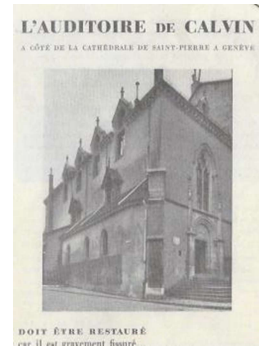




Church of Scotland Geneva

Auditoire de Calvin

Newsletter March 2018



Letter from the Minister

There's nothing like time spent with the International Presbytery to remind you of the rich and varied kinds of churches there are – even within the Church of Scotland. With ministers and elders from Brussels to Bermuda, Rome to Rotterdam, and Geneva to Gibraltar, the scope and variety of cultural contexts and situations unique and particular, simply serves to point to the amazing capacity of the Christian gospel to intrigue, and win over all kinds of people, with all kinds of stories. It is immensely encouraging to be among people who are so different, and yet are so profoundly committed to the Christ they follow, and the church they serve.

Sharing in the Lenten Study Groups has offered a similar insight into the journeys people within our congregation have taken to bring them to Geneva – and to bring them to Jesus! It has been humbling and touching to share with great honesty, trust and Christian love in the highs and lows, the struggles and the searchings that have brought us all to where we are on our pilgrim way: and with generosity, grace and love each of us is allowed to be who we are, and where we are – but all enfolded, listened to, and supported by the whole family of faith. This is a great blessing and a heart-warming privilege. No dogmatic assumptions or insistence that we all be at the same place on the road, thinking the same way, seeing the

faith in some uniform monochrome – but individuals, brought to where we are by the same Spirit, but never required to pretend to be what we are not, understanding more than we actually do, be more sure that we really are.

So, when I look out on the rainbow congregation that we are, placed within the rainbow world church that we are part of, I feel the richness of that, the warm embrace of that diversity, and the huge delight brought to our church life by those differences.

Love to all -as always

Laurence

And a few words from the Editor

I was reflecting recently that I have now been in Geneva for a year. It has been a very quick year, although one full of challenges, firsts and new things. Indeed, one of the new things I have done is to be a full-time “minister’s wife”. This role has included helping with church lunches, editing the newsletter and learning to bake! It is a somewhat steep learning curve but as always there are plenty people around to offer help, support and advice. Please keep it coming! I continue to enjoy my new life.

Happy Easter,

Lindy



HOLY WEEK

Easter Services

Sunday March 25 at 11.00
Palm Sunday service with
admission of new elders,
followed by church lunch- all
welcome

Thursday 29 March at 20.15
Maundy Thursday communion

Friday 30 March at 11.00
Good Friday service

Holy Trinity Church
Good Friday service
12-00 3-00 p.m.
-a reflective, ecumenical
service of readings, music,
preaching and silence
with contributions from local
clergy throughout the
afternoon.

Easter Sunday, 1 April
communion service at 11.00,
preceded by Easter breakfast
in the Salle from 9.30 to 10.30

We are delighted that sharing
in our Easter Sunday Morning
service will be the orchestra
of



from the United States of
America

They will play before and after
the service - and will share in
the accompaniment of several
of the great Easter Hymns. A
real enrichment to our worship,
we are very pleased that they
have shown a passion to play in
Calvin's Auditoire, and to
enhance our worship with their
musical gifts.



Church News

At present, discussions are ongoing with the Geneva church about the use of the Auditoire. The German-speaking congregation would like to use the Auditoire twice a month for Sunday worship while the Madeleine church is being renovated. The Madeleine church, which is down the hill from the Auditoire, just behind C and A, is likely to be closed for 2 to 3 years from September 2018. The Fusterie church is also near the Madeleine but it too is closed for renovation and so is not an option.



As many of you know we used to share the Sunday morning use of the Auditoire with the Dutch congregation, originally twice a month and then once a month. We know from that experience that there were some problems on both sides that had to be ironed out as we went along but in general it did work out. The German church will continue to have the use of their own offices and hall down the hill opposite the Madeleine church which could be helpful to both congregations.

In addition it is possible that the Children's programme of the Eglise Protestante de Geneve, EPG, will use the building during the week as they already cooperate with the German speaking church. At present the Auditoire is mainly used during the week for music lessons and has not been open to the public regularly since its renovation. This has been a concern as so many visitors to Geneva would like to visit the Auditoire; we and the EPG receive many requests for visiting groups to view the Auditoire. If the Children's programme use the church it is likely that there will be more opportunity for the public to visit our historic church but some of the other users may have to find another venue for music lessons. At present discussions are ongoing about the practicalities of the proposal which, if agreed, would start in September.

AGM

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, GENEVA
ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
TUESDAY 22 MAY 2018.

POTLUCK SUPPER FROM 6-30 p.m.

FOLLOWED BY BUSINESS

FOLLOWED BY DISCUSSION

PLEASE PUT THIS DATE IN YOUR DIARY
AND SHARE IN THIS IMPORTANT MEETING.

Divinity Student

We have been invited to help a Divinity Student, in training for the ministry, by providing him with a five-week placement, working alongside our own minister here in Geneva. This will offer the student an excellent experience of the the variety and styles of ministry available within the Church of Scotland.

Douglas Creighton was a Head teacher before feeling a call to ministry, a call the Church has confirmed by accepting him as a candidate for the Ministry. He hopes to come to Geneva to share in the life and work of the congregation during the end of July and all of August - and of course, a major factor in that happening, is where he might stay during that time. The congregation is being asked to let Mr. Twaddle know if there are any possible accommodation opportunities that they might know of...

Douglas is married with two young children - and would love it if the whole family could come with him. However, if accommodation can only be found for himself, then the family will stay at home, and he will come to Geneva alone.

If you can think of a way to help out with this, or have a good idea how he and or his family can be accommodated for the five weeks, please let the Minister know as soon as possible.

Working with us in Geneva could be a very important element in his development as a minister. Let's see if we can make it happen.

Youth Worker

Might you be able to provide accommodation for a young African student being placed as an intern at the UN for six months, beginning in May? Anita comes from Nairobi and is a trained Youth Worker, who hopes to help us out at the Auditoire while she is in Geneva. She would love to be hosted by someone in our congregation while she works at the UN - and assists us with our Youth Programmes. Can you help? Contact the Minister as soon as possible. Thanks.

Obituaries

We are sorry to report that Colin Allan died on February 13. Colin and Elizabeth came to Geneva in 1976 and even after retirement and move to the South of France they continued to visit Geneva and the church on a regular basis. The most recent visit was towards the end of 2017 when Colin was already frail but keen to visit the Auditoire once more. We extend our condolences to Elizabeth and the family.

Our mission partnerships, and how you can help.

What are our mission partnerships?

The Church of Scotland, Geneva, has two active mission partnerships outside Geneva. These are with Ekwendeni Mission Hospital in northern Malawi, and the Nepal Leprosy Trust (NLT) in Lalagadh, Nepal. With close links with our congregation, these provide Christian help and assistance for highly vulnerable people in two of the world's poorest countries.

The Ekwendeni link was begun by our previous Minister, Rev. Ian Manson, working through contacts in the Church of Scotland central office. The "project" he initiated has, over time, become a strong and vibrant partnership.

The Ekwendeni Mission Hospital Youth Centre receives, tests, treats and counsels young people likely to be affected by HIV/AIDS, and other poverty-related issues, from a wide surrounding area. The Centre supports over 300 local youth clubs, and feeds vulnerable children, promotes Income Generating Activities for young people, helps with village vegetable gardens and (re)building of houses and stock barns, and promotes social and sporting activities (the girls' netball team and the boys' basketball teams are local champions!).

Over the years, several groups and individuals from Geneva have visited Malawi, normally for two weeks or so, and we have welcomed young Malawians in return. These visits have often been life-changing for both sides. Geneva participants' life directions have been changed by experiencing the joys, needs and challenges of life in Ekwendeni, and young Malawians have returned home with fresh ideas and contacts made in Geneva to put into practice.

Our contacts with the Nepal Leprosy Trust originate from our Elder, Dr Graeme Clugston, and his wife Meena. When Graeme retired from a senior post at the World Health Organisation, they returned to Meena's home country of Nepal to provide "salt and light" through medical work and Christian outreach there.

One's normal vision of Nepal is of rarefied air and high mountains, but Lalagadh is in the hot, steamy lowlands of the major river system that feeds from Nepal into Bangladesh. In this area, leprosy is still a major health issue. Lalagadh hospital is the world's busiest leprosy hospital as well as a major general hospital for an area containing hundreds of thousands of people. Many patients also come from across the border in India. Leprosy sufferers are treated free, while other patients make financial contributions for their treatment.

In the decade-plus that Graeme and Meena have been there, they have experienced earthquakes and monsoon flooding on top of all the difficulties of working in a mainly Hindu region of a mainly Buddhist country, where Christians are regarded with suspicion and mistrust. Nevertheless, the work of the hospital has grown and it has become a major general and speciality hospital in southern Nepal. Following the major earthquake in 2015, NLT worked incessantly to bring food, building supplies, health care and other relief to affected villages in mountainous areas around. And at major Christian festivals and on Sundays there is a joyous atmosphere in the hospital and in the local church.

How do we support them, and how is our support used?

In Ekwendeni, we are the only major source of funds for the Youth Centre. Our core support pays the salaries of the Youth Leader (Shupo Kumwenda), the caretaker of the centre, and a handyman. Other

funds from concerts and events have been dedicated to the youth feeding programme and to help with school fees for orphans.

Recently, some members of our congregation have also funded the upgrading of an extension to the Youth Centre building where medical and nursing appointments can take place.

In Lalgadh, we are one of many donors, and directly provide the salaries of one local doctor and nurse. In addition, our congregation gave generously to a special appeal for earthquake relief in 2015. Individual members, and the congregation as a whole, have supported the construction of a newly-opened Children's Unit. There, sick children can be given the special care, love and attention they need.

How can I contribute?

You can pledge regular support via our Freewill Offering scheme. This can be done either via the "blue envelopes" placed in the offering plates on Sundays, or by bank transfer to the Church's account. In either case, you can specify which programme you wish to support. If the direction of the donation is not specified, your funds are divided equally between the two. Giving through the envelopes or directly via the Bank is, of course, additional to normal support for the life of the church and its on-going local work.

We also have retiring offerings from time to time in favour of the mission partnerships. The next opportunity to give in this way will be on **Sunday 29 April**.

The money received for mission is counted separately from the day-to-day Church account. All that comes in, goes out. We normally make transfers to the two programmes twice yearly. The Mission Sub-committee of the church looks after the good operation of the two schemes, and receives regular e-mail updates from Shupo, the Ekwendeni youth centre supervisor, and from Graeme and Meena.

If you wish to make a pledge to our mission programmes, please contact Tom Snow, our Freewill Offering treasurer (sneaux@gmail.com) or speak to our Minister any Sunday.

Thank you!

Pictures from Ekwendeni



School children waiting for and enjoying their meal.

Four schools are now in the school feeding programme, with meals prepared by the local communities.



Maize meal and fertilizer ready for distribution



Ekwendeni Youth Centre champion basketball team!

Photos from Lalgadh



The new, colourful Children's Unit



Boys' ward with the first two leprosy in-patients



Girls' ward with its first two leprosy in-patients



Community outreach, supporting village schools

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE

The Annual Congregational Meeting (ACM), which is scheduled for Tuesday 22 May, seeks to elect new members on to the Congregational Committee. Below are a few details that may help you decide if you would be interested in becoming a member.

What does the Committee do?

It oversees the temporal matters of the church. Regular agenda items include finance, fabric, mission and fundraising. Examples of other matters discussed are Church Fair organisation, the Church website & newsletter and facilities for persons with disabilities.

Who serves on this Committee?

Membership comprises the chairperson (the minister), treasurer, secretary, elders, and 12 elected members from the congregation, each serving a 3-year term of office, with election of 4 members at each ACM. Representatives of several church organisations are also invited to attend as observers as there are often items concerning the organisations they represent on the agenda.

What does membership encompass?

It gives a fascinating insight into the full range of practical matters related to the administration of the church. Participating in meetings gives the opportunity to learn about, contribute to and influence the way the church's practical affairs are handled.

How much time does this commitment take?

Attendance at 5 meetings per year plus the Annual Congregational Meeting (ACM). The regular meetings are normally held on Tuesday evenings from 20:00 hours to approximately 21:30 hours. The ACM will also be held on a Tuesday evening this year – on 22 May – beginning at 18:30 hours.

How to become a member

If you feel you would like to volunteer or know more about serving the church in this capacity, please contact either the minister or me (the undersigned).

Thank you for giving some thought to this matter.

Nan Braunschweiger
Congregational Committee Secretary



CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER – GETTING OLDER

One major preoccupation – among others! – of the Caring for One Another core group has, for some time, been how we can better support the older members of our congregation.

Some of you may remember that, a few years ago, we held a special evening in the Salle Théodore de Bèze on the subject of "Ageing". Some issues around growing older were also raised during the congregational consultation organised by Caring for One Another core group in June 2017.

One specific idea which has emerged from these discussions is that the Church may be able to help some of our members who are concerned about what might happen if they fall ill or, worse, pass away. Questions such as "Who should be informed?" or "Who is the next of kin?" arise. These kinds of concerns may be felt particularly by those who live alone, with no spouse or partner, and whose families don't live close by – but they may also apply to couples who wonder what would happen if they both had an accident, for example.



The Caring for One Another core group has, therefore, prepared a short form which members of the congregation may complete, providing the names and contact information of those who should be informed if anything serious should occur, such as your hospitalisation or death. Placed in a sealed envelope, the forms will be held, in total confidence, by representatives of the Church of Scotland, Geneva – notably the Minister and the Coordinator of the Caring for One Another core group. The information on the forms will not be passed on to anyone without your express permission, or unless your condition makes you unable to grant that permission.

For further information, or to discuss this idea in more detail, please don't hesitate to speak to any member of the Caring for One Another core group. They are: the Minister Revd Laurence Twaddle; the Caring for One Another core group coordinator, Revd Jim Sharp; Terry Angleys; Janet Askew; Christine Bunn; Jean Murray; Eleanor Strittmatter; and Rosaleen Walker.



FLOWERS

The Flower rota for this year has been standing beneath the notice board in the Salle for a couple of months now awaiting your name. Perhaps it is my fault that I have not spoken to you

personally... please forgive me and do get in touch by telephone or email to say that you would like to donate some flowers on a particular Sunday. I will be happy to help you arrange them if necessary.

I do hope you will enjoy sharing in this ministry of contributing flowers on a particular Sunday

- to remember the passing of a loved one,
- or on the occasion of a celebration, a birthday or anniversary,
- or for the sheer joy of seeing fresh flowers brightening the Auditoire on a Sunday morning to glorify God...
- and our group of 'Carers' are always happy to have flowers to take to those who are ill, are housebound, or are in hospital.

Please add your name to the flower rota and let me know that you have done so. Thank you.

I would also like to make a **special appeal for flowers and arrangers for Easter Sunday** (1st April) when we like to fill the Auditoire with flowers to celebrate this special day in the church's year.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Janet Askew (Tel: 022 758 14 45 or email: janetaskew@greenmail.ch)

Fun, Fellowship and Flair for our Fair (4Fs)

Did you enjoy last year's Church Fair? Already thinking about this year's Fair [24 November, in case you're wondering ;-)]?

Many of us thought it would be nice to have a homemade craft stall stocking well, homemade items. We then thought it would be fun to get together in each other's houses to make these items and, obviously, to have a natter and a cup of tea. So in mid-January, a few of us got together at Christine Bunn's house to start the ball rolling and ideas started flowing (along with lots of a laughter).

We thought it would be good to meet once a month in the afternoon and Eleanor Strittmatter kindly agreed to host the next meeting on Tuesday, 13 February from 13:30 (future meetings will be held at different places and we'll let you know when/ where through the appropriate Sunday Service.

If you, like some of us, and are all fingers and thumbs, it doesn't matter - the first and second Fs are for Fun and Fellowship, and this will be an ESSENTIAL part of our get togethers. And if you can't manage to come every get together, that is also no problem (just make sure that the host/ hostess knows when you are coming). Afternoons a problem? We'll be scheduling evening or weekend sessions over the next few months, for those who work or have other obligations (such as child watching).

Meanwhile, can you check your house for materials that could be used: buttons, felt, scrap fabric Want to know more? Please have a chat to Christine Bunn, Jane Broere, Eleanor Strittmatter, Suzanne Murray-Jones, Christine Buehler, Ann Caloz,

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