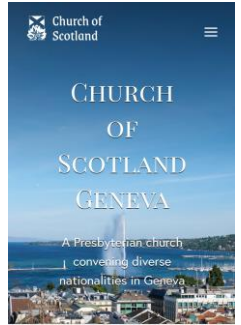




Newsletter

July 2024



Letter from the Minister

“Everyone wants to be loved!”

Not a sentiment you might expect to encounter in the hard-bitten, slightly cynical world of the sports columnist – but there it was, not just once, but twice on the same day in the Times newspaper...with reference to two different sports, two different major sporting personalities – tennis colossus Novak Djokovic, and highly successful England manager Gareth Southgate

.In an article on Thursday 11th July, columnist Matthew Syed shared his sadness, disappointment and frustration at the reception received at Wimbledon for Djokovic – a worthy champion, but not as well-regarded some more popular opponents – Federer, Nadal, Murray.

Syed shared – from his close contacts with Djokovic – how hurtful and disappointing...and not a little disrespectful, the multiple Grand Slam winner’s treatment by the spectators felt.

“Everyone wants to be loved!” reminded Syed.

Another grizzled sports writer, Martin Samuel – in the same newspaper, reflected on how wounding and unjust it had seemed, to see one of the most successful football managers in English football, being disrespected, put down and on the receiving end of abuse - boos and cups of beer being hurled at him by disgruntled fans. And at the same time- pundits

aplenty lined up to criticize most things he has been doing in the Euros!

“Everyone wants to be loved!” wrote Samuel, who hoped reaching a second major final, a semi- final and a quarter final during his term of service might win Southgate a little bit of appreciation, warmth and affection, in the hearts of fans and commentators alike.

“Everyone wants to be loved!” is the kind of bottom line for all of us – our needs, our inner ache...the disappointments along the way...the people who didn’t seem to love us very well – and the people who left hearts broken, or bruised.

It doesn’t matter who we meet – today, tomorrow...this week...along the journey...however they might strut and preen...however they might hide and pretend...

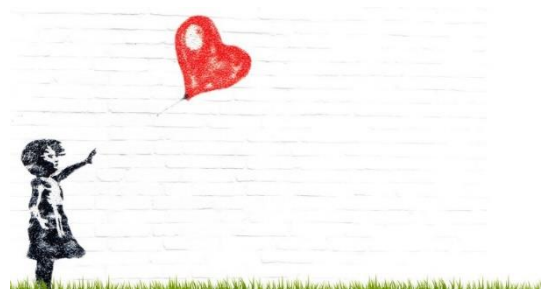
Everyone wants to be loved.

Our Good News is that everyone **IS** loved!

And, when we meet them - we can help them discover that...feel that...believe that.

Happy summer days!

Laurence



Church News

(- quite a lot of articles this time- lots happening)

Nominating a new Minister

(for the deferred linkage between Lausanne and Geneva)

On 16 May we, and the congregation in Lausanne, selected 13 representatives on a committee to nominate a new minister in Lausanne. The committee met on 25 June and will meet again on Tuesday 16 July.

Please pray for wisdom for them all so that they can fulfil this duty.

They are:

Nan Braunschweiger

Jane Broere

Christine Buhler

Ian Colliar (Vice-convener)

Mak Ikeda

Cornis van der Lugt

Morven Maclean

Erica Martin (Clerk)

Carolyn Meduski

Xoeseko Nyomi

Neil Wallace

Hannelize van Zyl (Convener)

Flower Rota

Dear Everyone,

We are trying to revive the Flower Rota. A list of dates should now be pinned up in the Salle so that anyone who would like to contribute flowers on a Sunday, perhaps to commemorate a friend or loved one or just to brighten up the church, can sign up. Please also add an e-mail address so that I can pop a little reminder to you the week before. Janet Askew used to do this for me and if your memory is anywhere near as bad as mine, receiving one is very useful!

Many thanks, Rosemary Hill (hillrosemary@yahoo.co.uk)

FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN



For many years the Women's Group supported the Fellowship of the Least Coin (FLC) by collecting 5ct pieces which are contributed to this worthy cause. The fellowship supports local projects with small grants to cover wide-ranging needs on a global scale.

Some snap-shot examples include:

- Sanitation and Hygiene Program, Bangladesh

- Dignity and Social Inclusion: Socially vulnerable children and youth, Argentina
- Iwaki Food Radiation Measurement Project, Japan
- Awareness Creation on Gender Based Violence Crimes, Tanzania
- Rehabilitation and Sessions of Intensive Vocational Training at the Central Women's Prison in Baabda, Lebanon
- Seeking wisdom to care for God's creation, Pacific Region
- Young Egyptian Women as Agents of Peace Building and Consolidation, Egypt.

Much more information can be found on their website at [Fellowship of the Least Coin](#).

Since COVID the practice has fallen through the cracks but we would like to revitalise it. Anyone in the congregation can participate: simply collect your 5ct pieces – or larger denominations if you wish - for the FLC and support of their projects and give them to Nan Braunschweiger or Jane Broere on the first Sunday of any month. Please note we can only use Swiss coins.



SAVE THE DATE....
CONGREGATIONAL AWAY DAY
 Château de Bossey
 Saturday 21 September 2024
 Varied and interesting programme
 details to follow

The Fair

This year's annual Fair will be held on **Saturday 2nd November from 09h30 until 15h00**. It's a day to come together, rekindle old friendships with fellow members of the congregation and forge new connections.

The loyal and long-standing stallholders are signed up and now we need to help them in stocking their stalls. Should you be travelling to the UK over the summer, Scottish and Christmas items would be most welcome. Calendars, Christmas cards and tartan scarves, amongst others, are hugely popular with our returning customers.

Every contribution you make, be it through purchases or donations will support essential projects and initiatives.

Posters will be available nearer the time, but please talk to your friends, families, colleagues, everyone, to spread the word! It's never too early to ask folk to save the date.

If you have any questions or wish to discover opportunities for participation—like volunteering during the event (there's plenty to engage with) or assisting behind the scenes in the days prior to the Fair—please reach out to Christine Buhler, buhlerchristine@hotmail.com (41 79 417 09 93)



And not to forget our very popular Ceilidh in the evening – 19h00 – 22h00 with plenty of dancing, food and guaranteed fun. Tickets are CHF35 each (children under 12, free) and can be ordered at ceilidhchurchofscotlandgeneva@gmail.com

And a little something Micheal noticed:

Sir,

Tricia Shuler's family call 'And Can it Be, That I Should Gain ' the bicycling hymn (letter, May 8). My family did too, but for my mum and dad it was personal.

They met on a chapel-organised cycling outing when my mum's chain fell off and my dad fixed it.

The lines of the hymn are: "My chains fell off, my heart was free,/ I rose, went forth, and followed Thee."

My mum's name was Rose, and we sang the hymn at my dad's funeral.

Sue Scott

Theydon Bois, Essex



BOOK CLUB

The book chosen for our first book club meeting is

HAMNET by Maggie O'Farrell

ISBN978-1-4722-2382-1

Hamnet tells an imagined story of Shakespeare's family life, focusing on what is usually mentioned only in footnotes – his wife and children, including the death of his son Hamnet during childhood. It's a story of love and grief, an illustration of passion and hard work.

There is a copy in the Geneva municipal library.

We plan to meet on Wednesday 25 September at 14h00 – venue still to be decided. Please let me know if you plan to attend and I look forward to our discussion.

Gillian

gillianfriedli@bluewin.ch

Futuring our focus, focusing on our future

In three well-attended meetings in January, February, and April, our congregation developed a vision to strengthen and deepen our community, working along three axes: neighbourhood groups, other groups, and congregational events.

Last month, our kirk session looked at the practical steps needed to implement this vision, beginning in September. It agreed to approach four members to oversee the programme of events and the creation or development of the other groups.

We already have a small planning group to develop a strategy for the neighbourhood groups. It will meet this month and again in August.



Páraic Réamonn

December 1: Carol service on Advent Sunday



The kirk session has agreed that our annual Carol service this year will be on Advent Sunday (December 1), to avoid clashing with the Fête de l'Escalade or, even worse, the Cours de l'Escalade. Put the date in your diary now and guard it zealously; and if you would like to join the choir in leading the service, please let me know!

Páraic Réamonn

A rota for our new order of service

It is a truth universally acknowledged that congregations take longer than individuals to recover from Covid: perhaps we may think of it as congregational “long Covid”.

When we returned cautiously to in-person worship in the Auditoire, we had, to begin with, a printed order of service that was just that: an outline of what was happening in the service. Last year, the kirk session discussed a return to the more comprehensive order of service that was standard before Covid struck – in those days, mostly prepared by Peter Tulloch (to whom much thanks). In October, a prototype rolled off the presses, on A4 paper folded longwise, with the order inside and on the outside pages, notices, bank details, and a list of those leading or helping with the service (it's always good to be recognized).

Since then, it's been a work in progress.

We began with a “Welcome” banner and underneath a picture of the Auditoire behind closed doors. “Not very welcoming,” said Peter. Intrepid Lindy sorted that out double-quick, in the process immortalizing Lily Geissbuhler and Alex Craye.

On the fourth Sunday in Advent, we adopted a collection of banners (from the website of Vanderbilt Divinity School) for each Sunday of the Christian year. This worked fine until we got to Trinity Sunday and discovered that, after that, Sundays in the season after Pentecost weren't labelled, for example, “Second Sunday after Pentecost” but, puzzlingly, “Proper 4 (9)”. In a later newsletter, I'll explain why, as well as why we are currently in “Year B”.

By now, however, we have a standard template for the new order of service, a lot of experience, and a set of easy-to-follow instructions. All we need is a rota of eager and willing volunteers with colour printers to take turns in producing the orders, Sunday by Sunday.

Many hands make light work. We already have six such volunteers. But we'd like to double our numbers to 12, so that no one has to produce the order more than once every three months.

If you are interested in joining our ranks, please send me a WhatsApp or an email

079 151 91 43, paraic.reamonn@gmail.com

Páraic Réamonn



Tribute to Ritchie by Mary Couper

In memorium: Mary Ritchie Pannetti 01.08. 1926 - 12 .05 2024

Feisty, ferocious but above all fun loving.

I had the privilege of knowing Ritchie for over thirty years. Many of you will remember her from the bookstall. I remember her saying that she inherited a few banana boxes but she turned it into a thriving business making a substantial contribution to the funds of the church. When her failing eyesight made it difficult for her to continue, she would nevertheless faithfully take up position behind the stall on a Sunday morning with a big smile on her face. No one ever suspected the effort it took but she remained in charge almost to the end.

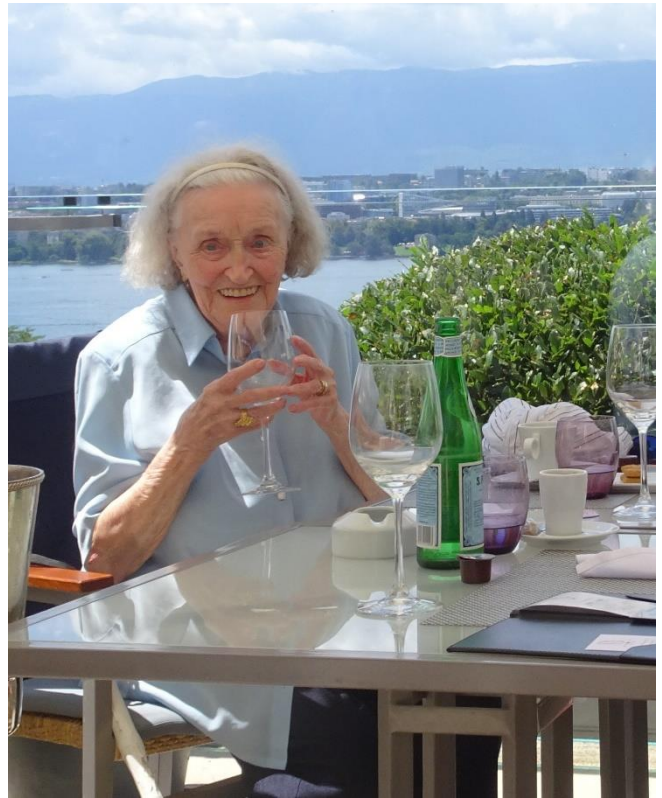
Over the years she and I travelled many times. We went to Scotland on a couple of occasions. The first trip was to Edinburgh in order to stock up on the cards for the aforementioned bookstall. We enjoyed that trip so much that that we decided to go back visiting Perth and my family. We also went to Budapest with my daughter and the South of France with my son. We went to Paris on the TVG one New Year because our good friend Jim Sharp was preaching on the Sunday. That was when she told me that she had a premonition; she was diagnosed with macular degeneration later that year. Once we went to Ireland travelling by car and once we went to Stresa, Italy by train. On each occasion we would share a room and of course we would indulge in a few drams She would always insist on getting the ice from the various hotels in which we stayed. Oh happy memories.

She adored her malt whisky and her oatcakes. She was a passionate royalist. She loved the Queen's birthday parties, which fortunately did not affect our friendship. We would regularly have lunch together and she would come to stay with me on many weekends. She loved shopping for clothes and I do not think there was ever a time when she did not come away without yet another blouse.

She was the most courageous person I have ever met, bearing her infirmities with dignity.

I will miss you my dear.

With much love Mary xx



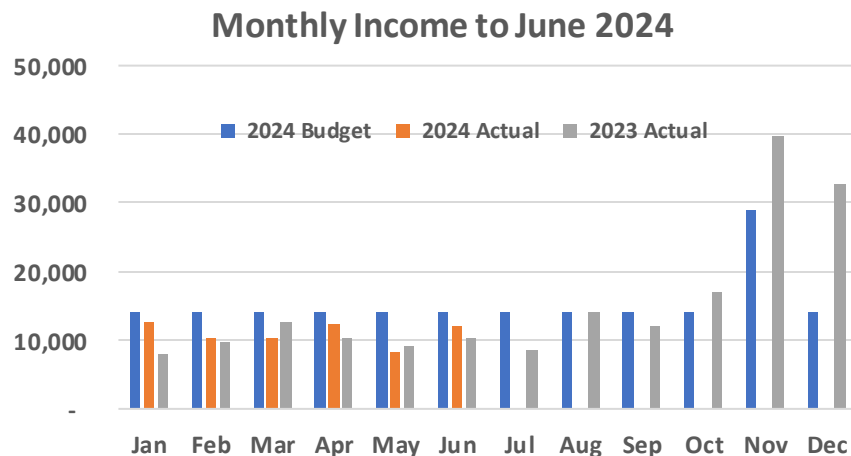
Finance Update – June 2024

The presentation of the report on the Church's finances at the Annual Congregational Meeting (ACM) in June was not the easiest to prepare. On the one hand, it was quite easy to report back on what happened in 2023, with the alarming state of finances which was only addressed at the very end of the year but in quite spectacular fashion. What was not so easy was answering the obvious question which came next: so how is 2024 going ? Comparing the first few months of one year with its predecessor, which saw a massive change in the last couple of months, requires a grasp of what facts there are, some intuition and a fair bit of speculation.



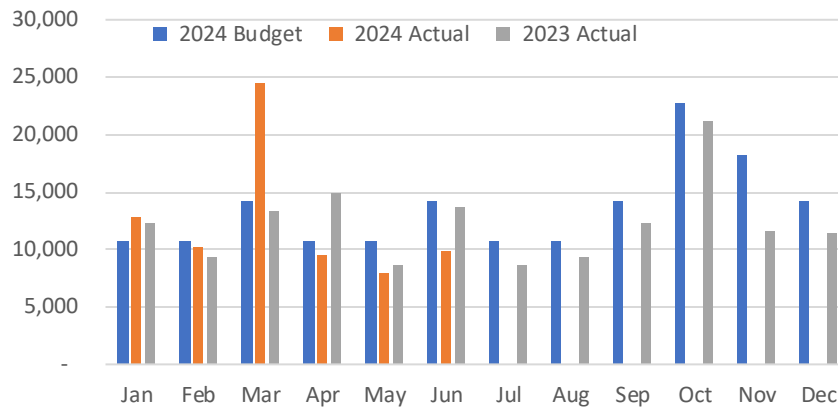
Nonetheless, we need to know how 2024 is going so that we can plan ahead and use the benefit of experience. This is extremely important in making sure that we don't end up where we found ourselves a year ago, heading for one of the highest deficits seen in the Church's recent history.

Mathematically, what we see to the middle of 2024 are the following:



The blue is what we planned for in the budget approved by the ACM. The orange shows the income received and the grey shows (for comparison) the equivalent amount in 2023. In short, the Church is generally doing better in 2024 than in 2023 but is not meeting its targets. The exception was March when income dipped notably. May was slightly down but largely due to the lack of a Service on one Sunday. Overall, income has been higher in 2024 to date by around CHF 6,000 over the equivalent period in 2023. This is being driven mainly by the Freewill Offering, which indicates the positive response to the longer term request last year that Church members would, if possible, make ongoing commitments to the Church. This is the most valuable source of long-term funding which is sustainable and reliable.

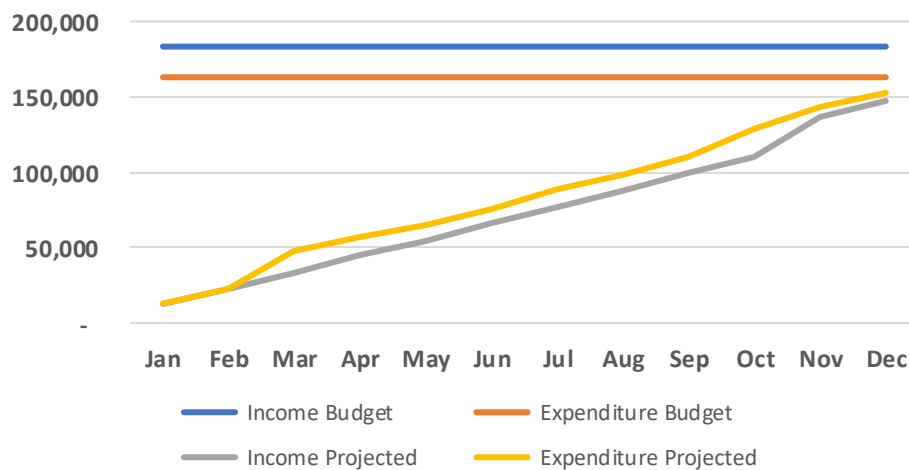
Monthly Expenditure to June 2024



The picture with regard to expenditure is more mixed. Serious variations are seen across different months due to one-off expenditures on taxes and different timings of Church of Scotland assessments. The main conclusions to draw are that overall expenditure trends are below budget¹ (which is good) but higher than in 2023 (which is not so good).

Comparing 2023 is only useful up to a certain point though. The key questions are whether the Church can sustain itself and how well it is performing against budget. The chart below shows how 2024 looks in this respect, by comparing the income and expenditure projected to the end of the year against the budgeted amounts (the straight lines at the top):

Cumulative Financial Predictions 2024



The critical messages are:

1. Both income and expenditure are projected to be under budgeted levels but income more so.
2. Expenditure is projected to exceed income by around CHF 5,000.

¹ The exceptional amount of expenditure seen in March 2024 is due to tax reconciliations which may be reclaimed although this is to be confirmed at present.

Compared with a projected deficit in mid-2023 of around CHF 20,000 – 25,000, a projected deficit of CHF 5,000 is a distinct improvement. However, it's still a deficit, which means that the Church is living beyond its means. Nor do expenditures get less from one year to the next so the need to grow the income remains as important as ever.

The initial response to the dire situation in 2023 was put in place by the finance functions of the Church but analysis quickly demonstrated that the problem was deeper than that and concerned the health of the Church as a whole.

We read in 1 Corinthians 12 that the Church is like a body and while it's probably not entirely what St Paul meant, you can see the finances as a critical part of that body, even if not the central concern. They're a bit like the blood circulation: the real value lies in the brain but if the circulation fails, you nonetheless have quite a problem. Like circulation, they're also quite easy to measure in quantitative terms and so provide a good indicator of the broader health.



The diagnosis (if you can call it that) was that the generosity of Church members (as evidenced, for example, by the Freewill Offering as noted above) was not in question but the numbers were. Hence the two-pronged approach with a special appeal and the recovery plan to energize Church life and bring in new members. The recovery plan has since been effectively superseded by the Future Focus initiative which, quite rightly, encompasses much more than Church finances. In view of what has taken place over the last year, I would like to add unconditional support from the Church's financial perspective to the Future Focus work, and would encourage everyone to be involved as actively as possible. If it revitalizes our outreach, we can all feel the benefit and that will quickly be reflected in the Church's finances as well.

Ewart MacKenzie
Treasurer



Please note that the above report does not take into account Mission income and expenditure. These remain distinct from those of the rest of the Church and are considered equal to each other from one year to the next so that their mathematical impact on the measurement of the Church's finances is zero.

Special Malawi Appeal

The HIV Resource Centre in Ekwendeni, Malawi is as busy as ever, doing its amazing work with the many young people in its large catchment area. The Centre has been in operation for about 20 years now and it has touched hundreds and hundreds of young lives through its activities and its outreach program with 60 different youth groups. Over the years, our church has developed a strong partnership with the Resource Centre, and we continue to support its work through Mission donations from our congregation.

In September, Jane and Han Broere will once again visit the Resource Centre and as before, we would very much like to provide them with a gift of money to take there, and to use to purchase something they see is needed, useful, life-changing, for the people we help serve.

In order to raise that money, we are inviting all members and friends of the congregation to give to this special purpose, over and above our normal giving, if we are able, and happy so to do.

Donations are very welcome either as cash in the offering plate on Sundays (in an envelope marked 'Special Malawi appeal') or as bank transfers (again please note 'Special Malawi appeal' when making these electronic transfers). Moneys raised through this special appeal will be specifically included in this special gift. Any funds raised that are excess to the needs that Jane and Han find there, will be used towards the church's next regular donation to Ekwendeni, scheduled for January 2025.

As a reminder of the different aspects of the Resource Centre's work, attached is a brief extract from Jane and Han's report from their last visit in 2022.

With many thanks in advance, on behalf of the Mission Committee,

Jenny Rietbergen

Bank Details:

UBS Bank Account: Church of Scotland, GE

Account no. 279-C7114389.0

IBAN: CH13 0027 9279 C711 4389 0

HIV Resource Centre, Ekwendeni, Malawi (report from Jane and Han)

The Centre is busier than ever as the general population of the area has increased, as has the student population. The Centre is fulfilling an amazing and essential role for young people in the Ekwendeni catchment area. HIV testing, counselling, encouraging adherence to treatment, treatment of STDs and condom provision are all offered at the RC. Campaigns such as stay at school, no to child brides, gender equality and no to domestic violence, to name but a few, are run by the Centre using music, dance and drama. These, plus sports and other activities are important and effective vehicles to encourage behaviour change. The Centre also provides a safe place where the young people can gather. Without this many would have nothing to do and be pulled into bars, the drug scene, prostitution etc.

Shupo Kumwenda, the Supervisor, is very astute and dedicated to the youth and the communities. He has earned profound respect from the police, the synod, village headmen, the communities and many more. He is often sought out to help in a whole manner of issues. Even the local police bring him troubled youngsters whom he then takes under his wing, keeps them close and integrates them into the RC. The youth from the youth clubs also come to him when they see somebody in their villages is in trouble, orphans with nothing to eat, victims of domestic abuse, elderly people who are ill or need help. Shupo then organises the youth to help with these situations, in a programme called Home Based Care.





Lalgadh Leprosy Hospital & Services Centre (LLHSC) NEPAL LEPROSY TRUST

A little note to say... "Many Many Thanks" - to our Church of Scotland Family, Geneva

from graeme & meena Clugston – Medical Director & Nursing Adviser,
Lalgadh Leprosy Hospital, Nepal

June 2024

E-mail: clugstong@gmail.com

Lalgadh Hospital web-site: www.nepal-leprosy.com

Lalgadh Hospital FaceBook: www.facebook.com/nepal.leprosy

Our Dear Church-of-Scotland-Geneva Family,

This little note is to say again how deeply grateful we all are at Lalgadh Leprosy Hospital Nepal, to you our dear church family. THANKYOU ... for your long precious partnership and support - your encouragement, prayers, funding, and love. You have enabled lovely progress in the front-line mission work at Lalgadh Leprosy Hospital Nepal, including our outreach to poor needy remote communities in nearby villages and in the mountains.

Truly everyone at Lalgadh Hospital is so very grateful to you – our doctors, nurses, patients, all the staff, and of course Meena and me. This is one of the world's busiest leprosy hospitals – our yearly patient numbers usually amount to some 10,000 leprosy patients, and about 100,000 patients of all sorts, including 20,000 children. Daily we treat 400 – 600 patients in our Outpatients clinics, including 20-60 leprosy-affected and the rest with other tropical diseases. At this time of year with hot daily temperatures 35-45 degrees and the monsoon approaching, diseases increase due to mosquitoes, the heat, and contaminated water (eg typhoid, skin diseases).

Your fabulous faithful support over the years has helped transform Lalgadh Hospital, with medical and surgical care for the poor and needy patients, plus better equipped new wards, much-needed equipment such as wheelchairs and crutches, our beautiful child-friendly Children's Unit, our Isolation Unit, our life-saving ultrasound machine ("Janet"), a new school for needy mountain children, and support for a doctor and nurse.

Your funding and care have helped us reach out across our huge catchment area (Province-2, some 6.2 million people), to seek, and find. Because some leprosy-affected folks still hide due to stigma. We try to rescue, treat and rehabilitate many tens of thousands of poor leprosy sufferers and other needy folks - often disabled and marginalized.

With your help and an additional outreach for extra-needy children in high difficult-access remote areas, we built a small school to replace the earthquake-wrecked school, and supported a teacher there. We run a children's clinic there each year as well.

In our regular daily morning devotions in the Children's Unit at Lalgadh Hospital with nurses, doctors and leprosy patients, we always give thanks for you and your wonderful sustaining love and support for people and work here.

Many many many thanks again to you all. We are all so very grateful! We hope to see you very soon as we are returning to Geneva.

Much love and God bless,

graeme & meena

Dr Graeme A. Clugston & Meena Clugston,
Medical Director, & Nursing Adviser,
Nepal Leprosy Trust,
Lalgadh Leprosy Hospital & Services Centre
Dhanusha District, Province-2
Nepal

Mobile Phone: +977-981 889 4150

E-mail: clugstong@gmail.com

Lalgadh Hospital web-site: www.nepal-leprosy.com

Lalgadh Hospital FaceBook: www.facebook.com/nepal.leprosy

Lalgadh Leprosy Hospital & Services Centre (LLHSC) NEPAL LEPROSY TRUST



With your help... (a) reconstructive surgery for leprosy patients ...
(b) supporting a doctor and nurse for hospital care of leprosy patients, especially children



With your help ... (a) a new school to replace an earthquake-wrecked school in the mountains; ... and (b) running a school clinic in the mountains.

International Youth Presbytery Meeting 2025



There have recently been discussions between Lausanne and Geneva to jointly host the next Youth Presbytery in 2025. Because Lausanne are hosting the next Presbytery meeting in October, as well as recruiting a new Minister, they have asked Geneva to take the lead of a joint group from both churches. The Kirk Session strongly supports the initiative. Would you be interested in joining a small group in the organisation of the weekend? Hopefully the points below will answer any questions you may have, but please do speak to Christine Colliar or the Minister if you are interested.

What is it?

So far, the churches to have hosted Youth Presbytery include Amsterdam, Brussels, Regensburg, Lausanne, Rotterdam and Budapest. Each occasion has been different, but, in general, each has meant young people gathering for a weekend to enjoy fellowship, consider a certain theme, and take some role in worship on Sunday.

Who goes?

Young people no younger than 18 are targeted, and the upper limit is quite flexible. The idea is to limit participants to no more than 2 from each church. In 2023 the number was 8 visitors (2 from Bochum, 1 from Brussels, 3 from Rome, 2 from Rotterdam.) In earlier years the number has been around 15.

What happens?

The host church chooses the weekend that best suits them. So far, the weekend has always been in February to accommodate a break between exams and the spring semester for universities. Once a church is set on hosting, it promotes and plans the weekend with a theme. On Friday there is introduction of the weekend theme with Saturday a mixture of sight seeing, free time, exploration of the theme, and preparation for Sunday worship, which they usually participate in.

Temoigner ensemble à Genève

For many years now, Arthur Askew has been the Church of Scotland's representative to TEAG. The movement brings together many and varied church communities established in Geneva, including principally those having their origins in immigration. It has the aim of weaving links between established and recently-formed communities by celebrating together and showing a community of churches living with their diversity as a source of enrichment. The activities of Witnessing Together in Geneva are open to all. Arthur would now like to hand the baton over to someone else. There are several meetings a year and a celebration together with the other communities on Jeûne Genevois.

Would you be interested to take this on? Arthur would be happy to discuss further and give additional information should you so need.

Musings from New York.

Christine Colliar

I'm writing from the Big Apple, New York City, where the Statue of Liberty is a symbol of freedom. Emma Lazarus wrote this poem about the statue, 'The New Colossus'. It ends with the famous lines of welcome for people searching for a new life.

The New Colossus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes
command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries
she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

This poem was written in 1883 when many immigrants were entering the United States. These were people desperate for a better life, and the Statue was the first thing they saw as they started their new life in the United States. It became the symbol of freedom from the restrictions of poverty in their home country, freedom from oppression, and freedom from religious intolerance.

The statue is known as 'Mother of Exiles.' She has a light in one hand and a writing tablet in the other. Written on it is *July 4, 1776*, the date the United States broke from British rule, which the people at that time had found oppressive and unjust.

We arrived here just in time
to see the firework display,
which still celebrates this
freedom every 4th of July.
It's as if the statue says, 'We
aspire to be free - now come,
all you who yearn for freedom.'



What a wonderful invitation - come, all you who
yearn for freedom.

And how wonderful to know that Jesus constantly
calls to us with this same message,
'Come, all you who yearn for freedom.'

Through Christ, we are *abundantly* free, signed,
sealed, and delivered by the Holy Spirit, made
whole and holy by God's love.

Manhattan has the same surface area as the isle of
Raasay, and roughly the same shape. While
Raasay has about 160 people, Manhattan has 1.6
million. It is busy, crowded, bustling and vibrant.
The crowds of people caused author Madeleine
L'Engle to reflect on individuals she encountered
on the bus when she wrote this prayer-poem in
New York in 1969.

Lines Scribbled on an Envelope while Riding the 104 Broadway Bus

There is too much pain
I cannot understand
I cannot pray...

Here I am
and the ugly man with beery breath beside me
reminds me that it is not my prayers that waken
your concern, my Lord;
my prayers, my intercessions are not to ask for
your love for all your lost and lonely ones,
your sick and sinning souls,
but mine, my love, my acceptance of your love.
Your love for the woman sticking her umbrella
and her expensive parcels into my ribs and
snarling,

Why don't you watch where you're going?"
Your love for the long-haired, gum-chewing boy
who shoves the old lady aside to grab a seat,
Your love for me, too, too tired to look with love,
too tired to look at Love, at you, in every person
on the bus.

Expand my love, Lord, so I can help to bear the
pain,
help your love move my love into the tired
prostitute with false eyelashes and bunioned feet,
the corrupt policeman with his hand open for
graft,
the addict, the derelict, the woman in the mink
coat and discontented mouth,
the high-school girl with heavy books and
frightened eyes.
Help me through these scandalous particulars
to understand
your love.
Help me to pray.

Amen