Dare to count your blessings, and dare to be a blessing to others. You are invited to consider the gifts that you can share and to make a pledge during Stewardship Month.
Dear Members and Friends of the ACP,

I love sweater weather! The temperature has shifted and we are now fully entering into the Autumn season. I love this time of year because we encounter some of the most important holidays of the Christian calendar. As we are moving from the Toussaint holidays (around the All Saint’s Day holiday of November 1) toward the end of the Christian year with Christ the King Sunday (20 November) and the beginning with the First Sunday of Advent (27 November), there are some key events that I would invite you to reflect upon with me…

But first a poem and a story… Rainer Maria Rilke writes about God,

We must not portray you in king’s robes, you drifting mist that brought forth the morning.

Once again from the old paintboxes we take the same gold for scepter and crown that has disguised you through the ages.

Piously we produce our images of you till they stand around you like a thousand walls.

And when our hearts would simply open, our fervent hands hide you. 1, 4

I thought of this poem as I read from one of my favorite devotional writers, Brother David Steindl-Rast, who Don Postema introduced to me in my doctoral studies. Brother David shares the following story that Martin Buber tells:

Rabbi Barukh’s grandson Yehiel was once playing hide-and-seek with another boy. He hid himself well and waited for his playmate to find him. When he had waited for a long time, he came out of his hiding place, but the other was nowhere to be seen. Now Yehiel realized that he had not looked for him from the very beginning. This made him cry, and crying he ran to his grandfather and complained of his faithless friend. Then tears brimmed in Rabbi Barukh’s eyes and he said, “God says the same thing: ‘I hide, but no one wants to seek me.’”

Where do you see God? And where are you seeking God? The eyes of faith see God everywhere, but Jesus teaches us that he is wherever mercy is shown. Should we be in search of God, we might start with service to the poor. This is one of the emphases of our stewardship text for this year, Matthew 25:31-46.

The connection between merci and compassion is obvious in the English. Of course, merci is the French root for our word “mercy.” Giving thanks is related to understanding the mercy that we have received from someone, and from God. This connection is traceable in the traditional American Thanksgiving narrative.

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The Pilgrims gave thanks to God for the mercy of surviving the hardships of a move to a foreign land. There is still poignant resonance with us today as we remember the basic human compassion shown by the native Americans who helped the first European settlers to survive in their new country. We give thanks to God as we re-orient to a new place and community and especially for those people who have helped us to know that despite our dislocation we are valued and loved.

We will be celebrating Thanksgiving here at the ACP with an ecumenical service of worship on Thursday, 24 November at 12h15. The service will include a joint choir from the ACP and the American Cathedral, and leadership from the ACP, the American Cathedral, the Kehilat Gesher Synagogue, as well as the American Embassy here in Paris for the reading of the President’s annual Thanksgiving Day Proclamation. I encourage you all to make time for this service of worship in the middle of just another workday here in Paris. Many of us have experienced God’s mercy and are thankful!

It is no coincidence that our Stewardship Dedication Sunday on 20 November falls in this season of Thanksgiving. This month we are reflecting on the blessings we have received and how we are called to be a blessing to one another, this city, and indeed the world! Please prayerfully make your commitment to God and bring your pledge cards of time and talent and of financial support to God’s ministry and mission through this church.

There are many blessings and mercies for which I am thankful: my family and friends, health and strength, the amazing congregation that we have here of people from around the world and all walks of life, and simply the privilege of living and working here in this amazing city... Rilke’s poem reminds me that the blessing of God’s presence is everywhere, even in the mist of the early morning. And Buber’s parable reminds me that God is always so near, but that sometimes I do need to seek. Jesus promises us that when we do seek, we will find!

Perhaps my busyness is a main obstacle if I am not sensing the loving presence of God? Perhaps my striving is not the way to the heart of gratitude that God desires for us, the heart which is free to receive and then to give and to show mercy toward others? Mother Theresa reminds us that as we love the least of these, we may see the face of Christ.

May God bless you and yours in this full season of blessings and mercies which are ours in Christ the Servant King. And may we enter into the new Christian year seeking but also remembering how God has come to us, will come again, and comes to us even now, with “tender mercy...”1 Like a nice warm sweater, may the love of God warm your soul and give you a simply open heart of gratitude.

In Christ,
Scott

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**THE ACP WILL BE HOSTING A THANKSGIVING DAY ECUMENICAL SERVICE** of worship at 12h15 on Thursday, 24 November. The Rev. Elizabeth Hendrick, Canon Pastor at the American Cathedral, will preach. Mark your calendars and plan to join us.

**ASSOCIATE PASTOR SEARCH UPDATE:** The ACP's website has the job description for the Associate Pastor position and an application for interested candidates to complete and send back to the committee. Pray for the committee as they engage in a wise and caring process that will lead to a pastor through whom God will bless our church.

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1 Luke 1:78.
**November Worship**

**6 November**

Reading: Matthew 25:1-13"

Sermon: “Come out to meet him”

**13 November**

Reading: Matthew 25:14-30

Sermon: “Entering into the Joy”

**20 November**

Reading: Matthew 25:31-46

Sermon: “All the Nations”

**27 November**

Readings:
- Isa. 64:1–9; Ps. 80:1–7, 17–19
- 1 Cor. 1:3–9; Mark 13:24–37

The Rev. Philip Mounstephen, Chaplain of St. Michael’s Anglican Church will be our guest preacher on Sunday, 6 November. This “pulpit exchange” is intended to strengthen our relationship as congregations.

**Thurber Thursdays:** We normally meet in the Thurber Room at 18h30 for a home-cooked meal and brief worship, and then from 19h30 to 21h00, we learn together. Come join us for Bible study with the Rev. Jeff Powell leading a class on *Gospel Life* and the Rev. Scott Herr leading a class on *Gospel Christianity*. We will be taking a break for the Toussaint holidays but resuming dinner and classes on **10 November**. Below is the schedule of topics:

**10 November:**
- Gospel Life: Work: Cultivating the Garden
- Gospel Christianity: How do we change?

**17 November:**
- Gospel Life: Justice: A People for Others
- Gospel Christianity: What is Jesus’ Mission?

**24 November:**
- Gospel Life: Eternity: The World that is to Come
- Gospel Christianity: Why Can’t I Do This Alone?
"Now what do you say?" Does that question sound familiar as your mind goes back to your childhood days? It certainly does for me. That parental question served two purposes. It was a teaching tool helping a child understand that gifts should be acknowledged with gratitude. Later that knowledge expands to the recognition that life is dependent upon and supported by others. After the lesson has been learned, it seems that a reminder to be grateful is needed both for children and adults.

As we move into the month when Thanksgiving is celebrated in a number of countries, especially in the USA, the American Church in Paris also sets aside a time of worship to be thankful to God for the gifts that support life. A "family meal" that is part of the traditional celebration is also part of our Thanksgiving. Being together over a meal is an experience of acknowledgement of the importance of our relationship with one another. Pastor Scott included in a sermon not long ago how eating and a meal is a significant aspect of our life together.

This year I have had an experience which reminds me how often things are taken for granted, seemingly little things but significant aspects of life. My wife, Cil, broke her wrist making it necessary to do things with one arm. It is a frustrating and exhausting experience as time and effort is needed to do things that were automatic before. Thankfully, I had a two week trip planned to be with family. Being both an assistant, but also an observer of how difficult little things are for her to do, I am prompted this year to include in my thanksgiving the little but basic things in life that often I take for granted.

The challenge of living with only one arm is temporary for Cil. There are people in life that have learned to live with challenges because of limitations they have. During my internship as a pastor, we hosted a guest speaker in our home who was blind. I found myself "falling all over myself" trying to be helpful. I was told by our blind guest that all my efforts were not necessary as he had learned to live without eye sight. In a way it seemed that God blesses those with such limitations with extra sensitive senses to compensate for what they lacked. I found he could manage well without all my extra efforts. The only problem he had was he sat down on our couch and crushed my hat that I carelessly neglected to hang up.

Thanksgiving should be a daily practice for us. Possibly the importance of our annual Thanksgiving celebrations is a reminder, like the parental question, "Now what do you say?" Join me and others at the American Church in Paris thanking God for all that we are given, especially those little things we often take for granted.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits...." Psalm 103:2 (Read the entire Psalm as it reminds us of all the benefits God gives.)
Dan and Lauretta: Making a New Home Run
By Christa Leste-Lasserre

They’re as American as baseball and pumpkin pie. Well, maybe with a little bit of spicy Caribbean seasoning, that is.

ACP’s new youth director Dan Haugh (pronounced “Howegg”) and his wife Lauretta, both natives of the northeastern corner of the United States, came to Paris from New York where Dan had been an associate/youth pastor, as well as the local baseball coach. Both Dan and Lauretta have dabbled a bit in world travel, and Dan has organized numerous foreign mission trips primarily to the Caribbean and Central and South America. But as they’ve run from base to base across the planet’s playing field, they’ve never lost sight of that Colonial home plate.

“Family is very important to me,” says Dan, who grew up at the Massachusetts/New Hampshire border with grandparents for next-door neighbors and his entire extended family within 30 minutes from home. “Aunts, uncles, cousins, everyone,” he says. “And every holiday, every birthday, we were together. I mean, it was really big news when one of my cousins moved to Maryland! For the most part, everyone stayed put.”

Lauretta, with her characteristically warm smile – smiling towards Dan while speaking to me – says she and her four sisters have always been really close to their parents and each other. “Holidays are really important to us, and every year we all have a high-energy family reunion along with my 10 nieces and nephews,” she says. “New York has always been home to me. It’s what I’m used to.”

So how does this pair of solid Northeasterners end up halfway across the world, thousands of miles away from their families?

Well, it all happened when Dan stepped up to bat. So to speak.

While his faith and his family are dearest to the pastor’s heart, baseball runs a passionately competitive third place. “In New England, baseball is life,” he says. “When I was growing up, my father’s and grandfather’s generations were practically waiting for the Red Sox to win the World Series before they could die.” (Much to the relief of all, the Red Sox finally did win, in 2004, stirring up an unprecedented emotional upheaval across the colonies, according to Dan.) He played on his college baseball team at Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts, during his undergraduate years. And in addition to pastoring at his Christian and Missionary Alliance church just outside Manhattan, he also coached a local
team for seven years. Baseball was in his blood, and it became a part of who he was, and is.

So after 10 years at the same pulpit of the same New York church, Dan sensed the “Ultimate Pitcher” calling him to bat. It was time to move on, explore something new. “I started applying,” he says.

He stepped up to the plate, positioned himself with his bat firmly in hand, and waited for the call—I mean, ball. But when he swung, the ball cracked and flew farther than he would have ever imagined. All the way to Paris.

“I applied to a lot of different churches, all of them local, in the Northeast,” he says. “Except one. I knew it would be a stretch, but the ACP was exactly the type of church I was looking for. Just not exactly where I was looking for. But I thought, ‘I probably won’t get the job anyway. So I’ll just apply.’”

As the application process advanced, though, Dan “started having these really great conversations” with the search committee, he says. “And I started to like it more and more and more.”

“And I started to get more and more nervous!” Lauretta interjects.

Paris was a beautiful, exciting, culturally rich place in Lauretta’s mind. But it was a far cry from where she wanted to live. In New York, she was in a comfortable position, settled, happy, fulfilled. She had a tenured job as a special education teacher in an excellent school; she was only 10 minutes away from her parents and one of her sisters; she had a suburban parsonage home with a yard for their black Labrador retriever Brady. “You would think the lure of Paris would be enough for anybody, but it really wasn’t that for us, especially me,” she says. “There were definitely a lot of tears on my end.”

Dan admits that he didn’t feel especially called to come to the ACP at first, even though the conversations were going well. “I just felt called to ministry, and to be close to my wife,” he says.

But when Dan flew out to Paris—his first time ever to the city—and he visited the ACP, he says he was “sold.”

“I just loved the church, loved the values, the mission, and the sense of community, and how ecumenical and diverse it was,” he says. The church also particularly appealed to Dan’s long-established thirst and appreciation for cultural diversity. “Language can be a barrier, but I’ve always loved discovering and experiencing different cultures and different customs; it’s something that’s always been in me,” he says. “And that was one of the main pulls for me to the ACP—how international and how intentional about being international this church is.”

So as a couple, they brought their concerns to God. “We spent a ton of time praying, asking God to show us a sign,” Lauretta says. “We really wanted to make sure we were doing God’s will, and we wanted to feel comfortable about the decision.”
When the ACP offered Dan the job, Lauretta says they still weren’t convinced. So they came to Paris together as a couple. “In the short time we were here, I met some really wonderful people,” she says. “And we really got a sense that they wanted this decision to be what was right for us, as a couple, regardless of our choice.”

In the end, they never did get any kind of loud or flashy “sign” from God. But what they did get was an unquestionable sense of deep peace—peace about Paris, about jobs, and about their relationships back home.

“Within the first week of being here, there was not a doubt in our minds that this is where we were supposed to be,” Lauretta says.

“I realized I just had to come out here and trust God first before the sign came,” Dan adds. “It was like God was saying to me, ‘Do you trust me? Do you trust me with your future? I know you, and I know what’s best for you.’”

And while that sense of peace is reassuring to them, it doesn’t mean it made the goodbyes back home any easier. “It was very tearful,” Lauretta says. “It was hard for everyone, but we did leave with their (our families’) blessings.”

Dan agrees. “It was tough,” he says. “But I really hope that when our term ends here at ACP, it will be just as hard to leave.”

Undoubtedly, Dan and Lauretta, undoubtedly.

But we won’t think about those goodbyes yet. We’re still working on all the hellos; we’re not finished welcoming them yet—and they’ve noticed. “It’s only been six weeks, but we feel so connected and so welcome in this community, and God has blessed us with great friends,” Lauretta says.

So what now? He’s got big plans for the youth group with lots of exciting projects in store. She’s helping out however she can, happily available to any youth looking for a faithful listening ear or shoulder. He’s writing a book on youth ministry. She’s learning where to shop for groceries and winter clothes. He’s looking into volunteering for a baseball team at the American School. She’s getting ready for the traditional American holidays that remind her of home: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas. They’re both learning French as fast as they can, and they’re both looking forward to family visits and short trips around Europe. And the black lab Brady’s making plenty of friends every morning in the park along the Seine.

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They’re digging themselves a comfortable, cozy dugout here in the 7th arrondissement of Paris. And while it will never replace home base, it will definitely run a very close second for years to come. 😊
YOUNG ADULT EVENTS

8 November, Tuesday, 18h00/19h30 Pizza Night in the Thurber Room
16 November, Tuesday, 19h30 Bible Study in the Catacombs
22 November, Tuesday, 19h30-21h00 Worship Evening “Prayer and Praise”
29 November, Tuesday, 19h30 Pizza and Talent Night

Come and join us every Tuesday for either Bible Study or Pizza Night, as we share fellowship and conversation. For Pizza Night come at 18h00 to help cook and from 19h30 for dinner and small group discussion.

Due to the Toussaint Holiday, we will not be meeting for Bible study on 1 November. For more information and updates subscribe to our Facebook page: http://www.facebook.com/groups/ACPyoungadults/

Also, since it is Reformation Sunday, find a book about the Reformation or read one of works of Martin Luther. Enjoy!

YOUTH EVENTS

6 November, Sunday, 15h00-17h00 Youth Group in the Catacombs (Satisfied: episode 5 of the Story of God)
10 November, Friday, 19h30 Youth Leader Meeting
13 November, Sunday, 15h00-17h00 Youth Group studies (Mission: episode 6 of The Story of God) in the Catacombs
18 November, Friday, 19h30-21h30 Youth Group Game Night
19 November, Saturday 11h00-17h00 Youth Missions Book Sale at the Marché de Noel
20 November, Sunday, 15h00-17h00 Thanksgiving Prayer Stations
27 November, Sunday, 15h00-17h00 Youth Group studies in the Catacombs (Restored: Episode 7 of the Story of God)

Youth Group meets on Sundays from 15h00-17h00 for fun, fellowship and Bible study in the Catacombs. Please wear/bring comfortable clothes and shoes. Please feel free to bring friends along – they are always welcome at ACP events!

We are on Facebook! Connect with us for weekly reminders, posts, and updates: http://www.facebook.com/groups/acpyouthgroup/

Contact youthpastor@acparis.org for more information about Youth and Young Adult events.

CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT: The children’s worship team is happy to begin preliminary preparations for the live nativity service. This will be held on 11 December at the 11h00 service. To volunteer, contact us at childrensworship@acparis.org
You Who Are Blessed
Stewardship 2012

Last year the ACP stewardship focus was to study and reflect upon the Grace of God. This year we invite you to reflect on Jesus’ examples of what it means to be blessed and be a blessing unto others (Matthew 25:34).

As a Christian are you daring to count your blessings and daring to be a blessing to the world, in spite of whatever hardships or suffering, illness or loss you might be facing? Are you transforming your lifestyle and your commitment to God through more responsible stewardship of all God has given you? Stop reading – right now. Take a few moments and count your blessings – if it helps write them down, discuss with friends/family, draw a picture, email them to the Stewardship Team!

Amazing, isn’t it, just how deeply and fully God has blessed each one of us? We are blessed as people because we have an inheritance from God before we do anything at all. We are blessed because we are able to give to others out of the grace we have received from God.

Take this month to prayerfully reflect on how God has called you as a blessed person and to be a blessing to others at the ACP, in Paris and the world. We hope you will fill out the Gift of Financial Resources and Gift of Service pledge forms, and prepare to make a new commitment to the Lord on Stewardship Sunday, 20 November.

You have gifts that you can share with the ACP regardless of your income, ability, age, marital status, profession, or gender. Consider how your lifestyle may better reflect your gratitude and thanks for God’s generosity and blessing to you.

Faithfully,
The ACP Finance & Stewardship Team

Julia Kung (Stewardship Chair), Julie Coutton, Sue Orsoni, Noemie Plaza, Dave Smidt (Finance Committee Chair), Dustin Smith, Megan Staley

Note:
-- if you have not received an email from Pastor Scott inviting you to this year’s stewardship season, or a post mailing on/about 20 October, please stop by the Stewardship table at coffee hour to update your information in the ACP’s database
-- all Stewardship information and forms are available on the ACP website

You are a blessing to the ACP!
Marché de Noël
Christmas Market

Saturday
19 November
11h00 ~ 17h00
Free Entry

Organized by the ACP Mission Outreach Committee. Proceeds to benefit Mission Ministries: Habitat for Humanity; Rafiki; SOS; Foyer de Grenelle; Friday Mission Lunch; King's Garden Children's Home, Philippines; The Living Truth Foundation Ghana; and Youth Missions.

visit our website: http://acparis.org/marchedenoel.html

COUPON
Good for One Cup of Coffee or Mulled Wine at the Marché de Noël Christmas Market
11h00 ~ 17h00
Saturday, 19 November 2011
The American Church in Paris

(Please cut out and use the above coupon in order to get a cup of coffee while taking a break from shopping.)
PUT A LITTLE LOVE IN A BOX

It is that time in the year again to share your joy through the project Love in a Box. This year ACP hopes to increase the ministry of Love In A Box by describing how it came about and who it serves. We will also give you direct ways in which you can serve.

Love in a Box is a Paris-wide community project which served 2,500 children last year. This project began in Great Britain in the 1990s. It was eventually adopted by the American Cathedral which has sponsored it since 2001. Through the hard work and warm hearts of people along with several other community groups, needy children have received shoe boxes filled with presents and needed school supplies. This ministry serves the children of Paris, Strasbourg, Mulhouse and as far away as Bulgaria. With 2,500 boxes collected last year, the organizers did not quite reach their targets. This year they hope that through the help of the American Church in Paris, more boxes can be given away.

Love in a Box will kick off with the distribution of flyers on Sunday, 13 Nov. A table will be set up in the Theater during Coffee Hour for further information. The next step would be to gather school supplies and children’s items, putting them in and wrapping the shoe boxes. You can drop off your shoe boxes at the Table until 4 December. The American Cathedral will have a shoe box wrapping time during the first week of December. Members of our youth group have in the past joined other service groups in packing boxes. The last phase will be sorting out and checking boxes at the American Cathedral from 5 to 9 December.

If you do not have time to collect items and to prepare a box yourself, you can write out a check for 10 euros to The American Church in Paris, with a note on your check stating “Love in a Box”. These will be accepted at the Love in a Box Table.

Please feel free to contact Arlene Bruce if you have questions. You would certainly experience the joy of Christmas by participating in this ministry.
ATELIER CONCERT SERIES
SUNDAYS AT 17H00
FREE ADMISSION

6 November
Julie DeVaere, mezzo-soprano
Saffron Chung, piano
Works by William Bolcom, Jake Heggie, Ricky Ian Gordon, Lee Hoiby

13 November
Le Duo Rachmaninov: Polina Shiryaeva, Soprano,
Monica Molinaro, piano
Works by Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Liszt, Dvorak, Brahms

20 November
Jane Thorngren, soprano
Laurana Mitchelmore, piano
Works of Dørumsgaard, Sibelius, Grieg, Grainger, Britten, Coward, Porter.

27 November
Michael Patilla, guitar

NOËL! It’s not that far off. Be sure to save Saturday, 10 December for the annual Candlelight Christmas Concerts at 17h00 and 20h00. Participating this year are the ACP Adult Choir, The Celebration Ringers, The ACP Bronze Ringers, The ACP Youth Choir, Shin e, Voices Choeur International and the French Children’s Choir “Sotto Voce”.

THE SPIRE RINGERS are made up of our beginning adult handbell ringers which meet on Thursday afternoons at 14h30. If you are interested in learning to ring please speak with Fred. The members of the group will also be glad to fill you in on what we do! No previous music experience is necessary.
Newsbriefs

The American Church has just been awarded a $30,000 grant from the John Templeton Foundation to support and to strengthen the church’s efforts at engaging the important dialogue between faith and science. We will begin using the Test of Faith curriculum (prepared by the Faraday Institute of Cambridge University) in January 2012 to prepare our congregation and local theologians and scientists for planned Spring lectures given by Keith Ward, retired Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, member of the Royal Institute of Philosophy, and Fellow of the British Academy.

The ACP is also planning to serve the poor in our neighborhood through hosting the Friday Mission Lunch here at the ACP campus. This service to the homeless and marginalized of our neighborhood has been going on for 29 years in partnership with the American Cathedral. Due to renovations, the Cathedral leadership has asked the ACP to host the Mission Lunch for a year. It will give us an opportunity to evaluate, with the hope that we can give the Friday Mission Lunch back to the Cathedral, but start a different day Mission Lunch here at the ACP. We believe this is a mission that will help us to personally experience the presence of Christ in serving “the least of these.”

Leaders, Life & Purpose invites you on 11 November 2011 from 18h30 on, to “Soaring (vs. Sinking) Under Pressure: Character in business and family leadership in the 21st century – an evening of discovery, discussion and degustation.” Tom and DeAnne Hutchison share about their fast-track life and a situation that brought them to reconsider spiritual priorities. For more details contact Denise Dampierre.

Armistice Day is a French national holiday. Please join hundreds of others who will be remembering on 11 November with a special English service of worship at 15h00 at Notre Dame Cathedral. All are welcome to attend!
Finding time and space for God
By Lauretta Haugh

“Come to me all you who are weary and heavy burdened, and I will give you rest.”
Matthew 11:28

Just a few weeks ago on Friday, 6 October, congregants from ACP headed to Houlgate, Normandy for a weekend of Sabbath. Those who attended this Sabbath retreat were privileged to learn from Don Postema and get to know his sweet wife Elaine, who was celebrating a very special and memorable birthday with her ACP family!

Whether you were attending this retreat on your own, were there with your family or spouse, part of the young adult group, or a child or teenager, the weekend was created so that we would be reminded of something so important, yet often easily forgotten ... REST.

Don’s structure of teaching varied from singing hymns together, talking in small groups, sharing with the whole group, as well as a time of personal reflection. One of my favorite exercises was when Don sent us out on our own to have alone time, and to reflect on God. Some chose to go back to their rooms, or found a quiet place to sit and rest. Others took to the beach to take in the beautiful surroundings of the Normandy coast and crisp fresh air.

Saturday afternoon was free time! Some people walked into the quaint little town of Houlgate, or took a walk on the beach (the seashells were amazing!!!), while others explored the city, or stayed back at the retreat center. However people chose to spend their time alone, I trust it was relaxing and refreshing. Throughout the day we had learned the importance of Sabbath as rest, refreshment, receptivity, mindfulness and release.

On Saturday evening we came together once again to learn more about Sabbath, and as Don put so eloquently, “... time and space to breathe the Holy face of God.” Our community was encouraged to ponder the presence of the Lord in our lives, or as Don communicated, “to refocus on the Holy in our midst”. A wonderful quote referred to over the weekend was from Abraham Joshua Heschel and defines Sabbath as “a sanctuary in time; and opportunity to mend our tattered lives; to collect rather than to dissipate time.”

Part of this process begins with stilling and quieting our hearts, minds, and souls. Earlier that day, Don had encouraged us to think about something that would remind us to pause, and pray. For some this was a daily routine early in the morning, for others, it was the sound of church bells. Whatever the symbol one chose, I think it was a great idea. For me, whenever I now hear church bells, I think of the weekend in Normandy, and I am reminded to pause, pray, and ponder God’s presence.

Sunday morning was a special time of prayer, reflection and communion. We gathered together again to sing songs. (Don loves to get three part harmony going on). Once again we sang one of my favorite songs, that I learned that weekend, “Ubi Caritas”. It goes like this, “Ubi caritas et amor, ubi caritas deus ibi est.” Where charity and love are found, God himself is there. A simple, yet profound statement. I was deeply impacted during this weekend and experienced first-hand the beauty of cultivating awareness for God. 😊
In Full Bloom in Paris
by Pamela Leavy

Remember the lyrics in a Neil Diamond song, “human kindness overflowing”? Kindness certainly overflowed Saturday, 1 October as the Women of the American Church (WOAC) put the spiritual, educational and cultural welcome mat out to more than 199 Bloom Where You’re Planted participants. Of that number 39 were kids between 0-17 of age who enjoyed their own separate Bloom Program. Bloom welcomed 11 university students as well.

In the Franco-American spirit, in addition to the American Church, religious groups in attendance included the Bible Study Fellowship, American Cathedral, The Bridge International Church, Kehilat Gesher Synagogue, American Catholic Women’s Organization, and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. Some representatives have already reported that Bloom attendees have turned up at the church of their choice for services or other activities.

Bravo to WOAC president Kim Herr and Bloom director Allison Wiley for coordinating a set-up to tear-down Bloom volunteer team of more than 70 volunteers. The 18-member Bloom Planning Team began working on the event in February. Thanks to all of these efforts Bloom was a huge success, with a registration that surpassed recent years.

The Bloom program was founded in 1970 by the Women of the American Church, planned and hosted by many dedicated volunteers over its 41-year history, and continues to sow the seeds of understanding between English-and French-speaking cultures.

Along with more than 154 years of ACP history and the renowned Tiffany windows, guests were warmly welcomed with Starbucks coffee and home-baked muffins. Throughout the day they were dined and wined in French style with a gourmet buffet lunch prepared by Deb Smidt and other Cordon Bleu students, and a Wine Down wine and cheese presentation by Eric Pasquet of Vivin, a charming wine cellar in Neuilly.

Upstairs at ACP, among the 31 speakers were ACP members with opening words by Pastor Scott Herr. W.H. Smith Bookstore was on site and hosted a book signing by authors Elaine Sciolino, Charles Timoney, and Paris Walks’ Peter Caine. An English-speaking improvisational comedy group called The Improprofessionals provided laughs with their “discover what it is to be French” audience participation skits.

Downstairs young attendees including three sisters dressed in identical Minnesota sweaters and pink clogs practiced French phrases, played games in the gym, competed in a French-language Bean Bingo match and viewed the now French classic film Ratatouille.

Evaluations indicated a profitable learning, and fun time was had by the Bloom guests. They took home Bloom bags filled with brochures from the more than 47 cultural, social, religious and education exhibitors, and of course the invaluable Bloom Where You’re Planted book.

Finally, comments from a young guest express it all. Kim Herr ran into a woman and her 4 year old son the day after Bloom. She told Kim that her son was so tired at the end of the day that he fell asleep on the metro and didn’t wake up until the next morning, that he slept right through dinner. And when he woke up the next morning, the first thing he said was “Can we go to Bloom again?”

See you at the next Bloom, 6 October 2012! ACP and its thriving WOAC ministry will continue to provide the gold-standard tools that allow our participants to Bloom.
From a late Bloom-er

Who ever said that the Bloom Where You’re Planted orientation program was only for newcomers to Paris? Long-time resident Dani Lippoldt said that despite having lived in Paris for several years, she learned a lot from the various speakers. She found particularly useful the sessions on medical information, on how to deal with depression, and on fitness.

15, 17 or 18? Dani said she appreciated the talk given by Clydette de Groot. Although not all the medical information she heard was new, she said that it helped to be clarified about the three numbers and which to call in an emergency: in case of an attack, robbery or death, call the police (17); in a life-threatening situation or if someone needs CPR (cardio pulmonary resuscitation), call the pompiers (18). You can call SAMU (15) for medical advice.

Elizabeth Rand was another speaker from whom Dani learned a lot. She shared tips on how to deal with depression or feelings of isolation, and gave numbers to call or places to go for help. People have romantic ideas about coming to live in Paris, but the reality can be quite different. Some people can go through periods of depression or isolation because they are so far away from everything familiar.

Dani also enjoyed the session on health fitness by Alison Benney, and remembered appreciating the 3-minute exercise and stretching at the beginning of the talk. Alison, she said, pointed out the dangers of those tantalizing French pâtisseries.

“I have never participated in a Bloom program before, but am glad that I did this time,” Dani said. 😊

HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TO THE BLOOM VOLUNTEERS:

With special thanks to Allison Wiley, Bloom Director 2011;

Planning Committee: Camille Pasquiet, Carrie Cheney, Daniel Grout, Deb Smidt, Eleanor Diaz, Jody Smith, Judy Myers, Julie Coutton, Jurie Ane Feleo, Kim Herr, Lori Gustavson, Marie Grout, Mary Heinert, Melissa Linard, Miranda Crispin, Rosalyn Mckeown, and Sylvie Borniche;

OCTOBER AT ACP: The month in review

Bloom Where You’re Planted, 01 October

Photos by Fred Gramann
All Church Retreat, 7-9 October
Photos by Ilinca Mreana and François Pierre
Filipino Fellowship, 25th anniversary, 23 October

Photos by Fred Gramann
Fred Gramann was the Fellowship’s Inspirational Speaker. He was probably the only person still at ACP who has seen the group since its birth. From the vantage point of one of many non-Filipinos adopted by the Fellowship, he cited four qualities that he has observed over 25 years: compassion, spiritual growth, service and celebration. Here are excerpts from his message:

In 1986, the fellowship grew out of a need for a supportive, compassionate community for the Filipinos who were attending the American Church. For the newly arrived expat Filipino there was, and still is, no substitute for the support and encouragement that another Filipino can give who has faced the difficulties of leaving behind country, family and culture and is dealing with the task of surviving in Paris. How many hundreds have found hope here, have received assistance in finding a job, have been cheered on as they try to acquire working papers, have found comfort as they miss parents, brothers, sisters, children and grandchildren back home? I have had the privilege of playing for a number of memorial services for your members who have lost a loved one back home and were financially unable to make the trip. I witnessed how your community surrounded them and suffered with them.

After morning worship you gather here for a meal together, followed by an extended period of worship which involves Bible study, hymn singing and discussion. The matter of faith in Christ and knowing God’s will are at the heart and foundation of this fellowship.

I have a hunch that Filipino DNA has a special, unique code which programs them for untiring joyful service. If there’s an ACP need, there you are: Serving on committees, on council, ushering, teaching Sunday school, watching babies in the nursery, making delicious food as a fundraiser for the church, decorating the sanctuary for Christmas, singing in the choir, ringing handbells, ushering for the concerts, putting out the Spire newsletter, putting together work parties to deep-clean the sanctuary, ironing choir robes… and on and on, all with gracious hearts and glowing smiles.

Celebration. We outsiders usually think of our anniversaries, such as a birthday, a silver wedding anniversary or such, as occasions for others to honor us, to shower us with gifts and make it a special day for us. Here the Filipino Fellowship has something to teach us, for you mark your anniversaries by making them special for your guests! You send us invitations, set up a beautiful room, present us with a bountiful feast, provide a program that shares the delights of your culture, and then actually insist that we who should be honoring you serve ourselves first from the lavish buffet. Interesting isn’t it. What a lesson. I think there’s something to the passage which says that “the last shall be first,” because this community’s example of compassion, spiritual growth, service and celebration, combined with sincere humility set a very high standard for us all.
## Opportunities for Adult Education, Fellowship and Ministry

**Sunday Morning Bible Studies** meets in the G2 between 10h15 and the 11h00 service. The class is usually led by lay leaders, and most of the time participants work with study materials. For information contact Kristie Worrel.

**Tuesday Women's Bible Study** meets from 10h30 to 12h30 here at the church. All are welcome. We are studying *Be Mature: Growing up in Christ*, a study of the Book of James by Warren Wiersbe. For more information, contact our coordinators: Jennifer Jourlait and Diedre Grizzle.

**Simply Christian** - Why Christianity Makes Sense by N. T. Wright. Have you ever wondered why humans in all places and times have yearned for beauty, truth, spirituality, and justice? Bishop Wright contends that it is because we hear the echoes of God's voice -- the same God who created the world, is known through the children of Israel and Jesus Christ, and who is at work in the world through the Holy Spirit. Connecting to this God through worship, prayer, scripture and the church leads to life that is full and abundant.

**ACP Men** – come for coffee, conversation, prayer and fellowship. Any men interested in further information or in being added to our e-mail list should contact Ed Hyslip for information about address and door codes.

**Calling All Multicultural Couples.** Our next gathering will be on 18 November, Friday. Bring a dish to share and join the fun. For more info, contact Monica Basset or Susanna Anglada.

**The Knitting Group** has resumed and welcomes newcomers and experts, and others in between – all are welcome. Some members are currently engaged in a knit-a-long in which they are all working on the same project simultaneously while others are doing their own thing. Monday afternoons at 17h00. For more info, contact Antoinette Wolfe or Elizabeth Rand.

**Movie Discussion Group:** The movie group's choices for November are: Polisse, by Maiwenn; The Ides of March (Les Marches du pouvoir), by George Clooney; Bir Zamanlar Anadolu'da (Il était une fois en Anatolie), by Nuri Bilge Ceylan; and Contagion, by Steven Soderbergh. See any or all of the films in the cinema at your own convenience, then join the group for discussion on Thursday, 17 November at 18h30 in the church basement.

**Women's Running Team.** If you are interested in being part of the ACP running team (men and women are welcome) please contact Kim at woac_president@yahoo.com. We are constantly looking for races to run. Several have already signed up for various races in the coming months!

**Moms in Touch Prayer Group:** Do you believe prayer makes a difference? Would you like to join with other moms as we lift up our cares and concerns for our children and their schools to our loving Father? Experience the joy of replacing anxiety with peace and hope when we pray scripture together. Moms in Touch groups are in 120 countries and now English language groups are forming in Paris. Contact Caroline at MomsInTouchParis@gmail.com.

**Mini Yoga Retreat.** Take a break, relax, breathe, and move while supporting your global community. 8 December 2011, 14h00-16h00 at ACP. Fee: 25 €, At door 30 €. No experience necessary. Retreat facilitator: Lisa Laney, registered Yoga teacher of Puressence Yoga in collaboration with the American Women's Group of Paris. All proceeds from this event go to support the target water project of the Federation of American Women's Groups Overseas (FAWCO), Wells for Clean Water in Cambodia. Your contribution goes directly to build sustainable clean water wells for families in Cambodia.
**2011**

**November**

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<td>Worship services, 9h &amp; 11h, and 13h30</td>
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<td>Knitting Group, 17h</td>
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<td>Docent tours, after 11h service</td>
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<td>Celebration Ringers, 18h45</td>
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<td>10 December: Christmas Candlelight concerts, 17h00 and 20h00</td>
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<td>25 December: Christmas Day worship service, 11h00 and 13h30 only</td>
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* Activity not held at ACP. Check with organizers for details. Please check the ACP website for a more complete and detailed schedule.