

Bonne et Heureuse Année 2025 !

Proper French etiquette tells me to start by expressing our desire for you to have a fruitful and joyful year serving our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. There is no higher calling we could answer and obey.

Ryan is free!

Our all-powerful God miraculously delivered our son-in-law the 20th of January from his nearly 2 ½ years of imprisonment in Afghanistan. When he landed in Texas January 22nd at 2 am, Anna, Ketsia 19, Miriam 17, and Caleb 14 were waiting for him. God has already used and will continue to use this terrible trial to bring glory to His Name. We are surprised, humbled, edified, and encouraged to be receiving unending notes from those who have interceded for his liberation. Anna was completely absorbed in her fight for his release. Steve's prayer has been that God would receive all the glory-- not a person, nor a political party. As we watched the inauguration ceremony in Washington (knowing Anna had been invited and flown in...maybe even to speak...), Ryan was in the process of being released while one administration gave place to the new one, working together for the final steps of a very fragile and unexpected agreement. TRULY A MIRACLE.

End-of-year report

Little did we know in mid-December all that would transpire. "God leads His dear children along" is a song my dad loved and that I sing quite often. After our unexpected and amazing Christmas program in FREJUS on December 8th, we prayed and prepared for the usual calendar distributions and church activities. Deep in our hearts, however, we each felt Anna and the children needed us as their trial was "over-the-top" heavy.

Steve's sister, Ruth, serving in Italy, had planned a BISHOP-BARNES family time from Dec 23rd -26th about a 5 hour drive from us. Our daughter, Rachel, and her husband and son, Paul 5, joined us from Switzerland.

On Dec 28th we flew to Minneapolis to spend 4 nights with our son and family, continuing on to Anna's in New York for 8 nights. Steve returned to France Jan 9th and I flew to Seattle to meet up with my brother, Russell, and my sister, Ruth. I returned to France Jan 16th from Portland. Never ever had we had a sibling reunion...just us! It was wonderful and "better late than never" .

Beginnings of a new year

We see new faces appearing in our services. Quite thrilling that the Lord is bringing some absentees back and that they come, knowing they are loved and wanted. The deep spiritual and emotional needs are heavy. Please pray. Our world is dark.

Two brothers are gaining confidence leading and preaching in our absences. And the church family is deepening their trust and care for each other. Sweet to see.

We are also "tuned" into the needs of the St Denis church. From Jan 31st-Feb 5th we will be in St Denis visiting and encouraging. Some are professing isolated believers attending no church but receiving Steve's daily Bible meditations. Most of these are people we invested in many years ago. Others are suffering from various trials. Of course preaching in St Denis Feb 2nd is the highlight of our visit as well as experiencing their potluck dinner! Hopefully some former attendees will visit and be encouraged to settle into the church they used to love.

Thank you for sharing our joys and burdens as we serve Christ in France.

Rowena (and Steve) Barnes in FRÉJUS, France