

## Witnessing Together in Geneva



We celebrated our common commitment to Jesus Christ as the Place du Bourg-du-Four became a meeting point for the diversity of nations and cultures in Geneva. Saturday September 3<sup>rd</sup>, was a perfectly warm, gorgeous autumn day. The Place du Bourg-du-Four was devoted to artists for the day; painters, sculptors, poets, and four Christian choirs representing as many continents:

churches and communities currently worship in Geneva, in hotels, basements, in peoples' houses, churches and, in the summer, outdoors. The John Knox Center, named after the great Scottish preacher that made his way down here in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century as a refugee, and who is immortalised at the Reformation Wall, has made it a point to act as a catalyst for nourishing this eclectic faith community.



AFRICA—Wings of Praise  
EUROPE – Gaël Cosendai  
AMERICAS—Chorale Internationale de Genève  
ASIA—Come to Jesus Fellowship

To support this mission, the John Knox Center and members decided to host a Concert in the centre of the old town. ELCG pastors Ekkehard Lagoda, Lusmarina Campos-Garcia and Terry MacArthur were all behind this bold initiative to open the Lutheran Church to other foreign communities not often able to perform in such a visible location as the Bourg-du-Four.

Altogether over sixty singers and musicians kept the spectators spell-bound for two hours.

This was a great opportunity to open our church, to bring the word of Christ Jesus to the world. We are proud that it is thanks to our church, the choirs, the John Knox Centre and many dedicated volunteers that we were able to make this event such a rewarding experience for all. *Carl Bjertnes* ■

Geneva attracts people from all over the world. Since the Reformation, Christian communities of foreign origin have gathered for worship in our city. Over 80 foreign Christian

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## Congregational Retreat 8-9 October 2005

See [www.genevalutheran.ch](http://www.genevalutheran.ch) for highlights of last year's retreat.

**Alle, welche dich suchen, versuchen dich**

Rainer Maria Rilke

All who seek you  
test you.  
And those who find you  
bind you to image and gesture.

I would rather sense you  
as the earth senses you.  
In my ripening  
ripens  
what you are.

I need from you no tricks  
to prove you exist.  
Time, I know,  
is other than you.

No miracles, please.  
Just let your laws  
become clearer  
from generation to generation.



**Visit our website at  
[www.genevalutheran.ch](http://www.genevalutheran.ch)**

Looking for a past sermon? Can't remember a meeting date? It's all on our congregation's website which is updated regularly. It's a great place to find information about what's happening and what did happen if you missed worship last Sunday!

**GenevaLutheran Team**

- Jennie Smith, Editor
- Carl Bjertnes
- Jacinta Goveas
- JoAnne Lam
- Stephen Padre
- Susan Singh

## Editor's Note

This issue of the GenevaLutheran is all about community. From singing on the Place Bourg-de-Four, to studying Luther's catechism, to discussing our purpose in this earthly life, to worshipping with the French speaking congregation, or practicing with the choir, we are a richly diverse community of people brought together by our common faith.

One of the highlights in the community life of our congregation is our Annual Retreat scheduled for 8-9 October this fall. If you were there last year, you know it's not to be missed. If you didn't make it last September, then be sure to work it into your schedule this time around. You'll be glad you did.

Here are a few words taken from Pastor Lusmarina's sermon the week after our return from last year's retreat. The theme was "Building an Ark on the Shores of Lake Geneva."

*Painting a sail is an act of faith because it is an exercise of building community together, of being community. It is the act of exposing oneself and risking being accepted or rejected; appreciated or disdained; of being judged by other people's criteria and expectations. It is more than a question of whether or not someone's brilliant yellow will combine or totally clash with my perfectly luminous purple; it is a question of overcoming lots of hurdles. Will someone else like my idea? Will others join in with what I propose? Do I dare to say what I think? Do I dare to say what God seems to be telling me? Can I actually live in a way that God seems to be leading me? Will others in this community support me? Will I support them? What happens if God's will is not clear? What happens if we disagree?*

*It takes faith to put one's color on a sail, or the shape with which one responds to God's call. It takes time to learn to be a rainbow. And we are never clear what the end result will be. It is necessary to believe in God and in her Creation in order to plant mango trees. And it is undoubtedly essential to like mango in order to plant 30 of them. It is crucial to believe that our faith grows as we live, as we struggle, as we meet each other and learn from one another, as we pray for each other, as we see our prayers being answered or as we hope for an answer, as we risk an unknown possibility, as we paint a sail, as we wait for the mangoes still to come.*

*May the wind of the Spirit blow through us, as a community, and as individuals, so that our faith grows and grows. Amen.*



**Scenes from the 2004 retreat -  
picture yourself there this year.  
8-9 October 2005**

# Bible Readings

## *EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST*

**18 September 2005**

Jonah 3:10--4:11  
Psalm 145:1-8  
Philippians 1:21-30

## *NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST*

**25 September 2005**

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32  
Psalm 25:1-8 (Psalm 25:1-9 NRSV)  
Philippians 2:1-13  
Matthew 21:23-32

## *TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST*

**2 October 2005**

Isaiah 5:1-7  
Psalm 80:7-14 (Psalm 80:7-15 NRSV)  
Philippians 3:4b-14  
Matthew 21:33-46

## *TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST*

**9 October 2005**

Isaiah 25:1-9  
Psalm 23  
Philippians 4:1-9  
Matthew 22:1-14

## *TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST*

**16 October 2005**

Isaiah 45:1-7  
Psalm 96:1-9 (10-13)  
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10  
Matthew 22:15-22

## *TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST*

**23 October 2005**

Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18  
Psalm 1  
1 Thessalonians 2:1-8  
Matthew 22:34-46

## *TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST*

**30 October 2005**

Micah 3:5-12  
Psalm 43  
1 Thessalonians 2:9-13  
Matthew 23:1-12

## *TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST*

**6 November 2005**

Amos 5:18-24  
Psalm 70  
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18  
Matthew 25:1-13

## *TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST*

**13 November 2005**

Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18  
Psalm 90:1-8 [9-11] 12  
1 Thessalonians 5:1-11  
Matthew 25:14-30

## *LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST*

**20 November 2005**

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24  
Psalm 95:1-7a  
Ephesians 1:15-23  
Matthew 25:31-46

# Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

**Week 39: 18-24 September**

Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine

**Week 40: 25 September—1 October**

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia

**Week 41: 2-8 October**

Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,  
Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan,  
Uzbekistan

**Week 42: 9-15 October**

Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal

**Week 43: 16-22 October**

India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

**Week 44: 23-29 October**

The Indian Ocean Islands: Comoros,  
Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles,  
Maldives

**Week 45: 30 October—5 November**

Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo,  
Rwanda

**Week 46: 6-12 November**

Republic of Congo, Gabon, Sao Tome,  
Principe

**Week 47: 13-19 November**

Cameroon, Central African Republic,  
Equatorial Guinea

**Week 48: 20-26 November**

Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania,  
Niger

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## BIBLE STUDY GROUP MEETS THURSDAYS

The English speaking Bible study group will continue to meet on Thursdays this year from 9:30-11 am at the Ecumenical Centre in the Open House.

This fall the group will use the book, *Praying the Catechism*, which explores the meaning of the Apostles Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the 10 Commandments, the sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Martin Luther wrote the Catechism as a guide for family and individual meditation.

This book will help us consider how we live as forgiven people, as children of God, and what forms our ministry together and individually can take. Primarily, it will strengthen our prayer lives.

Everyone is welcome and invited to attend. Contact Dorine, Lynn or Bill for further information.

## Regular Church Activities

### Every Sunday morning

Christian education programme

8-14 yrs. old, 10:00 *church*

Adult forum, 10:00 *Spaghetti Factory, Rue de la Fontaine 13 (close to the church)*

Sunday worship 11:00

### Every Thursday

\*Bible study, 9:30-11:00 *Ecumenical Centre*

Junior choir, 18:30 *church*

Adult choir, 20:00 *church*

### Every Wednesday

Confirmation class, 16:00 *third floor of the church*

### Monday-Saturday

Open Church, 12:00-13:00 *church*

### Third Tuesday of each month

Japanese Bible study, 20:30 *home of Thomas and Koko Taylor, 11 chemin Gamay, Bernex*

### First Saturday of each month

Worship in French, 18:00 *cave voutée at the church*

### Third Sunday of each month

Concerts for Peace, *church*

## Refreshment Duties after Worship

Every week a neighbourhood group prepares refreshments after worship. If you are not sure which group you belong to, please contact the church.

**September 25** Group B  
*(Versoix, Bellevue, Chambésy, etc.)*

**October 2** Group C  
*(Meyrin, Vernier, Châtelaine, Lignon, etc.)*

**October 9** Group D  
*(Grand-Saconnex and Petit-Saconnex)*

**October 16** Group E  
*(Servette, Paquis, Vermont, Délices, etc.)*

**October 23** Group F  
*(Centre Ville, Jonction, Carouge, Eaux-Vives, Acacias, etc.)*

**October 30** Group G  
*(Chêne-Bougeries, Florissant, Cologny, Vésenaz, etc.)*

**November 6** Group H  
*(Lancy, Onex, Bernex, France Haute Savoie, etc.)*

**November 13** Group A  
*(Nyon, Coppet, Crans, Gex, Ferney, etc.)*

**November 20** Group B  
*(Versoix, Bellevue, Chambésy, etc.)*

**November 27** Group C  
*(Meyrin, Vernier, Châtelaine, Lignon, etc.)*

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS  
TIME CHANGE  
"FALL BACK"  
SUNDAY 30 OCTOBER  
AT 3H00

**18 September** La Brante  
20h00 musique villageois de Bernex

**16 October** Regine Kummer, Michel Piuze & Pierre Villard  
17h00 Organ and alphorn trio playing Swiss music

## Concerts **for Peace**

Concerts are held on every third Sunday of the month. There is a time for reflection at each concert on the theme of peace – peace in our world, between nations, between people, and in our hearts – and a time for lighting a candle to symbolize the presence of Christ who is our peace.

## Making the Spaghetti Stretch

It's Monday evening again. One by one we enter the room, greet each other, take our offerings of food or drink to the table and sit around, talking, sharing stories of the day.

What is this all about? People returning home from work? People living in an institution? No. It is the Spaghetti at Night Group getting together with new purpose and renewed energy.

The Spaghetti Factory continues to be host to a small group from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Geneva every Sunday. The staff moves around, setting tables, readying themselves for the clientele, while we reflect on the Gospel of the day and talk about all sorts of things. All too soon, it is time to head for the Church. Though we all really benefit from this time together, some of us thought it would be good to have more structured gatherings on some evenings as well. So we get together every second Monday at someone's house and talk, eat, and reflect on life and the meaning of life and God's purpose for our lives.

We use the book "A Purpose Driven Life" by Rick Warren as the stimulus for discussions. Most of us are aware of the criticisms about this book; many agree with the critics. However, as a group we are not so much about the book as about using it as a way of engaging in dialogue on the theme of discerning what God's purpose is for each of us. We talk about our personal journeys, wax eloquent on academic references and just generally get totally confused by the end of the evening, with more questions than answers and each of us secretly convinced that the answers will be found in the following chapters and we have just not gotten there yet!

"Why go through all this angst?" you may be wondering. Well, for us, it is an opportunity to share the company of like-minded (we are all searching together) people who are willing to share thoughts, ideas and experiences. We also appreciate the opportunity to get to know each other better, to transcend the level of acquaintances and share deeper bonds with each other – the bonds of a community of faith, who recognize that God is in our midst but want deeper clarity as to what God's presence means in our lives – concretely. We could go through this process alone, but, in talking together, we share struggles and challenges, as well as memories of times when we have truly been at peace within ourselves and with God, those precious times when we perceived that we were on the 'right path'.

This sharing offers encouragement and some frustration. Did you ever imagine that the person who is always smiling and so willing to do so much could be wondering if what she was doing was what God meant for her to be doing? That he or she also struggles with issues of discernment? That others go through times when it feels like they should just give it all up and start again? But they seem to be so all together!

Another benefit of getting together like this – in a structured way that invites people to join in, regardless of whether they are your friends or not, is that we are also building community within the Church. We started with an idea that maybe four people talked about; we are now about ten that meet. There are others who have expressed an interest to join us when they can. For the time being we will continue to read the book and reflect, discuss, argue together. Later we will move on to other readings. You are welcome to join us! *Jacinta Goveas* ■

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### ELCG French-speaking Congregation Schedule

#### Regular Services at 18h00

*1 October*

*29 October*

*3 December*

#### Reformation Day Service

*31 October 20h00*

A DVD program in French. Martin Luther, Witness of Jesus Christ.

Lasting fifty-five minutes with pictures, words, and music in five parts:

The Era of Luther, The Youth of Martin, The Time of Breakings,

A Period of Crisis and Edification, The Last Years.

The text is from Pastor Albert Greiner who has written several books on the Reformation.

He will be present to introduce the program and to answer questions afterwards.

If necessary, English and German will be used.

#### ACAT Regional Meeting

*15 October*

Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture

Ecumenical Center

**Practicing for the Choir** (Continued from page 7)

The Spirit says to us, "Sing" and we respond. The room throws back the sound to us and we feel surrounded by the angels. We are practicing for the choir, a choir where our voices count, and where the song of praise to God never ends.

At a recent workshop on ecumenical worship, Wesley Ariarajah, a former colleague at the WCC, noted that when the Bible talks of heaven there is always a lot of singing going on. He pointed out that worship does not begin or end. The praise of God is ongoing. The singing never stops. As we worship we tune in. Are we practicing for the choir? No, it is much more than that. We are the choir, all together, offering our praise to God.

So with the church on earth and all the hosts of heaven we join in their unending song, "Holy, holy, holy." ■

**Music creates order out of chaos:  
for rhythm imposes unanimity upon the divergent,  
melody imposes continuity upon the disjointed,  
and harmony imposes compatibility  
upon the incongruous.**  
- *Yehudi Menuhin*

**JUST FOR FUN**

One Sunday morning, the pastor noticed little Alex staring up at the large plaque that hung in the foyer of the church. It was covered with names and small American flags were mounted on either side of it.

The seven year old had been staring at the plaque for some time so the pastor walked up, stood beside him and said quietly, "Good morning, Alex."

"Good morning, Pastor" he replied still focusing on the plaque. "Pastor, what is this?"

"Well Alex, it's a memorial to all the young men and women who died in the service."

Soberly they stood together, staring at the plaque. Alex's voice was barely audible, trembling with fear, when he asked, "which service, the 9:30 or the 11 am?" *thanks to Lynn Granke*



**Staying Connected:**  
*A Collection of Emails*

Hello ELCG!

I wanted to let you know that my husband and I have moved -- we love receiving the Geneva Lutherans (makes me feel a bit closer to home!), so we're hoping that you can update your records. Our new address is:

Katie Larson & Lance Wiliford  
80 Cherrywood Ave  
Toronto, ON M6C 2X3  
Canada  
Email: [katie.larson@utoronto.ca](mailto:katie.larson@utoronto.ca)

Thanks!! I miss all of the Geneva folk very much...  
Katie Larson

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*Share your news from near and far with the congregation.  
Send email to [newsletter@genevalutheran.ch](mailto:newsletter@genevalutheran.ch).*

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In June, the youth of ELCG English-speaking congregation participated in a scavenger hunt with the youth from Emmanuel and Holy Trinity. It was a beautiful summer day of fun and fellowship.

## Practicing for the Choir by Terry MacArthur

The voice is a muscle. Like other muscles, if you don't use it, you lose it. Increasingly we have songs everywhere, sometimes nerve-rackingly so, for instance when the beat is booming out of earphones on the bus. But we are doing less singing, particularly as a group. There used to be singing together at school, around the campfire, before meals, after meals, at family gatherings, at the bar.

But many of these moments have now disappeared. The earphone is replacing the communal song, and the only way a song is shared is when one earphone gets placed in a friend's ear. All of this leaves out the voice.

Studies have shown that people can no longer sing as high as they used to. The range of notes they can sing is smaller. The ability to sing from musical notation is waning. Those who can harmonize become fewer and fewer. The voice is a muscle

and communally we are losing our voice from disuse.

But at the English-speaking congregation of the Lutheran Church, we keep singing together. In this way, we are counter-cultural. We sometimes have people sing into microphones and sometimes we use amplifiers, but by and large we make the sound together without electronic additions.

There is something special about the sound of our congregation. It is not that we are always on pitch or that it is so beautiful. But there are moments, not every Sunday, but often, when our singing is full of energy, not the electronically zipped-up energy of our age, but the spiritual energy of every voice counting, even those who think they can't sing, every voice being invited in, even those who have three good notes and no others.

*(Continued on page 6)*

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**Place du Bourg-du-Four is abuzz during the concerts held there on Saturday, 3 September.**

Copies of the newsletter may also be downloaded as a pdf file from our website.