

## **SCOTS KIRK PARIS – Church Profile**

Bonjour! The Scots Kirk Paris is the only congregation of the Church of Scotland in France. It has been in Paris for over 150 years and is located in the very heart of the city.

We are now looking for our next minister.

The new minister will build on a solid foundation and help the church expand its reach into this beautiful, vibrant and diverse city at the heart of Europe yet only two hours from London.

The church has a history of witness – it features in “The Tartan Pimpernel”, Donald Caskie’s autobiography and it is where Eric Liddell famously preached instead of competing for a gold medal during the 1924 Paris Olympics, which inspired the film “Chariots of Fire”

The church is situated in a modern building in the very heart of Paris – a two minute walk from the Champs Elysées. We are looking to further on these strong foundations to become a key presence in the Christian community in the Paris area.

### **Our strengths**

1. Exciting location at the heart of Europe
2. Diverse and multi-cultural congregation built around a solid core
3. Modern church building and a comfortable central Paris manse

### **Our areas for development**

1. Opportunities for outreach and impact
2. Involving children and non-regular members or those living at a distance
3. Ensuring a solid financial footing for the future

If this sounds interesting and the photos look like somewhere you could live and lead our church, please keep reading....



## **Worship and Congregation**

Worship is weekly on Sundays at 11am and typically lasts for an hour. We celebrate Holy Communion on the first Sunday of every month, as well as during the main Christian festivals.

We have a congregation of approximately 80 people, the average attendance being between 25 and 40, and up to 70 on special Sundays. Those who attend come from different nationalities, denominations and backgrounds, and the successful candidate should demonstrate experience in communicating and engaging with such a diverse congregation.

Generally speaking, there are three distinct groups:

- longer term members – single people, couples and families (often of mixed nationality)
- those who have come for short periods ranging from a few months to several years, to study or work with international companies/organisations
- a large number of visitors and holiday-makers, some of whom return regularly and who consider the SKP as “their church in Paris”

However all feel at ease with our accessible form of worship and fellowship.

The church aims to be a place where new arrivals to Paris can find a special welcome as big cities can be lonely and daunting at first. We attach particular importance to this “welcoming” aspect of our church life – especially as we, ourselves, were all newcomers at one point.

A number of our regular members live some distance from the church (45-60 minutes’ drive) and many have a longer working day than in Britain, or travel frequently for their work. These factors can make it difficult for them to come in from the suburbs to central Paris for weekday/evening meetings and this means a different way of engagement and communication compared to many Scottish parishes. It means too that the Sunday morning service is the focal point of our congregational life and makes it important that worship is a meaningful and relevant experience.

There are nine elders on the Kirk Session and an active Board of 14 members which meets regularly to deal with the administration of the Kirk. There is some overlap in membership and the Session and Board work well together. One of the elders is currently training to be a Lay Reader.

We have a small number of children of school age who attend regularly and would welcome a regular Sunday School, although it can be difficult to have continuity in the numbers. There is currently no Sunday school. Regular All-Age services have partly compensated for this but there may be opportunities to involve the children more in the services – a minister who knows how to talk to and address children will find an appreciative audience. Crèche toys are available in the church hall before and during the service for the pre-school age.

Our church pianist is passionate about making use of the excellent piano and church fabric for concerts. There are regular concerts performed in the sanctuary during the year by both local and international musicians. There is no choir or vocal group but a musical minister may be able to round up some volunteers!

The recent COP21 Climate Change Conference in Paris infused our congregation with increased interest in our approach to ecological matters.

## **What we are looking for - The Minister**

We are very grateful to our outgoing minister who has continued to build up our faith and has helped to build on the stability and numbers of the congregation. We currently have a small core of active members but this needs to be increased as we have not yet reached the tipping-point where we can be sure we will have 50-60 regular members each Sunday.

We are looking for someone who can communicate their belief and inspire others through their understanding of faith in the modern world and its relevance to modern life and current events. We

need somebody with good people skills who can connect and relate to the diverse congregation, visitors and other groups, and feel at ease preaching to people of different backgrounds, nationalities and ages (including young people and children).

The new Minister should be comfortable with, and indeed encourage, use of technology/audio-visual systems in worship/website etc. because we recognise this both as a way of making the service easier to follow, but also connecting with an often distant congregation. The congregation comes from far and wide – and frequently includes visitors from all five continents, so the church relies on technology and social media such as Facebook to keep people updated. The website has recently been revamped and is updated on a weekly basis with details of upcoming services, notices, events and so on and allows donations to be made online via Paypal.



## Outreach

The recent Presbytery review stressed the need to conduct more outreach. The church is located in a very prosperous area of the city centre, but there are pockets of extreme need as in any major city.

There is a major English-speaking community in Paris and the surrounding area with relatively few English-speaking congregations, mainly Anglican. This means outreach amongst the anglophone community would be worthwhile especially as the Scots Kirk is “home” to a number of anglophone support groups during the week. In the past we have also had a number of connections with some churches in Scotland, although these could be developed further and the new minister may be able to encourage and support links of this kind.

There are fewer baptisms, weddings and funerals than might be the case in a traditional Scottish parish.

Because the congregation is small and there are very few mid-week “obligations”, the new minister will find lots of time for outreach and engagement with other groups.

The church also supports two projects by raising funds or making donations:

- a hostel for homeless men here in Paris, run by the “Missionnaires de la Charité”, which the church has been supporting for many years now
- the Dorcas Project in Malawi, managed by two former Scots Kirk elders. Their aim is to help AIDS orphans continue to live in their villages and become autonomous rather than be placed in orphanages



Malawi

The Church also participates actively in projects initiated by the WMC and the International Presbytery (e.g. "A Place at the Table", "Let us Build a House", etc.).

## Activities in the church

The Scots Kirk has a Scottish country dancing group which meets every Friday. We also have Pot Luck Lunches after the service on special occasions – or barbecues on the patio during the summer months.

The church premises are actively used by many different groups, including:

- a Korean Methodist congregation, on Sunday afternoons
- two Sri Lankan Christian congregations, also on Sundays – one in the morning, the other in the afternoon
- two AA groups, two Alanon groups, two French-speaking choirs, a Post-natal support group and an English-speaking Parents' Support Group (from Monday to Saturday), with other groups beginning after the summer.

Donations from these groups go to church funds and contribute significantly to our running costs. Other than sharing the building, there is little other connection with these groups and there may be an opportunity to start to engage more with the various groups that use the church for their activities.



## Church building

Our church building is part of a modern complex, with a sanctuary designed to accommodate 100 people at basement level, and a meeting hall looking onto a patio at ground level. The design of the meeting hall makes it possible to divide it into two separate, soundproof units for smaller meetings. The building is purpose built but DIY skills sometimes come in handy!

There is also a church office, kitchen, toilets and storage areas.

The church has a lift to facilitate access for the disabled.



## Manse

The manse is a spacious, furnished apartment on the third floor of a traditional French “Hausmann” building in the 9th arrondissement of Paris, in an area well served by local shops and schools. The area can be seen on Google Maps by clicking [here](#).

The church is easily accessible by métro and bus and is just a short drive away by car. The manse is also within walking distance of the Gare du Nord railway station, which provides good access to Charles de Gaulle airport by direct RER train service. Gare du Nord station is also well connected to London/Brussels/Amsterdam and the rest of Europe through the Eurostar and Thalys high speed trains which run from there.

The manse consists of:

- Sitting room, dining room, and study
- 2 bedrooms (one with “en-suite” bathroom)
- Kitchen
- Shower room with separate toilet

There is also a “maid’s room” on the 6th floor of the building which belongs to the church and which is normally rented out to a student. The building has a lift.

The congregation meets the costs of the manse upkeep, property taxes and local utilities (gas, electricity and water).

There is a parking space in a nearby underground car park and car running expenses are paid by the church.



## **Stipend and benefits**

The Minister's stipend is paid monthly by the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh. The Paris congregation reimburses Edinburgh annually the total cost, less a grant from the Salvesen Trust towards the cost of the stipend. The local congregation pays all local ministry costs including Social Security, top up medical insurance to give full cover, car expenses (including a parking place next to the manse), and the running costs of the manse such as utilities.

The Minister will contribute to and be covered by French Social Security (under a specific scheme for clergy of all denominations), providing basic old age pension, graduated pension and health benefits, which are recognised by the British Social Security for retirement benefit purposes. The remuneration of the office will be approximately equivalent to that of ministers in Scotland, adjusted to take account of length of service, local cost of living, local social insurance and taxation. A copy of the full Terms and Conditions of Service for ministers in European charges can be provided on request.

The International Presbytery has recently granted the SKP a 100% ministry after negotiation. Whilst this reflects the need and the opportunity in Paris, it should also be noted that the church relies heavily on the Salvesen Fund, which we need to try to redress in the future. Whilst the current vacancy has been confirmed as a full-time post, the Kirk in Paris is not immune to the situation faced by many congregations in Scotland and it will remain a challenge to continue to finance a full time ministry indefinitely into the future.

Churches in the International Presbytery will be moving away from the World Mission Council to come under the auspices of the Ministries Council which will mean a shift in financial balance.

## **French language and education system**

All services at the Scots Kirk are in English. However, as the role of the new minister will be to represent us within the community at all levels, it is important that he/she should have (or should acquire) a good knowledge of French to facilitate communication with local people and other churches. It is sometimes necessary to conduct baptismal, wedding or funeral services partly in French. It goes without saying that it will make life in Paris far easier and far more enjoyable if the minister has a reasonable knowledge of French.

Education in the French state school system is free and in French. English-language schools are mainly situated outside Paris and are fairly expensive. The children of many congregation members are educated in the French state schools. Experience shows that young children adapt well to nursery and primary school education, learning French quickly and with seeming ease. This becomes considerably more difficult as children get older.

## **In Summary**

This is a unique opportunity for the right person who feels called to Paris. We are looking for a minister who can build on a strong foundation and reach out in Paris and beyond. In order to do that, we wish to appoint a minister with energy, faith and vision, who will be able to embrace this challenge and move ahead with us in this new chapter in our church life. The challenging times we live in mean that church life and support are even more in demand.

## **NOTE TO APPLICANTS**

Potential applicants who are not registered Church of Scotland ministers should contact the Ministries Council of the Church of Scotland at 121 George Street, Edinburgh to confirm that they are eligible or find out what they would be required to do to become eligible.