How’s your driving?
St. Patrick’s Day
200th anniversary
“He’s a Music Man!”
Thoughts from the Rev. Dr. Scott Herr

Running Devotional with Rev. Michelle Wahilla

Council Vice-Moderator’s report, by Mark Primmer

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Thurber Thursdays

The Smokin’ 7th arrondissement, by François Pierre

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ACP Music Notes, by Fred Gramann

Mardi Gras as a globalized tradition, by Natalie Hideg

Young Adults and Youth

Catching up with Hanna, by Hanna Woodhead
Progressive Pondering, by Rev Dan Haugh
Youth Alpha
Final thoughts on my internship, by Andrea Chaumont

ACP Missions
Destiny E. Ryales
Francis Gobbinah
ACP Homeless Ministry and AUP Cares

ACP Small Group Paris XV

March calendar

From the cover:
The word above the main church door is the Greek word, romanized as
"IXTHUS", pronounced "ick-thoose," oose pronounced like caboose. The fish is one of the
ey early Christian secret symbols to discreetly show that Christians lived there. The
Greek word IXTHUS literally means "fish." It is also a nifty acronym: I is the first letter in
the Greek spelling for Jesus, X is the first letter for the Greek word for Christ (Xristos),
TH is the first letter for "of God" [theou, genitive], U is the first letter of the Greek word
for "Son," and S is the first letter of the Greek word (soter) for "savior." Hence, the
Greek word for fish can also proclaim, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior of the world." -
Pastor Scott Herr
Dear Members and Friends of the ACP,

I recently read the fascinating spiritual and professional journey of the new (since last year) Chief Information Officer at Goldman Sachs. Back in 1993, after earning his PhD in medical information science at Stanford University, Marty Chavez had begun working at Goldman Sachs as an analyst, but after four years he quit, claiming he needed “a new challenge.”

The real reason, he later admitted, was more profound: “I decided to stop drinking.” He described what people in addiction recovery call “pulling a geographic,” referring to when a person makes a move to a new location, often an entirely different region of the country, in an effort to escape their addiction or unwanted behavior. Mr. Chavez experienced a number of career changes, finally retiring in New York.

Then last year, Gary Cohn, the new president of Goldman Sachs, called him to say “I heard you retired. That’s ridiculous. I was just calling to share with you that you’re coming back…” Mr. Chavez was reluctant, but went on a personal silent retreat at a monastery in New Mexico. There, cleaning toilets, he had “an epiphany” and realized that “he wanted to effect transformation in a global way and that returning to Goldman Sachs was the way to do it…”

Mr. Chavez’ story is fascinating to me, as in many ways it reflects the dynamics of the life of faith and repentance. It begins with brokenness and the realization of a need for change. It involves scanning to discern what that change involves practically. Repentance can feel like “it’s going to get worse before it gets better.” Perhaps for Mr. Chavez cleaning toilets was physically a place of humble service, but it also symbolized a posture spiritually, a willingness to do whatever it takes to listen. And then it happens. God speaks when we really listen! There is a new dawn, a new opening and opportunity for service, a new passion to be a part of something so much bigger than ourselves; indeed, to be a part of “transformation in a global way!”

I invite you to take this season of Lent as an opportunity to reflect on your own life and our life together as a church. What are areas in your life that need “a new challenge”? What in the ministry and mission of your life or our life together need to experience “pulling a geographic,” meaning that we need to significantly relocate ourselves in order to be the men and women, or the church, that God has created and calls us to be? Are we willing to do the quiet, non-glamorous, humble work of listening and “cleaning toilets,” as the case may be, in order to hear the fresh Word of God that will take us to a new season of life that will be part of God’s global project of redemption and reclamation?

Two dates require special attention this month: the first is **Ash Wednesday, 5 March**, the beginning of Lent. Lent is the church’s “holy Spring” and a time for new life and new openness to hear God’s Word to us. Join us for Ash Wednesday, and may Lent be a time for renewed faith and repentance that leads to new life for you personally and for us as a community.

Secondly, please note that we will be having an important congregational meeting on **Sunday 23 March**. In fact, we will be enjoying brunch together, a combined worship service together, and then meeting together to listen, discern and decide about some important issues for our future. Please see more about the meeting in this issue....

Finally, take a moment to read Matthew 4:1-11. This passage reveals that even Jesus had to face his own demons and struggle with his calling in life. It’s hard to listen. It’s hard to discern God’s call. It can be a painful struggle in the wilderness to clarify God’s path and purpose for our lives... and to practice faith and repentance. But when there is that “epiphany,” that revelation of “this is what I am meant to do,” there is new joy and passion for life. You are energized to do what is hard so that you can accomplish what is great! May we put ourselves in a position to listen, to hear, and then to respond in faith to God’s call! May it be so for us together as we follow Jesus to the cross and to Easter New life... Hoping to journey with you all the way,

In Christ,

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Week Two

Training for a race is a difficult task, spanning a long period of time. In training for long distances, runners slowly build distance each week in order to work toward their goals on race day. Even though distance is built gradually, most runners reach a point in their training when the number of miles is so great that the body, mind and spirit are all tired – and ready to give up.

The main obstacle might be pure fatigue, injury or discouragement. At this pivotal point in training, the runner must face the obstacle and decide whether or not he or she has hope – hope for completing the training and eventually the race. During this low point in training, I have found much encouragement through other runners, those who have completed long races and those who train with me.

It’s always amazing how the encouragement of others can help to renew hope and strength. On those very long runs when I think I cannot put another foot in front of the other when someone says, “You can do it!” I suddenly begin to soar. Out of no where comes strength I didn’t believe I had.

If this principle is true for something as simple as running a race (as challenging as that is!), can you imagine the encouragement you could give to someone running through the darkest hours of life? Without a doubt, our ultimate strength comes from the strength of our Lord, Jesus Christ. As those who claim Him, it is our responsibility and our delight to bring His strength to those without hope. Hope comes from the Lord, but it comes through you and me. May you be encouraged and may you be an encourager.

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

Bénédictions,
Michelle

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Running Devotional
The Rev. Michelle Wahila
Associate Pastor

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. - Isaiah 40:29-31

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From Your ACP Council ~ What’s Going On

Members and Friends of ACP,

Grace and peace to you from your Church Council. As I write to you we are approaching the end of Epiphany and soon will enter into the Lenten Season, a time for spiritual transformation and renewal. In this spirit, Council is busy preparing for our annual congregational meeting on Sunday, 23 March. On this day we will worship together in a combined traditional/contemporary service at 11h30, with the meeting to begin at 12h30.

Collectively as we discern how to provide for our programs and activities based on our human and financial resources, we will also be asked to determine two important pastoral matters: the renewal of our Senior Pastor’s call to serve at ACP, and the elevation of the Pastor of Youth and Young Adult Ministries to Associate Pastor of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, both of which have Council’s unanimous support.

In addition, we will receive annual reports from our pastors and committees. We are blessed to have a gifted and committed team serving on Council this year; leading and supporting a vast array of programs and ministry activities. During our February meeting, Council welcomed John Benson as our new Secretary, replacing Bleu Bettencourt who has returned to the US with his family. We are grateful for their service at ACP.

At the same time, we are also blessed by the many “quiet” acts of faithful service that go on behind the scenes. We all contribute in our own way to the ACP family, and we are healthier, wiser, and spiritually stronger thanks to the inspiring faith-driven commitment and tireless devotion to serve this place of worship.

In the days of anticipation and preparation for Easter, may we continue to pray for strength and peace, thereby opening ourselves more to God’s love and grace.

In Christ,
Mark Primmer, ACP Council Vice-Moderator
A message from Michael

Michael Beeman was an active member at the American Church in Paris from 2009 through 2011. He now works in South Sudan for a faith-based, relief and development agency headquartered in London.

Missionary is not the first word that comes to mind when I consider my work. No more a missionary than the next person. Service is central, yes, and I pray that God would summon out of me what He desires to see. But, it is particularly challenging to embrace “missionary” in this type of work.

Currently, I do program development for an NGO (nongovernmental organization), often referred to as a humanitarian group or a relief and development agency. The aid sector is heavily focused in post-disaster areas (e.g. Philippines following the most recent cyclone) or in chronic crises, like in Niger. Many NGOs manage long-term development projects in other countries, like Angola and Mozambique.

I am in South Sudan, a three-year old country and a part of the world that has not been far from conflict for some 20-plus years. My role is a reflection of how international development has evolved: I work with teams of individuals to identify needs and design projects to meet those needs, and, with others, I seek the resources to implement those projects. In other words, I manage grants. A lot of those resources come from European and the US governments, the main supporters of international development globally today.

The priorities that a faith-based institution and a government donor raise may not be the same, although one would hope so. I feel a responsibility to influence the government’s priorities. But, in the end, our aim is to meet the needs of a vulnerable community. The Church and UN agencies, in particular, have come a long way in doing so. And both have a lot to learn from each other, I would say. This is my context, and I am thankful for the ACP’s prayers and support here.

What I see is an enormous desire to reduce vulnerability globally, and here I can begin to understand missionary work in the 21st century — where is the spirit of service? In many ways, it is very easy to hand out food, build a temporary shelter, and vaccinate children against measles. But to live peacefully and in full love with one another is extraordinarily challenging — all the more reason to devote a life working in peace and love. A mission for any city.

This is a brief insight into what I will be doing and what I have been thinking as I begin another chapter of public service overseas. With each month, I hope to share additional insight into what I do, along with some reflection. Thank you again for your prayers and support.

I am glad to connect with you via email as well at beeman.michael@gmail.com.

Please remember to do the math!

9h00 service - 11h service - 13h30 service = ONE BIG CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH SERVICE

Sunday 23 March 2014
Congregational Meeting and a Change in Worship Service Times

This year we wanted to make it easy for all our ACP members to attend the annual congregational meeting, which will be held on Sunday, 23 March. We will be voting on several exciting changes and projects coming up here at ACP, getting an update from our Council Committee and Pastoral Staff, as well as approving the church budget for 2014. Please keep in mind that we cannot vote on the proposed items unless we have a certain number present from the congregation — do join us if you are in town!

In order to make this easier for you, we would like to invite you all to an ACP Brunch on Sunday morning at 10h00 at the Church. Following the brunch we will have a special combined Worship Service at 11h30. Not only will this be a rare opportunity for all our church family to worship together, but it will also be a service with elements from all three of our regular services combined into one. The congregational meeting will follow in the Sanctuary directly after this service. There will be no need to move anywhere, change rooms or locations or remember the time of the meeting. Join us for Service, stay for the meeting!

We look forward to seeing you there.
What’s driving your Bible study?

By Rev. Brent Anderson
ACP Parish Associate

The Heart of a Pastor

There are many ways to describe a pastor’s ministry—one of care and compassion; one of servanthood, sacrifice and dedication; one of love and prayer; teaching, preaching and worship. Caring for people is important. There is truth in the old saying, “People don’t care about what you know, until they know that you care.” But assuming that most pastors truly do care about their congregations isn’t it true that what a pastor knows IS important? That’s why we love educated pastors who spend a good deal of time each week in personal prayer and study. We expect them to know about the things of God and be able to share their learned wisdom and insight with us.

That is one of the reasons I love attending the American Church in Paris. Not only does this church have pastors who truly care about this congregation, this congregation has a senior pastor who studies the Bible diligently and it shows — each and every Sunday as he steps into the pulpit. It’s obvious that one of Pastor Scott’s passions is to understand the Word of God and make it understandable to others.

The scripture effect

And why are most pastors passionate about Bible study? The answer is obvious. We know that there is strong correlation between a person’s understanding of scripture and the depth of a person’s relationship with God. We know that the more a person reads and understands the words of scripture (particularly in community), the more they will understand who God is, who they are, and how they can relate to God. They will also understand what it is God desires of us and how God desires us to live — how God calls us to be a reflection of Christ’s love and grace in the world — how God desires to use us to show others glimpses of God’s kingdom. We know that the more a person reads the words of scripture and seeks to understand them, the more likely their lives will be transformed by the Word of God and the more likely their lives will have a positive impact on their families, in their communities, and ultimately in the world bringing light and health and wholeness. Could there be anything more important?

What’s driving your Bible study?

But what if we drove our cars the same way some of us study the Bible?

First off, some people would never even get out of the driveway. Their shiny new cars might be parked out front—for the whole world to see—but it would be a rare day to ever see them looking under the hood, opening the doors, or even daring to start the engine. The problem is, now that they have one, they just aren’t quite sure what to do with it—they aren’t quite sure what all those knobs and pedals are for—so mostly their cars just sit out front gathering dust.

For others, they are admirers—collectors of classic cars—what they consider to be valuable relics of the past. They love collecting cars—they see them as worthy of preservation and admiration, but perhaps not always practical for “modern life” or “city life”. Still, they love to show off the old classic and they love to get behind the wheel every now and then.

Others, of course, prefer to have “chauffeurs” do the driving for them. Intimidated by the rules of the road, the busyness of rush-hour traffic, or simply just unsure of how a car really works, these individuals prefer to let others do the driving. They keep their eyes closed and trust that their “professional” driver will get them where they are going. Like the slogan of a famous bus company in the United States, they “Leave the driving to us”—and place themselves at the mercy and wisdom of their driver. But are chauffeurs always reliable and trustworthy? Don’t even professional drivers cause accidents and sometimes head the wrong way? Shouldn’t every car owner know how to drive themselves?

There are some who have learned to drive and they enjoy driving—a little bit. They like to take their cars out for leisurely drives every now and then—perhaps on the weekend. But they tend to prefer the same routes. They avoid unfamiliar neighborhoods or long trips to new destinations. And so around and around the block they go. They like their little neighborhood and they rarely venture outside their comfort zone.

Finally, there are those who have learned to drive and they drive well. Their cars might no longer be shiny and new, but they are well oiled and well used. These
individuals are comfortable driving even in the worst of conditions. They’re not afraid of the highways and byways; the country roads and the difficult neighborhoods. They consult their maps. They plan out their trips. When lost or curious, they stop and ask the locals for help. And they love to take others along for the ride. Sometimes they’ll get behind the wheel and lead and other times they are content to be a passenger (or ride “Shotgun”). But most of all, they enjoy the experience of traveling together. There is a richness that comes from being on a road trip with others. Life together on the road is transformative.

Learning to drive can be a challenge. It takes time getting used to being behind the wheel. Anyone who has learned to drive a manual transmission will tell you that there are a lot of starts and stops at first. And then there comes learning to parallel-park. But once mastered, these skills can be rather enjoyable, even exhilarating. But it takes some time and it is always helpful to have an experienced driver teach you how to drive, rather than trying to do it on your own.

How’s your driving?

How is your driving these days? Have you learned to drive? Would you like someone to teach you? More to the point: How comfortable are you in studying the Bible? How well do you know Scripture?

There are lots of people in the church who would love to partner with you, journey with, and help you better understand what the Spirit is trying to say to the church through Scripture. Consider contacting one of the pastors and ask them to help you. Or simply join one of the many Bible study opportunities available through the American Church in Paris. There is a convenient Bible study every Sunday morning in between the worship services at 10am. We would love to welcome you there.

And if you would like some suggestions on how to study, what to study, what kind of Bible to buy, what kind of tools might be most helpful, I have prepared a little document with several suggestions. Please contact me at brentaanderson@me.com and I would be happy to send it to you or you can download it from the church website at www.acparis.org/brentaanderson.

Blessings,

Brent

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**Events to celebrate the 200th anniversary**

**Saturday 29 March, 20h**
Haydn’s Mass in Time of War, performed by the ACP Adult Choir, the Choir “Lux Perpetua” and the Association Symphonique de Paris, with Franck Chastrusse, conductor.
Tickets: 12 euros and 7 euros

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

**Friday 11 April**
Habitat for Humanity Benefit Concert

**Sunday 25 April**
Gospel Worship Service

**Thursday 29 May and Sunday 1 June**
Dr. Neal Presa, Moderator of the PCUSA, lectures and preaches at ACP

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

**Saturday 6 September**
Garrison Keillor and Prairie Home Companion host live show, ACP Sanctuary

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

**24 – 25 October**
Open Paris International Youth Workers Conference

**28 – 30 October**
ACP hosts City to City Europe pastors’ conference, featuring Dr. Tim Keller, Senior Pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church of New York
4-Step Prayer Seminar:
Praise, Confession, Thanksgiving, Intercession
Caroline Corda-Razat

Do you long to deepen your personal quiet time or to simply pray through a busy day?

Have you ever wanted to start a regular prayer time with your spouse or your family but frankly it feels, well, a bit strange?

Do you have a heart to start a prayer group among friends or colleagues?

Join us for three Thurber Thursdays in March as we take the time to learn and practice a simple prayer prompt. In each session, we will discover and focus on different aspects of the 4-Step prayer introduced at the ACP Lay Care Giver Prayer Seminar last year. Our time together will equip you with practical tools to start something new for yourself, with your spouse, family or group. Come to one session or all three.

Caroline Corda-Razat brings clarity, fun and openness to this prayer discipline that she has used and shared for more than 10 years. Active in Moms in Prayer International for many years, she is a founding member of the ministry in France. Caroline speaks to international audiences about prayer, recently presenting God S.P.A. at the ACP Women’s Retreat.

Her brand of humor, authenticity and energy brings insight to God’s truth and encourages and equips listeners to develop a deeper relationship with God. Although she earned an MBA from New York University, she counts it all joy to replace her ambition for dealing in the world’s international business with taking part in God’s eternal business. Caroline now lives in Paris with her American/French family of four.

Thurber Thursday is an adult community gathering and growth time that is open to all. The program begins at 19h30; reception to follow.

Meeting God through Scripture
Rev. Brent Anderson

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

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

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

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

Thurber Thursday is an adult community gathering and growth time, that is open to all. The program begins at 19h30; reception to follow.
The smokin’ 7th arrondissement
Thurber Thursday presentation

By Francois Pierre

What did the area around the church look like 100 years ago, and how was the American Church able to obtain the property? Almost 50 people gathered for our first Thurber Thursday evening of 2014, and were privileged to get answers from Paul Smith, an English historian who lives in Paris and works for the Ministry of Culture.

Paul came to Paris for a year in 1973, and has stayed ever since. He gave us an extremely interesting talk about the history of the “Gros Caillou”, the part of the 7th arrondissement that surrounds the American Church.

In the 19th century, the Gros Caillou was not the wealthy residential area it is now, but an industrial and working class neighborhood. Along with a slaughterhouse close to Les Invalides and a glue factory, there was also a steam-driven pump - next to what is now the South African embassy - that pulled water out of the Seine to supply the neighborhood with drinking water. There were also a few casual dining, dancing and drinking places, called “guinguettes”, along the Seine.

The lot between the river quay and rue de l’Université had been used throughout the 19th century for an immense tobacco factory, which employed over 2,000 people. This is why the name of the street next to our church was changed from St. Jean to that of Jean Nicot, the person who is historically credited (or blamed) for introducing tobacco to France.

Jean Nicot was the French ambassador to Portugal in 1560, where tobacco was already being used in the form of snuff, and he sent this new product to the French queen, Catherine de Medicis. It cured her migraine headaches, and she – and the court – quickly became addicted. When scientists documented and researched the tobacco plant, its “curative” substance was named after Nicot, thus nicotine.

The State was quick to perceive that it could generate substantial tax revenues from the product, so tobacco became a state monopoly called SEITA in 1681 and it was heavily taxed (as Ecclesiastes says, there is nothing new under the sun). At first, tobacco was ground and inhaled as snuff, or smoked in a pipe, until cigars became trendy in 1830. In the factory, most of those employed in rolling cigars were women, ostensibly because their fingers were more suited to the delicate work, but Paul Smith thought their lower wages may have had a lot to do with it. Cigarettes were created in 1843, thanks to the invention of cigarette-rolling machines.

Due to the rising value of the area at the turn of the century, the Gros Caillou tobacco factory was closed in 1901 and moved to Issy-les-Moulineaux. The building was demolished in 1910, leaving a large vacant lot. In 1924, the American Church pastor, Joseph Cochran, was shown the land by a local piano teacher, and the land was purchased for the American Church in early 1925.

It was a riveting presentation by Paul Smith, who is obviously passionate about his subject. But as his presentation closed, I couldn’t help thinking, “All I need now is a good smoke…”

SEITA

The Société d’exploitation industrielle des tabacs et des allumettes, the former French state-owned tobacco monopoly, not only taxed tobacco products, but also the humble match. This may seem preposterous until one considers the convenience that friction matches provided at the time, versus flint and steel, for instance.

The first practical matchstick, invented by French chemist Charles Sauria in 1831, unfortunately used poisonous white phosphorous. In fact, one source states that deaths and suicides from eating the heads of matches were frequent. In 1906, the Berne Convention banned the use of white phosphorus in matches.

Trivia: The word “match” derives from Old French “mèche” referring to the wick of a candle. The hobby of collecting match-related items, such as matchcovers and matchbox labels, is known as philumény.
The heritage of English-language worship in Paris is built on the foundation of remarkable expatriate men and women. But one of the most colorful Americans in ACP history has to be a dentist: Dr. Thomas W. Evans, who arrived in Paris from Philadelphia in 1842, when dentistry in America was further advanced than in Europe.

One history states: “His masterful fillings, his use of vulcanized rubber [for dentures], and his use of laughing gas were revolutionary” and he was “probably the most famous of his profession in 19th century Europe at a time when most ‘tooth pullers’ were to be feared, some even employing brass bands to drown out the screams of their victims.”

While he became dentist to many grateful royal families, including the Czar of Russia and the Sultan of Turkey, in 1854 he was decreed the French crown’s official dentist by Napoleon III, whose bad teeth demanded almost weekly attention. At almost the same time, Georges Eugène Haussmann started visiting the emperor to discuss their plans for the restructuration of Paris, and Dr. Evans was on hand to overhear which areas in the city were about to jump in value. As a result, he made a fortune in real estate, building his own mansion on what is now Avenue Foch, which boasted a staircase designed by Garnier, the architect of the Paris Opera.

Dr. Evans was the first American to receive the Legion d’honneur, in 1853, and he created the first American newspaper in Paris, The American Register. Evans was also a member of the American congregation in Paris, which was outgrowing the Chapelle Taitbout. So when an Anglican chapel in the rue d’Aguessel came up for sale, he naturally secured an option to buy it, and notified the American and Foreign Christian Union in New York [see next page], for instructions.

The AFCU gave the green light and started looking for an American minister who could take the building and congregation in hand. The call was for “one who can command the love of the highly cultivated as well as of the humbler classes. He must be able to speak the French language fluently. He must be a man of good business capacity. And last but not least he must be a man of fervent piety”.

This year marks the 200th anniversary of English-language worship in Paris. Each month we will tell the history in 20 to 25-year increments, from the point of view of the American Church in Paris, the first established American church overseas. This month: 1840 to 1860. By Alison Benney

The first American church in Europe

History in context

1839  First photo taken of the moon, by French photographer Louis Daguerre.
1840  Thomas Cook opens first travel agency.
1843  A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens is published in England: 6,000 copies sold.
1844  Samuel Morse sends first telegraph message "What Hath God Wrought?"
The Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) is founded in London, England.
1845  US Congress authorizes ocean mail contracts for foreign mail delivery.
1846  Texas is admitted to the United States of America.
The first baseball game under recognizable modern rules is played: New York Nines 23, Knickerbockers 1.
1848  Gold discovered at Captain John Sutter's lumber mill in California.
1849  The Communist Party Manifesto, written by Karl Marx, is published in London.
1850  First public demonstration of ice made by refrigeration.
1852  Second French empire established; Louis Napoleon becomes emperor.
1853  Baron Haussmann and Napoleon III start the reconstruction of Paris.
1855  For 6 months, the Exposition Universelle takes place on the Champs-Élysées. Napoleon III requested a classification system for France’s best Bordeaux wines, on display. These were the Grands Crus classés.
1857  Dred Scott Decision: US Supreme Court rules slaves cannot be citizens.
1859  The Suez Canal Company begins construction on the canal in Egypt, at the northern end.
1859  At the Cirque Napoléon in Paris, Jules Léotard performs the first Flying Trapeze circus act.
The Big Ben rings out over the Houses of Parliament in Westminster, London, for the first time.
The popular Reverend Edward N. Kirk fit the bill, and he returned to Paris in February 1857. Although the Anglican chapel was no longer available, imperial permission was sought and granted that month to purchase a site and erect the first American place of Christian worship in France. The license came with one condition: that no services could be conducted in French.

Drs. Kirk and Evans went site-searching, and settled on 21 rue de Berri, just off the Champs-Élysées, and Kirk had to defend himself against criticism that the undeveloped area was too far from the center of the city. Furthermore, because of French law at the time, the title for the property had to be made out in Dr. Kirk’s name (the title was transferred to the AFCU in 1901).

The American Chapel was dedicated on 2 May, 1858, by the Reverend R.H. Seeley, a congregational minister from Springfield, Massachusetts, who became the first pastor of the American Chapel. It served as a gathering point for resident and visiting Americans, much as the ACP does today.

About a year later, on 3 July 1859, a young man visited the Chapel out of a sense of duty but left elated and inspired. As Reverend Dr. Beard, he returned to Paris 24 years later to become the American Chapel pastor, and wrote this:

“[In 1859] I found the Chapel at that time as plain within as it was without, the walls and ceiling undecorated, and the auditorium severely contrasting with what I had seen in the Cathedral [of Notre Dame]. …Dr. Seeley proceeded to exalt the dignity and largeness of a life of true consecration. It was quietly spoken, but was like an arrow from a bow drawn at a venture…No sermon that [I] had ever heard had made so profound an impression…

“Yes indeed, this American Church is a unique place for Christian influence. The strangers who pass through these aisles – away from their homes – often present many special reasons in themselves and in their experiences why the Gospel of Christ is the power of God to them. The influences are mainly untraceable, but not infrequently they are as lasting as life itself.”

Next month: The civil war, anti-slavery, the Third Republic, and the inventor of the telegraph.

On 6 September, 1857, when construction of the American Chapel was well underway, Dr. Kirk preached his last sermon in Paris at the Chapel Taitbout. One excerpt:

“We owe it to our God to recognize Him by erecting here a new house of prayer….And here according to our purpose and our compact the services are to be Christian, simply and purely Christian. That is, they are to be evangelical but never denominational.

…Let it be most definitely understood that, except by a violation of compact, the chapel we are erecting can never become exclusively devoted to the forms of any one sect. Some have complained of this. I glory in it.”

Reverend Edward N. Kirk, from Friendly Adventurers, 1931.
So begins the Confession, believed to be the authentic theological writings of Ireland’s internationally beloved St. Patrick. He can even be found within the American Church. Among our beautiful stained glass windows is the Missions window, up in the balcony. It depicts missionaries from around the world, and we find St. Patrick holding the famous green shamrock. According to Irish folklore Patrick used the 3-leafed plant to teach pagans the nature of the Trinity.

He is a model expat. Patrick was not Irish himself, but born a Roman in 4th century Britain, in coastal Cumbria, near Hadrian’s Wall. Although his father was a deacon and his grandfather a Christian priest, Patrick had not been educated into the faith. At 16, he was kidnapped by Irish pirates and enslaved in northwestern Ireland, working as a shepherd, and as he became fluent in the Irish language and culture, he started to pray, grew to know God and quickly converted to Christianity. After six years he escaped bondage and convinced a sea-master to return him to his parent’s home. He continued Christian study and at age 24 returned to Ireland as a missionary. Legend says that he preached to animists and Druids, baptizing thousands who followed the example of their leaders at Tara Hill wells in what is today County Meath, north of Dublin (this is the inspiration for Margaret Mitchell’s Tara plantation in Gone with the Wind).

As a perpetual foreigner, Patrick lacked the bonds of kinship so important for protection in tribal society. His Confessions state that he was beaten, robbed and put in chains for a trial which may have been over perceived financial improprieties. In his defense he spoke of gifts he returned, and services such as baptism, for which he did not charge. Still, he recruited sons of Druid tribal chiefs as his Christian followers, ordained priests and established convents for women, often in opposition to the wishes of their wealthy families. Patrick became bishop of Armagh, in modern Northern Ireland, southwest of Belfast. His saint’s day in the Roman Catholic calendar is 17 March, which is traditionally given as the date of his death in either 460 or 493 AD.

Today St. Patrick is one of the most popular of saints, perhaps only second to St. Nicolas. As patron saint of Ireland, his legends have circled the world along with the Irish diaspora. In the US, Irish emigrants flocked not only to Boston and New York, but to other eastern port cities such as Charleston.

In fact, a sense of being Irish has pervaded American culture since the 19th century, from Boston’s politics to New York’s gothic St. Patrick’s Cathedral and Chicago’s annually green-dyed river; from the ubiquitous St. Patrick’s Day parades to the “wearin’ o’ th’ green”. Irish poet Brendan Behan wrote, “No strangers here, just folks you haven’t met” and may easily have been describing St. Patrick who personifies the easy camaraderie of the people and the gift of the gab.

“If I have any worth, it is to live my life for God so as to teach these peoples, even though some of them still look down on me.” – St. Patrick

The “Confessio” of St. Patrick is believed to be his authentic writings and can be read online in six different languages: www.confessio.ie/

Paris celebrates St. Patrick’s Day

Day is an unofficial holiday for expats everywhere. With 17 March falling on a Monday this year, festivities will begin on Friday and continue over a long weekend. There is no shortage of partying: there are Irish pubs in almost every arrondissement, and many will be geared up with traditional Celtic music and a relaxed convivial atmosphere. Many Parisians enjoy wearing something green on the day and you’re sure to see some reflections of the Emerald Isle among pedestrians or traveling in the métro.

If you’re looking for something special, try the Celtic Festival slated for the 15th and 16th. Billed as “The Soul of Ireland”, it will feature 150 artists at the Zenith. The Irish Cultural Center in the Latin Quarter will offer a St. Patrick’s Day concert of traditional music on Sunday at 14h, and reservations are encouraged. In Paris it’s a time for everyone to claim a little Luck o’ th’ Irish.

Irish Cultural Centre, 5 rue des Irlandais, 75005; www.centreculturelirlandais.com
Zenith, 211 avenue Jean Jaures, 75019; www.zenith-paris.com
Good list of Irish pubs in Paris (and all France) here: www.irishabroad.com/Culture/pubs/directory
For more, see the Irish Eyes/Courant d’Eire at www.irisheyes.fr

For 200 years Irish emigrants have spread to every major world city, and Paris is certainly no exception. St. Patrick’s
ACP Today Review

By Jim Hobbs

To commemorate Martin Luther King Day in the United States, the ACP Today radio show dedicated the broadcast on 20 January to the subject of racism. How has racism improved and changed since MLK Jr's death 45 years ago? Does racism differ in Paris versus the United States, historically and today? Will it ever be possible to one day eradicate the problem worldwide?

“It’s amazing to me how diverse our congregation is”, said Senior Pastor Scott Herr, opening the show. “I think, in many ways, it’s a taste of the kingdom of heaven to see so many people from around the world, different races, different nationalities, different cultures, linguistic groups, all worshipping God together. It’s truly a beautiful thing.”

Host Jim Hobbs welcomed Ellen Kountz, an ACP member and resident of Paris for 20 years, who organized the first Black History Month event at the American Church. In addition to an undergrad degree from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, she also earned an Executive MBA at ESSEC (Ecole Supérieure des Sciences Economiques et Sociales) in Paris (La Défense).

“Being African-American on the world scene is a privilege,” she said. “I have to say, all I could do with the people I have had to deal with, who they themselves had different baggage, dealing with racial issues of their own, all I could do was ease the blow through politeness.”

Also on the show from North Carolina was Enuma Okoro, an author, speaker, and spiritual director, who lectures on a variety of topics around culture and identity, women and narrative, faith and spirituality. She was born in the US and raised in Nigeria, Ivory Coast, and England, and holds a Master of Divinity degree from Duke University, where she served as Director for the Center for Theological Writing.

“I didn’t come to the States as an adult until I was about 17 when I came for college; and I think that was initially when I first started having to navigate what it meant to be a black person, and what that meant in the way people treated me, and they way people expected me to behave.”

The discussion turned to the US political scene, when it was brought up if having an African-American President in Barak Obama helped ease racist tensions or actually heightened them due to the overtones of racism, not just across America, but in France as well. “I think it’s probably both,” Enuma said. “I think he really complicates matters. It’s fascinating to me that the first black president of the US would be someone who doesn’t have a slave history in his background. His father is African. What would have been different if the first black president was a full African-American, not interracial, and not having a father direct from Africa? There’s a lot in there that no one is talking about.”

Ellen added, “Part of the reason that it is important is because that he had to be embraced by everybody. Politics are very personalized. I think that his story, as improbable as it seemed in 2007, at the end of the day it really made sense.”

Martin Luther King Jr had used the word “colorblind” in the hopes of a society which would not see color in its people, but Ellen had a very interesting opinion on the use of the “colorblind” terminology:

“The interesting thing about colorblind, I understand the term in the context of what he was saying, but I think it’s extraordinarily important to my very being that I’m African-American, and that can’t just be kind of pushed aside and or downplayed, when everything is a part of you. You can combine your cultural roots and your heritage with your ‘American-ness’.”

Enuma echoed Ellen’s thoughts: “I would never advocate for colorblindness, as in some way that erases the unique ways in which we are all made as Christians in the image of God. I definitely want people to see that I’m black.”

Scott added, “As Christians, our view, our vision of the kingdom of heaven is going to be when people from every nation stand before the throne. Multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multi-linguistic, that diversity is something that seems to be celebrated in the biblical vision of ultimate reality.
ACP Choir concert

On Saturday, March 29th at 20H the ACP Choir and the Lux Perpetua Choir will be accompanied by the orchestra of the Association Symphonique de Paris in Haydn’s Missa in tempore belli, or Mass in Time of War. Under the direction of Franck Chastrusse, Haydn’s masterpiece will battle its way into your very soul.

Composed in 1796 when the Austrians feared imminent invasion by the French army, Haydn incorporated the sounds of war into this mass via threatening timpani rolls and warlike trumpet fanfares. As with all his works, Haydn penned “Praise be to God” on the final page, perhaps in this case as if to say that the outcome of the conflict was in God’s hands.

Orchestral conductor Franck Chastrusse is tenor section leader with our adult choir. He earned his diploma in orchestral conducting from the famous Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris and has been head of the Association Symphonique de Paris since 2007. Franck was recently named conductor for the University Orchestra in his home city of Limoges. Franck directs the adult choir when Fred is away.
As Patti Lafage puts it, she came to ACP simply to sing in the choir. Nothing more. She was not particularly interested in the spiritual side of ACP and considered herself a non-believer. Of course God just loves a difficult case. Slowly but surely Patti felt subtle nudges from God which became increasingly stronger as time went on. Several years down the ACP road she confidently knew she was being called to be a missionary to children in Africa. It was thanks to the Rafiki Foundation that she was able to realize her dream.

It required raising her own financial backing. The ACP and numerous friends came to her aid, pledging their support. Since then her work in Uganda has been so fruitful that she desires to continue. Thus once again funds are necessary to make that possible and that’s where this concert comes in!

On March 15 at 20H the amazing Sotto Voce choirs will present a benefit concert for Patti. How appropriate; children helping less fortunate children. There will be all kinds of music from Mozart to Broadway tunes. You’ll experience both smiles and tears. Admission is free with a suggested donation of 10€ or more as possible. Even if you can’t give a financial gift, your presence will show your support!

There will be a wonderful display of recent photos from the school where Patti teaches, and our enthusiastic Missions Team will be on hand to answer all questions you may have about Patti’s work, as well as other mission projects we support. See you there!

“He’s a what? He’s a What?” “He’s a Music Man!”

This quote from the Broadway musical “The Music Man” is the perfect introduction for Scott Prouty, founder and conductor of the Sotto Voce choirs. It was through high school musicals that this once shy student found his voice and calling. At Bethany College he learned the ropes of putting together a choral concert from A to Z.

While spending a semester abroad in Paris, Scott found himself feeling isolated and lonely, so he sought out the American Church. He was soon active in the Adult Choir and rang handbells too. Finding a church family and friends gave him the fortitude to finish that first difficult experience of living abroad. Fred and Scott have now been friends and musical colleagues for over 30 years!

Back in the US, a life-changing moment came for Scott when he hosted a visit from Les Petits Chanteurs de Paris, a children’s choir that sang classical repertoire with a rare purity and professionalism. Scott readily accepted an invitation from their conductor to train with him for six months in Paris. As fate would have it, the conductor fell ill and Scott ended up stepping in to co-direct the choir for several years. Then came the opportunity to start his own choral program in connection with the music conservatory in Créteil. Being one of the poorer suburbs it provided a unique opportunity for the children of the area to “find their voices”; to blossom and grow under Scott’s unique direction.

Vocal production is very important for Scott, but equally so is movement which frees the body to sing. Anyone who has seen Scott’s choirs perform will have witnessed their spellbinding blend of song and movement. Today the Sotto Voce choir program is in residence at the Théâtre du Châtelet and is comprised of three choirs: the “Choeur Préparatoire”, the “Choeur d’Enfants Sotto Voce” and the “Jeune Choeur Sotto Voce”. Scott readily admits that a highlight of every year is their participation in the ACP Candlelight Christmas Concerts, something they have done for the past two decades and that we plan to continue.

Making Music For Patti Lafage

Scott Alan Prouty
Now here’s something to crow about!

Thanks to funds from the Music Reserve account, the harpsichord donated to ACP some years back has been recently restored and is playable once again. The instrument was built in 1973 in Hopewell, New Jersey by Christopher Freeman Bannister (1938-1996) who studied music at the Oberlin Conservatory. Following an apprenticeship with the Dowd and Hubbard Harpsichord Company in Boston, he set up shop for himself, crafting his own harpsichords for universities, concert halls and private homes. Our harpsichord was built especially for an American living in Paris.

Bannister’s chosen path was to adapt the fragile instrument of the 18th century to more rugged 20th standards. He strove for more stable tuning and added foot pedals to operate the different sets of strings with more ease. This of course made the instrument quite cumbersome and more complex, which in turn required some major adjustments in the recent restoration process.

The soundboard had also slightly bowed and was touching the lowest set of strings. Fortunately the craftspeople at the Dowd Shop here in Paris cleverly pulled it back down into place, freeing the strings to vibrate again.

Unlike the piano where the strings are hit with hammers, the strings of a harpsichord are plucked by small quills. Bannister’s wife recalled how on their honeymoon they went hunting for crows, as their quills were perfect for plucking harpsichord strings!

The ACP harpsichord will be officially rededicated with a recital by Vibeka Lyman on Saturday, 8 March at 20h in the Theater. Come join us for some exquisite music. Admission is free... and you don’t even have to eat crow to attend!

Look who’s been tickling the ebonies at ACP

Did you know we have a harpsichordist in our congregation? Vibeca (Becky) Lyman is a gifted keyboardist who became enamored with the harpsichord and is continuing her studies here in Paris. She has been making good use of our instrument and will play a recital on it on Saturday, 8 March at 20h in the Theater. The program will include selections by J.S. Bach, François Couperin, Domenico Scarlatti, William Byrd and Johann Froberger. Admission is free with a free-will offering taken at the exit.

Vibeka Lyman
Free Concerts in the Sanctuary at 17h00

Sunday 2 March – entrée libre
The Bose-Pastor Duo
Pia Bose & Antonio Pastor, piano 4-hands
Music by Albéniz, Turina, Montsalvatage, de Falla, Ravel, Gershwin

Sunday 9 March – entrée libre
Florent Barrois, French horn
Naoko Fujiwara, piano
Music by Debussy, Saint-Saëns, Chabrier, Dukas, Poulenc, Vignery

Sunday 16 March – entrée libre
Salvatore Vaccarella, piano
Music by Debussy (Préludes livre I) and Liszt (Années de Pèlerinage)

Sunday 23 March – entrée libre
Ann Zignego Fournès, soprano
Bonnie Brown, piano
Music by Schubert, Mendelssohn, Zemlinsky, Wolf, Chausson, Fauré, Debussy, Poulenc, Britten, Barber

Sunday 30 March – entrée libre
Angela L. Owens, soprano
LaToya Lain, mezzo-soprano
Morgane Fauchois-Prado, piano
Music by Delibes, Offenbach, Bizet, Massenet, Carter, Hayes, Bond

Atelier Concert History
Did you know that the Sunday Atelier Concert Series started back in 1895? It didn’t become a regular part of the American Church’s cultural program until our new building was finished on the quai d’Orsay. Prior to that the gatherings were held in the Latin Quarter in various ateliers, large student halls and roomy apartments. The major driving forces in the early years were Rev. and Mrs. Ernest Shurtleff. You may have noticed a plaque in our sanctuary which tells that he wrote the lyrics of the well-known hymn, “Lead On, O King Eternal.” Now, 119 years later, the concert series is alive and well, providing a much sought-after performance outlet for young musicians. The series includes some 35 concerts each year and is already booked through the end of 2016.

It’s new. It’s different. It’s French.
It needs a name. How about:
A Baguette-o-phone
A Bagel Bugle
A Crumbpet
A Self-rising Piccolo Trumpet
A Bakery Blaster
A Horn of Plenty
When we think of Mardi Gras, what comes to mind? New Orleans, perhaps? We watch heavy crowds of parade-goers milling about, taking in the decorative face masques, colorful costumes and shiny beads wrapped around the necks of young and old alike. Elaborately-themed floats pass by as spectators chow down on some typical Cajun cuisine or sweets, and everyone enjoys a day of hedonistic fun.

We generally consider Mardi Gras an American holiday – and imagine it celebrated in this manner – because of its Louisiana roots (although the very first Mardi Gras recorded actually took place in what is now Mobile, Alabama). Yet this traditional day of feasting not surprisingly originated in Europe with the Bourbon dynasty in France, and eventually made its way down through Venice and Rome.

French-Canadian explorer Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne Sieur de Bienville brought the tradition with him to the New World, and originally intended it as a festival of indulgence on the day before Ash Wednesday (the first day of Lent, a period of fasting) with the procession of the “Boeuf Gras”, or fattened calf, followed by a feast. The holiday eventually took root in New Orleans, and exists as we know it today. In Europe the tradition developed into a 2-month-long “Carnival,” the etymology of which better reflects the original purpose of the celebration — to say “farewell to the flesh”, or carne vale – but less reflects the more modern, secular nature that it has adopted.

In many cities around the world, the period from Epiphany to Ash Wednesday (January-February) is typically celebrated as “Carnival”, either as a part of a long-standing tradition, or just as a perennial excuse to party. Rio de Janerio, Goa, Dusseldorf, Venice, and Cadiz are all known for their Mardi Gras celebrations. In France, the most extravagant parades take place in Nice, attracting herds of tourists every year.

Paris has long-held its own Mardi Gras/Carnival (with the exception of a 50-year hiatus, ending in 1997 when the Carnaval de Paris was revived), attracting 50,000 visitors. Although the City of Lights cannot compete with its neighbor to the south, Parisians can still enjoy theatre shows, live music, jugglers, and acrobats. Instead of a twoweek-long party as in Nice, Paris must settle for a one-day blowout, this year under the theme of “Fairies, Trolls and Company”, on the Sunday before Fat Tuesday. The procession of “Pimprenelle” the cow – yes, they still parade around an actual cow – starts at 13h at Place Gambetta and ends on the newly minted esplanade at République, where the entertainment will commence.

As expats, our reasons for celebrating Mardi Gras are sure to be different. Perhaps we are from New Orleans (or know someone), and so the holiday signifies a message of hope for a city that was able to rebuild itself and continue a beloved tradition; perhaps we choose to consider the holiday as more religious than festive, and we use this time to reflect before a period of lent and fasting; or perhaps we want to immerse ourselves in the local culture of the city and participate in a day of relaxation and diversity. Whatever our reasons for celebrating Mardi Gras, in a globalized society, we can now do so from almost anywhere in the world.
Catching up with Hanna

Hanna Woodhead served as the ACP Youth and Young Adults Intern from December 2012 to July 2013. Having returned to Geneva to continue her studies, we caught up with her to find out what she has been up to since she left Paris.

“God of Life, lead us to Justice and Peace”. This prayer, which is also a statement of faith and a call to action, was in all participants’ mind during the 10th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in South Korea at the end of last year. I was lucky to have been selected as a young theologian to be part of the WCC Global Ecumenical and Theological Institute. It was so inspiring to see thousands of Christians united in prayer and liturgy despite cultural, theological or even linguistic differences.

Indeed, this theme “God of Life...” was particularly suited for a General Assembly gathering over 3,000 Christians from all over the world and from many different denominations! Some of them experience persecution at home or have to work with failed States and corrupt governments. Because most Christians nowadays are from the global South, all issues were addressed mostly from a global South point of view, which reinforced the importance for us people from the global North to adopt a de-centered attitude. Of course, being served kimchee (fermented cabbage) for breakfast also proved to be a de-centering experience to someone more accustomed to French croissants!

Although it’s a French-speaking, country, at least in Geneva, life in Switzerland is also very de-centering for a Parisian “born and raised”. It is much more peaceful here and I enjoy being back to studying full-time, without having to juggle between classes, work in a company and métro rides!

The expat community is huge and there are many English-speaking churches to help all newcomers find a sense of community. A Genevan friend of mine accompanied me to an English-speaking service and was amazed to see how truly welcoming such churches were. But as far as I am concerned, it was not that surprising: I had been welcomed with open arms by the ACP not so long ago!

I know that the American Church in Paris is proud to be a “sending” Church that welcomes people and lets them go to wherever God leads them, equipped with renewed faith and a sense of community that transcends borders. Now that I have got more used to my new life here in Geneva, I feel like it is my turn to use the source of inspiration that the ACP represents and start a ministry to help young adults connect and explore their faith in Geneva. Along with another former ACP-er who now also lives in this city, we have plans to start the Genevan edition of “Pub Theology”! I will keep you updated on this adventure.

En Christ,

Hanna
“Progressive Pondering”
The Rev. Dan Haugh
Director of Youth and Young Adults

While it is a famous insurance company in the United States, the dictionary defines “progressive” as the following: “Moving forward; advancing; Promoting or favoring progress toward better conditions or new policies, ideas, or methods.”

The idea that we as humans and society are actively seeking ways in which to advance and improve is positive and necessary. So too, the Church, has always been a progressive agent of ideas and social change throughout history. Led by God’s Spirit, Christians seek to understand how and where the Spirit moves in each culture, time and place. This, of course, constantly changes over time, thus revealing that the Word of God is living and active.

As Pastor Scott mentioned in a recent sermon, New York Times columnist David Brooks writes, “There is a strong vein of hostility against orthodox religious believers in America today, especially among the young. When secular or mostly secular people are asked by researchers to give their impression of the devoutly faithful, whether Jewish, Christian or other, the words that come up commonly include ‘judgmental,’ ‘hypocritical,’ ‘old-fashioned’ and ‘out of touch’.”

Often, the Church is criticized for not making adaptive changes to culture, being “old fashioned” or stuck in the past. While holding on to historic doctrinal beliefs is important and remembering how God acted in the past, how these beliefs are interpreted and lived out should always be reforming. Naturally, the Protestant church and the great Reformers of our past were known as progressive leaders who held fast to the truths of Scripture, learned from the successes and failures of history and always had an eye on the future.

In order to promote progress toward better ideas or methods, leaders are needed who speak prophetically in the Church, to the Church, and for the Church. As a pastor to youth and young adults, I am keenly aware of the criticism our younger generation has of the Church. Some is perhaps unfair and biased. However, much of what is said comes from a place of deep longing for the Church to speak their language and once again be a hopeful and active agent in our world.

In the hope of learning from the leading voices in youth and young adult ministry today, I will travel to Chicago this month as the Jopa Group and Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago are inaugurating the Progressive Youth Ministry Conference. They’re committed to presenting a diverse line-up of speakers, fresh ideas for the theory and practice of youth ministry, and space for youth pastors to share our voice as well.

As we progress ahead in this exiting year of ministry at ACP, may we learn, love and live together with the Spirit’s guidance into the hope-filled future God has for the Church.
ACP Youth Group (13-18yrs)

Youth Alpha at ACP

By Andrea Chaumont

What is Alpha? “Alpha is a practical introduction to the Christian faith. The Alpha course has been running at Holy Trinity Brompton church in central London since the late 1970s and is now running in over 160 countries and over 15 million people have attended an Alpha course.

Youth Alpha was started as a response to a growing demand to bring this teaching to youth. It is designed to give young people (11 -18 yrs) the opportunity to explore life and faith. It's run by young people for young people” (from the website http://uk-england.alpha.org/youth/home). At ACP we have been running the Youth Alpha course in the “collège” group and will continue to do so until the end of March (for a total of 8 weeks).

The three main focuses of Youth Alpha are Food, Fun and Small Groups. A typical Alpha session starts with some food, which is followed by a “talk” explaining a particular aspect of the Christian faith. This is followed by a small group discussion. During this discussion time, everyone is encouraged to discuss the talk honestly.

The Youth Alpha course covers the following topics and at ACP has been running on these dates:

- **Sunday 2 March** Session 4: Why and How Do I Pray?
- **Sunday 9 March** Session 5: Why and How Should I Read the Bible?
- **Sunday 16 March** Session 6: How does God Guide Us?
- **Saturday 22 March** 9h30-17h30 the Holy Spirit
- **Sunday 23 March** Session 7a: How Can I Live Free?
- **Sunday 30 March** Session 8a: What about the Church and Telling Others

The sessions are run by the “collège” leadership team, which consists of Matt, Valentina, Sherin, Catherine, Lillie and myself. We would ask for your prayers as we finish up this course. Pray that the person and work of Jesus Christ be revealed to our kids, that they would know that God loves them and that they are invited into an exciting adventure, which is the Christian Faith. A key verse for us is 1 Timothy 4:12 “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.” Pray that the young among us would be transformed by the Holy Spirit and would be an example to the rest of us about what it means to follow Jesus.

For more information please contact youthintern@acparis.org

For more information about Youth and Young Adults events at ACP, please contact youthpastoracparis.org for more information and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.
Final thoughts on my internship
Andrea Chaumont
Youth and Young Adult Intern

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appoint-
ed you as a prophet to the nations.

Ah, Sovereign Lord, I said, I do not know how to speak; I am only a child.

But the Lord said to me, Do not say I am only a child. You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you, declares the Lord.” Jeremiah 1:4-5

This verse from Jeremiah says several important things. One is that God knows and has a plan for each child: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.” He is the master Artist who created each child with his wonderful wild creativity. The second thing to notice is that he has a plan: “You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you, declares the Lord.” During my internship I have wanted each child in my group to know that God knows and loves them and has a plan for their life.

I have been the Youth and Young Adult Intern here at ACP since July 2013. These past 8 months have flown by! In July and August I was busy cleaning and organizing the youth rooms and lesson planning. I also had the opportunity to participate in the services, in the readings and prayers with Michelle.

In September we started the school year with a series of teachings that I prepared during the summer, based on a program called TILT for pre-adolescents. This program is based on the four questions that pre-adolescents ask themselves:

Where do I come from? (the world, life, my place in creation, my family, my city, my country, evolution)

What Has Worth? (Unconditional love of God, my identity, friendship with God, taking care of myself, ecology)

How can I Know? (other religions, humanism, origins of the Bible)

Where am I going? What is my calling? How can I know it? What are my gifts for serving?

I learned to be more and more concrete in my teaching, always including some kind of lesson object or crazy experiment. I also got the guitar out and starting leading worship songs and the kids sang along. I learned that games and eating together are an important part of youth group, where we become a community and learn that we “belong” in the group.

I also got to co-lead a Bible study with Dan for the Young Adult group on James. Each time I taught, I also learned and was encouraged by the thoughtful questions, reflections and prayers that came out of this time.

I want to say thank you for this experience. Thank you to Dan for your leadership. Thank you to Scott and Michelle for your encouragement. Thank you to the parents of the “collège” students for entrusting me with your children, for your partnership, and your words of encouragement. Thank you to the youth leadership team Matt, Sherin, Lillie, Catherine and Valentina for working faithfully as a team to let each student know that God loves them. I am thankful for all that I have learned these past 8 months, which has better prepared me for the ministry which lies ahead.

My goal has been that each leader and student would know the love of God in Jesus Christ and in return I have experienced deeper the presence of God at my side and for this I want to say thank you!

The One World Walk: One hour for a whole world

What will you be doing at noon on Thursday 20 March? How about taking a walk?

Anna Zweede, a member of the ACP congregation, has created the One World Walk, on 20 March from noon to 13h, as a way of focusing our attention on what we have in common - one world - instead of focusing on our differences. Why 20 March? Because it is the equinox: first day of spring in the northern hemisphere, first day of autumn in the southern hemisphere, and a day of equal hours of light and dark. Why noon to one o’clock? Because at noon both hands of the clock are together, and because one o’clock is, well...ONE!

The goal is to go from noon in the first zone after the International Date Line right round the world. It may be too simplistic, may be wildly idealistic, but her wish is to see groups of people around the world join up and just walk together for an hour. Here in Paris, Anna’s group will start at the American Church, but she is hoping that there will be many groups walking around Paris, around France, and yes, around the world.

To spread the word, there is a website, of course, but she says: “Just think, if everyone tells a few friends, who each tell a few friends, who each... Why, the whole world could find out!!” Join her at http://theoneworldwalk.org

22 ACP Spire, March 2014
Following our Destiny!

Destiny E. Ryales

I'm very happy and blessed to share with you all pictures from the Excellence Computer Technology Foundation’s second location (ECTF2) at Abura Gyabankom. The students are very happy to learn computer literacy with our teacher Hannah Ackah. ECTF2 currently hosts 10 computers with 134 students attending the lesson each week! May God bless this village and students as much as in Afrangua!

A Note from Ghana

By Francis Gobbinah

Our missionary, Francis Cobbinah, of The Living Truth Foundation (TLTF) in Ghana, has had a very busy and fruitful 2013. He and his wife Anna continue their full time ministry in the schools, hospital and prisons around the Elmina area. Francis wrote us in January to thank us for our continued support of his ministry over the past 7 years.

This is with love and appreciation from the hearts of T.L.T.F. Ministry members to all at A.C.P. Through A.C.P. the good Lord provided, supported, fed, clothed and put joy in the hearts of hundreds of prisoners and school children and also the sick for the past years.

This same good Lord has started the year 2014 with us with sound and perfect mind, so we are confident He will end it with us too.

Francis and the T.L.T.F. Ministry have nothing more to say to Pastor Scott and the A.C.P. than to say may the name of the Lord be magnified and glorified because of who He is and what He has done. We offer our heartfelt appreciation to all at A.C.P. for what the Lord has done through you.

May each and every one of you be abundantly rewarded and blessed.

A graduation ceremony for Disciple 1 Bible study class, where Bibles are distributed as gifts to all participants
As we walked through the doors of the church to meet with Pastor Scott and Assistant Pastor Michelle we were immediately welcomed graciously into what would be the beginning of a beautiful partnership between the ACP and AUP Cares.

At the time (October 2013) AUP Cares was a new student-led initiative at the American University of Paris. We were seeking interesting and worthwhile charitable projects to participate in and we felt that the American Church of Paris was the instinctive choice to begin our journey. Talks continued for several weeks on how we could collaborate on various charitable projects in order to make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate. We immediately began to collect items to donate towards the “Love In A Box” initiative and in the space of a few weeks we managed to donate 20 boxes in total to this special cause.

We then moved onto our next project in which the ACP kindly hosted us for our annual Thanksgiving Dinner, held on 28 November 2013. This Thanksgiving Dinner allowed AUP students to recognize the importance of giving on such a day and we were able to raise 400 Euros through donations. However, it must be said that without the ACP and its community’s incredible generosity we would have never been able to raise the 1371 Euros that we collected, allowing us to buy as many as 91 sleeping bags for the homeless.

On 15 February we distributed the sleeping bags together with the ACP’s Homeless Ministry. The ACP’s Homeless Ministry provided the best direction and opportunity in which our wonderful partnership was able to come together and share in the joy of giving.

We would like to thank the American Church of Paris, for the time, consideration and overall great effort they have put into helping us in our journey of helping those around us and showing that the American University of Paris truly does care. We thank you and look forward to working with you all on many more worthwhile and heartwarming initiatives in the future!

“It’s not how much we give but how much love we put into giving.” (Mother Theresa)

ACP Homeless Ministry and AUP Cares Blanket Drive

On Saturday 15 February, over 30 volunteers comprising ACP Young Adults and congregation members and students from the AUP Cares initiative joined together to distribute sleeping bags and sandwiches to the homeless in our city. Led by Jurie Ane Feleo and armed with sleeping bags, sandwiches and drinks, teams split up and headed to Bastille/St.Paul, Chatelet, Opéra/St. Lazare, Gard du Nord and St. Michel.

Sadly it didn’t take long for us to find plenty of homeless and within just a few hours we had distributed all 91 sleeping bags together with the sandwiches.

A special “thank you” has to go to Daniel Grout, who helped us with the distribution by stuffing his car full of sleeping bags (!), and to AUP Cares for buying the sleeping bags and partnering with us, enabling us to offer a source of warmth with our sandwiches, as we continue to try to reflect Christ’s love and shine His light in this city to those in need.
Acts 2:42 – “They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

A little more than one year ago, a few women of the 15th arrondissement began meeting together to study God’s Word, and share in fellowship and prayer. We have grown into a group of eight dynamic, diverse women (not all from the 15th) who are in different places on our journey with God. Being in this study together has allowed us to grow spiritually and relationally.

We spent this last year studying the gospel of John and the Holy Spirit revealed many things to us through the Word and each other: How much God loves us. What a great Savior we have in Jesus Christ. The abundant life we can have following Christ. What it means to be a servant to God and others. The list goes on and on. The Bible is a living, life-transforming book and we were eager to dive into it each Wednesday night. We were richly blessed by the sharing of answers to our weekly questions. Each contribution helps shed a little more light or shows a different facet of the passage. Even though some of us had studied John previously, God worked through each of us to provide new perspectives, new understanding and opportunity to grow.

Though the bulk of our time each week is spent in Bible study, we book-end this by beginning with an informal time of catching up over snacks and ending with a time of prayer. As we’ve journeyed together, we each have realized that our group is a safe place where we can share our challenges and successes and know we will find encouragement and support to press on as we seek to glorify God with every part of our lives. We want to be transformed into the women God wants us to be so we can be a light for Him in our homes, work places, church, Paris and wherever else He might call us. Being in a small group helps us in the transformation process.

We are about to start a study of “Crazy Love: Overwhelmed by a Relentless God” by Francis Chan and can’t wait to learn more about God’s love for us and the passionate love relationship He wants us to have with Him.

If you’re not in an ACP small group, consider joining one today. In Proverbs 27:17 we read that “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” A small group is a perfect place to be intentional in our desire to become “sharp” for the Lord so we can impact the world for His glory.

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.

Communications Committee

Are you a grammar geek? Do you enjoy sharing information with the world? Have you got ideas for Spire articles?

Join the communications committee! It is responsible for the ACP website, social media channels, church bulletin, email blasts, the Spire, ACP Today radio show and much more.

We’d love help with photographs, graphics, article writing, layout design and to hear from new team members with creative ideas and vision.

Interested? Join us at March after the 11th service in G2 or email communications@acparis.org.
# ACP Spire Diary – March

## events, meetings and concerts

(please check www.acparis.org/diary for updates)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Events and Monthly Meetings and Concerts</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sandwich Ministry</strong></td>
<td>Saturday 1 Mar</td>
<td>7h30</td>
<td>Jurie Ane Feleo <a href="mailto:homelesssandwich@acparis.org">homelesssandwich@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communion Sunday</strong></td>
<td>Sunday 2 Mar</td>
<td>9h00, 11h00 &amp; 13h30 services</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Atelier Concert</strong> - Free admission, with free-will offering Bose-Pastor Duo - piano 4 hands</td>
<td>Sunday 2 Mar</td>
<td>17h00</td>
<td>Fred Gramann <a href="mailto:music@acparis.org">music@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACP Today: Faith Talk in Paris radio show</strong> Tune in for inspiring music, interviews, and sermon highlights.</td>
<td>Monday 3 Mar</td>
<td>20h45 - 21h30</td>
<td>100.7 FM Radio Fréquence Protestante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ash Wednesday worship service</strong></td>
<td>Wednesday 5 Mar</td>
<td>19h00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thurber Thursday</strong> Speaker: Caroline Corda-Razat gives Four Step Prayer Seminar– Praise, Confession, Thanksgiving, Intercession</td>
<td>Thursday 6 Mar</td>
<td>19h30 - 22h00</td>
<td>Michelle Wahila <a href="mailto:associatepastor@acparis.org">associatepastor@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACP Café</strong> Music from the Still Point band in a café setting. Catered by KPS. Free entry, snacks and beverages.</td>
<td>Friday 7 Mar</td>
<td>19h30</td>
<td>Natalie Raynal <a href="mailto:cmusic@acparis.org">cmusic@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concert</strong> - Free admission, with free-will offering Vibeka Lyman - harpsichord / clavecin</td>
<td>Saturday 8 Mar</td>
<td>20h00</td>
<td>Fred Gramann <a href="mailto:music@acparis.org">music@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multicultural Couples Potluck</strong> Fellowship and discussion on topics such as raising bicultural/bilingual children and cultural differences. Bring a dish to share.</td>
<td>Friday 7 Mar</td>
<td>20h00</td>
<td>Monica Basset &amp; Anja Wyss <a href="mailto:multicultural@acparis.org">multicultural@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writers’ Group</strong></td>
<td>Saturday 8 Mar</td>
<td>14h00 - 17h00</td>
<td>Laura Kerber <a href="mailto:writers@gmail.com">writers@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth Sunday</strong></td>
<td>Sunday 9 Mar</td>
<td>11h00 &amp; 13h30 services</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Atelier Concert</strong> - Free admission, with free-will offering Florent Barrois - french horn / cor; Naoko Fujiwara - piano</td>
<td>Sunday 9 Mar</td>
<td>17h00</td>
<td>Fred Gramann <a href="mailto:music@acparis.org">music@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thurber Thursday</strong> Speaker: Caroline Corda-Razat gives Four Step Prayer Seminar– Praise, Confession, Thanksgiving, Intercession</td>
<td>Thursday 13 Mar</td>
<td>19h30 - 22h00</td>
<td>Michelle Wahila <a href="mailto:associatepastor@acparis.org">associatepastor@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
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</table>

For more information on weekly Bible Studies and meetings, including BSF International, Moms in Prayer International and Youth and Young Adult events, please go to “What’s on at ACP” at www.acparis.org.
# ACP Spire Diary – March

**events, meetings & concerts (cont.)**

(please check www.acparis.org/diary for updates)

| **Special Events and Monthly Meetings and Concerts** | **Saturday 15 Mar** | **20h00 Sanctuary** | **Jurie Ane Feleo**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sandwich Ministry</td>
<td>13h30 Ask at reception for meeting point</td>
<td>Fred Gramann <a href="mailto:music@acparis.org">music@acparis.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Concert</td>
<td>20h00 Sanctuary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Le Jeune Choeur Sotto Voce; Scott Alan Prouty, director; Fanny Le Netour, piano. Concert supports Patti Lafage, ACP’s missionary at Rafiki Foundation Uganda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Atelier Concert - Free admission, with free-will offering Salvatore Vaccarella - piano</td>
<td>Sunday 16 Mar</td>
<td>17h00 Sanctuary</td>
<td>Fred Gramann <a href="mailto:music@acparis.org">music@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACP Today: Faith Talk in Paris radio show</td>
<td>Monday 17 Mar</td>
<td>20h45 -21h30</td>
<td>100.7 FM Radio Fréquence Protestante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tune in for inspiring music, interviews, and sermon highlights.</td>
<td>19h30 -22h00 Thurber Room</td>
<td>Michelle Wahila associatepastor @acparis.org</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Meeting</td>
<td>Tuesday 18 Mar</td>
<td>19h30 Thurber Room</td>
<td>Pam Bohl councilmoderator @acparis.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurber Thursday</td>
<td>Thursday 20 Mar</td>
<td>19h30 -22h00 Thurber Room</td>
<td>Michelle Wahila associatepastor @acparis.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker: Caroline Corda-Razat gives Four Step Prayer Seminar– Praise, Confession, Thanksgiving, Intercession</td>
<td>19h30 Room G2</td>
<td>Rebecca Brite <a href="mailto:movies@acparis.org">movies@acparis.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movie Discussion Group</td>
<td>Thursday 20 Mar</td>
<td>19h30 Room G2</td>
<td>Rebecca Brite <a href="mailto:movies@acparis.org">movies@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This month: The Lego Movie; Gloria; The Grand Budapest Hotel; and Saving Mr. Banks. View any or all films in the cinema, and then discuss with the group.</td>
<td>10h00 brunch 11h30 worship service 12h45 congregational meeting</td>
<td>Fred Gramann <a href="mailto:music@acparis.org">music@acparis.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunch Combined Traditional/Contemporary Service Annual Congregational Meeting</td>
<td>Sunday 23 Mar</td>
<td>17h00 Sanctuary</td>
<td>Fred Gramann <a href="mailto:music@acparis.org">music@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atelier Concert - Free admission, with free-will offering Anne Zignego Fournis - soprano; Bonnie Brown - piano</td>
<td>Sunday 23 Mar</td>
<td>17h00 Sanctuary</td>
<td>Fred Gramann <a href="mailto:music@acparis.org">music@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
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<td>Thurber Thursday</td>
<td>Thursday 20 Mar</td>
<td>19h30 -22h00 Thurber Room</td>
<td>Michelle Wahila associatepastor @acparis.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker: Reverend Brent Anderson leads two-part event on Meeting God through Scripture. Session 1: Meeting God through Daily Readings and Session</td>
<td>19h30 Room G2</td>
<td>Rebecca Brite <a href="mailto:movies@acparis.org">movies@acparis.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concert—Haydn's Mass in Time of War</td>
<td>Saturday 29 Mar</td>
<td>20h00 Sanctuary</td>
<td>Fred Gramann <a href="mailto:music@acparis.org">music@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACP and Lux Perpetua Choirs, accompanied by the orchestra of the Association Symphonique de Paris</td>
<td>19h30 -22h00 Thurber Room</td>
<td>Michelle Wahila associatepastor @acparis.org</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atelier Concert - Free admission, with free-will offering Angela L. Owens - soprano, LaToya Lain - mezzo-soprano, Morgane Fauchois-Prado - piano</td>
<td>Sunday 30 Mar</td>
<td>17h00 Sanctuary</td>
<td>Fred Gramann <a href="mailto:music@acparis.org">music@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Concert
En
Aide aux femmes
Atteintes du cancer du sein
Au Togo

Gluck : Danse et menuet des ombres heureuses de l’opéra “Orphée”
Haydn : Missa in Tempore Belli

Chœur Lux Perpetua : direction Claire Lewis
Chœur de l’Église Américaine de Paris : direction Fred Gramann
Association Symphonique de Paris : direction Franck Lastraussa Colombier

Le 1er Avril 2014 à 20h30 à l’Unesco
Salle n°1-125 avenue de Suffren

Réseau Ticketnet : Auchan · Cora · Cultura · E. Leclerc · Galeries Lafayette · Fourêt du Nord ·
Le Progrès de Lyon, Réservation par Tél. 0592 390 100 (0,34€ TTC/mn) www.ticketnet.fr
Contact : promoculturehumanitaires@yahoo.fr
Mères : Séguir · Cambonne · Ecole militaire
En raison du contrôle de sécurité, le public est prié de se présenter 1/2 heure avant la représentation

20 euros