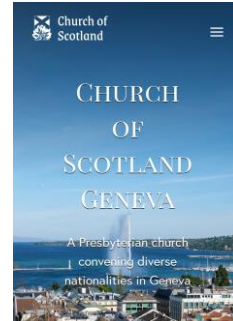




Newsletter

March 2025



LETTER FROM THE MINISTER

I call these last 8 years “The Bonus Years”!

I have no idea what our life would have been like had we followed through on our arrangements to retire in 2016, move into the lovely house we had rented for 6 months in the Languedoc and embraced *la vie en rose* – to see whether we liked it or not!

Instead, we had the wonderful privilege of coming to the Church of Scotland, Geneva – meeting so many wonderful people from across the world.

People who would never have been in our story became our story, and what an extraordinary delight and blessing that proved to be!

Living in Geneva wasn't too shabby, either!

And offering hospitality to an extraordinary collection of people, who *happened to be passing through Geneva*, or who kindly came to visit us from all across the world, was a huge pleasure – though it took its toll on the waistline!

But, here at the Hotel Taverney, there was much laughter and love shared, as well as wonderful cooking enjoyed, and excellent Swiss wine explored. Lindy, I am sure, would have enjoyed a 5 Star Hostess rating on Tripadvisor! And always the shortbread!!

Of course there were moments of great sadness and loss along the way, and the memory of precious and beautiful people, the story of their lives and the example of their faith and faithfulness - those connections are embedded in the memory and will remain.

And there were mistakes...missed opportunities, disappointed people, and errors of judgement. Those recollections bring regret and sorrow... and hope of understanding and forgiveness.

Although it is a reality of life, and particularly of ministry, that you will not please all the people all the time, and you cannot, that reality is still a source of sadness.

It has been a huge honour, privilege and blessing to share in the ministry of the congregation of the Church of Scotland, Geneva...the place, the people, the service together, the friendships, deep and true, that have been formed, the lessons learned, the songs sung, the prayers shared, the kindnesses shown, the love that has grown.

All these things are grafted on to my heart - and I know onto Lindy's heart as well.

I feel very positive about the future life of the congregation, as new families begin to share in its story, and will help work for it in the years to come. When that commitment and faithfulness are energized by the presence of the Spirit of Christ moving within the life of a congregation, lives will continue to be changed, faith will continue to deepen, and love to grow.

That's a powerful and compelling vision!

There will be other moments to say thank you – but this might be a good time to say it...when I don't have to choke back the tears...

Love as always...and thank you!

Laurence

Church News

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER 2025



Palm Sunday April 13th

– 11-00 a.m. Auditoire



Monday 14th – Zoom Holy Week
Lunchtime Service 12.30 p.m.

Tuesday 15th – Zoom Holy Week
Lunchtime Service 12.30 p.m.

Wednesday 16th - Zoom Holy Week
Lunchtime Service 12.30 p.m

Thursday 17th – Zoom Holy Week
Lunchtime Service 12.30 p.m.

Good Friday 18th – 11.00 a.m. Morning
in the Auditoire.



Easter Sunday – Morning Service at 11.00
a.m.

(preceded by Breakfast in the Salle from
9.30 a.m.)

If you would like to help with the
breakfast, please contact Christine Buhler.

A Farewell Letter from Beatriz Figueiredo.

Dearest Church,

As I move back to Finland to complete my studies, I wanted to thank all of you for the open arms with which you have accepted me into your community.

Being able to sing with the choir has brought such joy to my heart! I cherish the memories so, specially rehearsing and singing for the Christmas service. (I still have "Voice of God" stuck in my head!)



You all have showed me once more that regardless of what new environment I find myself in, we can always find a community in the house of our Father.

So, I pray that God keeps blessing your lives and this Church, and that your loving hearts may continue to be as caring and welcoming!

May God's peace be with you!

Beatriz

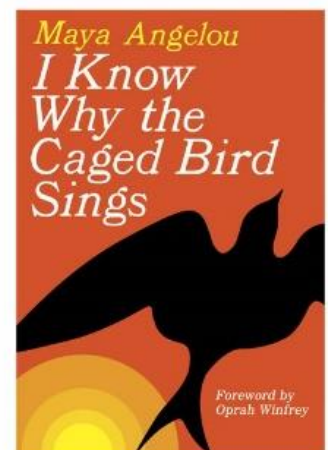
Book Group

The book club met on 12th March and we discussed *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus which is a book about social conditions, sex discrimination and feminism in the 1950's and 60's.

Most of us enjoyed it but some thought it too preposterous. All agreed that it was well written and very funny - enough to make us laugh. There was much to discuss including the importance of families, dog intelligence and faith.

The next meeting is on Wednesday 30th April in the Salle at 14.00 hrs when we will discuss the book: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou: about poverty and racism in USA, beautifully written, autobiographical. We also decided to read *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens to be able to discuss it in the autumn.

Gillian Friedli

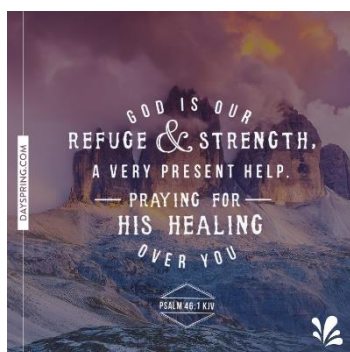


Burns Supper 2025

The Burns Supper on 25th January was a really happy occasion, thoroughly enjoyed by all members and friends of our congregation in attendance. Of course, a successful and enjoyable evening like that doesn't just appear out of nowhere. A huge amount of work went into making our Burns Night so special. Many thanks to all those who rearranged and decorated the salle, set the tables, prepared the traditional Scottish fare, served the tables, welcomed guests downstairs at the door or upstairs at the bar, brought along a keyboard, played that keyboard, sang, recited poetry, made speeches, cleared up afterwards and, most importantly, shared good humour and conversation (not to mention a dram or two) in a spirit of fun and friendship. A great time was had by all!



A heartfelt note from Suzanne Murray Jones



I just want to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone for your continued prayers and support for Dougie over these couple of months as he has been facing some serious challenges with his heart and kidneys. By God's grace, he's slowly improving and has now been moved to a hospital closer to home. We're so grateful for your love and encouragement- thank you!

From the Editor,

Those of you who remember Laurence's claim to have found the prefect Christmas gift for me, may like to know—he was right! I have always wanted one of these and this is a magnificent example and just right for our house in rural Burgundy. Not sure how he smuggled it home without me noticing!



from Michael:

When David Frost proposed to the daughter of the Duke of Norfolk, one of the first people she told was her favourite nun.

"Is he religious?" the sister asked.

And finally- because I hate empty space- a few bloopers.

These sentences (with all the BLOOPERS) actually appeared in church bulletins or were announced in church services:

- The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.
- The sermon this morning: Jesus Walks on the Water. The sermon tonight: Searching for Jesus.
- Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.
- Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community. Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say 'Hell' to someone who doesn't care much about you.
- Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.
- Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.
- For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.
- Next Thursday there will be try-outs for the choir. They need all the help they can get.
- Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.
- A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.
- At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.
- Potluck supper Sunday at 5:00 PM - prayer and medication to follow.



Finance Update – February 2025

The main question most people have of a financial update or report at this time of year is always backward-looking: how did we do last year? This was something I attempted to show in the last newsletter although since the data was only available up to the end of November, it was always going to be based on projections and best estimates.

Now we have the actual figures. They still have to be approved by the independent examiners and then approved by the Annual Congregational Meeting (ACM) on 01 June this year but the likelihood is that they can be considered reliable. The ACM will receive a full report but the summary version can be given here.

	2024 Budget	2024	2023	2024 vs 2023
Income	183,300	173,987	184,186	- 13,704
Expenditure	162,965	157,045	146,551	6,990
Surplus	20,335	16,942	37,635	- 20,694
Mission	N/A	26,522	30,027	- 3,505
NET ASSETS	292,840	289,447	272,505	16,942

The overall picture is that the Church achieved a surplus of CHF 16,942. That was about 45% of the surplus achieved in 2023 but the latter was no ordinary year. The Church had been under-performing in financial terms since the COVID-19 lockdown in particular. In 2023, the alarm was raised that it would soon lose around 10% of its net worth each year, if not more, risking bankruptcy by 2030. That led to the special appeal which generated a huge level of income at the end of the year, giving the quite spectacular result seen then.

The question in 2024 was whether or not the message had sunk in. The special appeal emphasized that this was not purely a financial question. The Church does not exist to make money. Its core “business”, if you want to call it that, is spiritual. However, its money is a bit like a body’s temperature or blood pressure. It’s not all there is to the overall health but it’s a good indicator and one which is easy to measure in quantifiable terms which are comparable over time.

So did things change in 2024? The need to boost Congregational life and bring in new members got off to a strong start with the launch of the Future Focus initiative. This is ongoing but its financial potential is still to be realized to a significant extent at this stage. The strongest performer in terms of income in 2024 was the Freewill Offering which brought in over half of the Church’s revenue with CHF 106,660. This indicates a high degree of commitment by regular members and givers, which is very encouraging. The impressive performance of the Church Fair (including the Ceilidh) at a net income level of CHF 13,819 also shows an excellent combination of the Church coming together as a community and raising funds as part of that.

Cash income and other donations were down relative to 2023 but a lot of the latter were probably one-time responses to the special appeal, or else moved over to more regular Freewill giving in 2024. Cash has only ever recovered at a slow rate since it was almost wiped out by the COVID-19 lockdown.

Expenditure was kept within budgeted levels although it was higher than in 2023 due mainly to Church of Scotland/International Presbytery dues, increased utilities costs and taxation expenses. Overall, the Church retains quite a strong control over its expenditure which is a good thing.

Overall, this leaves the Church in a reasonable position although there is a serious risk of complacency. The special appeal in 2023 roughly reset the financial clock to around the point where it had been in 2018/2019. A surplus of almost CHF 17,000 is a good performance but not exceptional. Nor should it be taken for granted. This is especially the case when the income relies to a significant extent on a small number of donors who give large amounts. As noted above, we plan and control our outgoings quite effectively but the slow start of Future Focus shows that apart from the Church Fair, we don't have a very proactive approach to what could be considered fundraising or even marketing. There is more to fundraising than bake sales and lunches, valuable though those are. However, if the Church wants to take control of its future direction, something along the lines of a strategic outreach committee, reporting to the Kirk Session and/or the Congregational Committee would be a great boost.

Moving into 2025, we can see this already. Going by history, January and February are roughly indicative of the monthly income levels you expect to see throughout the year, apart from November and December when they can increase a shade (even beyond the effect of the Church Fair). However, the expenditure figures are typically lower.

At the end of February, income was CHF 23,930, expenditure CHF 27,847. A deficit in the order of CHF 4k is hardly a disaster and could be wiped out by a single, generous donation but the more concerning issue is that it should be developing in this way. If we want to take control of the direction of our Congregation and invest in its life, we need to be doing a shade better.

Of course, we may yet have such an opportunity. The loss of our Minister at the end of May is nothing to look forward to. We will all miss Laurence greatly. Also, the leadership of a full-time Minister is of considerable value, not only in a spiritual sense but also in terms of driving forward the Church as a going concern. This is something which the Kirk Session will need to address. Nonetheless, from a purely financial perspective, there is a mathematical benefit to having part-time cover in place of a full-time Minister. The current projection, which is admittedly very approximate, is that going by performance to date and projections based on the Minister costs situation, 2025 income may be in the order of CHF 170k and expenditure around CHF 130k. Some CHF 40k surplus would represent a great opportunity for investment in measures designed to achieve better financial sustainability and Congregational life. This is where the Church needs to see what its finances represent in 2025 and take strong action to make the most of it.

The question is thus, are we prepared to sit and enjoy the financially good times while they last, or do we want to stand up and grasp the possibilities which are on offer? This is not just a question for the Finance Sub-Committee but for the whole Congregation. Right here and right now.

Ewart MacKenzie
Treasurer

Please note that the above report does not take into account Mission income and expenditure, except where explicitly referred to in the table. These remain distinct from those of the rest of the Church and are considered equal to each other from one year to the next so that their mathematical impact on the measurement of the Church's finances is zero.



aThe International Presbytery: Reflections on a First Meeting in Paris, March 2025

Ewart MacKenzie

It can be easy to be a shade suspicious of the bodies in charge pretty much anywhere. Boards of directors in companies, parliaments and senates, UN governing bodies, school councils and many more: if you're not part of them but they make decisions which affect you, the likelihood is that you're not entirely sure that you trust them.

The Church of Scotland is no exception and certainly, the tone which most people adopt when saying, "121 George Street," is a case in point. Personally, having attended quite a few briefings given by the Stewardship Committee in Edinburgh, my own feeling is that 121, as it's commonly known, gets a somewhat unfair deal although its internal communications could maybe do with an overhaul.

For those not familiar with the Church's governance structure, 121 George Street is essentially a form of secretariat to the General Assembly, which leads the Church through a series of Presbyteries. These groups of Churches are all in Scotland apart from the Presbytery of England and the Channel Islands, and our own, International Presbytery.

Unlike Scottish Presbyteries, it's physically impossible to hold a meeting of representatives from all Churches together in one day. The logistics of travel between Bermuda and Sri Lanka, the two farthest flung Congregations, are just too much. Even linking Lisbon, Rotterdam and Rome is more or less impossible for a day's meeting. As a result, the International Presbytery meets twice a year over three days in a location hosted by one of the European Churches.



While this may be challenging in terms of organization, I understand that it has a significant benefit. It brings together the representatives from across the Presbytery who come together, get to know each other, and have quite positive, productive and friendly meetings together. The stereotype of a soulless, governing body meeting where people would sit and either immerse themselves in endless details of exceptional boringness or, even worse, discuss shady ways forward like a little cabal was quickly blown away by the meeting I joined in early March. It was nothing like that.

I myself am not technically a member of Presbytery. I'm a corresponding member. This basically means that I'm not an Elder but I am serving on the Finance Committee and, by extension, in the full Presbytery discussions. I can speak but not vote. Given that most decisions seem to be made by consensus, I'm not sure that makes a lot of difference in practice and it certainly didn't this time around.

The Finance Committee is actually a very good example of how well the Presbytery appears to work. What impressed me most was that everybody there knew each other very well from many meetings ago but having been requested to join, I was immediately made to feel welcome and asked to provide an opinion on matters. Anybody could speak up, anybody could challenge anyone else and nobody was disrespected in any way. There was nobody there who didn't understand what the admittedly technical points of discussion were about but the atmosphere was relaxed enough that people were enjoying the discussions about topics such as support from the fabric fund for archiving in St. Andrew's Scots Kirk, Sri Lanka or the implications of the Church's registration with the Office of the Scottish Charity Register and the associated need to move from accrual to cash accounting. It's a lot more interesting than it sounds when you're part of a dynamic group who know what it means and work together by default.

The broader Presbytery worked just as well. It was great to see the appreciations being voiced for retiring members, the reports made on things already past, the analysis of current challenges and the encouragement voiced in terms of both spiritual direction and practical steps forward. It didn't seem to matter whether someone had been there for one meeting or one hundred. There were plenty of people who were clearly long-term members and brought an experience which nobody else could match. However, they were just as happy to listen to newer and younger members, many of whom had not been in their respective Churches for so long, precisely because they had been elsewhere and therefore brought new insights and perspectives with them.

There were plenty of Scottish people there but also Church members from Holland, Canada, Bermuda, Germany, Italy, Sri Lanka, the United States, Poland, Ireland and various others I should be remembering but am failing to do so, and, of course, England. There were people with backgrounds from the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church and various denominations outside Europe. Of course, our own Congregation in Geneva shows a similar mixture, as do no doubt most international Churches but the nice thing about the International Presbytery was seeing this mixture in action. Questions of faith, fabric and finance were all addressed among a range of others. We even got to attend the ordination of a new, Ordained, Local Minister in the Scot's Kirk in Paris on the last day. The Paris Congregation organized a great reception after the Service and at least for me, it got a bit hard trying to remember who was part of the Presbytery, and who was part of the Congregation, especially when somebody was both. By that point, it was just a very good Church meeting.

Overall, the meeting in Paris was a great opportunity to see how our Church is composed of so many, very different people who come together to work for God with whatever skills and knowledge they have, to find that our Church is run by people who understand each other and care about each other and their Churches, and to be welcomed as part of it. Geneva is due to host the International Presbytery in a few meetings' time and it's something which I think we can all look forward to being involved with in whatever way possible.



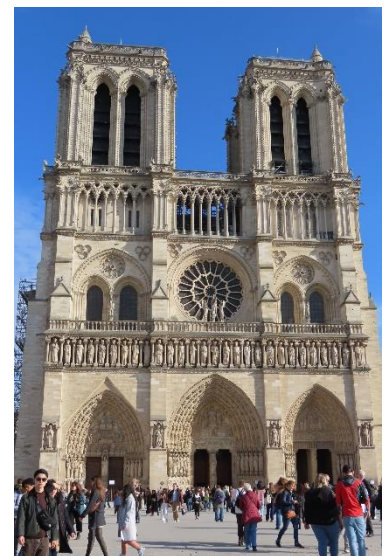
Ewart MacKenzie
Treasurer

And of course, the spouses have a great time too. We call ourselves IPP's- Important Presbytery People! We are in the fortunate position of being able to tour the locale- often with an informed native- to see hidden gems off the beaten track, while the Presbyters slog away in meetings. If forced, we will stop around lunchtime and partake of local delicacies. In Paris we were chaperoned by the charming Denis- husband of Valerie, Session Clerk. He led us on a walking tour of the Bastille area where we were staying and later to see the restored Notre Dame in all her glory. It was a heart-warming to see the building in all its cleaned and restored splendour and also to witness the faces of the hundreds of people touring the building- the vast majority of whom were smiling as they came out.

Lindy Twaddle.



It's not often you see policemen on roller blades!



Can you help host visitors from our Mission Partner in Ekwendeni?



The Mission Committee is very much hoping that our congregation can host three representatives of Ekwendeni HIV Youth Resource Centre in a visit this September. The visitors will include Shupo, who is in charge of the Centre, and two youth volunteers who work with him.

We have been able to secure grant funds to cover the cost of their flights, passports, visas, etc. BUT we need to make sure we have sufficient numbers of volunteers to help host the visitors during their two-week visit. The exact dates have not been fixed but the visit will be sometime in September.

It has been several years since we organised the last visit from our Mission partner in Malawi. The aim of this visit will be to celebrate together the work of the Resource Centre in this its 25th anniversary year, to strengthen our partnership relations, and to re-energise our mission partners and our congregation for this hugely important work with young people in northern Malawi.

Please consider offering any of the following areas of help:

- Providing accommodation for the visitors (at least two or three nights if possible)
- Taking them out for a day trip
- Hosting them for a dinner
- Or any other forms of assistance you would like to offer!

From past experience, we know that these visits to Geneva are hugely enriching not only for the visitors from the Resource Centre but also for those in our congregation who host them and get the opportunity to talk with them about their lives and work.

Many thanks in advance for any offers of help.

Jenny Rietbergen on behalf of the Mission Committee

jennifer.rietbergen@gmail.com





Church of
Scotland

Join us for a

Farewell Party for Laurence and Lindy

Sunday 4 May

12:15 to 15:00

Salle de Paroisse

Rue de l'Hôtel-de-Ville

Geneva

RSVP: buhlerchristine@hotmail.com

Come and enjoy a special lunch event as we wish Laurence and Lindy a fond farewell!

The Salle de Paroisse is on the right-hand side of the hill up to the Auditoire from the Bourg de Four
(see entrance circled in photo)



THE SCOTS KIRK PARIS

Setting the scene



The Scots Kirk, with origins going back to 1858, and a tradition of worship which has included royalty, presidents, prime ministers and Olympic champion Eric Liddell, also has strong mission traditions. When the 1940 German occupation forced the church to close, Rev Donald Caskie moved his ministry to Marseilles, where his mission included his work for the French Resistance.

Re-established in the heart of the city, this congregation still reaches out to those in need by providing regular donations of food, toiletries and clothing to a Roman Catholic brotherhood which runs a hostel for homeless men on the streets of Paris. In addition to our weekly donations we provide wrapped Christmas gifts and Christmas treats for the men in the care of the Missionnaires de la Charité.

The Paris charge has been vacant since March 2022 but our Interim Moderator, Rev. Laurence Twaddle (Geneva), has ensured that we have an excellent supply of locums to see us through what is never an easy period for a congregation.

We continue to attract a good number of visitors and pride ourselves on the warm welcome we offer to everyone.

Presbytery News



Welcome to this new twice-yearly newsletter designed to help you understand who's who and who does what at our International Presbytery meetings and indeed why they are held at all.

The "Setting the scene" column will give you information about the host congregation and their church – it just so happens that for this first edition, the host congregation was us! So nothing new this time!

What is the presbytery?

A presbytery is a group of congregations, all more or less in the same geographical area. The Church of Scotland is currently going through a mission planning process by which the number of presbyteries will be reduced to around 10 (down from over 40 in the past). Our International Presbytery covers a huge expanse with congregations in Bermuda, Brussels, Budapest, Rome, Geneva, Lausanne, Paris, Malta, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Lisbon and Colombo. We have been allocated five full-time ministers to cover these charges; a great amount of time and effort has gone into "making the numbers fit" and the result for us is that we are in a deferred linking with Rotterdam with permission to call a part-time associate minister; we hope to be in a position to advertise this post very soon.

The presbytery is the court of the Church of Scotland at district level (our "district" being international). It comes between the General Assembly, the highest court of the Kirk, and the Kirk Session at local level.

Presbytery is charged with relaying decisions and instructions issued by the General Assembly to presbyters who in turn pass them on to their own congregations.

Presbytery committees

Tech Team

The Tech Team has an essential role to play during meetings since it is they who ensure that everything we need to see is on the screen and that those attending on-line can take part fully and vote when required. It is also they who manage the [International Presbytery website](#).



Convener Rev. Cindy Campbell (Bermuda) and Robert Kenneth (elder, Lausanne)

Finance Committee

An extremely important committee which ensures good stewardship of the IP's finances. It also processes requests for loans and grants from one of the IP's three funds - Mission, Fabric and Stipend, all of which are endowed with considerable amounts of money resulting from the dissolution of the Gibraltar congregation.



Convener Jo Austen (elder, Malta)

Given the very sizable funds it now holds, the IP is registered as a Scottish charity so the Finance Committee now has to comply with OSCAR regulations as regards our accounts. The Convener and her team are in regular contact with congregational treasurers, always on hand to offer help and advice. This year alone, five congregations have had a change of treasurer, including SKP.

Who makes up the presbytery?

There is a popular misconception that "the Presbytery" is some distant body that tells congregations what to do, creating a "them and us" feeling. This could not be further from the truth! Presbytery comprises the minister and one elder from each congregation, the elder being elected by the Kirk Session. Retired ministers living within the bounds of Presbytery are also members. If the number of ministers exceeds the number of elders, what are known as equalizing elders are appointed to keep the balance. There are also a number of corresponding members who attend meetings but cannot vote. Presbytery votes regularly on a number of issues – ordinary people from our congregations acting in the best interests of our congregations.

The Moderator

Presbytery meetings are presided by a Moderator who officiates for a one-year term, from March to March. As for the General Assembly, the Moderator can be a minister or an ordained elder. At our Paris meeting, elder Thijs Polstra from Amsterdam was installed as our Moderator for the next year. Rev. Betsi Thane (Malta), the outgoing Moderator, conducted the ceremony.



How does the Presbytery weekend unfold?

International Presbytery meetings are held over a three-day weekend with most presbyters arriving on the Thursday. Committee meetings are held on the Friday morning; the first plenary session takes place on the Friday afternoon. In the evening we enjoy a meal together, usually provided by the host congregation. Saturday morning begins with a Communion service attended by presbyters and their partners (this is probably what sets us apart from presbyteries in Scotland - spouses come too!). After a short coffee break, whatever has been arranged for the spouses begins and normal business resumes for presbyters. We then dine together in the evening. The weekend concludes with the Sunday morning service in the host church. How wonderful it was to see SKP full and to listen to such great singing!



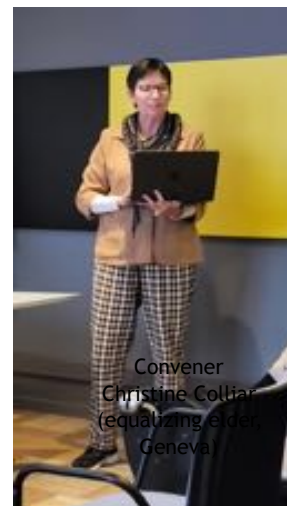
Mission and Creation Care Committee

Among other things, this committee is responsible for

- keeping before congregations the five Marks of Mission and their need to implement them
- recommending a cause for Presbytery Project support each year and reporting on that project
- keeping matters relating to the care of creation before Presbytery and encouraging congregations to work towards reducing their emissions in line with the Church's Net Zero 2030 target

SKP actively participated in last year's Presbytery project through our reverse Advent calendar initiative, raising the sum of 450 euros for Nourishing Minds.

This year's project is Mediterranean Hope, the refugee and migrant programme of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy.



Convener
Christine Colliar
(equalizing elder,
Geneva)

Convener Alice Goodman
(reader, Lausanne)

Fabric Committee

The Fabric Committee:

- ensures that congregations keep their church and manse in good condition
- reviews annually any property work carried out in congregations
- examines proposals for fabric expenditure when this exceeds presbytery's current limit of £30,000



Convener
John Barber
(elder,
Budapest)

Education and Training Committee

This committee:

- supervises candidates in training for Ministry
- ensures presbytery fulfills its obligations for safeguarding training



Convener
Christine Colliar
(additional
elder,
Geneva)

Superintendence and Ministry Committee

The remit of this committee includes:

- exercising general powers of superintendence
- arranging Local Church Reviews
- ensuring safeguarding governance, compliance and reporting.

There are usually two LCRs in any one year but the committee is in the process of "catching up" due to a backlog caused by Covid.

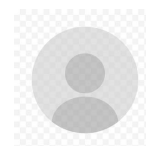


Convener
Ruud Witte
(equalizing
elder,
Rotterdam)

Mission Plan Committee

The MPC is responsible for:

- making proposals for implementation of the Approved Mission Plan
- carrying out annual evaluation and development of the Mission Plan



Convener Rev.
Derek Lawson,
Presbytery
Clerk

Ecumenical greetings

One of the earliest items on the agenda of every International Presbytery meeting is "Ecumenical greetings" when the host congregation invites two or three representatives of other denominations to address presbyters. The Paris congregation, through presbytery elder Valerie and equalizing elder Scott, invited Father Mark Osborne, chaplain at St. George's Anglican Church and Mrs Lyeojeong Kim, the probationer minister serving the Korean Methodist congregation which meets in SKP on Sunday afternoon. Presbytery very much appreciated their words of support and encouragement.



Watch Lyeojeong Kim reading her message to us

<https://youtu.be/6ccfSuowwOM>

Presentation by the host congregation

This is also a regular item on the agenda, giving the host church the opportunity to give presbyters some historical background and to talk about the ongoing work of the congregation. Derek Bonin-Bree, elder and Chairman of the Board and Luciano Freitas, treasurer spoke eloquently on our behalf. Derek gave an illustrated presentation of the church from its beginnings to the present day, leaving us in no doubt that he is indeed a passionate history teacher! Luciano's task was to answer two questions: "Why did you come to the SKP?" and "Why do you keep coming back?"



"...an incredibly warm and welcoming community"

"...we continue to find beauty within our congregation"

"...Truth, Goodness and Beauty embody why we chose SKP as our spiritual home"

International Presbytery Bible study

Discipleship in Practice



'Discipleship' and 'disciple' are words that appear often in church services. Jesus regularly refers to people being his disciples. We tend to think of it as meaning 'to follow Jesus'. We talk about being 'in Christ' and 'walking with Jesus' but what do these expressions mean in practice? How do we be a disciple of Jesus?

Join us for our next online Presbytery Bible study where we will explore what being a disciple really means for us today.

There will be three sessions during Lent, then a break for Easter and three further sessions after Easter. You can join any or all the sessions, which start at 19h30 on a Tuesday and will last about an hour. Dates are:

- 11 March
- 25 March
- 8 April
- 6 May
- 20 May
- 3 June

If you would like to join, send an email to: dlloyd@churchofscotland.org.uk

Ordination of Scott MacSween

The Sunday morning service was a very special occasion for the International Presbytery as a whole and for the Scots Kirk Paris congregation in particular. Long-time elder Scott MacSween was ordained into the Presbytery as an Ordained Local Minister (OLM). To quote the Church of Scotland [website](#) "OLMs are deployed to a particular locality or role by Presbytery and sometimes work across Presbytery borders. They do not receive a stipend and often combine their ministry with secular employment".

Rev. Betsi Thane (Malta) conducted the ceremony and Rev. Derek Lawson (Presbytery Clerk) read out the Formula which Scott was required to sign.

We were delighted to welcome Scott's family and friends on this special day.



And finally from the editor...

I hope you have enjoyed finding out more about the International Presbytery and how it works. The information I have included about the various committees is an extremely condensed version of what is contained in the IP's standing orders; if you would like the full version, don't hesitate to let me know (be warned, it's a lengthy and not always very exciting read!).

Likewise I have not gone into any great detail concerning the actual business of the meeting. Each committee convener gives a report and proposes a number of deliverances to be approved by presbyters. Again, Scott and I have all these reports and the minutes of the meeting; we will be happy to share them.

Two ministers will be retiring very shortly: Rev. Eric Foggitt (Brussels) and Rev. Alistair Bennett

(Bermuda). Rev. Laurence Twaddle will be leaving his charge in Geneva meaning that there will be a total of five vacant charges in the IP. Challenging times lie ahead.

Photo credits: Ruud Witte who, in addition to being the Convener of the Superintendence and Ministry Committee, is also the IP's Communications and Publicity Officer.

Thank you to Helen, Fiona, Fabienne, Heather, Nicola, Louise, Derek, Luciano and everyone else at SKP for making the weekend such a success. There is a standing joke within the IP which goes like this: "What is the best presbytery meeting you've ever attended?" Answer: "The one immediately after the one you organized!" Amsterdam in October will certainly be less stressful for some of us!

