



Swiss Church News

Spring 2019

Swiss Church in London
Eglise Suisse de Londres
Schweizerkirche in London
Chiesa Svizzera a Londra
Baselgia Svizra a Londra

Dear reader,

It has been a turbulent start to the New Year. As Brexit unfolds, not only Parliament but society as a whole becomes more divided over the issue. The way ahead is unclear and brings a lot of insecurity. There is a good chance that a solution will not be found for many years to come. Yet what I find most difficult about Brexit is that it completely overshadows other burning issues that need to be urgently addressed but have simply no space amidst the self-inflicted chaos. Child poverty is on the rise, the health system is on the brink of collapse and more people than ever before are affected temporarily or long term by homelessness or precarious living and working situations. On my way to the Swiss Church I pass under the train bridge at Finsbury Park station to get on the tube. Over the past years the underpass has become a village for people with no permanent accommodation who have built cardboard houses and bed stations. Some of these houses even have doors and book walls and coat hooks. I notice that I am getting worryingly used to this sight. I am turning a blind eye to the social issues on my doorstep as I find myself watching the Brexit drama unfold on primetime television instead. It is so easy to give in to the temptation. I believe however that it is our duty as a church community to turn our eyes to the challenges of our days that go unseen, to remind each other of this responsibility.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped to keep the church ministry going during my maternity leave. A special thank has to go to Meret and Daniel who have given a part of their sabbaticals to look after the congregation and helped out in many ways; and of course to the whole team and all the volunteers. The baptism of our son Yuvi Mark on 21 October 2018 was a highlight for our little family, and we are grateful that Yuvi can grow up in such a caring church community. To be part of a community gives us a sense of belonging. Communities – religious as well as secular – are the foundation

of our society and carry us through good and bad times whatever political turmoil society as a whole is facing. Church communities present an opportunity to meet people whose paths we might otherwise never cross and therefore challenge us to be more understanding and tolerant of each other. In a society where generations are often separated, they are places where young and old come together and learn from each other's experiences. The Swiss Church community has a special place in many people's hearts and our many skills and personalities make this place thrive and prosper.

I am delighted to be back to serve as your Minister and to put my energy into growing the Swiss Church further. There are some changes ahead and some exciting projects coming up. I hope to see you at one of our events or church services soon!

From 25 February to 8 March, Luca Boetschi will do an internship at the Swiss Church. Luca is from Basel and is on a gap year after his 'Matura' (A-Levels). From 22-29 April, theology student Anna Lerch and Lisa Di Andrare will also be on an internship at the Church.

We are looking forward to welcoming them in our team!

I would also like to make you aware that the position of Office and Lettings Administrator (4 days/week) is vacant and that we welcome applications to fill this important front of house role. Please contact the church office for more information. The full job description can be found on our website.

I wish you all a blessed 2019!

Yours,

- Rev. Carla Maurer

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Latest news

✚ From the Consistoire



by Peter Stäuber
- President

After our fantastic events during the Christmas season, the more prosaic part of

winter – and the long wait for spring – is well underway. But we have another exciting year ahead of us with many events and community gatherings.

There have been a few changes in the Consistoire in recent months. Nathalie Chalmers has stepped down as Company Secretary. She took up that role soon after joining us in 2017, and I would like to thank her very much for all the work that she has done, not least the organisation of last year's AGM. Yvon Tse has kindly offered to act as Company Secretary on a temporary basis, until we have found a permanent replacement

– I would also like to thank Yvon in advance for this, it's much appreciated! After Hermann Aebischer's move from London to Paris, the new Consul General from the Swiss Embassy, Manuela Ferrari, has joined the Consistoire – welcome!

Last year was the first in which the Swiss Church had to stand on its own two feet financially. We've managed to do that thanks to the fantastic work of our Venue Management team, as well as the generous donations that we've received, both from Switzerland and from the UK. I'd like to thank everybody for their support and hope that the coming year will be a successful as the last.

With best wishes,
Peter

Peter Stäuber's recently published book 'Sackgasse Brexit: Reportagen aus einem gespaltenen Land' can now be ordered online, or you can contact Peter directly for more details: peter.stauber@swisschurchlondon.org.uk

FROM THE VENUE



By Nat Breitenstein
- Venue Manager

It is difficult not to think about the tumultuous situation we find ourselves in here in Britain at the moment. We are on the precipice of great change, but what this change will be no one knows.

Not being able to predict outcomes is nothing new, how we deal with it can be though if we ask ourselves, as well as encourage others, to look inwards questioning; where did we make mistakes, how can we learn from them, what and how can we change in order to grow in the future. Most importantly we need to think about how we can adapt, let go of old ways, perhaps even cross some red lines and take action. No small feat for anyone.

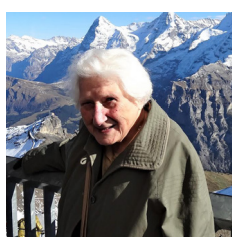
And yet we do this constantly in our day-to-day lives, whether in outright negotiations or on some peripheral level; when dealing with a problem at work, with a family situation or a disagreement with a friend. Assessing needs with flexibility and adaptability is always at the chore of human relations and social harmony.

For me, this is key to my job here. Being able to manage the 'who, what, when, where and how' of all the myriad users of this beautiful space, and balance out their needs and various demands, that may on occasion hold potential conflicts takes a fair amount of effort. Although I, of course, don't always get this right. My aim is to enable as many as possible to 'co-habit' here in harmony, adhering to the Swiss Church in London's mission to be an open, creative and accessible space.

Great change may be coming but if we all focus on the efforts we make daily, the small changes we have to make within ourselves this may make the bigger changes less daunting and easier to navigate successfully.

This topic may be an opportune moment to announce a restructuring of the team here. We are recruiting for a Office and Lettings Administrator. If anyone is interested or knows anyone who might be interested the details can be found on our website www.swisschurchlondon.org.uk.

I cannot recommend working here more highly, it is hugely satisfying, and great to be part of a truly amazing team. From my part I will be staying on with a venue and premises advisory role helping to maintain and further develop the Swiss Church in London into the best it can be.



Edith Crack – A tribute

1 December 1919 –
22 November 2018

Edith Hartmann was born in Basel in 1919. She was the youngest of three children.

In 1938, having gained a Diploma from the commercial school - the Handelsschule - Edith, age 19, started work at the Union Bank of Switzerland. She enjoyed her job and its responsibilities and remembered the years with happiness despite her brother's death in the war in 1942, and the death of her father in 1944 in 1944, aged 65

The summer of 1947 Edith, her sister Erika and their mother went to San Remo in north-west Italy, near the French border. Ken - a very English Englishman - had also ventured abroad to San Remo and managed to charm Edith. They married in July 1948 in the Minster in Basel and then moved to Highgate, North London. The shock of coming to live in a country where everybody spoke English and everything was rationed, was great. To English ears her Swiss accent sounded like German which made life very difficult in a country which had recently been at war with Germany.

After the birth of their first daughter, the couple moved to Finchley where all three children grew up. Katherine was born in 1949, followed by Dorothy in 1952 and by Frederick in 1957.

After 1970 the household at Church Crescent grew quieter and Edith had more time to

herself and so was able to attend services and events at the Swiss Church. Edith became a member of the Consistoire in 1972 and was elected president in 1980. She was president for 20 years until May 2000, when she stood down age 81.

Edith's greater involvement with the Swiss Church coincided with the time that her husband started working abroad. The plus side was that Edith was able to take extended holidays visiting the foreign countries where Ken worked. The downside was that they grew apart in his long absences abroad and in 1992 they divorced after 45 years of marriage and Edith, moved into her house in Oakfield Road.

Edith continued to travel into her 80s including of course to the USA to visit Fred & his family. Edith was a regular attendee at the annual Swiss Abroad meetings.

Edith had lived a long and full life. She very much valued and enjoyed the "café und kuchen" visits of her Swiss church friends. Edith's house in north London was the family hub where all her children, grand-children and great-grandchildren came together. In her Lebenslauf Edith wrote: "may God protect and keep my children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren to the end of their lives."

(Abbreviated version of Katherine's tribute to her mother)

Edith's ashes will be interred in the Hartmann family grave at the Hoernli Friedhof in Basel on Thursday 21 February. Pfarrer Paul Jungi has agreed to conduct a short service. Paul Jungi was the Minister at the Swiss Church in London from 1975 - 1978. He is now retired and lives in Riehen.

Art Programme news

by Kirsty White

My new year's resolution for 2019 has been to bring more audiences into the Swiss Church. Hence, this year's programme is structured around two main events that will invite multiple artists, and hopefully, new and different visitors to the space.

The first of these events is a one-day project that takes as its starting point two of the meanings of volume—the amount of space something occupies as well as a degree of loudness—and looks to sensorially map the interior volume of the church by engaging with site-specific and sonic art practices. It will focus on artists who explore the sculptural properties of sound, and how sound can occupy, or make visible space. This is influenced by artist Alvin Lucier's *'I am sitting in a room'* (1969), a seminal sound work in which Lucier accentuates the resonant harmonies and frequencies of the surrounding environment through a process of recording and re-recording his own voice on a tape recorder.

Also taking inspiration from the 1960s, the second event in the programme is a contemporary response to the avant-garde performances that were presented in the Judson Memorial Church, New York by choreographers such as Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton and Trisha Brown. A combination of new work, recreations of existing works and archival footage, the event will highlight how chance, improvisation and generative practices were used by the Judson Dance Theatre to question the traditional dance concert format and promote a cooperative method for producing dance performances. It



will compare this to artist's use of algorithms and computer programmes in artworks today, to look at how and why artists devolve their artistic decision making to autonomous systems.

Outside of these events, I am launching a new off-site and online programme that will ask artists to respond to the church space without doing a public event at the Church. Instead artists will be commissioned to contribute a written, drawn, painted, photographic, digital or sonic response that is disseminated by email, the website and/or print if appropriate. This is inspired by a desire to play with fiction and reality, and to test the value of the event in real life versus the online event. It will also give me the opportunity to engage with practices that aren't necessarily supported by the space because of its heritage listing, for example photography, writing and print or publishing.

I look forward to sharing more details (and dates!) with you soon. Please visit <http://beingandappearing.org.uk> for more details.



Appeal for Information on the Petavels

I am a Professor at the State University of New York at Albany, researching the life and work of Captain James William Petavel (1870-1945). Captain Petavel was the second son of Rev. William Petavel, Minister of the Swiss Church from 1866 to 1879, and a nephew of Rev. Emmanuel Petavel-Olliff, Minister of the Swiss Church from 1863 to 1866. Captain Petavel served in the Royal Engineers from 1889 till 1900, when he retired from the military. He spent about half his time in the military in India, and in 1914 he returned to India, where he spent the remainder of his life as a pioneering educator, mainly based in Calcutta and then in Hyderabad. He was a prolific author, publishing about 30 books and pamphlets, and at least a hundred articles in journals, magazines and newspapers. In the early 1900s he was mainly based in West Yorkshire, and between 1909 and 1914 he directed Moore Place, the Stanford-le-Hope Educational Colony in Essex.

I would be delighted to hear from anyone who is interested in Captain Petavel, or who has knowledge of any relatives, including his two wives (Jeanne Bertha Touchon, and Mabel Hannah Parsons), and six children (Evangeline, Harold L., Gladys May, Ellen Miriam, Frederick, and Marjorie Dora) I would also greatly welcome information on records that might be available in Neuchâtel, the home town of the Petavels, or elsewhere in Switzerland.

Ray Bromley - rbromley@albany.edu

office in USA 1-518-442-4766

or mobile 1-518-605-7585

Or alternatively contact Colin McIntyre: Colin.McIntyre@swisschurchlondon.org.uk





Noah's Ark – The Story

This is an abbreviated version of Noah's Ark as told in the Bible. You can read the full version in the Book of Genesis, chapters 6-9 (the very first book when opening the Bible)

The entire population of humankind had become evil and wicked and God decided to bring a flood to the earth to destroy everyone but Noah and his family. Noah was a man who found great favour in God's eyes. God told Noah to prepare an ark big enough to hold one male and one female from every kind of animal and creature.

"Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded. Then the floodgates of the heavens were opened. For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than fifteen cubits. Every living thing that moved on land perished—birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all humankind. Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark."

But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth. The water receded steadily from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the water had gone down and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. After forty days Noah opened a window he had made in the ark and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth. Then he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground. But the dove

could find nowhere to perch because there was water over all the surface of the earth; so it returned to Noah in the ark. He reached out his hand and took the dove and brought it back to himself in the ark. He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from the ark. When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth. He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did not return to him.

God said to Noah, "Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you—the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground—so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number on it."

God said: "Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease." Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth."

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: "I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth." And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life."

“Nach mir die Sintflut”

Thoughts by Rev Carla Maurer
(inspired by James Rasa)

The story of Noah's ark is one of the most famous bible stories, and it is particularly popular with children. For centuries it has triggered the imagination of young and old, and artists have found inspiration in this exceptional tale. The Bernese songwriter Mani Matter has written a song about Noah. The refrain goes “Und me begriff dass d'Lüt hei gseit däm Maa däm spinnt's” (“And it is understandable that people thought this man is mad”). Jackie Morris and James Mayhew have written the children's book “Mrs Noah's Pockets” which

Religious people might find comfort in the belief of some sort of afterlife, but I know that many church goers, including myself, deep down struggle to believe that our lives continue after we die. If humankind is extinct from this planet, as other species were before, it is very likely that the planet will recover and that new forms of life will emerge. The Earth does not depend on us, but we depend on her. These are frightening thoughts, and more often than not we chose to avoid them completely. There is a German saying that describes the attitude of acting in a way that completely ignores the consequences of our actions: “nach mir die Sinnflut” (“after me the deluge”). It is the “nach mir die Sintflut” attitude that humankind has embraced for too long and led to the environmental disaster that we now face. Not just our time as individuals is limited on this Earth, but perhaps also the time of humankind as a whole.



The story of Noah's Ark ends on a hopeful note. When God sent the great flood to erase the wicked from the surface of the Earth, a small group of people and animals were saved and given another chance. Noah sent out a dove to explore whether there is land in sight. The dove with an olive branch in its beak became a defining symbol for peace and hope. When Noah and his family and the animals finally left the ark, God made a covenant with every living creature promising that he would never destroy again all life by the waters of a flood. The rainbow became the visible sign for this covenant and whenever we see a rainbow we are reminded of our promise to live in harmony with all creatures.

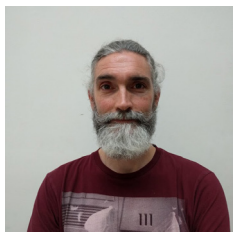
tells the story of Mrs Noah who goes out to gather all the fantasy animals that would not have made it into the ark without her. Which explains why unicorns still exist...! Noah's ark is one of the few biblical stories that almost everyone knows, even those who have little affiliation with Christian faith or the Bible. Yet I wonder how child friendly it really is? We have this quite harmonious image in mind of a big ark loaded with animals and some humans who all survive. For the people and animals however who were not on board of the ark, the story has no happy ending. They face destruction and death.

The story of Noah's ark resonates with our reality today. With our wicked actions and careless lifestyles we have done great damage to the earth that nurtures us and which our lives depend upon. Global warming has led water levels to rise and whole communities and cities are at risk of going under if we fail to turn things around in time. Glaciers are melting away at record speed and the expansion of deserts threatens whole countries. The story of Noah's ark is the story of our time. The destruction of our planet reminds us of our own mortality.

Perhaps there are not enough rainbows, or perhaps we have simply forgotten that we play a part in this covenant too. Another catastrophic flood or a similar disastrous event – even though it might be a creeping process – has become very likely. Will we be given another chance, or will our “nach mir die Sintflut” attitude lead to the extinction of the human race?

There are many things we can do to turn things around. We can lobby politicians. We can eat less or no meat. We can reduce waste. We can recycle. We can fly less. We can raise awareness. All these actions will have an impact, but will it be enough to turn things around? Only time will show. We need to open our eyes and face the reality before it is too late. Every rainbow reminds us that God is on our side and that he is a forgiving God. Yet God needs us to play our part too. This covenant has two parties and we need to keep our promise to look after the creation. There might be no third chance for us. It depends on us whether the white dove with the olive branch in its beak will once again return to tell us that there is new ground to set foot on.

From the Community



By Josh Kelly, Community Worker

An enormous heart felt thank you to the staff at the Swiss Embassy for their generous donation to our Shoe Fund. They managed to raise a massive £470!

I will start buying good walking shoes at the tail end of the sales in order to make the money go as far as it can. Last year the shoes averaged £26 each so I should be able to buy 18 pairs of shoes for our regular Tuesday breakfast crowd.

This winter we started a new relationship with the charity Wrap Up London. This charity collects good used winter coats at key tube stations throughout November, sorts and bags up them then offered them out to homeless charities. I bid for and secured 40 men's coats and Kirsty White and I collected them from the Kings Cross area early in December. The experience was a bit surreal. We arrived at a large storage warehouse and had to navigate ourselves and a stubborn warehouse trolley through a labyrinth of padlocked steel doors before arriving at a mountain of massive white bags, each containing 10 winter coats. Getting the bags and trolley back through the claustrophobic low ceilinged maze and into the taxi was another feat in itself.

We have also had several donations of socks from donors who wish to be anonymous, it is greatly appreciated. This means that by mid-February Breakfast on the Steps with have been able to provide coats, socks and foot wear for many of our regular Tuesday diners.



City Pilgrimage London

27-30 August 2019

We associate pilgrimage perhaps rather with rural areas than with a metropolis, and yet to discover a city from a pilgrim's perspective has its very own charm. In collaboration with Reverend Michael Schaar from the pilgrimage centre in Zurich, we invite you to put on your hiking shoes and to join us on this spiritual journey. A group from Zurich will travel to London to get to experience our city in a new light. It would be wonderful if some members of the Swiss Church and the Swiss community in London would join the group to build new friendships and tell our visitors more about life in London.

Programme

Tuesday, 27 August:

From Limehouse to Angel along Regent's Canal. Visit of St Paul Old Ford Church, Victoria Park and St James Church.

Wednesday, 28 August:

Parkland Walk from Finsbury Park to Alexandra Palace. Visit of Highgate Cemetery.

Thursday, 29 August:

Meeting at the Swiss Church in London (morning). Street pilgrimage in Central London or free time (afternoon).

Friday, 30 August:

Along the Thames from Shepperton to Hampton Court (Weybridge Ferry route).

Members and friends of the Swiss Church can participate in the whole programme or join in for individual days. We ask for a donation of £10 per day. Bring your own lunch. Evening meal in a restaurant (optional).

To sign up please contact Carla (carla.maurer@swisschurchlondon.org.uk) by 15 July. We are also looking for volunteers to welcome the group at the Swiss Church on Thursday, 29 August.

Baptism service

Saturday, 13 April, 11am

Upon request from our readers and members we decided to hold a baptism service on a Saturday which will make it easier for family and friends from Switzerland and other parts of the world to participate. If you would like to be baptised or bring your children to be baptised, please get in touch with Carla (carla.maurer@swisschurchlondon.org.uk). Everyone is invited to this intergenerational service – it would be lovely to see many of you there!



Events @ the Swiss Church

Church services

every first and third Sunday of the month,
11am - 3 Feb, 17 Feb, 3 March, 17 March,
7 April, 21 April (Easter service),
5 May, 19 May

Followed by lunch or refreshments.
Communion every first Sunday of the month.

Everyone is invited to join our Sunday services, no matter what faith tradition (or none) you come from.

Breakfast on the Steps

Every Tuesday, 8-10am

Join us for food and fellowship. If you would like to volunteer, get in touch with Josh (josh.kelly@swisschurchlondon.org.uk)

Goldsmiths Exhibition

5-9 March

Curating student Mariana Lemos has been chosen to show her project 'The Table' for this year's Goldsmiths exhibition. The exhibition will include workshops, screenings and performances by various artists challenging heteronormative narratives. For more information and performance dates consult the Swiss Church webpage.

Seminar "Living Well. Bereavement, Grief, Care & Coping with Loss"

Tuesday, 12 March, 6:30pm

The Swiss Benevolent Society invites you to this seminar at the Swiss Embassy.

Please register www.swissbenevolent.org.uk/activities

Baptism service

Saturday, 13 April, 11am

Get in touch if you would like to be baptised or bring your children to be baptised. For more information please see page 6.

World Day of Prayer

Friday, 1 March, 5:30pm

St Mary's German Lutheran Church and St Anne's Lutheran Church invite you to join them for the World Day of Prayer. Shared prayer, food and fellowship. Everyone is welcome! No need to sign up.

Address: St Mary's, 10 Sandwich Street, Kings Cross, WC1H 9PL

Announcements

Wedding blessing

Charlotte Boyce and Kishan Sharma received a wedding blessing in the church service on 3 February 2019. We wish the newlyweds many happy years together! Be their marriage be blessed with joy and love.



VEGSIL annual meeting

The annual meeting of the 'Verein Ehemaliger Glieder der Schweizerkirche in London' will take place in Zurich, Switzerland on 25 August – more details tbc

New President of the Frauenverein

We congratulate Cecile Mistry who was unanimously elected to be the new President of the Frauenverein. Cecile is a member of the Consistoire and an active member of the congregation. We are looking forward to work with her in this new capacity. A big thank you to Maria Kitsis, the outgoing president, for her commitment.



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Editors

Carla Maurer, Colin McIntyre
& James Rasa
020 7836 1418
info@swisschurchlondon.org.uk

Website

www.swisschurchlondon.org.uk
You can download the latest Swiss Church News on our website.

Frauenverein

Every first Tuesday of the month.
Mrs Cecile Mistry 07778 508 405

La Causerie

Every second Tuesday of the month.
Mrs Lisa Hall-Zeller, 020 8894 2114

Mothers' Group


Every second Wednesday of the month.

Vegsil

Mr Georges Keller
Theater - 8 Februar
Operette - 22 Februar
Theater - 1 März
Konzert - 10 März
Oldies Night / Let's dance - 5. April

Kirchweg 7, 8196 Wil
+41 79 759 21 93
kellerg@sunrise.ch

Presidents Erika and Chris Dyke
chris@macrolevel.co.uk
erikadyke007@gmail.com



"I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth", says God. (Genesis 9:13)

"The thing to do, it seems to me, is to prepare yourself so you can be a rainbow in somebody else's cloud. Somebody who may not look like you. May not call God the same name you call God - if they call God at all. I may not dance your dances or speak your language. But be a blessing to somebody. That's what I think."
(Maya Angelou, American singer, poet and civil rights activist, 1928-2014)

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bt.com/charities/theswisschurchinlondon](https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/theswisschurchinlondon)

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Contacts

Minister

Rev. Carla Maurer

020 8350 4916

079 6853 0380

carla.maurer@swisschurchlondon.org.uk

President of the Consistoire

Mr Peter Stäuber

Peter.stauber@gmail.com

Organist

Peter Yardley-Jones

pyj@swisschurchlondon.org.uk

**Swiss Church in London,
79 Endell Street
London WC2H 9DY**

Tel: 020 7836 1418,

info@swisschurchlondon.org.uk

www.swisschurchlondon.org.uk

Twitter: @SwissChurchLond &

@SwissRevLondon

Carla Maurer's blog:

swissvicarlondon.blogspot.co.uk