Dear Members and Friends of the ACP,

Our Ash Wednesday service of worship will take place on Wednesday, February 17th, at 19:00. I would invite you to make an effort to attend this austere service which begins the season of Lent. As the name indicates, part of the worship of God during the Ash Wednesday service involves the strange blessing of ashes. The marking (or “imposition” as it is traditionally called) of ashes on the forehead with the sign of the cross is significant in that it retraces the sign of the cross made at baptism for some traditions, but more importantly in that it reminds us that the cross is a necessary destination for us if we are to share in the glory of the crucified risen Lord.

Receiving the sign of the cross on Ash Wednesday is a symbol of entering into the spiritual significance of the season of Lent. Lent, which literally means spring, is a 40 day journey remembering the way of the cross, a way which we in our typically materialistic and instant-gratification culture often choose to shun or avoid. But Jesus says clearly, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it” (Mark 8.34-35).

What is the grace of the cross? Part of the way of the cross is losing our own merits, our own credentials, our own security, and becoming empty of all that we think will fill us, in order that we might receive Christ’s merits, Christ’s credentials, Christ’s security and fullness. It is a paradox, but this season of Lent involves emptying and withholding from ourselves (traditionally through prayer and fasting) not so that we will die, but for new life.

Professor Jürgen Moltmann is coming in March to give his Lenten Lectures on the Passion of Christ and so in preparation we can reflect on some of his insights on the significance of the cross for the church today. Consider what he means by “cultic religion” as he writes,

*Cultic religion must be replaced by the spreading of the word of the cross, the celebration of faith and the practical following of Jesus. The cultic division between the religious and the profane is potentially abolished in faith in the Christ who was profaned by crucifixion. Thus the Eucharist, like the meals held by Jesus with ‘sinners and publicans’, must also be celebrated by the unrighteous, those who have no rights and the godless from the ‘highways and hedges’ of society, in all their profanity, and should no longer be limited, as a religious*.
Sacrifice, to the inner circle of the devout, to those who are members of the same denomination. The Christian church can re-introduce the divisions between the religious and the profane and between those who are within and those are without, only at the price of losing its own identity as the church of the crucified Christ.1

Indeed, the crucified Christ is the one with whom all who suffer can identify. This is the mystery of the revelation of God’s glory at Calvary, that in this singular act of sacrifice, a universal invitation and welcome was accomplished by God. It is by faith that we respond affirmatively and receive the benefits of Christ’s suffering. But we are also then set free to share in Christ’s suffering as we suffer for others, including those outside of our own “denomination,” tribe or clan. As God has done for us in Jesus Christ, so we are called to empty ourselves for others, and in doing so, we not only point to but participate in the eschatological community of the crucified risen Lord! I know I have much to learn about the significance of the cross for me and the community Christ is forming in us (as “the church of the crucified Christ”). How might we learn to celebrate with the ‘sinners and publicans,’ with the unrighteous, the godless and profane of this age and so share in the mystery of him who became sin for our sake so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (II Cor. 5.21)?

Perhaps it begins with humbling ourselves in small ways. Perhaps it begins with a smudge of ashes…

In Christ,

Scott

New to Paris? The BLOOM Program helps English-speaking newcomers settle in and make new friends. Come to BLOOM to CONNECT, LEARN, DISCOVER. All are welcome!

The BLOOM Program
Date: Saturday, March 13, 2010
Venue: The American Church in Paris
Time: 9am - 5.30pm
(Lunch will be provided)

Pre-Registration Fee:
20€ per Adult
10€ per Child

Information and Registration: www.woac.net
or phone 01 40 62 05 00

The full-day program will include interesting speakers covering topics essential to newcomers, such as:

- understanding French/Parisian culture
- how to access the French healthcare system
- a cross-cultural panel who will answer your questions

- tips on sports, antiques and hidden secrets in Paris
- a French cooking demonstration, cheese and wine tasting and much more!

Children will enjoy separate forums hosted by other children who have lived in Paris and experienced settling in to a new school environment. Childcare can be arranged for very young children.

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From Rev. Laurie Wheeler
Associate Pastor

There’s a story told about a young man who visited his old Scottish minister. The man was troubled, concerned that he was losing his faith. Some months earlier, he had stopped attending worship in the local parish – the people struck him as hypocrites, and the prayer meetings and Bible study discussions frustrated as much as fed him. So he’d decided to go it alone – confident that his private time with God was much more productive. Thing is, his desire for God – his confidence in faith – they’d been waning. So he wanted advice from the minister on what devotional practices he could do to keep his faith alive. Why, even though he was no longer around the church people whom he found so often difficult, was his devotion fading rather than enflamed?

The old minister said nothing, but went over to the hearth, where a stack of coals was burning bright red, heating the room. Using a pair of fire tongs, the old man took one red coal off of the stack and set it alone on the stone mantle. Both men watched in silence for several minutes as the coal slowly cooled – turning from red to grey. When it seemed quite dead, the old minister picked it up again in the tongs, replacing it on the hot coals in the hearth. Slowly, the coal began burning red again. Understanding perfectly, the young man thanked his old friend and left.

It’s a simple story, I know. First time I heard it I thought it a rather quaint and somewhat contrived illustration of the way that Christians need to be in contact with one another if the flame of faith is going to continue to burn. But the imagery has stuck with me for years. I had a coal burning stove in Scotland – so I can vividly imagine the sight of one solitary lump of coal cooling off alone. There are times when I don’t feel so connected to God, and so I certainly don’t feel like connecting in any way with God’s people. Yet the Holy Spirit has used the story’s imagery time and again to keep me connected in community – trusting that Christian community is absolutely essential to a living faith. And time and again, staying connected to others has slowly but surely restored the warmth and fire of my own faith.

This, it seems to me, is one gift of grace in a community. It is grace because the warmth and fire of faith is an act of God. This is a good thing – because if the warmth and fire of faith depended upon the goodness or devotion or perfection of a community of people, then we’d be sunk! People fail us. For every person whose company enthralls us in the church there is another person whose presence annoys us. We are, to be sure, lumps of coal – maybe some are closer to diamonds – but not me. I’m pretty sure that I am a lump of coal.

God’s grace can take lumps of coal and set them aflame in the Holy Spirit. Grace sets alight the lumps of coal in the hearth of Christian community – so that the light and warmth of that fire can create a hospitable welcome to those feeling the chill in this world. I don’t know if you’ve ever been in a sitting room in the Northeast of Scotland – on a dreich winter evening when the cold and damp settles into
your bones – and watched your friend pour another load of coal onto the fire in the hearth. Trust me – it is one of the best sights in the world – the sound of the coal crackling as it lights – the feeling of warmth that settles into the room. That is hospitality – a coal fire radiating warmth and light in the hearth on a cold and damp winter’s night.

This gift of grace can only be received and given when we are in contact with each other – like the coals in a grate can only catch fire and generate heat by being in contact with one another. To quote a passage from the book *Free of Charge* by Miroslav Volf: “A gift is a social relation, not an entity or an act in itself. It is an event between people.” (p. 84). The gift of God’s grace is an event between us and God, to be sure. It is also, however, a gift given and received as an event between God’s people. Coal fires require patience, to be sure – they don’t flame to life like paper or wood – but give it time, and there is no more satisfying sight in the middle of the dark of winter. The same is true of Christian community.

This year Lent begins on 17 February, and I’d like to encourage you to participate in a Lenten small group Bible study. Why? Because this is a year of seeking God’s grace, and because we believe that the gift of grace is an event between people – that God’s Holy Spirit generates the warmth and beauty of grace through people who are connected in community. I won’t promise that you will find anyone or anything other than 8 – 12 lumps of coal all in close proximity in one space. But Jesus has promised that where two or more are gathered in his name, he is there in the midst of them. I am confident in this promise – in the presence of the Holy Spirit creating the warmth and fire of renewed faith among Christians gathered in community.

*Lenten small groups will meet for three weeks prior to Prof. Moltmann’s visit, and one week following. The small group Bible studies will focus on the cross, which is also the focus of Prof. Moltmann’s lectures. Small groups will meet both in homes and here at the ACP church house. See the article by Ken Loewen, vice-chair of Congregational Nurture, for more information on Lenten small groups, and the article by Peter Bannister, chair of Christian Education, for further information on Professor Moltmann and the Lenten Lecture series (16, 17 and 18 March).*

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*Note: Following is a note from Ms. Eunice Raar, widow of Dale Raar, former ACP member, and Moderator of the ACP church council. Mr. Raar passed away on Sunday, December 13, 2009. A memorial service was held at the First Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Michigan on Sunday, December 20.*

My family and I would like to thank you all at the American Church in Paris for your sympathy when Dale passed from this life into the presence of his Lord and God. We so much appreciated the many cards, letters, and emails we received during the past two weeks. The beautiful floral bouquet that came from friends of the American Church in Paris was stunning. We hope that you will convey our gratitude to all those who participated in such a thoughtful and generous expression of their sympathy for us during this time.

We wish you, your family, and the church family a very happy and healthy New Year!

May God richly bless you,

Eunice
How about having a lawyer for a pastor? This is not a joke about one lawyer, one pastor and you. Pastor Jack Hustad, American Church in Paris (ACP) Pastoral Assistant, was finishing law school when God called him to serve. He is back at the ACP for a second time.

And as God expected of him, Pastor Hustad obeyed the call and went into seminary and was ordained in 1957. He remembers how out of the blue his father suggested he goes into seminary.

“Somewhere in mid-seminary I longed to finish law school and abandon the seminary but after reading Psalm 77, I settled for seminary and was assured that this was my call,” he explains the two major turnarounds in his life.

After serving in the United States, Pastor Hustad has been serving international congregations around the world. “I am not alone in my ministry,” he confirmed. “Helen, my wife, has been a major role player in my life.”

Helen Hustad, an active peace worker has been organizing trips for music bands from Uzbekistan and the United States in an exchange program. “She’s also a member of the Executive Committee of the American and Foreign Christian Union (AFCU),” said Pastor Hustad who also serves as a consultant on the board of the AFCU.

With over 50 years of ministry, Pastor Hustad wants to do more. He served in more than 15 countries in Europe and Asia, and France was blessed to have him twice. Among his many travels, he served in Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, South Africa, Japan and Korea and taught in several universities.

“I was here in 2001 and the chance came over once more to serve this wonderful ever growing congregation,” he exclaimed about the diversity of faithful worshipers and the variety of activities. “ACP is jumping and alive more than ever.”

ACP holds three serves every Sunday and several opportunities for studying the word of God. There are also schools and activities for all ages and guidance for the youth.

“It is always a privilege to come back to serve and worship with old friends and the members who joined after our last visit,” confirmed Pastor Hustad. “And sing again with Fred!”

He explained that the Holy Spirit is active in the congregation of the ACP, “Many churches struggle with the rapid growth and the challenges of the information technology age, but here we can see an amazing presence of the Holy Spirit at work.”

As Pastoral Assistant, Pastor Hustad is helping mainly with wedding ministry. It has changed since he last served here. “There are always many Asian weddings but there is a noticeable increase in the weddings of Franco-American couples and many more couples are coming to renew their vows.

“It’s wonderful to witness couples who are still passionately in love and want after 30 or 40 years to say ‘I do’ once more, confirming their bond.”

He explained that longing for his two sons and daughter and his grandchildren makes him go back to the US, otherwise serving in international congregations has been very enriching.

Fifty years and counting, the Hustads have been in ministry together in the US and around the world and now returning to the American Church in Paris for a second time around until July 2010.

He confirms his desire to continue to follow his calling, “We never say no to any invitation. We always go wherever we are invited until we can’t do it anymore.”
More Room for God in the Primmers’ Lives

(Following is an interview with Mark and Nicole Primmer. Mark has served a number of times on the Church Council, notably as Assistant Secretary and Vice-Moderator. Nicole sings regularly in the choir.)

Tell us a little bit about your family – how old are your kids, how long have you been involved at ACP...

We’re a family of four with two daughters, Ava and Mia, 7 and 4 respectively. We’ve been coming to the ACP since 2003. We greatly appreciate the faith and community within the church, and we enjoy participating in many different ways through the music as well as other programs.

I wonder what you expected, as a parent and a former Sunday School leader yourself, when you heard we were trying a “children’s worship” approach this year ... have there been any surprises for you?

(smiling) Yes, the change in name did make me think, what’s going on? How do we explain this to the girls? We were fortunate that they were able to participate in the Artist Workshop with Peter (Chalmers) during the last week of August, so then when the new “Children’s Worship” began; it was a logical extension/application of this approach. Ava and Mia love art, and using it in a worship setting has been very effective for them. But it is more than art, and I thank all of the leaders and volunteers for fostering such a special place for our children.

Your family was on the all church retreat this past fall – what was that experience like for you?

Wonderful. It was our first time to attend the family retreat, and now that the girls have reached an age where it could have greater meaning, we were particularly interested in going. From our view, it was hugely successful. All of us were able to enjoy the program, as well as the location – it was a most welcome break from the “normal” day-to-day of Paris life and a great opportunity to build closer relationships with friends (both old and new).

Last question – how have you seen God at work in your family recently?

For us, this past Advent season was particularly meaningful, and one where we felt God’s work within our family. I believe that the daily Advent readings greatly assisted in this. We followed the readings each day, mostly during dinner time, and this not only brought us closer together as a family, but also helped create space for God’s love to flourish. Our conversations focused not only on the reading, but also about on how it relates to our lives. I believe it helped reduce the commercial pressure of the season and brought greater spiritual meaning to Christmas. I can see this in the girls, and through what they talk about today.
Year of Grace, 2010: February Readings

Our readings this month are all based in the Old Testament as we follow the story of God’s steadfast love – God’s grace – to his people, the Jews. This month’s readings pick up the story in the book of Exodus. If you’d like to remember how the story developed from the birth of Isaac, to the twins Esau and Jacob (whose name was changed to Israel), through Israel’s twelve sons who sold their brother Joseph into slavery – read Genesis 24 – 50.

Week one, Sunday 31 January: Moses & the Exodus
Mon: Exodus 1 & 2 Tues: Exodus 3 & 4
Wed: Exodus 5 & 6 Thurs: Exodus 7 & 8
Fri: Exodus 9 & 10 Sat: Exodus 11 & 12

Week two, Sunday 7 February: Moses & the law
Mon: Exodus 13 & 14 Tues: Exodus 15 & 16
Wed: Exodus 17 & 18 Thurs: Exodus 19 & 20
Fri: Exodus 24 & 32 Sat: Exodus 33 & 34

Want to find out what happened between the giving of the law and the anointing of David? Read:

Exodus 40: the Tabernacle
Leviticus 9 & 16: the priesthood, sacrificial offerings in worship, and the day of atonement
Numbers 9 – 14, 20 & 21: Israel in the wilderness
Deuteronomy 31 – 34: Moses’ final words & death
Joshua 1 – 6: Joshua leads Israel into the promised land
Judges 1 – 8 and 13 – 16, and Judges 21:25:
- the era of the judges, between the conquest of Canaan and the era of the kings
Ruth 1 – 5: the connection between the judges and king David
1 Samuel 1 – 3: God calls Samuel); 1 Samuel 8 – 9:
- Samuel anoints Saul, the first king of Israel).
Week three, Sunday 14 February: David    (Lent begins 17 Feb.)

Week four, Sunday 21 February: Jeremiah

Week five, Sunday 28 February: Ezekiel
“Reflections on the Cross”

Lenten Lecture Series

Professor Jürgen Moltmann
Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology, University of Tübingen in Germany.

16th, 17th & 18th March at 8:00pm
The American Church in Paris
65 quai d’Orsay 75007 www.acparis.org
THE 2010 ACP LENTEN LECTURE SERIES

“The Passion of Christ – Compassion of God”
Tuesday, March 16

“The Passion of Christ – God’s Solidarity with Victims”
Wednesday, March 17

“What does Christ’s passion mean for God?”
Thursday, March 18

Series Lecturer Jürgen Moltmann.
Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology at the University of Tübingen in Germany, is one of the most widely read theologians of the second half of the twentieth century.

He was appointed Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Tübingen in 1967 and remained there until his retirement in 1994. From 1963 to 1983, Moltmann was a member of the Faith and Order Committee of the World Council of Churches. From 1983 to 1993, Moltmann was the Robert W. Woodruff Distinguished Visiting Professor of Systematic Theology at Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. He delivered the Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh in 1984–1985. Moltmann won the 2000 Louisville Grawemeyer Award in Religion for his book The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology.

Moltmann married feminist theologian Elisabeth Wendel in 1952; they have four daughters.


Location: The American Church in Paris
65 quai d'Orsay    www.acparis.org    01.40.62.05.00

Series is open to the public, no entrance fee.
All lectures will be in English, with French language transcripts available on the night.
The words ‘German Theology Professor’ may for some of us conjure up visions of a severe, bespectacled academic expounding incomprehensibly on matters of no conceivable relevance to the actual lives of ordinary people. Well, Professor Jürgen Moltmann (b. 1926) may indeed wear glasses, but there the resemblance ends. Widely hailed as one of the most important Christian thinkers since 1945, he has inspired generations of readers, students and church-goers all over the world with his creative and challenging reflections on the meaning of the call of the Gospel for our times. Not that his work is lacking in intellectual substance, but it has always remained rooted in a personal encounter with Christ as a young German soldier given a Bible in a British prison camp where he was held for three years after the end of the Second World War. Having known first-hand the horror of armed conflict as a teenager followed by the harrowing confrontation with the revelation of Nazi Germany’s responsibility for the Holocaust, he subsequently developed a theology whose interest could never be merely theoretical. Instead it consistently sought to answer the deepest and most pressing questions both of the individual and of our world. Looking back sixty years later to his experience of the Allied fire-bombing of Hamburg in July 1943, code-named ‘Operation Gomorrah’, he comments:

> ‘I am not only a theologian who is concerned with the hopes and fears of humanity on the scholarly level. I am also a survivor of ‘Sodom and Gomorrah’. To say this is not poetic licence in the religious sense. It is painful fact. Whenever I call up that catastrophe and descend into the dark pit of remembrance, I am overwhelmed again by fear and trembling. [...] But in that catastrophic night, for the first time in my life I cried out to God: ‘God, where are you?’ That was my question in the face of death. It was not the theodicy question we are all familiar with – the question, how can God allow this to happen? That always seems to me like an onlooker’s question. The person who is in the grip of a catastrophe, or is already in the jaws of a mass death, asks differently about God. And then came the other question, the one which has haunted me all my life ever since: why am I still alive and not dead like the rest?’

After returning to Germany for theological studies and spending several years as the pastor of a small Reformed church near Bremen, Moltmann came to international attention with his ground-breaking *Theology of Hope* (1964), exploring the explosive power in a contemporary context of the Biblical notion of Divine Promise. Always seeking to hold joy and suffering, Cross and Resurrection in productive tension, he followed *Theology of Hope* with arguably one of the most penetrating works of the modern period to be written on Christ’s Passion, *The Crucified God* (1972). Since then he has continued to make seminal contributions in many areas of Christian thought, conveying a dynamic sense of the

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1 *In the End – the Beginning: the Life of Hope*, translated Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), pp. 33-34.
identity and mission of God’s people (*The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (1975)), bringing out the profound implications of a re-discovery of the doctrine of the Triune God (*Trinity and the Kingdom of God* (1981)), and offering a powerful vision of God’s future not only for humanity but for the whole creation (*The Coming of God – Christian Eschatology* (1995)). He has been a major contributor to the dialogue between First and Third World Christianity and to ecumenical efforts towards the healing of historic divisions in the global Church, as well as to the conversation between theology and the natural sciences. He is married to Dr Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, herself an important theologian and co-author with her husband of three books.

We are extremely privileged to be welcoming Professor Moltmann and his wife to the American Church this March for a series of three lectures entitled ‘Reflections on the Cross’ on March 16, 17 and 18 at 8 p.m. Those who are able to attend can be assured that they will be challenged and hopefully inspired to deeper discipleship by a powerful message rooted in personal testimony. Professor Moltmann’s thinking is a reminder that profundity and directness are not incompatible. For, in his own words, ‘what cannot be said simply does not need to be said at all.’

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**Will You Join Us?**

We currently have a few openings on our Children's Worship team at 11am. In this photo are our "Red Team" leaders (4 - 5 year olds): Anne Speicher (co-coordinator of Children's Worship), Andrea (with her son, Mikey) and Tiffany. These are just three of the 15 volunteers that we depend on every Sunday to provide worship for our children (45 volunteers in total since teams rotate Sunday morning leadership!).

Anne, Andrea and Tiffany meet with the youngest group in the library. Children ages 6 - 8 worship in the first floor classrooms, and the oldest kids (9 - 11) are in their own 'studio' worship space on the garden level (G7). We are hoping to expand Children's Worship into our 1:30 Contemporary Service as well.

Can you join us to share God's love with our kids? Our next team training is on Saturday, 13 February from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. in the Thurber Room. Volunteers are welcome to begin as greeters and helpers on a team with more experienced leaders, which provides an opportunity to learn the ropes. Please contact childrensworship@acparis.org for more information.

This month in Children's Worship at 11am the storytellers will be sharing from the life of Jesus. The stories will include calling of the twelve disciples, Jesus calming the storm and Jesus raising Lazarus. During the school vacations (February 21 and February 28), children will join the All Ages Worship when some activities will be provided for them during the sermon. You are all invited to the Families Fellowship on Sunday February 28 between the 11:00 am and 1:30 pm services which will take place in the Library on the 2nd floor. Please bring a dish to share with others. The Children's Worship will resume again on the first Sunday of Lent, March 7th."

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Leaders, Life and Purpose: An Invitation to Listen to Jonathan Aitken

Some of you may have heard of ACP’s exciting new effort, Leaders, Life & Purpose. Developed by ACP members, Leaders, Life & Purpose provides an environment where business leaders can gather for an inspirational address and discussion on the deeper spiritual issues of purpose, work, and life. Here’s why we do it.

How To Talk About Faith Without Being Embarrassed

Have you ever walked by a strangers’ mirror and discovered another grey hair or something that made you stop short? Some Bible verses have done that to me. “If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels,” says Jesus in Luke 9:26. Frankly, I was embarrassed to speak of Jesus Christ and did not know how to do it.

“Start simple. When you talk about your activities, mention church. Then find activities which bring Christians and seekers together for open discussion,” I was told. Indeed, if God is truth, He should be able to handle questions!

A Tool: Leaders, Life & Purpose

Leaders, Life & Purpose speaking series is a place to grapple with life’s vital questions. Past topics include “How much is enough?” and “Values & value creation.”

The invitations present an elegant tool to broach faith with colleagues and friends. Our speakers, Christians, stand on their own right: past director of White House Staff, turn-around manager of British utilities, and consultant to the G5 governments. Our upcoming speaker is Jonathan Aitken, previously a U.K. Cabinet Member and an ex-prisoner. We meet in exquisite venues which add appeal to the invitation.

Friends and colleagues are flattered to receive a Leaders, Life & Purpose invitation.

The Thrill

Participants readily express their enthusiasm for Leaders, Life & Purpose events:

- “It’s an opportunity to share around the table in an open non-judgemental environment on questions such as, ‘What is the meaning of your life?’”
- “We gained perspective on the influence we have on our environment.”
- “… high standard speaker, a very stimulating and thought-provoking discussion.”

- “I appreciated the open atmosphere, friendliness, freedom of discussion, and the possibility of easily moving across usually segregated subjects such as business, finance, ecology, and Christian faith.”

It’s a real spiritual encouragement to have friends and colleagues thank us for the opportunity to participate in these events.

Leaders, Life & Purpose: a Benefit to ACP

Thanks to Leaders, Life & Purpose, Jonathan Aitken will be in Paris on February 11 and 12. He will be speaking at Thurber Thursday on his book, Psalms for People Under Pressure.

On Friday, February 12, Jonathan will moderate a discussion on “Failure in Success? Success in Failure?” In these precarious times, who among us has not struggled with career upheaval, search for purpose, or balance of personal and professional life?

Jonathan’s perspective—from U.K. Cabinet Minister, Member of Parliament, to ex-prisoner and his experience rebuilding a life after prison, bankruptcy, and divorce—promises to add meat to the exchange!

- Join us for either the breakfast (from 8:30 to 10 am, at the US Ambassador’s Residence) or the lunch (from 12:30 to 2 pm, in a magnificent historical setting along Haussman Blvd, with an option to linger over coffee).
- Pass on the invitation to a friend.
- Watch for God at work…maybe in your friend, surely in you.

We look forward to your support in bringing qualitative speakers to the ACP. Feel free to contact any of our team members for further insights.

Sincerely in Christ,

Denise Dampierre
Chair, Leaders, Life & Purpose

LLP Team: Scott Herr
Carolyn Bouazouni
David Holmes
Marta Llorente Gomez
Kris Richardson

LLP Alumni: Bill Johnston
Julia Kung
David Lear
Mark Primmer
15 Candles for the Movie Discussion Group

The movie discussion group celebrates its 15th anniversary in February with Joel and Ethan Coen’s take on the Book of Job, “A Serious Man” – along with Jason Reitman’s Oscar-mooted “Up in the Air,” Guy Ritchie’s “Sherlock Holmes” and Safy Nebbou’s “L’Autre Dumas.”

At the first meeting of the group in February 1995, the idea of it lasting so long would have seemed laughable: the only person who showed up to discuss Kenneth Branagh’s “Frankenstein” was the founder, Rebecca Brite. Eventually the idea took off, however, and through the years many members of the ACP congregation and even the church staff have attended. Remarkably, as best anyone can recall, the group has met every single month, even in August and December, since the beginning.

Meetings often took place in the pastor’s office in the early days, though in recent years they have generally been held in one of the basement classrooms. The format was free-flowing at first, but gradually a system evolved, and the typical meeting now unrolls as follows:

First we choose the date (always a Thursday) and films (usually three or four nowadays) for the next meeting. As distribution schedules frequently fluctuate, it’s hard to plan much further ahead than that. Next, for each film, everyone in turn gives a score between 1 and 10. Each person then has a chance to back up his or her score, and people sometimes change their rating as a result of this discussion.

The movies chosen are generally first-run features, which participants see in regular cinemas whenever it suits them. At the end of the meeting is the section we call “Picks and Pans,” where people recommend – or not – other films they’ve seen since the previous meeting. Finally, we ask for a small contribution to pay for the cheese, crackers, wine and soft drinks that accompany the discussion. The evening starts at 7:30 and usually ends before 10.

Depending on the time of month or year, and the films chosen, the number of people in attendance may be quite small – or we may have 15 or 20 people show up. Participants come from all over, and many are there not just because they like movies but because they want to improve their English, which is the main language of the discussion.

The scores sometimes range very widely. For a previous Coen film, “O Brother, Where Art Thou?”, the low was 2 and the high 9. The Pixar feature “WALL-E” similarly divided the group. Just as often, though, there’s a fair degree of unanimity, as with the recent hit “Slumdog Millionaire,” where the high again was 9 but the low 7; or “Waltz with Bashir,” where the range was from 6 to 8. And it’s not uncommon to have an outlier: the current blockbuster “Avatar” won several scores of 8 or 8.5 – plus one of just 5.

The anniversary meeting on February 18, will certainly feature discussion of the Oscar nominations, due out on February 2, and the expansion of the best picture category to 10 titles. There may also be reminiscences about some of our favorite movies of the past 15 years. Everyone is welcome, even if you haven’t seen all the chosen films – we make it a policy to avoid giving away “spoilers.”
### Sunday Atelier Concerts
February - Sundays at 5 PM

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| **February 7** | Piano recital by award-winning Japanese artist Hisako HIRATA  
Most recently she won the 1st Prize at the 2009 International Liszt Competition in Brest, France. Works by Beethoven, Chopin and Liszt                                           |
| **February 14** | Surprise your sweetheart by bringing him or her to this free (don't mention that detail) Sunday concert entitled “LOVE SONGS FROM AROUND THE WORLD: A Valentine’s Day Lyrical Celebration” with Pablo VEGUILLA (tenor) and Alberta ALEXANDRESCU (piano). Works by Bridge, Bizet, Puccini, Tosti, Serrano and Pedilla. (Please note: The ACP disclaims any responsibility for spur-of-the-moment proposals during this concert.) |
| **February 21** | Genevieve and Bernard PICAVET, piano four hands  
They have the reputation of being one of the top piano duo teams in France.  
Works by Schubert, Onslow, Rachmaninoff and Lefébure-Wély.                                                   |
| **February 28** | Juliana LASKA, cello  
A native of Albania, Julinana holds a performance diploma in cello from the Greek National Conservatory in Athens. |
## THURBER THURSDAYS

**DINNER AT 6.30**  
**TEACHING AT 7.30**

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### ON THURSDAY FEBRUARY 11:

**JONATHAN AITKEN**  
“OUT OF THE DEPTHS”

Jonathan Aitken is a British author, broadcaster, columnist, lecturer and campaigner for prison reform. He is a former Cabinet Minister, Member of Parliament, and ex-prisoner. (See related article on page 13.)

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### JANUARY 14: WORK & FAITH SMALL GROUP STUDY, THURSDAYS 7:30 – 9:30 PM

A six week, small group workshop has begun, following the regular Thurber Thursday dinner. It explores ways to better integrate professional life and personal values. Please join us to know more about this opportunity to reflect upon and react to the Christian challenges posed by the corporate world. Registration will close on the following Thursday. For more information contact Pascal.

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### ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

**THURSDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY** meets weekly at 7:30pm in the associate pastor’s office (basement level). Please come and join us. For further information please contact Daniel.

**SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY** takes place from 10:00 to 10:50 in G-4 (basement level). All are welcome to attend. For further information please contact Kristie.

**WOAC WOMEN’S BIBLE STUDIES**: We’ll be continuing on with our Spiritual Transformation Study with the topic being "Grace." For more information contact Amy Loewen.

**FRIDAY NIGHT NOOMA STUDIES**: The name NOOMA comes from a phonetic spelling of the Greek word *pneuma* meaning 'wind,' 'spirit,' or 'breath.' In the form of short films, Rob Bell's NOOMAs use contemporary experience to teach about the fullness of life through Jesus Christ. Contact MaryClaire.

**“JUST WALK ACROSS THE ROOM”, ADULT SMALL GROUP FROM 12:15 – 1:15**: Join us for a 4-week small group experience that will refresh your appreciation for the Holy Spirit's mysterious ways, rekindle your passion for people and revive your belief that the single greatest gift you can give to your friends and family members is an introduction to the God who created them, loves them and has a purpose for their every day. During these four sessions, we'll learn together how to approach our sin-scarred world with a relevant, appropriate message of truth - a message that is conveyed on the heels of a simple walk across a room. Light lunch provided. Please contact MaryClaire King.
### OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

**LAY CAREGIVER TEAM TRAINING.** Strives to be the hands and feet of Christ. We are a trained team of church members who make visits to hospitals, and call or send cards to those who are grieving or who are going through a difficult period. We also rejoice with those who have just had a baby or have experienced other joyful events. At this time, we are exploring new ways of caring for others and will be adding to our numbers. Please contact Kerry for more details or if you would like to join the team.

**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 convenes Mondays at 5 pm in the Associate Pastor’s office. Newcomers of all skill levels, ages and gender are welcome. Bring your own knitting or participate in a group project.

**PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY**: Whenever you capture a great digital photo of an ACP activity, group of people or event, be sure to send a copy to music@acparis.org for our ACP photo bank. Please include all available information such as the date it was taken, the names of the people and the event. Help us build a photographic memory for our publications and our archives.

**A FITNESS FUNDRAISER** is being planned to benefit the Haiti earthquake victims on the morning of February 6th in the Theatre at ACP. For more information contact Alison at awbenney@wanadoo.fr.

**DOCENT TOUR**: Docent tours will be given after the 11h service on the February 14, 21 and 28 of February. If you're interested in becoming a docent, email Alison at awbenney@wanadoo.fr.

**THE MOVIE DISCUSSION GROUP** celebrates its 15th anniversary in February with Joel and Ethan Coen’s take on the Book of Job, “A Serious Man” – along with Jason Reitman’s Oscar-mooted “Up in the Air,” Guy Ritchie’s “Sherlock Holmes” and Safy Nebbou’s “L’Autre Dumas.” See any or all of the films at your convenience, then join the group for discussion on Thursday, February 18th, at 7:30pm in the basement. (See related article on page 14.)

**NEEDED: BLOOM BOOK ADVERTISING & SPONSORSHIP HELP**: No particular previous experience is needed but you should have some free time on & off from February through mid-October (excluding August). You should have easy access to a computer with e-mail and be familiar with the following programs: Word, Excel and Acrobat Reader (all available on your computer). Having attended a previous Bloom event and/or read the Bloom Book is a plus, and an eye for detail is very helpful. Most of the work is done by e-mail and in English. For more information, contact Christy de Looper at: woac_president@yahoo.com.

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED** in a Mission Outreach volunteer opportunity in Paris, this may be the right match for you! SOS Help, which is an English language telephone help line for people in crisis, is holding three alternative Spring recruitment meetings at the ACP: on Wednesday Feb.3rd, Thursday Feb. 11th and Tuesday Feb. 16th at 7PM. You need no prior experience or training, just a compassionate heart, a willingness to learn and a little free time. You will find more details in the February issue of What's On at ACP and you can visit the SOS website at SOSHelpline.org. You can also contact Elizabeth Rand at ehrand@gmail.com or by telephone at 06.07.33.91.22.

**THE AMERICAN CHURCH IN PARIS** is looking for a **Development Consultant** for a 6-month period starting February 1st. If you are interested please send a CV and fee expectations to Pierre Lisbonis, chair of the HR committee.
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