



Swiss Church News

Spring 2022

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



Image by Ella Mettler

Dear Readers,

Fundraising and budget planning are a big part of

my ministry at the Swiss Church, and I acquired these skills as a volunteer for the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women, first as a member of the coordinating committee, then as a project manager for the Pop Up Monastery 2015. Volunteering for the Forum was a hugely beneficial experience, both in terms of learning new skills and the friends I gained.

It's been uplifting to see more volunteers from our wider network joining the Swiss Church in recent months. The Breakfast on the Steps team has doubled since the relaunch in June, and the Art Committee is going from strength to strength. It is a privilege to be part of this creative dynamic and to witness new ideas bouncing and evolving!

In the UK, applying for a volunteer position can be as demanding as applying for a paid job, especially for the big national charities. Volunteering in this country is an essential part of one's CV that can make all the difference when applying for a job. Charities, often heavily dependent

on people giving their time and skills for free, also fill major gaps in our chronically underfunded public and social services. Without the uncountable hours of volunteering, our communities would be in a much worse place.

The pandemic has made us all think about what really matters in life. Our local communities have become essential for our mental and physical wellbeing, as we were unable to travel to give or receive support from friends and family who live elsewhere. Neighbours filled these absences for each other, and many of us realised how gratifying it is to be rooted in the local community.

I would like to thank everyone who has joined our volunteer team recently, and especially trustee Jenny Breitschmid who has helped with the onboarding process and volunteer strategy to make sure volunteering at the Swiss Church is a rewarding and safe experience. It's hugely exciting to see our church community grow with people offering their time and expertise in different areas. It truly feels that our church has arrived at the heart of the community, and I can't wait to see where this spirit will lead us next.

This year, we will adapt the way we communicate with the different groups associated with the church. We will grow our social media outreach and communicate more often via electronic newsletter. There will be two editions of the print Swiss Church News, the Easter edition that you are holding in your hands, and the Christmas edition. Event information will also be available on the webpage and will be distributed on Sundays.

I hope you enjoy it!

With every blessing,
Reverend Carla Maurer

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✚ From the Consistoire

- By Jenny Breitschmid and Barbara Wachter, Consistoire Trustees



As we head into 2022 after yet another year full of unknowns, we want to share a message of

optimism with you, highlight a few stellar moments of 2021 and share our excitement about upcoming projects.

First and foremost, the Consistoire would like to thank staff, volunteers and members of the congregation alike for their continued support of the Church – without your time, dedication and enormous joint effort for the community we would not be where we are today.

Just as the year was coming to a close, and new uncertainties imperilled our plans for Christmas, we pulled off the Big Give Christmas Challenge, a fundraiser which trustee Colin McIntyre and volunteer Andreas Feller had enrolled the Swiss Church in. The Challenge raised the incredible sum of over £11,000 for our homeless outreach. Thanks to everyone who contributed, and to those who donated, for putting your trust in our work.



This campaign and its proceeds have particular significance as they enable us to move from the pilot phase of restarting our homeless outreach programme in 2021 to a more regular rhythm. As a project which is particularly close to our hearts and which we unfortunately had to pause, we're thrilled that Breakfast on The Steps is once again up and running, led by Andreas Feller and Robert Kaufeler, and supported by a growing number of volunteers, and solid financial base.

We also want to give a shout out to our Art Committee and its co-chairs Mary Branson and Julie Hoyle, who,

through their tremendous work, have increasingly positioned the Swiss Church at the centre of the Arts Community in Covent Garden and London broadly. The next notable event will be an alumni networking evening in May for artists who have shown work or been in residence in recent years. We are excited to hear and see what inspirational and thought-provoking projects the Art Programme will plan and execute this year!

As the Swiss Church is buzzing with life again, we can't wait to hopefully meet and see many of you there again soon.

✚ From the Venue

- Emily Rose - Venue Manager



It seems the building has come to a sort of ten-year itch. Odd breakages and shortages are happening at

unexpected and inopportune times. Some of you may have been at the baptism last Autumn when the sound system stopped working. We assumed someone had used it, tampered with it, but no. The entire system's malfunction

was all caused by a tiny fuse in one of the plugs deciding to retire from its strenuous role of allowing electrical currents to move through it. I've heard the term "you were lucky to get ten years out of it" a strangely numerous amount of times these last few months as engineers come in to diagnose various problems with the lift or the hall projector system. It chimes in my mind as Rupert replaces a part of the kitchen's handwash sink or researches new urinals for the men's toilets, or echoes in my ears as I sit at my desk trying to prepare myself for the next inopportune malfunction.

But then the doorbell rings (that's still working at least) and I watch another person walk into the building for the first time, sucking in their breath with awe. In these moments I remember that a building is not the sum of its malfunctions. In fact, The Swiss Church seems to outlive most of its malfunctions; they are replaced or fixed, or some simply dissipate over time and the quiet, intangible beauty of its spirit continues almost seemingly unaffected.

The arts team is growing!

Lindsey Wiercioch - Volunteer Arts Community Organiser



Hello, my name is Lindsey Wiercioch. I've recently joined the Swiss Church as a Volunteer Arts Community Organiser supporting the Art Committee

with the promotion and encouragement of community involvement in the annual Church arts programme. I am also in the process of aiding the Church in establishing and developing an artist network, as well as the beginnings of an arts archive.

I'm very excited to begin working with the Swiss Church and to get to know its congregation and community! I think the arts programme has some fantastic things to offer and I can't wait to find more

ways for everyone to not only feel just as excited about the arts programme as I do but to also get involved in all that goes on with it.

While I was born in California and am currently an artist-curator based in London, during the past 8 years I have lived all over the UK. In 2020, I graduated from the Royal College of Art with an MA in Curating Contemporary Art with a primary focus on arts education and previously completed my BA in Art History at the University of St Andrews. My work primarily focuses on public programming surrounding the pursuit and encouragement of arts education within arts institutions and communities, themes I've actively used while working with several Arts charity organisations in London, as well as with other Contemporary arts organisations and projects both in the US and abroad. Within my own arts practice, I try to pursue both psychological expressions and representational understandings of the self, largely through the use of portraiture.

«Breaking Bread» 6-10 June: Art exhibition Margaret Ashman

Back in June 2021, Margaret Ashman invited a group of deaf dancers to perform a piece around the meaning of Communion at the Swiss Church. Sharing the Lord's Supper became a longed-for feast during the pandemic lockdowns. Filmmaker Emil Kunda filmed their dance, and Margaret Ashman produced twelve large scale photo etchings to be shown alongside a 6-min film in their upcoming exhibition at the Swiss Church. Margaret's art straddles many discourses; the use of a language for the deaf, typically BSL, in much of her work locates her practice within disability arts. Breaking Bread explores themes of inclusivity, meeting together and fellowship within Christian worship.

Margaret lives and works in London.



She began her career as an artist twentyfive years ago studying Fine Art at Hertfordshire University, followed by a Masters in Printmaking at Brighton University and London Print Studio. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Painter Printmakers (RE). She regularly exhibits in International group shows and her most recent solo show was Higher Ground, at the Muse Gallery, London in 2019.

Private View:
Monday 6 June, 6pm - 8.30pm

Exhibition open to the public:
Tuesday, 7 June, 12 noon - 6pm
Wednesday, 8 June, 12 noon - 6pm
Thursday, 9 June, 12 noon - 6pm
Friday 10 June, 12 noon - 4pm

The dancers will be invited to the Private view alongside a sign language interpreter so that the artist can speak with them, and other deaf people who come along on the night.

FROM PANCAKE DAY TO EASTER SUNDAY

A chronology of Easter

By Reverend Carla Maurer

Christmas and Easter are the best known religious holidays in the Christian calendar. They bring public life to a standstill, at least in this part of the world, and everybody is treated to a long break regardless of one's religion. For us Christians, Easter is the most important event, and yet in the secular world, Christmas is the one that stands at the top of the pyramid. That's not surprising. The story of birth where both mother and child are well and everyone around them is filled with joy, with angels singing and kings making their appearance, Christmas is bound to be a bestseller. Who doesn't like a nativity play or some beautiful carols?

When it comes to Easter, things are more complicated. The Easter story is not very child friendly, and the joyful experience of the resurrection of Jesus cannot be told without mentioning his brutal death on the Cross. But it's not only a difficult story for children. Death is often a taboo in our society and we struggle to find the appropriate words to talk about it. Easter is also political. The man, who we believe to be the Son of God, ends up on the Cross executed by the authorities. Not the greatest topics of conversation around the family table.

It is therefore not surprising that we tend to focus on coloured eggs, daffodils and chocolate bunnies, reducing Easter to a festival of joy that comes with the resurrection. But Easter is so much more. If we look at Easter as the period starting with Lent and ending with Easter Sunday, it takes us through the ups and downs of life and is rich with symbols representing different aspects of human life. The Easter season can help us cope with the difficult aspects of our existence, throughout the year, throughout our life. Here is a chronology of the Easter period with some small actions to do for each part:



Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day)

This is the last day before Lent and associated with clearing out cupboards of sugar, fats and eggs. It's celebrated in English-speaking countries, and is known as 'Mardi Gras' in France. In Switzerland, the beginning of Lent is marked with 'Fasnacht', from the words 'fasten' (to fast) and 'Nacht' (night), when people put on fancy dresses and parade through the streets for several weeks.

DO: Invite your neighbours or friends to a celebratory meal of leftovers and pancakes. There is always more in our cupboards than we think.

Ash Wednesday

It marks the first day of Lent and derives its name from the placing of repentance ashes on the foreheads of churchgoers.

DO: Write on a piece of paper something that you would like to change in your life. Burn the paper (please be careful!) and collect the ashes in a little bowl as a reminder.



Lent

Lent is the 40-day season that comes before Easter. It's a time of reflection and preparation for Easter. Often Lent is associated with deprivation and self-discipline (no sweets, no coffee, no meat). But it is about much more than that really. It's a time to sharpen awareness of the impact of our actions on the environment, and how we can be more in tune with God's creation.

DO: Observe this Lenten season, not as an act of self-discipline, but think of the impact on the world around you. What action can you take to make a difference?



Maundy Thursday

The Thursday before Easter marks the day Jesus had the last supper with his closest circle before his trial and washed his disciples feet. Later, this has been interpreted as the first Eucharist, or Communion, that we still celebrate in church today by sharing wine and bread.

DO: Make a charitable donation as an act of sharing and caring.

Good Friday

On this day, we mourn the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Good Friday is the most important holiday in the reformed church. Jesus died on the cross feeling abandoned by God and by his closest friends. His suffering stands for the suffering of humankind, and with his death, he has taken all our sins upon himself.

DO: Free up your calendar and give yourself space to feel the burdens that you are carrying in life. Light a candle, write in your journal or pray to put in words what weighs heavy on your shoulders.

Easter Saturday

Easter Sunday is often overlooked, but full of meaning. It's the day that Jesus lay in his tomb after he died. Most churches teach that Jesus descended to the realm of the dead to save righteous souls who died before his crucifixion.

DO: Meditate by repeating the sentence: "Bleibet hier und wachet mit mir. Wachet und betet." - "Stay with me and keep watch with me. Keep watch and pray."

Easter Sunday

The day of the resurrection. The resurrection is the ultimate symbol of hope and new life. Whatever really happened on Easter Sunday, death does not have the last word.

DO: Be the beacon of hope for someone else. Bring flowers, visit or call someone who is struggling to get through the days.

"Listen and I will tell you a mystery. Not all of us will die, but we will all be changed, in a flash, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."

1 Corinthians 15:51-52)

Children's book review

The Easter Chick (Das Osterküken), by Géraldine Elschner

Here is a vicar's confession. If someone had asked me two years ago how the Easter date is calculated, I wouldn't have had a clue. Former Swiss Church intern, Swiss teacher Maja Wachter (and aunt of Consistoire chairwoman Barbara Wachter), made it a mission to fill the gap. She sent this cute book on a long journey before Easter 2019. The Royal Mail failed to recognise the postal address and sent it back, "Return to sender", by which time it

was Christmas. I finally received the book at my parents' Swiss address a year later. Good things take time! I love to read it to my son all year round, not just at Easter.

I'm not going to spoil the story, in case some of you have the same Easter-date knowledge gap. You can discover it from little owl Max, who explains it to Hilda the hen, whose little chick absolutely wants to hatch on Easter Sunday. Not a day early, and not a day late. So, her mum sets out on a journey to find out when this will be...





Make a direct impact!
Become a **volunteer** at our breakfasts
for the community

LOCATION:

Swiss Church London, Holborn,
79 Endell Street, WC2H 9DY

CONTACT:

andreas.feller@swisschurchlondon.org.uk



Swiss Church in London

- as many hours as you like
- directly support the local community
- work with a fun team

Become a volunteer!

The Swiss Church offers many volunteer opportunities!

We are currently looking for volunteers to join the Breakfast on the Steps team that serves fortnightly breakfast to people from the community affected by homelessness and poverty.

We are also looking for volunteers cooking lunch or serving refreshments at our art and Swiss community events, or we are happy to discuss volunteer opportunities tailored to your expertise or skill sets that you would like to learn.

Contact Jenny at volunteer@swisschurchlondon.org.uk for more information.



La Causerie - Welcome back!

We are delighted to see the return of some of our church groups! Last week, La Causerie met at the church for lunch. They are a group of French-speaking Swiss who come together to speak their language, socialise and occasionally visit concerts together.

If you would like to know more about our church groups, email:

info@swisschurchlondon.org.uk

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And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate God's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from God, who is the Spirit.

(2 Corinthians 3:18)

“The easy road would have been to stay on the same path, the one that led only to death and decay. Instead, I took the road less travelled; I journeyed towards new life; towards transformation.”

(Alex Clare-Young, transgender URC Pioneer Minister)



To give online: swisschurchlondon.org.uk/church/donate and follow the link.

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Account Name: **Swiss Church in London**

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The Swiss Church in London
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