

NEUCHÂTEL CHURCH MAGAZINE

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2012

Letter from Dianne

..... and a Happy New Year!



January was named after the Roman god Janus, who traditionally had two heads, one looking forward and one looking backwards. It is an appropriate origin of the month when we look backwards at the old year and look forwards to the new one.

One of the first things I do when I have a new diary is to go through the old one, noting anniversaries and birthdays, to put them in the new one along with appointments and events planned for the future. It gives me a very quick skim through the previous year as well as a rapid review of the coming year. I am often surprised to realise that someone will reach a particular age, or that significant events may be coming up quite soon.

But looking ahead can sometimes feel a little uncomfortable. What is past is at least familiar. What is ahead is still unknown. At such times - and they are not of course only about facing a new year - we need to remember the things of which we can be sure.

As 1939 drew to a close and England was at war, King George VI addressed his nation with these words of courage and encouragement:

"I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown' and he replied, 'Go out into the darkness and put

your hand in the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way ..'”(The Gate of the Year, Minnie Louise Haskins, 1908)

King George closed with these words of his own,

"And may that Almighty hand guide and uphold us all"

A hymn I like reminds us:

'I do not know what lies ahead, the way I cannot see, but one stands near to be my guide, he'll show the way to me.

I know who holds the future and He'll guide me with His hand

With God, things don't just happen, everything by Him is planned

So as I face tomorrow, with it's problems large and small,

I'll trust the God of miracles, give to Him my all'

We do not know what lies ahead, but we can take our journey with an experience
and loving guide.

As the Gospel hymn puts it:

'Put your hand in the hand of the man who stilled the water.

Put your hand in the hand of the man who calmed the sea.

Take a look at yourself and you can look at others differently

By putting your hand in the hand of the man from a Galilee.'

As we look forward to the year ahead let us rejoice in knowing that 'we have an anchor that keeps the soul, steadfast and sure while the billows roll'

'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever' (Hebrews 13:8)

Happy New Year!

Your Friend and Pastor,

Dianne.

Editor's Note: Please excuse the tardiness of the appearance of the first magazine of 2012. The magazine is still monthly, this is just an anomaly...

Church Notices

Here are some of the most important dates coming up in the first half of the year, so mark them down in your Diary to ensure you don't miss out.

February

Tuesday 7th 9.30am: Fellowship, clergy flat
Thursday 9th 8pm: Fellowship, Veenendaals
Tuesday 14th 9.30am: Prayer meeting
Tuesday 20th 9.30am: Fellowship meeting, clergy flat (Lent 1 film)
Thursday 23rd 8pm: Fellowship meeting, Ann Morel's (Lent 1 film)
Tuesday 28th 9.30am: Prayer meeting

March

Tuesday 6th 9.30am: Fellowship meeting, clergy flat (Lent 2 film)
Thursday 8th 8pm: Fellowship meeting, clergy flat (Lent film 2)
Saturday 10th to Sunday 11th: Church weekend
Tuesday 13th 9.30am: Prayer meeting
Tuesday 20th 9.30am, Fellowship meeting, clergy flat (Lent 3 film)
Thursday 22nd 8pm: Fellowship meeting, clergy flat (Lent 3 film)
Tuesday 27th 9.30am: Prayer meeting

April

Thursday 5th 8pm: Joint fellowship, Maundy Thursday Communion at the Veenendaals
Good Friday 6th: Walk of Witness, time to be decided
Easter Sunday 8th: Early service by the Lake followed by breakfast.

Committee Meeting Summary

At the last committee meeting held on 11 January Dianne presented a list of suggested aims for 2012, this will be discussed in more detail at the next meeting and will then be presented to the congregation.

The committee plans to distribute flyers with details of our regular services in La Coudre church to various English-speaking companies and other appropriate places.

We hope to have several services over Easter finishing with an early morning service by the lake on Easter Sunday, if anyone has any suggestions for the venue (with a backup in case of rain) please don't hesitate to tell a committee member.

We would also like to arrange an informal meeting with the congregation of La Coudre church over a light supper and are actively working on finding a suitable date.

Still on the subject of food, the Spanners have offered to host another meal in favour of church funds. This will be held on 17 March at their home in Vallamand-Dessus (transport can be arranged) and is an occasion not to be missed!

The Treasurer presented the accounts to date and the budget for 2012. The theme for the 5th February service is "Preparation for Pledge Sunday" and details of our commitments and their impact on our financial situation will be explained.

Epiphany

A merry band braved the snow on Friday 6th January and gathered at the church in La Coudre to dismantle the Christmas decorations. Memories of the Carol Service and the Christingle service kept us warm as we scurried round "is this yours or mine? ... whose is this? ... "Oops! Sorry I couldn't catch it in time!". Anyway, the job was soon done, and Rosemarie, having lopped off all the branches loaded the remains of the tree into her car and we all waved goodbye.

In the evening a few people braved the snow and gathered at Dianne's to read the gospel together, take communion and reflect on what the story of the wise men and their gifts means to us, and more generally to the Christian community. As always, there was time to think and pray, but also much merriment and two sorts of "Kings' Cake".

Come Down O Love Divine

Neuchâtel Church Weekend

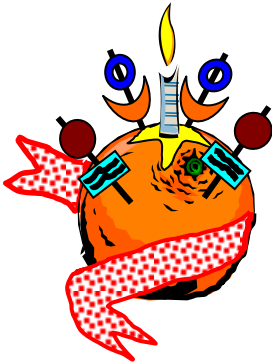
10th - 11th March 2012

Learn more about the Person of the Holy Spirit, in the Old and New Testaments, His Gifts and His Interaction with us, deepen our walk with Him and seek what He is saying to us as individuals and as Neuchâtel Church.

For more information about this weekend, or to book, please contact Bernard

Moreau: zelbern@gmail.com

Christingle Service



*Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory;
blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy;
send forth Your word, Lord, and let there be light!*

Some 65+ people gathered on Christmas Eve to celebrate the wonder of what God has done for us in sending Jesus his Son. This beautiful service, which has its origins in Moravia reminded us of the promise in Isaiah that God would send light to those living under the shadow of death.



The orange reminds of the world in which we live, the cocktail sticks of the harvest we in the Western world have each year. The red ribbon around the orange is a symbol of what it cost our Lord to buy us back on the Cross-, whilst the candle symbolises the light and presence of Jesus with us - *Emmanuel*.



We all live under the sovereign debt of the prince of this world, but in Jesus, the debt was paid and we can live as children of the Heavenly King.

Let us all resolve to share this great and wonderful news with all those we come into contact with in this coming year, that nations and people will realise that it is only in Jesus can there be complete freedom and meaning.

*Lord Jesus Christ, Light of the World,
shine into the darkness of lives lived in conflict.
We pray for children who are refugees, torn by the tensions
of war and living in new cultures.
Help us to understand their sadness so that they may find
acceptance.*



Thank you to Linda for the superb pictures.

Téléthon 2011

On Saturday 3rd December about 30 people, most of them wearing Santa hats following Linda's suggestion, assembled in Place Pury to begin a two hour session of carol singing in the pedestrian centre of Neuchâtel. It was a chilly day with a blustery wind and menacing sky, but there was much laughter as we tried to get ourselves sorted out, installing banners and music stands where there was enough shelter from the wind to keep them upright.



Collecting boxes were distributed, music books opened, Blaise raised his tuning fork, gave us a note, "We wish you a merry Christmas" rang forth, and the very first "Neuchâtel Church Carol Singing for the Téléthon" was launched.

Dianne had first suggested Carol singing in the town centre to bear witness to the real meaning of Christmas back in September on the way back from Taizé, and the idea, once in motion, took off. Abbie talked to lots of people in NIC, Linda bumped into Alison who told everyone at Johnson & Johnson, and a lot of her friends in Yverdon, Ann got the list of Carols and other Christmas songs sorted out and quite by accident or perhaps by divine intervention, Blaise heard about us, and offered to "stand in front and wave his arms about".

The keen choristers weren't able to rehearse enough, the first rehearsal was a shambles with everyone singing different words, and sometimes even tunes, and Blaise was seen to look worried at times. However, as most of us have been singing carols for more years than we care to remember, and with the children keen to join in, singing if they could read, and jingling bells and tambourines if they couldn't, we managed to make a sweet and joyful sound most of the time.

Bernard's photographs pretty much tell the story, but I just need to add that on Monday morning we forwarded an amazing 647 CHF to the Swiss Téléthon.

I understand that planning start in summer 2012.

for the second edition will

