

ENGAGING NATIONS

PRAYER | WORSHIP | STORIES | VIDEOS | LIVE BAND | FOOD

Date Saturday 5th May
Time 6pm till 8.30pm
Venue Christ Church
Address High Street, Tunbridge Wells TN1 1UT
Cost Free

An interactive evening of International Food, Videos, Stories, Prayer and Worship from the Nations to the Nations. Featuring the WEC band "Resonance" bringing multicultural worship to a new level and WEC's "Operation World" bringing a definitive guide to what is happening across the globe and how you can make a difference to it.

For more info contact Janet on
01892 522323 | janet@cctw.org.uk

wec-uk.org

For many years, St Paul's has supported Jeremy and Kate Ellis in their work with WEC. Formerly based in Pakistan, they are now in the UK. Learn more about the work of WEC at 'Engaging Nations', where Jeremy will be leading the evening of worship and prayer for the nations. It should be informative and inspiring, giving an insight into the work of WEC. Please

contact worldchurch@stpaulsdorking.org.uk to confirm if you're interested in coming so we can sort out lift sharing.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Saturday 5th May – Engaging Nations (see above)

Sunday 27th May – Tearfund's Inspired Individual Christophe Mbonyingabo is visiting St Paul's (see next page). He will be at both services plus a **shared lunch**

Sunday 1st July deadline for interest in 2019 trips

Saturday 6th October Quiz n' Chips –watch for details!

Be inspired by Christophe's message of reconciliation on Sunday 27 May at 9.00am and 10.30am and during a shared lunch



Christophe, whose life has been scarred by ethnic violence, can teach us all about reconciliation and peace. A Rwandan Tutsi, his life has been marked by the violence between the Hutu and Tutsi peoples, including the horrific Rwandan genocide of 1994, in which around 800,000 Tutsis were massacred. Following the genocide, around 2 million Hutus fled from Rwanda into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), fearing reprisals. A bloody conflict flared in DRC and Christophe joined the militia there. He lost his father and two brothers to the ongoing violence. Battle weary and suffering, he left the army in 1999.



Meeting Jesus. One of his neighbours invited Christophe to church. It was a turning point. However, soon Christophe began to notice divisions in the churches, between Hutus and Tutsis, and other racial groups, which troubled him. Then God started speaking to him through the Bible: "*I*

felt God say to me "That's why I gave my son. I did it to reconcile people, to break this wall of animosity and division." God had given the church a mission to be ambassadors of Him for reconciliation and I could see most of God's church weren't responding to his call." Christophe founded **Christian Action for Reconciliation and Social Assistance (CARSA)** in 2002. CARSA brings together offenders and survivors from the genocide and offers trauma healing and reconciliation. One very practical programme is **Cow for Peace**: CARSA provides a cow, shared by an offender and a survivor. "*They take care*

of the cow together, and this becomes a bridge that allows them to meet on a regular basis and continue their journey of forgiveness." When the cow has a calf, they share the milk, and when the calf has grown, the survivor gives the calf to the offender as a sign of true forgiveness.

The journey can be extremely tough for everyone involved, but to see former enemies working together has a powerful effect on the community, as they see what is possible.



News from Alex and Jane Cacouris in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Alex is associate chaplain at Christ Church, an English-speaking church in Rio. In March, 45 adults and 10

children from the congregation enjoyed a church weekend away at a retreat house. Alex recounts how productive it was, having space to hear God through some fantastic teaching and encounter Him individually and together.

The congregation is growing steadily and the church is busy running Alpha, Youth Alpha, Family Fundays and church socials, and is developing the team, by encouraging, mentoring and training people with their God-given gifts to lead in children's work, evangelism, hospitality, social action etc. The church is currently being supported by a volunteer kids and families intern, who is blessing them with her energy and positivity.

Complex negotiations are currently underway with other users of the site to exchange property for additional space in the church cloisters, which will hopefully materialise into a prayer room, improved kids and family rooms and space to offer to local Christian charities. Prayers please.

An annual review of the new strategy implemented at Christ Church is approaching. They hope to add another charity partner and set up a Practical Action group responsible for sorting out weekly donations for



Street Church (a church service for the homeless), and potentially to start a food bank.

Jane is involved in the *Mary e Marta* project, co-ordinating a team of volunteers teaching English to children from the Santa Marta favela every week.

The situation in the favela remains volatile, with armed bandidos (bandits) stationed next to the Mary e Marta building. Shooting is happening almost daily and, following a recent incident, the children are now walking to Christ Church for their lessons, given the danger to volunteers. Jane hopes the project can be consolidated as an NGO to enable it to access government and international funding to help secure its longevity.

Jane and Alex are working with Tearfund Brazil and several pastors in Santa Maria to organise the first UMOJA workshop. UMOJA is a “community transformation tool” using workshops and other means to prompt the community to prioritise key issues and come up with solutions.

Your prayers are warmly received and if you would like to give to Alex and Jane, you can do so online at churchmissionsociety.org/cacouris

Three members of the church family, Karen and Rob Wheatley and Rowena Birch, recently visited Lille, where St Paul's supports the Centre de la Réconciliation, which offers support for under age refugees.



Maths at 'Ecole sans Frontiers'

These young people, aged 13-17, who have fled from their homelands and arrive unaccompanied, are helped to gain the right to remain in France and are also assisted in many practical ways. Their immediate needs for shelter, safety and food are met, but they are also helped to integrate into their new society (fostering, education, help with administration and spiritual support).

The vast majority of these young people

arrive in Lille without official identity papers, fleeing from Congo, Cameroon and Guinea. Many will have witnessed death, experienced imprisonment, abuse, slavery and a precarious boat trip towards the Italian coast.

Whilst the French system handles those who arrive with identity documents, and has a system for processing adult arrivals, these paperless young people fall through the net. Their prospects are precarious, as they find themselves living rough, perhaps in a squat, perhaps psychologically damaged or physically unwell, and vulnerable to all sorts of unwholesome people and influences.

The Centre de la Réconciliation, which is the social outreach arm of the 'La Réconciliation' Baptist Church in Lille, has been working for about 5 years to help these vulnerable young people to transition from traumatised individuals to active citizens. Before these interventions, many of them were camping out in one of the local parks.

Since our previous visit last year, things have moved forward. An agreement has recently been forged with the local network of Catholic schools to take these young people into the appropriate level of education, on a free places basis. For those unable to access a place at a Catholic school, Pastor Christian

de la Roque has this year set up 'Ecole sans Frontiers', a basic schooling operation run by volunteer teachers and overseen by a 'civic servant' contracted to the Centre de la Réconciliation.

Housing arrangements for boys have changed: there were too many sleeping in the church building every night and behaviour was not always appropriate. Boys are now lodged preferentially with host families – currently around 80 boys are being hosted like this. Another 30 boys can sleep for two weeks on a rota basis in church buildings in Lille.

The Centre de la Réconciliation now 'employs' two "civic servants": young people aged 19-25, who are giving their skills to the community in a gap year, earning a very small wage, whilst also gaining experience. They liaise with housing and education authorities.

A sister association ABEJ (which the La Réconciliation Baptist Church founded in the 70s) runs an

established drop-in centre for 18-25 year olds (Point de Répère). Here, young people can get medical check-ups, be referred for psychiatry, or be given benefits advice etc, plus come in for a shower and a cup of tea. This support aids with the transition necessary when leaving a host family.

Christian and his team are encouraged by our ongoing regular support (last year amounting to £4,000), which helps with employing the two civic servants and also educational costs. He was most welcoming and ensured we were well informed and had plenty of opportunities to meet those involved and see where things were happening.



Drop-in for 18 – 25 year olds

Recently, one of the refugees being cared for in Lille was interviewed for the French Evangelical Alliance "I come from Guinea. I did not choose to come to France, my family couldn't have afforded it. I had problems with my

father, he was violent and I could not stay.

I came to France with a man I trusted who was very, very kind at first when he was in Guinea. He brought me to Conakry, the capital of Guinea, and afterwards I trusted him. He was very nice but when I arrived in France he abused me.

He disappeared, leaving me in Lille. I was 16 but couldn't prove it because he did not leave my papers. Before arriving here, I did not know the word "minor". In the village where I grew up, there are girls who are really abused and it happens at home. They get married at 13 or 14.



I went to the shelter and they explained about protection of minors. But without papers I could not prove my age, so I ended up at the church at Porte d'Arras, the church of Pastor Christian de La Roque. I was in the church for a month and a half, then the pastor took me to a flatshare in Old Lille. They helped me with a letter of recommendation so I now have my passport and was recognized as a minor a week before my majority.

I had never been to school at home. When I arrived in France, I learned to read and write, and even to speak French. Some say I am smart and strong, but it's not me. It is the miracle God has brought about in my life. It's not because I'm strong. But it is the Lord who

is always working miracles in my life.

All the French people I met are kind, super nice to me, and especially the pastor and the flat mates I live with, who help me a lot to give me support. They are there every day when I need them. When I came to France, I had a problem in my head. The pastor helped me to take care of this. He did not treat me with drugs, but he treated me with prayers.

My plan is to stay in France, because my mother was everything to me but she is no longer alive. I have no news from my sisters and brothers and I do not want to have my father's news any more. So, my project is to make my life here, to get my diploma, to work and to settle here. So really, really, I thank the French and especially Pastor Christian who does a lot for us, not for me alone, for isolated girls who come to France. He managed to get us to school even though we were not recognized as minors, we thank him very much."



As part of the church objective of being "increasingly courageous for Christ", a reminder about the proposed venues for 2019 trips.

Following the details given last month of the proposed August 2019 trip to **New Hope Orphanage in Kenya**, we were planning to bring you more in this issue about trips to **India** and **Kisumu, Kenya**. Unfortunately, we are still awaiting

Tearfund to give us examples of the type of activities that will be undertaken in India and we are working on a suggested programme for Kisumu. If you have already expressed an interest, we will forward details as they come to hand. Otherwise, watch for May's newsletter. **Do register with us if you are even thinking about joining any of the trips and keep praying about whether this is where you are being led in your journey to be *Increasingly courageous for Christ*.**

See <https://www.stpaulsdorking.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=203869> or contact worldchurch@stpaulsdorking.org.uk.

Deadline for registering an interest in these three trips is 1st July.

For information about any of the above, please contact
St Paul's World Church Team: Karen Wheatley, Charlotte Chaplin, Tim Eley, Sally Hulbert, Jonathan Papworth, Elizabeth Shaw and Sue Swain-Fossey worldchurch@stpaulsdorking.org.uk