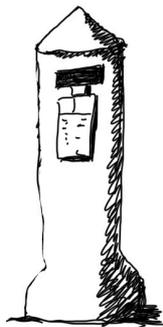


BINCHE BULLETIN MAY 2021



Dear friends,

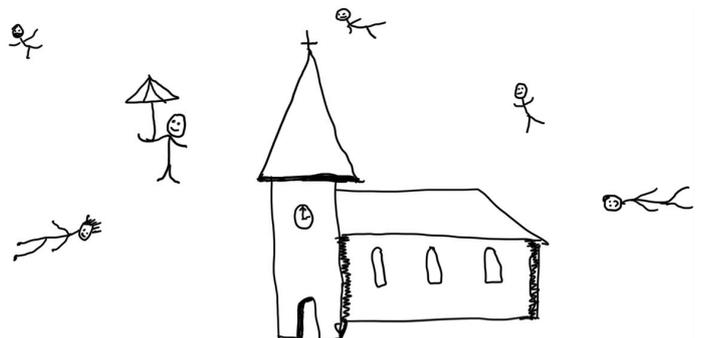
We are writing from chez Hannah and DJ in quarantine in Bristol so thank you to those of who prayed that we would manage to see our children and grandchildren! Yesterday, Elizabeth, Rosemary and Alice from our other Bristol family brought parcels to the doorstep and it was strange to keep them standing outside in the rain but lovely even so to see them in '3D'. (The quarantine survival package: homemade scones, basket of fruit, puzzle and tools were much appreciated too.) It is a good life, this confinement! Today we fulfilled our commitment to take another COVID test and benefitted from the special provision of being allowed out to walk to the postbox!

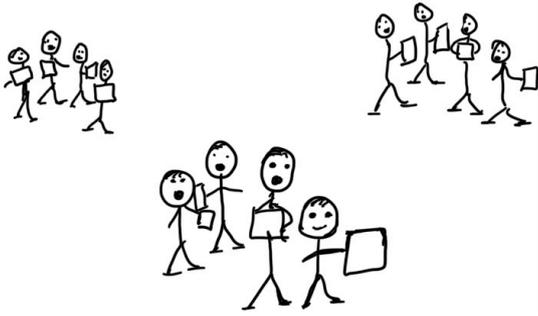


Although we are based in the UK for four weeks, we are still looking after the church in Binche (sorting out pastoral issues and running services) and Frances continues to give English lessons on Zoom. For much of our activities in these strange times, our physical location is less important. Even so, we will have two weeks of holiday to spend time with the family.

We don't yet know for certain if we will have to quarantine on our return to Belgium but it is looking increasingly likely... This will complicate plans as we hope to hold services in-person outdoors

(weather permitting) from June and maybe indoors if it is raining. Our 'upper room' usually used for the children is large enough to hold us and can be well aired. It seems that friends in Binche have grown used to participating from the comfort of their lounges so we are a little nervous that we might be quite few. *'But they all with one accord, began to make excuses...'* In fact, several friends have drifted away in recent weeks, some spiritually and others moving out of the area – we even have one couple exiled in Italy! This has been hard emotionally and we ask you to pray for us as we adapt and support them appropriately. Please pray that we will remain motivated, provide good pastoral care and seek to find ways we can reach out to the thousands of Binchois who so desperately need a living relationship with the Lord.





As planned, Binche church did come together to celebrate Easter despite tight restrictions. We met for a walking service in groups of four and followed a printed service sheet, praying together in several locations with short walks between each to keep warm! It was a particularly special moment when each group arrived in the town square and sang 'A toi la gloire', (Thine be the glory) one after the other. This was the first time some of our members had met in a whole year.

Charles' bible study for 8 – 14s continued until about April but has become more complicated as one family have moved and another have suffered a family bereavement. It will undoubtedly be difficult now to bring the members together on Zoom when other activities are becoming possible and we enjoy deconfinement. Like us, our church members are now desperate to meet friends and family.



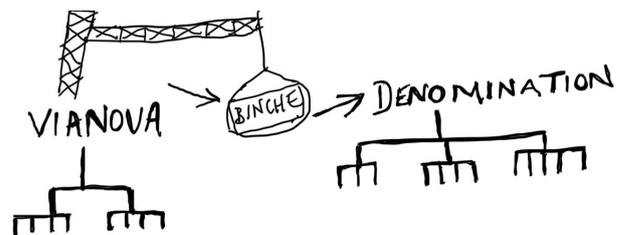
Since we last wrote Frances has had the first operation for the first stage of her sleep apnoea treatment. We weren't quite prepared for



this to be quite so consequential. For the first fortnight she found herself too tired to leave her bed much. Since then she has had to learn to eat, speak and sleep with a spacer in her mouth and a 5mm gap between her front teeth. Let's just say it is neither pretty nor easy – she might be the only person pleased that wearing face masks is common place. Few saw her bruising and even now she is happy to hide the gap. Please continue to pray that the treatment will be successful.

Preparations for the bilingual youth camp « InterAction » are underway. We have both been asked to be leaders so please pray for this project. We don't know yet how many youth can attend or if leaders from the UK will be able to join us (such as Luke and family, and Hannah and DJ).

In recent weeks we have started the process of moving our church from Vianova (the BEM) to an association of evangelical protestant churches historically linked with the BEM. After much prayer, discussion and help from a group of wise friends, we have concluded that we fit best with this association of churches (which is similar to the FIEC in the UK).



As always we are very grateful for your prayers, encouragement and financial support. Many thanks for transferring your support so efficiently to Crosslinks and many thanks too to those who have increased their support! We are very grateful and feel very privileged to be able to dedicate ourselves to ministry full time. Whether you pray, give or write, we are very blessed by each and every one of you!

The Lord continues to lead his Church in his way through these extraordinary times. Please continue to ask that his will be done in Binche as it is in heaven!

*Much love
Frances
& Charles.*