Dear Members and Friends of the ACP,

As we move through this season of Lent, I was asked recently in light of God’s grace, if the spiritual disciplines were of any use at all. It’s an important question, as it raises the distinction between what theologians call “justification” and “sanctification.” One of my favorite summary verses of the gospel is Ephesians 2:8-10: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God — not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.”

Do you see the two very different aspects and clear order embedded in these verses? On the one hand, our salvation is all about grace through faith. There is nothing we can do to “save ourselves” or add to the work of Christ who lived, died, and rose again for us! There are no works that contribute one drop of sweat toward this gift of God’s salvation. But on the other hand, it is also clear that God created us for a new life in Christ Jesus, a life that is different than our life prior to our being “in Christ.” We are created for good works and good works are to be our way of life! The order makes all the difference. But it is also important to recognize that grace is the engine (from beginning to end) which drives any transformation and good works that proceed from a saved life.

Paul seems to follow up on this paradox when he writes to the believers in Philippi, “Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12-13, italics mine). God is at work within us, and so our lives are to be engaged in the process of working out, or practicing our salvation with fear and trembling, which I take to mean humble awe and gratitude.

It’s the difference between trying harder and wise training. Any athlete knows the benefits of wise training. If you’re going to run a marathon, you don’t just go out and run 42.195 kilometers. That would hurt most people. It would kill me! Rather, you train, maybe even begin with walking a kilometer each day until you’re ready to increase your distance and speed without doing yourself injury.

The key question in any of the spiritual disciplines we might engage for this season of Lent (or any season of discipleship for that matter) is simply, Are the spiritual disciplines transforming us more into the saints (ones sanctified in Christ) that God created and calls us to be?

This begs the question: What is the true measure of any spiritual “progress” or signs that we are engaged in “good works” or that our salvation is actually getting “worked out” in us? I love Thomas Merton’s observation, “Saints are what they are, not because their sanctity makes them admirable to others, but because the gift of sainthood makes it possible for them to admire everybody else. It gives them a clarity of compassion that can find good in the most terrible criminals. It delivers them from the burden of judging others, condemning other men. It teaches them to bring the good out of others by compassion, mercy, and pardon. A man becomes a saint not by conviction that he is better than sinners but by the realization that he is one of them, and that all together need the mercy of God!”*

Friends, as we move through the last days of Lent into the humbling remembrances of Holy Week, we are reminded again and again that it’s all about grace. May the spiritual disciplines and training in which we engage lead us to a deeper appreciation of God’s grace. And may our lives and life together, sinners that we are, bear the fruit of grace: freedom from judging or condemning others, and an increase in compassion, mercy and pardon toward all! This is the Easter new life to which we are called and to which we must give witness in our broken and hurting world.

Grace and peace to each of you as we continue working out our salvation together.

In Christ,

Scott

Thurber Thursdays

19h00: Dinner in the Thurber room
19h45-21h00: Presentation, then Q&A
All are welcome.
If dining, please bring a donation to offset costs.

Missed out?
If you can’t make it to Thurber Thursday, you can still enjoy our amazing speakers and discussions. The video is available at http://acparis.org/thurber-thurdays-archives.

Women’s Small Group Bible study This Bible study meets twice a month on Saturdays.

Our facilitator is Elodie Mbette, speaking on “The Women We Are in Christ,” based on John 10:2-28. For more information or to register, please email women.acparis@gmail.com.

Bible readings for March

March 6  Fourth Sunday in Lent
Joshua 5:9-12
Psalm 32
2 Corinthians 5:16-21

March 13  Fifth Sunday in Lent
Isaiah 43:16-21
Psalm 126
Philippians 3:4b-14
John 12:1-8

March 20  Palm/Passion Sunday
The Liturgy of the Palms
Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

The Liturgy of the Word
Isaiah 50:4-9a
Psalm 31:9-16
Philippians 2:5-11

March 24  Maundy Thursday
Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14
1 Corinthians 11:23-26
John 13:1-17, 31b-35
Psalm 116:1, 10-17

March 25  Good Friday
Isaiah 52:13-53:12
Hebrews 10:16-25 or
Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9
John 18:1-19:42
Psalm 22

March 27  Easter Sunday
Acts 10:34-43 or Isaiah 65:17-25
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
1 Corinthians 15:19-26 or Acts 10:34-43

Would you like to propose articles, write, proofread, do layout or take photos? Contact Alison Benney at Spire@acparis.org Note: Deadline for the February Spire is Thursday 18 February.
We’ve all been there. We’ve all had the last minute panic over what to give up for Lent. For some of us it’s chocolate. For others it’s alcohol or sugar or some other food we deem unhealthy and tempting. More recently it’s become popular to give up social media, in particular Facebook.

Our practice of self-denial during the Lenten season has its roots in remembering the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness. In our self-denial we are constantly reminded of the example Jesus set and the victory Jesus won, while also remembering the cost of following him.

But what happens after our 40-day journey? Chances are we pick up those habits again. We begin eating chocolate. We start drinking beer. We log on to Facebook. In his book *The Weight of Glory*, C.S. Lewis wrote, “The New Testament has a lot to say about self-denial, but not about self-denial as an end in itself.” In other words, self-denial isn’t about the mere practice of self-denial, but in something deeper.

Perhaps we’ve used Lent as a time for self-denial as an end in itself. What would it look like, then, to truly give something up for Lent? And not only give it up for Lent, but forever.

On the first Sunday of Lent in youth group we looked at the story of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness in the gospel of Luke. Over and over Jesus is tempted by the devil. First with hunger, then with authority, and finally with power.

As we studied this story together one thread that runs throughout these temptations is control. Over and over again the devil is tempting Jesus to take control. When Jesus is starving the devil tempts Jesus with food. The devil then tempts Jesus by offering authority over all the kingdoms of the world. Finally, in what seems to be the most tempting situation of all, Jesus is tempted to show his true power. And why not? If he showed his power to people in commanding the angels to protect him, many people might have come to believe that he really was the Son of God.

Where in your life are you tempted to take control?

What places in your relationships, education, or career are you tempted to be the one in control?

We live in a culture that encourages even celebrates the mastery of our destiny. We’re in charge. We’re in control. Nobody else. If we want something and work hard enough at it, we can have it. It seems good enough. In fact in some ways these lessons are good for us as individuals. It is good to work hard for something. It is good to have the hope that we can pull ourselves out of hardship through hard work.

But in the end it’s all about control. Who is ultimately in control?

In effect when we try to become the master of our own fate we are saying (whether consciously or not) we want to be God.

The temptations of Jesus in the wilderness were the same kinds of temptations in the Garden of Eden. The serpent said to the humans, take control, be in charge of your own lives, because you know best.

More often than not in our own lives when we try to make ourselves the masters of the universe we inevitably mess things up. God does not expect control simply to assert God’s authority over us, as deserving as it is. God’s control over our lives is always in our best interest and always protects us, despite our very best protests against the idea and our claims that we know what’s best.

So during this season, our youth have been challenged to give up for Lent. To give up control over their lives. To give up the idea that simply with enough hard work and determination that we can live the best possible life.

It’s a lesson I am learning myself in a deep and powerful way this Lent.

So won’t you join us in giving up for Lent?

Because in the end, our giving up control means giving the Creator of the world, who loves us more than anyone ever could, the power to guide and direct our steps toward truth, beauty, and goodness.
Youth@Noon

Every second Sunday of the month, 12h15-13h15 in G2

Are you a youth (ages 11-18) who is unable to attend other youth group events or are you looking for another chance to hang out and grow in faith? Join us for a time of fellowship once a month to discuss everything from the week’s scripture lessons to current events, and how they relate to you! French and English speakers welcome. Lunch will be provided. For more information, email youthpastor@acparis.org.

John Huffman
Thurber Thursday 31 March 19h00

A Profile of the Church that Will Not Just Survive but Flourish in the 21st Century

At Thurber Thursday on 31 March, our guest speaker will be Dr. John A. Huffman, Jr., a leading figure in national and international Evangelical circles.

After 47 years of active local church ministry, Dr. Huffman was honorably retired in November of 2009 by the Los Ranchos Presbytery and elected “Pastor Emeritus” by the congregation of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church. He has now re-emerged as a “Minister at Large.”

Born in Boston, Dr. Huffman earned his B.A. in history from Wheaton College and holds several advanced or honorary degrees, including a Master of Divinity and a Doctorate of Ministry from Princeton Theological Seminary. As a Princeton student, he served as an assistant to Dr. Norman Vincent Peale at New York’s Marble Collegiate Church.

As a Princeton graduate student he served as an assistant to Dr. Norman Vincent Peale at New York’s Marble Collegiate Church and to Dr. Bryant M. Kirkland at New York’s Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, where he was ordained. From 1965-1968, he was the associate pastor at the First Presbyterian Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma. From 1968-1973, he was pastor of the Key Biscayne Presbyterian Church in Florida. From 1973-1978, he served as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In 1978 John Huffman became the pastor of the 4000-member St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Newport Beach, California.

Dr. Huffman has written nine books, including “The Family You Want” and “Forgive Us Our Prayers” by Christian Focus Publications, and the “Joshua” volume of The Communicator’s Commentary published by Thomas Nelson.

He has extensive radio and television talk show experience on secular stations in Miami, Pittsburgh and Los Angeles. He currently serves as an authoritative resource for various networks, newspapers and magazines on contemporary matters of faith and life.

Dr. Huffman has held many leadership positions in the Presbyterian Church (USA). He attended, as an Elected Accredited Visitor, the World Council of Churches Seventh Assembly in Canberra, Australia in 1991 and served on the General Board of the National Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the US, chairing the Presbyterian delegation for two terms.

He has been involved in professional sports chaplaincies, including the Miami Dolphins (1969-1973), the visiting NFL teams (1973-1978) and served as the backup chaplain on the PGA Senior Golf Tour (1973-1978).
For four Thursdays in January and February, a group of 27 people gathered in the Thurber Room around the theme “Simplify.” Our series began with video presentations by Bill Hybels, and the four session themes were “Streamline your Schedule,” “Spend Wisely,” “Strengthen Your Relationships,” and “Full Surrender.” Time; money; relationships; spiritual trust: all significant life themes, and appropriate things to consider during this season of Lent.

What was most striking to me was the power of the word that followed the title “Simplify.” That word was “Unclutter.” The sub-title of the book is “Unclutter your Soul.” Time and again I, and others in the discussions, resonated with that word … “Unclutter.” “Simplify” is clear, logical, conceptual. “Unclutter” is visceral, emotional, tangible.

I come from a family of “keepers” and “collectors.” “Don’t throw that away, it’s still good.” “Don’t give that away, we might need it some time.” The stacks (and closets, and garages full) of things easily grow, to create clutter!

The clutter of unneeded possessions is fed by the “clutter” of thoughtless or careless spending. The clutter of time wasted keeps us from fully realizing our personal, relational, or spiritual goals. And distractions of all kinds become “clutter” that keeps us from living the kind of focused and spiritually centered lives we want … the lives to which God is calling us.

Whatever part of your life the word may touch; whatever kind of clarifying or cleansing it may suggest; whatever pathway it may open for a closer walk with Christ; I commend the words and their invitation to you this Lenten season: “Unclutter” … “Unclutter your life.” “Unclutter your soul.”
Welcome our new Associate Pastor

Rev. Timothy Vance

For “In him we live and move and have our being;” as even some of your own poets have said, “For we too are his offspring.”
Acts 17:28

For the last six years Tim has been serving as Associate Pastor at Gateway Presbyterian Church in The Dalles, Oregon. He is also a volunteer justice speaker for International Justice Mission, which works to address issues of slavery and injustice that disproportionately impact the world’s poor.

Tim is a New York Yankees fan and a long-suffering Buffalo Bills fan. His hobbies include basketball and cycling. His favorite Bible verses are Micah 6:8 and Acts 17:28.

Tim, Maija and the kids - Noah, Sophia, and Ezra - are very excited about arriving in Paris and being a part of our beautifully diverse ACP community.

Sunday Concert Series

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

Sunday 28 February

Güray BASOL - piano

Music by Hadyn, Beethoven, Chopin, Poulenc

Sunday Women's Gathering, 13 March, 12h15 – 13h30

Ladies, please join us for a time of fellowship and discussion. Our guest speaker will be Nisryn Razzouq discussing “Justice and Mercy in Syria?” We will look at Syria from a historical context, the land and its people, particularly the Christians living there.

Coffee and tea are provided, and if you can contribute to our snack table, thank you. Also note that childcare is available.

Spring forward

REMEMBER: Turn your clocks FORWARD at 2h00, Easter Day 27 March!
Welcome to ACP Today, the radio voice of the American Church in Paris!

Launched 4 years ago, ACP Today radio show airs the first and third Monday of every month at 8:45pm on Frequence Protestante 100.7 on your FM dial. For 40 minutes twice a month ACP Today shares the voices of members of the ACP community, highlights activities taking place at the church and provides answers to your faith questions. ACP Today, Faith talk from Paris!

Genie Godula, ACP member and anchor for the French news channel France 24, leads the team of volunteer hosts. When asked what motivated her to lead this project at ACP Genie explained “I began my career in radio, and I have such fond memories of starting out, it’s a real pleasure for me to teach people how to put together and host a show. I love getting to know the different pastors who come on and helping the hosts conquer their nerves and just get in front of the mike and have fun with it. It’s a big challenge presenting a 40-minute show, and our hosts have all been doing top-quality work.”

Monthly meetings are held to trade story ideas, test new concepts for the show, assess what worked well in past shows and identify future guests. Each host brings a unique voice to the show.

Listeners will appreciate the polished, practiced approach by Genie Godula, Nancy Dimich and Ginny Powers – all skilled media professionals, the thick New York accent and wry humor on the air with Robert James Oliver and Jim Hobb’s easy going ebullience. Amit Pieter brings a scholarly touch with his historical explanations and anecdotes. Monica Bassett has a special way of putting her guests at ease and engaging lively interactions in the studio.

Hosts rotate to share the responsibility of preparing and presenting each show. Genie says, “As the hosts have become more used to how the show works, they’ve gotten better and better on the air. It’s great to see people really come into their own hosting styles and having fun with it! There’s also been quite a bit of turnover, and it’s been great for me to get to know other members of the congregation who I probably wouldn’t know otherwise”.

One feature segment of ACP Today is the Question of Faith. The Pastor co-hosting the show will be asked to provide insight on an issue or question submitted by a listener. Questions of Faith vary from show to show and grapple with issues such as understanding la laïcité, the origins of Ash Wednesday and even as far-fetched as the spiritual lessons from the movie Groundhog Day!

Another popular segment is “My Story, My Song.” This is a way to get to know members of the ACP community and the music that inspires them. Guests pick a song that has particular meaning to them and share with listeners.

Music is a central part of worship at ACP and a central feature any given ACP Today show! The show has featured in studio performances by Alexia Rabé, Phinehas, Young Woong Seo and his brother Il-Woong Seo, and Lisa Prevett on the flute. Genie recalls, “One year we had a few of the bell ringers on and it was so cool having them tell us how the bells work, plus it sounded great on the air”.

All of the shows are available to download on the ACP website. If you have a story idea, a guest you’d like to hear on air, or a Question of Faith to be answered, a Story or Song to share, please contact the ACP Today team at acptoday@acparis.org. We love to hear from our listeners! We’re also always looking for people to host or help with the show by recording, editing and producing interviews and segments.

This month don’t forget to tune in to ACP Today on 7 and 21 March at 20h45pm on 100.7FM!
Hope and healing in marriage
By Pringle Franklin

What was God’s purpose in making marriage? How can you grow closer to your spouse? How should a Christian view divorce?

To hear answers to these and other questions, mark your calendars for an upcoming two-part series on the book Hope & Healing in Marriage: True Stories of Renewed Love by author Pringle Franklin. The sessions will be held on 10 March and 17 March as part of our Thurber Thursday offerings.

Here is a sneak peek:

When is it time to give up on my marriage? Most married people, if they are honest, have contemplated leaving their spouses at some point. The heart of this book is about endurance, sticking with your spouse in a contemporary society that encourages people to bail out if their needs aren’t being met.

To begin, let’s look at an astounding quote from The Meaning of Marriage by the Rev. Timothy Keller. In the Introduction of his wonderful marriage guidebook, Keller addresses the primary question:

What was God’s purpose in creating marriage?

“Marriage is a way for two spiritual friends to help each other on their journey to become the persons God designed them to be..... A new and deeper kind of happiness is found on the far side of holiness.” - Rev. Timothy Keller

Wow. What a goal. This is the opposite of the usual idea that my spouse’s job is to make me happy.

Most married people aren’t even considering how to make their husband or wife a better person in the Lord. Maybe that is why most marriages need help!

After researching my book in the United States and France, I’ve come up with a imprecise yet helpful formula to apply to the question: is it time to give up on my marriage? A few marriages are so ideal, they seemed to have been made in Heaven. These lucky people just know how to work out their issues with mutual love and respect. This might represent 10% of today’s couples.

Other marriages are so broken, they seem like they were made in Hell (think serious abuse, drug addictions, ongoing infidelity, etc.). These dire cases should end in divorce. This might represent 20% of today’s couples.

The majority, or around 70% of marriages, were made on earth. These are the ones which can benefit from changes in behavior, in lifestyle, in attitude. With God’s help and two partners willing to roll up their sleeves, these marriages can be saved. Most of today’s marital strife lands within this middle ground.

Come and join us to find out more! The talk runs from 19h45 to 20h15.

10 March: Divorce, anger, and contempt
17 March: Divorce, lust, and betrayal

‟Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.
And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

Colossians 3:16-17
On Sunday 20 March

Remember to do the math!

9hoo service + 11h00 service + 13h30 service =

One BIG
Congregational Service
at 11h30

10h30 - Coffee and cake
11h30 - Combined Worship Service
12h45 - Congregational Meeting

See you there!

Remember, if you are a member of the congregation and can’t make it to the meeting, please fill out a proxy form, available at reception, so that we can count your vote.

The Council of the American Church in Paris requests the presence of all voting members of the ACP at the annual congregational meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to receive the annual Ministry reports from the Council and Pastoral leadership of the ACP and to vote to approve the 2015 accounts and 2016 budget. We’ll start this special Sunday with coffee and cake at 10h30, before worshipping together at the combined 11h30 service. The annual meeting will start immediately after the service, at 12h45. Childcare will be provided during the meeting.

Please plan to attend this meeting, but if you cannot be present, make sure that your vote counts by filling out the proxy form available at the ACP Reception or online at www.acparis.org. Please return your proxy form to the Council Secretary’s mailbox at the Reception or by emailing it to councilsecretary@acparis.org.
A Visit to Deep Griha Society

By Michael Beeman

As I was saying goodbye to South Sudan, I was sharing with Carolyn Bouazouni, my plans to visit India for a few weeks. Immediately, her face lit up and she told me I should talk to Pascale Deforge about visiting the Deep Griha Society in Pune, about 150km outside of Mumbai. Little did I know that the names “Pascale” and the “American Church in Paris” would light up so many faces when I would visit 2 months later.

I recently completed that visit and can confidently say that the grace of the community at ACP and that of Pascale’s has touched many at Deep Griha Society (DGS), a nonprofit that has been empowering individuals in the slums of Pune since the 1970s. With each person I met, I mentioned both names and a smile covered their faces.

While it was a blessing to see the expanse of the church community, I was more touched by the DGS’s capacity to navigate the challenges of being a nonprofit in order to meet the needs of the community. From childcare for single mothers to adult education and income-generating activities, I met individuals, like Pakrash and Rajud, who gained new opportunities for education and employment that, otherwise, would not have existed without DGS programs.

What a dynamic team in a dynamic city! My only regret was that I could not stay longer, and I look forward to hearing the stories from future visits of ACP members to DGS.

First things first

From Coach Joe Gibbs’ Two Minute Drills

You may or may not be a list-maker. It doesn't really matter. Because whether you are or you aren’t, we all live by a list. We all do what’s most important to us — our ones, twos, and threes. The tens, twelves, and fifteens rarely make an actual appearance.

The same goes for our money. We may or may not live by a budget — Ron Blue will get us for that — but we have our reasons for spending and saving the way we do... or don't. Our first things come first, whether they’re sound or just selfish.

Thankfully, the Bible comes right out and tells us what our first financial thing needs to be: “Honor the Lord from your wealth, and from the first of all your produce” (Proverbs 3:9). Before one dime goes toward dinner out or a new DVD — or even toward your mortgage, insurance, and utility bills — giving to God through the church where you worship should come right off the top. First thing.

Or how easily it becomes a forgotten thing.

If this sounds a little too radical and expensive, seek out someone you know who manages their money by this principle. Ask if it’s proven to be a bust to their financial health, a decision they’ve grown to regret. See if instead God hasn’t opened up the "floodgates of heaven" and poured out on them a blessing "without measure" (Malachi 3:10). When the Lord comes first, everything else just falls into place.

Prayer: I ask you, Lord, to help me realize that everything I own or earn comes from you. May I be grateful enough to honor you with my giving, and to grow my trust in you at the same time.
Our dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Our last article was about our upcoming mission trip to Pune, India. Now that we are here, let us share a few memories we have already collected during our first few days.

India is noisy, busy, never resting not even when the sun goes down. Our first day was spent with the women of Saint Paul’s Church with whom we held a French cooking session. We shared our recipes for Croque Monsieur, Pain perdu, a rice salad and a pear and chocolate grimolle (cake from Poitou-Charentes French region).

Our next day was spent with Gus (former Deep Griha Fundraiser), Lynn and Lysette at the Agakhan Palace, where Mahatma Gandhi and his wife were confined in 1942.

On Monday 22 February, our chain of love was completed. It all started at the end of January, with an email from Neela Onawale about the shortage of water they were experiencing in City of Child, the orphanage in Kasurdi village.

In Psalm 76:11, it is written: “Make your vows to the LORD your God and perform; let all alone around him bring gifts to him who is to be feared.”

We put out the word that donations would be welcome, to help restore the old well that had gone dry in the village. We prayed with the Women’s Bible Study group - a very deep and emotional prayer, and a first huge donation offered the first glimpse of the amazing generosity of our congregation. This was followed by a second big donation, and followed by many good-hearted contributions until 14 February. This amazing flow of funds was generated also thanks to Claire’s article on Facebook and Marta’s by email. *(For God nothing is impossible.)*

The last day of this chain of love was when we met with Mrs Neela Onawale, founder of Deep Griha. We could not wait to share the great news, that we had managed to raise all the money to for the well. Pascale told her about the ACP congregation’s €1700 donation, and I told her about the €1200 euros from the website created to collect donations.

When we finally told her the total amount of donations came to €2900, Neela could not help but join one wrist on top of the other on the table and bow her head on them as if all the stress was suddenly relieved in a gasp, implying “Thank you God.” She thanked us with tears in her eyes and we all looked at each other with the same understanding: God is good. What am I saying? God is awesome! We prayed and God answered our prayers, He provided when we needed.

*And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.* – *Matt 21:22*

We are so grateful for each of you who have donated; every euro is a blessing. We will go to City of Child on Friday and we will have the chance to see the work on digging the well. Thank you to those who kept us in their prayers and those who are still praying for us.

In the Cultural Centre of Deep Griha, the food is soooooo Good ! Praise the Lord !

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**Prayer meeting for Mission Outreach Ministries**

Please come join us to pray for our missionaries and ministries every second Sunday of the month from 10h30-11h in G4 the basement Library.
Body of Christ: What’s up in Paris

By MaryClaire King

A selection of interesting events for Christians in and around Paris in March. All events are in French.

Excluded—the Poor and the Disabled—a Path of Unity

Jean Vanier, founder of L’Arche (147 communities in 35 countries for people with intellectual deficiencies), talks with author Georges-Paul Cuny about the message of Father Joseph Wresinski, founder of ADC Quart Monde (an organization fighting misery in over 30 countries).

Saturday, 12 March, 17h-19h. Collège des Bernardins, 20 rue de Poissy, 75005 Paris. Free. To reserve a limited seat, email: joseph.wresinski@aliceadsl.fr

Who am I responsible for?

In the face of world events such as the migration crisis, a philosophical and theological review of individual responsibility for all people with Mattieu Villemot, Professor at the Faculté Notre-Dame de Paris.


The Bible under the Test of Archaeology

A conference with Michaël Langlois, specialist in Hebrew and Aramaic literature, professor at the University of Strasbourg and researcher at the Collège de France.

Wednesday, 16 March, 20h30-22h. Free.

When we serve those who are struggling to survive and are forgotten by society, we not only strive to give them some instant relief from the struggles of living on the streets, but we also talk to them and try to get to "know them by name".

We were scolded the other day by a man who told us we shouldn’t hand out food because the homeless "don't deserve it". Who deserves to starve? In a culture where individual productivity and accomplishments are valued more than helping and assisting others, the problem quickly becomes not just an issue of income equality and exploitation, but of value and self-worth.

Serve the City values those suffering in an unfair world, for we have seen and felt much joy in our mission to remain steadfast and persevere when others persecute us for our beliefs. Give generously to all without finding fault, and it shall also be given to you, for the poor in the eyes of the world are many times the ones richest in faith and hope for a better future. "Love your neighbor as yourself" shows no favoritism, but does show faith in action, for faith not accompanied by action is worthless to those hungry and destitute.
What’s up in Paris

March event listings

By Karen Albrecht

Bettina Rheims

Parisian powerhouse Bettina Rheims has been an influential figure at the Maison Européenne de la Photographie ever since the Marais center first opened in the early 1990s. This celebration of her career features 180 shots spanning four decades, some never before shown in France, and all displaying her unique talent for exquisite, erotic and unabashedly subversive images of women.


Orchestre des objets trouvés

The mad geniuses behind the ebullient percussion-fest "Stomp" (which featured trashcan-lid tympanums and dancers with oil drums strapped to their feet) are back with their "Lost and Found Orchestra". The 60-strong company revels in making music out of madcap materials ranging from steel handsaws or rubber tubing to traffic cones and trash bins. The really crazy thing is, it actually sounds pretty cool.

11-20 March, www.olympiahall.com

Traversées africaines

Le Tarmac, an arts space in eastern Paris dedicated to the international French-speaking arts scene, is hosting a transnational festival of African cultures. It kicks off with the Dutchman Herman Diephuis’s choreographic creation for four young Burkinabe dancers "L'objet principal du voyage," and moves on through music, theater and yet more dance, with outstanding artists from Kenya, Cameroon, Congo and Burkina Faso.

9 March-16 April. www.letarmac.fr

Holiday on Ice – “Believe”

Former Olympic skating champion Christopher Dean has brought a revolutionary concept to the long-running ice-rink glitz-fest: an actual plot with a beginning, middle, and end. This "rock and roll Romeo and Juliet" portrays star-crossed lovers from opposite sides of the tracks. Never fear, the story doesn’t get in the way of giddily spectacular skating and big production numbers. And oh yes, this Romeo and Juliet actually manage to skate their way to a happy ending.


Daido Tokyo

The Fondation Cartier is hosting its second major retrospective of pioneering Japanese photographer Daido Moriyama, who has documented the vast visual rollercoaster of post-war Tokyo from the 1960s to today. Amidst the colorful cacophony of urban contradictions, a specially commissioned multiscreen slideshow of new black-and-white shots intriguingly titled “Dog and Mesh Tights.”

Until 5 June, http://fondation.cartier.com
Community Life

One of a series about ACP committees

Helping hands of the Community Life Committee constitute one of the indispensable parts of our American Church in Paris body. Community Life planned, prepared and served meals that fed more than a thousand people at various ACP events in 2015, but food is just one of the committee’s responsibilities.

Carol Brown headed the committee from June 2014 until resigning at the end of 2015 in preparation for moving back to the U.S. this spring. Carol and husband Chris plan to split their time between Virginia and North Carolina in retirement as well as travel the U.S. and abroad as much as possible.

Now Carol has handed the reins to Mary Hovind-Gay, who joined the committee as vice chair last March and became chair January 1. Mary started helping Carol in the kitchen on Thurber Thursdays in October 2014 and soon realized she could use her gift of hospitality serving with the committee. This is a woman who loves being in the kitchen and thrives on presentation and decorating. (She rearranged her gift shop back in the States each season and once had four Christmas trees in her house.)

Community Life operates behind the scenes in at least five other ways:

- It organizes the ACP Ministry Fair held each September, where representatives of about 30 ministries help people find a ministry using their gifts.
- It provides hospitality for the church’s guest apartment, fixing a “welcome basket” for the arrival of guest speakers and visiting pastors.
- It coordinates a new-member class four times a year, e-mailing people who have expressed an interest in joining the church. The committee provides food and flowers and hands out materials and forms during the one-hour class, then later at ACP services, helps welcome anyone choosing to join.
- It monitors the church kitchen, keeping it supplied and purchasing needed equipment.
- It wraps up any food left over from meals for distribution in the Serve the City program feeding the homeless on the streets of Paris.

Community Life spends the lion’s share of its time preparing food for special events. In November the committee, using 70 volunteers, presents a traditional Thanksgiving feast for 200 in two sittings in the Thurber Room. The celebrants devour 25 turkeys. Two days before that, the committee provides soup and sandwiches for the reception following the joint Thanksgiving service with the American Cathedral.

Hundreds more are fed Easter brunch surrounding ACP’s multiple services. In addition, Community Life cooks meals for Thurber Thursday classes and programs with guest speakers, crowds ranging from 15 to 50.

The committee is responsible for snacks on Mother’s Day and Father’s Day and food at the congregation’s annual meeting and ACP’s volunteer reception. It also sets up the party after the children’s Christmas program as well as the Christmas Eve cookie reception.

Mary needs help doing all these things and welcomes volunteers -- members or nonmembers -- who feel called to this ministry. She’s also looking for a vice chair to aid in the organization and administration of Community Life’s duties. For vice chair, she would love to have someone comfortable in the kitchen and somewhat familiar with ACP programs in general. That person must be an ACP member; the vice chair serves on the council and attends committee meetings with the chair. Anyone interested in volunteering should e-mail her at communitylife@acparis.org.

Mary hopes anyone volunteering will feel it’s a “natural fit” like Community Life is for her. When she told friends back in the U.S. she had joined Community Life as vice chair in training to be chair, they enthusiastically agreed it was an obvious place to use her gifts.

Her favorite Bible story is about Jesus visiting the home of Mary and Martha. Martha, gifted in hospitality, was working hard preparing food while sister Mary sat at Jesus’ feet listening to his teaching. Her former church had a mission statement about seeking, serving and sharing the Savior. Mary believes there must be a balance between serving Jesus and seeking Him to really be sharing Him.

“I’m a Martha at heart, but I try to balance it with the Mary,” she said.

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. - 1 Peter 4:1
Celebrating Holy Week and Easter at ACP

Palm/Passion Sunday, 20 March

One Worship Service only, at 11h30

Holy Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 21-23 March

Holden Evening Prayer Services at 19h00. The Holden Evening Prayer is a lovely setting of vespers, following the traditional form and using contemporary and inclusive language.

Maundy Thursday, 24 March

Worship Service with communion at 20h00 in the Sanctuary.

Good Friday, 25 March

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

Easter Sunday, 27 March

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

Note: Attendance at the Easter morning service at 11h00 always exceeds church capacity. If you look forward to worshipping at the traditional service, please consider attending at 9h00.
Share your “Finding Christ” moment
By Mira Hobbs

“I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me.”
- Proverbs 8:17

One of the most important and special moments in a Christian’s life is when they encounter the Lord. It is fascinating and beautiful when we are faced with Christ for the first time, and so is hearing stories about others’ revelations.

During the associate pastor hiring process, my family hosted dinner each week for the visiting candidate and members of the search committee. One evening, we went around the table and shared our Christian journeys. We each started with how our relationship with God had begun and explained how it has grown through our life experiences. Though there were only about 8 of us attending dinner, we were all brought to tears by the powerful stories.

I couldn’t believe how impressive and different everyone’s testimony was. I started to think about the amount of breathtaking experiences there must be in our entire congregation and how I wanted to be able to hear them. I decided I might as well share them with the world. Our congregation is extremely culturally diverse and so I decided to write a book, a compilation of ACP’s testimonies.

My goal for creating a book for our church is solely to show the world how special our congregation is. We are incredibly fortunate to have such a vast and diverse Christian family. I am interested in hearing how, although we’ve had different experiences and have multicultural backgrounds, we’ve all crossed a common path: the path of Christ. We often say our church is a melting pot of nationalities, and I think if we come together we can construct a masterpiece showing how the Lord has done beautiful acts for people around the globe.

I am inviting and encouraging everyone who feels called to send me their “Finding Christ” moment. Perhaps you can use Lent to reflect on your journey with God and take time to write about the moment your relationship became real. Remembering such a spiritual and essential moment in our lives, no matter how recent or long ago it was, will be refreshing and healing for all of us.

I will be collecting submissions from 10 February until 24 March by email at acpstory@gmail.com. No matter who you are, where you come from, or what you’ve been through, I know your story will touch someone’s heart. You will allow someone who is feeling alone or going through a rough time to be able to relate.

I recommend people include their first name, nationality, age, mother tongue, and years at ACP. If you’d prefer to stay anonymous or only include a fraction of that information you can do so as well; whatever you’re comfortable with. I will add headings and titles to everyone’s work but nothing else. I won’t edit anyone’s story unless asked to do so. I want to publish everyone’s raw stories written from their heart. The only requirement I have is for the submissions to be no more than 1,000 words. If you’re interested or have any questions, reach me at acpstory@gmail.com

Please submit your story from 10 February until 24 March by email at acpstory@gmail.com. No matter who you are, where you come from, or what you’ve been through, I know your story will touch someone’s heart.

The Movie Discussion Group
Thursday 17 March - 19h30 – G2
This month’s movie listings: Hail Caesar by the Coen brothers, The Room by Lenny Abrahamson, and The Revenant by Alejandro González Iñárritu. See any or all at your leisure and join the group for discussion.
Contact: movies@acparis.org
Saying goodbye to South Sudan… for now

By Michael Beeman

It is hard to believe that over 2 years have passed since I began working in South Sudan. Time has passed so quickly. Recently, I have decided to answer a call to return to the US to consider other opportunities, after about six and a half years outside my home country. This does not mean I will not return to South Sudan, but the move creates a time for reflection on what I have learned. So, with that in mind, I would like to use this contribution to the Spire to offer a few key lessons learned.

People want to and do help themselves – the consequences of war in South Sudan since the 1950s have affected generations. From what I have observed, this left communities fearful of what would happen next, especially after violence erupted in December 2013. On top of that, it is commonly believed (at least among the expatriates) that years of humanitarian assistance have created dependency. However, I easily recall a conversation outside a remote village in the center of Jonglei state with local church leaders about just that. And, in that conversation, the woman in the group asked explicitly for prayers that one day the community would be able to help themselves. I did not expect this. I haven’t heard similarly strong comments, but it shined a light on what I believe is the most valuable lesson I will take forward.

Learn the culture early and quick – in 2014, I spent Christmas and New Year’s in Juba. Where I come from, it is normal to spend a quiet holiday season with close friends and families, and, maybe, your office will host a Christmas party. I spent the holidays in Juba in a similar fashion—with close friends. Only after the holidays did a colleague tell me that he was calling our other South Sudanese colleagues over Christmas to wish them a Merry Christmas on our behalf (the foreigners). He explained that in fact it is the norm to simply show up at their homes to eat with them. Regrettfully, I did not know this. And for this reason, I will be spending more time sooner to research explicitly the cultural norms for gift giving, holiday celebrations, and so on, because as another friend and colleague has said, “As guests in this country, we are ‘under their culture’ and we are all under God’s culture.”

The project’s logical framework does not have the final word – I spend most of my day-to-day work reviewing logical frameworks and proposals for new projects. I ensure that our project’s desired outcome is coherent with the specific objectives and the project targets. It can be tedious, especially when the project is measuring longer-term development. However, I have come to believe strongly that in community development, whether in Juba or Paris, these “logical frameworks”, well, are just that—only logical. They do not capture the greater transformation and work that God is leading in these communities. God’s “framework” has the final word, not our own.

I am incredibly grateful for those two years in South Sudan. Although the time was short, I have learned more about the nuances in poverty alleviation and God’s presence in communities struck by conflict. And I am glad that I could share some of those snapshots with the American Church in Paris. Going forward I look forward to continuing to share what anecdotes I can from my work when relevant. In the meantime, thank you for your prayers and support.
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 6 March**

*Michel GEOFFROY - piano*

Music by Beethoven, three sonatas

**Sunday 13 March**

*Véronique DAVERIO - violin*

*Hélène BELLANGER - piano*

American music: Barber, Adams, Gershwin, Bolcom, Williams

**Sunday 20 March**

*Carlos FELLER - flute*

*Mary CHUNG - piano*

Music by Telemann, Fuhling, Chopin, Debussy, Dutilleux, Nobre, Landestoy
When you hear the name of Giacomo Puccini, you first think of La Bohème, Tosca, or maybe Turandot, but seldom the Messa di Gloria.

While the Italian composer (born in 1858 in Tuscany) was most famous for his operas, his Messa di Gloria is also worth getting to know. Parisians will have a chance to do just that on 12 March, when the Adult Choir of ACP combines with Lux Perpetua and the Association Symphonique de Paris to perform this too-little-heard work.

Completed when he was only 22, this Mass presents not only perfect academic mastery of the complexities of the fugue form, but also a pronounced taste for rich melodies and luxury orchestration (which we will find again in his later lyric productions).

Although the mass was first performed in 1880, it was only published in 1951. The manuscript had been lost, and was not found again until after World War II, when it was brought to public attention in New York.

The actual title of the Messa di Gloria is in fact Messa a quattro voci, or a Mass for Four Voices, but the Gloria section is so long and rich that the first publisher gave it the name it is now known by. It represents a perfect combination of youthful energy and total respect of the classical heritage.

Speaking of heritage, one little historical detail should be mentioned. Puccini studied at a music school in his hometown of Lucca and in 1876 walked 20 miles to Pisa and back to hear a performance of Verdi’s Aida. Verdi was Puccini’s musical hero, and the Mass that he would complete just four years later shows clear influence of that.

The Messa di Gloria is an uncomplicated work. Its style is direct and unashamedly operatic. As a liturgical work written in an overtly operatic style, its most obvious antecedents are Rossini’s Petite Messe Solonelle (1863) and Verdi’s Requiem (1874). It is a remarkably assured work for such a young composer, full of color, vitality and musical surprises, such as the many sudden key changes.

To illustrate the link between Puccini and Verdi, the March program will also include the overture from Verdi’s opera Nabucco, whose libretto is based on biblical stories from the Books of Jeremiah and Daniel. It recounts the plight of the Jews as they are assaulted, conquered and subsequently exiled from their homeland by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, rendered as “Nabucco” in Italian.

Don’t miss this concert with the American Church choir Saturday, 12 March at 20h00

Puccini – Missa di Gloria
Verdi – Nabucco (ouverture)

Lux Perpetua Choir, directed by Claire Lewis
ACP Choir, directed by Fred Gramann
Association Symphonique de Paris, directed by Franck Chastrusse Colombier

With soloists: Ragaa El Din tenor and Michele Patti baritone
February 16, 2015

My dear friends and neighbors,

It was just a week ago that Barbara’s body finally gave out. She died very peacefully in her sleep. The gathered family concurred that hers was one of those so-called ‘good deaths’. By that, I mean that Barbara was able to bring closure with all members of her family and most whom she loved. Thanks to Skype, she was able to say her goodbyes, and they to her, who were too far away to stand around her bed and hold her hand.

She also died with no regrets – except one. She’d lived her life pure and was right with all. Given the fact that, other than the cancer, she was in superb physical and mental condition. She expected to outlive all her contemporaries. So she felt wronged and angry for a season that she didn’t get at least another twenty years. But she also came to accept her plight.

I’m also writing to announce that the family has determined to celebrate Barbara’s life on Sunday, 24 April here at Pilgrim Place. The service will begin at 3:30pm, followed by a reception. Our children, remembering how much Barbara loved chocolate, promise to provide a chocolate lover’s delight, whatever that means. But it’ll be that dark, healthy 92% kind. No milk chocolate for her.

We recognize that those living far from Southern California will not be able to join us for this celebration of life. However, for those who are able, we’d love to have you join us for the memorializing of Barbara’s earthly journey.

Dying sucks. It’s a sad time. Losing a mom, sister, aunt, sister-in-law, grandmother, dear friend and life-partner – where’s the fun in any of that? It’s a major loss, a hole in our lives that takes time to fill if, in fact, at all. Barbara will only come along once in any of our lives. About the only good thing about her dying is it brings cessation to her pain and suffering. About that, I can fully rejoice. Not about much else.

But, as a pastor, I’ve witnessed many dying moments where elements of joy and humor break through the solemnity, sadness and gloom. I guess these momentary revelations of joy and profundity are part of what characterizes a “good death.”

RIP Barbara Rogers

Reverend John Rogers was one of our first Visiting Pastors, helping out in 1991 and again in 2001. He and his wife Barbara are known to many of the ACP congregation. Barbara recently passed on, and this is the intro to the letter John wrote in tribute to her final days. John can be reached at rogersjohn70@gmail.com

Multicultural Couples Potluck Dinner

Friday 25 March - 20h00 - Thurber Room

Calling all multicultural couples. You are warmly invited to bring a dish to share and join the fun. There is always great fellowship and fascinating cross-cultural discussion. For more information contact Monica Bassett or Anja Wyss at multicultural@acparis.org
Blessed to be a Blessing

The annual women’s retreat
By TL Valluy

“When’s the next retreat?” This is what many women and even some children were asking as they left the church on Saturday 13 February, having attended the women’s and kids’ retreats.

The Spirit was definitely present as Rev. Jodi Fondell talked to the women on the subject of “Blessed to be a Blessing.” Focusing on Abram’s faith and Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, Jodi held up two promises from the Lord: that He loves us and that He will bless us. Then, when we are blessed, she noted, we are to turn around and bless others...we are blessed to be blessings.

Sixty women participated. We began our day with an informal breakfast brunch, enjoying each other’s company, surrounded by candles and pictures of an overflowing tree, symbolizing us putting our roots in Jesus and then being able to branch out and bless others. The graphic artwork was done by Cédric Valluy.

Along with listening to God’s message through Jodi, we also enjoyed dining together and were blessed to have the ACP Men’s Ministry, as well as youths Lanie Benson and Matthew Herr, serve and clean. Alyssa McKnight also blessed others, working hard in the kitchen to prepare lunch. Still Point led the worship at one part of the day, energizing the women, many of whom raised their voices and hands in worshipful praise. Upon hearing Still Point for the first time, Trudy White exclaimed, “I’m going to attend the one-thirty service!” Trudy then stated that she is a visitor to Paris and felt blessed to have discovered the Spirit-filled community at ACP.

We also got some much-needed time alone with the Lord, which can be a rarity in our busy lives. We were able to sit, reflect and pray in and around the church and just take time to be still and know that He is God.

The women’s day ended with several sharing their personal testimonies about their own blessings. This was such an invigorating moment, one woman felt the need to spontaneously share and was an instant blessing to everyone present! “I was just so moved; I just felt like I had to tell,” Emmanuelle Denfert-Bariani said. Chinwe Akujuobi and Zainabe Taylor also witnessed in word and song.

Upon leaving, we were presented with a small silver heart, something that might get stuck in a pocket or pushed down in a bag, something that when found would be a small reminder of the retreat, of our own blessings in Christ, and of the idea that we are blessed to be blessings.

But we weren’t the only ones having a special day; the kids in childcare had their own retreat. The children had fun in the gym, always a treat, and also spent time learning about Jesus through stories, movies, and games. Arts and crafts during the day were a big hit. Pamela Gonder, Sonja Marron, Imelda Mendez, and Elisabeth Ngo Njock took care of our young disciples, and the kids left exhausted and joyful.

The organizing committee was composed of Chinwe Akujuobi, Kim Herr, Elodie Mbette, Luciana Rothwell and Teri Lee Valluy. Of the experience Luciana said, “I was surrounded by a dedicated team, and we allowed God to work through us. I’m grateful to God for having chosen me for the task.”

So, when is the next retreat? Well, for women and kids only, it’s not until next February, but keep it in mind, and between now and then, may we all grow in Christ and bless others as He blesses us.

Call for Sunday Nursery volunteers

We have a growing need to serve our smallest disciples, and our nursery requires extra helping hands during the 11h and 13h30 services. Please contact childrensworship@acparis.org if you have experience with caring for children under 23 months and you would like to assist this vital ministry.
Serve the City Mission Project

The Serve the City Mission Project is distributing food donated by Prêt à Manger to the needy. There are now nearly 20 American Church volunteers serving up to 150 meals five days a week to the less fortunate in and around Paris. Additional volunteers are needed to help pick up sandwiches from the Prêt à Manger’s Neuilly-sur-Seine shop at 8h and distribute them to homeless people. Come join the team and help us Serve the City! Contact parisservethecity@gmail.com.

Volunteer with Habitat for Humanity

Founded in 1976, Habitat for Humanity has built or renovated more than 800,000 homes around the world, providing more than 4 million people with safe, decent, affordable shelter. Anyone who can hold a hammer or a paint brush is welcome to the work of Habitat for Humanity. Volunteers provide man power that allows the building of homes or the making of renovations at considerably lower costs.

More importantly, the volunteering experience transforms lives: both for the volunteers who work alongside Habitat homeowners and for partner families who see people who care enough to help them break the cycle of poverty.

The American Church in Paris is organizing a Habitat for Humanity trip for August 2016. Volunteers must be 16 years old or older.

Questions? Contact Kai-Marcel Grunert by email at awaiting_further_informations@yahoo.com

SOS Help spring book sale

Last year SOS Help listeners answered almost 5,000 calls - around 10% increase over the previous year. Thank you for your help in reaching those who may wish to call us.

Our spring book sale is coming up. These sales are not only important fundraisers, they also enable us to work in the community we serve. With your help and our bulletin sent to 1500 odd customers they help to raise awareness of our service to potential callers.

We're back with fresh books in all categories-one of our largest selections ever! Pick up some new reads at low prices, as well as some delicious goodies at our bake sale!

**SOS Help spring book sale**

**Sunday 3 April, noon to 16h**

Orrick Law Offices
31 avenue Pierre 1er de Serbie
75016 Paris

[http://www.soshelpline.org/events.html](http://www.soshelpline.org/events.html) for full details.
Uganda decides

By Patti Lafage

"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God." - Romans 13:1

Official results of the presidential and legislative elections were held in Uganda last month, where I am living and working at Rafiki Village. Provisional results at time of writing was 60% for the incumbent, 35% for the principal opponent – no surprises.

Here’s a bit of history: Uganda’s President Museveni led a rebel army in a 5-year bush war to take power in Uganda and thus became head of state in 1986. Failed governments, ruthless dictators, and foreign intervention had characterized the 24-year period since independence from the British in 1962.

Under President Museveni peace, unity, and stability were restored. Uganda recovered: education became available again, some of the infrastructure was rebuilt. People took pride in their country and identified themselves as Ugandans.

However, many feel that development has been too slow. The country is still very poor, still depends on foreign aid for about 30% of the national budget, still counts too many households living by subsistence farming: plowing with a hand hoe and irrigating with jerry cans of water carried from the nearest well. Rafiki Foundation aims to teach Ugandans to raise their standard of living.

As in most elections, the incumbent wants to continue in power, which, in the case of Uganda, means adding five more years to his 30 years in office.

The campaign period has been largely peaceful. Sizeable groups have mobilized under the banner of peaceful elections. Thousands of special military and civilian “crime preventers” are deployed. On election day, delays of up to 5 hours in receiving voting materials meant that voters waited in for line for hours or left without being able to vote. Disturbances broke out. The leading opposition candidate was arrested and detained to prevent civil disobedience. Rafiki is contributing to raising up the future leaders of Uganda.

I could only pick up small bits, but heard the various presidential candidates’ names loud and clear. These men seemed light years away from any potential for violence. I pray that the millions like them throughout the country will resist temptation to join in any violent protest. Rafiki students are learning to respect authority and make good choices.

I studied a large billboard across the road for The Arm of God Ministries. The sign lists activities every day of the week, several Bible study sessions, plus three worship services on Sunday. It proclaims the church’s vision from Isaiah 49:1-6: “to gather Israel to himself...” – “to restore those of Israel that I have kept.” I wonder... There are thousands of independent churches in Uganda. The pastors may or may not have any theological knowledge or training. Syncretism, the blending of biblical teaching with traditional beliefs, is widespread. The spirit world, appeasing malevolent spirits, idolizing charismatic preachers: they are all part of life. Rafiki is here to help Africans know God.

Thank you for praying with me for peaceful elections in Uganda. Please continue to pray with me that Rafiki can make a difference.
### Special Events and Monthly Meetings and Concerts

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| **Breakfast Ministry**  
Preparation: Friday 19h30, meet at ACP Reception  
Distribution: Saturday 08h00, meet at ACP Reception | Friday 4 Mar  
Saturday 5 Mar | 19h30  
8h00 | | Jurie Ane Feleo  
homelesssandwich  
@acparis.org |
| **Atelier Concert - Michel GEOFFROY, piano**  
Free admission, with free-will offering | Sunday 6 Mar | 17h00  
Sanctuary | | Fred Gramann  
music@acparis.org |
| **ACP Today: Faith Talk in Paris radio show**  
Tune in for inspiring music and interviews. | Monday 7 Mar | 20h45 - 21h30 | 100.7 FM, Radio Fréquence Protestante |
| **Thurber Thursday - Pringle Franklin**  
Hope & Healing in Marriage #1 | Thursday 10 Mar | 19h00; 19h45  
Dinner;Lecture  
Thurber Room | | Jim Lockwood-Stewart  
visitingpastor  
@acparis.org |
| **ACP MOPS (mothers of children ages newborn-6)**  
Childcare available. Come “flourish fiercely” with us. | Friday 11 Mar | 10h00 - 12h00  
Catacombs | mops@acparis.org |
| **Friday Mission Lunch (volunteers needed)**  
Every Friday a hot, nutritious meal is prepared for the homeless and needy. ACP is responsible for the meal on the second Friday of each month, but we are grateful for help with cooking, serving, and cleaning up every Friday. | Friday 11 Mar | 10h00 - 14h00  
The American Cathedral | If you are interested,  
please first contact:  
Kristie Worrel  
fridaymissionlunch  
@acparis.org |
| **Writers' Group** | Saturday 12 Mar | 14h30 - 16h30  
Room G2 | Tendayi Chirawu  
writers@acparis.org |
| **Concert – Puccini: Missa di Gloria and Verdi: Nabucco (ouverture)**  
Lux Perpetua Choir, ACP Choir, Association Symphonique de Paris | Saturday 12 Mar | 20h00  
Sanctuary | Fred Gramann  
music@acparis.org |
| **Youth@Noon**  
A time of fellowship for youth (ages 11-18) unable to attend other youth group events or looking for another chance to hang out and grow in faith. French and English speakers welcome. Lunch provided. | Sunday 13 Mar | 12h15 - 13h15  
G2 | Billy Roberts  
youthpastor  
@acparis.org |
| **Women's Gathering - Nisryn Razzouq speaking on “Justice and Mercy in Syria?”** We will look at Syria from a historical context, the land and its people, particularly the Christians living there. A time of fellowship | Sunday 13 Mar | 12h30-13h30  
Thurber Room | Kim Herr  
women@acparis.org |
| **Atelier Concert - Véronique DAVERIO, violin and Hélène BELLANGER, piano**  
Free admission, with free-will offering | Sunday 13 Mar | 17h00  
Sanctuary | Fred Gramann  
music@acparis.org |
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<td><strong>Atelier Concert - Carlos FELLER, flute and Mary CHUNG, piano</strong>&lt;br&gt;Free admission, with free-will offering</td>
<td>Sunday 20 Mar</td>
<td>17h00</td>
<td>Fred Gramann&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:music@acparis.org">music@acparis.org</a></td>
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<td><strong>ACP Today: Faith Talk in Paris radio show</strong>&lt;br&gt;Tune in for inspiring music and interviews.</td>
<td>Monday 21 Mar</td>
<td>20h45 - 21h30</td>
<td>100.7 FM, Radio Fréquence Protestante</td>
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<td><strong>Holy Week Services</strong>&lt;br&gt;Holden Evening Prayer Service: Mon, Tues, Wed&lt;br&gt;Maundy Thursday Service&lt;br&gt;Good Friday Service</td>
<td>Monday - Friday 21-25 Mar</td>
<td>Mon, Tues, Wed&lt;br&gt;19h00&lt;br&gt;Thurs, Fri&lt;br&gt;20h00</td>
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<td><strong>Multicultural Couples Potluck Dinner</strong>&lt;br&gt;Fellowship and discussion on topics such as raising bicultural/bilingual children and cultural differences. Bring a dish to share.</td>
<td>Friday 25 Mar</td>
<td>20h00</td>
<td>Monica Bassett &amp; Anja Wyss&lt;br&gt;multicultural&lt;br&gt;@acparis.org</td>
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<td><strong>Time Change to Summer Time / Daylight Savings</strong>&lt;br&gt;Set clocks forward one hour</td>
<td>Sunday 27 Mar</td>
<td>02h00 (03h00)</td>
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<td><strong>Holy Week: Easter Sunday</strong>&lt;br&gt;Sunrise Service on the quai d’Orsay&lt;br&gt;Easter Fellowship Breakfast&lt;br&gt;Traditional Celebration of the Resurrection&lt;br&gt;Contemporary Celebration of the Resurrection</td>
<td>Sun 27 Mar</td>
<td>7h30&lt;br&gt;8h00&lt;br&gt;9h00, 11h00&lt;br&gt;13h30</td>
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<td><strong>Easter Monday, Lundi Paques</strong>&lt;br&gt;Church building closed for public holiday.</td>
<td>Monday 28 Mar</td>
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<td><strong>Thurber Thursday - Rev. Dr. John Huffman</strong>&lt;br&gt;A Profile of the Church That Will Not Just Survive But Flourish in the 21st Century</td>
<td>Thursday 31 Mar</td>
<td>19h00; 19h45 Dinner; Lecture</td>
<td>Jim Lockwood-Stewart&lt;br&gt;visitingpastor&lt;br&gt;@acparis.org</td>
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(Please check [www.acparis.org/whatson](http://www.acparis.org/whatson) for updates and weekly schedules)
CONCERT
PUCCINI - Missa di Gloria
VERDI - Nabucco (ouverture)

Samedi 12 mars 2016 à 20h00
Eglise américaine de Paris
65, quai d’Orsay - Paris 7ème
Métro: Invalides / Alma-Marceau
Entrée: 10€ / 5€ (étudiants, -18ans)