

# L'Église sur la montagne

ÉTÉ 2020

## VIRTUAL CHURCH CONTINUED, AND NOT THE END...

As you can read in these pages, during lockdown we set up daily meetings around a Bible reading (second half of the Gospel of Luke, and the book of Acts), as well as Sunday worship, by video-conference. Now that we can resume a more normal life, it's time for a review ...

When the Conseil Presbytéral decided to propose daily meetings on a biblical text, to maintain the presence of the church and to accompany people in isolation, we had no idea who would be interested, and even less idea as to whether the meetings would last. I myself was reluctant at first, fearing a loss of meaning with a disembodied group. However, as the days went by with the readings and the worship, the opposite happened. Links were established between parishioners physically distant from one another; from Vallorcine, Megève, Cluses, Scotland and elsewhere. One of the main difficulties in our parish is the bringing together of people who are scattered throughout the area and whose presence can involve a lot of travelling.

The shape of worship also gradually evolved, involving different people in creating the liturgy in order to bring energy to the content, and we celebrated the Sacraments, each at home, and yet in communion, the Spirit seeming to cross our borders and barriers. With committed parishioners, we thus shared 46 meetings during this difficult time, with an average

attendance of 11 people.

When the lockdown ended, participants expressed a desire to continue. We gave up daily meetings, in order to take advantage of our renewed freedom, and we changed to 2 meetings per week. We also decided to use the video tools during ordinary services of worship to allow people far away to benefit from them.

The first attempt at Pentecost was appreciated, but we had technical problems the second time ... so a bit more work is required to retain this system which seems to satisfy most parishioners.

I have to say that, in spite of my initial reluctance, these technical tools seem to open up great opportunities for coming together in our scattered community, while we maintain worship in different places so as not to lose the joy of being in each other's physical presence.

**Romain Gavache, pastor**

## LISTENING

During the summer we will continue to benefit from this opportunity provided by video conference to get together once a week, but there are other things that we can learn from this way of communication.

The first thing we notice during a video conference is the fact that only one person can talk at a time. It is not possible to hear more than one voice, and you have to listen carefully in order to understand what someone is saying. It is a training in listening, until the end of the speech and without interrupting.

Another characteristic that we notice is the time lag of the sound. We not only have to wait until the end of a speech before speaking, but for a few moments afterwards, so that the last words reach the ears of all who are listening. We get used to silence, and we become more at ease with it perhaps than we do in worship and

meetings where we are physically present. As well as attentive listening, and the appreciation of silence, we learn patience. During the 'lectio divina', we wait for the reflections of each person, we take time so that thoughts can formulate themselves into words. At the end, we say together the Lord's Prayer, and we have to say it slowly, we have to wait until each person has finished the sentence before beginning the next one, we have to wait before speaking.

It seems to me that this training in listening, the understanding of the practical aspects of listening, and the recognition of the effort necessary to understand properly what someone is trying to say, is a training that should affect all our relationships.

**Abigaïl Crofts,  
présidente du conseil presbytéral**

**'RAPPORT MORAL' FOR THE A.G.  
"A CHURCH FOR SOWING"**

We would have liked to have given you a report from the 'Assemblée Générale' in this newsletter; presenting the newly elected councillors and reporting on our reflections on the building project, validated by the members of the church. However, the exceptional circumstances of this year having postponed our AG until 5<sup>th</sup> July, we will report on it later. Here is the 'Rapport Moral' that we will present at the meeting, as a summary of the fundamental ideas of the Council on our mission.

## **The Parable of the Sower (Marc 4 : 1-9)**

**4** Again he began to teach beside the lake. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the lake and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the lake on the land. <sup>2</sup> He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: <sup>3</sup> 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup> And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. <sup>5</sup> Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup> And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away. <sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. <sup>8</sup> Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.' <sup>9</sup> And he said, 'Let anyone with ears to hear listen!' Our first reaction when we hear these words from the Gospel according to Mark is to ask the question: 'Who am I? Who am I in the story?'

Am I 'the path,' where the birds come and eat the seed?

Am I 'the rocky ground,' where the seed is scorched due to the lack of roots?

Am I 'amongst the thorns' where the seed grows, but is choked by the thorns?

Or am I 'the good ground', where the seeds bring forth grain?

But the message of this parable rests not so much on the question of who we are, but on what Jesus is doing.

'A sower went out to sow'.

The sower, Jesus, went out to sow the seeds of love; the love of God.

A love that knows no exceptions, a love that has no conditions, a love that is there for each one of us, as we are.

God does not love us in order that we love him back; he loves us in order that we share this love with others. Love that is kept only

for ourselves is tragic and lost.

Jesus did not keep the love of his Father just for himself; he sowed the seeds of that love everywhere.

He didn't look at the ground before he sowed to know what the harvest may be. He didn't calculate the possible harvest of the different ground before sowing. He sowed the seed everywhere.

This idea of sowing without thinking of the harvest seems strange to us today. Our society does not encourage us to give without knowing what we are going to receive in return. It's crazy! Why spend time, energy, emotion, without knowing whether there will be a harvest or not; without knowing if that which we sow will bear fruit?

But Jesus sowed, everywhere.

How do we sow the love of God as a parish of the Protestant Church, the Church of which Jesus is Lord ? It is clear that we don't sow amongst big crowds, except for once or twice during the year. We sow amongst small groups.

There are regular services of worship in three places.

There are the Haltes Spirituelles in Chamonix, on the Sundays when there is no service, which attract people who never go to normal worship.

There is the meal following the service once a month in Cluses, where we take time to get to know one another.

There are four bible study groups, in Chamonix, Megève, Cluses, and Bonneville, which bring together Protestants and Catholics.

There are the 'lectio divina', from now on by video-conference ; the opportunity to bring together our scattered community.

There are the meals shared with the clients and volunteers of the Épicerie Sociale at Christmas and at Easter.

There is the vegetable patch behind the Temple, linked to the Épicerie Sociale;

another opportunity to get to know other people.

There is 'Mums and Tots', once a week, where parents and carers are welcomed at the presbytery in Chamonix to meet each other, to talk to each other, to support each other.

There is the French conversation group, which enables English speaking people who have little opportunity to speak French to practice.

There is the welcoming of the Muslims who cannot find a hall in which to meet.

There is the welcoming of choirs and musicians in the Temple in Chamonix, where they can rehearse and put on concerts. The Sunday of 21<sup>st</sup> June, the Fête de Musique, Romain prepared a musical service of worship which was attended by young and old alike.

Sometimes, we have an idea of the fruits of the seeds that we sow. We know that something said or done has affected someone. We know that visitors are often impressed by one activity or another, and that they are going to try to do something similar in their home country.

More often however, we don't know if the seeds of love which we have sown will bear fruit or not; but like Jesus, we continue to pray, we continue to work, and we continue to sow.

***'Do not judge the day by what you have received, but by what you have sown.'***

**Abigaïl Crofts**

Raoul Allier, born on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1862 in Vauvert, near Nîmes, a professor of philosophy of the Protestant Theological Institute of Paris, is a remarkable personality but too little known, although he devoted his whole life to others: serving the weak with a social Christianity alongside Tommy Fallot, in the service of justice during the Dreyfus case; in the service of his co-religious and of the Protestant Federation of France in its beginnings; in the service of people who underwent colonisation through his interest in the study of religious missions; in the service of the war effort in 1914 - during which conflict he would lose his son Roger—; but also, in the service of national cohesion through his sincere commitment to secularism.

A worthy heir to Jean-Paul Rabaut Saint-Etienne, a Protestant and Gardois like him, and one of the authors of article 10 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen of 1789 which proclaims that *"No one shall be concerned for having his own opinions, even religious, provided that their expression does not disturb public order established by law"*; a worthy heir to François-Antoine de Boissy d'Anglas, also a Protestant and author of the first separation between the Churches and the State in 1795; and also a worthy heir to the Protestant librist Alexandre Vinet, Raoul Allier was obviously in favour of what is now called 'the principle of secularism'.

At the time, there were already many debates on the definition of this notion and on the role public authority should play when faced with cults.

In the spring of 1902, Pierre Waldeck-Rousseau, at the head of the "Bloc des Gauches", won the legislative elections. He had to resign for health reasons, and Émile Combes succeeded him, and we then see a

very clear hardening of the policy of his predecessor concerning cults and congregations. Using its anticlericalism, the requests for authority are now refused 'en bloc' by the government of Emile Combes; 2500 schools founded before the 1901 law by authorized congregations are closed and the religious dispersed. In 1904, Émile Combes forbade them to teach, and also to preach and to trade. This action in particular, led to the breakdown of diplomatic relations with the Vatican in the same year. Consequently, the debt restructuring regime lapses and the idea of separation had to come to fruition.

Clemenceau, a tireless defender of secularism and an opponent of this project, declared: *"Because I am the enemy of the King, the Emperor and the Pope, I am the enemy of the omnipotent state, sovereign, master of humanity"*.

More concretely, it was also a project that prevented any structuring of cults at the national level, and therefore any financial equality, putting the small remote communities of religious minorities in great difficulty. We are thinking here, for example, of certain Protestant communities of the Cévennes spread over several departments: the Gard, the Lozère, Hérault and Ardèche. Thus, this project, which can be described as "neo-Gallican", worried as much the free thinkers, who denounced the links maintained between the State and the Churches, as the believers who defended true freedom of worship and refused any public guardianship.

Faced with the obstinacy of the Government of the time, Raoul Allier launched an important press campaign for this project to be abandoned: between late 1904 and late 1905, 46 press articles, almost one a week, were published, the majority in the newspaper *Le Siècle*.

This set is included in two issues of *Cahiers*

*de la Quinzaine* by Charles Péguy.

Raoul Allier did so with the support of two other Protestants, Francis de Pressensé and Louis Méjean (the future writer of the report on the bill presented by Aristide Briand and the director of worship), and he won this fight for a liberal version of secularism. Of course he was not alone, but his personal analyses and, more generally, the influence of Protestantism, were certainly vital. Jules Ferry declared in 1879, following the transfer of the Protestant theological faculty from Strasbourg to Paris: "*Protestantism has been, in modern history, the first form of freedom.*"

At the end of the deliberation of the deputies, in 1905, Raoul Allier expressed his agreement with the essence of the future law, writing, "*The more I study the Law of Separation, the more I am struck by the spirit of liberalism that dictated it. Not everything is perfect, as I am the first to recognise; improvements will have to be introduced, it's true. But as a whole it represents a great effort of justice and loyalty.*"

The law was finally adopted on 9<sup>th</sup> December; a law described as "appeasement" by Raoul Combès, but also as "freedom" by Aristide Briand and Jean Jaurès themselves.

Extract from the speech by Nicolas Cadène, director of the observatory of secularism, during the inauguration of the library of the Protestant Institute of Theology in Paris..

## CENTENARY OF THE ARGENTIÈRE CHAPEL: PLANNED CELEBRATIONS

In spite of the continuing fluctuation of constraints, the Conseil Presbytéral wish to maintain the three days of meetings planned for this jubilee. The commemoration is based on the person of Professor Raoul ALLIER, who instigated the construction of the chapel.

There is still uncertainty as to places and times, but here is the outline:

Friday, 7<sup>th</sup> August in the evening:

Presentation by Irène Frachon, *lanceuse d'alerte sur le médiateur*, and great-granddaughter of R. ALLIER.

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> August 8 in the afternoon:

Biblical walk and forest experience with Frédérique ARTHUIS, forest therapist. In the evening, Musical Interludes.

Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> August : Worship celebrated in the morning at the chapel in Argentière by Laurent SCLUMBERGER, former President of the National Council of the EPUdF, followed by a picnic in the woods.

## WORSHIP, SPIRITUAL PAUSES, LECTIO DIVINA, BIBLICAL WALKS...

Summer is historically the liveliest part of the year for our community, especially in the *resorts*.

The history of our various places of worship reminds us that it is around summer tourism that our parish developed: with the Temple in Chamonix welcoming English tourists and mountaineers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and then the chapels in Argentière, Saint-Gervais, Plateau d'Assy, Megève, and Flaine, built thanks to French Protestant families wanting to be able to live their faith during their holidays.

If participation in worship today is less than it was a century ago, we are convinced that this spiritual welcome remains essential for those on holiday, and we seek to maintain meetings in different places and in various



ways.

Worship remains the central opportunity for the proclamation of the Gospel and the support of the community. Every Sunday during the summer we organize 2 services: one in the morning in Argentière, and one in the evening alternately in Saint-Gervais and Megève.

Since January we have also introduced a light form of worship in Chamonix to allow a celebration every Sunday: Spiritual Pauses are liturgical meetings which relieve the work of the preachers. Although we only had a short period for the experiment before lockdown, we discovered that this form of worship attracts people who do not come to traditional services. This undoubtedly meets a need for prayer, meditation, and praise, without necessarily the need for preaching.

The lectio divina, introduced over the past 3 years, are times of listening to the Bible, with a sharing of thoughts on the texts. The discovery of digital tools allowing people to participate remotely, without having to travel a long way for a short meeting, has enabled these meetings to become an essential community link for many parishioners.

Biblical walks allow you to take advantage of the exceptional setting of the Chamonix valley, and to listen to the Word while savouring the beauty of creation. We will offer thematic outings as we did last summer (a forest experience, the discovery of vegetable plots ...).

Through these proposed activities, we hope to work with our community based on the Bible, linked to our commitments to our society, by offering different ways of experiencing and approaching the Word.

*Romain Gavache*

## FINANCIAL APPEAL

A big thank you to the hundred people who, year after year, help ensure the financial needs of our parish. Year after year, we overcome the fragility of our scattered community, the discontinuous presence in the valley of half of us, the fact of our language differences ... Like many others, we have maintained a link by internet for the lockdown period; like everyone else, we don't know what the next few weeks will bring.

Financially, our annual budget is around 70,000 €. The beginning of the year is always difficult, the holiday periods bring an improvement, and more often than not, matters sort themselves out in the month of December. For the moment however, it must be said that our receipts have fallen by thirty percent compared to last year, which does not allow us to meet our current expenses. After a shortened winter season and the cancellation of several ceremonies, we also expect a drop in attendance in the summer. We need your loyal support.

*Olivier Martin*

## PRIÈRE

**I am, you are...**

I am from clay  
You are from breath

I am the ash  
You are the embers

I am the crumbs  
You are the bread

I am the tears  
You are the source

I am the dead end  
You are the way

I am the absence  
You are the awakening

I am beaten by waves  
You are at peace ...

Come roll away the stone  
of my prisons

May your life finally  
cross from you to me!

Francine Carillo  
prière proposée pour le 21 avril  
dans le *Livre de prières*,  
éditions Olivétan

## INFORMATIONS PRATIQUES

### **Présidente du CP :**

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### **Pasteur :**

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74 400 Chamonix  
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### **Lieux de culte :**

**Chamonix :** 24, passage du temple, 74400 Chamonix

**Cluses :** 37 Avenue du Dr Jacques Arnaud, 74300 Cluses.

**Megève :** chapelle Sainte-Anne (à côté de l'église)

**Argentière :** 72 chemin des Rachasses 74400 Argentière

**Saint-Gervais :** 510 chemin "La Vignette" 74170 St. Gervais - Les Bains

### **Rencontres par vidéo-conférence :**

nous contacter pour avoir les codes d'accès.

### **Site internet :**

<https://www.protestantschamonix.org>

### **Coordonnées bancaires pour virements :**

IBAN : FR 76 1680 7000 7183 1034 0119 867

BIC : CCBPFRPPGRE

### **Congés du pasteur :**

le mercredi,  
et du 19 juillet au 2 août

Si vous souhaitez recevoir le pasteur  
pour une visite, n'hésitez pas à appeler  
ou envoyer un mail  
pour donner vos disponibilités.



## SUMMER CALENDAR

This agenda is not final; the progressive opening of cultural occasions and notably concerts may enable us to host more events. We will announce them as and when, and indicate them on the web-site.

### JUILLET

<b>Dimanche 5</b>	10h30	Chamonix
	Assemblée Générale	
Mardi 7	19h	Zoom et
Chamonix	Lectio Divina	
<b>Dimanche 12</b>	10h30	Argentière
	Culte	
	18h	Chamonix
	Halte Spirituelle fr/ang	
	18h	Megève
	Culte	
Mardi 14	19h	Zoom et
Chamonix	Lectio Divina	
<b>Dimanche 19</b>	10h30	Argentière
	Culte	
	18h	Chamonix
	Halte Spirituelle fr/ang	
	18h	St Gervais
	Culte	
Mardi 21	19h	Zoom et
Chamonix	Lectio Divina	
<b>Dimanche 26</b>	10h30	Argentière
	Culte	
	18h	Chamonix
	Halte Spirituelle fr/ang	
	18h	Megève
	Culte	
Mardi 28	19h	Zoom et
Chamonix	Lectio Divina	

### AOÛT

<b>Dimanche 2</b>	10h30	Argentière
	Culte	
	18h	Chamonix
	Halte Spirituelle fr/ang	
	18h	St Gervais
	Culte	
Mardi 4	10h	rando
bible		
	19h	Zoom et
Chamonix	Lectio Divina	
Vendredi 7	soirée	conférence
Juana Franchon		