual. She could not eat very much and we were all very worried. When I came back to France I was naturally very worried indeed. Like most people who live abroad and especially in the case of a serious illness in the family, the question we always ask ourselves is "will I get back in time". I prayed that God would continue to guide us and give us both strength especially now at what seemed to be the end of this special journey with Him.

Christmas was on the horizon and I prayed that Mum would still be with us. Sadly it was not part of God's plan. On 5th December I woke up one morning in France and knew that I must book to go back to be with her. Something very strong was prompting me to go. I travelled on the 6th and rushed up to the home to see her. She looked very poorly and was very sleepy most of the time. On the journey to the home I thanked God that I had had a safe journey and that Mum was still alive and I could sit with her and talk to her. I was able to tell her I loved her and she smiled. I prayed to God that He would give us more time, that she would not be in any pain and that it would be a peaceful time for her. The next day I saw her again and stroked her face. She still had lovely skin even at 81. She looked drained and pale. When she saw me she told me that she was not afraid to die because she would soon be seeing her loved ones. I felt frightened and very cold. I didn't want to lose her. My father had
died in 2004. I asked her to stay with me - I needed her. She smiled again and went back to sleep.

The next day a nurse from the home rang me to ask me to come there quickly. Her breathing had become more difficult and they felt I should be with her. I arrived at the home only to be told as I walked into the main entrance that, sadly, she had just passed away. I closed my eyes. I knew that one day I would be told this news and I was stunned. I was also very cold and felt numb. Why had she slipped away without saying goodbye? And this question haunted me for days afterwards. The male nurse who had been looking after her had been crying and he put his arms around me to comfort me and kept saying what a lovely woman she was and how he would miss her. She had made him laugh so many times. All I knew at that moment was that Mum had gone to Heaven. The journey had finally ended for her. But God had answered my prayer. I had seen her and told her I loved her.

The weeks following her death were difficult. I was still numb and in shock and I was angry with God. I was also angry with Mum too for leaving me. I was so tired and I knew that there was so much to do. How would I manage? Would I be strong enough to cope? These questions kept going through my mind especially in the quiet of the night. But nearly three months later, and thanks to God, I can now see part of the bigger picture. I spoke to the Senior Pastor at the ACP several times. I cannot thank him enough for his kindness and support during my mother's illness. It is also thanks to him that I began to read the Bible again and to pray and I know that God answered my prayers throughout the journey, perhaps not always in the way I would have wished but He knows the plan for our lives and He makes everything possible.

As I look back I see that from the very beginning God provided us with a wonderful doctor who helped Mum so much. He listened to her and reassured her and didn't pressure her to undergo any treatment she didn't want to pursue. I respected him for this. God sent the kind nurse in the palliative team who made it possible for a bed in the hospice. He sent the Social Worker to encourage me to visit the home during one of my visits and God provided for Mum at that home. He kept His promise to me too - despite Mum's illness and suffering she was peaceful right until the end. He also sent me two dear friends many years ago. Thanks to them and their continued support I didn't give up. He also provided a comfortable bedroom at my godmother's house for me to rest and sleep during the difficult times and I cannot thank my aunt enough for her kindness and the love she showed my mother and me. God does answer prayer. We just have to trust, pray to our Father in Heaven and ask for guidance, strength and peace. And we must always remember to thank Him for always being there and for providing for His children. When we are angry or disappointed we often leave God but He never leaves us. We need to remember this.

I miss my mother terribly but I know that she is in Heaven and she is at peace and not suffering anymore. The nurses said that she was a "tough cookie" and I made sure the vicar mentioned those two words at her funeral. She deserved all the lovely things that neighbours and friends said about her. She was very brave and everyone said so and it was important for me to hear it. Mum prayed I know and God was always near her. For many years she slept with a little booklet under her pillow and there was a prayer about "strength". God did strengthen her each day and He provided for her in so many incredible ways. He sent the right people at the right time and I never needed to worry or be afraid that God was far away and not listening. He was there all the time and IS there for each one of us. We just have to pray and ask Him into our lives. He wants to hear from us.

I continue to thank Him for all the wonderful people we met on the journey. For the dear friends who stayed near us and helped us. For the little birds who visited my mother and made her smile so many times. For safe trips and for the time to rest. As Mum lay in her bed with her head on the pillow I felt somehow that the pillow was God and that she was comfortable lying there relaxing in His love and strength and knowing that she could lean on Him to provide for her, to protect her.
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)

“13 Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. 14 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. 15 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. 16 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 under the chandelier in the sanctuary.

From the Lay Caregiver Ministry Team...

On Pentecost Sunday, the Lay Care Giver team started a new tradition of anointing those who wish for it, along with prayer. Anointing is a very powerful addition to prayer and blessing. We are reminded of Christ's anointing before his death and reminded that we, too, are risen to new life. Therefore, a Christian anointing always points toward the newness of life found in Jesus and the “wholeness” that is given through him.

Anointing also means consecrated or a sacred act, which is why the young confirmation class members were also anointed with oil.

When we anoint in his name we are acting in his power and love to share his gifts of peace, forgiveness and wholeness. Our Lay Care Giver team members receive training from our pastors and are commissioned to represent the pastors to our congregation.

The Lay Care Giver team members will be anointing those who would like to be blessed after the worship services on the first Sunday of each month. All are welcome to be anointed.

Look for our new Lay Care Giver cards in the pews!

Do you need prayer or a listening ear? Fill in the new card for the Lay Care Givers, put it in the offering plate and we will contact you. We are trained to come alongside people in times of difficulty. Let us share your joys and your sorrows. You can also contact us by email at laycaregivers@acparis.org.

We follow training to be equipped to be the hands and feet of Christ in our community. We are always looking for more members and are happy to receive requests for visits or calls. All of our requests are confidential. If you know of anyone who could use a visit or call from us, or would like to become a member of our team, please contact Pastor Michelle or Yoshiko Okubo laycaregivers@acparis.org
La Fete Nationale
By Tendayi O. Chirawu

Commonly referred to as Bastille Day by English speakers, La Fete Nationale is the French Independence Day. It is a day that commemorates the uprising of the modern French nation instigated by the storming of the Bastille fortress, effectively collapsing the monarchy and ushering in the First Republic.

All throughout Paris the day is eagerly anticipated by natives, expats and tourists alike. The actual day is filled with exhilarating activities starting with the military parade which is held early in the morning at the top of the Champs-Elysées. This is followed by the *Bals des Pompiers*, where all the fire departments in Paris open up their doors to the public for energetic dancing and reasonably priced drinking. Paris, known as the city of light, draws attention as not only being a luminescent city but a city that inspired many great cultural revolutionaries, such as artists and philosophers. This fact gives the word light a double meaning i.e. the actual beauty of the splendiferous city and the semiological meaning which refers to the city that birthed cultural illumination. It is only fitting then the independence celebrations end with a light show of fireworks put on by the *Mairie* (the Parisian municipality). The fireworks are lit against the backdrop of the Eiffel Tower which fills the Champ de Mars with swaths of exuberant people.

Interesting to know is that France’s day of rebirth is celebrated in other countries such as the United States, Belgium, UK, Hungary, New Zealand and South Africa. The cultural contributions and captivating ideas left behind by those inspired by France resonate in all corners of the world and vice versa, thus making the nation a cultural melting pot bound by the legacies left behind by those who sought the realization of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* - the French national motto meaning liberty, equality and brotherhood.

The American Church is evidence of this cultural melting pot, as the church hosts many different nationalities. The church community members were all drawn to Paris specifically and have chosen to make it their temporary or permanent home. In doing so the ACP community takes great joy in joining in the jubilation of independence and freedom with its host country. So whether you call it Bastille Day, Quatoze Julliet, La Fete Nationale or July 14th, go on and enjoy with and like the French on this historic day.
Hey ladies, you wanna skip church one Sunday? Come on, I’ve done it before ... And lots of other women are skipping, even Pastor Michelle! You just have to do one little thing ... run 6 km or 4 little miles. Trust me. It’s fun and you can even get an official ACP running shirt!

No, seriously! Two years ago I was a ring-leader of the “are you crazy?!” club who scoffed at the idea of exercise in any form. And if I was late to church and had to run the block on Jean Nicot from rue l’Université to Quai d’Orsay, I would miss not only the Call to Worship but also the opening hymn just because I would have to stop often to catch my breath.

But then some ladies at ACP suggested that we run La Parisienne as a church team. They had such a positive attitude and offered words of encouragement and gentle nudges. So I figured that I may as well register since (a) the race goes down my street, and the noise and cheering prevents me from sleeping in; (b) it is on a Sunday and I have to walk past/through the event to get to church; (c) it is FUN – thousands of women laughing and supporting each other; (d) and it raises awareness for breast cancer.

Once I registered, I panicked. What had I done?? I mean, we’re living in the land of croissants and baguettes and wine and chocolate and cheese and did I mention those warm, buttery, delicious croissants? And now I had committed myself to run/walk 6km?? But I successfully finished the 2011 La Parisienne along with 14 other women from ACP. And we celebrated by having a potluck lunch afterwards at the Herr’s apartment.

If in the span of 8 weeks I could go from 0 to 6k (and 3 weeks later to 10k), so can you!! You want to know the secret? Here it is: exercising is a spiritual discipline. God blesses each of us with so many talents and gifts, and an amazing body. Our bodies come in all shapes and sizes (hallelujah!), and our bodies are meant to move and dance and play and praise the Lord. I didn’t focus on my time or my miles. I didn’t focus on my weight or my waist. I focused on respecting the body God gave me and giving thanks to God by honoring Him and getting my body healthy.

No, it’s not easy (and in my case, not that glamorous), but that’s where the women (and men) runners and exercisers of the ACP are invaluable. If you’re nervous about where/how to start running, maybe you should consider attending one of the many fitness classes at ACP (aerobics, pilates, yoga, Zumba). And if you don’t want to run alone – we are here to help! There are women who meet at the church at 9h30 most Mondays to run about 6km. And we have people in other parts of Paris who would love to have a running partner.

As individuals, we have a responsibility to take care of ourselves; as a community, we are here to support each other in our efforts to do so. La Parisienne is on 15 September this year and we have about 10 women already signed up. Please consider registering to run or coming out to support and encourage the ACP Women’s Running Team.
10 tips for enjoying the 100th Tour
By Alison Benney

1. Get in the know. Tour the Tour de France pages at www.letour.fr in English or French, and read up on its facts, history, the map of the ride, the riders, and of course, live updates of the race.

2. Get there before the riders do. For the very first time, the Tour de France rides through Corsica, where the 2013 race kicked off on Saturday 29 June. Fly into Porto Vecchio and watch the spectacular air show as the Patrouille de France honors the Tour’s 100th ride and marks its own 60th anniversary.

3. Get into the mood. Walk around the Luxembourg Gardens, where an expo of 80 photographs pay tribute to Tours past and present until 27 July; then go see the recently released movie about the Tour, Tour de Force.

4. Get obsessed: follow the Tour on social media. Use hashtag #TDF, and remember the event is called simply and elegantly “Le Tour”, so find it at Twitter.com/LeTour and Facebook.com/LeTour, or for those really obsessed, try the Facebook page named “If you don’t want to hear Tour de France results stay off social media”. Really.

5. Get your cable working, pull up your cushion in front of the tube and be a Tour-ist, watch the cyclists ride through the countryside live, thanks to caravan and helicopter crews broadcasting a blow-by-blow description of not only the race but the history and heritage of the itinerary. Or watch it online at www.sbs.com or other sites like CyclingCentral or CyclingReporter.

6. Get on a train and be part of the audience. Claim a roadside seat outside a rural café near Albi, for instance, so that you can catch some swag from La Caravane, and applaud as the bikers whip by.

7. Get in shape and intrepid. Climb Mt Ventoux if only in a car, to understand what kind of men these be. But avoid Bastille Day, which is when they will be completing this legendary mountain stage.

8. Get the garb and be a wannabe – Sign up as one of the 5,000 who will wear a yellow jersey and ride the final stage around the Champs-Elysées starting at 14h30 on 21 July, before the real riders get there. This could be a fun ego booster as, unusually this year, the final étape doesn’t start down the Champs Elysées until 19h30, but many unsuspecting tourists may will think you are the real thing.

9. Get there for the finish, at twilight on the Champs Elysées. This stage has been the traditional finishing line for the Tour since 1975. What is not traditional is the Patrouille de France that will honor the riders by closing out the 100th ride.

10. Take drugs. Just joking, but couldn’t ignore doping in an article about professional cycling. No, those who really want to get ahead of the crowd will take a bicycle ride around Yorkshire, which is where the 2014 Tour will kick off.

And since this is the 100th anniversary there is one more essential thing to get: a t-shirt, of course, available with lots of other souvenirs online.

Read http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/activityandadventure/10059431/Where-to-watch-the-Tour-de-France.html
How to survive “Les Soldes”
By Marta Hobbs

Ah, Paris in the summer... those long picnics under the Eiffel tower with your favorite guy, a rose wine and a baguette sandwich. I could sit here for hours just reading a book or watching the people around me. Well, I would if I could! For the past two months the weather has gotten above 70 maybe a couple times so I’ve barely gotten the chance to shed my boots. When May was coming to an end I was still waking around in my winter coat! Yes, the weather has been rather disappointing and after a long winter (with several heavy snowfalls, which are rare around here!) Parisians are ready to break out their sandals and lose those berets! But one of the things I love most about summer in Paris is not affected by the sunshine (or lack of it...) – welcome to the craziness, which we know as “Les Soldes.”

“Les Soldes” in French means Sales and you’re probably thinking “What’s the big deal?!” Well, these sales in France are regulated by the state and can only happen twice a year on very specific dates. The first chance to grab your favorite pair of shoes at a discount is in the winter, right after Christmas. This is always a good chance to pick up a new winter coat, choose a fabulous pair of new boots, and generally purchase fall and winter clothing. The Parisian shops are getting ready for the spring season, so many of the heavier things end up on the sales racks to make room for sun dresses and shorts. Winter Sales for 2014 have been set for January 8th to February 11th so start booking your flights. These sales are not limited to clothing only either! You will see Parisians racing to their favorite department stores picking out curtains, tablecloths, purchasing washers/dryers, re-decorating their homes and buying new TV’s. Jewelry, accessories, shoes, perfume, make-up, you name it! Everything is on sale! Well, don’t bother with Louis Vuitton on the Champs Elysées – some things are never inexpensive...

Summer sales are a great time to expand your warmer-weather wardrobe (or re-decorate again!) and on 26 June I did just that! The six-week-long sales will end on 30 July and the trick to these is to have a well-planned method. What might that look like? Consider the tactics of experienced Parisian ladies, who always look fabulous. They scope out their favorite pieces and try them on well before the sales start. Then, on day 1, they are in the boutiques making those purchases before their item of choice is gone. I have seen hour-long lines at some of the Grand Magasins stretched around the corner well before the stores open.

Another important thing to consider as you plan out your “attack” is that the longer you wait to make your purchase, the deeper the discount. Sales kick off with an initial mark down the first week, then midway through the sale there is a second markdown, and one more time towards the end you will see a final slashing of prices. Of course, if you wait until the very end, you may learn that that purse you’ve been eyeing was already scooped up by someone less patient, but more eager to own it.

It is not only the locals that are out there hunting for bargains. Many tourists have caught onto this golden opportunity, so when I tell you this is an absolute frenzy, believe me. Brace yourself. Be patient. Stop to sit down for a glass of wine when in a panic, that always helps. Really feeling overwhelmed? Have two glasses. Or call it a day and start over tomorrow.

Some tips to make this less painful: know your European dress and shoe sizes; dress lightly as many stores do NOT have air conditioning; work out your elbows as you will get shoved and pushed around if you’re not prepared;
make sure what you’re buying fits – during *les soldes* most stores will not accept returns; go during the week and outside lunch and after-work hours; and good luck, Ladies!

Some of the best bargains can be found at the department stores such as *Le Bon Marche, Galeries Lafayette, Printemps or Bazar de l'Hôtel de Ville (BHV)*. But my favorite places to visit are the small boutiques, which make Paris such a special place to shop. In *St Germain, the Marais* or even the 7th district (arrondissement) you can stroll around (when not getting shoved by a woman on a mission with a tight deadline) and pop in and out of local shops while still enjoying the atmosphere of being in this magical city. As always when setting out on “Mission *Les Soldes,”* I start my day off with a Starbucks, wear comfortable shoes, and try to go out there with a good sense of humor. After all, this is really NOT a matter of life and death.

So laughing off some of the nonsense you may experience is probably my biggest tip. And of course, when you’ve just had it, a leisurely lunch with a good friend and a bottle of wine is sure to remind you that you are in the City of Lights after all, where life is always fabulous. Even if the sun has forgotten about us. So, *Sante!* Slow down, relax, show off your fantastic new shoes, tie your new scarf properly around your neck and order dessert. You just shopped in Paris... This is *joie de vivre* at its best.
Bloom Where You’re Planted
The premiere orientation program for English-speaking newcomers ready to make the most of their new life in Paris

Connecting people in Paris for over 40 years

Saturday
5 October 2013
9h ~ 18h30
Visit the Welcome Table for full details
For online registration: bloom.acparis.org

Bloom where you’re planted;
have a seed to sow
Try to be a good friend;
don’t just rely on those you know
When you find yourself in trouble,
the Lord will see you through
Bloom where you’re planted,
let the good life come to you.
Folksinger Piper Leigh

Those lyrics may be easy to say, but putting down roots can be a challenge when you’re living in a foreign culture, speaking a different language and struggling to get used to a strange city. Every expat has been through it, and that is why the congregation at the American Church of Paris has been holding out a watering can of assistance to newcomers for over 40 years.

Want to know how to shop like a Parisian? Understand the school system in France? Figure out how to cut through the red tape of banking, insurance, visas? Bloom Where You’re Planted can help with that and more, all in one day of seminars and workshops on 5 October.

This year’s program is stellar. It kicks off with a snapshot look at Paris architecture and history by the erudite Paris tour guide Peter Caine, and a guide through French cuisines by Patricia Wells, award-winning cookbook author, teacher and restaurant critic. Participants will get tips about smooth transitions from cross-cultural adaptation expert Jane Kendall, and share some laughs about expat experiences with the comedy improvisational team, the Improfessionals.

The afternoon workshops are organized around the themes of work, family and daily life. But being a new expat can be a lonely experience, so networking moments take place all day, around the morning coffee, during the lunchtime expo or at the closing wine reception. These are the perfect opportunities to exchange cards, share experiences and ask questions you may feel silly asking elsewhere, like which flour do I buy to bake cookies, how do I get tickets to the opera, and why do school crossing guards wear white gloves.

Take a look at the full program at http://bloom.acparis.org. Registration is open online or at the church on Sunday mornings, and closes 1 October. The 40 euro fee includes the famous Bloom Where You’re Planted manual, a reference that lasts for years.
Summer Book Club

Whether your jetting off in search of some elusive sun, going home to visit family, travelling or staying in Paris this summer, why not take some time to relax with a good book? Here are our suggestions for a great spiritual-read this summer!

Pastor Scott’s top-10!

1) *Uncommon Decency: Christian Civility in an Uncivil World*, by Richard Mouw, 2012. Dr. Mouw is the outgoing President of Fuller Theological Seminary and I am planning on attending lectures by him in October.

2) *Sabbath in the City: Sustaining Urban Pastoral Excellence*, by Bryan Stone and Claire Wolfteich, 2008. This was recommended by another urban pastor and it sounded like a good read for those of us doing ministry in Paris!

3) *Jesus Have I Loved, but Paul?*, by Daniel Kirk, 2011. Dr. Kirk is a New Testament scholar at Fuller Theological Seminary and I recently heard a lecture he gave that intrigued me. Here is a fresh approach to understanding Paul for today.

4) *Dare We Hope "That All Men Be Saved"?*, by Hans Urs von Balthasar, 1987. This is a book written by a Swiss Catholic priest who is considered one of the most significant theologians of the 20th century. This book is one of my "big question" reads for the summer!

5) *God: A Guide for the Perplexed*, by Keith Ward, 2013. Keith is a provocative thinker I respect and appreciate greatly, and this book is a good overview from a philosopher’s perspective on the different ways of viewing God.

6) *The Obedient Master*, by Timothy Keller, 2013. I always love Keller’s way of articulating the faith, and here is a recent volume on Jesus.

7) *Body and Soul: Reclaiming the Heidelberg Catechism*, by Craig Barnes, 2012. This book is written by the new President of Princeton Theological Seminary, and is on my favorite catechism!

“I would also recommend focusing on two Biblical texts this summer”:

8) *The Gospel According to Luke*, as in worship we will be moving through Luke for most of the rest of this year until Christ the King Sunday!

9) *The Book of Daniel*, as I’ve wanted to read this through the lens of what it looks like to live mindful of the Living God in a foreign land...

And finally...

10) *The Chronicles of Narnia*, by C.S. Lewis will provide some good reading time with Matthew, and this fascinating "children's literature" will provide perhaps some of the best theological reflection out of all of my reading!
Pastor Michelle recommends...

*An Extravagant Mercy: Reflections on Ordinary Things* by M. Graig Barnes offers thought-provoking reflections, giving a new biblical perspective to the ordinary things in daily life.

*Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation* by Parker J. Palmer invites us to listen to the inner teacher and, using illustration from his own life, the author shares his experiences of darkness and depression and joy and fulfilment.

*The Luminous Dusk: Finding God in the Deep, Still Places* by Dale C. Allison Jr explores the loss of wonder in our western society and calls us to seek the stillness of God in our noisy world.

And...*the Chronicles of Narnia* by C. S. Lewis!

Pastor Dan suggests...

*What we talk about when we talk about God* by Rob Bell tackles misconceptions about God and illustrates how He is with us, for us and ahead of us and what this means for our lives.

*The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society* by Leslie Newbigin investigates how the Gospel relates to a pluralistic society by drawing on scholars such as Michael Polanyi, Alasdair MacIntyre and Hendrikus Berkhof, as well as offering thoughtful and provocative reflections.

*Christianity After Religion* by Diana Butler Bass looks at how the failings of the church today is creating a “spiritual not religious” movement. By using polls and research, the author examines the connections and divisions between theology, practice and community that Christians are experiencing today.

And finally...if the above recommendations haven’t left you with enough to read this summer, Pastor Scott says why not try *Four Quartets*, by T.S. Eliot? This poetry is powerful and will be the basis for a project ACP is working on in 2014. (if you are stuck on the poetry, *The Art of T.S. Eliot*, by Helen Gardner, 1049 might help. This Oxford scholar has been helping me understand more of the *Four Quartets*)

Happy Reading!!
Young Adult Activities in July

Young Adult Events (18-30yrs)

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Scripture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 2</td>
<td>19h30-21h00</td>
<td>Bible Study</td>
<td>Luke 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 9</td>
<td>19h30-21h00</td>
<td>Bible Study</td>
<td>Luke 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 16</td>
<td>19h30-21h00</td>
<td>Bible Study</td>
<td>Luke 21-22</td>
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<td>Tuesday 23</td>
<td>19h30-21h00</td>
<td>Bible Study</td>
<td>Luke 23-24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 30</td>
<td>19h30-21h00</td>
<td>YA Social</td>
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Check the Facebook page to keep up-to-date about the YA Social and our weekly events.

For more information about who we are and what we do at ACP Young Adults, please visit our group page on the church website:
http://www.acparis.org/acp-groups/young-adult-ministry

We also invite you to connect with us online for community and updates on all young adult activities and gatherings:

http://www.facebook.com/groups/ACPyoungadults/

You can also follow us on Twitter (www.twitter.com/danhaugh)
Youth Events (13-18yrs)

Please feel free to bring friends along – they are always welcome at ACP events!

Sunday 28 July 15h00-17h00
Combined Youth Group
Africa presentation

Catacombs

Youth group is on Summer Break in July and August, so we won’t be meeting every week. We are planning to organize some trips, so please check the Facegroup page or contact youthintern@acparis.org for more information!

6-21 July: lycée group mission trip to Gabon, Africa.

Please pray for the group of youth and leaders as they travel to Gabon.

For more information about who we are and what we do at ACP Youth, please visit our group page on the church website: http://www.acparis.org/acp-groups/youth-ministry, or contact Rev. Dan Haugh at youthpastor@acparis.org.

Join our Facebook group and stay connected with our online community:
http://www.facebook.com/groups/acpyouthgroup/
"If I'm not crying everyday, I'm not living with God"

By CJ

Funny how I tend to cry. Like a lot. It seems at some point everyday, my eyes well up with tears of joy and gratitude. For an American guy, that's not really cool to say. It's kinda really uncool. In fact, that's got "wimp" written all over it! But I know I'm a cryer. Not sure exactly when it started. Maybe it was when I was in middle school, and especially active in the FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes). I suddenly began to feel God's touch in my life, and I would just start crying. The overwhelming feeling of His Love just makes me ball like a baby. It's embarrassing at times. Much like me sweating all the time, but that's another story. Suffice to say, I cry a lot. Maybe it's drinking wine everyday now that we live in Paris!

Either way, His grace many times just blows me away to the point of tears. And of course, I have to hide it. What kinda guy is just crying in the middle of the day? Then the questions would come. "What's wrong? Why are you so sad? Everything ok?" These aren't bad questions. In fact, they are very reasonable. It's just...I don't want to answer them, because it puts me in an odd, awkward conversation (which is what God always wants). I think, "What do I say? Uh, let's see, God loves me with his grace so much I just tear up?" Or maybe, "I am feeling so incredibly loved by Him that I really can't express my emotions so I'm just overwhelmed to the point of crying". That would lead to either more questions, or better yet a blank stare of, "Wow, this guy has really got a screw loose". And in many ways I know I've got a screw, or two, or ten loose. God's love will turn the screws loose. God's love will bring you to your knees. It will glorify His name while making your life make sense in ways you can't imagine. It really is overwhelming, to the point my tears will flow freely. I guess it's God's way of making someone ask you, "What the Heck is wrong with you?" Because there is something wrong with all of us who believe. Jesus died for our sins. We believe. We have faith. We can't believe ourselves that, after all our sins, God never leaves us with His unconditional love and Fatherly care. We mess up daily and God walks with us every step of the way. The whole concept is crazy enough to make even the most hardened person cry. Of course, a cryer like me cries when I think about it.

I guess crying at the end of the day is a weakness, which with God means it is good because it is something He will turn into a strength for His purposes...just as He takes all the mistakes we've ever made and transforms them into His glorious story for our life. Our weaknesses and failures are always the way God reaches out and communicates His message of humility, compassion, gentleness, kindness, patience, and most of all love all wrapped in a thankfulness that...well, of course, makes me cry.

So I guess at least I'm a thankful wimp...all these tears of joy when I feel God's love in my life. Or, wait a minute...maybe my daily tears are the water washing my daily sins away, cleansing me in a way only Jesus dying on the cross could do. Oh no... time to cry again...
If you get into trouble this summer, above are the numbers to call for instant help and support...happy dialling!
Opportunities to Serve the Community

CHILDREN’S WORSHIP:  Children's Worship Needs You!  
Volunteers are asked to commit to serving approximately two Sundays every 6 to 8 weeks.  
For more information, please contact Jeanette at childrensworship@acparis.org.

GREETING AND USHERING:  We are seeking new members for this group.  
If you are interested in participating during the services, please contact Anna Zweede at worshipandmusic@acparis.org.

FRIDAY MISSION LUNCH  at the American Church in Paris. Each Friday from 10h00 to 14h00, a hot, nutritious meal is prepared for the homeless and needy. The American Church is responsible for providing the meal on 14 June (the second Friday of each month) but we are grateful for volunteers and helping hands every Friday. If you are interested and available, please contact Kristie Worrel.

WELCOME TABLE ATTENDANTS and COFFEE HOUR GREETERS:  
Be a MEETER GREETER! We are looking for happy, cheerful people to help at the Welcome Table after every service, as well as roaming coffee hour greeters. This is a ministry that we can ALL share in, and if you can share 20 minutes of your time, once a month to participate in welcoming guests, you are sure to find more joy than you can give. A smile and a handshake is all that is needed! Teams are being formed so that each team serves one Sunday per month at each service. Please contact Camilla Furman at communitylife@acparis.org if you can be counted on to spread some joy and welcome a newcomer!

SANDWICH MINISTRY DOES BREAKFAST  on 13 July at 8h00, when we will be making breakfast for the hungry and homeless. Contact Jurie Ane or Dan Haugh at youthpastor@acparis.org if you would like to get involved.

For other volunteering opportunities, check with Mission Outreach at missionoutreach@acparis.org, Community Life  at communitylife@acparis.org, or Dan Haugh with Youth and Young Adult Ministries at youthpastor@acparis.org

ACP Today: Faith Talk From Paris

Have you tuned in to ACP Today, the American Church in Paris’ radio show yet? Join us on Monday 1 and 15 July and 5 and 19 August at 20h45. The 45-minute program is an exciting and inspiring mix of music, interviews, sermon highlights, and discussion on hot topics.

Tune to 100.7 FM on the radio dial, Radio Fréquence Protestante! And please invite others to listen—friends who may be housebound or who would simply like more devotional time on a Monday evening. Missed a show? Don’t worry, you can catch up online at www.acparis.org/acptoday.

If you have any questions or comments, be sure to contact us at acptoday@acparis.org.
ACP Groups and Additional Activities

ACP WRITER’S GROUP meets on the second Saturday of the month at 14h00 – 17h00 in room G2. Contact Laura Kerber at ApollinarisPatera@gmail.com.

KNITTING GROUP is on summer recess and will start meeting again on 2 September. Whilst we are primarily a knitting group, we have several new members who crochet, cross stitch and embroider. We knit for ourselves and/or church missions. We welcome all to our fun and diverse group. Please contact Susan Owens for more information.

QUILTING GROUP meets on Tuesday afternoon at members houses. We welcome quilters of all levels. Some of us work on our own projects while others of us learn new techniques. For more information please contact Bonnie Smith.

MOVIE DISCUSSION GROUP: The movie group’s choices for July are: The Look of Love (playing here as A Very Englishman) by Michael Winterbottom, Before Midnight by Richard Linklater, Hijacking by Tobias Lindholm and A Late Quartet (Le Quatuor) by Yaron Zilberman. See any or all at your convenience, then join the group for discussion on Thursday, 18 July at 7h30 in basement room G2.

Independent Christian Prayer Groups and Bible Study Activities

MOMS IN PRAYER INTERNATIONAL has come to Paris! Are you concerned about your kids? Would you like to join with other moms as we lift up our cares and concerns for our children and their schools to our loving Father? Experience the joy of replacing anxiety with peace and hope when we pray together. Contact Caroline for information and join us Tuesday mornings at 9h30 in G2. See also MomsInPrayer.org.

BIBLE STUDY FELLOWSHIP (BSF INTERNATIONAL): What a great way to discover the gift of God’s Word through BSF’s interdenominational and international Bible studies! This Paris class brings together 50 or so women for in-depth Bible study every Monday evening from 19h00 to 20h50. Contact Thelma Fuchs for more information.

MINDFUL MEDITATION: This group, being offered on Saturdays from 12h00 to 13h15 in G2, is for those who already have a meditation practice, as well as for those who are interested in beginning a practice. Mindfulness meditation is a way of learning to pay attention to our life as it unfolds moment by moment. It is open to church members as well as to the larger community. Norma Jean Deak, a clinical social worker, has taught Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction for 14 years. Contact Norma Jean with any questions.
The American Church in Paris is a member congregation of the Association of International Churches in Europe and the Middle East. If you are traveling and looking for a place to worship, please consult the AICEME website for our sister congregations: http://aiceme.net/.

Clergy and Staff of the American Church in Paris

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Associate Pastor Michelle Wahila associatepastor@acparis.org
Visiting Pastor Dan Thornton visitingpastor@acparis.org
Dir. Youth and Young Adults Dan Haugh youthpastor@acparis.org
Youth Intern Hanna Woodhead youthintern@acparis.org
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Daytime Receptionist Emily Claudio reception@acparis.org
Evening Receptionist Kithsiri Fernando reception@acparis.org
Saturday Receptionist Martha Gachoka reception@acparis.org
Sunday Receptionist Boryana Dimitrova reception@acparis.org
Building Maintenance Tom Padden maintenance@acparis.org

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