Worship as flash mob
May holy days and holidays
200th: La belle époque
Music Notes

The American Church in Paris
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**On the cover:**
With three national holidays this month, what better place to relax than along the banks of the Seine, just in front of the ACP?

*Photo by Shannon Boisson de Chazournes*
Now that the façade renovation and cleaning is complete and the scaffolding is down, it feels like we are worshipping in a new sanctuary! In fact, it was 85 years ago on Sunday, 26 May 1929, when our congregation first worshipped in the new building! Joseph Wilson Cochran writes,

As yet the Assembly Hall of the Sunday School on the main floor was not completed and the Church sought temporary quarters for the Sunday Morning services. The use of the French Baptist Church at 48 rue de Lille was generously accorded through the courtesy of the Rev. W. O. Lewis, Superintendent of the Baptist Missions in Europe, and here the American congregation worshipped until Sunday, May 26 when, with thanksgiving and prayer, the first religious service on the new site was conducted.¹

It was on 11 May 1929 when Mrs. Cochran, President of the Ladies’ Benevolent Association, gave a reception to raise money to furnish the new Church House rooms, and on 23 May 1929, when the “Prudential Committee” of the ACP held their first meeting in the Thurber Memorial Hall.² As we go through this month, we can give thanks to God for 85 years of worship, fellowship and mission that has been ongoing since our ancestors began using the buildings on the quai d’Orsay as a spiritual home.

It is fascinating to note some of the great people who have worshipped at the ACP since its official charter in 1857: Three United States presidents – Ulysses Grant, Theodore Roosevelt, and Woodrow Wilson – have worshipped with our congregation. Many American Ambassadors to France since the Lincoln Administration have attended the ACP Thanksgiving services.

Famous preachers like Charles H. Spurgeon, Dwight L. Moody, S. Parkes Cadman, Martin Luther King, Jr., Mark Labberton (President of Fuller Theological Seminary), and most recently, Neal Presa (Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, USA), have graced the pulpit.³

Perhaps just as important as the famous people and preachers are the many thousands of un-named visitors who have joined us in worship over the years. We had record attendance numbers again this Easter, but throughout the year we welcome guests from around the world. I often receive an e-mail of encouragement from people who are surprised to find such dynamic and vibrant worship going on in the capital of the country now infamous for its commitment to secularism. Everyone who joins us for worship is so precious in God’s eyes. We are here for everyone and are committed to living into God’s vision relayed through the prophet Isaiah: “My house shall be a house of prayer for all peoples” (Is. 56.7).

A friend recommended to me Erich Auerbach’s classic, Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature. I am fascinated by this German Jewish literary scholar’s insight into Christian faith! He notes that in classic Greek and Roman literature, the only heroes were kings, queens and those of noble birth. But in the Christian telling of history, even poor laborers are heroes!

This is the good news of Easter, that Christ lived, died and rose again for all people! In Christ there is no one who is a nobody. This is the triumph of the gospel that continues to inspire our worship every Sunday: As we embody the grace of God’s welcome to old and new friends, members and strangers alike, we realize even as we sing in our communion liturgy, “that glad eternal feast, to which you welcome great and least.”

Please enjoy this Spire issue and all that is happening in this month of May and, as we gather for worship, remember the great saints who have gone before you... and who are sitting next to you!

In Christ,

²Ibid., 196.
³From a brochure celebrating the 100th anniversary of the ACP: The American Church in Paris 1857-1957: A Spiritual Adventure.
Dr. Robbins will teach us some basic principles of the spiritual life and guide us through various ways of praying with Scripture, keeping a spiritual journal, and attending and responding to God’s leading in times of silence, praying with the Monks, and group sharing.

Cast your net on the other side: A deeper discipleship through spiritual practice

Have you been searching for something more in your life, in your relationship with God? Have you ever wondered how you might develop a more vital and intimate relationship with Christ? Do you want to learn how to attend more faithfully to the Spirit’s leading? If so, this retreat is for you! You are invited to join with other Christians to learn about and experience spiritual practices that have been taught for centuries which will help you encounter our risen Lord in new ways, ways that transform your way of seeing and being in the world.

Dr. Martha A. Robbins is director of Pneuma Institute and the Joan Marshall Associate Professor Emerita of Pastoral Care, at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. She is a graduate of Maryville University (B.A.), St. Louis University (M.A.), and Harvard University (Th.D.). A licensed clinical psychologist, Dr. Robbins is also an Episcopal Lay Eucharistic minister, spiritual director, and retreat leader.

Before she came to Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, she was Dean of Students at Villa Duchesne High School, and director of Campus Ministry and the Human Development Program at Maryville University in St. Louis, MO., and has given workshops and retreats on various topics related to Pastoral Care, Loss and Transformation, and Christian Spirituality in Africa, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Israel, New Zealand, and the US.

She has published poems, articles, book chapters, and a book:  *Midlife Women and Death of Mother: A Study of Psycho-historical and Spiritual Transformation*. She authored a series of professional CD’s: *Guided Meditations on Sacred Scripture*, to help others pray with Scripture and deepen their Christian discipleship for mission. She is currently working on a manuscript on the transformation of faith during times of transition, and continues to explore the relationships between cosmology, evolution, and Christian spirituality.

Our program will begin with supper Friday evening, and end after lunch on Sunday. It will include discussion, meditation and prayer time, perhaps a question and answer period with a monk, and some free time to relax. We are offered a special option to attend any or all of the six daily services with the monks.

Do not miss this exceptional opportunity to learn from Dr. Robbins.

**Places are limited to 36.** If you wish to go on this retreat or if you have any questions, please contact Pastor Michelle at associatepastor@acparis.org as soon as possible to make a formal reservation.
May holy days and holidays

When I look at the new calendar of the year, one of my first instincts is to see where the May holidays fall. We all groan if the first and the 8th of May fall on a weekend, and it’s only slightly better if they fall on a Wednesday. The best, as it is this year, is when those two public holidays fall on a Thursday, making it possible to take off Friday the 2nd, 9th, and the day after Ascension, the 30th, to create three bridges, or “ponts” for a long weekend.

What are all these holidays, anyway? I always forget what the 8th signifies, and Dan admits he hadn’t heard of Ascension as a holiday before arriving in France. And while it’s not a day off, Mother’s Day is a May day as well — two of them, in fact. And Pentecost is not far behind. Here’s our guide to the real Springtime in Paris.

May Day: Something for everyone

By Alison Benney

Unlike other holidays, it is a bit startling to realize how many reasons have sprung up for celebrating the 1st of May. For romantics, it evokes images of pagan European rituals from the middle ages, and dancing around a brightly colored Maypole. The date falls on a cross-quarter day, falling midway between the March equinox and the June solstice. Whether the significance stems from this seasonal significance, from the Germanic reverence for sacred trees or as a British communal symbol, the Maypole does seem to be tied up in moral conflict. As Nathaniel Hawthorne put it in a short story in 1836, The May-Pole of Merry Mount, “jollity and gloom were contending for an empire.”

For historians there’s the story of 11-year-old King Charles IX of France, who was presented with lily of the valley flowers on 1 May 1561. He was so touched, he presented lilies of the valley to the ladies of his court each year on the first of May thereafter. (Unfortunately, he was also the son of Catherine de Medici, and ultimately responsible for the St Bartholomew Eve Massacre in 1572; he died two years later.)

In any case, for the traditionalists, the custom evolved into the European “bals de muguet”; once a year single young people could party without having to get their parents’ permission. The girls dressed in white, and the boys wore a sprig of lily as a buttonhole.

In France, and particularly in Paris, the 1st of May is now the Fête du Muguet. You can’t miss the street vendors selling small sprigs to bouquets of the lily of the valley, as there are special regulations that allow people and some organizations to sell these flowers on this one day without paying tax or complying with retail regulations. The custom is to buy a sprig of lilies for loved ones or friends, and some say that it brings good luck.

On a more serious level, rights activists celebrate May Day as Labor Day. In France, May 1 officially became known as La Fête du Travail on 29 April 1948. It is a day to campaign for and celebrate workers’ rights, and in Paris there is at least one big parade which gathers activists of all kinds, shouting union slogans, demanding human rights in general, demonstrating against racism or for current social issues. Marie le Pen, for instance, has her own parade that day, marching from the statue of Joan of Arc on rue de Rivoli, ending at place de l’Opéra.

On a global level, the 1st of May is called International Workers’ Day, celebrating the international labor movement. This is a national holiday in more than 80 countries, although not in the US - that is, except for the demonstrations around the country by various socialist, communist and anarchist groups commemorating the 1886 Haymarket affair in Chicago.

For the rest of us, although post offices, banks, stores and other businesses are closed, as well as many restaurants and cafes, the 1st of May is purely and happily a day off of work – and any excuse will do.
Victory in Europe Day: the 8th of May is mainly a European holiday, celebrating the end of World War II. After the Allied D-Day landings in Normandy on 6 June 1944 and the liberation of Paris two months later, it took until 8 May 1945 to formally end WWII.

The six years of war ended with the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany in Rheims, France, by Field Marshal Keitel. The surrender had been expected for months, but finally took place only after the suicide of Hitler during the Battle of Berlin on 30 April. Hitler’s successor, Reich president Karl Donitz, authorized the laying down of German arms.

The French signed both surrender documents: General François Sevez, de Gaulle’s chief of staff, at a red brick schoolhouse in Rheims, and General de Lattre de Tassigny in Berlin. It was co-signed by the Allies — by Great Britain, the United States and representatives of all the occupied countries. General Charles DeGaulle announced the victory on radio, “We have won the war. Victory is ours”.

Bells of churches all over France rang out and joyous crowds flooded the streets, singing and dancing, unfurling flags and banners. De Gaulle laid a wreath on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the Arc de Triomphe in front of throngs of cheering spectators.

Surprisingly, the Russians celebrate the surrender a day later. The Soviet army had taken Berlin on 2 May, and recognized the Rheims signing as a preliminary step to peace, signing their first official document on 8 May in Berlin. But fighting didn’t actually cease until 9 May, near Prague. This is the date still recognized by Russians for the war’s end, signaled by a radio address from Stalin: “The age-long struggle of the Slav nations...has ended in Victory. Your courage has defeated the Nazis...the war is over.”

In London, crowds massed at Trafalgar Square and up The Mall to Buckingham Palace where King George VI, Queen Elizabeth and Prime Minister Winston Churchill stood on a balcony and saluted the cheering crowd. In the US, Victory Day happened to fall on the birthday of newly-installed President Harry Truman: his most enjoyable gift, he said after his radio address. He dedicated the victory to the memory of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had died less than a month earlier.

In 1953 the French government declared 8 May a national holiday. France, with 15 other European countries, including Russia, commemorate the end of this military conflict in Europe, with a holiday. Public institutions are closed and government workers have the day off. And, yes, the American Church in Paris takes that day off as well.
I must be honest…I had never heard of Ascension Day before moving to France. Of course this does not surprise me as I continue to learn how little I knew or experienced prior to moving overseas. One of the many observations I have made since moving here three years ago is the myriad of public national holidays that have religious origins.

In addition to Christmas and Easter holidays, France recognizes All Saints Day, Ascension Day, Pentecost (on a Monday), and Assumption Day. Schools and shops are closed and churches hold various festivities and services. I dare say that most French people no longer understand the significance of these holidays. I do find it odd that a “secular” nation still celebrates such important Christian feast days.

One of the blessings for me personally has been the introduction of these days and a deepening of understanding and appreciation of their traditions. In contrast, during my tenure in New York, the schools had all of the major Jewish holidays off, and I was able to learn the significance of those days, not only for my Jewish brothers and sisters, but for my own faith as well.

Throughout Christian history, the Church calendar has set aside such feast days as a way of remembering the story and marking the seasons. Growing up, my tradition would celebrate Christmas and Easter, and the rest of the year….well, that basically was up for grabs.

Here at The American Church in Paris, we follow the Church lectionary and calendar, and I am amazed at how the intentionality of the seasons helps with the continuity of the story of God throughout the entire year. Certainly there are some “low” periods in the year, but much of our worship planning (and cultural holiday season) is shaped by the legacy of Christianity. Truth be told, if I didn’t celebrate Ascension Day, I probably would not be focusing as much on the resurrection stories of Jesus and the Commissioning of Disciples. The nation of France gives me a day for this!

Ascension Day marks the day that Jesus ascended to heaven following his crucifixion and resurrection. It is the 40th day of Easter and is ten days before Pentecost Sunday. The Biblical narrative can be found in Acts 1: 9-11.

The Ascension window in the Sanctuary at ACP is also our Pentecost window. What is interesting is that both are part of a much larger window in the back of the church, known as the Missionary window. From a theological perspective, the ascension of Christ and the descending of the Spirit directly impact discipleship and the sending out of missionaries to preach the gospel. The Missionary window depicts some famous missionaries, covering four regions in four of five columns, starting on the left with Asia, then Europe; the center shows Christ’s missionaries; then to the right, Africa and the Americas.

Seen from the pulpit, the face of the risen Christ is the brightest spot in the church. These are visual reminders each Sunday as we listen to the benediction and depart from the Sanctuary that we are all to look upward and gaze upon Christ.

For in His resurrection glory and ascension we find our calling, our hope and our salvation.
Thanks to smart commercializing, holidays can be hard to forget: bakeries displaying special holiday-specific delicacies, and commercials on the TV and radio selling us something that’s sure to make our loved ones feel special. But when your native country celebrates these holidays on a different date than that of your adopted home – and especially, when the date falls weeks in advance – it could make remembering that much more difficult. And if there’s one holiday we mustn’t forget, it’s the one that celebrates she who brought us into this world: Mother’s Day.

Approximately two days before the date each year, I receive a phone call from my father (the only time he ever calls) to remind me to call mom. Not that I had ever forgotten when I was living in the US, or that I’ve ever forgotten a birthday or special occasion thus far. But he knows it’s important to her. Mothers of expats require special attention on this day, maybe to compensate for a hyper-exaggerated empty-nest syndrome as the parents of children who have chosen to make their lives thousands of miles away. Being so far from home makes it that much more important that we keep in touch.

The history of Mother’s Day in Europe dates back much farther than that of the US. The Greeks honored Rhea, the goddess of maternity (and mother of Zeus), and Romans celebrated “les Matralias” (the matrons). In France, the holiday has gone by a number of different names over the years. In 1806, Napoleon established a day to recognize mothers of large families, taking after the English who had recently revived the centuries-old tradition with their “Mothering Day.” After WWI, the holiday got at least three names: in 1917 Paris established the “Fête des Familles Nombreuses”; in 1918 Lyon created “La journée des mères de familles nombreuses”; and in 1920 “La journée nationale des mères de familles nombreuses.” La Fête des mères had become a tradition around 1928, but it wasn’t until 1950 that the government enacted a law designating it as an official holiday.

In the US, the story is much simpler. During the Civil War, groups of women were working to promote peace and to improve sanitary and health conditions for wounded soldiers. Initiatives were proposed to establish a day that honored these women, such as Julia Ward Howe’s “Mother’s Day for Peace” observance, or the 1872 “Mother’s Day Proclamation” which accompanied it, but neither were able to immediately gain ground. In 1908 Anna Jarvis held a memorial for her mother Ann Reeves Jarvis, who had founded some of the Mother’s Day Work Clubs to help soldiers. After intense campaigning by Jarvis, Mother’s Day became a national holiday in 1908. As early as 1920, though, Jarvis had already become bitter because of the over-commercialization of the holiday, which some might say still exists today.

“La journée nationale des mères de familles nombreuses.” La Fête des mères had become a tradition around 1928, but it wasn’t until 1950 that the government enacted a law designating it as an official holiday.

In the US, celebrating Mother’s Day can be synonymous with offering flowers or chocolate, or more sophisticated and generous gifts of jewelry or clothing. Sending cards is also a typical U.S. tradition for most holidays, Mother’s Day being no exception. As much as the French have seemed to pick up on many American traditions, this is not one of them, a fact that is reflected in the lack of holiday-specific cards in stationary shops.

But in general, the way we celebrate Mother’s Day seems to be universal to all cultures – spending time together with the family over a meal, be it in a restaurant or at home. So mark your calendars this year for Sunday, 11 or 25 May – depending on where your mother can be found – and make that phone call count.

“A printed card means nothing except that you are too lazy to write to the woman who has done more for you than anyone in the world. And candy! You take a box to Mother—and then eat most of it yourself. A pretty sentiment.” Anna Jarvis, founder of American Mother’s Day
Worship
The ultimate flash mob experience
By Rev. Brent Anderson

A flash mob is performance art. It’s when a group of people assemble in a predetermined location to perform for a brief period of time and then disperse as quickly and mysteriously as they appear. Usually their goal is to entertain the public while having fun themselves (or in the case of marriage proposals, to support the happy couple and make the occasion a unique and memorable, once-in-a-lifetime event).

Flash mobs happen in busy railway stations, department stores, street corners, school cafeterias, and grocery stores; essentially anywhere a large group of people can gather and be seen by the public or the intended audience. Often flash mobs will suddenly break into song and dance; like you would see in a 50s musical or on a television episode of Glee.

Other flash mobs prefer to create still art; the participants posing in complete statuesque silence as if frozen in time for a period of five minutes: perhaps posing with umbrellas as if they are about to be carried away by the wind, couples holding a passionate embrace, kids tying their shoes, or the classic “reading the newspaper” pose.

If you’ve ever experienced a flash mob, you know that a lot of time, effort, communication and coordination must have happened behind the scenes to make it all possible. Rehearsal and preparation are crucial. Timing and choreography are critical. And the results are usually amazing (search “flash mob” on YouTube and watch some of the videos; you’ll be amazed at what you see).

The preparation for a flash mob happens behind the scenes. If the flash mob is going to perform a song and dance, the instigators will produce a short instructional video and post it online. Friends, friends of friends, colleagues and other group members will be invited to participate through social media (like Facebook, Twitter, or simple text messages). They’ll be told when the flash mob will occur, where they can watch the video to prepare, and when they can expect final instructions and details (including the exact location, time, and cue to begin). It’s then the responsibility of the participants to learn the song and dance, find the appropriate attire, and be ready on the day of the event.

In Paris, towards the end of every June, thousands of people, all dressed in elegant white, participate in an epicurean flash mob popup feast event called Dîner en blanc. Participants bring their own feasts, tables, chairs, glasses, silver and white napery. According to the organizers, the purpose of the event is: “To gather at a secret location with the sole purpose of sharing a high-quality meal with good friends at the heart of one of the city’s most beautiful locations.” It used to be a word-of-mouth event. But today, one must be invited by a participant from the previous year or be on the website’s waiting list.

Why do I bring up flash mobs and the Dinner in White? I have been thinking a lot about worship recently and I have been wondering whether or not it is possible to come to worship with the same passion, preparation, enthusiasm and excitement that people experience when participating in a flash mob.
What difference would it make if we saw ourselves more as participants than spectators in our worship services? What if we prepared for worship the way a flash mob participant prepared to participate in a flash mob? What type of things would or should we do to prepare for our weekly worship event?

Do we come to worship on Sundays expectant? Do we come ready to perform? Do we come hoping to delight or please our intended audience (God)? Are we attentive to our cues? Do we follow the lead of our prompters? Do we put all of ourselves into our performance? Even when we are not the “lead” actor, do we “stay in character” or “keep our head (and heart) in the game”?

On the flipside, how can pastors and worship leaders make our worship more participatory? How can we design our services or lead them in such a way that the congregation is invited to be more fully involved in the act of worship (involved not just in voice, but with head and heart)?

Will Willimon, in his book *Preaching and Leading Worship*, laments our inability to engage people in worship: “Many of the Sunday orders of worship consist of the pastor speaking, the pastor praying, the pastor reading and the choir singing, with little opportunity for the congregation to do anything but sit and listen... When the Sunday service is simply a time to sit quietly, hear some good music and a good sermon, sing a hymn, and then go home to eat dinner, no wonder many of our people get confused into thinking that Christ only wants passive admirers rather than active followers.”

Soren Kierkegaard famously used the metaphor of the theater, and worship as a theatrical play, to reframe our understanding of the role of the congregation in worship. Instead of the pastor being the lead actor on the stage with the congregation serving as the audience, Kierkegaard encouraged us to see the various roles differently. Instead of the pastor being the center of attention for the audience/the congregation, he argued that the members of the congregation are the main actors on the stage. God is the audience. And the pastor is merely the prompter (or narrator) who feeds the congregation lines and keeps the drama moving.

In her book *A Royal “Waste” of Time*, Marva Dawn presents Paul Dahlstrom’s metaphor of the worshipping congregation as an orchestra. The worship leader is the conductor, with the congregation being the instrumentalists. While the role of the conductor is to know/embody the music and provide the cues that enable the individual musicians to play, it remains the sole responsibility of the musicians to actually play the music. In order for the orchestra to play the music well, countless hours of preparation must take place before the time of the performance. The musicians need plenty of time to learn the music and master their instruments. And when it comes time for the performance, they look to the conductor to unify the performers, to set the tempo, to provide visual interpretation and cues in order to shape the sound of the ensemble.

I like these ways of thinking about our various roles in worship. Flash mob event, theatrical performance, orchestral concert — each of these images provides helpful insights into worship as an act of devotion to God. All of them highlight the important role that members of the congregation play in the worship of God as well as the unique responsibility each of us has in making worship authentic, honest, and real.

If you would like to read more about worship, here are a number of interesting books:

Events to celebrate the 200th anniversary

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

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

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

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

Around the world with General Grant

After he left the White House in 1877, General Ulysses S. Grant took some time off, three years in all, to travel around the world. This is a small excerpt from the book written about his travels, during his stay in Paris. Oh, and the subtitle to this entertaining travelogue written in 1879 is:

A narrative of the visit of General U. S. Grant, ex-President of the United States, to various countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa, in 1877, 1878, 1879: to which are added certain conversations with General Grant on questions connected with American politics and history

" ...The Avenue of the Opera is a beautiful street with beauty of a pretentious kind. As you turn from the boulevard, from the Rue de la Paix, along which falls the shadow of the Vendome Column, you come to one of the centers of the American colony, the office of the New York Herald. This office is among the shrines of the American abroad. He can hear all the news. He can write his name on the register, and know that it will be called next morning to New York, and his presence in Paris spread to an envious or admiring world at home. He can read all about home, for here is the best reading-room in Europe.

Whether he comes from Pennsylvania or Oregon, Maine or Texas, he will find his home paper, and read all about the church and the county fair, the latest murder or the pending canvass — deaths and marriages. Perchance he will find some wandering brother, and there will ensue comforting chat about America, and how much cheaper it is than Paris, and what scoundrels these Frenchmen are, especially in the matter of candles. If he has any news to bestow, Mr. Ryan, who is in charge of the office, and is one of the oldest and most distinguished members of The Herald staff, will listen with an eager and discerning ear.

The Herald office was one of the favorite haunts of General Grant in Paris. He would slip in of a morning and seek out a quiet corner, and brood over the newspapers for an hour or two."

Gustave Eiffel, engineer extraordinaire

The Exposition Universelle of 1889 featured the tallest building in the world, the Eiffel Tower, and the longest building in the world, the Galerie des Machines, and they were both the products of Gustave Eiffel, not long after he contributed the metallic skeleton to Bartholdi’s Statue of Liberty. He had already built the longest bridge in the world, the Gabarit viaduct.
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: 1880-1904. By Alison Benney

La belle époque

Americans flocked to Paris during la belle époque, the prosperous period between 1871 and the First World War. In an age of iron and glass, accented by the romanticism of Art Nouveau, Parisians in the post-Haussmanian era enjoyed the city’s clean, walkable neighborhoods, lit increasingly by electricity rather than gas. Line 1 of the Paris Métro opened, and bicycles and automobiles mingled with horses on the roads.

The public was entertained by cabarets like the Folies Bergère and the Moulin Rouge, by the farces of Feydeau, and by the waltz and the cancan. The Lumière brothers held the first film screenings in the world and James Gordon Bennett, Jr started the Paris Herald, in direct competition with Dr. Thomas Evans’ American Register.

For the American Church congregation it was also an era that Dr. Cochran calls in Friendly Adventurers, “the high-water mark of spiritual power and beauty.” From 1880 to 1904 the American Church welcomed a number of high-profile Christians for worship and company. During his month-long visit to Paris in 1877, Ulysses S. Grant spent his Sunday mornings in a pew at the American Church. The evangelical duo of Ira David Sankey and Dwight Lyman Moody preached both at our church and at the Oratoire du Louvre in October 1882.

Dr. Augustus Beard, American Church pastor from 1883 to 1885, nurtured the mission efforts of Robert Whitaker McAll, who created the Mission populaire évangélique de France. In cooperation with the American Church of the Holy Trinity, Pastor Beard also helped create the Relief Society of the USA in Paris, which in 1930 became the American Aid Society.

Then, about a month before the Eiffel Tower was finished, in February 1889, Reverend Edward G. Thurber and his wife arrived, to stay for 16 years of what Dr. Cochran called the “perfect pastorate.” When services were held on 1 May 1889, to commemorate the Centennial of Washington’s inauguration, the US ambassador gave a speech, and commissioners of the International Exposition of 1889 attended.

During the Exposition, in fact, many Americans gathered at the Thurbers’ residence at 13 ave MacMahon for their “At Homes” on Wednesdays. Over 22,000 entries were recorded in their attendance book.

History in context

1881 - Clara Barton creates the Red Cross.
December 1882 – The first Christmas tree with electric lights was created by an employee of Thomas Edison.
24 May 1883 – The Brooklyn Bridge opens.
1883 – Buffalo Bill created his Wild West Show, on tour with Sitting Bull, Geronimo, Calamity Jane, and Annie Oakley; it was a big hit at the 1889 Expo in Paris.
1884 – Mark Twain publishes The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.
1886 – In Germany, Heinrich Hertz uses sparks to send a radio signal.
4 May 1886 – The Haymarket Riot in Chicago, after a bomb was thrown into a meeting called to show support for striking workers. October 28, 1886 – The Statue of Liberty is dedicated in New York Harbor.
4 October 1887 - The Paris Herald was founded by James Gordon Bennett, Jr. Its first edition mentions a gathering at the American Cathedral.

1888 – George Eastman invents the Kodak camera, making it easy for amateurs to take photographs.
1889 – Moulin Rouge opens, features the cancan.
1891 – Bicycle-maker Peugeot creates an automobile.
1892 – John Muir founds the Sierra Club.
May 1893 – A decline in the NY stock market triggered the Panic of 1893, leading to an economic depression second only to the Great Depression of the 1930s.
1893 – New Zealand is the first country to give women the vote in national elections.
1893 – Maxime’s bistro opens in Paris.
1894 – Captain Alfred Dreyfus is falsely accused of passing military information to German agents.
1895 – Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite, arranged in his will for his estate to fund the Nobel Prize.
April 1896 – The first modern Olympic Games, the idea of Pierre de Coubertin, are held in Athens, Greece.
1898 – Hotel Ritz opens.
1898 – In China and India the bubonic plague begins to kill what will eventually be three million people.
1900 – In the US the paper clip is invented.
19 July, 1900 – Paris Metro underground railway system, Line 1 opens.
1903 – Marie Curie wins Nobel Prize for Physics.
1903 – Ford Motor Company formed.
1903 – The Wright brothers make their first powered flight in the Wright Flyer.
Mrs. Sarah Wood Thurber started the Ladies’ Benevolent Association in 1889, which grew to include over 125 women. They sewed more than 600 garments each year for the Christmas Fetes held in the halls of the McAll Mission, and these meetings apparently included literary and musical entertainment “of a high order”.

During Dr. Thurber’s pastorate, Mr. L.P. Twyeofft was the church treasurer, and the pastor was assisted during the last years of his ministry by Rev. Sylvester W. Beach, the father of Silvia Beach, bookstore owner and publisher of *Ulysses*. Dr. Stephen Tyng, a member of the ACP’s Prudential Committee (now the church Council), co-founded and was the first President of the American Chamber of Commerce in France in 1894, making “AmChamFrance” the oldest US business association overseas.

There were at least three major events in 1901 that had an impact on today’s church. First, at the Easter Sunday service on 7 April 1901, the church expressed its appreciation and gratitude for the Tiffany memorial windows placed above the pulpit by Mr. Rodman Wanamaker. He also paid for the installment of electric lights.

This is also the year that the French government changed the status of religious establishments in France. Before 1901, churches had been exempt from taxes. Now, all duly-organized religious bodies were considered *associations cultuelles* (that’s *culte* not *culture*), including the American Church.

Finally, this is the year that the Gros Caillou tobacco factory closed. Its abandoned site is where the American Church was to move 30 years later. That story will be told in next month’s edition.

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**The Thurbers at the ACP**

Reverend Edward G. Thurber preached his last sermon at the American Church on 25 September 1904. His successor, Rev. Chauncey W. Goodrich, described him as “Granite in character, but always with gladness on his face. That solidity of nature befitted the one who for 16 years wrought to solidify the church...it was a work of unflagging self-giving.”

And did you know? The Thurber room is not, in fact, named after either the poet or the pastor, but after the pastor’s wife, Mrs. Sarah Wood Thurber, for her work in establishing the Women’s Benevolent Association, which paid for the room’s wood paneling, and for whose use the Thurber Room was designed.

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**The American Cathedral**

**The church across the river**

The American Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, America’s Episcopal church in Paris, has served the American community since the 1830s when services were organized in the garden pavilion of the Hôtel de Matignon, now the official residence of the French Prime Minister. A parish was formally established in 1859 and the first church building consecrated in 1864 on rue Bayard.

In the 1870s, the Rector, Dr. John B. Morgan, began a successful fundraising campaign for a new and larger church. The site was purchased on avenue George V (then called avenue d’Alma) from the estate of the Duc de Morny, half-brother of Emperor Napoléon III. The church was built in less than four years, from approval of the plans in October 1882 to the first services held, in September 1886.

The church was consecrated on Thanksgiving Day, 25 November 1886, coinciding with the dedication of the Statue of Liberty in New York. In 1922, Holy Trinity became a cathedral, technically a pro-cathedral, in that it continues as a parish church and also serves as the seat for the Bishop in charge of Episcopal churches in Europe.
Members and Friends of ACP,

Grace and peace to you from your Church Council. As I write to you we are reaching the end of our Holy Week services.

What a wonderful and joyous week this has been and I’m grateful for all of the varied ministry teams who have tirelessly prepared and contributed to another inspirational Celebration of the Resurrection of Christ.

I trust that each of you, in your own way, has been uplifted during this Lenten Season, and that you feel a renewed sense of God’s presence in your life. At the same time, you may also feel fatigued from all the activities of an intense Parisian springtime. We are entering the month of May, when holidays and other events work to compress our already busy lives. It is vital therefore to hold onto the joy of the Easter Season as we carry out our ministries in every place.

In this spirit, Council is beginning the preparations for the next Congregational Meeting which will be held on 25 May. The primary purpose of this meeting will be to elect next year’s Council.

The Nominating Committee, headed by Tom Johnson and Marie-Laure Lauverjat, is busy preparing the slate of proposed individuals to replace outgoing council members. Our thoughts and prayers are with those who are discerning their respective calls to serve. We look forward to sharing with you the completed slate in due course. We ask you to please mark your calendars now and plan to attend.

In Christ,
Mark Primmer
ACP Vice Moderator

Jerusalem: City of Passion
The Lenten Lectures by Dr. Ron Tappy

With enthusiasm and expertise, he led us through the streets of Roman Jerusalem and brought alive the settings of the Passion story, from Jesus’ Sunday entrance into the Temple to the discovery of the empty tomb.

We especially appreciated his vivid description and depictions of the Temple that Herod built in 19 BC, and the Romans destroyed in 70 AD. We discovered that the tyrant Herod was an excellent engineer, one of the first builders to use cement. He filled in an entire valley to support the huge structure.

There were three valleys that surrounded ancient Jerusalem, with the Temple looming over them, and Jesus most probably walked down one of them, from the Garden of Gethsemane to the house of Caiaphas – as Dr. Tappy reminded us, “down the valley of the shadow of death”.

He explained that the famous wailing wall is the original western wall of Herod’s Temple. He also pointed out the southeastern area of the Temple, the Pinnacle, a setting for the temptations of Jesus, where the devil encouraged him to jump. He was able to show us a photo of the arch on the Via Dolorosa that is called the Ecce Homo arch, through which Pilate brought Jesus in his crown of thorns to show him to the crowd: Behold the Man.

And these examples are only a fraction of the riveting anecdotes, images and history Dr. Tappy recounted over three evenings. He finished the last evening with a word about the tension between faith and religion, and the struggle the church has with popular culture.

He told us that while he was worshipping in a basilica in Normandy, he was handed a political leaflet. It disturbed him, he said, because the main mission of the church is vertical, not horizontal; the main mission is to teach the Gospel of Christ. Dr. Tappy was able to teach us about the Bible via his brilliant archaeological lectures, and we came away blessed.

Reported by Alison Benney

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Reported by Alison Benney
The ACP’s contemporary band Still Point has been hard at play preparing a second CD soon to be available. I interviewed their director, Natalie Raynal, about this exciting project:

Natalie, I’m guessing the not everyone knows where the band’s name “Still Point” comes from. Tell us about that.

‘Still Point’ comes from my favorite cycle of poetry, The Four Quartets of T.S. Eliot. It’s a picture of the incarnation of Christ and a great image for the essence of worship. It is the place where we are reconciled. It’s where we know by God’s Spirit that we are loved and accepted by our Maker. The still point is God stepping in and making himself known to our hearts. Except for the point, still point, there would be no dance, and there is only the dance. As the worship team evolved it felt right to put a name to what we were gathered around. That Still Point is what we seek together.

How did the second CD project come about? It’s been an ongoing question: how can we best share the music that has become meaningful to us as a congregation? Music that encourages us together towards a goal with very specific outcomes. What you can share songs that can be a part of people’s lives beyond our time in collective worship. The CD is one effort to that end. The CD’s will go on sale in June, by the scheduled Féte de la Musique ACP Café on 21 June. They will be available at ACP’s reception desk, and possibly through the website.

What have been some challenges in seeing this project through? Finding and scheduling times to record while continuing to prepare for the 13h30 service and events like ACP Café is a huge challenge. And there’s the fact that once you know something well enough as a team to record it, it already feels quite old. But we are becoming more agile as our understanding grows. I’m guessing the moment this recording is completed we’ll begin the next.

Has it helped the band grow as a team? Hugely. Working together towards a goal with very specific outcomes causes everyone to improve their game. We want to offer something of the highest possible quality we can, so every single detail of every part matters and shows through. What you get away with live, doesn’t work in isolation. We share songs that can be a part of people’s lives beyond our time in collective worship. The CD is one effort to that end.

What is special about it? More of You introduces 2 new songs, including the title track by Il-woong and Young Woong Seo, a beautiful new arrangement by Daniel Herr of the old George Matheson hymn “O Love That Will Not Let Me Go”, our arrangement of Luther’s “A Mighty Fortress”, as well as original versions of a number of beloved cover songs by artists such as David Crowder, Misty Edwards, Tim Hughes, and others.
This month Fred is off to the US to conduct handbells in five different places. The first stop will be Dan Haugh’s old stomping grounds, Nyack, New York. The Hudson Valley Handbell Festival attracts handbell choirs from all over the Northeast and there are usually about 300 ringers in attendance.

From there Fred jets to Reno, Nevada to work with the top-notch community handbell choir, Tintinnabulations. The Californis Bay Area Handbell Festival has a long standing tradition of excellence, the area being awash with wonderful ringers. The final concert will include a piece for all ringers, plus an ensemble of a dozen solo handbell ringers who will be using “bell trees”, a method of suspending a half-dozen bells in the shape of a tree and playing them with mallets.

From there Fred moves north to Ashland, Oregon, for the Siskiyou Summit Handbell Festival. At 4,310 feet, Siskiyou Summit is the highest point on Interstate Highway 5 in Oregon. Fred’s last stop features a festival in the church near Portland where Scott Herr grew up: Calvary Presbyterian Church. Scott’s dad has been hard at work building special risers in the church for the event! Portland also happens to be the home of Fred and Nancy’s two grandchildren, Noah and Emile, so it will be quite a celebration!
Join the Pentecost Language Choir

A Pentecost Sunday tradition at the American Church is a Language Choir. No, they don’t sing. Rather they read the Acts text simultaneously while surrounding the congregation, each one in a different language. We would like YOU to participate by sending Fred an email stating the language(s) you would be able to read. You will receive all the instructions and have a chance to rehearse on the morning of 8 June just prior to the 11H00 service. You may choose an attire typical of your home country, or else possibly wear red. Help us set the congregation on fire with the Holy Spirit as expressed through the gift of language!

Little Ringlets: No longer just a hairstyle

The ACP is proud to announce it will likely be the first church in the world to have a handbell choir for new born babies: The Little Ringlets. The minimum size to join is the length of the treble bell case (see photo to the right). The charter member is Leola Thenot, daughter of Lisa and Regis Thenot. Lisa rings with the Celebration Ringers and the Bronze Ringers. Born on 20 February, Leola weighed the same as an Eb3 handbell. Another member will be added when Anjali Bhatara (who rings with the Celebration Ringers) gives birth this month. The third member will be Emily Seftel’s son, Benjamin, born 4 September (Emily rings with the Celebration Ringers). Being the oldest he will be in charge of the lower bells. The repertoire will be based on random ringing to start with, and the bells will be stopped by placing them directly in the mouth.

Fred considers the major challenge will be having the Little Ringlets fed, changed (we don’t want them ringing wet), and burped (probably during the hymns, not the sermon) and awake when it is time to play. Special cribs are being installed behind the organ screen which can be rocked by Fred’s right foot while still playing the pedals with the left. Eventually a handbell processional is envisioned with the aid of strollers.

More members are needed! Women of the ACP, when that pregnancy test comes back positive, immediately give Fred a ring and insure that your new born has a spot in The Little Ringlets.
Free Concerts in the Sanctuary on Sundays at 17h

Sunday 4 May at 17h
**Riccardo Bozolo**, piano
Music by Bach, Haydn, Brahms, Godowsky, Rosenthal

Sunday 11 May at 17h
**Cristina Ballatori**, flute  
**Kevin Chance**, piano
Music by Donizetti, Welcher, Bartok, Clarke, Boulanger, Zyman

Sunday 18 May at 17h
**Catherine Nataf Muller**, soprano  
**Pierre Muller**, piano
Music by Scarlatti, Handel, Mozart

Sunday 25 May at 17h
**“Duo Semplice”**  
**Silvia Bellani & David Peroni**, piano 4-hands  
Music by Mozart, Ravel, Kapustin, Alkan

It is obvious from this photo that the ACP Bronze Ringers are very gloved and appreciated... at least by former ringer Laura Potratz, who sent a bundle of hand-died green gloves for the ensemble to wear. Laura is currently Music Director at University Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota and also works for the “Organ Doctor”, tuning, repairing and rebuilding pipe organs. (We glove you too, Laura!)
ACP collective run to Jerusalem

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

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

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

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

Thanks to your effort and perseverance, in just a short 4.5 weeks, we've gone 1665 km! Help us journey the remaining 4191 km before Pentecost. It's not too late to join us on our (virtual) journey to Jerusalem during Lent and Eastertide.

Congregational Meeting
Sunday 25 May at 12h30

Don’t miss this important meeting when you will have the opportunity to hear the full slate of proposed new Council members.

Make sure you save the date. Come along to elect your new Council!
An Evening with Dr. Jane Goodall  
15 May at 18h30

World-renowned primatologist, Dame of the British Empire, founder of the Jane Goodall Institute and U.N. Messenger of Peace - Dr. Jane Goodall discusses her groundbreaking chimpanzee behavioral research and exciting updates from the work of the Jane Goodall Institute. The evening will include a lecture by Dr. Goodall, followed by a reception, book signing, a raffle and a meet and greet.

More than 50 years ago, a young Jane Goodall first set foot in what is today Tanzania’s Gombe National Park. Little did she know at the time that she was about to embark on a groundbreaking chimpanzee behavioral study that would rock the scientific community and redefine our understanding of animals and, ultimately, ourselves. Likewise, she probably never imaged that she would one day leave Gombe and begin a quest to empower others to make the world a better place for people, animals, and the environment we all share.

In her speech, Dr. Goodall will bring her audience into the world of the Gombe chimpanzees—from her early observations and experiences to the latest news and stories from the field. She will share information about the work of the Jane Goodall Institute, which continues her pioneering research and celebrates its 37th anniversary this year.

During the reception part of the evening Dr Goodall will sign copies of her books, speak in person to those attending, take photos and spend time among the audience in an intimate setting. There will also be a raffle featuring many items donated by the Jane Goodall Institute, including a lunch with Dr Goodall herself! Lastly, we will also celebrate Jane’s 80th birthday right here at the American Church in Paris!

Tickets are available for purchase at €20. Space is limited so you must reserve now.

This event is hosted along with the American University in Paris. All proceeds will support the work of the Institut Jane Goodall France. Please visit www.janegoodall.org for more information.

Reserve your spot and book your tickets today at www.acparis.org/janegoodall.
Denise Dampierre, mother of four, volunteer for Children’s Worship, and founder of the website home-is-fun.com, recently conducted her second workshop for families with young children at the church. She uses innovative tools to “boost family love”, including discovery stories, relationship-building gift certificates, Dishes & Discussion time, and even revolutionary cooking techniques. She explains how “Home is Fun” initially came about, as well as what she enjoys about hosting workshops.

Tell me a bit about "Home is Fun." What was the initial idea behind it? “Necessity is the mother of invention.” We had four boys in seven years and they have not always been easy. I needed help and turned to wonderful parenting experts, many of them Christian. In devouring their counsel, I wondered how I could put these ideas into practice. How do I start “listening to my child” when my normal behavior is to lecture them?!?

I began to develop innovative communication tools to translate the experts’ advice into activities we could do in the car and while preparing or enjoying dinner.

So my parenting became increasingly purpose-driven. I kept asking other parents what they did in everyday life in order to help their children become healthy adults physically, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. My French friends responded, “Oh! C’est une autre histoire!” (“It’s another story.”) Why? Shouldn’t it be same one? What successful business would separate strategy from action plan? That’s a recipe for bankruptcy!

That’s when I sought to apply management and leadership practices to the home. After all, family is a service organization; we serve each other, our God, and our community.

What inspired you to lead workshops at the church? Mother Teresa said that God loves the world through people. Families are one of God’s great gifts to experience love. My hope is to be a resource to enable parents and children to appreciate even more fully the blessings of family. I know that it’s easier and more exciting to “go out” and discover something new together than it is to try and create a moment of change at home. These workshops are family outings that include learning and fun for everyone.

What has been your favorite part about leading these workshops? There are two favorite moments. One thrill is the parents’ “Aha moment” when they realize that practices taken for granted at work could make home life smoother and more fun. In the Positive Routines workshop, we hear parents’ reactions when they make the connection between job descriptions and clarifying expectations for their kids. For Boosting Love, parents’ heads nod when they realize that families can intentionally grow love just as businesses increase income.

The other ultra precious moment is when parents listen to their children. So often we moms and dads are giving instructions. We are so busy giving, we don’t take time to receive...or allow our kids to give. These workshops create a context and a time for parents to (re)discover their kids. Children love the focused attention of their parents and the opportunity to help make family great.

Missed this year’s “Home is Fun” workshops? Don’t worry, Denise will be back in the fall with more opportunities for families to learn and grow together. We are both already looking forward to it!
Take me out to the ballgame

By Amit Pieter

However my games end, let me always have fun
And if Heaven has All Stars, I hope to be one
When my games here are over, and my seasons are done
Let me play on Your team, just like your Son.

A Baseball Player’s Prayer, Anonymous, early 20th century

Forget soccer, rugby and NASCAR and get thee to the ballgame. Baseball, that is. The 2014 American playing season batted off on 30 March, although French league ball started a bit later, on 6 April. An incurable fan myself, I played pickup games in Paris during the 1990s, with American expats and young French enthusiasts on spring weekends in the Bois de Vincennes. I was especially impressed with the serious equipment the players had invested in.

In France, baseball dates back to 8 March 1889, in the shadow of the new Eiffel Tower. Albert Spalding, a former star player and owner of America’s largest sporting goods company, was the organizer, who later became an Olympics Commissioner, coming often to meetings in Paris. Spalding helped found The French Baseball Union in 1912, which was forerunner of the Fédération Française de Baseball et Softball, and today consists of 200 clubs with 9,000 members. He started the Spalding Athletic Club in Saint Germain in 1913, touring Normandy with exhibition games in the summer. Back in New York City in January 1914, he declared France “the next baseball country”.

A European Baseball League was created, with teams in Paris, Nice and Monte Carlo, but the outbreak of WWI in June stalled the project. Still, over 2,500 US soldiers and European locals played in games sponsored by the YMCA and Knights of Columbus. In 1919 the final Allied Games were played before 22,000 spectators at Pershing Stadium in Paris, with such splash that mandatory baseball instruction was ordered by the French army.

Parisian clubs organized in 1921 into the first French National League. By August 1924, the Paris All-Stars had defeated the London “Americans” in the European World Series at Stade Elisabeth, Paris. This same year the Paris Olympic Games hosted exhibition matches between the Chicago White Sox and New York Giants, and a French National Championship was played each year from 1924 to 1939.

Back in the US, the most famous French player in the Major Leagues was Napoleon “Nap” Lajoie. His father was French-Canadian, and Nap was born in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, in 1874. He was the top 2nd baseman for 20 years, from 1896-1916, and managed a team called the Naps for 5 years, from 1905-1909; today they’re known as the Cleveland Indians. He was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame and his 1933 baseball card is one of the rarest and most expensive for collectors.

Some other memorable players of French descent include Clement “Clem” Labine, Deacon Phillippe and Pierre LePine. Labine hailed from Woonsocket as well, and went on to star in the Brooklyn Dodgers’ bullpen in the 1950s. In the only World Series the Brooklyn club ever won, against the hated Yankees in 1955, Labine pitched one key win and saved another.

Deacon Phillippe, son of French parents, pitched the very first World Series game, in 1903. He won by pitching the entire nine innings for the Pirates, although Pittsburgh ultimately lost the series.

Another French-Canadian, Pierre LePine, played on the Detroit Tigers team in 1902. He died in 1949 in Woonsocket. If anyone can explain the attraction of that town (pop. 41,000) to French-Canadians I’d be very interested.

Since the end of WWII, there has been less enthusiasm for baseball in France. Today there is no play comparable to the Major Leagues of the US, Japan, Korea, Mexico, or the Caribbean. A minor league team from Rouen has been French champ for 11 of the past 12 years, and the professional teams closest to Paris play in Chartres and Senart. Still, amateurs in public parks of the bigger French cities gather for friendly competition and honing of skills, including the ongoing game at Stade Pershing in the Bois de Vincennes. Play ball!

To join a baseball game, contact the Fédération Française de Baseball et Softball, 41 rue de Fécamp, 75012, www.ffbsc.org, communication@ffbsc.org; tel: 01 44 68 89 30.
Knotting Prayers for someone special
By Yoshiko Okubo

In a country some centuries ago, wives and mothers asked any woman, friends or unknown, to help them fill a cloth with 1000 red knots. One “knot” represented one person’s wish and it was to be made by 1,000 different hands. The cloth thus embroidered was included in the baggage of men departing for war. Officially, the cloth was to wish that their men fight bravely for the honor of their country but the silent message of each of the knots was to see the loved one come home, safe and sound. The country enjoys peace now, but this tradition of embodying a prayer into physical action remains, as “battles” never seem to cease in life.

When one of the ACP family members is fighting a battle, what can others do to be useful? While praying individually is indeed consequential, can we not also unite our efforts in collective action?

Thus the idea of stitching knots came into being. It was our attempt to create the synergy of prayers through togetherness and so anybody who wished to knot a prayer was invited to join. This project was “officially” inaugurated in March with the first few knots being placed by Scott and Kim Herr. The kick-off was quiet but filled with special promise.

Since then, many hugs and kisses, exchanges and concerns have surrounded the cloth. In the midst of the noise of the meeting point, some tranquility reigned throughout the process. As fingers moved, knots of many different colors and sizes gradually filled the white cloth. The ACP congregation, helped by the Filipino Fellowship and two families in Palo Alto, filled the cloth with one thousand one hundred and sixty-one knots. Each one is a prayer silently breathed into the cloth, offering support and love to our ACP member. The cloth was sent on Easter Sunday.

I am overwhelmed each time I look at this cloth. So many knots were stitched in France and abroad in only two Sundays! What a responsive and vibrant community we belong to! It seems so precious and beautiful. Thank you to all and beyond.

A thank you note from Love in Action Children’s Home

Holistic care means that we physically care for our children by bathing, clothing and feeding them as well as providing medical and dental care; mentally we provide vocational and educational programs that intellectually empower them; emotionally we provide on-site psychological support through group and individual therapy; spiritually we encourage our children in the love of Christ through daily prayer, scripture, fellowship and church events; and socially we engage in numerous activities in a diverse community.

We want to thank “The American Church in Paris” for it’s generous gift to us for 2013! Without the support of churches, businesses and individuals we could not do what we do.

We are a home for children, located in Chapala, Mexico. We currently house 34 children between the ages of 1 and 19 years old.

Our mission at Love in Action is to provide Christ-centered, holistic care to abandoned, abused, and orphaned children.

To find out more about Love in Action, www.loveinactioncenter.org.
A thank you note from Friday Mission Lunch

The Friday Mission Lunch team wishes to thank the American Church for its warm and embracing welcome during the year and a half that the program was hosted at the ACP while the American Cathedral was undergoing its extensive renovations.

The hospitality extended both to our guests and volunteers has been uplifting and our guests loved the light and spacious Theater as it was transformed into a bright and cheerful dining room each Friday afternoon.

We are now back at the Cathedral and enjoying the new and modern kitchen facilities. We wish big success to ACP’s recently launched Homeless Friday Mission Lunch Program.
JoAnn Neal has been working with the Rafiki Foundation in Africa for more than a decade and has been supported throughout this time by ACP. JoAnn will be writing regularly for the Spire and keeping us updated with life as a missionary in Tanzania.

Explaining Rafiki


- **Providing a home and education for vulnerable children.** As the ChildCare Administrator, I facilitate admitting disadvantaged children to come to Rafiki to live. We work through the local pastors who usually make the initial application for the child. If the local social welfare case worker agrees, we take the child to the hospital for a medical check-up and submit the paperwork to our Home Office in Florida for final approval. Once this is in place, the guardian and the child come to the Rafiki village. The guardian sees where the child will live, the child meets his/her “mother” (our Rafiki caregiver), and the child settles into his/her new living situation.

- **Providing a Christian education for the resident students and local children.** Our school is accredited with the Tanzanian government and we employ national teachers who have high qualifications to teach the children. Both the children who live at Rafiki and local children can begin to go to pre-primary school when they are 3 years old, continue with kindergarten, and then on to primary school. We currently have grades one through four in the primary school. Each year we will add the next grade level.

- **Providing a Bible study for national people and children.** Rafiki has an ambitious Bible study program that includes lessons on the entire Bible. Each week all of the Rafiki staff and children study the same lesson. The children memorize their weekly Bible verse and learn their catechism question.

- **Providing training for pre-school teachers through a new program called R.I.C.E.** (Rafiki Institute for Christian Education). Qualified teachers are invited to attend a six month course, at no charge to them, that is facilitated by a Rafiki Overseas Staff member who is one of Rafiki’s missionaries. The students each have a computer and can progress at their own rate through the computer courses. This program is intended to raise the level of teaching, as well as introduce the students to the Rafiki Bible study.

- **Providing widows with a viable income.** The Rafiki Widow’s Program is designed to buy hand-made products at a fair market price from widows’ groups and send them to the Rafiki Exchange in Eustis, Florida, for sale on-line and at the Rafiki Exchange.

All of these programs are making a huge impact on the people involved with them. As Rafiki grows, these programs will have a ripple effect, helping the people involved to know the truth of God’s word and also, to raise their standard of living.

JoAnn Neal
Rafiki ChildCare Administrator
Moshi, Tanzania
Keeping up with Patti at Rafiki Village in Uganda

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

Keeping 104 children busy and happy for two weeks during school holidays can be a challenge, especially when half of them are teenagers. Luckily, all the children enjoy outdoor chores like cleaning the grounds, picking tons of fruit, and digging the gardens.

Activities included daily cross-country runs, football practice and library read-alouds, the movie “War and Peace” and an overnight camp out for the older boys. Some were invited to help cook a “French” dinner at my house.

The older girls were treated to an outing to hear the Kampala Singers Easter concert. They also enjoyed managing spelling bee and penmanship practice for the younger children. Everyone had extra time for music lessons and practice. Board and card games, as well as movies (thanks, ACP and John Tynan for donating so many good ones) for the rainy days.

The youngest boys (5 to about 8 years old) are continuing their long-term project of building a city down in the “bush”, using sticks and stones and odds and ends gathered from the refuse pile of our real construction site. Some engineering talent is evident. The youngest girls have made all new clothes for their dolls out of scraps left over from various sewing projects. After two weeks, nearly everyone is happy to be returning to school tomorrow.

If these children sound exactly like any other children in the world, well,

A friend of Rafiki donated funds for some new things for the schools which the children and teachers will be delighted to use.
Lent brings to mind the challenges associated to self-denial in preparation for Easter Sunday. It also reminds me of the grace that has already been given — the grace we celebrate on Easter.

And yet it can be hard to remember that grace or to articulate His truth when one doesn’t “feel connected” or when financial hardship hits home or especially in times of loss.

This struggle can seem too prevalent in a context like South Sudan. Fighting since December 2013 has left the country on the brink of famine. The United Nations has been sounding the alarm, and NGOs persistently seek open corridors to transport life-saving goods, like medicines and PlumpyNut, a type of high-calorie peanut butter paste to treat malnutrition.

In my work since February, I have spoken with government representatives about the sights from the most affected areas. My colleague recently flew to an isolated area controlled by opposition forces, but which has become a recent safe-haven.

Rates of malnutrition there are alarming. Some 100+ children under 5 years of age are being admitted into feeding centers each week to treat malnutrition. A two-year-old boy named Mabot still cannot walk due to the effects of acute malnutrition. His mother was invited to a feeding center where my colleague’s team distributed PlumpyNut.

Without food in the market or enough seeds to plant before the rainy season begins in May, the PlumpyNut can be a lifeline for children like Mabot. My colleague’s team will continue to monitor him each week to ensure healthy development.

Where is God when the struggle seems insurmountable, when conflict seems so pervasive, and when lives are threatened and lost? Mabot’s mother is hopeful; her faith and resilience are stunning and awesome. I find hope knowing that nothing removes the objective fact that God is with us, regardless of our feelings or circumstances.

Easter reminds me that Christ has reconciled us to God who is in control—our rock and redeemer. It is to us, as God’s children, to take that Good News to every corner.

Please pray with me that, as Easter people, we can rejoice in all parts of the world and be the living expression of His grace. Please also pray that His peace will reach every household in South Sudan.

From our Prayer Chain Team

Do you have a prayer request for our Prayer Team?
If so, please forward your prayer by e-mail to prayerrequests@acparis.org. Your prayer request will remain strictly private and confidential. Prayer is powerful. We are here for you.

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

If you would like someone to pray with you after services, there will be a Prayer Team member available. Meet in the chapel next to the theater.
Every Sunday morning an ever-growing group of ACP worshippers gather in the Catacombs (that’s right - our group is too big to stay in G4!) to hear the wonderful Reverend Brent Anderson share his deep understanding of the Scripture reading to be preached on the following Sunday.

Why do we love Brent’s class? For some it is Brent’s historical and biblical knowledge, for others the way he reads the Bible passage, the explanations of the text and the referencing to other parts of the Bible.

For others still, it is the discussions that arise each Sunday, the relaxed atmosphere and the fact that no preparation is required and no reservation is necessary - you can just show up. For those who cannot plan ahead this is a true blessing.

Whatever the reason, those of us who have become a tight faithful regular bunch - who definitely try not to miss a Sunday with Brent - can assure you that if you come once, you will definitely want to come back.

The Lord is working in us as we come to know Him better through a deeper understanding of His word.

The only regret we have is that the hour is up much too quickly and that the class is only once a week! Fortunately the next lesson is only 7 days away.

Thank you Brent for your insight and passion for God’s word.

Mark your calendars:
Garrison Keillor, 6 September, at the ACP

Parlez-vous Garrison Keillor? Slow-talking, down-home Minnesota native Garrison Keillor will soon make his radio debut in Lake Wobegon, France.

A Prairie Home Companion, the radio show heard by over 4 million listeners weekly on hundreds of radio stations across the US, will be recorded live on Saturday 6 September, at the American Church in Paris. Ticket proceeds will be donated to the church, and will be going on sale in June.

Meanwhile, follow his selections of poetry and prose via the Writer’s Almanac at http://writersalmanac.publicradio.org/
ACP YOUTH
MONTHLY EVENT

Disney’s
Beauty and the Beast
03pm

EVENING GAMES
@ Church! 06-10pm

Saturday, May 24

Book ticket (25€ or 35€) & register for the evening games at youthintern@acparis.org!

Only 16 tickets on sale - First come first serve

Evening games: 06-10pm, pizzas included!

-> Parental Consent Form Required <-
## Special Events and Monthly Meetings and Concerts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labor Day</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>1 May</td>
<td>All day</td>
<td>Public Holiday, Church building closed</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast Ministry</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>19h30</td>
<td>Saturday 2 May</td>
<td>Preparation: Friday 19h30 at ACP Distribution: Saturday 8h00, meet at ACP</td>
<td>Jurie Ane Feleo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Against Human Trafficking Europe</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>16h00</td>
<td>Sunday 4 May</td>
<td>Youth event</td>
<td>Antonin Ficatier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atelier Concert</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>17h00</td>
<td>Sunday 4 May</td>
<td>Free admission, with free-will offering</td>
<td>Fred Gramann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACP Today: Faith Talk in Paris radio show</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>20h45 - 21h30</td>
<td>100.7 FM Radio Fréquence Protestante</td>
<td>Tune in for inspiring music, interviews, and sermon highlights.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WWII Victory Day</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>All day</td>
<td>All day</td>
<td>Public Holiday, Church building closed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writers’ Group</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>14h30 - 16h30</td>
<td>Room G2</td>
<td>Writer’s Group</td>
<td><a href="mailto:writers@acparis.org">writers@acparis.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India Night and Youth Talent Celebration</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>19h30</td>
<td>Thurber Room</td>
<td>Come and celebrate the talent of our youth and experience the culture, cuisine and stories from our India mission team. Free event! (please RSVP <a href="mailto:youthintern@acparis.org">youthintern@acparis.org</a>)</td>
<td>Antonin Ficatier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Day (US)</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>12h45</td>
<td>Room G2</td>
<td>Habitat for Humanity service opportunity meeting Registration are now open for the ACP service trip to Bulgaria 1-10 August</td>
<td>habitatforhumanity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atelier Concert</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>17h00</td>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
<td>Free admission, with free-will offering</td>
<td>Fred Gramann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Evening with Dr. Jane Goodall</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>18h30</td>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
<td>Hosted by ACP and the American University of Paris</td>
<td>Tickets at:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwich Ministry</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>19h30</td>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
<td>Preparation: Friday 19h30 at ACP Distribution: Saturday 13h30, meet at ACP</td>
<td>Jurie Ane Feleo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural Couples Potluck</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>20h00</td>
<td>Thurber Room</td>
<td>Fellowship and discussion on topics such as raising bicultural/ bilingual children and cultural differences. Bring</td>
<td>Monica Bassett &amp; Anja Wyss</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## ACP Spire Diary – May
### events, meetings & concerts (cont.)
(please check www.acparis.org/diary for updates)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Events and Monthly Meetings and Concerts</th>
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</table>
| **Mother’s Day Luncheon and Workshop with Caroline Corda-Razat**  
(please RSVP to childrensworship@acparis.org)                                                                 | Sunday 18 May| 12h15      | 2nd Floor Library   | Allison Wheeler          |
| **Sunday Women's Gathering**  
Terry Schooley speaks on Women in Politics                                                                        | Sunday 18 May| 12h30      | Herr’s apartment    | Kim Herr                 |
| **Atelier Concert** - Free admission, with free-will offering  
Catherine Nataf Muller - soprano, Pierre Muller - piano                                                            | Sunday 18 May| 17h00      | Sanctuary           | Fred Gramann             |
| **ACP Today: Faith Talk in Paris radio show**  
Tune in for inspiring music, interviews, and sermon highlights.                                                     | Monday 19 May| 20h45 - 21h30|                     | Radio Fréquence Protestante |
| **Council Meeting**                                                                                              | Tuesday 20 May| 19h30      | Thurber Room        | Pam Bohl                 |
| **Movie Discussion Group**  
This month: States of Grace, Joe, Is the Man Who Is Tall Happy? (Conversation animée avec Noam Chomsky), and Zwei leben (D'une vie à l'autre) | Thursday 22 May| 19h30      | Room G2             | Rebecca Brite            |
| **Beauty & Beast Show**  
Youth event                                                                                                        | Saturday 24 May|           |                     | Antonin Ficatier         |
| **Mother’s Day (France)**                                                                                          | Sunday 25 May|            |                     |                          |
| **Congregational Meeting to Elect New Council**                                                                   | Sunday 25 May| 12h30      | Theater             | Pam Bohl                 |
| **Atelier Concert** - Free admission, with free-will offering  
Silvia Bellani and David Peroni - Piano Duo                                                                      | Sunday 25 May| 17h00      | Sanctuary           | Fred Gramann             |
| **Ascension Day**  
public holiday, church building closed                                                                               | Thursday 29 May|  All day   |                     |                          |
| **African Fellowship fund raising event**                                                                        | Sunday 1 June |           | Thurber Room        |                          |
| **Atelier Concert** - Free admission, with free-will offering  
Margarete Nüßlein - soprano, Ulrike Nüßlein - piano, Scott Rednour - piano                                          | Sunday 1 June | 17h00      | Sanctuary           | Fred Gramann             |

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.
INDIA NIGHT & YOUTH TALENT CELEBRATION

The American Church in Paris
19h30 in the Thurber Room

Come and celebrate the talent of our youth and experience the culture, cuisine and stories from our India mission team. Free event!

PLEASE RSVP TO YOUTHINTERN@ACPARIS.ORG

Deep Griha Society, Pune
"Empowerment of the marginalized through capacity building and sustainable rural and urban development programmes"