

THE SCOTS KIRK PARIS

Happy New Year!



French tradition affords us the luxury of being able to wish each other a Happy New Year right up until the end of January! So here are new year greetings from the Kirk Session and Board in some of the languages spoken within our congregation.

Afọ ọhụrụ ọma

Feliz año nuevo

Frohes neues Jahr

Ẹkùn ọdún tíú

Bliadhna Mhàth Ur

Bonne Année

Happy New Year



A word from Laurence, our Interim Moderator

It was a delight to be with you, sharing time and worship - getting a real sense of the challenges you face as a congregation - and the opportunities open to you as a Church of Scotland congregation in the heart of Paris. It's been a proud, historic and fruitful journey thus far.

Mind you...

I'm sure you remember it...(it might even have been you!)

The car has barely reached the end of the street when the five year-old pipes up "Are we there yet?"

It's a good question for any Church to ask - "Are we there yet?"

But in answer to the question "Are we there yet?" in most congregations, Paris as much as any, we have to say "not by some distance".

For until

- We agonise over the drifters and the lapsed...till we hurt enough to go looking for them
- We give of our resources at a level that indicates our real commitment to building the Kingdom of God
- We go the second and third mile to welcome, embrace, come to know and treasure all newcomers
- We have an urgent sense of mission and concern for those who are seeming to live without a meaningful faith
- We are brave to explore all forms of worship and can demonstrate an easy tolerance towards expressions of worship that are new and strange to us
- We are open and eager in seeking to express our oneness with our brothers and sisters from different Christian traditions
- We feel a real sense of being part of the World Church and the Church of Scotland
- We pursue every opportunity to grow in Christian love

Special guests

Les Maîtres Chanteurs is a choir consisting mainly of lawyers. They rehearse in our church every week but as is the case with most of the other users, we rarely get a chance to meet them.

And so it was decided that we would invite them to lead the singing at our Christmas service on 11th December. They were delighted to receive the invitation and seven of them (all ladies!) came along not only to sing with us but to give us a special rendition of *Puer Natus in Bethlehem* which was very much enjoyed by all.

The choir is very keen to come back and share our worship and assured us that they felt a special connection with the SKP.



We will be looking at opportunities for getting to know our other users better and building up the wider SKP community.

Who are these mysterious "other users"?

- 2 Sri Lankan congregations
- 1 Korean congregation
- Message, a support group for English-speaking parents
- 3 AA groups + 2 Alanon groups
- Piano owner Denis Dumas who practises and gives lessons
- Saturday evening concert performers

towards one another

•We feel deep concerns expressed in practical ways for the disadvantaged of our society - and a passionate commitment to righting the injustices that deface the world

•We seek time with God and the chance to grow in understanding of the faith, and personal journey with him

Until these become the hallmarks of our personal Christian experience and the defining characteristics of our congregational life...then I guess we're not "there yet".

A bit to go...much praying still to be done.

Still, it's good to have targets, aspirations...dreams...

Love to all

Laurence

Bags of Hope



The **Bags of Hope** project reached its target of 100 bags in the first week of January. A huge thank you to all of you who made this possible and for your thoughtfulness as reflected in the items in the bags. The Missionnaires de la Charité have been overwhelmed by your generosity and constant support.

In light of the success of the project, the Kirk Session has decided that it should continue until Easter. No target has been set for this second phase but we hope that the enthusiasm will continue and that you will come up with even more imaginative ideas to bring a little light into the lives of some of the homeless men in Paris.

If you would like to be involved in delivering the bags to the Missionnaires in the 15th arrondissement, simply make yourself known to any elder.

Who's who at the SKP

Session clerk: Dorothy Mure

Treasurer: Douglas Anderson

Elders: Dorothy Mure, Dorothy Nitsche, Valerie Prieur, Alison Tardivel, Derek Bonin-Bree, Andrew Craig, Scott MacSween and Pierre Mure

Board: Elders + Louise Anderson, Fabienne Bonin-Bree and Denis Prieur

Pianist: Nathan Prieur


Presbytery Elder: Valerie Prieur

International youth presbytery

STATUS VS. IDENTITY

**HOW WE'RE CLASSIFIED
AND WHO WE REALLY ARE**

**INTERNATIONAL YOUTH
PRESBYTERY
17th-19th February 2023
BUDAPEST**



**We need to have
our final list of
participants by
10th FEBRUARY,
so speak to your
local church's
leadership
TODAY!**

WHO CAN COME?

- Young people (18-30) from churches in the International Presbytery of the Church of Scotland.
- Usually up to 2 people from each church.

WHAT HAPPENS?

- Participants arrive during the day on Friday.
- Friday night is for introductions, first thoughts on the theme, and socializing.
- On Saturday we continue the previous night's discussion, enjoy getting to know the city a bit, look ahead to Sunday, and socialize some more.
- On Sunday we help lead worship for the local congregation, and, having made new friends, participants start returning home after lunch.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS?

- We ask congregations to pay for travel to Budapest for their 1-2 young people.
- We in Budapest arrange the accommodation and meals, which are paid for by Presbytery.
- Young people cover their own incidental costs like souvenirs or extra snacks and drinks.

This year's International Youth Presbytery meeting will be hosted by the Budapest congregation in February. As Aaron Stevens, the minister in Budapest, explains: "Youth Presbytery is basically a Youth Weekend for the young people from our various churches to meet each other for mutual encouragement.

Unlike a regular Presbytery meeting, there are no reports or deliverances. Instead, there is a theme for the weekend, which the young people get to explore in discussions and other interactive ways. Sightseeing and socializing are part of the experience too...This year's theme is "Status vs. Identity: How we're classified and who we really are". This topic will allow us to explore things like immigration status, relationship status, employment status and more, all in light of what Scripture tells us about our God-given identity".

The weekend is aimed at the 18-30 age group. If you would like to meet other young people of different nationalities to discuss this topic and at the same time visit a fascinating city steeped in history, contact Valerie Prieur, our Presbytery Elder. The number of places is usually limited to two per congregation but could be more depending on the response received across the IP.

The months ahead at SKP

Under the Presbytery Mission Plan proposed by the International Presbytery Planning Committee and approved by Edinburgh, the Scots Kirk Paris is to be linked with St. Andrew's, Brussels. The Kirk Session, and our Interim Moderator will be meeting with the IP Planning Committee to discuss our future and how we would like to see the linkage operate. The Brussels Kirk Session will be doing the same. There are numerous aspects to be examined but we pray that we will find a solution which ensures that both our congregations will be able to continue providing a welcoming place of worship where they are.

Until a final decision is taken, we will be welcoming the following locums until September:

- Rev. Joanne Evans-Boiten will be with us until the end of February (starting on 29th January)
- Rev. John Munro, formerly of Farmilehead Parish Church, will be taking care of March and April
- Canon John Lindsay is returning for the month of May
- Rev. Robert Simpson is coming back for June and July
- Rev. Dr Martin Scott, former Convener of the Assembly Council, will be with us for August and September

Getting to know you

Felipe Gallardo has been worshipping with us for some time now but has become a much more familiar face since he started preparing the PowerPoints for our Sunday services. We are very grateful to him for taking on this task and for his interest in the musical side of our services.

Felipe, can you tell us something about yourself?

I'm a young Chilean who was moved to Paris for a 1-year project related to finance and software. My client decided to keep me for longer, so here I am 3 years later!

I studied Industrial Engineering in Chile and have a Masters in entrepreneurship which defines most of what I try to do in my life.

I'm the "sandwich" child with two brothers.

When and why did you start coming to the Scots Kirk in Paris?

I was worshipping in a Chilean Presbyterian church and happened to find the Scots Kirk through the internet. I was delighted that the sermons were in English as my French was very bad (still working on it :P).

Do you have any hobbies?

I love to cook, play instruments/video games and dance and I work out whenever possible. I try to travel as much as possible as I enjoy meeting new cultures as well :)

What is your vision for our congregation?

Since I have been in the Scots Kirk, I have been amazed at how welcoming and warm a congregation it is. I see our congregation using this distinctive feature to carry the love of Jesus to more people, and hope I can contribute my little grain of sand through the music segment.



Felipe's "grain of sand"

Music and singing are very important aspects of our worship. Felipe is setting up an SKP Music Team and invites anyone with musical talent of any kind to come and join him, Nathan, our pianist, Love and Nicola. If you can sing or play an instrument, don't be shy, we need you!

In a congregation with many non-native English speakers it can sometimes be quite a challenge to understand what we're actually singing. And even those of us who have been singing hymns for longer than we care to remember will admit that at times the words seem a bit strange to our modern ear! Felipe is keen to teach us simpler songs which will allow us




to better understand and focus on what we are singing but of course these will be integrated into our usual CH4-based worship. We have already started singing Taizé songs which are often just a couple of lines repeated several times. The words are easy to understand as is the message.

Music speaks to young people and young people are the future of the church. So if you, no matter what your age, would like to be part of this exciting new music project, contact Felipe or Nathan who will be delighted to welcome you

"Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised"

Psalm 145:3

Taizé update



Taizé 2023

You are invited to join us for a week at
Taizé, Burgundy
18-24 June 2023

Taizé is home to the community of the Brothers of Taizé and
has been welcoming young people for many years.

Join us for a week of reflection, spiritual nourishment,
community and inspiring conversation.

This trip is jointly organized by The Scots Kirk Paris,
Chaplaincies of University of St Andrews and Glasgow and
Logie Kirk, Stirling.

For further enquiries, please contact:

Samantha Ferguson - sjf6@st-andrews.ac.uk
Carolyn Kelly - carolyn.kelly@glasgow.ac.uk
Scott MacSween - smacsween@churchofscotland.org.uk
Jan Steyn - steynjan@gmail.com

The Scots Kirk Paris is committed to giving young people the opportunity to "take time out" and reflect on life and their place in today's difficult world. SKP elder Scott Macsween and our former minister Jan Steyn, now based in Stirling, will be taking a group to Taizé in June of next year.

The Church of Scotland has given them a generous grant of £1000 which is great news and testifies to the importance of this project.



If you would like to be part of the group, or if you know someone you think would benefit from a week of reflection and fellowship with other young people from around the world, contact Jan or Scott (their email addresses are on the flyer opposite). You don't have to be a church member to go to Taizé but a few days spent there could be a life-changing experience!

SKP elder Scott MacSween gives us this latest update on the project: "We are continuing to engage with the university chaplaincies. Jan has been talking in high school assemblies about the Taizé community and our mission project and he has invited a number of S6 students. We are now starting to look into the slightly complicated logistics of getting a group from Scotland to Taizé taking into account the changing flight availability and ticket prices and train connections.

Taizé is a particularly tricky place to reach wherever you come from!"

Tricky perhaps but well worth the effort!



Click [here](#) to find out more about the Taizé community

Prayer matters

At the last International Presbytery meeting in Budapest, Irene Bom, Ordained Local Minister in Rotterdam and our Worship and Prayer Promotor, indicated that she would be willing to write a regular article about her Prayer Matters blog. Here is her first article entitled "Angela Ashwin and the ministry of 'borrowed words'".

I launched the Prayer Matters blog in 2017 as a way to resource and promote prayer, both within our Presbytery and beyond. Each month I select a theme and find relevant prayers, readings and other materials to share with visitors and subscribers. You can visit the site anytime to browse or consult the handy Index or search bar. You can also choose to subscribe to Prayer Matters to receive newly published posts by email.

In my search for prayer-related treasures old and new, there are some resources I turn to again and again. Angela Ashwin's book, *The Book of a Thousand Prayers*, is one of them. Besides regularly posting prayers from this treasure trove, I also wrote a blog post entitled "In the school of prayer with Angela Ashwin", including her perspective on the value and ministry of "borrowed words" in our prayer life. In the introduction to her book she writes:

"We do not always need another person's words when we pray. But there can be times when a prayer by someone else expresses our concerns and desires better than we could do ourselves and becomes a source of inspiration and strength. Or we may 'grow into' a prayer which has tremendously high ideals, such as the one by John Wesley: 'Lord God, I am no longer my own but yours.' Even though we have not ourselves arrived at such dizzy heights of self-giving, the very act of using a prayer like this helps us to come closer to its aspirations.

There can also be a sense of freedom in using a set prayer, because the words are given, and we simply let go into their flow and meaning. This is

especially helpful in times of stress or doubt. The familiar words of a well-known prayer, or the challenges of a modern one, bring us back to our roots in God and remind us that we belong to the great body of Christ's people. A written prayer links us not only with its author but also with all the other people who have used it, so that, in a sense, we are never alone when we pray.

We usually think of prayer as an offering we make to God - and so it is. But it is much more. Prayer is God's gift to us, a banquet of good things to feed our inner life as we respond to the invitation to his feast of peace, forgiveness, challenge and love." (p.11)

Besides the "borrowed words" of Christians through the ages, Angela's book also includes some prayers she's written herself. Here's one:

God of delight, Source of all joy,
thank you for making me part of the web of life,
depending on the rhythms and fruits of the earth
for my existence.
Help me to be wholly present to you,
now, in this place,
where my feet are on the ground,
and where I am surrounded by creation's gifts,
from concrete to clouds,
if I have the wit to notice them!

from *The Book of a Thousand Prayers* by Angela Ashwin, #210

Check out the website Index for this and other posts from the "School of Prayer" series and more besides.



The Church of Scotland website describes prayer as being "the foundation for our relationship with God" and provides numerous resources for individuals and congregations. Among these is a range of short, simple [prayer cards](#) which can be downloaded, cut up and slipped into your purse or pocket or passed on to someone who is in need of support.

Visit the [website](#) to discover the other prayer initiatives and prayer material made available by the Church of Scotland. And if you would like to lead our congregation in prayer one Sunday, please tell us and we will gladly give you the opportunity to do so.

"Praying Hands" by Albrecht Dürer (early 16th century)