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# Encompass<sup>®</sup>

WORLD PARTNERS



We spent Saturday handing out flyers for an upcoming musical that retells the story of the Prodigal Son in a new setting. Several cast members performed songs while we handed out flyers for the show which is called *Novice et le Dragon*.

*“This is no weekend war” (From Eph 6, The Message, see more below)*

## Winter Edition

We celebrated Christmas and New Years with family and friends and then we hit the ground running with French classes, ministry opportunities, planning for a Summer Intern program, and setting up visits with churches in our region. Read on for more details.



In French class we made a Galette des Rois. You can't go to any gathering in our region during January and not be served a slice of Galette des Rois. What is it and why does ours have a Paw Patrol pup inside? Find out more by joining our French Language and Culture WhatsApp group. On your phone you can click >> [here](#) << to join the group. If it doesn't work, just reach out to one of us and we'll get you set up.

## Building Relationships

In the winter months we've been enjoying getting to know people more intimately as activities move indoors and people are travelling less. Most of our friends are from Church, the Gospel Choir, or an eclectic group of English-speakers living in Aix that meets together every once in a while.

In Gospel Choir people frequently ask us about the meaning of lyrics or at least how to pronounce the words. Last week at choir practice, the director introduced a new song, and right after reading the final lines, a woman spontaneously said to Pam, "That can't be right!" She viewed these two lines as impossible to reconcile: *No religion will help you. Only Christ can save you.*

Also last week, we met with a really sweet, retired woman from California who has been living in our city for 20 years and it was really fun to get to know her better. We learned that she is Jewish, though non-practicing. In her view, all Protestants, Catholics, and Jewish people basically pray to the same God for the same things: health, good relationships, good jobs, etc. She believes that everyone prays for God to bless them, with the only difference being that the different groups pray in different ways.

We also learned last week that there are people in our city who live "normal" middle class lives, but they also practice forms of sorcery. The secular movement in France swept out belief in God, but it seems to have created a vacuum that left people looking for other forms of spiritual power to help them in daily life.

## A Spiritual Battle

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As you can imagine, we're frequently reminded in many ways that life as a Christian is a battle. There is a fight between truth and lies, between a life of freedom and a life of believing lies. And without the strength of God, we are powerless in the fight. So now, more than ever, we are asking for continued prayer. And we are SO thankful to God for you, as you "fight" alongside us. Please also pray for our grown children and anything else that the enemy may target to make us "fall."

"*The Message*" version of Ephesians 6:10-20 is a little different from other translations in a way that can help us to see the passage with fresh eyes:

*God is strong, and he wants you strong. So, take everything the Master has set out for you, well-made weapons of the best materials. And put them to use so you will be able to stand up to everything the Devil throws your way. This is no weekend war that we'll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the Devil and all his angels. Be prepared. You're up against far more than you can handle on your own. Take all the help you can get, every weapon God has issued, so that when it's all over but the shouting you'll still be on your feet.*

*God's Word is an indispensable weapon. In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other's spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.*

*And don't forget to pray for me [Paul]. Pray that I'll know what to say and have the courage to say it at the right time, telling the mystery to one and all, the Message that I, jailbird preacher that I am, am responsible for getting out.*  
*Ephesians 6:10-13,17-20 (The Message)*

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## Prayers and Praises

We're so thankful for

- **You**, our friends and family whom we love. And thank you for **your continued prayers**.
- The 80+ people who continue to come to Gospel Aixpression choir practice. Plus, our involvement has opened the doors to several relationships and conversations.
- Our church, Le Rivage (The Shore) that continues to minister to people and to be a true light in the darkness. We recently learned that before Le Rivage was planted 10 years ago, there had been 8 previous attempts to begin a church in our city, and they had all failed.

## Prayer Requests

- For continued deepening relationships. We really love the people we've gotten to know, and we want wisdom for when and how to share the Gospel. Pray that we are wise, bold, and humble as we share.
  - For Frank's pain in his wrists. He just had a procedure done yesterday, so pray that it will provide long-lasting relief.
  - For an upcoming (Feb 17) musical performance, Novice and the Dragon. We helped to pass out flyers in our city and in a large city nearby. Like the Gospel choir, this musical is an outreach of our church.
  - For the Gospel choir weekend (March 15-17). About 90% of the members aren't Christians, and in addition to various choir workshops, there will be great opportunities for sharing during meals, etc.
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- For our meetings with various churches in our region. Our first meeting is Sunday, February 11. Pray that we make helpful contacts and that we catch a vision for how God might want to use us in France longer term.
- For potential interns that may choose to come to France this summer. We, along with Laura, will be involved on a daily basis, as we share our daily life and introduce them to ministry opportunities.

Thank you for your continued love and prayers!! We appreciate it!

Want to join our real-time chat for up to the minute prayer requests, photos, and anecdotes about life in France? Reach out to Pam via email ([pam@jocia@bellsouth.net](mailto:pam@jocia@bellsouth.net)) or WhatsApp and she will add you to the list.

Click [here](#) if you would like to financially support our work in Aix-les-Bains.

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