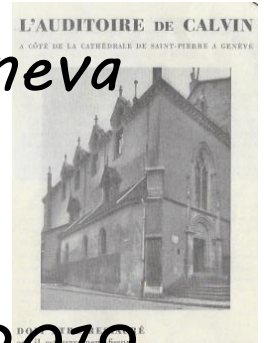




Church of Scotland Geneva

Auditoire de Calvin

Christmas Newsletter 2019



LETTER FROM THE MINISTER:

Dear Everyone,

eventually, we all get around to it! De-cluttering...trying to achieve

“the lean and happy home...”

For only so long can we bear the sheer accumulation of *stuff* -and then it dawns on us, just how suffocated we are being by the “things” that begin to oppress us and crowd out our delight in life. *They own us*, rather than we own **them**! And so, we assert our control...re-calibrate our priorities - and the Big Tidy Up starts. Gadgets that we haven't used for years, clothes we haven't worn in decades...into the re-cycling bin and out of our lives, liberating us from the sheer weight of “things” – things no longer needed on the voyage...things that are holding us back, slowing us down, crushing us into inefficient and distracted living. Enough is enough! Time to cut a path through all this – and then we can see the way ahead...sort out what really matters...get our priorities right. Phew, that feels good! That feels liberating!

John the Baptist might seem an unlikely champion of de-cluttering – but that was certainly the thrust of his preaching, as he warned his listeners of the dangers of, actually, not seeing the wood for the trees

– not being ready for this great event that was soon to be – the coming of the Light of the world, into their story, their experience. He urged them, as he urges us – not to allow ourselves to be distracted or deflected from the true focus of these coming few weeks we call Advent – otherwise, the Christ might come – and we are too busy with the light-weight, the trivial, the commercial, and the sociable to realise that someone who will change everything with his love, and can change us with his presence, is going to be right there, in the heart of it all...the reason for it all, and says John – “you must not miss it, you must not!”

So, we are urged to clear our feet, unclutter our thinking, see with a clear eye, unclouded by pressures, and not so dazzled by the myriad little lights, that we miss the true Light that shatters the darkness, and brings hope, hope of deliverance.



Happy Advent...and a glorious Christmas,

Love as always...

Laurence T.



Two visits

October saw us play host
to two sets of
distinguished visitors.

Janet Chipeta and Blessings Waliwa



These two young people are both very active and valued volunteers at the Resource Centre and are role models for behaviour change in Ekwendeni and, because of that, were nominated to come to Geneva to share hospitality as well as information with us.

They arrived in Geneva with Jane and Han Broere who were returning from a trip to Malawi to see the work being done in the centre and outlying villages.

During their stay, Janet and Blessings were hosted by families from the



Auditoire. They experienced many "firsts": first time on a boat, first

taste of cheese, first snow, first time shopping in Manor. They visited a good sample of our tourist attractions- a chocolate factory, Gruyères, the Olympic Museum, Champéry, Col de la Faucille, the Désalpes at St Cergue and the glacier at Les Diablerets to name a few.



They attended church at the Auditoire and also La Cote, a service at the World Council of Churches, the Presbytery dinner at Versoix and a dinner dance to raise funds for Nourishing Minds.

They were lovely young people who coped admirably with an experience which was quite different from their day to day lives and circumstances. They made many friends and, we hope, left with the feeling that we in the Auditoire remain committed to



Two visits

October saw us play host
to two sets of
distinguished visitors.

supporting the work being carried out in the Ekwendeni area.

International Presbytery meeting in Geneva 11 to 13 October 2019.

Representatives from all our sister congregations in the International Presbytery plus some visitors came to Geneva for presbytery's twice yearly meeting. In all, we had more than 50 people to look after as well as providing logistics for the meetings. Many thanks to those in our congregation who helped by providing food, welcoming the visitors, and in many other ways. We received many thank yous for the welcome and hospitality of the weekend. Presbytery is the supervising body for all the congregations within its area and one of the questions it is currently wrestling with is how to deal with a shortage of Church of Scotland ministers. Within Scotland many congregations are being amalgamated but this is not a realistic proposition for such a widespread presbytery as ours with churches from Bermuda to Sri Lanka

and even within Europe from Budapest to Lisbon.



The weekend is not only about meetings but also allows time for ministers and elders from the different churches to worship together, to eat together and talk together. If you would like to know more about the International Presbytery do speak to those of us who attend presbytery meetings, that is Laurent Djamen, Jim Sharp, Alice Tulloch, Paraic Reamonn, and Laurence Twaddle.

The spouses have a great time too!



A pilgrimage trip to Scotland



We are a Church of Scotland congregation but how much do we know about Scotland and its religious heritage? This trip will explore some significant places in the long history of Christianity in Scotland as well as giving us a chance to see very varied Scottish scenery. The 8 day trip will allow some free time but does involve some walking, including on uneven ground, so participants need a good level of mobility and stamina.

Some detail is given below but please contact Alice Tulloch or Sherree Atkinson if you are interested or for further information. We need a minimum number of people to make the trip viable **so please let us know before the end of December if you are interested.**

When? Monday 8 June to Tuesday 16 June 2020. The date is not yet finalised and may be one week earlier, depending on availability of hotels.

How much?

The cost will be approximately 1,300chf which includes bed and breakfast for 8 nights in a double room (200 to 300chf extra for a single room), private coach travel, entrance fees and documentation about the trip.

What is not included?

Meals, other than breakfast.

Travel to and from Edinburgh; Easyjet flies directly to Edinburgh every day.

Travel insurance including for cancellation which we strongly advise as you will be liable for the cost even if you cancel.

What will we see? (programme subject to confirmation)

Monday 8 June we will start our trip by meeting up at our Edinburgh hotel on Monday evening and eating together with an introduction to the programme.

Tuesday 9 June we will start by exploring reformation history in Edinburgh with time for optional visits to some of the many attractions Edinburgh has to offer.

Wednesday 10 June we will go by coach to East Lothian where John Knox lived and trace other aspects of Christian history in the county.

Thursday 11 June we leave Edinburgh for Oban, stopping at Stirling Castle en route.



Friday 12 June is a day trip to the island of Iona. We take the ferry from Oban to the island of Mull and from there the short boat trip to Iona where we spend time exploring the ancient abbey on this peaceful island which is considered to be the cradle of Christianity in Scotland.

Saturday 13 June we make our way over to the North East of Scotland driving via Fort William and Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in Scotland, to Loch Ness where we stop for a boat trip on the loch or a visit to Castle Urquhart which overlooks the loch. We go on to Beaulieu to meet up with Ian Manson, our former minister.

Sunday 14 June. We visit Beaulieu Abbey on the morning before attending morning worship in Beaulieu. Travel south to St Andrews in the afternoon with a stop en route.

Monday 15 June explore the ancient town of St Andrews with its links to the Reformation and its university founded in 1411. In the afternoon the coach will take us to some beautiful little fishing villages on the coast and we will have dinner together before driving to our Edinburgh airport hotel.

Tuesday 16 June tour ends after breakfast.



The Scottish Fair 2019

I can't say I am sorry the 16th November is behind us but what a great day!

We had almost all the usual stalls, the usual delicious choice of food and drink, cakes galore, Scottish and Christmas goods, arts and crafts, church items, jam and preserves, jewellery and accessories, interesting items, toys and soothing scents. Absolutely something for everyone- and anyone who was anyone was there! There was a great feeling in the Salle and around the various eating areas all day and many local people turned up.

Although we could not operate the book stall this year, the book team organised a separate sale at the Auditoire on the following Saturday.



The Geneva Pipes and Drums were there and did us proud both inside the hall and out in the yard.

The ceilidh (and curry) in the evening was a huge success also and there were kilts and tartan galore!



As well as marking our presence in the local community and providing a hugely entertaining day out for many, many people, we did also make some money. The total at the moment is a magnificent 14,400chf!!

Part of this will be used for our "year end" offering and go to the following local charities:

Carrefour-Rue Points d'Eau, which provides washing facilities for homeless people at various locations in Geneva: Centre social des Pâquis, which is a day centre for homeless and refugees and ESCA Cancer Support, which provides support in English for people affected by cancer in Geneva, Vaud and neighbouring France.

So--- whether you baked or bought, cooked or collected, created or crafted, sold, served or sewed, you were part of a tremendous team.

Huge thanks to EVERYONE involved!

Lindy Twaddle

Church News

For many years Sigurd Maxwell, who died earlier this year, attended worship with us in the Auditoire, always arriving by bike. Sigurd was a tireless environmental campaigner, in particular, for better public transport and it is largely due to his ceaseless lobbying in Geneva and in Bern that the new CEVA train link due to be opened this month, has come into being. Although Sigurd did not live long enough to see the project completely finished his contribution has certainly not been forgotten. One of the new Regio trains has been named after him; do look out for it!



Music in The Auditoire.



As many of our devoted readers know, we share the Auditoire with a German-speaking Swiss Reformed congregation that worships here on Saturdays at 5pm. Following the pattern we pioneered successfully last year, our two choirs will again lead two services of nine lessons and carols to celebrate the Christmas season. Our Church of Scotland service is on Sunday December 15 at 3pm. (The other, for those who are still in town and want to brush up on their German, is on Saturday December 21 at 5pm.) With the whole congregation we shall sing some of the best-loved carols - from "Once in royal David's city" through "Ding, dong, merrily on high!" to "O come, all ye faithful". In addition, the choirs will sing some less well-known carols in English, French, German and Latin. We shall be rehearsing over the next two weekends. If you would like to sing with us, it's not too late to sign up: contact me at paraic.reamonn@gmail.com or 079 151 9143.

The pattern of music in Sunday worship we began this year has also proved itself in practice. Our choir, growing slowly but steadily in numbers, sings an introit each Sunday; a second piece for communion on the first Sunday of the month; and an anthem on the last Sunday. On the other Sundays, instrumentalists and soloists step up to provide a second piece of music. If you are interested in joining their ranks, please contact Vivien, my wife, at vivienliu.chan@gmail.com. The choir adopts an easy-care approach to rehearsals. We run through each Sunday's music at 10am before the service and preview the music for the coming month after the congregational lunch on the last Sunday. We take a six-week break in the summer. It's helpful if you read music but not essential (not all of us do).

"No stress" is our motto: The aim is not to overburden busy choristers but to have fun in praising God. Why not give us a look?

Páraic Réamonn.

Christmas at The Auditoire:



15th December :

11.00- Christmas Family Service with participation of Young Church.

15.00-Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols -our own choir and that of the German-speaking Swiss Church - carols in English, French, German and Latin.

22nd December:

11.00- Morning Worship- 4th Sunday in Advent

25th December:

11.00-Morning worship- offerings will go to "Glory Reborn", a Christian organisation providing holistic mother and child care in Cebu City, the Philippines, where our own Emma Rietbergen is currently working (<https://www.gloryreborn.org>).



Invitation from the Caring for Others group-
Reception following the Christmas Day Service around 12 noon followed by lunch- all welcome.
If you would like to stay for lunch please contact Jim Sharp (0227864847/ jimsharp@bluwin.ch).



Christmas events in local churches

Holy Trinity Church

1 December 7 p.m. :Advent Carol service followed by festive refreshments in the church hall

22 December 3 p.m. : Christingle service

24 December 7 p.m. : Organ recital followed at 7.30 by Service of Nine Lessons and Carols in St Pierre Cathedral.



Emmanuel Church

Saturday 21 December at 5 p.m, Service of Lessons and Carols in St Gervais.

RightsTech Women, the Swiss NGO advancing women and girls in STEM, is celebrating 2019 with a Winter Party in the Salle Théodore de Bèze on Thurs., 12 December. Get your tickets here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rightstechwomen-winter-party-tickets-84526726715>. For more info, contact events@rightstech.org Warm wishes, Ellen Walker