Dear Members and Friends of the ACP,

As we continue our Lenten journey pursuing a “Call to Live,” I hope many of you are enjoying the opportunity to spend some extra time each week getting to know better some of the members of your small group. This is an excellent way to strengthen the fabric of our community, and I am thankful that we have 12 new small groups participating in this study!

During the Ash Wednesday service we wound our way through the twists and turns of the labyrinth toward the cross. The maze walk was a powerful reminder of how life is full of unexpected times of redirection and reorientation. We remembered that as we follow the way of Jesus, we will sooner or later come by way of the cross. But we also remembered that the cross is an unavoidable gateway, it is not our final destination. As Paul

1 Referenced 22/03/11: http://www.worldvision.org/resources.nsf/main/lent-2009/$File/Cover_Intro.pdf
2 Thank you to the Young Adults and Ginger Strickland for their creative design of this service and the labyrinth, and to artists Lionel Montoliu and Monica Bassett for so graciously loaning us their artwork.

HOLY WEEK and EASTER SCHEDULE

**Palm Sunday**, April 17
regular worship times (9:00 am, 11:00 am, 1:30 pm)

**Holy Monday**, April 18
Worship in the sanctuary, 7-7:30 pm

**Holy Tuesday**, April 19
Worship in the sanctuary, 7-7:30 pm

**Holy Wednesday**, April 20
Worship in the sanctuary, 7-7:30 pm

**Maundy Thursday**, April 21
Worship in the sanctuary, with Holy Communion, 8 pm

**Good Friday**, April 22
Worship in the sanctuary which will include 9 movements from Marcel Dupré’s organ work "The Stations of the Cross" interspersed with poetry and accompanied by a visual presentation.

**Easter Sunday**, April 24
7:15 am Sunrise service, on the quai (in the park directly across the street from the church)
8 am Easter Fellowship Breakfast in the Thurber room
9 am Traditional Celebration of the Resurrection *
11 am Traditional Celebration of the Resurrection*
1:30 pm Contemporary Celebration of the Resurrection

**Easter Monday**, April 25
CHURCH IS CLOSED.
writes in Romans 6:5, “For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.” Our hope as we prepare for Easter celebrations as a community is that just as we share in the death of Jesus, so also will we share in the new life of Jesus.

Part of our Lenten journey involves welcoming Holmes and Jane Rolston the first week of April. Professor Holmes will be giving some lectures on the topic of his book, Three Big Bangs. Holmes is a Christian who has pursued God’s call upon his life, even when it led him into the shadow of the cross. I was able to sit at the feet of this great thinker during my days in Colorado, and I was inspired by his work building bridges between the faith and science communities which are too often suspicious if not openly hostile toward one another. One of his insights that continues to intrigue me is how human beings exist at the “midrange” of reality. Holmes writes,

The human being starts out as a single cell and the information in that genome generates with increasing complexity a highly functional organized body with $10^{13}$ to $10^{14}$ cells of more than 200 cell types. If the DNA in the myriad cells of the human body were uncoiled and stretched out end to end, that microscopically slender thread would reach to the sun and back over half a dozen times. The human being is the most sophisticated of known natural products. The human brain, built by DNA, is the most complex entity known in the universe…

Isn’t that amazing? In a way, it answers the Psalmists query, “When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?” Indeed, God cares for us because we are the crowning jewel of od’s creation! God entered into our reality because in a very real way, we are the closest being in all creation to the imago dei. It makes perfect sense that if God were to redeem all of creation, God would choose to do it in human form, beginning with the most complex center of all reality.

And that is why we prepare to celebrate in these last days of Lent, Holy Week and Easter. Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again! This is the mystery of the gospel. Amidst all of the ambiguities and perplexities of this broken world, Christ is the hope we proclaim.

Along the way, I hope that you will be able to attend the Three Big Bangs lectures on April 5, 6 and 7. Bring your French-speaking friends, as we will have translations provided. Please also note that we are not only welcoming a great thinker who has built bridges between the scientific and faith community. We will also be welcoming the week after Easter another gifted thinker, Prabhu Guptara, a man who has spent years of his life building bridges between cultural and faith communities. Prabhu will be our Leaders’ Life and Purpose events speaker, as well as our guest at Thurber Thursday when he will talk about "Why should a Hindu follow Jesus?!” Then in May, we will be hosting the AICEME pastors’ and spouses’ conference and keynote speaker Mark Labberton. Mark’s Thurber Thursday talk is “Following an Enemy-Loving God.”

As we pursue the way of the cross, it is with the bold hope of new life, whether it be in the science, business, or socio-political dimensions of life! May God continue to guide, challenge and inspire us as we follow the way of Him who is the center of all of life,

In Christ,

Scott

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3 Holmes Rolston III, Three Big Bangs (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 49.
Weekly Events

Sunday Worship Services
9am Holy Communion
11am Traditional Service
1.30pm Contemporary Worship

Music

Celebration Ringers: Mondays, 6.45 – 8pm. Theatre.

Adult Choir rehearsal: Wednesdays, 7.30-9.30pm. Theatre.


Beginning Handbell Choir: Thursdays, 3:00 – 4:00pm Theatre.

Contact music@acparis.org for more information.

Youth Music

Gaudeamus: Young Adults vocal ensemble, Tuesday 7.30pm – 9pm. Venue TBA

Cherub Choir: Wednesday 1 – 2pm

Children’s Choir: Wednesday 2 – 3pm

Children’s Handbells: Wednesday 3 – 4pm

Shine: Youth Choir, Wednesday 4 – 5:30pm

Youth Handbells: Wednesday 5:30 – 6:30pm

Contact youthmusic@acparis.org for more information.

Youth & Young Adults

Youth Group: every Sunday 3-5pm

Young Adults alternating Bible Study and Pizza Nights: alternating
Tuesdays in the Catacombs at 7.30pm

For specific dates and times, please visit the Youth and Young Adult’s section.
While I was studying for my ordination exams, slogging unhappily through a boring period in the history of my denomination, I discovered the story of John Henry Hobart. By all accounts he was an extraordinary man—a bishop of New York who spent every moment in service of God and others. Just reading his biography made me feel sort of guilty, made me realize how much time I waste doing things like brushing my teeth and staring off into space.

The interesting thing is, though, that the story of his life in the text I read focused less on his accomplishments than on a pretty drawn-out account of his death, as recorded by a young priest who stayed with him throughout his final sickness.

What I found really interesting was that apparently when the pain was at its worst—and it sounds like he had a really difficult final illness—he would look over at the man who was with him and say: Comfort me. And his friend would tell him about who Jesus was, about his forgiveness and love. He would recite the great promises of Scripture, the words of love and hope that people have relied on for thousands of years.

And reading it, I kind of thought—yeah, that is a more important story than what he did during his life. That story tells me more about Hobart’s faith than a cv, a list of accomplishments.

It says more that his idea of God, what came up at the most extreme moment of the most pain and fear—was not a God who demands action, good works…but rather God as a source of love and safety, was God the great Comforter.

I forget that a lot—I get so focused on worrying about trying to figure out what God wants me to do, about the challenge of Scripture—and that I forget that ultimately, our faith is good news—it’s comfort and safety and hope. That when we think of God, of who God is and what God promises us, we can be comforted, reassured.

I think that story says something about who Hobart was as a friend. It takes a kind of humility and self awareness to be able, no matter how extreme the circumstances, to say to a friend, flat out, without any need of explanation or excuse: Comfort me. Or basically tell me that God loves me. That’s bravery, a kind of vulnerability that we don’t see often. How often do we have the capacity for that kind of friendship? To ask for that comfort or to give it…

We live in a world that tells us that we are the sum of what we accomplish, that we are only as good as what we can do. It...
seems important to be reminded that in the most ultimate sense, what matters is not what we’ve accomplished but rather who God is, the fact that God loves us.

May we know this, be comforted, and comfort one another.

In the name of Jesus, who calls us to follow.

John Henry Hobart, Christian we celebrate today. Died 55, every moment doing something amazingly productive
Waste – brushing my teeth, sleeping

strange
Lesser feasts and fasts skips quickly, focuses on death

Particularly –
Terrible pain,
Friend
Comfort me

Friend would tell him
Jesus love and forgiveness
Recite great promises of scripture – grace, love, faithfulness

In some sense, seems right to focus more on that story than on giving a kind of CV for John Hobart…

That story says more about what kind of person he was than a list of accomplishments

Great pain
Ultimately thought of God as the source of love and comfort and hope
God faithful to promises, who was his source of freedom and safety.

How often do we remember that?
Get preoccupied by what God calls us to do, how God calls us to act, which is important…
But forget the main part of the story, the Good News, that God is…that we should be comforted.

Story also says something about who Hobart was as a friend
Vulnerability, humility, lack of pretense
To say I need comfort.

How often do we allow ourselves to do that?
Are we the kind of friend to others who can point to real comfort?

We live in a world that tells us that we are the sum of what we accomplish, that we are only as good as what we can do. It seems important to be reminded that in the most ultimate sense, what matters is not what we’ve accomplished but rather who God is, the fact that God loves us.

May we know this, be comforted, and comfort one another. Amen.

Have you ever heard of a flashmob? How about a Christian flashmob? Check it out... An Easter Flashmob is in the works!

For more information, please contact Aline Lebert or Pastor Ginger at youthpastor@acparis.org or 01 40 62 05 07.
TALENT SHOW!!
7pm, April 2, ACP THURBER ROOM

In Support of the Youth Mission Trip
to Burkina Faso

A team of ten ACP youth and leaders are headed to Burkina Faso in July to serve with Heal the World, a Christian non-profit focused on building a future in Burkina through education. We are eager to see how the Holy Spirit is already at work in one of the poorest countries in the world.

Other news:
1. Looking for an opportunity to serve? The American Church in London, a sister church that is often our partner for mission projects, is going on a mission trip to Haiti and looking for volunteers. More than a year after the catastrophic earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12, 2010, tens of thousands of Haitian families are still living in makeshift “temporary” homes. The mission therefore is a long-term program designed to restore hope and secure a future for bruised and battered people in Haiti. For more information, please contact Angie Brown-Gillian at brownangela@yahoo.com.

2. Peace-building workshop - The young adults of St. Joseph’s, the English-speaking Catholic church group in Paris, have invited us to a peace-building workshop that would be led by Mr. Michael Jaco, a Christian former U.S. Navy Seal instructor who’s worked in major conflict zones. Mr. Jaco currently gives talks and workshops on fostering peace and preventing conflicts in groups (from jails, 'hot' suburbs to blue chip companies HR and management, and religious groups).

The peace-building workshop would comprise of a talk & exercises touching on elements such as techniques to develop empathy and the comprehension of the other through focusing, thus fostering group bonding and stability, and how one can project love in social relations as to stabilize them. The workshop will be taught from a Christian perspective.

The event will be from 2-5pm on Saturday, April 2 at St. Joseph’s Church, 50 Av. Hoche, 75008 Paris. Participants are encouraged to turn up from 1.30pm for a ‘mingling’ & ‘petit pot’ session. There is no fee, but please email corez32@yahoo.co.uk to let the organizers know that you are coming.
The Youth Group meets on Sundays from 3-5pm for fun, fellowship, and Bible Study. Please wear/bring comfortable clothes and shoes.

Meeting dates: April 3, 10, 17
Other dates: May 8, 15, 22, 29/June 5, 12, 19, 26

COOL STUFF!!!

*April 14: ACP Seder. Join the youth table as we learn about what Jesus was up to on the night before He died.

*April 30: Laser Tag with youth from St. Michael’s and Emmanuel International Church.

*May 21: Worship Night. Music, fun, and fellowship. Please meet in the Catacombs at 7:00pm.

*June 18: Study Break. Join us at 2pm for a break from studying for exams. You’ll need it!

CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE

ACP YOUNG ADULTS 2011

BIBLE STUDY. Join us every Tuesday night at 7:30 pm in the ACP Catacombs. For deep conversation and fellowship during 1st, 3rd, and 5th Tuesdays of the month. Dates: April 5. Other dates: May 3, 17 and 31/June 7 and 21

PIZZA NIGHT. Come at 6pm to cook or 7:30pm for pizza, prayer, and small group discussion. In the ACP Thurber Room. 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month. Dates: April 12 and 26. Other dates: May 10 and 24/June 14 and 28.

SPECIAL EVENTS

April 8-10: Young Adult Retreat. Please join us in Jambville for a weekend of campfires, community, and prayer.

May 28: Deepening Your Spiritual Life – join us for a night of reflection, discussion, and prayer; a chance to focus on the living God in the midst of a busy life. Meet in the Catacombs at 7:30pm

June 11: Pentecost Picnic. Come enjoy friends, food, and prayer. 6:00pm. Location TBA.

For more info, contact Ginger Strickland at 01 40 62 05 07- Friends are always welcome at ACP youth events! To be put on our email list, Ginger Strickland---Office: 01.40.62.05.07/youthpastor@acparis.org
STAND UP!
Youth, are you ready for a challenge? Are you ready to explore the BIG questions about God? Are you ready to talk about what being a Christian really means? You are invited to join us for STAND UP, a chance to spend some intense time with a small group and to explore your faith in a new way.

This experience is designed for youth group members who have not yet made a public profession of faith. This might be youth who have not yet been baptized, youth who have been baptized but want to declare their faith and join the church, or youth who have been baptized and would like to be confirmed.

STAND UP includes:
- Introductory meeting for youth and families on March 13 from 12:15 -1:15pm in the ACP Catacombs.
- Meetings with faith mentors (dates TBD) and a family dinner on May 7 from 6-8pm.
- Worship service including baptisms and confirmations, May 8.

Please contact the youth director for more information: youthpastor@acparis.org.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY CONCERT - Fundraising Habitat concert for Humanity concert followed by a wine and cheese reception will be coming up on May 3 at 8 pm. Tickets are on sale at the reception and at the coffee hour. For more information please contact David Holmes at holmesd@gmail.com. The ROTARY has accepted for the third year to sponsor this important mission. We are counting on you too to make it a full house! Tickets can be ordered online at www.habitatconcert.com. Only 25€!

The Living Truth Foundation (one of our missionary partners) will host a 34-week Bible Study graduation for their prison ministry this April. Destiny Ryales will travel to Elmina, Ghana to attend the graduation and further encourage Brother Francis Cobbinah in his youth, hospital and prison ministries. Please contact Destiny if you would donate slightly used clothes, toiletries, Bibles, Christian books or monetary assistance.
Those of us present at our inaugural series of Lenten Lectures last year are not likely to forget Professor Jürgen Moltmann's powerful Reflections on the Cross. It was a rare privilege to have a visit from and to interact with one of the leading Christian theologians of our time, an event that we hope will set the standard for future lectures intended to bring the best of contemporary spiritual reflection to the American Church congregation and the broader Paris community. This year we are therefore delighted to be playing host to another seminal thinker, Holmes Rolston III, Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Colorado State University, who will be lecturing on the subject of his latest book, Three Big Bangs: Matter-Energy, Life, Mind. Winner of the Mendel Medal of Villanova University (2005) and the Templeton Prize (2003), the world’s foremost award for exceptional contributions to ‘affirming life’s spiritual dimension’, he is highly regarded internationally as the pioneer of the discipline of Environmental Ethics as well as for the depth and critical engagement of his writings on nature, science and faith. He has lectured on all the continents, speaking at the 28th Nobel Conference (1992) and the World Congress of Philosophy (1993/1998) as well as delivering the prestigious Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh in 1997/1998.

Of the many reasons which should encourage us to take heed of Professor Rolston as a figure at the cutting edge of current Christian thought, it is perhaps worth briefly mentioning three in order to whet our appetites for his lectures:

- Firstly, being both a Presbyterian minister and a scientifically-trained philosopher, Holmes Rolston has brought a profoundly poetic spirituality and keen metaphysical insight to his contemplation of the natural realm and the latest advances in scientific knowledge. He emphasizes that a Biblically-formed worldview can and must go hand in hand with a sense of wonder at the history of the universe that modern science is increasingly revealing to us. This feeling of awe is however far from naïve; Rolston does not shrink from the mysterious, indeed disturbing aspects of a ‘cruciform’ nature whose history is also a ‘passion play’ characterized by the suffering as much as by the flourishing of living creatures.

- Secondly, at a time of ever-deepening ecological crisis, Holmes Rolston III has issued a prophetic philosophical challenge to an exclusively anthropocentric view of our planet, stressing the intrinsic value of non-human nature and human duty towards it. His work asks penetrating questions of science, knowing that, for all the apparent miracles of modern technology, “the whole scientific enterprise of the last four centuries could yet prove demonic. We may be caught in a Faustian bargain, in a scientific sink”. Rolston is acutely conscious of the way in which our insatiable urge to master our environment through knowledge, a desire to conquer that is anything but pure, has brought humanity to the brink of self-destruction. His reflection on science is therefore no mere theoretical speculation, but rather an ethically-charged call to

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4 Past recipients of the Templeton Prize (http://www.templetonprize.org/previouswinner.html) have included Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Brother Roger of Taizé, Billy Graham and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

action: ‘we not only have a paradigm, we need ourselves to be the paradigm, the disciplinary matrix, the disciple who incarnates the truth.’

- Thirdly, while writers associated with the New Atheism such as Richard Dawkins or Daniel Dennett are loudly proclaiming that natural processes are random, unguided and ultimately meaningless, Holmes Rolston offers an inspiring alternative vision in which God is discreetly but faithfully active at the deepest level of universal history. We are a part of a dynamic creation whose essential openness is demonstrated by the three ‘Big Bangs’ of ‘radical genesis’: the generation of matter-energy, life and mind. Our cosmic epic is full of emerging novelty and spiralling complexity, characterized by the repeated appearance of unpredictably new levels of being. These depend on previous levels just as biology depends on physics and chemistry, but in each case the higher level cannot simply be explained in terms of the lower. You cannot simply read off dinosaurs, elephants and Presbyterian pastors from quarks, protons and trilobites; ‘the universe story, the Earth story is a phenomenal tale of more and more later out of less and less earlier on’. Contrary to the narrative of blind chance and necessity perceived in the natural order by scientific atheism, it is in this phenomenal tale that the lens of faith enables us to perceive the hand of the Creator who is ‘making all things new’ (Revelation 21:5).

‘In the end we must ask the questions with which Genesis begins: wondering about creation resulting in persons who image God. We are better placed than any generation in human history to ask these questions, to take the measure of them. But answers to ultimate questions still lie almost beyond our reach. If found, answers will focus on the three big bangs.’

Further biographical information together with extensive selections from Professor Rolston’s publications can be found at [http://lamar.colostate.edu/~rolston/](http://lamar.colostate.edu/~rolston/)

by Peter Bannister, Chair, Christian Education Committee

IN PREPARATION FOR THIS YEAR’S Lenten Lectures on April 5, 6 and 7, Peter Bannister will lead a session in the catacombs following the 11 a.m. service on Sunday April 3 entitled: ‘Faith and science - what is the current state of the dialogue, and why does it matter?’, introducing some of the themes of Holmes Rolston III's work and setting them in the broader context of contemporary discussions between Christians and the scientific community.’

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6 Ibid., xvi.
7 Ibid., 339.
Greetings to all ACP worshippers,

Sunday March 13 marked and important milestone in our church’s calendar – the first Congregational Meeting of 2011.

This annual event is a special time where we all come together to receive reports from our pastors and committees, to approve our financial reports and budgets, and to resolve other congregational matters as needed. Most significantly on the 2011 agenda was the renewal of Rev. Scott Herr’s contract to serve as Senior Pastor.

Pastor Scott’s initial 3-year mandate will expire this summer, and the American and Foreign Christian Union (AFCU) decision to extend his term depends on the recommendation of a majority of the Church Membership.

Having unanimously approved the 2010 audited results and the 2011 budget as well as hearing Pastor Scott’s report including his vision for our community in the coming months and years, members were invited to discuss his renewal.

A number of people rose to give testimonials on Pastor Scott’s wonderful service as a preacher and friend – subsequently, the Church Membership unanimously approved the recommendation to renew his term, to which Pastor Scott graciously gave thanks.

Before concluding the meeting, ACP Communications Chair Amy Johnson and Vice Chair John Newman gave an exciting presentation on new look ACP web site, which was later launched in March.

Looking ahead, we ask you to mark your calendars, the next Congregational Meeting is scheduled to take place on May 22nd, at which we will hold elections for next year’s Council.

In closing, we would like to thank again all of our committee leaders for their dedicated service and also you, our members, for your support.

In Christ,
Mary Crass Fenu,
ACP Council Moderator

Mark Primmer,
ACP Council Vice Moderator

In his remarks following the vote to extend his contract, Pastor Scott said, "Thank you for allowing me the privilege of continuing to serve you. Some of you have heard me say before, but I will say it again, 'I am a weak and ignorant man in the hands of a strong and wise God.' Trusting that the Holy Spirit is leading us into the future together, I pray that I would continue to grow into the pastor that you so richly deserve."

By Amy Johnson, Chair of the Communications Committee

After six months of behind the scenes preparation, the Communications Committee was thrilled to unveil the new American Church in Paris website at the Congregational Meeting on 13 March 2011.

One of our primary goals was to create a site that portrays the ACP as dynamic and engaged, both as a community itself and as a presence in Paris. We achieved this goal by ensuring a real depth and breadth of ACP news and activities throughout the site, and complemented this content with images of the city as well as an improved listing of community events held at the ACP.

Another top objective was to improve the visitor’s experience to acparis.org. The new site offers users a superior experience on the “front-end” thanks to easier navigation, updated information, improved graphics, more photos and enhanced calendar functions. The new calendar function is connected to Google Apps; it enables a user to view all ACP activities at-a-glance. Simply click on an event to automatically download it to your own calendar. Who knew that moving the ACP into the 21st Century would be so seamless?

Overall site users will have an easy and intuitive navigation experience: six bars across the top have clearly-organized drop-down choices and links.

Our new site looks great, too, because it follows the ACP Style Guidelines that were created in early 2010. The site’s pages have a clean, common look and feel – and this helps improve navigation around the site.

Visitors to acparis.org will find the meeting room reservations function and “weddings” information more prominent and much easier to navigate than on the previous site. Materials have been improved, photos enhanced and mechanisms are now in place to make reserving a meeting room an efficient and pleasant experience. Selected pages will soon be available in French, and eventually in Japanese.

Do you visit websites using a mobile device? Do not fear - the new site is designed with you in mind, and a compatible view is automatic. We have also built-in the ability to add links to Facebook groups, Twitter, etc., and anticipate that this will be in place soon.

On the “back-end” of the site (the administrative side of things where changes and updates are made), our team is enjoying a vastly improved functionality. The site was designed using a popular, open-source Content Management System (Joomla) and this will make it easier for our team to customize and expand the site as needs evolve. The site is much easier to update, customize and expand; security and backup systems are improved; and we have synergies with Google Apps.

Our Web partner (Hosting Paris) is locally-based, making maintenance, training and support issues easily and quickly resolved. They are handling technical issues such as further improving security and backup system(s) and have also been contracted to develop and implement a Search Engine Optimization (SEO) strategy.

A website is never “finished.” Site improvements will constantly continue and functions will evolve just as the ACP evolves. New features and additional functionality to be added in phases, including planned changes and “as needed” enhancements.

If you have ideas or comments about the new site, or if you want to join the Communications team, please let us know: communications@acparis.org.
The Cross
By Lionel Montoliu and Monica Bassett

The large painting of a cross (4m x 2m) displayed in the sanctuary during Lent is actually part of a larger installation. It is made from tire traces of all sorts, sizes and colors representing the myriad of races, cultures, beliefs, and people that make up this world. It symbolizes the fact that mankind is one body and faced with many crucial decisions at this particular time on the planet. It has been said that our world is at a crossroads of its destiny (thus indicated by the intersection of the two axes of the painting) on Earth (depicted by the red and yellow circle at the center). One central question must be answered: Will we move towards the cross and deepen our relationships through spirituality and love or move away from the cross towards consumption and self-centeredness?

Truth be told, this painting was not intended to represent a cross or any particular Christian symbol at its conception. It was intended to be an all-encompassing symbol signifying mankind on the Earth at this time. How paradoxical, then, that the end result is a Christian cross? One could deduce that this is exactly how Christ works in and through our lives along with the Holy Spirit weaving its way in countless patterns and with each stroke and every trace. It also mirrors the message that all journeys will eventually lead us to the cross.

Positively or negatively, Art demands a response. The amazing thing about artistic expression is that each person sees and understands a specific piece of art based on his or her own unique experiences regardless of the intention of the artist(s). We are humbled to hear what kinds of thoughts and feelings have been brought forth from this painting since its appearance on Ash Wednesday. We feel truly blessed to be able to share our art with the ACP and privileged to see this piece in such a unique and divine space surrounded by the beautiful energy of magnificent stained glass, prayer, music, and meditation.

It is our hope that the Cross painting in the sanctuary will serve as a continued source of reflection as the congregation contemplate their lives during Lent as well as a source of inspiration and renewal through the Easter season. We are grateful to the pastors and the church council for their gracious invitation.
No time to retire
By Gigi Oyog


Many people about to retire usually consider a lot of options like the ones cited above. But not Patti. She was in search of something special, and slowly, it took shape and stood out. Then it all became clear. One Sunday about a year ago, she listened as Carolyn Bouazouni, former Council Moderator, speak to the congregation about her trip to an ACP mission in Ghana, and also to a Rafiki Village. “I wanted to work in an orphanage, and the word ‘Africa’ also clicked. Soon, Africa was beckoning, and Patti knew that this was the way to go. Patti has chosen to serve with the Rafiki Foundation. “To hear a call is the most wonderful thing that can happen to anyone, to me,” she said.

Patti Lafage came to ACP in 2005 and quickly became involved in its hectic life. She joined Fred Gramann’s choir. She is also a member of the Prayer Care team, a group of individuals happy to pray with people and in this way, carry part of people’s burdens.

“Why am I doing this? It is all about giving back,” said Patti. “I have had so many blessings throughout my life. I want very much to give back from the abundance that I have received. Of course, I don’t have to go very far to give back, but I feel the need to live simply, to get back to the basic and human values.”

Describing her mission, Patti said that she will be teaching and hire, supervise and train teachers for resident Rafiki Village children and local village children. One country in Africa is losing 2,000 teachers a year and its education system can replace them at the rate of only 1,000 teachers a year. Disease, war, famine and poverty have left Africa with 44 million orphans.

Moreover, being a teacher would mean going back to her roots and her original profession. In the United States, she had taught French and English literature and history. The pieces were beginning to fall in place, and the picture was becoming increasingly clear.

“Rafiki” means friend in Swahili and in just one word, depicts the purpose of the Foundation, i.e. to be a friend to orphans and widows in distress. The mission of the Rafiki Foundation is to help Africans know God by caring for
and educating orphans, providing materials and training in education and Bible study, and giving economic opportunities to widows.

To accomplish this mission, Rafiki established 10 Rafiki Training Villages in Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, and Ethiopia. These Villages provide living, educational and medical facilities through Rafiki’s four programs: childcare, education, training and widows.

The story of Rafiki began in the summer of 1946 when, at a youth mission rally, Rosemary McEachern Jensen felt compelled to step forward and answer the call to give her life to serve God on the foreign mission field. No matter that Rosemary was just 17 then. With that one step began a 7-decade journey in God’s service first as a missionary to Tanzania, then executive director of the Bible Study Fellowship International and most recently, as President of the Rafiki Foundation. In 1985, Rosemary, her husband Robert, her brother Don, and her friend Richard returned from a trip to Tanzania, deeply troubled by the disease, famine and poverty they had just seen. The four then resolved to form a foundation – the Rafiki Foundation, a friend to orphans and widows.

Patti hopes to leave by the summer but it may not be until January 2012. It is not clear yet where she will be sent. In the meantime, there are some requirements that Patti is obliged to meet, and the biggest challenge is to raise $100,000 to cover travel, housing, stipend and living expenses for the two years she will be staying in a Rafiki Village. Money is slowly trickling in: friends, family and ACP members continue to donate. A fund-raising concert will be held on April 15 for Patti, or in January 2012 by the ACP Mission Outreach Committee. One can also make pledges.

Patti said: “I will miss my family but spiritually, I am getting ready. Emotionally, I want to go tomorrow! I’m going to take the plunge!”

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**IRS – Paris Office: TAXPAYER ASSISTANCE DAY OPEN HOUSE**

- To provide assistance to taxpayers who need help with their tax questions
- Individual one-on-one consultation offered from 2:00 p.m. – 5 p.m. (on a first come-first serve basis)
- 30-minute presentation at 5:30 PM followed by a question and answer session
- Presentation topics to include new tax laws affecting 2010 tax returns to where to go for IRS help
- Tax assistance information forms, publications, and pamphlets will also be available

**Where?** Mona Bismarck Foundation, 34, Avenue de New-York 75116 Paris (Metro Alma Marceau or lénà)

**When?** Monday April 4, 2011, 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.

**Questions? Call 01-43-12-24-60**


Feel free to drop by and bring a friend! (Valid picture ID needed for admission)
DOES WHAT WE LEARN ON SUNDAY MAKE A DIFFERENCE ON MONDAY?

By Denise Dampierre

Beliefs have an impact on business. That’s what Professor Prabhu Guptara has observed in his 15 years of travelling the globe to garner new ideas for business growth and long-range planning. Opportunities are viewed differently from a Confucius standpoint than from a Judaic one. The Humanists’ perspective on time pressures contrasts to that of the Hindu outlook. The value of resources, particularly the human dimension, in a Buddhist framework is unlike that of the Christian one.

Professor Guptara will address “Making Money with Meaning: The Approaches to Wealth Creation of Atheism, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Confucianism, and Judaism” during the Leaders, Life & Purpose event on April 29, 2011.

Leaders, Life & Purpose came about through the efforts of ACP members who sought to provide a tool for church-going, business leaders and professionals to easily and respectfully broach spiritual issues with interested colleagues. LLP hosts a thought-provoking speaker followed by moderated discussions over an elegant meal. Past themes included “How Much is Enough?”, “Success in Failure and Failure in Success,” as well as “The Economics of Mutuality: The Financial Value of Values.”

Leaders, Life & Purpose events are unique in that they bring together Christians from multiple churches with seekers to discuss, in an open setting, deep issues of faith and work. Participants express the following:

- "The perspective it gave us as individuals of the influence we have on our environment."
- "Sharing around the table in an open non-judgemental environment."
- "Breath of fresh air. Wise words from the mouth of someone who contributes to changes to better the world."
- "The personal interaction far exceeded expectations."
- "The discussion was very interesting and made me think!"
- "Provided a forum for exploration, listening and expression. Dramatically opened my eyes to certain life experience of some table mates."
- "In fact, I regret not having invited guests which I will probably do next time."

Why am I involved in Leaders, Life & Purpose? C.S. Lewis words says it for me: "It is a serious thing... to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting (or the most fascinating and intelligent) person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you could see it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare." My friends’ eternal future is at stake. LLP events help spur them on a spiritual journey no matter what they believe and in a highly honorable manner. As one of our guests said, "At the minimum, it’s an enjoyable dinner. At its best, it’s thought-provoking conversation.” There is all to gain!

We hope many of you will join us for the event and invite friends. Please feel free to contact me for more information.

Sincerely in Christ,

Denise Dampierre
Chair, Leaders, Life & Purpose

LLP Team:
Carolyn Bouazouni
Bill & Critty Fairback
Scott Herr
Kris Richardson
Joe Schlie
David Smidt

LLP Alumni:
Pascal Berger & Mary Claire King
Judith & Jacques Huart
Bill & Evelyne Johnston
Julia Kung
Marta Llorente Gomez

Sue Orsoni
Ursula & Jacques Perrier
Mark Primmer
John Smith
Laurie Wheeler
APRIL 3
Marianne DUMAS, cello
Adrien REIGNIER, piano
Music by César Franck et Frédéric Chopin

APRIL 10
Laura POTRATZ, organ
Music by Bach, Byrd, Liszt, Alain, Litaize

APRIL 17
Sylvia HO, piano
Music by Debussy, Chopim and Granados
THE AICEME IS COMING TO ACP!

From May 9-16, the American Church in Paris is hosting the annual conference of the Association of International Churches in Europe and the Middle East (AICEME). Over 50 pastors and spouses are expected to come.

The AICEME is an association of Christian congregations, bearing witness to the Gospel and serving Jesus Christ among English-speaking people throughout Europe and the Middle East. AICEME member churches are diverse in style, tradition, denominational affiliation and membership. Many pastors have attested to the importance of this conference to them, as it offers them a chance to share ideas and to hear the experience of other churches, and to learn from them.

Special guest speaker
Mark Labberton will be the conference’s special guest speaker. He holds the Lloyd John Ogilvie Chair of Preaching at Fuller Theological Seminary and also directs the Ogilvie Institute for Preaching. Prior to this, he served as the Senior Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley for seventeen years. He holds degrees from Whitman College [B.A.], Fuller Theological Seminary [M.Div.], and Cambridge University [Ph.D.], and was ordained in 1982. His writing ministry expresses itself in a variety of periodicals and he is an Associate Editor of Leadership Journal. His book: The Dangerous Act of Worship: Living God’s Call to Justice was published in 2007 [IVP] and his latest book, A Just Heart: Seeing Others Through the Eyes of Jesus [IVP] came out in 2010.

You are warmly invited to listen to Mark Labberton on Thursday, May 12, as he talks on “Following an Enemy - Loving God”. On Sunday, May 15, he will deliver the sermon on “Worship That Matters”.

Please note: There will be only two worship services that Sunday, May 15 (11:00 and 13:30), as we will be welcoming the AICEME pastors and spouses conference participants and enjoy a half hour of special prelude music prior to the 11:00 service.

The Planning Team, under the leadership of Marie Grout, and under the guidance of Pastor Scott, has been making plans in the past two years on how to welcome the visiting pastors and spouses. Other than the lectures by Mr. Labberton, there will be tours and visits to some of the most outstanding venues in Paris and France. Highlights of the week-long conference will include a specially designed “Little Geneva” walking tour that will trace Protestant history in Paris and France, and a day trip to Chartres Cathedral.

WE NEED YOUR HELP! During the week, ACP will be organizing many of the meals. We need your help cooking, setting up, serving or cleaning up. Sign-up sheets are waiting for you at the Welcome Table during coffee hour. For further information, please contact Cobi at cobicamberlein@aol.com or Marie at lafamillegrou@gmail.com. This is your opportunity to join the fun!
ACP MEN MEET THE PRODIGAL SON
By Bleu Bettencourt

On the afternoon of Friday, March 4, a group of men from the American Church left for Farnham Castle in England for a weekend of spiritual and physical retreat. One thousand years ago, the Normans built this castle as a refuge (retreat) against antagonistic forces of their time. Comparably, these men sought refuge in the arms of God, through companionship of his Church and protection of His Word. The men were warmly hosted by some 20 men from the International Community Church (United Kingdom). The focal point of the weekend was a series of captivating and paradigm-shifting studies on the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-31); nevertheless, the men also enjoyed time spent in various forms of fellowship: playing football, singing together, and other such English play.

The men from the ACP began their journey from Gare du Nord, through London, and the metropolitan rail-network to Farnham, where the town’s self-titled castle sits on the hill-side on the edge of town. A walk across town, from the local train-station, and up the methodically-numbered stairs to the castle – seriously, there was a blind bishop who resided at the castle who needed to count steps – they arrived to the welcome of 20 men singing in the Bishop’s Chapel. By hook or by crook, and alluding to the ambience of the weekend, this singing was more heart-and-soul than fine-tuned. (Thank God!)

That night saw the beginning to a three part study on our parable. The speaker for the weekend opened by reading the two precluding parables – the lost sheep and lost coin - and the one that would be our focus for the weekend. He noted that, in all three parables, there is an important repetition - something noteworthy in Hebrew writing - that each story (or parable) touches on repentance. Repentance, as used in the New Testament, is derived from the word Metanoia in Greek: a compound of "after/behind one's mind", or more simply, "to change one’s mind after". (In the ancient Hebrew context, it is represented by two verbs that mean "to return" and "to feel sorrow").

Drawing from the depth of his personal experience as being a father of two boys, the speaker continued his search to role play, and asked the men to place themselves in the shoes of the father who was vandalized by one son, insulted by the other, and dishonored by the both. And after, they were to imagine which brother they most represent in character - the younger or older. The former squandering what was likely a third of his father’s estate – accented by Luther’s comment that, "if you are going to sin, sin vigorously" - or the latter who publicly insults his father after the return of the younger son by his distaste for the father's grace. The night’s session ended with time in small groups were the men shared and meditated on what they had heard.

The men were asked to step inside the shoes of the father who was vandalized by one son, insulted by the other, and dishonored by the both; and to match our own personalities to those of the younger and older brother. Most found they could easily be characterized in one or both sons.
Afterwards, it was game night in the castle’s pub - a room not likely partitioned by the 10th century Normans, but no doubt a welcomed addition by the 20th century English. The men from the ACP were at a disadvantage on the pub quiz: they scored something like 35%! A large part of the quiz was on finding the American equivalent of English jargon, but no time was lost in defeat as everyone enjoyed the time laughing and chatting with the others.

On Saturday morning, the day began with breakfast in the castle’s old kitchen, then up to the Bishop’s Chapel where the speaker taught on the prodigality of each of the characters in the parable. Most poignantly described was the prodigal father, who lavishly, even prodigally, welcomed the younger son back home, who, after repentance, came back to his Father to beg for mercy. The parallelism between the father and the Holy Father is obvious. The father runs to embrace his lost son and grants him more than a place back within the family, more than just forgiveness - he receives his humanity restored (with a nod to John Paul II) and a celebration. The older brother, as we know, does not celebrate.

“What keeps us from asking mercy from and receiving God’s grace?” the speaker asked. He reminded the men, that God is not looking for men to be His trophies, but Sons, even heirs of His Kingdom, with all the glories and wonders that holds. Indeed, the men were reminded Angels, those celestial beings who enjoy eternally the Holy of Holies presence, rejoice at this, at this amazing act of grace. The men finished the time again, with their small groups, reflecting and sharing their hearts on the message.

Then, they all joined in on a workshop for male singing. Using sporting events as an example, men uninhibited by any lack of confidence in their vocal performance, sang "Swing low, sweet chariot", "Abide with me", and "Guide me O thou Great Jehovah" – as arranged by English rugby and football fans. All were left wondering why can’t we be as uninhibited in our Sunday morning worship?

Saturday afternoon was then filled with all kinds of recreational activities ranging from football in the nearby pitch to a character study of Nebuchadnezzar in the town pub – the matter apparently a form of avant garde bible study. Thanks be to God, no injuries were had on the field, save to the men’s egos; and the other men returned from the pub more full of the Spirit than of spirits. In any case, all found the afternoon a good time to just rest, read and share in conversation with others.

The evening saw the return to and final chapter in the analysis on the Parable. After the first two sessions, then men were
left to wonder, "do we have enough faith in the cross - the divine act of the father coming to meet (us) the son - to see ourselves as we truly are?" There is, as Paul states in Romans 8, "no condemnation in Christ Jesus." So, what is keeping us from responding? The speaker pointed out in this session, amongst others, that we, like the older brother, are opposed to everything the younger brother was: we are performance driven, foolishly legalistic, and cautiously grace-resistant by nature. We need God-given Metanoia to come to our senses. We need to fall in the loving arms of the one who so graciously bids us to come home.

Followed again by small groups, the men were able to reflect on how they (we), individually and corporately, as the body of Christ, can be just that: the reflection of the love of God in the world. One can't help seeing all that is happening in the world - from natural catastrophes to political uprisings – and wondering where the love of the father is. The world is, as Paul notes, in the pain of childbirth.

22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved.

The last evening, the men concluded a day full of the message of grace and hope, by sharing in each others lives.

Sunday morning, all, save a few who had to return to the grind of life, spent time in worship in the castle's keep: oldest remaining part of the castle. Singing was led to the tune of a fellow ACP brother's guitar. Pastor Scott gave a denouement sermon on the gospel and/or the parable. (They are the same story, right?) Reminding the men that the good news is that God's love is so much greater than our fallen nature, our sin, the men were charged to go out into the world, knowing that the love of the father in the story – the love of the Heavenly Father – is with them.

It might be easy to recognize some of the practical differences from Jesus' retreat into the wilderness or Saint Ignatius' monastic spiritual retreat he popularized in the Middle Ages. (Did you remember the bit about bible study in the pub and soccer?) The men however did not fail to hit the nail on the head: the weekend was full of the Word of God and retreating, as it were, to His Love. Again, it is the message of the parable and the Gospel: we are lost and need to retreat from whatever it is keeping us from the Father, and the Father welcomes, even runs, to get us back.

Hope you men out there will join the next retreat.
Welcoming the Stranger –

BLOOM Needs Your Help!

Do you remember what it was like to be brand new in Paris? For 40 years BLOOM has been an essential outreach ministry of the American Church, helping strangers to Paris find their way. These seminars, feature speakers and workshops on various topics from food and wine tasting to health care and general safety, need-to-know subjects, and just plain fun. BLOOM helps with understanding cultural differences, creating a new life in Paris, and getting connected with friends and organizations throughout Paris and the surrounding areas.

“Thank you SO much for the past two days. I met so many inspiring women from around the world and truly enjoyed each of the speakers and workshops. I am definitely EXCITED and hopeful for my future here in Paris as a result of this amazing experience!”
Holly, October, 2009

“I went to Bloom and found it great, not only a whole bunch of info, but met some great people too; I had no idea that so many activities take place at the church - also very multi-national.” - Student

Traditionally the program is run entirely by the core leadership team of the Women of the American Church. This year the WOAC leadership is expanding the leadership of BLOOM, in the hope that the coordination of this flagship outreach event can be better supported by our entire congregation. So, we are putting out a church wide call for a BLOOM Task Force that can evaluate and coordinate both BLOOM and the BLOOM Book. You don’t have to be a woman—or an American – just someone who remembers what it is like to be new to Paris. This is your chance to help someone else settle in Paris by extending the hospitality of Christ to the stranger in our city.

Can you help with BLOOM or participate as part of a BLOOM Task Force? If so, please come to an information meeting on Sunday, April 3, between the 11am and 1:30pm worship services in G7. If you are interested, please contact Christy at woac_bloomdirector@yahoo.com.
**Adult Education Opportunities**

**Sundays Sermon Bible Studies Following the 9AM & 11AM Services:** Adult Bible studies meet between the services. The Bible studies meet 15 minutes after the end of the worship service in room G2 (Basement level).

**Nooma Studies** will be held every other Friday, from 8:30 pm. Please contact MaryClaire.

**WOAC Women’s Bible Study** meets on Tuesday mornings from 10:30-12:30 am. Everyone is welcome! We are currently going through the 5th book in the Pursuing Spiritual Transformation series: Gifts - The Joy of Serving God. For more information, please contact Shelley Fischer or Diedre Grizzle.

**Other Opportunities**

**Every Friday, the Mission Lunch Program** provides a free, cooked lunch at the host church (American Cathedral, 23 avenue George V, Paris 8e) to those in need. ACP organizes the lunch on the second Friday of each month, but volunteers are needed every week for cooking, serving and cleaning-up. Contact: Kristie.

**Knit One, Pearl Two:** The Knitting Group meets on Mondays at 5 pm in the Catacombs. We welcome newcomers, whether they be rank beginners, experts or somewhere in between. We even welcome quilters, crocheters, tatters and people who just want the fellowship! We knit for church missions as well as for our families and ourselves. We can guide you toward Paris knit shops, patterns, online resources and more. Drop in; bring a friend; check it out. Contacts: Antoinette Wolfe or Elizabeth Rand.

**ACP Prayer Care Team:** Members of the Prayer Care Team invite you to join them after the 11 am service if you would like to pray together for your special concerns. Look for the team on the left side aisle under the chandelier.

**Docent Tours** needs more members! If you like learning and sharing history, archaeology, or just love trivia, you will enjoy giving 20-minute docent tours. For more info or to join the docent team, contact Alison Benney.

**Liturgist Ministry:** We have a wonderful team of lay readers (liturgists) who assist in leading worship at the 9 and 11 am worship services each week. If you are interested in being considered for this ministry, please contact the church secretary at secretary@acparis.org.

**Altar Flowers:** Offering altar flowers is a beautiful way to honor God, or people dear to you, to celebrate special occasions in your lives, or to remember your loved ones. If you would like to donate flowers, please contact the church secretary at secretary@acparis.org.

**Movie Discussion Group:** The movie group’s choices for April are Susanne Bier's Oscar-winning "In a Better World" (aka Revenge), George Nolfi's "Adjustment Bureau" (L'Agence), Lucy Walker's Oscar-nominated "Waste Land," and John Wells' "The Company Men." See any or all in the cinema at your convenience, then join the group for discussion on Thursday, April 14, at 7:30 pm.

**Thursday Morning Men’s Morning Coffee** takes place at 7:30 am each Thursday at Starbucks, located near the church at 90, rue St. Dominique, 75007.

**Mother’s Day Pancake Breakfast.** The Women's and Men's Ministries invite you and your family to help us thank the mothers and women of our church on **Sunday, May 8** between 9:30 - 11:30. There is a suggested donation of 5 Euros per person or 15 Euros per family. Attention Men: If you are interested in volunteering, there will be more information and a volunteer sign up sheet in the Theater between worship services.
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* Activity not held at ACP. Check with organizers for details.