

NEUCHÂTEL CHURCH MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2011

Letter from Dianne



Are you ready for Christmas?

Have you all got all your cards and presents organised? Or are you rushing around making plans and trying to squeeze even more events into your diary? I have already been told that one Christmas event will have to be in January as everywhere is booked up. In the shops the big sell has started a long time ago. December is exciting, busy and often very expensive. And for children December 1st marks the time to eat their first chocolate from their advent calendar. Countdown time to the biggest present day of the year.



This season of the four weeks is also a time for preparation for Christmas in the churches as well. It is called Advent. Yet as a complete antithesis to the materialism of our secular world, it is marked by a reflective tone on some of the greatest issues in life: death, judgement, and life after death. Although both church and society are celebrating Christmas, there is often very little correlation. I had great difficulty, for example, finding an Advent Calendar in Neuchatel which

was actually about Christ's birth.

This is the time of preparation for the celebration of a time when God Himself came to live on earth as a human being, coming as a helpless baby, born to a single mother with no place to call home. As we light the Advent candles each week in church we remember with gratitude those who have faithfully held on to God's promises, the Jewish patriarchs, the prophets, John the Baptist, and Mary, who accepted God's call to be the mother of Jesus.

It also is a time for reflecting on the end of all time, when Christians believe Christ will return in glory.

We are looking forward to the carol singing in Neuchatel Centre, to our carol service, with the Nativity Play and to the Christingle service on December 24th. We too are busy and excited. But are we too in danger of a Christmas when we too say, as our nativity play puts it, 'Away with the manger.' It is a great time to tell others about the Christian faith in carols, symbols and drama. But perhaps somewhere in all the busyness we can find some daily space to think about the time when God broke into history. As we move towards celebrating Christ's mass, let us ask ourselves:

Are we ready for Christ's coming?

Are we really ready for Christmas?

Your Friend and Pastor,

Dianne.

Church Notices

Prayer Meeting

Tuesday 6 December 9.30 at L'Agardouse, Gare 12
(next to La Rochette Church) The next one will be 17th January.

Tuesday fellowship

No more till January 10th 9.30 at the clergy flat

Thursday Fellowship

8th December Joint fellowship meeting 8pm at Roy and Mieke's:
A Christmas Miscellany. Bring nibbles and Christmas items to share.

Advance notices for your diary

<u>Saturday 17th Dec</u>	9 -12 am. Rehearsal for Children's play at Carol service and decorating the church. Sandwiches provided
<u>Sunday 18th Dec</u>	5 pm. Carol service with creche for under 5s.
<u>Saturday 24th Dec</u>	5pm. Christingle service
<u>Sunday 15th Jan</u>	5pm. Songs of Praise Service. Choose your favourite hymn
<u>Sat / Sun March 10th – 11th</u>	Church weekend March 10-11 approx chf 110. Read on for more information.

NEW THIS YEAR !!

After the Carol Service, during refreshments, I'm organising a

BRING AND BUY STALL

in aid of Church Funds.

If you've read the "Membership" page of our website, you'll be aware that in order to maintain our resident minister, we had to double our financial target this year. So every little helps.

So far, we're assured of articles such as home-made jam, chutneys, cakes, fudge, fresh parsnips etc.

Look forward to seeing you there!!

Rosemarie

Junior Church

About half the team got together one Saturday evening to celebrate all the wonderful work that Rosemarie Zimmerman and Jenny Veenendaal have done over the years as Junior Church leaders, and the following day Rosemarie gathered 9 children round her piano in Chezard St Martin.

Rosemarie began by showing them some of her clocks and the children practised beating time with the pendulum, and then they started work on Away in a manger which will be part of the Carol service. (Sshh - don't tell anyone.) With Rosemarie's help and encouragement the children

were soon singing a moving first verse, and she was so pleased with them that she invited Benoît in to listen to them. We then moved on to practicing a rhythm to accompany the chorus of one of our hymns in church.

All the children had a lovely morning, which included a snack, helping Joker to show off his tricks in the garden, and playing hide and seek with Joker and his bear.

Thank you Rosemarie, Benoît and Joker.

Help Needed!!



Having moved into bigger premises we now need even more help with decoration for the carol service. Therefore, if you have a poinsettia (or two) around the house, we would really appreciate borrowing it for the Carol Service. Ideally we would like you to drop it off on Saturday 17th between 10am and 12noon when we will be there setting everything up. You can then take it back home with you after the carol service on the 18th. To ensure you get your own plant back, please label it discreetly.

In addition we cannot shift furniture around in the Church until the afternoon of Sunday the 18th, therefore we would ask that if you are able to lend a hand, to please arrive early (up to an hour earlier if possible) to ensure we are ready to welcome the masses.

Louise's Feast

We stepped up the candle-lit steps, were welcomed by Jordan and ushered up into a big comfortable living room,



with a huge crackling log fire, and the scene was set for a wonderful evening.



Once Nick had made sure everyone had a drink, and Dianne had said grace, Maddy wearing a sari and bindi seated us round Louise's massive table, loaded down with mountains of popadoms arranged between a vast assortment of chutneys,



salads and yogurts, and we were invited to tuck in. We did! For a long time, most of the conversation went along the lines of “oh, this one is just delicious” and “my! have you tried this one” or “I think I might just have another little spoonful of that delicious pear chutney”. Well, once we were all sure we’d tried them all, and some of them several times, Nick called for our attention.

He was presiding over a lordly array of pots, and waving a spoon, he indicated the different beef and chicken curries in front of him, each with a label, each graded according to the heat of the curry. Those who like it hot, made a bee-line for the pots labeled with three chilies, while the more timorous souls headed for creamy chicken Korma.



Louise meanwhile hovered behind an even more massive array of dhals, rice, potatoes and platters of chapatis. We all headed back for the table, and different dining companions, with loaded platters. For a long time, conversation was pretty much limited to murmurs, of “gosh, this really is good, isn’t it” and “wow, Louise really can cook, can’t she”, but gradually the noise level rose as replete diners let their tongues run more freely.



People, chatting to their companions, often just seen for 10 minutes after church over a hurried cup of tea, discovered just how magical a good dinner among friends can be. People wandered over to the buffets just to try a morsel of something different, then plumped themselves down to enjoy a conversation with another friend, and the magic continued.

For dessert, Nick announced fruit salad with cream from Gruyère, mince pies and pumpkin pie. An amazing array of absolutely luscious seasonal desserts, and we loved them!

We’d all like to say a huge thank you to the entire Spanner family for their food and hospitality and for the money they have raised for church funds, but above all, for an evening of true fellowship.





Neuchâtel Church Weekend
10th - 11th March 2012

Come Down O Love Divine

We shall be meeting at the beautiful and recently restored retreat house of the Communauté des diaconesses de Saint-Loup at Pompaples. [Website www.saint-loup.ch]

This is set in peaceful grounds with plenty of areas to walk and seek space to think.

During the weekend we shall look at the Person of the Holy Spirit, in the Old and New Testaments, His Gifts and His Interaction with us and to seek what He is saying to us as individuals and as Neuchâtel Church.

Our prayer is for a renewal of our vision for the work of the Kingdom in Neuchâtel.

There will be plenty of times to reflect and worship and seek a deepening of our personal walk with the Lord.

We shall join the Community for their service on Sunday morning and also have our own time of joining around the Lord's Table before we leave in the late afternoon.



It takes about an hour to drive [60 kms] from Neuchâtel to Pompaples and we aim to meet on the Saturday afternoon in time to settle in and start our first teaching session at 4pm.

We have calculated the cost of the whole weekend including food and snacks as ~110Fr/person.

Contact Bernard Moreau zelbern@gmail.com to book.

Roy Farrar and Dianne Cox.