



Swiss Church News

Autumn 2023

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



Dear readers

I am delighted to be back at the Swiss Church after the birth of our second son Kit. The birth of a child is a mind-blowing event and it is impossible to predict what it does to us physically, emotionally and mentally. I thought I would be back to full power after six months, and so it took me by surprise that I was nowhere near ready back in June. To step back into ministry and shoulder the many responsibilities seemed an impossible task. Two months later, I'm feeling very different. I am ready to step back into the outside world with my visions, enthusiasm and ideas. It's a delight to be back working with the Swiss Church team. What an amazing bunch of people! I also enjoy stepping into the church on a Sunday to worship with our lovely congregation.

At my first service back we talked about the prophet Jeremiah, one of the great prophets of the Old Testament. We like to think of the great prophets and prophetesses as confident and unshakable people, firm in their mission and unphased by what people may think of them. Jeremiah however is a vulnerable, insecure man who, criticised and mocked by his friends, doubts his suitability as a messenger of God. I believe that deep down every person feels vulnerable, no matter how strong someone comes across on the surface. We should always keep this in mind in our everyday encounters.

Artists frequently draw inspiration from diverse religious traditions, creating thought-provoking and inclusive work that resonates with a global audience. Through their creations they continue to push boundaries providing a space of reflection on the enduring significance of religion and spirituality in a fast changing world.

The Swiss Church has been working towards this goal of becoming an art space and place of worship for over a decade beginning with the tasteful renovation of the church inspired by the concept of a White Cube Gallery and the establishing of an Art Committee. We have gained a reputation as a community led art space with a unique spirit and vision that remains relevant in today's society. What an exciting journey ahead!

May the coming Christmas season be filled with love, laughter and inspiring moments and bring warmth to your heart and home.

With every blessing,
Rev Carla Maurer

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From the Consistoire

Katrin Frey,
MTh, Trustee,
Acting Chair,
Safeguarding
Officer

As the UK is marvelling in amazingly hot weather, I write to you about the same old, same old: change! The weather keeps changing (heat wave in September?!) but what stays the same is that we love moaning about it. No matter what! Personally, I love this late burst of warmth. Do you?

As acting chair of the Consistoire I am overjoyed to have welcomed back Reverend Carla Maurer from her maternity leave. There might even be some respite in working at the church instead of dealing with baby nappies and toddler tantrums? Who knows... As such we said goodbye to Reverend Harry Ching in June and wish him all the very best on his journey taking over a congregation in Macau, in the Diocese of Hong Kong.

Within the Consistoire we welcomed Niccolò Aliano (back). Niccolò was an active member of the Swiss Church a few years ago and has since moved to Edinburgh to take a degree in Church History and Ministry. He has hit the ground running and is actively involved in HR matters, volunteer onboarding and anything else that comes across the Consistoire's virtual desks. Sadly, we have already had to say goodbye to Emma Brown who had been taking care of the church's finances diligently and accurately this past year.

In March the church sent Emily Rose Simons on her way. After 4 years as Venue Manager her career as writer and composer is taking on new heights. We wish her all the very best in what is surely going to be a thrilling and sparkling future. As a replacement we were happy to reel in fellow Swiss Therese Theurillat, who had been working for the Arts Committee as well as helping with community work as a freelancer. Her first few months have been incredibly busy with organising the big hire for the light show currently showing at the church.

Last and most definitely not least long-standing trustee and member of the Consistoire Colin McIntyre bowed out. Having moved to the Wirral during Covid he was always going to leave sooner or later. But he kept on going, advising, deciding, and helping out where he could with immense patience, expertise and knowledge. The small room next to the office at the church has been renamed "Colin McIntyre Room" to honour his contribution to the church.

The next VEGSIL (Vereinigung Ehemaliger Glieder der Schweizerkirche in London) meeting is just around the corner: on 8th October I will be holding the sermon in the church in Tenniken, BL. We are visiting Melanie Muhmenthaler who completed the vicar training with Carla and studied with myself in Basel.

We need all the help we can get. Please get in touch with myself, or Carla if you can donate some of your time and expertise. Thank you!



From the Venue

By Therese Theurillat

Back in Spring, I took on my new role as a Venue Manager here at the Swiss Church. Luckily, I already knew the building and the team, but little did I know of the challenges I would face right away with my first big task: negotiations with a major production company for the light show "Genesis".

Setting up the light show kept me pretty busy until summer. I had to stand my ground in contract negotiations, then had to organise

and plan the blackout of the skylight and the internal windows, which would have been impossible without the help of our caretaker Rupert. Finally, we needed to change our premises licence to accommodate the early show times. Despite all these challenges, it was truly impressive to see the artistic team from Switzerland set up the projectors and create a light show that was perfectly adapted to the church's architecture.

I was equally pleased to experience the flexibility of everyone involved in the church working around the light show. Breakfast on the Steps can still run in the hall, between the protected projectors, and the Swing Dance class also continues Tuesday evenings. For the Sunday Service, we even remove some of the blackout so everything can run smoothly until the show ends late October. It is again thanks to Rupert's willingness to climb up on the roof that we have some natural light on some days.

It is a great experience to have this light show in our church, and I meet so many people who love the show. This hire helped fill out the calendar during the quieter summer months and brought in some much-needed funds. However, I am already looking forward to when the hall is free again and the natural light is floating once again through the windows and into our office, and other groups can use the hall flexibly. With the arts programme on the rise, we are getting a lot of interesting inquiries from artist, actors and musicians and we can be excited for the times ahead.

I love to work in this building, despite the relentless challenge to fixing things, be it the door or the lift etc, but I will happily continue to fix things for this beautiful church hall in central London where Faith meets the Arts to create a space for memorable moments for everyone.

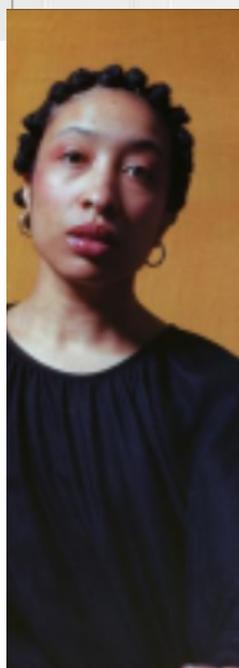
Softly Swaying

This May, we were delighted to host artist Fabienne Hess' exhibition, 'Softly Swaying'. Exploring the themes of community and gift exchange through silk prints, a pink rope stretched across the church, suspending the prints in mid-air.

The prints questioned the spatial dimensions around them, by lacking depth and blending into the walls of the building. The photographs printed onto the hangings depicted gifts exchanged in the community at the church. As Fabienne says, "gift exchange within a group offers equilibrium and coherence, a kind of anarchist stability". During her months getting to know the church's community groups, Fabienne photographed objects or gifts that were passed between the community.

The gifts included objects such as cheese-toasties grilled for people affected by homelessness and tangerines brought to a potluck lunch of the church's Mother's Group.

Hess also captures the intangible gifts she saw, like time, attention and care, through details, such as the careful covering of hard-boiled eggs used to keep their warmth. Through unravelling the printed silk fabric by hand, Fabienne reduced the printed photographs to individual lines. Her exhibition explored the idea that fabric, like community, offers shelter and belonging; that both are held together by the interdependence of separate elements. Fabienne's exhibition gently and beautifully captured care and gift exchange within the Swiss Church's community.



Artist in Residence 2023 - Anna Fearon

Anna Fearon is our 2023 Artist in Residence. Anna Fearon is a Photographer, Director, Writer & Artist from South London. Her work centres on exploring identity, telling nuanced stories exploring Black and queer identity.

Her photography and film project 'The Legacy of Family', is a celebration of chosen family within queer communities, specifically Black and POC communities and the spaces that facilitate community. Exploring what it means to create legacy through the intertwining of family trees, iconography and myth.

Anna will engage with movement and choreography to create compositions that echo tradition and iconic imagery but through the gaze and lens of centering Black queer subjects. Anna will be turning her studio at the church into a dark room to develop the photographs she takes during her residency.

Anna's end of residency exhibition will run from 2nd – 5th November 2023.

Find out more about Anna's practice here: www.annafearon.com

Ruth Gordon's 2023 Ballet Gala: Four Seasons

A Ruth Gordon's 2023 Ballet Gala we travelled through Winter, Spring, Summer and Autumn, in an evening filled with music by Franz Schubert, Pasa & Garcia Alvarez and Antonio Vivaldi at Ruth Gordon's 2023 Ballet Gala.

Each year, with the help of ballet dancer and choreographer, Ruth Gordon-Jaeggi, the Swiss Church in London puts together a Ballet Gala and fundraising event. This is part of our annual Art Programme and helps us to support our amazing artists and exhibition programme throughout the year.



A huge thank you to those who attended the sold-out show this year and made donations. Your contributions are invaluable and really appreciated!



'Megalith' A film Screening by Hot Desque

25 – 28th January 2024

January 2024 sees a screening by Hot Desque. The artist duo will be showing their new short film 'Megalith', a future-past, sci-fi inspired world where artworks (or relics) are uncovered in a fictional archaeological dig. This screening will coincide with part two of the exhibition, which is taking place at archaeological museum, The Corinium Museum, in Cirencester.

Hot Desque is a collaborative practice by Artists Lizzy Drury & Neena Percy. They work between film, installations and writing, and were 2020 Artists in Residence at the Swiss Church.

Find out more about Hot Desque: hotdesque.xyz



Congregation Trip to Paris

Finance Officer Anina Smith is leaving

Finance Officer Anina Smith is leaving the Swiss Church to continue her professional journey with a local firm, and in a more senior role. Anina worked for the Swiss Church in various capacities and has supported change and transition with her many skills. Her ability to optimise procedures and her attention to detail will be greatly missed. She always knew how to make members of the team feel special who celebrated a big occasion or went through difficult times. Anina, we are so happy for you! You will always have a special place at the Swiss Church.

Closing a chapter, and moving on...

This has not been easy to write, and I am pretty certain that part of me is still in denial about it all, but after 9.5 years I have decided to take an opportunity offered to me to further my professional career and therefore leaving The Swiss Church in London.

I am immensely grateful for my time here at 79 Endell Street and will take with me memories that will last a lifetime: Tuesdays and Wednesdays have always been firm favourites of the working week, meeting the inspirational ladies from Frauenverein, La Causerie and Mothers' Group, listening to their life stories and getting to share some coffee and cake or even a glass of wine. And who could forget our whirlwind day trip (yes, we did it in 1 day!) to Paris?!

The early days with Breakfast on the Steps, Holy Soup and an open door policy brought Andy Palfreyman to The Swiss Church.

Having played even the tiniest part in turning his life of 30 years on the streets around and seeing him host his own photography exhibition as well as a sustainable fashion show and now having a home, is priceless.

Witnessing The Swiss Church being transformed by the likes of Dior and uncountable London Fashion Week clients, allowing me a glimpse both behind the scenes and into illustrious worlds, brought sheer excitement to the event planner in me.

Rediscovering traditions from my childhood and making connections with other Swiss in London has always been great fun, I can't wait to continue this by bringing my two boys along to as many events as possible.

To everyone that crossed my path, showed me kindness and encouragement, believed in my abilities and enriched my life over this past decade: Thank You! and see you soon,

Anina xx



Aninas's kids, Max & Luca



London Fashion Week performance

Candles:

Symbols of comfort and peaceful protest

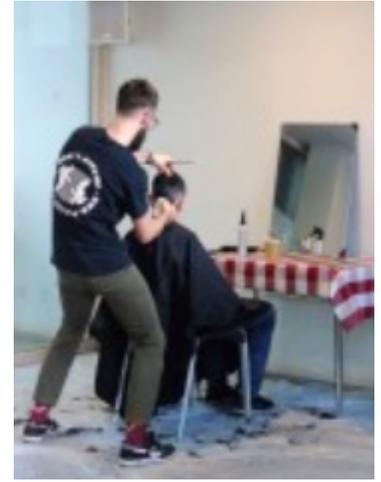
It's an unusually warm and sunny September day and I'm sitting outside the church having my lunch soaking up the sunlight as long as I still can. Soon, these days will be counted and we will be living in the dark for most of the day until Spring comes around again. Autumn is my favourite season. I'm lucky that the end of summer doesn't fill me with dread. I can't wait for all the good things that will come around again as the days are getting shorter: hefty comfort food, warm socks, hot chocolates, fairy lights and the cosiness of my winter jacket. And candles. Candles are magic. Whoever invented them was a genius.

Candles have been used as a source of light and to illuminate celebrations for more than 5'000 years, yet little is known about their origins. The earliest use of candles is often attributed to the Ancient Egyptians who made rushlights or torches by soaking the pithy core of reeds in melted animal fat. Candles have always played an important role in religious ceremonies. Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of lights, dates back to 165 BC. According to the Bible Emperor Constantine has called for the use of candles during an Easter ceremony in the 4th Century. In Sweden, the candlelit Lucia procession takes place on 13 December with girls and boys clad in white full-length gowns singing songs together and Lucia leading the procession with a crown of (electric or real) candles in her hair. In Switzerland, children gather for the Raebeliechtliumzug (Turnip Parade) in November with their hand carved lanterns singing traditional songs. And then there is Halloween on 31 October, the Eve of All Saints' Day, with its carved pumpkin lanterns and a bunch of excited trick-or-treating children in fancy dress blissfully unaware of the festival's religious roots. Diwali is the Hindu festival of lights celebrated between around mid-September to Mid-November symbolising the victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance.

Before the invention of electricity, candles were necessary to light homes in the evenings and on dark winter days. But even today with illumination in our homes only a light switch away, candles are still hugely popular as a source of light in our own four walls, for various reasons. They create a warm glow and a relaxing atmosphere that electric light can't. They are beautiful as decor, and a symbol for romance and peace. Candles are good for our mental health; they awaken inspiration, reduce stress and help with insomnia. Many people have personalised candles at home, for instance their baptism or wedding candle, or candles that remind them of lost loved ones.

And candles are political. They are often used as a peaceful tool to transport a powerful message. Do you remember the many candles glowing on our window sills during the pandemic to show our gratitude to care workers and health professionals, and to think of the bereaved? Candles are used at wakes and demonstrations for victims of racial, misogynist or homophobic crime, or after tragic incidents on our roads or in the air. Candles are used at political rallies to raise awareness for injustice and inequality. They symbolise peaceful protest.

As the last warm days are coming to an end, and we are preparing for the upcoming colder season, perhaps you can think of a person, a situation or something that weighs heavy on your heart that deserves a special candle this winter. Or perhaps there is a person in your community who has been through hardship recently and you give a candle to lighten up their home. May the light of Christmas warm your heart and fill your soul with hope.



scan to donate

Breakfast on the Steps - Christmas Fundraiser

An integral part of the community outreach at the Swiss Church London is the 'Breakfast on the Steps'. Every Tuesday, a friendly bunch of volunteers, led by OSA delegate Andreas Feller-Rys, open the door of the beautiful Swiss Church in Covent Garden as early as 7.30am for people affected by poverty and homelessness. As well as receiving a lovely breakfast, guests can have a chat, read the newspaper on display, or enjoy the peaceful atmosphere in the building, which is often in stark contrast to many day centres.

With raising homelessness in London and the cost-of-living crisis, we rely on donations as much as ever to continue our work. Participate in the 2023 Christmas Challenge from 28 November until 5 December 2023 and support a good cause. 100% of your donations will go to the purchase of groceries and toiletries. Thank you!



SAVE THE DATE

Swiss Family Christmas

Our annual and highly popular Christmas gathering for Swiss families will take place on 3 December 2023 at the Swiss Church in London (time tbc). Please check our webpage for further details. Samichlaus/Saint Nicolas will make an appearance. We will carve Raebeliechtli (turnip lights) for a little parade around the blocks and sing traditional Swiss Christmas carols.

Places are limited. Please email to register your participation.
info@swisschurchlondon.org.uk

We need volunteers to help run the event

Drop us an email if you can help, including providing refreshments, baking, organising the turnip carving station, decorating, assembling Santa's goodie bags.



Art Coordinator, Diane Chappalley and her husband Oliver Wooley, became parents to their first child, Elliot Wooley on 20 February 2023.

The Swiss Church community is delighted and wish the young family a prosperous and happy future!

Events @ the Swiss Church

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You can download the latest Swiss
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Church services Every first and third Sunday of the month, 11am

2023
October 15
November 5
November 19 (Commemoration service)
December 3 (Swiss Family Christmas - time
tbc)
December 17, 5pm (Christmas carol service)
2024
January 7 / January 21
February 4 / February 18
March 3 / March 17
March 31 (Easter)
April 7 / April 21

**Communion and choir every first
Sunday of the month. Solo or
chamber vocals every third Sunday of
the month. Everyone is invited to join
our church services!**

**Breakfast on the Steps and Haircuts
for the Homeless Community**
Every Tuesday, 7.30-9.30am

**Anna Fearon
End of Residency Exhibition**
2-5 November

**'Megalith'
A film screening by Hot Desque**
25-28 January 2024



Swinging at the Swiss Church

Experience the captivating world of
West Coast Swing partner dancing with *Swing Academy UK!*

Whether you're new to dance or looking to elevate your skills, our tailored classes offer the perfect blend of technique and creativity. Learn from passionate West Coast Swing instructors who will guide you through every step with enthusiasm and expertise. Join a welcoming community of fellow dancers and make lasting friendships whilst mastering the art of West Coast Swing. Our classes will have you moving with confidence and style, aiming for a smooth connection and playful improvisation.

Classes: Every Tuesday, 7.30pm - 10.30pm
Brand new beginners class - 7.30pm
Followed by another two beginner friendly classes plus social dancing

First class FREE if you're brand new to West Coast Swing
Everyone welcome - No experience - No partner, no problem

Location: The Swiss Church, 79 Endell Street, London
Contact: Coleen Man on 07720 289906 or email swingacademyuk@gmail.com

swingacademyuk.com

Frauenverein

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

La Causerie

Every second Tuesday of the month.
info@swisschurchlondon.org.uk

Mothers' Group

Every second Wednesday of the month.

Vegsil

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

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



“While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become sons of light.” These things Jesus spoke, and he went away and hid himself from them. (John 12:36)

Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared.
(Buddha)

To give online: [swisschurchlondon.org.uk/church/donate](https://www.swisschurchlondon.org.uk/church/donate) and follow the link.

Bank details for internet banking or

Standing Orders:

UK – HSBC Bank

Account Name: **Swiss Church in London**
Sort code **40-03-15**
Account no: **61410512**

CH – Post Finance

Account Name: **Swiss Church in London**
Account no: **80-37960-9**

Please complete a Gift Aid form if you are a UK taxpayer. Gift Aid increases the amount that the Church from your donation by 25%, at no cost to you. Forms are available on our website.

The Swiss Church in London

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