



GENEVA LUTHERAN

March 2011 Edition

Dear friends and members of our congregation,

As we journey through the Lenten season together, many thoughts and feelings spring to our minds: what we need to let go of or leave behind, what new lessons God is teaching us, or perhaps simply: "I miss chocolate!"

At its heart, the season of Lent is designed to help us focus on the life and teachings of Jesus in ways we otherwise might not be able to, by asking us to give up something that has become an addiction or even just a distraction, by leading us through the process of thinking about our mortality and how we want to spend our time on this earth, and by helping us do some "spring cleaning" for our souls so that we can better sense what God is doing in our lives and in our world.

This Lent, as we change seasons from winter to spring, as we change our clocks to daylight savings time, and as we change our diets to light, summery food, what other changes is God calling you to make? What have you learned about how you want to spend your time and what you want to leave as a legacy for your loved ones? For us as a church: how can we as a community embody these lessons we're learning?

Witnessing together in Geneva - Integration of migrant church communities

Many of our congregation's members will remember last September's successful event, "Jeûne Genevois International", described in the following Geneva Lutheran. Our congregation was well represented, with Terry MacArthur contributing to its musical creativity, Ana Villanueva and Réka Posewitz helping with interpretation, and our Sunday school teachers and children preparing a huge banner proudly carried in the procession that made its way from the Temple des Pâquis to the Temple de Saint Gervais. For those who missed it, video clips can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/user/temoignerensemble>, and you will notice that we now have a YouTube channel dedicated to the "Témoigner ensemble - Witnessing together" events and interests.

"Témoigner ensemble – Witnessing together in Geneva" is a movement supported by the Protestant Church of Geneva and the John Knox International Center that helps integrate local Protestant churches and those formed by migrant communities. The organization is coordinated by Roswitha Golder, an associate member of our congregation and a pastor in the Protestant Church of Geneva. We meet several times per year with representatives of many migrant church communities and organize special events with an integrative theme.

Two upcoming activities in 2011 are:

1. A day of "Encounter" to be held in Malagnou at the Come to Jesus Fellowship on the 28th of May from 8am to 4pm. There will be biblical dramatization, prayer, a pilgrimage, a children's program, food, fellowship, and of course, music. Interpretation will be available in English, French and Spanish. All are welcome.
2. A 2-day seminar called "Getting to Know the Ecumenical Center in Geneva" will be held 24-25 June from 9am to 5pm. Each day begins with a short worship service in the chapel. Day one is built around a presentation of the wider Ecumenical Center: the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, ACT Alliance, the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, advocacy on HIV/AIDS, HIV in Africa to fight the stigma, personal testimonies and meetings with representatives. Day two focuses on "Just and Inclusive Communities", with examples from areas such as anti-racism, Dalit communities and indigenous peoples, through the work of the Ecumenical Disabilities Network (EDAN), migration and migrant churches, and links with the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe. As the seminar has a limited number of places (four per community), those interested should contact Roswitha Golder, whose contact information can be found in the congregation's directory. Simultaneous interpretation will be offered in English, French and Spanish.

Submitted by Ray Woodcock, representing our English-Speaking Congregation

Simply an evening together

It was an evening out and a chance to get acquainted with and to remember the fine things about each other that we already know. From the low-pressure organizational approach, based on sign-up sheets, to the surprises scattered throughout the evening's entertainment, it was a celebration of things to like about ELCG.

We have to start by recognizing the organizers; but they spread the credit around as much as they can (another one of those things to like). The planning and set-up were careful and solid, because some people took the trouble: Valerie Marinoni, for example, managed a delicious meal for 140 while, as usual, making it look easy.

For the entertainment, Jackson started the evening off. He reminded me why I enjoy his guitar playing, mixing meditative with joyful moods. Tony Herder, the MC, maintained a light touch within the hubbub of the room. When it was the choir's turn, they went in a new direction with an unorthodox take on Bach. This is another thing to like about ELCG: things that seem so different sit comfortably together.

Ralie Deffenbaugh was himself a mix of the familiar with the new, as he mixed history of the church with stories from his three periods of membership here. Let's see, was that story about his confirmation class or the use of the building for soldiers that came in the 1800's? And in which century did his group of teenagers find the secret access to the (then hidden) vaulted cave?

For those who hadn't seen Koko and Sylvain, it was a revelation of the comical possibilities in music. If, like me, you have seen them before, you could just get on with laughing uproariously.

Finally the youth of the congregation joined the act: Julia Wilbers, with some help from Kumiko Nishimura, brought us a nostalgic number from *The Sound of Music*, and the "familiar-to-us", virtuoso Lohmann children played some rather less-familiar klezmer music.

It was not a polished performance of an evening (although Koko and Sylvain have everything down like clockwork, so to speak); rather it was friendly and fun at the same time. And let's face it: that is a lot of what brings us back to this church time and time again.

Submitted by John Evans-Klock

Rendez-vous with Nishi Nishimura

Our 'Rendez-vous' series features an interview with a member of our Congregation - for those who find our refreshment hour is just not long enough...!

When did you come to Geneva and why?

I came to Geneva on 1 September 2010 with my wife Kumiko, to start my new work with Y's Men International.

What are three adjectives that describe who you are?

Positive, humorous and active.

From whom have you learned the most? What is it that you have learned from him/her/them?

Fortunately I have had many people that I have learned from, until I met the best coach, Jesus, from whom I will learn forever.

Which traits do you appreciate in the opposite gender?

I appreciate their cheerfulness.

What place does our Congregation and our Sunday services have in your life?

An encouragement to go forth in the world and to rest my mind towards a stronger spirit.

Can you share a strong childhood memory? What did your Sundays look like in those days?

I participated in all the scouting activities, without fail.

Where is the most beautiful landscape you can think of?

The view of Mount Fuji, the mountain on which I was baptized, from the 18th hole at the Green Water golf course.

What would the perfect dinner be? The perfect dinner company?

Dinner with my entire family and the Holy Spirit around the table.

God? Prayer?

Two or three, in the name of Jesus Christ.

When did you fall in love for the first time?

I can't remember well... maybe when I was a child... it depends how you describe love...

What's your greatest virtue?

To accept Jesus as my Lord.

What's the best decision you've made so far?

That I applied for this new job.

At the highest summit: which experience?

Me, standing on a mountain or a hill, looking at clouds below.

What was secondary school all about for you? And what did your country look like in those days?

I was busy with my swimming club and the boy scouts. The country's economy was rapidly growing.

What is your greatest fear?

The power of God.

After secondary school, what was your next step? Did you have a 'master plan' for your future?

I was too young to have plan.

What did friendship and dating look like in those days?

On a daily basis with my schoolmates, and on weekends at the scouts.

If you could be Prime Minister for one day, what would you do? What's the point our leaders are missing? Is there hope for our world?

Prime ministers are not necessarily leaders, they are politicians... Unless he or she knows about Jesus, I do not have much hope.

What is Geneva for you?

The destination that God planned for me.

How do you relax?

By playing golf.

What is your motto in life? Where did it come from?

Be prepared, from the scouts.

Life... do you think you have figured it out at this point?

No one can, as it is endless.

Submitted by Maarten Wilbers

Holy Week worship schedule

17 April, 11h00 Palm Sunday

21 April, 19h30 Maundy Thursday

22 April, 19h30 Good Friday

23 April, 20h30 Easter Vigil

For your agenda:

Friday-Saturday, 1-2 April
Saturday, 14 May

Sunday, 29 May

Sunday, 5 June
Sunday, 12 June
17-19 June
27 June-10 August
Sunday, 14 August
Sunday, 21 August
Sunday, 28 August

Confirmation Class Retreat

Beer and Hymns: an evening of singing and fun
(and fundraising for the painting of the sanctuary)

Congregational Assembly after worship

Worship with Swedish Speaking Congregation

Worship at 11h30

Fête de la Musique

Summer Concerts every day at 12h30

Last worship before painting the sanctuary; we remove furniture

Worship at the Madeleine Church due to painting

Worship back at ELCG