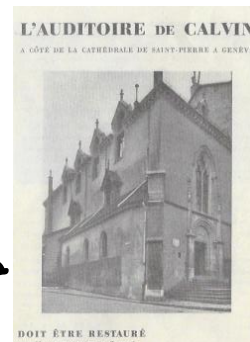




Church of Scotland Geneva

Auditoire de Calvin

Newsletter November 2018



Letter from the Minister

Sometimes being a Presbyterian gets a bit weird! Especially in the International Presbytery.

There is something about the systems and structures of the Church of Scotland that seems designed to make things cumbersome, slow...decisions hard to come by, speedy action all but impossible. Everywhere the brakes are applied, the gates are erected, the failsafe switches put in place – ostensibly to stop things going awry...but effectively just to stop things. The clumsy clutters of committees and bureaucracy and layers of Church government do not make for smooth shifts of directions, or quick responses to crisis. This can be frustrating – as you might imagine – and if you come from a commercial world where big, brave, quick, decisions are taken, and risk is part of the process of conducting business, you would find the ways of the Church arcane... and really annoying!

At the moment, the International Presbytery – that conglomeration of Churches from Budapest to Bermuda – from Rotterdam to Rome...from Lausanne to Lisbon...14 charges in all – is suffering from a severe lack of ministers. So, there are vacancies at present, or coming very soon - in Lausanne, Rome, Sri Lanka, Brussels, Lisbon, Costa del Sol, Malta.

This means that the remaining ministers are responsible for running the Presbytery – *and* overseeing those churches. Most ministers still standing will be an interim Moderator at one church or another – while the business of the Presbytery – responsibilities sent down from the General Assembly and 121 George Street, still needs to be done.

All this puts pressure on congregations, whose ministers are occupied by things not particular to their own local situation but required of them by the shortage of personnel to do the work.

For example, as well as acting as Interim Moderator at Lausanne twice over the last 18 months, I have been required to serve as Convener of the Presbytery Superintendence Committee – the committee that oversees and organises the Presbytery Local Congregational Reviews for the whole Presbytery grouping, monitoring and supporting the wide-ranging individual congregations. The role of convener means membership of the Presbytery Business Committee – and so

it grows. This year the Presbytery has met in Lisbon and Amsterdam over two week-ends, and in addition, I was required to carry out the Local Congregational Review of the congregation in Lisbon. Next year, the Presbytery will meet in Paris in March – here in Geneva in October, and there will be one Local Congregational Review for which I will be responsible. The Presbytery is also sending me to the General Assembly in May.

If we are very fortunate, by May the vacancy at Lausanne will be filled, God willing, and I will be able to relinquish that responsibility, delightful though it has been.

About none of this do I complain.

It is the reality for a Church of Scotland with a crying shortage of ministers, in a presbytery widespread and full of quirky, interesting, and important International congregations. The only unsettling thing about it is the amount of time it has required be spent away from the Auditoire! Possibly four or five additional Sundays forby annual leave, is a lot more absence than I would have anticipated or wished. And while it is uplifting and delightful to meet other congregations and lead worship there – I'd rather be here. Fact.

However, as resources become increasingly stretched – and will continue to do so, we all have to respond with patience and understanding to the cold realities – while at the same time, rejoicing that we are part of something bigger than just ourselves – bringing enrichment, shared vision and common purpose in the Gospel.

On a lighter note...returning to Scotland for my daughter's wedding was a time of joy and blessing. And to let someone else conduct the wedding, meant I could relax and let the moment fill my heart with love and warmth. And the bride was beautiful...outside and inside.

Love and blessings as always

Laurence





– the call goes out.

Do you remember going to Sunday School? Hearing those great Bible stories, working on project sheets, learning songs that have stayed with you ever since?

Do you remember your favourite Sunday School teacher? How much part of your growth in the family of church they were – and what an important role they had in making the story of Christianity real and important to you?

That is still the role of a Sunday School teacher today – and the part Sunday School plays in the development of discipleship, the positive feelings about the church family remains crucial.

Circumstances here at the Auditoire have put pressure on our Sunday School – as leaders who were very involved over a number of years have either moved away from Geneva or felt the need – after long and faithful service, to step aside and turn their gifts in different directions. Those changes have put a real strain on those who staff and support the Sunday School, and the need is now critical for additional helpers. And those can only come

from within the family of the Church.

As is always the case in these situations, the more who share in the work – the more manageable the task – and the Sunday School children need us to step up to the challenge.

You may have been a teacher in years gone by, or you may be a beginner – but if you think about this work – how important it is, and how precious are the children – and if you pray about it - and feel it is work that you could do – and maybe even work that you should do, then please speak to either the Minister, or one of the Sunday School helpers upstairs after church.

Everyone who works with the children will be eased into the work and not thrown in at the deep end. Also, Child Protection Legislation will need to be followed through – so appropriate training will be expected, in line with Church of Scotland requirements.

Someday, some person will be looking back to their Sunday School time at the Auditoire, and thanking God for the patience, love and loyalty you showed them, as you served with the team who told them the story and helped them find faith.

If you think you can offer any help, or would simply like to chat about it, please contact the minister.

BIG CONVERSATIONS TAKE OFF!

Informed practitioners, dealing with the issues particular to their field of expertise, and speaking with passion and insight, is a pretty exciting thing to see – and the chance to share with them in discussion of those topics is a rare delight.

The Big Conversations series of gatherings has already proved popular and appreciated, and it has been our privilege to share the visions and concerns of two enthusiasts - Paraic Reamonn, on Israel/ Palestine, and Matthew Ross on the state of the Ecumenical journey as things stand today. The evenings were convivial, challenging and thought-provoking – enjoyed by all – with discussion lively, and in-part informed and wise.

There are three more Big Conversations to come

December 5th with Professor Isobel Phiri speaking on the World Church – what shape it is in, what it has done with the heritage of the great missionary movements of the past - what it has to bring to the whole church, and why does the Church seem so vibrant and growing in parts of the world where life is hard, unsettled and full of challenges.

Few people in the world have greater experience of, and insight into, these issues than our own Isobel Phiri.

7.00 p.m. at the Open House, the Ecumenical Centre.

23rd January – Dr. Wesley Ariarajah will bring his great scholarship and wide experience to bear on the question of just what should be our attitude, in a pluralist society, to other world faiths? Dialogue, debate, evangelism? Tolerance or challenge? Some suitable strategy is needed, as the issue becomes more and more significant in the modern

world. Will the patterns of the past be enough, or must we find another way, a new way of co-operating and respect.? Author of several milestone books on this theme, Wesley will bring his thoughts for discussion. 7.00 p.m. Venue to be confirmed.

18th February – Cornis Van der Lugt will share his deep concerns and the results of his researches on the topic of Climate Change, and how the Church might respond to the reality that will shape the future of generations. How urgent is the crisis, and is there a theological imperative that should shake us up, and drive us to action? What are our responsibilities, and how do we overcome the stasis that makes us feel powerless to make a difference. Our children and grandchildren will not thank us if we allow ourselves to think that this is someone else's problem. 7.00 pm Venue to be confirmed.

The Big Conversation allows us to meet together, think together, and talk together...to learn new things, think new thoughts and maybe even move in new directions.

Here in the Auditoire, we are hugely blessed in the range of gifted and learned people we can draw upon for refreshing ideas and new vision.

Share in the Big Conversation if you can. Too good to miss.



What does the service of prayers for healing mean to me

Eleanor Strittmatter

It was over twenty years ago that I attended my first healing service. I needed a lot of time to pluck up courage to go. I really didn't know what to expect. I had read that these services take different forms depending on the denomination of the Church. My first experience was a bit daunting because in this church at a certain stage we were invited up to the communion rail (if we would like to have a prayer of healing said for us). So up I went and when the minister asked me what my prayer was, I froze. Those of you who know me might find this difficult to understand, because I always seem to speak too much. The minister was very patient with me. He waited. I said nothing, but tears were rolling down my cheeks. He put his hands on my shoulders and I felt at peace.

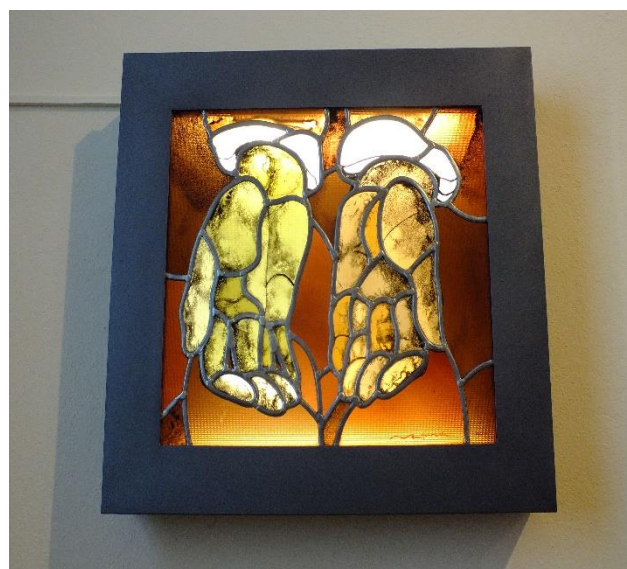
There are many ways of expressing our love towards God, as there are in the way that he expresses His love towards us.

Very rarely have I asked for prayers for myself. On certain occasions I have asked for guidance. But more often than not, I have prayed for people that I know, who are going through difficult times, be it health, family or work. These days there are also so many world situations that could benefit from our prayers. "Lord show us as Christians what we can do to heal these situations in our world. Lord teach us to care as you cared".

After every Communion Service on the first Sunday of the month a short Service of Prayer for Healing takes place in the small side chapel near the front on the left of the church. This is where the stain glass window of the hands in prayer is placed.

The format of this service is very simple. We sit in a circle and Laurence asks if we would like to share the name or names of the person or persons who we would like to support in prayer. Silence plays a good part in our time together and Laurence closes with prayer. This time has become very important for me.

You are most welcome to join us.



Music at The Auditoire

As we know, the Auditoire is a great venue for musical events of all sorts. On one Sunday in November we hosted two groups of musicians.

The Geneva Gospel Choir took part in our worship in the morning.



And later, our own Vivien Liu and a group of talented friends gave a concert in aid of three children's charities. It included a wide and varied programme ranging from Telemann to Scott Joplin.

Church News

On a visit to the USA in September, Mawunu caught up with some former members of our Auditoire family.

Lidian Shark and William and Sandra Ehlers send their warmest regards.



Carol Services for December 2018

Our Service of Lessons and Carols in the Auditoire this year will be a bit special. We shall be sharing it with our friends from the Swiss-German congregation of the Geneva Protestant Church (the EPG) who worship in the Auditoire on the fourth Sunday of every month and hold prayer meetings and other gatherings during the week. The two choirs will combine to sing carols and we hope that the congregations will do so too.

The service will take place on Saturday 15 December at 6.30 p.m. in German and French in the Temple de la Madeleine, and in English on Sunday 16th at 3 p.m. in the Auditoire.

Come along and sing in this multi-lingual service!



CULTE-CANTIQUES DE NOËL
WEIHNACHTSLIEDER-GOTTESDIENST

SAMEDI 15 DÉCEMBRE 2018
18 H 30, TEMPLE DE LA MADELEINE

CHŒUR DE LA MADELEINE ET SON ATELIER CHORAL
CHŒUR DE LA CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, GENEVA
ENSEMBLE INSTRUMENTAL
A L'ORGUE:
ARTHUR SAUNIER & OSCAR COLLIAR
DIRECTION:
STANISLAVA NANKOVA & PETER TULLOCH

LECTURES TEMPLE DE LA MADELEINE:
KATHARINA VOLLMER & LAURENCE MOTTIER
LECTURES AUDITOIRE DE CALVIN:
LAURENCE TWADDLE & MEMBRES DE LA CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, GENEVA

SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

DIMANCHE 16 DÉCEMBRE 2018
15 H, AUDITOIRE DE CALVIN

ENTRÉE LIBRE, COLLECTE

Church of Scotland, Geneva

Eglise protestante de Genève

GENF reformiert.
www.nf-genf.ch

Other services taking place in the approach to Christmas

Our Christmas family service – Sunday 16 December at 11 a.m.

Christmas Day worship – Tuesday 25 December at 11 a.m. followed by Christmas lunch (please contact Rev. Jim Sharp)

Please note also

Holy Trinity Anglican Church – Christmas Eve carol service in the Cathedral at 5 p.m. (organ recital) and 5.30 (main service)

- Christmas Eve Midnight Eucharist at 11 p.m.



CHRISTMAS SPECIAL OFFERINGS

We have a long tradition in the Church of Scotland, Geneva that special offerings taken around Christmas time – the Carol Service and the Christmas Morning services, are designated as moneys we give to special causes or purposes beyond our own congregational need. This year is no exception – and in the true spirit of Christmas giving, we are going to have a wonderful opportunity to support an amazing work that will transform the lives of many children and bring hope to their families.

The charity to which our Christmas Special Offerings will be sent this year is:

eyesight4life

Founded by Geneva eye-surgeon Dr Phillippe Desmangles, the Foundation carries out its work in Haiti, where there is a population of 12 million people, with only around 100 doctors to provide medical care. Simple eye operations that would save the sight of hundreds of people each year are not performed because of lack of resources and personnel – and Dr. Desmangles, an ophthalmic surgeon here in Geneva, arranges for doctors from Switzerland and beyond, to give time, and provides the necessary resources sufficient to treat 200 children a week, and bring light into a very dark situation.

With plans to expand the work beyond the mobile clinic and establish a permanent eye hospital – this is a charitable cause with a clear aim and a committed team behind it. It will be our privilege to share in it this Christmas time.



2018 Fair

A massive thank you to everyone involved in this year's Fair and Ceilidh. All seems to have been successful, in terms of



participation and ambiance. The final figures are not yet known but would indicate that we have made over CHF14,000 profit. This figure reflects the immense work and effort put in by everyone. As usual, it was not all about the finance, it was a day of fellowship, new friendships made and many, many laughs



Some of you may have heard that the Salle would be renovated next year, resulting in no Fair. However, this work has now been delayed until 2020, so reserve the date of **16 November 2019** for the next Fair.

The cake and baking stall was, as always, a big success. Thanks from Eleonor Strittmatter to all who contributed.



Once again, many thanks for to all those involved.

Christine Buhler