

CHRIST CHURCH LILLE

14 rue Lydéric, Lille, France



Christ Church Lille is an ICS Patronage Mission Partner



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Overview

"Everybody is welcome at Christ Church Lille" is our motto and **openness** is the key theme that runs behind everything we do.

We invite everyone to start by visiting our website <https://christchurchlille.fr>.

You will find photos and a short video of the church, which was consecrated in 1870.

The full [history of the church](#) is worth a read, as it parallels the story of the British community and its links with France.

For more videos, please visit our YouTube channel, which took off during the pandemic years.

<https://www.youtube.com/@christchurchlille/playlists>. Our annual video Christmas card is a popular feature there.



This document will explain more about how we strive to be **a place of worship for everyone**.

Church Life

Diversity

* Our congregation is gloriously diverse. We don't always agree, of course, but we usually manage to work together well.

* Although the church started out with a ministry to UK nationals, that's not been the case for many years now, and we are delighted to welcome people who want to worship in English, from all continents, and from many very different Christian backgrounds. There are even a few of our congregation who don't in fact speak much English, but who feel welcome here.



* International students at the university add to this wonderful mix and the age range on Sundays is wide. We regularly welcome visitors and new arrivals too.

* We aim to offer a range of worship styles and content, and can be considered to be a **broad church**.



Welcome and hospitality

- * Our door is wide open and some people think that this is what we do best.
- * Coffee after or between services, church lunches and fellowship are regular features.
- * We used to run a pavement café once a year (until local regulations changed), and we are constantly looking for new opportunities to share tea and cake.
- * As some people travel from a distance to attend church, it's not always easy to create additional events, so we try and make the most

of Sunday services to meet up. Food is definitely important!

Opening to the wider community

- * We reach out through our **Outreach Association** (La Solidarité Anglicane de Lille) and try to tithe 10% of our total income to charities at home and abroad. For example, we have been supporting the Beth Abi orphanage in India for many years. Until recently, we supported multiple charities. A serious financial situation temporarily suspended some of our ability to give, but is now under control. You can see more details of our outreach programme on this page <https://christchurchlille.fr/what-we-do/outreach/>.



- * Many of our **past members** keep in touch via our weekly newsletter. Some ladies continued to attend Ladies' Bible Study when it was held online even though they are now living in a different time-zone.



- * **Major festivals** (Christmas, Easter, Remembrance ...) see the church packed out with English speakers of all origins; Christ Church Lille is known and appreciated by the entire British community (as well as many French speakers) in the area even if they only come once or twice a year.

- * We have had excellent relations with **ecumenical** friends, most especially the local protestant church (Eglise Protestante Unie de France). We share our Harvest offerings with them, which they use for their food bank and kitchen. There is a CEC group organised by the Roman Catholic church, as well as a small group of ministers from

different Christian churches who regularly come together over coffee.

- * **Media** relations: the local radio, the catholic radio station, the regional TV (France3) all get in touch when they want an "English" point of view. They know they will get a warm welcome and some interesting perspectives.

* We maintain good relations with the local **military**: there is a UK and a US detachment based at the Citadelle, part of the NATO Rapid Response Force. Some of them attend church regularly, but even if they are not regulars, we welcome their participation in our Remembrance Day service in church and the wreath-laying. Occasionally, the chaplain is asked to take part in a service at one of the many world war graves cemeteries in the region.

* We have excellent relations with the **Town Hall of Lille**. They own the church building (see the section on buildings for details).

* We participate in the **Lille Heritage Days** by opening the church and offering visits (and explanations!)

* We also take part in the **Lille Braderie**, the largest flea market in the world. Our pavement café was a popular feature, but post-Covid, health and safety regulations meant we had to stop what was a major fund-raiser for us. Currently we run a bric-a-brac stall instead.



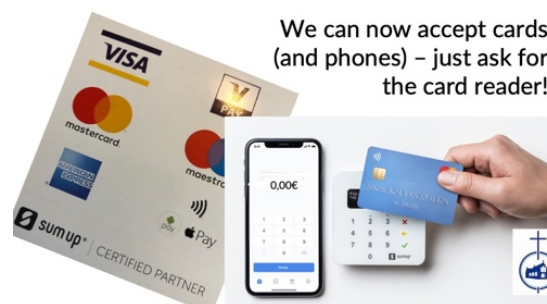
* We participate in Archdeaconry and Diocesan information and updates and have good contacts with other chaplaincies in France.

Open to new ideas

* We think that technology, for the most part, is a huge benefit. We had wi-fi in the church until building works cut off the link, we have had a SumUp machine for payments for many years, and we share QR codes for payments via PayPal or credit card.

* Our services on **video** were much appreciated during lockdown, and our Christmas video cards are still a regular feature. As are occasional videos about the organ or church events.

* We never had the technology or the wo/manpower for streamed services, but it's something we would like to do.



We can now accept cards (and phones) – just ask for the card reader!



* We use a video-projector for people to follow the service, thanks to a hard-working team member who prepares this every week. We are thinking about ways to improve this system, ideas welcome!

* Our website is regularly updated and our weekly newsletter reaches out beyond the congregation, to former members and interested readers from the wider population.

* We have a Facebook page, but at the moment nobody is available to keep it updated. We've left Twitter/X...

What we do

* We are fortunate to have a strong **admin team**, with the skills to support our work, but they are stretched around quite thinly.

* There is a **pastoral care** ethos, and this is something we want to do more of.

* We have a small **music** team, and this is definitely something we want to develop.

* We have held "Potting Shed" initiatives under **Eco-church**, we've grown cress, and planted bulbs in empty tin cans ... This has rather taken a back step, but needs to be restarted. But our Christmas tree is an alternative one!

* We offer ministry to working people through the **Working with Christ group** and the **Ladies' Bible Study** goes from strength to strength.

* A new team of leaders and helpers ensures that Sunday Club is held once a month.



Help us to continue to
serve the people of this
community

Cash or cheque or pay using
the QR code
Don't forget your
name and contact details



* Our "Envelope Challenge" for Gift Day in 2024 was a great success: this will doubtless be an annual event in the future. We have a small core group of regular givers.

* The 2025 version is running and looks to be just as successful. It celebrates our anniversary (the church was founded on Ascension Day in 1870)

Facts and figures

Electoral roll

The roll was renewed in 2025. The current roll lists 29 members.

Age profile

At the end of 2024, the age profile of the congregation was as follows:

| Age | Numbers |
|---------|---------|
| 0 - 10 | 12 |
| 11 - 17 | 4 |
| 18 - 69 | 38 |
| 70+ | 7 |

Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages and Funerals

During 2024 there were 3 Baptisms, 1 Marriage and 2 Funerals. There were no confirmations.

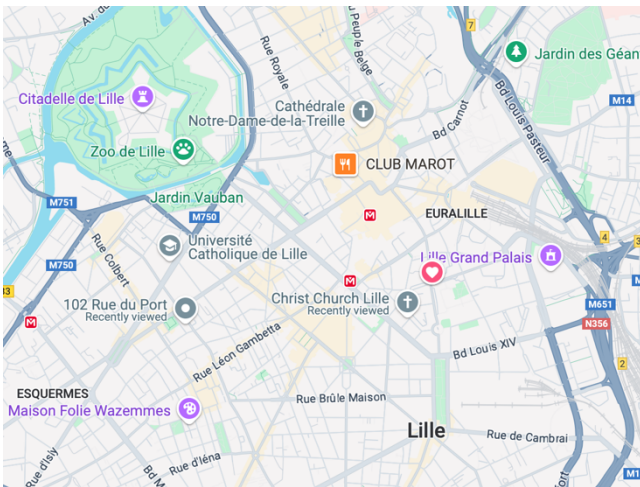
Weekly services

We had a regular pattern of services:

- 1st and 3rd Sundays
 - 09:15 A quiet service of Holy Communion (BCP)
 - 10:30 A service of Morning Prayer
- 2nd and 4th Sundays
 - 10:30 Holy Communion

But in this vacancy period, we have one service on a Sunday morning, led by a locum priest. On the first Sunday in the month, there is a service of Morning Prayer led by one of our Congregational Worship Leaders.

In the past, we had a service on Sunday evening, mainly (but not only) attended by younger people, with a more contemporary feel.



Church buildings

The church and hall

* The Town Hall owns the building and is responsible for structural upkeep. We have to pay for running costs and general maintenance. Thanks to good relations with the team at the Town Hall, they look after us and the building is well maintained.

* The church is situated in the centre of Lille and is easily accessible by metro, bus, on foot and by car, although parking during the week can be expensive.

* The church is currently not disabled-access-friendly but the Town Hall has been preparing a huge accessibility project and we are waiting for an announcement about the start of works. This means that the church should be accessible, but the hall beneath the church has been ruled out for accessibility access.

* The emergency exit from the hall is also not suitable for large numbers, so the authorities have limited the maximum number of people who can use the hall to 50.

* Following building works next door, a new heating system was installed by the Town Hall in 2019, but we can't afford to run it all the time, so it has to be turned on and off as needed. This is a problem, without enough people available to go into town to switch it on or off.

* There is an ongoing issue with the wall adjoining the new block of flats; the Town Hall is still in dispute with the builders about damp.

Chaplaincy house

- * For lots more details about the house, **please see the annex.**
- * We think we are fortunate to have been able to purchase the house, thanks to a legacy, and it's very well situated with easy access to the metro. It's fully equipped.
- * The chaplaincy accommodation is spread over four floors.



Life in Lille



Lille is the capital of the Nord Department, and the fourth most populous city in France. It is a lively, cosmopolitan city with a huge student population.

- The people are known to be amongst the most friendly in France
- There's lots to do, sports, culture, restaurants, cinema, theatre ...
- It's a regional transport hub, with easy access to northern Europe and indeed elsewhere; London is 1h30 mins away
- It's very flat – there is practically nowhere to practise your hill starts
- The city is very walkable and public transport is good
- The weather is similar to UK
- English is not as widely spoken as in some other regions of the country, but there are growing numbers of international students and workers. You really need to speak some French
- Cost of living is affordable and probably better than other French cities

Go to the annex for a full description of life in Lille

Strengths and challenges

Strengths

- * Differences are valued and celebrated
- * We are recognised as a place of welcome
- * We have a skilled team of volunteers including a Safeguarding Team and Congressional Worship Leaders; our Church Office admin is much appreciated.
- * We have a good volunteer communications team and an up-to-date website
- * We are open to new ideas and opportunities.

Challenges

- * We need greater financial stability and new ideas for fund-raising now that some of our previous and major sources of income (Braderie tea-room & Christmas market) are no longer available to us.
- * Volunteers are spread thinly and we need to encourage more people to play a role in managing our church life
- * Provision of improved accessibility
- * Cost of heating the church and difficulties managing the boiler

Annex: LILLE

Lille is a busy urban centre, with a huge student population in term time. The city has moved on from its industrial past and is working hard on sustainability: an excellent public transport system, pedestrianisation, new cycle paths and similar initiatives have made the centre of town much more pleasant to visit on foot, if not by car.

The old town was rescued in the 1980s by the then Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy. The whole area was renovated and regenerated and is now a popular and attractive area to wander around, enjoying boutiques, cafés and restaurants and amazing architecture.

Not all areas were so fortunate: like many other cities, there was quite a lot of 1960s rebuilding which is not so beautiful but fulfilled needs for offices and housing. Currently, there are huge building projects which are regenerating areas outside the centre with some interesting design concepts.

Transport

Pierre Mauroy was also the person who ensured that the Eurostar ran through Lille. This means that London is less than two hours away. Train time to Paris or CDG airport is about an hour, and Brussels is half an hour away by train. Also within easy reach are Amsterdam, Cologne, and neighbouring countries like Switzerland and Italy.

Train travel to other cities in France is fast and easy (5 hours to Marseilles, 3 hours to Lyon and 4 hours to Bordeaux, for example). There are two mainline stations (Lille Europe and Lille Flandres); they are quite close but do check which station your train arrives or leaves from.

Lille has an international airport, and although it is much used for holiday flights in the summer, there are regular flights throughout the year to countries in and outside Europe. There are however no flights to UK at the moment.

There are two metro lines, both are driverless, fast and efficient although they can get crowded at rush hours. There is a fast tram service going to the north of the city, and to neighbouring Tourcoing and Roubaix, and there are plenty of excellent local and circular route buses.

The motorway network around Lille is amazing although it sometimes causes traffic problems at rush hour or when there is an accident on one of the axes.

Generally speaking, it's really easy to get around, whether locally or more long distance.

Shopping

There is no shortage of shops: chain stores and boutiques, high-end and high street. Food shops are plentiful too and there is generally a good range of fresh food on offer at one of the many supermarkets.

There is a large shopping centre at Euralille (Westfield) and around the city there are several shopping centres.

There is a large weekly market, colourful and with lots of interesting cultural and ethnic produce in the Wazemmes district. Unfortunately for churchgoers, it's on a Sunday morning.

Sport

There are plenty of opportunities for sport of all kinds, although in France this would normally mean joining a club: most activities need a licence, which can imply insurance and a medical certificate. There are several swimming pools which are open to all.

Culture

Theatre, cinema, opera, music ... there are plenty of opportunities to enjoy all of these in Lille. The Orchestre National de Lille is famous and some of the most famous directors have worked at the Théâtre du Nord. The Opera de Lille is a beautiful, listed building and there are several cinemas some of which show films in "VO" (original language).

The Art Gallery in the centre is well worth a visit and there is also a wonderful gallery of modern art situated in a park just outside the city.

Population

The population is cosmopolitan. Many inhabitants come from former French colonies like Algeria and Morocco, and also Central and West Africa. The student population is equally international and young people from around the world come to study here.

There are fewer expatriate UK or US families these days but there are still a few; some live in Lille and commute to Brussels.

Fun facts

Lille sits in a "bulge" in the border between Belgium and France. You can cross the border without really knowing it, except that suddenly there are lots of tobacco shops (on the Belgian side). There is no real border as such. The Euro has made life easier, as people used to have to carry two sorts of cash if their local shop was on the other side of the border.

Belgians cross the border into France, the French cross the border into Belgium, on a regular basis. Sometimes it's just a question of finding products not available at home or just for an outing. Some products are cheaper on one side of the border or another.

Tourism

The Lille Tourist Office is a good place to start and we won't try and do their job. Apart from the many places to visit in Lille, it is easy to visit Ypres and the Menin Gate, where the buglers play the Last Post every evening.

The battlefields are all around, and the huge memorial at Thiepval is very moving.

Also worth a visit is Bruges, with its canals, or Ghent in Belgium.

<https://en.lilletourism.com/getting-organized/mobility-and-practical-information/>

Schooling

The French education system generally has a good reputation and you can read more at this link:

<https://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/international/curricula-and-exams/the-french-system#:~:text=The%20French%20education%20system%20offers,have%20'fun'%20at%20school>

All teaching is in French but most children learn English from primary school onwards. There are two international schools in Marcq en Baroeul, a few kilometres from the centre. One is a state school

<https://www.ecole-europeenne-lille.fr/en/>

and the other is private but both offer the International Baccalaureate.

<https://ecolejeanninemanuel.org/en/home/>

Annex: THE CHAPLAINCY HOUSE

The Chaplaincy house was purchased in 2016 following a legacy from UK. The purchase was only possible thanks to some other generous gifts making up the total cost.

Recent maintenance has included total rewiring of the ground floor, some plumbing work and also roofing work. The ground floor laminated flooring was replaced in 2024. The front door and the windows onto the street on the ground floor have just been replaced, improving both the heating loss and the noise.

The very top floor is used partly as a church archive but this does not preclude use as an extra bedroom.

Full plans of the house are available, as is a short video.

HELLEMMES

The house is situated in Hellemmes, now a part of the greater Lille area, but originally a small town in its own right. It's situated about 4 km from the centre of Lille.

Hellemmes grew up around the SNCF (national railway) rail technical and maintenance centre. There is still a huge SNCF presence and the population of Hellemmes is very mixed but charming.

LOCAL AMENITIES

Within a short walk there are shops, lots of pizza places, butcher, baker, chemists and supermarkets. The Post Office is nearby and there is a local market (fruit and vegetables, meat and fish) twice a week.

The baker is almost next to the house and highly recommended, as is the local bistro "54" just a few steps further on.

The metro station is just down the road, and allows you to access the centre of Lille or the church within about 15 minutes door to door.



