

Christ Church
Clermont-Ferrand, France

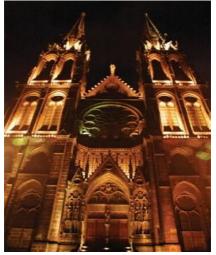
Parish Profile 2020

Almighty God, giver of every good gift: Look graciously on your Church, and so guide the minds of those who shall choose a rector for this parish, that we may receive a faithful pastor, who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP p. 818)

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View of the Auvergne's ancient volcanoes known as "puys" in French



Cathedral Notre Dame de l'Assomption in downtown Clermont-Ferrand



Easter Egg Hunt at Church



Christmas Carol Service 2019



Christmas Carol service 2019

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http://www.christchurchclermont.org
thttps://www.facebook.com/englishspeakingchurch/
The Episcopal Church, Europe - http://www.tec-europe.org/

Christmas decorations at Christ Church



Snow day at the Church!



EYE Youth Planning Team, Washington, D.C.



Lunch Bunch children performing Christmas Pageant

Christ Church Clermont-Ferrand

Introduction

Christ Church Clermont-Ferrand is the newest parish in the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, located in the Auvergne region of Central France. Our membership is made up of expatriated Michelin employees, university students, and Anglophones who have settled permanently in France. Our families come from a wide variety of Christian traditions. The congregation is a continuously changing one with the departures and arrivals of expatriate families from all over the world.

This parish church began as the home church of a small group of English-speaking residents who felt the need to come together and worship in their native language. This year marks our 23rd anniversary. We have grown from a small dedicated home group to an enthusiastic parish. The dedication and commitment of so many expat families over the course of those 23 years has resulted in a strong united community of Christians who continue to support one another, worship together, and ensure that the church remains strong for future incoming families. The bonds developed in this community are solid ones and it is common to welcome back former parishioners who make a point of attending a service during their business trips to France.

Our varied cultural backgrounds and denominations are our strength and our challenge. Christ Church will continue to focus on our commonalities rather than our differences as we worship together in Christ. We, along with the other 22 congregations in the Convocation throughout Europe, enjoy the unwavering support of our Bishop, the Rt. Reverend Mark Edington, who is based in Paris.

From July 2012 until February 2019, Christ Church was guided by our former rector, Rev. Rob Warren and his wife Caireen. Their departure for their new mission in Rome has created an opportunity for a priest-in-charge to lead our congregation into the future to fulfill our mission as God's faithful people.

The chapel is owned by the Église Réformée who kindly allow us to use the late 19th century building for our regular services and events. In addition to the chapel, the parish also rents an apartment in downtown Clermont-Ferrand (42 Avenue Albert et Élisabeth) which provides office space and a venue for various meetings such as the school children's *Lunch Bunch*, vestry meetings, and music practices.

Our congregation is an active one with various ministries led by devoted members who willingly assume leadership roles in the life of our parish. This leadership is one of our strengths, witnessed by those in and outside of our church family. Despite being a small parish, our church life is vibrant for both adults and children. Our fellowship together is a key element in keeping our community connected. Regular social events throughout the calendar year provide opportunities to have fun and share experiences.





Children's message



Christ Church's stained-glass windows



Thanksgiving dinner

feel God's calling to strengthen the signs of growth we have recently seen. We see scope for expanding the number of resident members of the congregation, our services to groups such as college students residing in the area, and to welcome those who may not be aware of our presence. We believe that our community will benefit from a priest-in-charge who either speaks or is willing to learn French, and who is welcoming and inclusive. We value a good preacher and teacher who is able to lead a congregation which is partly transient, and to minister to a wide variety of people of faith and perspectives.

Our Mission

Christ Church Clermont-Ferrand is an English-speaking congregation that seeks to reach out to our community to spread the good news of Christ Jesus throughout Auvergne. Our fellowship professes faith in Christ through worship, fellowship, education, stewardship and outreach. We welcome people of all backgrounds, nationalities and denominations at any stage of their journey of faith. Christ Church is a parish of the Convocation of the Episcopal Churches in Europe.

Communion service by our Lay Leader, Alison



Pentecost Sunday



Shrove Tuesday

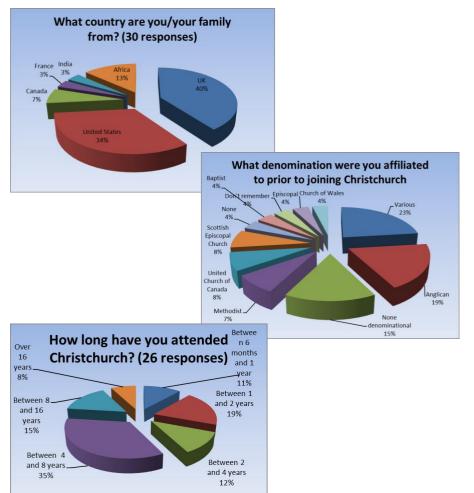


Welcome Back Picnic

Who We Are

The congregation of Christ Church Clermont-Ferrand represents an eclectic mix of national origins, denominational backgrounds, and family situations. Within this community you will find:

- A number of expatriates from the United States, United Kingdom, and African countries.
- Many of our members are expatriating in France in order to work for Michelin.
- A number of our members have made permanent homes in the Auvergne region for a variety of reasons.
- Although we are an Episcopal church, we have members from a variety of denominations.



As we have prepared this profile, in the process of seeking a priest-in-charge, we conducted a survey of the congregation and developed a snapshot of our current situation- bearing in mind, of course, that the make-up of the community evolves regularly as expat families leave to return home and new families join who are arriving in France.

In fact, one of the most remarkable characteristics of this congregation is that, in spite of the variety of backgrounds and preferences of its members, we lay aside our differences in favor of having a welcoming community of Christian believers who seek the opportunity to be together for worship and fellowship.

Where We Are



Beautiful Auvergne sunsets with Puy de Dome





Downtown Clermont-Ferrand



Tramway which runs throughout downtown Clermont and nearby villages



View of Puy Le Pariou (minutes from downtown Clermont)



Clermont's rugby team: ASM, 2010 & 2017 Champions of France

Nestled on the eastern side of the Massif Central volcanic mountain range, Clermont-Ferrand is approximately four hours from Paris and four hours from the Mediterranean. Our closest metropolitan city is Lyon which is two hours away. The city of Clermont-Ferrand, which is a merging of the two ancient cities Clermont and Montferrand is 10 kilometers from the Puy de Dôme, a local and national landmark.

The Auvergne region is renowned throughout Europe for its outdoor opportunities such as hiking, biking, and skiing. The area is full of open spaces dotted with gorgeous lakes, forests, and dormant volcanoes also known as puys. Puy de Dôme, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is one of the most visited sites in the Auvergne region and only a 15-20 minute drive from the city center. Clermont has warm, sunny summers and cool winters with very little snow. More than 500 churches can be found in the region including the historic Romanesque basilica Notre Dame de Port, also a UNESCO World Heritage site. It is part of the Routes of Santiago De Compostela in France. The largest and most dramatic looking church in the area is the Gothic cathedral Notre Dame de l'Assomption. It dominates the city skyline with its black Volvic volcanic stone.

UNIVERSITIES

Clermont-Ferrand is home to a collection of universities including the Groupe École Supérieure de Commerce, the Université Clermont Auvergne, École Supérieure d'Art, a medical and dental school and the École Nationale Supérieur d'Architecture de Clermont-Ferrand.

Between the universities there are approximately 42,000 students living in Clermont. Several of the universities have study abroad exchange programs with schools in the U.S., Japan, and China.

CULTURE & SPORTS

The mayor of Clermont-Ferrand, Olivier Bianchi, is committed to making Clermont-Ferrand the arts and culture capital of France. Because of this, there are many events such as professional dancers, bands, even trapeze artists throughout the town's squares, particularly during the warmer months. Clermont has three major museums: Musée Bargoin, for Gallo-Roman architecture and a diverse textile exhibition; Musée Henri-LeCoq, the natural history museum for the Massif Central; and the Musée d'Art Roger-Quilliot, containing a collection of paintings, sculptures, decorative art, and photography. Clermont also has a vibrant theater and music community. The Polydome at Place de Premier Mai and the Grand Hall at the Zenith are regularly visited by larger concerts and musicals. The city welcomes a larger global audience to the International Short Film Festival each February and celebrates the annual Fête de la Musique on June 21st.

Clermont-Ferrand is home of the ASM Rugby team and currently competes in Top 14, the top level of the French league system. The team won the French National Championship in the 2009-10 and 2016-17 seasons. The Auvergne region is also world renowned for its biking, both road and mountain. Clermont-Ferrand will be one of the stages of the Tour de France on July 11th, 2020.

TRANSPORTATION

The main railway station has connections to Paris and several regional destinations: Lyon, Moulins via Vichy, Le Puy-en-Velay, Aurillac, Nîmes, Issoire, Montluçon and Thiers. The motorway A71 connects Clermont-Ferrand with Orléans and Bourges, the A75 with Montpellier and the A89 with Bordeaux, Lyon and Saint-Étienne (A72). The airport offers direct flights to Lyon, Paris, Lisbon, and other European destinations. Clermont-Ferrand has a tramway thereby linking the city's north and south neighborhoods.

Our History

Christ Church, France



Children's message



Back to school blessing by Revd. Canon Mary Haddad



Communion service by Archdeacon Walter Baer

Starting from a small group of expat families who first met in front of a fireplace 23 years ago, Christ Church Clermont-Ferrand has grown from a small mission church into a fully-fledged parish of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe.

Desiring a place to continue to worship in English in their new French homeland, English and American expatriates in the Auvergne met in May 1996 with the support of the then Bishop-in-Charge, Jeffery Rowthorn.

These families approached the Église Réformée in Clermont Ferrand about the use of their stone chapel, built in the late 19th century, for English-speaking visitors to the spas and thermal springs found in the town of Royat, 5km from the centre of Clermont-Ferrand. The Église Réformée was using the building for morning services during the summer and offered to let the English-speaking congregation use the chapel on Sunday evenings throughout the year.

From late 1996 until 2002, Christ Church was served by the Reverend Joe Britton, Paris-based Canon Missioner of the Convocation. Twice a month, Father Joe would take the train to lead a 5pm service, then return to Paris. During this time, the church grew into a connected and caring community with parish lunches, Thanksgiving dinners, and other social and fellowship activities. More importantly, the mainly U. S. expat community with a British family of Anglican tradition, were an eclectic mix of national and denominational backgrounds. Nevertheless, they learned to lay aside individual perspectives in favor of a communal worship experience; a significant trait which remains a hallmark of Christ Church today.

With Father Joe's appointment to Dean of Berkeley Divinity School at Yale in January 2003, Christ Church decided to welcome its first resident rector, Reverend Karl Bell. For the first time the church had to make arrangements for a home and an office for a priest as well as establishing bank accounts and other administrative systems. With Father Karl's arrival, church services were held weekly, and the congregation continued to grow. Upon Father Karl's retirement, Reverend Tony Clavier served the Christ Church community for a year. All services were now held at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings except for July and August when they reverted to 5:30 p.m. This summer switch of schedule continues to this day.

After an international search under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Reverend Dr. Luk DeVolder and his wife Tiffany accepted the call of shepherding Christ Church in July 2005. Through their experience as an expat and multinational family - he's Belgian, she's American, and both were new to France - they led the Christ Church congregation to grow -in all meanings of the word.

Through a series of "leaps of faith" the congregation grew and thrived, and in September 2008 the Convocation granted our request to become a parish. We continue to be the newest parish in the convocation.

In 2011, having guided our young church from mission to parish, Father Luk accepted a call to return to the U.S. in Connecticut. Christ Church welcomed Father Ted and Diane Holt out of retirement to experience a winter and spring in the beautiful Auvergne. On July 1st, 2012, Christ Church was delighted to welcome Father Rob Warren, a Canadian, and his Scottish wife Caireen and son Stewart. In 2013, Christ Church moved its rented office and activity space to a more convenient and cost-effective location which the parish still rents today.



Thanksgiving Dinner



Children's message



Lessons and Carol service



Sunday Worship service



During Father Rob's seven years at Christ Church, he saw a slow change in the mix of our congregation which now includes not just expats and British families, but a few French members, as well as international students and other young adults from around the world. In more recent years, we have also welcomed several refugee families. Our congregation is now a wealth of diversity in age, nationality, religious tradition, and denomination.

Unfortunately, due to various circumstances, including a reduction in the number of expats, Christ Church has faced financial challenges. Nevertheless, the congregation and vestry have shown strength, perseverance, and faith in the Holy Spirit that the right path would be shown to us. Our parish has received unwavering support from the Bishop and the Convocation in allowing Christ Church to consider its next step for the leadership of our parish.

Since the departure of Father Rob to his new calling in the city of Rome in February 2019, the leaders of Christ Church have dedicated their time and efforts to ensure services and ministries continue. Although without a full time or regular priest for eleven months as at 31st January 2020, the congregation has grown, and all members of the parish have worked tirelessly to ensure Christ Church is an open and welcoming community with weekly services. This includes the introduction of a new monthly *ChristKidz* service. Since October 2019, we have welcomed two bridge priests, Reverend Canon Mary Haddad and Father Thomas Myers who visit us from Paris on an overnight stay. They each come once or twice a month while the other services are taken by our Lay Reader Alison Wale, and other church members who willingly give their time to lead a service.

Despite our small size we have contributed to the work of the Convocation with members recently on the Council of Advice, Commission on the Ministry of the Baptized (COMB), the Bishop Search Committee, and the Youth Commission. Christ Church has also hosted Youth Across Europe, Juniors Across Europe, and the Convention. In our 23rd year, Christ Church is a small but growing family, working together with the love of Christ to offer English speaking worship in the Auvergne to a diverse congregation and community. Our church has been truly blessed.

Our Ministries



Lighting of the Advent Candles



Spring picnic



Fall picnic



ChristKidz service – Children acting out the Gospel

At Christ Church, our ministries are a tangible sign that we are one community united in His name. Our parish members quickly find themselves not just involved, but in leadership roles. For many former members, the deep sense of community brought about by their personal involvement in Christ Church ministries is one of their most powerful memories of their time in France. We are followers of Christ, called to be fully engaged and we strive for our ministries to reflect this calling.

Ministries of Welcome and Integration

The newcomer and integration ministries at Christ Church help identify new members' interests and provide information, assistance, and introduction to ministry opportunities.

We communicate through our website and Facebook to share congregational life and ministry with the wider community in Clermont-Ferrand.

Fellowship

Meeting and dining are crucial parts of community building. Fellowship activities contribute substantially to the warmth and cohesion of our church community. Through our fellowship activities, we create a welcoming environment where members and visitors may find friendship or a listening ear.

Key activities:

- Fall/Welcome Back Picnic
- Thanksgiving Dinner
- Winter Supper
- Spring/Summer Picnic
- Coffee and Conversation after worship service

Prayer, Study and Christian Education

A Women's Bible study, in English, is organized in the community. Women at Christ Church participate in this weekly morning gathering of Christian women. Other congregational, educational, and study opportunities have been available in the past with the guidance of a rector.

Children's Christian Education

K-5 - Grade 5 *Lunch Bunch* - Children gather on Fridays at lunchtime at the church office. The Word of God is presented to children in a way that keeps them interested, focused, and having fun. After eating their lunch, children are engaged by a Bible story followed by a variety of crafts, songs, and games. *Lunch Bunch* has been a successful program which draws children from within and outside the congregation. We have chosen to increase our attention to, and include, children in our worship. A children's message is presented by a congregation member during worship on most Sundays. This message is tied to the lectionary theme presented at *Lunch Bunch* and/or the sermon. Recently, we have implemented a program entitled *ChristKidz* which will be a once a month Sunday which focuses on children's involvement in the worship service.

When youth were present in greater numbers in the congregation, a youth group was organized. Youth participate in Juniors Across Europe or Youth Across Europe, depending on their age, which are weekend retreats organized by the Convocation. We have a youth delegate who currently serves on the planning team for Episcopal Youth Event (EYE), a worldwide gathering held every three years.



Garden lunch to Welcome Bishop Mark



Church service



Children's message by Revd. Canon Mary Haddad



Collecting food for Les Restaurants du Coeur

Congregational Care

Through the guidance of our rector, children and adults prepare for the sacraments of Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation according to the needs of the parish each year. Pastoral care, prayer, and support vary according to the needs of the parish.

Outreach

Outreach involves both local and global missions. Our outreach ministry offers parishioners the opportunity to respond personally to Christ's command to care for those in need through hands-on service and financial resources.

In the past, we have been involved in

- Making dresses for girls in Africa
- Assembling Christmas boxes for local refugee children
- Donating socks for refugees
- Providing essential clothing for unaccompanied minor-aged refugees
- Contributing to a local food bank
- Donating to Phone Credit for Refugees
- Volunteering at the Restos du Coeur (a nationwide French association which provides food and clothing for the poor)

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Musicians hard at work



Easter 2019



JAE 2019



Little dresses for Africa mission

Worship & Music

Nearly all of the regular things we do happen on a Sunday at the 10:30 a.m. service (5:30 p.m. during July and August) and on a Friday with the school children's *Lunch Bunch*. Like many Episcopal churches in Europe, we are diverse. From our church survey: before moving to France, roughly a third of our members were affiliated with a variety of Episcopal or Anglican traditions, with the remainder from non-conformist backgrounds. Our services are based on the Book of Common Prayer and the Episcopal Lectionary with a leaning toward being informal but keeping a sense of reverence and dignity. Our most popular service of the year is our Nine Lessons and Carols. After the performance, we have refreshments and fellowship which is a chance for us to socialize with people we don't normally see on Sundays.

We work at having a range of music that reflects the backgrounds we come from, some like the traditional hymns, some contemporary worship songs, most like a mix of both. Happily, this means if we stick with a mix of traditional and contemporary, we have a chance of encouraging worship with hearts and minds. We are fortunate to have three regular musicians to lead the music: two accomplished keyboard players and one guitarist. Usually, the music is played on the keyboard and guitar although any of the three can lead the music on their own. The musicians have an informal system of taking it in turns to choose the music week by week, working with whoever is leading the service which helps to keep a variety of hymns. Most of our music is from Mission Praise books 1, 2 and 3. We also have traditional hymnals and resort to photocopied sheets for some of the later songs.

Several of our members are quite far flung, some more than an hour's drive away and others lead busy lives. Due to this, regular midweek meetings, which used to work well, have faded but that's not to say they could not be resurrected. We pull together well when we meet, having around a dozen volunteers taking part in the services in leading the music, Prayers of the People, giving a children's talk, taking care of the announcements and the collection. We have recently introduced a monthly family service *ChristKidz* to appeal to young families whose children come to *Lunch Bunch*, but who we seldom see on a Sunday.

Coffee and cookies are available after the service where people take the chance to mingle and catch up.

Young Adults Workshop 2019, Wiesbaden



Harvest



Christ Church teen presenting EYE at Convocation



Christmas Carol service 2019

Our Finances & Stewardship

Each year we are encouraged to assess our time, talents, and treasure in order to review our pledges and consider what we can do for God's kingdom. We have faithful people who give generously; however, we are not a rich church. Out of our present forty adult members only about ten are in full-time employment, most of whom are on an assignment for a few years working for Michelin's Headquarters in Clermont-Ferrand from the U.S. Other members are retired, semi-retired, unable to work due to visas, or living on minimal means. Depending on which Sunday you visit us, you may be introduced to a refugee or a high-level business executive. The generosity of both extremes is humbling. Around 90% of our income is from members pledges and, with a transient membership, these factors make long term budgeting difficult.

In 2019, Convocation generously gave us a grant to cover our financial commitments until our previous rector left us in February. For the remaining ten months, we have covered our bills plus the costs of accommodation and hospitality of visiting priests who come once or twice a month. Our expected income to the end of 2019 is approximately 53,000€, which includes 17,000€ Convocation grant and a one-off gift. We have managed through the year to accumulate a surplus, some of which has been used to subsidize:

- Taking young people to Juniors Across Europe (JAE).
- A lay reader attending Bishop Mark's induction.
- Delegates' Convention costs.
- Two members attending the COMB Vocational Discernment Weekend.
- The burial costs of a premature baby.
- Two members attending the Young Adult Ministry and Outreach Workshop in Wiesbaden.

We are grateful for those who give out of their riches because it has enabled vestry to consider these extraordinary events and say "yes" more often than "no".

Our budget for 2020 is presently being developed and discussed in vestry. In round figures, based on pledges and regular offertory giving: -

- Our income is estimated to be $44,000 \in$.
- Our regular outgoings are budgeted to be 22,000€, and we will be able to fund the unexpected out of our reserves.
- We are committing 20,000€ to cover all the costs and expenses for our priest-in-charge.

We hope our finances are not our whole story, nor discourage someone from their calling to serve our community.

Vestry & Administration



Sunday Worship service



During Annual Convention, in African attire



JAE 2018 in Clermont Ferrand



Sunday worship service

Christ Church Clermont, in Clermont-Ferrand, France is a parish of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, and as a constituent part of The Episcopal Church accedes to the Constitution and Canons of the Convocation and the Episcopal Church.

The vestry of our church is made up of the priest-in-charge and at least eight members, two of whom are designated as church wardens. The priest-in-charge serves as Chairman ex-officio of the vestry. The priest-in-charge annually appoints a senior warden from among the elected vestry members. In turn, the vestry annually elects from its members a junior warden. Wardens are communicants of Christ Church, Clermont Ferrand, France. The vestry is also comprised of a secretary, a treasurer, a membership director, and three members at large.

Day-to-day management, care and control of the business and temporal affairs of the church are the primary roles of the vestry.

Our chapel doors open to all



Congregation involved in church maintenance



Our chapel

Property & Facilities

The congregation of Christ Church does not currently own any real estate and is debt free. A small chapel built in 1886 in Royat, a short bus ride up the hill from the center of Clermont-Ferrand, has been our church home since 1997.

The chapel is owned by the Église Réformée, and a long-standing informal agreement allows the Christ Church congregation to use if for worship services on Sunday mornings from September to June, and on Sunday evenings during July and August. We also use the chapel for occasional meetings, presentations, and once an African dance workshop led by one of our parishioners. It is a one room chapel with a very small vestry/robing room/store cupboard and a pleasant but small enclosed garden with many shrubs and flowers.

For many years, the congregation has voluntarily contributed 2000 euros per year to help in the maintenance costs of the facility. Our members have readily donated time and funds for improvements and upkeep of the chapel, including repair of the stained glass, installation of carpeting, installation of a radiant heating system, maintenance of the guttering, and the toilet as well as the care of the garden.

In addition to the chapel, we also currently rent a small ground floor apartment near the train station in Clermont-Ferrand. Among other things, this was used as the office space for our previous rector. It is also used for our vestry meetings and our very successful *Lunch Bunch*. No 42, as it is known, is a very short walk from the local school where many of the expat children attend. It is therefore ideal to hold our equivalent of Sunday School here during Friday lunch times. The facility is also used for Bible study, workshops, vestry meetings, and music rehearsals.

Bishop Mark Edington in Christ Church on 8th Dec 2019



Christmas Carol service 2019



Christmas Pageant 2019

The Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe

Christ Church is part of the worldwide Anglican Communion and a member parish of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe. It comes under the direct jurisdiction of our Presiding Bishop, The Most Rev. Michael Curry. Our Convocation is led by an elected bishop, The Right Rev. Mark D.W. Edington, based at the Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity in Paris, France.

The Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe is a collection of churches, mission congregations, and specialized ministries, spread geographically over seven countries in continental Europe. The convocation includes nine established parishes along with fifteen missions and specialized ministries in Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, and (most recently) the Republic of Georgia. Our bishop, who took office in April of 2019, often speaks of the Convocation as the "research and development arm of the Episcopal Church," because our congregations are learning how to be the church under conditions of radical secularization, deepening multiethnic and multilingual populations, and the inescapability of intentionally interfaith engagement—all qualities that will come to characterize the American home of the Episcopal church in the coming decades.

In addition, the Convocation serves as a key resource for Christ Church. It provides support and guidance, as well as opportunities to engage on a broader level with Episcopalians in Europe.

Christ Church hosted the Convocation's Convention in 2012 and has been in the leadership of various youth and child programs for members across the convocation. Members of the parish have participated actively in the life of the convocation, to include service on the Convocation's Council of Advice, the Commission on the Ministry of Baptized, and on the organizing group for Episcopal Youth Event 2020.

Our Priest-in-Charge

After prayerful reflection and significant input from the members of our congregation via survey, we pray that the Lord may help us to find a priest-in-charge with the following characteristics:

- A welcoming-heart that continues to cultivate a warm and accepting community to all who attend our church.
- An open mind that is focused on including and listening to our crosscultural and interdenominational families.
- A voice that preaches the liturgy to a wide variety of people including children.
- A willingness to include a variety of music and prayer to our services.
- A willingness to learn French because many of our members speak French at work and school, but English at home.
- Part-Time Priest-in-Charge that perhaps has supplemental income



Rev. Rob Warren and Caireen's farewell



Service by Bishop Mark Edington



Chapel doors at Christmas



JAE on Puy-de-Dome



Bishop Mark Edington's first visit to Christ Church, June 2019