

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1976)

Heft: 1721

Rubrik: Swiss churches

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THE LIFE OF THE SWISS CHURCHES

The Swiss Protestant Churches held their Annual Assembly at the end of May at the Eglise Suisse, Endell Street. The meeting was opened by Mr. G. Gyssler, Vice-President of the Consistoire.

Among the problems raised, the issue of dwindling revenue and that of finding a new minister for the French-speaking parish, were the most important. Following the unexpected return to France of Pastor Michel Languillat last year, the Parish was left in the charge of Mr. Languillat's assistant, Mr. Raymond Renou, who has announced his wish to return to Switzerland at the end of September.

The Consistoire is presently trying to find a new man but all the indications are that this search will not be easy. Pastor Uli Stefan and his wife Ursula, of the German-speaking parish, are to leave London in September after ten years here. His farewell message is published in this issue of the *Swiss Observer*. His successor, the Rev. Jungi from Basle, married with a family, arrived in London in July to work himself into his new ministry.

Regarding the financial situation of the Church, the Treasurer noted that a record deficit of £5,000 had been sustained during 1975. This was due mainly to the costs of maintaining and repairing the church and the vicarage. This was coupled to a fall in income with respect to the preceding year, because the same legacies were not received in 1975 and because there was no Bazaar that year.

Reporting on the activities of the German-speaking parish during the past year, Mrs. E. D. Crack, President of the Parish Council, recalled that services on the fourth Sunday of every month had been dropped following a common decision by the Church Council and the Consistoire. Mrs. Crack spoke of the heavy programme of home visits carried out by the Rev. Stefan and of the outer London services held in London North, Dulwich, Wimbledon and Sevenoaks. These clearly showed that a need was being fulfilled.

She also referred to the success of the Mothers' group. It had organised two additional meetings. One, a visit to a theatre, had attracted nearly fifty mothers. The Frauenverein was the other long-standing group whose activities contributed to the life of the Church.

In his own report to the Committee of Swiss Catholics, Father Paul Bossard noted that the fall in attendance at Mass at the John Southworth Centre could partially be due to the fact that the hall used wasn't specifically designed for the purpose.

He said that a multi-purpose room deprived of the right atmosphere could be used for service on an occasional basis, but never in the long term. In view of this situation, Father Bossard managed to find the necessary support to build an ecumenical chapel at the Centre which should be consecrated this autumn.

He also announced that, starting with July of this year, ecumenical services will be held at the Eglise Suisse on the third Sunday of every month at 10 p.m.

SWISS CHURCHES – LONDON

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