Caroline Swash was born in Gloucestershire in 1941. Trained in painting and fabric printing at Cheltenham College of Art. She gained the Art Teachers Diploma with Distinction at The London Institute. She learnt stained glass technique in her father's studio. Both he and his father were stained glass artists (Edward and Henry Payne). In 1966 she married Michael Swash, currently Professor of Neurology at St Bartholomew and The Royal London Medical School. They have three sons.

Her first commissions in stained glass during the 1960s were for St Paul's Church, Cleveland, USA. In England her stained glass windows can be seen at St Mary, Brightlingsea; St Mary, Hemsby; St James, New Malden, The Multiple Sclerosis Headquarters, Kilburn. In 1992 she created the Herbert Howells Memorial window for Gloucester Cathedral and in 1997, The Cathedral Ladies window in Portsmouth Cathedral. In 2000 she made the memorial window in St Bartholomew, Rogate for the Countess of Sandwich. Recent windows have been made with Goddard and Gibbs Studios, London. Stained glass panels by Swash are in the collections of the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, the Victoria & Albert Museum, London and the Gerdasafn at Kopavogur, Iceland. From 1995 -97 she worked on the complete glass scheme for the church of St Barnabas, Dulwich with American architect Lawrence Malcic of HOK. Most of the commission was funded by The Arts Council. Current projects include 2 nave windows for the Army Air Corps in Salisbury Cathedral, a Centenary window for St George's School Harpenden and the Weller-Pooley memorial windows for Boxted Church, Suffolk.

Swash was Hon Secretary of the British Society of Master Glass Painters for 21 years, organising exhibitions, lectures and conferences. She was Founder Editor of 'Stained Glass', the Society's magazine. She has been correspondent on glass for Crafts, Neues Glas, Stained Glass (USA). Publications include '14 Stained Glass Walks in London' and 'Medical Science and Stained Glass' with Malvern Arts Press. With Dr Judith Neiswander she completed 'Stained and Art Glass' for The Intelligent Layman Publishers in 2006. At present she is Route Leader of the Post Graduate Courses 'Glass, Fine Art and Architecture' at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design (The University of the Arts, London).