

# THE SCOTS KIRK PARIS



## Lent

'Lent is the 40-day period before Easter, beginning with Ash Wednesday. During this time, Christians may fast or give up some of their usual routine to give time to personal examination and to reflect on their relationship with God.

"With the painful events of both the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing war in Ukraine fresh in our minds, this year it feels more important than ever to take this time to reflect on our relationship with God," Lord Wallace, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, said' (Church of Scotland website).

Click [here](#) to "journey through Lent with the Church of Scotland".

The Scots Kirk Lausanne is organizing a 6-week Bible study series for Lent entitled "Acting out of Love, Faith and Hope", focusing particularly on the theme of the Climate. The SKP is joining with the SKL for these Bible studies which will be held at **7.45 pm** on the **Thursdays** leading up to Easter (first session on 3rd March). If you would like to take part, email **Lindsay McTeague** at [lindsay@mcteague.ch](mailto:lindsay@mcteague.ch) and she will send you the Zoom link.



## A word from our Interim Moderator

or, as we know him, Laurence!

On 27th February, the Scots Kirk Paris was officially "preached into vacancy" by our Interim

Moderator, Rev. Laurence Twaddle, Church of Scotland minister in Geneva.

One of Laurence's tasks is to arrange locums to see us through the vacancy period thereby ensuring the continuation of our Sunday services.

He sends us this message:

"My visit to Paris was a delight! What's not to love about it? Well, you people who live in it, might have a few suggestions! But to a starry-eyed visitor, its magic still works, and its unique character and quality as a city never disappoints!

That said, because my visit coincided with the foul and brutal invasion of Ukraine, it was hard not to draw comparisons.

**I came by train...**and there were no terrified crowds of anxious mothers and children struggling through the mayhem to find an escape-route on any train taking them anywhere away from the bombs and shells. The Gare de Lyon was calm, orderly and a thousand miles from Lviv.

**I went to the bank** and there were no anxious queues along the street - people wondering if there would be any money to withdraw...or anything to buy with what money they had.

**We worshipped in a basement** because we chose to...other people in other places, sheltered in a basement because otherwise they might die.

Contrasts to give perspective and focus...to fill our hearts with pity and our souls with prayer.

I've always hated bullies...because they always pick on someone smaller, weaker, unable to meet might with might...the balance always in favour of the bully...with their muscle and their ruthless brutality.

The coward always chooses someone smaller to kick around... never someone their own size to pick on. That's why what Mr.

## Bags of Hope



**Bags of Hope** is the SKP's new mission project in support of the homeless men in the care of the Missionnaires de la Charité.

We are all used to bringing Christmas presents and food items for the basket but this project is designed to provide the men with small items that might brighten up their everyday lives throughout the year.

The idea is to take a bag away with you, fill it with 7 items (one for every day of the week) and bring it back to church the following Sunday or whenever you can. And of course no-one is limited to just one bag!

Among the items you can put in the bag are:

- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Cereal bars
- Socks
- Playing cards
- Plasters (especially for blisters)
- Wet wipes
- Etc.etc.

We will have a bag barometer with a target of 100 bags by the end of the year!

**WE ARE COUNTING ON ALL OF YOU TO MAKE THIS PROJECT A SUCCESS!**

**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!**

Putin is doing is so reprehensible and ugly. A big bully beating up the little kid and stealing his lunch money...but this time, with devastating deadly consequences.

I had been in Moscow two days before the invasion - for my son's wedding...and no-one I spoke with was supportive in any way of what was planned and eventually came to pass. And speaking with people in Moscow since the invasion I have met nothing but a feeling of shame and embarrassment from the ordinary Russians, who feel the judgement of history on the actions of their government. This really is Putin's War - not his people's!

By the time you read this...who knows what the situation may be...if peace has been brokered or things have become worse. One thing is sure...solidarity and prayer will still be needed. And our own problems and pressures, the comings and goings of church policies, and the little annoyances that frustrate us...will all be seen in perspective...as our hearts and our love reach out to the people of Ukraine.

Blessings and love,

Laurence

## Meanwhile, back in Scotland...

Jan was inducted into his new charge in Stirling on 24th February. He and Linda have settled into their new home which is adorned with a few reminders of their time in Paris!



Thank you to all of you who contributed to Jan and Linda's leaving gifts and to those of you who sent a word for the word cloud. Jan was presented with:

- a framed word cloud
- a certificate indicating the naming of "the Steyn star"
- a telescope to observe the family star on fine, clear nights in Scotland



Linda was presented with:

- two Gien cereal bowls
- a beautifully illustrated book on the gardens of Paris

We wish Jan and Linda *bonne continuation* at Logie Kirk.

## And now a word from our locum...or, as we know her, Joanne!

Dear Friends

As I write this, I am sitting at Jan's old rolltop desk at the manse. It is one of those desks with lots of smaller and bigger pigeon holes: ideal to sort things out; pens here, USB sticks there and little notes everywhere. I just love it, just like I love staying at the manse and of course being here in Paris with you. Sharing a bit of your journey.



Sometimes objects whether man-made or natural, can help us reflect on who we are and where and with whom we want to continue travelling. And so, as I was looking at the Manse desk it became something more than just a practical piece of furniture; it became a reflection tool about life.

I guess like me, most of you will have been disturbed in one way or another by the invasion of Ukraine. At times like these our thoughts and feelings go all over the place and though there is nothing wrong with being emotional about it we do need to sort things out. Reflect as it were on what goes where, where did we do the right thing and where not, what is possible and what isn't, what is important and what can wait.

Though recent events have highlighted the necessity of sorting things out politically, from a church point of view this too is a time to sort things out, to clarify what we stand for and to try and work out what we need to dispose of and what we want to keep as we move forward.

I hope and pray that the weeks and months ahead will be an opportunity for all of us to do just that: reflect and sort out where we want to go and how we can do that.

May God bless you on your journey

Joanne

## Getting to know you

Sébastien Slisse and family are among our newer members. Daughter Myriam, 15, joined the church by profession of faith on 30th January.

### **Sébastien, can you tell us something about yourself?**

I grew up in Alsace, in a small town where the Amish movement was born in the 17th century. I started learning English at the age of 13 with an excellent teacher and I rapidly decided that I also wanted to become an English teacher (a profession which is well-represented at the Scots Kirk Paris).

The best year in my studies was the one I spent in Penn State University: that was an incredible time! And now I've lived in Paris for almost 18 years.



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

My wife, my 3 children and I started going to the Scots Kirk in September 2019. We really appreciated both the minister and the church itself, where the community is welcoming and caring.

Since then, at the Scots Kirk Paris, we have met amazing people and it helped us get through the various lockdowns. And we felt blessed last month when our eldest daughter Myriam could do her confirmation. The Scots Kirk is a place where children are valued and made welcome.

### **Do you have any hobbies?**

I play the clarinet and I have been learning how to play the piano for about a year now: I love it. I also love reading; among my favourites are novels by Dickens (David Copperfield) as well as the poems and historical fiction written by our English friend Kate Innes.

### **What is your vision for our congregation?**

What with the pandemic and the international situation, it's very hard to tell. As Rev. Laurence Twaddle told us in church, there is every reason to remain hopeful. I trust we will all continue to praise God and spread the Word.

## A "rolltop desk" prayer

God grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change;  
courage to change the things I can;  
and wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time;  
enjoying one moment at a time;  
accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;  
taking, as He did, this sinful world  
as it is, not as I would have it;  
trusting that He will make all things right  
if I surrender to His Will;  
that I may be reasonably happy in this life  
and supremely happy with Him  
forever in the next.

Amen

[Reinhold Niebuhr \(1893-1971\)](#)



## A prayer for Ukraine

The news can be difficult to listen to and to read.  
When that news relates to faces we know  
And to voices familiar to us,  
It becomes all the harder to hear.

Lord God,

We ask you to hold the people of Ukraine deep in  
your heart.

Protect them, we pray;

From violence,

From political gamesmanship,  
from being used and abused.

Give, we pray,

the nations of the world the courage  
and the wisdom

to stand up for justice

and the courage too,

to dare to care - generously.

Lord in your mercy,

Take from us all,

The tendencies in us

That seek to lord it over others:

Take from us those traits

that see us pursuing our own needs and wants  
before those of others.

Teach us how to live in love

And dignity

And respect - following your example.

In your name and for your sake,

Amen

[Church of Scotland](#)

## Our five marks of mission

All Church of Scotland charges are expected to exhibit the following five marks of mission in the life and witness of their congregations:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

The Church of Scotland in Budapest, St. Columba's, is currently providing shelter for around 30 Ukrainian refugees every night, with many others arriving during the day for a shower or simply a cup of tea. We pray for Rev. Aaron Stevens and the work he and his team are doing in Hungary.