

THE SCOTS KIRK PARIS



The jubilee tree

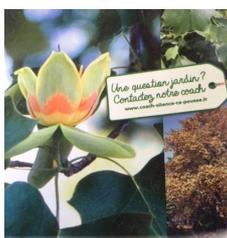
May's newsletter contained an article describing how we planned to commemorate the Queen's platinum jubilee.

Unfortunately we have had to put things on hold since the funding promised by Scottish Government France for the replica of the foundation stone was withdrawn at the last minute.

However, the jubilee tree has been bought and planted and we are hoping to have a plaque unveiling ceremony soon to officialise the SKP's contribution to the Queen's Green Canopy, albeit in Paris!

The tree is a *liriodendron tulipifera* or tulip poplar which gives yellow-green flowers in late spring.

It is sensitive to heat and drought so as the temperatures rise we need to be collectively responsible for ensuring that the latest addition to our patio is kept watered!



A word from Laurence, our Interim Moderator

Warmest greetings, as always!

Thank you for allowing me to attend the General Assembly in your name!

It was a rich and significant experience! A real privilege!

The reality is that after two years of Covid people are tired.

Across the Church people have had to make so many adjustments: they feel pressured, hunkered down...protecting what they have.

All a bit flat!

But, as Pentecost shows us, when the Spirit is in us...that changes the nature of our work for God.

And that change took place at the Assembly: energised those who were there and those sharing online...

We realised and were glad as we heard stories and examples of the amazing things the Church is doing...acts of compassion, visions of creative change...love poured on the wounds...

We remembered...this is who we are...this is what we have to do...

Empowered and uplifted in our spirits, by the Spirit of God...driving us forward.

Honoured guests...from Professor Jason Leitch, the man in charge of the response to Covid in Scotland, expressing the thanks of the government to the Church of Scotland for its amazing work during the height of the Covid crisis...to Bishop John Sentanu...to Archbishop Cushley of the Catholic Church in Scotland...to the Chief Rabbi...they all spoke with warm respect, overcoming old suspicions...sending long-defended walls crashing, -welcoming and open, generous and loving.

And you just knew that's the Spirit...this is what the Spirit of Christ does...how the Spirit of Christ is the spirit of healing, reconciliation, fellowship and love.

Crafty business

Our locum, Albert Bogle, is certainly keeping the Sunday school children busy.

On his first Sunday, 5th June, to illustrate the theme "the Wind of the Spirit", their challenge was to make kites, fly them and send Albert a photo.



The following week, 12th June, the theme was "Doves of peace, calling us to be peacemakers" and there they were making doves!



The theme for 19th June is "Don't let your joy be stolen" and there might just be some bubbles floating around the sanctuary!

On June 26th Albert will be talking about "the cost of following" and his visual aid will be aprons. Can't see the connection? Come along and find out!



Not one person left the Assembly untouched by a determination to make it work...and a sense of privilege at being part of this Church!

This is why we are dragged from our comfort zone...whoever we are...taken to new places, invited to follow in faith...even though we don't know all the answers.

All of it driven by the greatest gift of the Spirit...a capacity and a commitment to love...love one another, love our neighbour, love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength...

Whatever does not fit within those categories, those priorities, those principles...well, we're not interested.

We have Spirit work to be doing.

I look forward to being with you in July to share in worship, to catch up, and to be together.

Laurence

International presbytery meeting

On 11-13 June, the International Presbytery met in Bochum, Germany, the first in-person meeting since early 2020! Meetings are usually held in March and October but an extra meeting was required in view of the difficult decisions to be made within the context of the Presbytery Mission Plan. As you know, all the presbyteries in Scotland, the Presbytery of England and the Channel Islands and the International Presbytery have seen drastic cuts in their full-time ministry post allocations and have to come up with a Presbytery Mission Plan which makes allowance for these cuts by the end of the year.

The International Presbytery allocation has fallen from 11.5 to



5 for an area stretching from Bermuda via Europe to Sri Lanka! The draft plan proposed by the IP Planning Committee was at the heart of the discussions at the weekend. As far as we at the SKP are

concerned, the plan proposes a linking between Paris and Brussels. This was approved in principle by the IP which now has to submit its plan to the Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group in Edinburgh for approval before it is passed to the Faith Nurture Forum for final validation.

It is of course essential that the two congregations potentially involved in the linking be fully aware of what exactly that means for them. Members of the IP Planning Committee will be contacting the Brussels and Paris Kirk Sessions very soon to discuss the situation and ensure that we are all on board. The details of the linking will need to be worked out but at the last SKP Kirk Session meeting with our Interim Moderator, the elders were unanimous in saying that we will need a full-time Associate Minister.

There is still a long way to go with this process but we hope and pray that we are one step nearer to securing the future of the Scots Kirk Paris.

And now a word from Albert, our locum

Dare to pray dare to dream

It was back in a cold January morning that the phone rang and that familiar persuasive voice of Laurence Twaddle suggested, that since I was the Church of Scotland's Digital Advisor and I could work anywhere and he needed cover in Paris, I could surely help out as locum at least for a month. Paris in June sounded wonderful when living in Scotland in January. In addition, the opportunity to minister to a community shaped by the renowned Christian leader Donald Caskie was for me an opportunity that couldn't be turned down.



It was early in a beautiful June morning when Martha and I left our home in Bridge of Allan to catch the flight for Paris and join all of you at the Scots Kirk. It's never quite a straightforward thing to leave home for a month especially when there is a large garden to attend to and family to miss and your work to keep going from a new base, even if it is digital. However the lure of Paris beckoned us onward and we were excited to know that we would spend the first few days with our daughter Sarah Jane and her husband Iain and two of our wonderful grandchildren. The presence of the children would also give us an excuse to visit Disneyland.

Two days later we were in Disneyland. There is something spiritual as well as magical about aspects of the Disney dream. The idea that all will be well in the end is in fact a biblical promise, not a dream at all. We read in Rev 21 that "God will wipe away all tears from our eyes and there will be no more crying or pain for the Lord God has made his home with us".

It's quite wonderful seeing so many children enjoying the opportunity just to be children. It's amazingly refreshing to see adults so intent on making memories for their children, perhaps waiting to count the cost another day. It also brought to mind the millions of children around the world today who have nothing, not even

dreams to dream. During one of my early visits to Peru with the Vine Trust I remember being told the poor have no concept of the future. For them the focus is on the present. They need food and shelter for the now. They can't plan to make memories. They just need a present. The truth was and is the present is all any of us has.

We need to remind ourselves that there are still places in the world where children roam the streets at night looking for food and longing to be loved and wanted. So for me the dream of Disney also highlighted the reality that there is much to be done in this world before the lion will lie down with the lamb and children lie down in comfort at night.

And here you are a congregation placed in the most prodigious part of downtown Paris. The world passing your door. You simply need to go outside, turn right and you walk into a world that has everything but is lost looking for something more. The events of the past months have made more people aware that lasting security is not found in wealth or designer brands or a make believe dream. We need to see the crowds as pilgrims not tourists. They are, we are people in fact all of us children in search of home.

Be prepared during the time of vacancy to discover where the wind of God is blowing in your lives as the people of God called to worship and bear witness from this amazing location. Never lose sight of the fact that you are witnesses to the hundreds of thousands who pass your doors each day. Pray that God will bring to you like he brought to Donald Caskie the people to help you complete your mission and calling. And when you meet them, trust them and work with them to reach the pilgrims.

May it never be said of you that you were so spiritually poor that you could not dream a vision of ministry for the future. Instead may it be said that the God of Donald Caskie is still at work among the people of the Scots Kirk Paris bringing hope into broken lives, turning tourists into disciples.

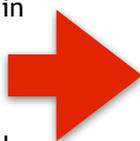
**"Follow me and I will make you fishers of men"
(Matthew 4:19)**

Bags of Hope update

The mercury is rising fast in the **Bags of Hope** thermometer!

At the end of May, 20 bags were taken to the Missionnaires de la Charité meaning that we are now half-way to our target of 100 bags. This is a tremendous result in such a short space of time (the project kicked off in March) and it is important that we keep the impetus going over the summer months.

The photo shows Frère Anastasius with our bags in the Missionnaires' storeroom. The bags have had a makeover to make them less "anonymous" and they now look like this



This will give the SKP more visibility and hopefully encourage anyone who finds a bag lying around to get in touch.



Bags are available every Sunday in the vestry. If you're going to be away over the summer, why not take a couple with you and bring them back in September!

A reminder that of course contributions of food items are still most welcome and can be put in the basket at the entrance to the sanctuary.

Incumbents board



The incumbents board was donated to the Scots Kirk Paris by Stan Blacklock. A text explaining his connection with Rev. Donald Caskie has now been framed and will be put up beside the board as soon as possible. The framed text matches that which accompanies the Old Cross thanks to the meticulous artwork of our former minister, Jan Steyn.

Thank you to Elizabeth Sevo for preparing the text and a big thank you in advance to the person, as yet unknown, who will be hanging the frame for us! Stan has been sent a photo but we hope he will be visiting soon to see it *in situ*.

