CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GENEVA

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL REPORT 2025

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A word from our minister

Blessed are those who put their trust in God, whose hope is in God.

They are like a tree planted by the river that thrusts its roots toward the stream. When the heat comes it feels no heat; its leaves stay green. It is untroubled in a year of drought and never ceases to bear fruit.

(Jeremiah 17:7–8)

Friends,

I love this painting by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman, a fellow Presbyterian minister and artist, because I think it poignantly captures our deep desire to grow into our God-given full potential as the Church of Scotland Geneva linked with the Scots Kirk, Lausanne.

As we navigate this "seedling-stage" of our new season of ministry as a linked charge, we are invited to rest in the promise of God's continued faithfulness to us as we move forward into uncharted territory, with no clearly marked maps showing us what next steps to take, yet a season beaming with potential for new life.

Here in Geneva, as we prepare for our annual congregational meeting, we give thanks for the many nurturing hands that made God's love, grace and mercy tangible for us… who prepared the ground for the next season. We offer our gratitude to our former minister Rev. Laurence Twaddle and his beloved partner in life and in ministry Lindy for their years of faithful service, love and care to our congregation. We give thanks for the many locums who have served in our midst since last May. And last but not least, we offer gratitude to all of you, our Church of Scotland Geneva community, who have shown your commitment and love by leading worship, offering pastoral care, nurturing the minds of young and old, and engaging in ministry in the wider community.

We know from gardening that growing anything well takes intentionality, preparation, a willingness to getting our hands in the dirt – to be involved in the daily act of nurture and care. The beginning of a new season means the ending of a previous, and we acknowledge that some things have come to an end during last year. We closed a season with the minister of the past eight years, and that means that some our relationships and the way we have done things have changed. Some beloved members died, joining God's eternal realm of love, while other beloved moved away for work or to be closer to family in their older years. We have grieved and may continue to grieve the holes left after final goodbyes, the changes in meaningful relationships and deep connections.

Yet now we are invited to move forward into the next season of life and ministry, with new possibilities for growth. In 2026, we have witnessed the contours of a new future emerge in two significant developments in the life of our congregation. The first - after a year and a half of groundwork, in January we have embarked on a shared journey with our sister congregation in Lausanne as a linked charge. You can read more about the details of the process in the report below.

One of the things that stands out to me is the energy and excitement the representatives from our two congregations on the nominating committee found in each other as they came together to now discern together a new vision for our linked charge. They were encouraged and inspired as they began to get to know each other and dream together, an experience many of you also savoured at last year's first joint awayday. The committee also found courage to slow down and re-orient themselves when the direction did not seem the right one. What valuable insights as we move forward in envisioning our new season of ministry!

I believe that our linkage offers us the opportunity to live into our identity being part of the one body of Christ more fully. As we bring our varied traditions and gifts together, we can inspire each other to recognize possibilities for new life and growth in our communities in ways that we did not think possible before. We can encourage one another to be faithful witnesses to God's love who are willing to take risks to reach out to the world beyond our walls.

The second development that fills me with excited anticipation is the decision of our kirk session and congregational committee to move to a unitary constitution. We believe that having dedicated committees to facilitate the various aspects of our ministry and reporting to one governing body – the kirk session – will help us be more agile and effective in fulfilling our mission.

As you see in the art piece by Lauren Wright Pittman, the hands in the dirt do the nurturing, the watering, the tending so that the seedlings can grow into a fuller creation. I am looking forward to learning what each of your hands, voices, and hearts brings to our common garden. As one of my mentors used to ask me, what makes you come alive? I invite you to prayerfully consider that question. Pray about these committees that we are establishing and ask where the Spirit might be calling you to contribute.

- Christian education
- Fabric
- Fundraising
- Mission and Outreach
- Communications
- Finance
- Worship

In our Presbyterian tradition, we believe that together we build and govern our church life and ministry, and each of us matters. We all add our unique perspective, our unique aroma, as Paul describes it, to our community. That is what makes the body of Christ healthy and vibrant.

Friends, as I reflect on the stories you have shared with me from the past years, I recognize God's steadfast love in our midst here at Church of Scotland Geneva, and your faithful response to that love. I'm reminded of a Zulu greeting, "Sawubona" that means "I see you…I see all of you, your worth, your dignity, as you come into this space." As we continue our journey in 2026 and beyond, as we seek to expand our ministry team and call an associate minister to serve this community, my prayer for us is that we will continue to trust and follow the guidance of Spirit.

May we be like trees who are rooted in the life-giving streams of divine love, growing in our discipleship, in our love for God and others. May we bring our energy, creativity, imagination, faithfulness, and love to creating spaces of welcome where people feel welcome and fully seen and can flourish into their God-given potential. Whether through sharing a meal and fellowship in neighbourhood groups, prayer and study opportunities that reach out into the wider community, may we nurture personal and communal transformation that leads to wholeness and justice and peace to all in Geneva and beyond.

Blessings and peace,

Rev Enikő (eferenczy@churchofscotland.org.uk)

International presbytery

In 2025, the international presbytery saw the culmination of work begun in 2023, achieving registered charity status with the office of the Scottish charity regulator (OSCR) on 21 January. This milestone marked a significant step forward in ensuring compliance and transparency for the presbytery's operations. One implication of this is that all full members of presbytery are trustees of the charity. In summer 2026 presbytery needs to submit its first official report and accounts to OSCR.

The implementation of the approved mission plan continues. Notably, the linking of your congregations in Geneva and Lausanne took effect following Rev Laurence Twaddle's retirement in May. After a thorough recruitment process, with a nominating committee comprising members from both Geneva and Lausanne, a minister was identified for the linked charge. Rev Dr Enikő Ferenczy was introduced in Lausanne on Friday January 23 2026, with the linkage celebrated in the same presbytery service.

I cannot write to you without also mentioning the international presbytery meeting on the weekend of March 6–8 2026. Presbytery was very well hosted by the Geneva congregation, and the feedback from presbyters was without exception positive. Amongst many comments received, presbyters mentioned the warmth of the welcome, the excellent preparation, the delicious food and drinks, the spouse's programme, and enthusiasm about your future. You have set a high standard for future meetings and can be proud of what you achieved. These meetings place a considerable burden on the host congregation even in normal circumstances, never mind those with a new minister and in a new linkage.

Presbytery met twice in person during 2025, in Paris in March and then in Amsterdam in October. The year began with a number of vacancies in presbytery, with retirements to add to the mix as the year progressed. Three ministers retired during 2025 - Laurence, Rev Eric Foggitt in Brussels, and Rev Alistair Bennett in Bermuda and it has been a busy year for interim moderators. However, I am happy to report that we are almost through the worst of this.

Online Bible studies organized by presbytery in 2025 – six during Lent through to Pentecost and four during Advent – were advertised and attended by some Geneva members.

A new minister was recruited to Christ Church Warwick in Bermuda. The Very Rev Dr Martin Fair is a former moderator of the general assembly of the Church of Scotland (and an incoming assembly

trustee). Martin's induction took place in October 2025, with a number of key presbytery figures finishing our meeting in Amsterdam, travelling to the airport, and flying straight to Bermuda!

I'm happy to see that you've begun to recruit for your new minister in Geneva. Brussels has just called a new minister, who should be in place before the summer. There is even light at the end of the tunnel for Paris, after several years of vacancy and a few twists and turns along the way.

In a year of both transition and growth, three candidates from within the presbytery completed their training for ordained local ministry (OLM) and were ordained in March, June, and October respectively. Whilst OLMs are not intended to be replacements for full-time ministry, this non-stipendiary form of ministry highlights both the church's and presbytery's commitment to nurturing new leadership. The report to this year's general assembly states: "there needs to be provision of flexible forms of ministry beyond the traditional full-time Minister of Word and Sacrament model. Ministry is not a one-size-fits-all concept. Building flexibility into the new model ensures that the Church can respond to local needs, capacity and mission priorities – making congregations inherently more flexible than the traditional single-parish, full-time mode". My prayer is that your linked charge can be a model of this to charges in Scotland.

The superintendence and ministry committee initiated a series of presbytery support visits, which replace the former mandatory local church reviews. These visits aim to identify and address the needs of local congregations, reflecting a proactive approach to supporting the church's mission. Serious efforts were made to ensure congregations' compliance with safeguarding requirements, with improvements made to training and to oversight, with discussions about how best to ensure safeguarding compliance in presbytery.

The Church of Scotland, in common with many traditional denominations, continues to face significant challenges – financial, ministerial, and congregational. The post-Covid recovery remains elusive, with finances, ministerial numbers, and congregational participation all under pressure. Yet, as always, the future of the church rests with its local congregations, the beating heart of its mission. The role of presbyteries and the general assembly in facilitating and supporting this mission remains as vital as ever.

As the new clerk to the presbytery only since January 1 2026, I feel it a little odd to write a report that looks back on such a year of change for your congregation, yet I am excited to look forward with you into the future of your linked charge, and to make sure that presbytery is there to support you in any ways that it can.

Scott MacSween
Presbytery clerk (International@churchofscotland.org.uk)

GENEVA LINKED WITH LAUSANNE

A long and winding road

In 2021, the Church of Scotland sprang a surprise on our international presbytery, the "presbytery of international charges" of which we and the Scots Kirk, Lausanne are 2 of its 12 congregations.

The general assembly told us that we would need to reduce the number of Church of Scotland ministers serving our congregations from 10.7 (as had been agreed in 2011) to 5.

At first sight, this seemed simply impossible: 12 congregations (at that time, we were actually 14) with 5 ministers? For a while we ran around like headless chickens. After we calmed down, we settled on a Cunning Plan that relied largely on redefinition and sleight of hand.

We weren't caught wholly by surprise. We had seen this coming, and under the astute guidance of Rev Derek Lawson (who retired as presbytery clerk at the end of last year), five years earlier we had persuaded the general assembly to pass the international presbytery act, which allows our congregations to look for Reformed ministers from outwith the Church of Scotland. This gave us more flexibility than our less fortunate sister congregations in Scotland, the UK, and the Channel Islands.

Two of our ministers, in Budapest and Rome, were redefined as "mission partners", employed by the national church and therefore not counting towards our allocation. Six of our congregations would be linked in pairs, each linkage having a minister and an associate minister, with the latter also not counting towards our allocation. Counting on our fingers, eventually we got to where we needed to go.

In Switzerland, our two kirk sessions discussed at length the proposal to link our two congregations in Geneva and Lausanne and were enthusiastic. Some of us, indeed, struck by a Damascus Road revelation, wondered why we weren't already working more closely together!

Rev Gillean MacLean, minister in Lausanne, demitted in June 2023, and the discussions thereafter became serious. Rev Laurence Twaddle, minister in Geneva, declined to have anything to do with the proposed linkage, and so it became a deferred linking, to take effect after he in turn stepped down.

On February 2 2024, our two congregations voted in favour of the basis of deferred linking. On June 16 2024, the two congregations, meeting separately, elected a nominating committee – seven from the Scots Kirk, six from the Church of Scotland Geneva – to seek a new minister, based in Lausanne, who would become minister of the linked charge when Laurence Twaddle demitted, as he did in May 2025.

Below, Hannelize van Zyl of the Scots Kirk reports on the successful work of that first nominating committee and previews the work of our second nominating committee, elected on November 9 2025, with seven from Geneva and six from Lausanne, to seek an associate minister to be based in Geneva.

Finding a minister for the linked charge. Our first nominating committee

The purpose of a nominating committee is to propose one person as a minister or associate minister. Ideally, its members reflect the congregation or congregations for which they act.

With seven representatives from Lausanne and six from Geneva, the first job was to introduce ourselves, as many of us did not know our counterparts from the other congregation, still less the congregation itself.

The committee was as follows:

From the Church of Scotland Geneva
Nan Braunschweiger
Jane Broere
Christine Buhler (our HR specialist)
Mary Couper
Makota Ikeda
Cornis van der Lugt

From the Scots Kirk, Lausanne
Ian Colliar (vice-convener)
Morven McLean
Erica Martin (clerk)
Carolyn Meduski
Xoeseko Nyomi
Hannelize van Zyl (convener)
Neil Wallace

Off we went at quite a pace, meeting every two weeks as an entire team. As this was our first post-Brexit nominating committee and we had no idea where our minister would be from, we had to follow the Swiss *Service de la population* (SPOP) requirements meticulously. This meant many spreadsheets to keep track of every application, every decision, and every reason. We had to advertise in job centres in Switzerland and all the EU countries, as well as LinkedIn and Indeed. It made for some interesting applications! Would we advertise for Church of Scotland ministers only? We decided from the start to cast the net wider.

We also decided to work by consensus, ideally with a unanimous decision on the sole nominee. If we failed to achieve that, we would vote but would require a two-thirds majority. To make sure we got everything done fast, we split into cross-congregational sub-teams who met more regularly, ending up with rather a lot of meetings; but the side effect was a crash-course in getting to know each other!

Our partner church: *scotskirklausanne.ch*

We had a congregational profile team to make one profile from two, which had to be approved by both sessions before we could start advertising. We had an advertising team to decide where and how we were going to advertise and to make the ad itself. We achieved all this in two months, and the advertisement was out by the end of August, along with two new pages on our two congregations' websites where all information could be found.

We then discussed how to arrive at a short list (this involved spreadsheets with criteria and formulae) and how we would interview those on the list. Part of the screening process was to chai- watch online services. A side effect of Covid was that we found as many online services as we needed to form a judgement.

To cover all our points, and to give as many committee members as possible a chance to take part in interviews, we decided to follow a panel interview format. We split into different cross-congregational teams, one responsible for asking questions about the person and the other for asking about their ministry. A list of questions was developed for five categories of topics.

This meant that each applicant was interviewed by two groups of people for at least an hour each. We recorded all interviews (with everyone's consent) so that the whole committee could watch them and form a complete view. Another spreadsheet and another list of criteria!

Pride comes before a fall

At the end of October 2024, we had 19 applicants of varying levels of interest. A month later, we arrived at a short list. The first interviews took place in December, with more in January; but the seven interviews presented us with theological views that made some of us uncomfortable, or confused, or both. Graham Austin, interim moderator in Lausanne, stepped in to provide clarification and guidance. It was at this point that we knew that we needed to start again. We let the congregations both know that we would be re-advertising. Our carefully planned timeline was a thing of the past!

The second round followed the same pattern. Just after Easter 2025, we had another list of applications, made into a short list after more chain watching of services, and we followed the same interview process to shorten the list further. In the next step, we showed our churches and the Lausanne manse, met the ministers in person in small groups for more in-depth discussion and difficult questions and, to learn more about them, had lunch together.

Discernment goes both ways. Not only did the nominating committee have to discern who was the right minister for us, but the ministers also had to discern whether we were the right congregations for them!

Success!
At the end of June 2025, we decided on our sole nominee, and happily she accepted. In the intervening period, the general assembly decided that the responsibility for granting certificates of restricted eligibility for congregations in the international presbytery now lay with the presbytery. Derek Lawson, presbytery clerk, was very helpful in completing the required steps. Only then could we share Enikő's name with the two kirk sessions.

We very much appreciate the guidance of Graham Austin and Derek Lawson, who were both supportive and helpful throughout. We also appreciate the support of presbytery's vacancy advisors: Ruud Witte, Irene Bom, and Eric Foggitt.

The clerk of a nominating committee probably has the biggest job of all, and this was made even bigger by the SPOP requirements and the first step of the process required for restricted certificates of eligibility. We were very fortunate to have in Christine Buhler our own HR specialist, because there are always tricky situations and difficult letters that must be worded just so.

Our committee was indeed a microcosm of our two congregations. We did not always agree on everything along the way, and it took us a while to understand everyone's deal-breakers. but we made sure everyone was heard. In the end, when it came to the most important decision, it was unanimous.

The rest, as they say, is history. Nominating committees are always nervous about the outcome of the vote. We were therefore extremely pleased with and grateful for the overwhelmingly positive response from the two congregations.

Finding an associate minister for Geneva. Our second nominating committee

According to the basis of linking between Geneva and Lausanne, the new minister in Geneva will be an associate minister. This minister will have primary responsibility for the congregation in Geneva. This is quite unlike associate ministers in Scotland. who typically are responsible for an aspect of ministry, such as youth ministry, and typically are appointed by the kirk session. Since what we are doing is quite new and unusual, there is no precedent or process from other contexts that applies directly. Our two kirk sessions therefore decided that the search should follow the same process as for the minister of the linked charge. An associate minister is a fixed term position, and the joint session meeting agreed that the term should be the same as that for the minister of the charge: three years to start with, renewable by three years thereafter.

The new nominating committee is as follows:

From Geneva:
Christine Bühler (clerk)
Alex Craye
Rosemary Hill
George Hodge
Makota Ikeda
Joy Mukete
Cornis van der Lugt

From Lausanne:
Ian Colliar (vice convenor)
Williams Devadason
Erica Martin
Sylvia McKillop
Xoeseko Nyomi (May 2026, replacing Christian Mühlheim, who resigned)
Hannelize van Zyl (convenor)

For the sake of continuity and because the process that has to be followed is very particular, it is good that we have six members from the previous nominating committee who are already familiar with the process, with seven new members to bring a new perspective. We had our first meeting in November 2025 and started getting ready for the search.

In November, Graham Austin was still interim moderator for both congregations and therefore also the moderator of the nominating committee. After Enikő's introduction in January, she became the moderator of both sessions and also of the nominating committee.

As before, the work of the nominating committee involves absolute discretion, and there is a limit to the updates we can give along the way. But I can tell you what we have done so far.

Like last time, we chose to follow the process of consensus. Only if we reach an impasse will we vote, but decisions will then require at least a two-thirds majority. Our intention is of course to reach consensus and we will work towards that.

We also had to write a job description so that it can be clear to applicants and the nominating committee what precisely it is that we are looking for in this associate minister. A sub-team worked on that, with input from Enikő as well as the kirk sessions. Then it was sent to the presbytery clerk of the international presbytery and then to the presbytery vacancy procedure committee for their comments.

In parallel, another sub team worked on updating the joint congregational profiles, so that when we start advertising, potential applicants can read about both our congregations in the process of discerning whether this is the place for them. The joint profile has also been approved by both sessions.

We began advertising at the end of April (see *churchofscotlandgeneva.ch/who-we-are/vacancy/*), with a closing date of June 30 2026. If you feel you might know someone who might be interested or are part of networks from whence we might be able to find a minister, please do let me, or any of us, know!

Next steps

We plan to start assessing applications from the beginning of July. Before that we will finalize a list of criteria by which we will assess all applicants. Once we have a short list we can start interviewing.

Depending on where the minister is from we may have to do some additional paperwork for purposes of immigration and a language test may be necessary. This can add a significant amount of time to the process.

Prayer requests

Please pray for this second nominating committee, for discernment and wisdom and to reach a common mind when we start assessing applications. Pray also that God will speak to the heart of whomever he wants to send us as the minister for Geneva, so that that person can hear the calling and that we can recognise him or her when we receive their application. Finally, we ask for your patience as we go through this deliberately detailed search for the right minister for Geneva.

Hannelyze van Zyl (hannelizevz@gmail.com)

Sharing in prayer

The Scots Kirk, Lausanne holds a short online prayer meeting on Sundays at 10h, just before their service at 10h30. We are invited to join the meeting, using *this Zoom link*. This will work better for those of us worshipping in Geneva online, rather than on our way to the Auditoire.

WORSHIP

Ushers

Ushers are normally the first people newcomers and visitors meet when entering the church, and the warmth of their welcome has a big impact on newcomers' first impressions.

We welcome Lucy Akomea, Anyangwe Clarimond, and Edith Takem, who joined the ushering team in the last year. Thank you to all involved in serving the church in this way, especially to those who step in when there is a gap.

The usher's role involves greeting those attending church each week and carrying out other tasks during the service to ensure its smooth-running. These include making hymnbooks available and collecting and counting the offering.

The rota for the following six months is published twice a year, in May and November. Each usher is on duty once every two or three months.

We are constantly looking for additional volunteers to usher. If you are interested in serving the church in this way, please speak to me or drop me an email.

Arthur Griffith (griffith@bluewin.ch)

Bible readers

Last summer, for the first time since Covid, we tentatively tried to restructure the readers schedule to include two readers, once again, at each service. Being the small but very dedicated group that we are this was, inevitably, going to mean more frequent participation from everyone.

Thus far, this has worked seamlessly, and I would like to thank all our readers most sincerely for stepping up week by week. We welcome Kérshia Cavele to our merry band.

Thanks are also due to several of our readers who have recently left Switzerland, namely Amy and Jason Leger and Peter Tulloch. They will be very much missed.

These departures, of course, mean that we could really do with some new recruits, so, please get in touch if you feel you would like to join our number. Reading in church services is a very rewarding experience and is not nearly as scary as you might think. Help and guidance is always available if you've never spoken in public but, then again, it really isn't about us, but about sharing the word of God.

Why not give it a try?

Nicola Hollyman (nicolahollyman@hotmail.com)

Music

In the past year, we've had an organist or pianist for every service, even though Peter Tulloch has had to step down from accompanying services due to his health. At the beginning of this year, Peter Billington also notified me that he was not going to be able to play for any more services due to age and health

issues. He also mentioned he had played for 77 services over the last 10 years, for which we all owe him a huge debt of gratitude, as he has offered his talents free of charge and is not even a member of the congregation!

On Christmas Day 2025, and January 4 2026, I was not available nor were any of the usual replacement organists. Through Nicola Hollyman, I was put in touch with a Russian singer from the Grand Théâtre who plays the piano to ask him to accompany for those services. In the end, he brought a friend, a Russian professional pianist, and the congregation was treated to Russian romantic improvisations! An unusual but enriching experience!

I also want to thank Kathryn Watson, Judith Peacock and Mak Ikeda for playing bassoon, bagpipe, flute and clarinet for services over the past year, as well as Peter Jeffes for singing a solo at a December baptismal service, always enhancing the worship experience.

After a discussion between myself and Christine Buhler about the fact that Linda Revkin and I are the only organists from the congregation still playing for services and that I had very few Sundays off, the Kirk Session decided that I could change the approach to the rota and ask three young organists from outside the congregation who have replaced me on occasion to play more regularly, on a paid basis. This new setup has been in place since April 2026 and seems to be appreciated by all! My thanks to Linda for her stellar contributions and to the congregation for its flexibility and support.

Rebecca MacDonald (rebdirks@gmail.com)

On an ordinary Sunday, our choir numbers range from 5 to 15. Whether large or small, we make a joyful (and often harmonious) noise.

We sing an Introit every Sunday; on the first Sunday of the month, we sing a second piece during communion, and on another Sunday (usually the last Sunday), we have a stab at an anthem, or "anthem-type", piece.

New choir members are welcome on any Sunday. It helps if you can read music, but not all of us do. We rehearse from 10h before the service. Fortified by the congregational lunch in the Salle at the end of the month, we repair to the Auditoire afterwards to run through the choral music for the coming month. No one expects you to show up every Sunday, none of us do. If you are tempted, drop me a note!

Once again (this time, entirely), our service of nine lessons and carols in December was a home-grown effort. In 2024, Peter Billington took the baton. In 2025, we were conducted by Peter Tulloch, who has now had more farewell performances than Frank Sinatra. We are grateful to them both, not just for this, but for services rendered over many years. We were again impressed by the number of folk who came out of the pews to join our usual suspects. We hope that they, and others, will do the same in 2026 (likely dates, still to be discussed, let alone confirmed: December 6 or 13, at 11h).

Páraic Réamonn (paraic.reamonn@gmail.com)

Flower rota

Flowers enhance the "look and feel" of our Sunday worship. Many thanks to the small but faithful group of people who donate at different times during the year. However, there are times when the wonderful generosity of Joy Mukete is bearing far too much of the load. It's not always possible to provide flowers every week.

If you would like to join our small but perfectly formed list of contributors even just once a year that would be a great help; there are only 52 Sundays in a year! There is a list in the Salle you can sign up on, or please contact me by email, and I will sign you up for the date you want.

If you are donating to mark a special event, please let me know what it is, and I can have it put in the Order of Service for you. We often give the flowers after service to anyone who is unwell or going through a rough patch, but you can also take them home with you afterwards. Many thanks for your help!

Rosemary Hill (hillrosemary@yahoo.co.uk)

Order of service

In October 2023, picking ourselves up after Covid, we began again to print a more elaborate order of service, with pretty pictures, due recognition of all those taking part in the service and notices of upcoming events, for the use of those in the pews. A variant appears on our website (and can be downloaded onto your phone), and a simpler version is emailed to the congregation a few days before the service, thanks to Christine Colliar.

Every day in every way, things are getting simpler and simpler. When we first began, those laying out the print order of service needed (1) a laptop or computer of some kind equipped with Microsoft Word, (2) a colour printer, and (3) a paper guillotine or a deft way with a pair of scissors or sharp knife.

Earlier this year, a light bulb went off in Christine Buhler's head. Why not ask the locum of the month to print the order at the manse? The locum, after all, is the one person we can be sure will come to church. Three locums and their spouses have now been doing this, and we hope that when our associate minister arrives, s/he will think this is "what's aye been done". Unless, of course, s/he reads this report.

The consequence is that all those laying out out the print order now need is (1) above: a computer with Word. No printing, no cutting!

Currently, the task is shared between three eager and willing volunteers: Christine Buhler, Laurent Djamen, and me. We should like to grow this rota, so that no one has to do it too often. Easy to follow instructions are available, as are easy to follow instructors. If you would like to join our gang, just drop me a line or corner any one of us after worship.

Páraic Réamonn (paraic.reamonn@gmail.com)

Sunday school

Our group continued with a core of seven children in 2025. The programme of weekly themes includes Creation, and for snacks after Godly Play sessions the children enjoy fair trade or bio-labelled products. Three new parent members of our Sunday school team completed safeguarding training online as required by the Church of Scotland.

For the annual church fair in November, we sold old toys made available for re-use. On December 14 our children participated in the service of nine lessons and carols. This included "Once in Royal David's City", where the kids sang along with our church choir. We also used video recordings of Sunday school children singing "Once in Royal David's City" to compile our Sunday school carols video for the annual online Christmas eve service.

New children and new helpers are always welcome!

Cornis Van der Lugt (cornis.lugt@gmail.com)

Zoom

Throughout 2025, we continued our commitment to provide worship via Zoom for some of our congregation, staying connected and nurturing community and faith across physical distances.

After our former minister retired, we simplified our Zoom setup by using a single iPad and asked everyone to speak from the lectern. This change was introduced to make the process easier and to encourage more members of the congregation to share in setting up and launching Zoom.
We are deeply grateful to Christine Bühler, Han Broere, and Mak Ikeda for faithfully sustaining our Zoom ministry. We also extend our thanks to Lyndsey Bochaton and Carol Holschuh, who have kindly volunteered to setup the iPad in church while somebody else launches the zoom from home.

The opportunity to participate in worship via Zoom continues to be greatly valued by many in our congregation, particularly those whose health or mobility prevents them from attending the Auditoire in person. It provides an important connection to the church and to friends within the congregation, helping to reduce feelings of isolation and ensuring that all remain included in our church family.

This provision is also appreciated by members who are travelling for work, visiting family, or on holiday, enabling them to remain connected and worship with their church community from wherever they are in the world. It is a powerful reminder of how technology can support and strengthen our sense of belonging.

To ensure that we can continue offering this valued service, we need help! The process is straightforward. Full training and support are provided, including the opportunity to shadow an experienced volunteer until you feel confident enough to manage on your own. It is not complicated.

There are different ways to help:
1. Setting up the iPads in church, while another volunteer launches Zoom from home.
2. Setting up the iPads and launching Zoom from your own laptop or phone while in church.
3. Launching Zoom from home while another volunteer sets up the iPads in church.

We warmly encourage anyone, who would consider helping with this important ministry, to talk to either Christine, Han or Mak.

Jane Broere (jane.broere@gmail.com)

Coffee and tea

A very big thank you to all the volunteers who help prepare and serve coffee and tea each Sunday after church! It is much appreciated as it provides an opportunity to meet others and to welcome newcomers and visitors.

Unfortunately we have to say ‘au revoir’ to Amy Petty and Jason Leger as they return to the United States. We will miss them but wish them well.

We are delighted to welcome Kérshia Cavele to our list. We would love more helpers, so please contact either of us and your name will be added to the next rota. It is a wonderful opportunity to get to know the congregation better and to meet the visitors.

Rosaleen Walker (rmwalker@bluewin.ch)
Hazel Griffith (hazelandarthurgriffith@gmail.com)

Wednesday and other online services

From May 2025, we have shared the Wednesday lunchtime online services we began in the dark days of Covid with our sister congregation in Lausanne, with up to 25 participants and 22 different worship leaders. They have been led by members of both congregations, locum ministers serving the charges, colleagues from within our presbytery, and ministers from further afield. This included a "moderator month", during which current and former moderators of the general assembly led the services.

There were no lunchtime services on Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve. There was an online service on Good Friday and an online Watchnight service on Christmas Eve.

Christine Colliar (ccolliar@churchofscotland.org.uk)

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Kirk session

The Geneva Kirk session met five times during 2025 as well as attending four joint session meetings with the Scots Kirk Lausanne.

Matters of importance in the life of the congregation included:

- Appointment of Graham Austin (minister, Rotterdam) as interim moderator for our congregation
- Retirement of our former minister at end May 2025
- Organization of a fitting farewell party for Laurence and Lindy to reflect our appreciation of their time in Geneva
- Arrangements, both practical and contractual, for a succession of locums
- Arrangements and organization to continue Wednesday online lunchtime services
- Arrangements and organization to continue online Sunday services
- The decision to offer only gluten free bread for communion
- The decision to host the March 2026 international presbytery meeting in Geneva
- Reconfiguring our congregational governance, with the decision to move to a unitary constitution. After discussions with the congregational committee, and their concurrence, the aim is to put the proposal to the annual congregational meeting in June 2026 for approval.

In the absence of a fabric committee, the clearing out, renovation and refurbishment of the manse was done by the session clerks.

Joint kirk session meetings with Lausanne covered the following topics:

- Arrangements for the service of linking, to be held at the same time as the introduction of the new minister of the charge
- The process for the appointment of an associate minister for Geneva
- The approval of the sole nominee Rev Dr Enikõ Ferenczy

Of the six representatives of the Geneva congregation on the nominating committee for the minister of the charge, five were elders. For the nominating committee for the associate minister for Geneva, of the seven Geneva representatives, four are elders.

At the meeting of the international presbytery in Amsterdam in October 2025, one of our elders, Christine Colliar, was ordained as an OLM (ordained local minister). We congratulate her!

Nicola Hollyman stepped down as a serving elder in September 2025. Christine Buhler and Jane Broere announced their decision to step down as session clerks at year end; and in early 2026, Cornis van der Lugt stepped up to take their place.

Session members (as of December 2025)
Elders
Lyndsey Bochaton, Jane Broere, Christine Buhler, Alex Craeye, Laurent Djamen, Mak Ikeda, Mark Jeffrey, Rebecca MacDonald, Jane McKenzie, Jenny Rietbergen, Cornis Van Der Lugt, Rosaleen Walker

Ministers
Graham Austin (interim moderator) Páraic Réamonn, Christine Colliar

Christine Buhler (buhlerchristine@hotmail.com)
Jane Broere (jane.broere@gmail.com)

Congregational committee

The committee met four times during 2025 by Zoom and had robust discussions throughout the year on a variety of topics related to the temporal affairs of the church. Regular items on the agenda were finance, mission, fabric, and coordinating the St Andrew's Fair. Other discussions included the joint awayday of the Geneva and Lausanne congregations, an ecumenical care for creation event, access to the Auditoire for people with reduced mobility, and the implications of moving to a unitary constitution.

The annual congregational meeting (ACM) took place on Sunday June 1. It covered:

- Approval of the minutes of the 2024 ACM
- Report on the 2024 accounts
- Approval of the 2025 budget

- Approval of the 2026 provisional budget
- Appointment an independent examiner for the 2026 accounts
- Reception of the annual congregational report on 2024
- Election of members to the congregational committee.

Reports of neighbourhood group experiences were given by Hazel Griffiths on the Franco-Suisse North group and by Sheree Atkinson on the Grand Saconnex group. The main discussion topic focused on *"What we are looking for in an associate minister"*.

The congregational committee includes the elders on the kirk session and a number of elected members.

Elected members (as of December 2025) and their terms of office:
From 2023 to 2026
David Hogg
Jason Leger
Mary Quement
Antonia Chapman Nyaho

From 2024 to 2027
Nan Braunschweiger
Han Broere
Ewart MacKenzie
Douglas Murray-Jones

From 2025 to 2028
Ina Hodge
George Hodge
Sherree Atkinson-Bret
Carol Hohlschuh

Nan Braunschweiger (ntbraunsch@bluemail.ch)

Caring for One Another

Through our prayers, cards, telephone calls and visits, our pastoral care group (Sherree Atkinson-Brett, Lyndsey Bochaton, Jane Broere, Sandy Cunningham, Hazel Griffiths, Jean Murray, Chris Sutton, and Rosaleen Walker) has continued to seek to express and embody the love of Christ for those around us. As we reach out to and care for one another, we strive to demonstrate the compassionate love and the strong spirit of friendship and fellowship that exist within our church community.

Cooperation with the ministry team has been excellent and we have particularly appreciated the support and varied insights of our locum ministers Rev Páraic Reamonn, Rev Robert Simpson, Rev Chris Levison, Rev Scott McCarthy, Rev Derek Munn and Rev Gillean MacLean.

Over the past year, we have been privileged to stand alongside members of our congregation and to offer our support in happy times, in difficult times and in some dark and heart-breaking moments. Our Christmas cards were much appreciated and we are currently working to prepare a compilation of practical reference material for pastoral care in our congregation and to arrange an Advent service with a focus on care and support in the Christmas season.

Jean Murray (jeancmurray@yahoo.co.uk)

Eco-congregation

Our Eco-congregation activities in 2025 focused on climate change and its intergenerational implications. Tropical nights disrupting the sleep of those living in cities, vegetable farmers struggling with overly dry soil, and homeowners preparing for impending floods – that is the future we can expect if climate change continues unchecked, according to the latest Swiss climate scenarios. Many of the impacts can already be felt and measured today, say Swiss climate researchers.

In Scotland, climate marches were held on October 25 (Scotland Demands Better) and November 15 (Scotland's Climate March). The Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church encouraged all their churches to become "net zero" (through electricity use causing close to zero polluting greenhouse gas emissions).

At a press conference convened at the UN climate convention conference (COP30) in Brazil by Faith Leaders, Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, moderator of the World Council of Churches (WCC) central committee, announced the Ecumenical Decade for Climate Justice Action (2025-2034). Some 356 churches across 120 countries, members of the WCC, will prioritise climate action over the next ten years.

As delegations at COP30 struggled to produce an agreement for advanced country action plans, our Geneva services on November 16 and 23 reminded members of these developments and included prayer for progress. The Harvest Thanksgiving service in October was also used to highlight our stewardship role. Our October newsletter included an article on the encyclical "Laudato si'", on care for our common home, issued by Pope Francis in 2015, with a focus on environment, development and climate.

Upon invitation of the Catholic Church in Geneva, we encouraged congregation members to attend a special event on October 2 at the Sacré-Cœur community centre. Speakers included Loraine d'Andiran, pastor of the Protestant Church of Geneva and EcoChurch ambassador, who provided a Protestant and spiritual perspective on ecology. The Laudato Si' Movement of over 900 member organizations promotes the message of the encyclical, work that resembles that of our EcoCongregation initiative.

Cornis van der Lugt (cornis.lugt@gmail.com)

Safeguarding

Safeguarding helps to ensure the church is a safe place for everyone, especially children and adults at risk. It involves preventing harm and abuse, and ensuring that any concerns are recognized, reported and addressed promptly. *Key safeguarding message: If harm or abuse is suspected or witnessed, or is reported to you, you must immediately report it to your safeguarding coordinator or the safeguarding panel.*

Safeguarding panel
A safeguarding panel is in place. Members of the congregation may speak confidentially to any panel member about safeguarding concerns. The panel members are:

- Lyndsey Bochaton (safeguarding coordinator)
- Christine Buhler
- Cornis van der Lugt

Safe recruitment
All individuals who work with children or vulnerable adults are required to complete a recruitment process and obtain safeguarding clearance from the safeguarding service of the Church of Scotland. The safeguarding coordinator supports individuals through this recruitment process.

Training
Safeguarding training is provided for volunteers undertaking regulated work with children or protected adults and for those in positions of responsibility in the congregation, including elders and elected congregational committee members. The level of training required depends on the role. The safeguarding coordinator is responsible for informing volunteers about available training dates, which are also published on the Church of Scotland safeguarding page.

Job descriptions
Every congregational role should have a job description, so that individuals understand their duties and responsibilities, including safeguarding responsibilities. The safeguarding coordinator supports groups or individuals in developing appropriate job descriptions.

Key priorities for 2025 were to:
- promote a safeguarding culture within the congregation;
- ensure that all those working with children and vulnerable adults hold current safeguarding clearance;
- encourage individuals to undertake safeguarding training and complete refresher training where necessary;
- provide updated job descriptions to the Sunday school team and the pastoral care group;
- maintain accurate and up-to-date records of safeguarding clearances and completed training;
- submit safeguarding audits to the international presbytery, as required.

Further information about the Church of Scotland safeguarding service can be found here: *churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/safeguarding-service*

Lyndsey Bochaton (lyndsey.bochaton@gmail.com)

Fabric

In the absence of a functioning fabric committee, I have been overseeing the renovation of our manse and preparing it for each locum's arrival.

In 2025, following the departure of our previous minister, the manse was cleared of all broken and superfluous items. Some items were donated to charity, while others were removed by a company working with the Grand-Saconnex commune. A professional cleaning company was then engaged to carry out a deep clean of the apartment.

This allowed us to assess the work required, which primarily includes repainting all rooms and sanding and varnishing the parquet flooring. At our request, the Régie inspected the manse and considered our proposal for renovation work. However, after obtaining quotes, they informed us that they were not willing to undertake any of the renovations. This decision has been formally contested, and we are currently awaiting their response.

In the meantime, on behalf of the Church, I have joined ASLOCA and will be seeking their advice. This is particularly relevant given that we have been tenants since 1969, during which time the Régie has carried out very little maintenance, with most painting historically funded by the Church.

To prepare the manse for incoming locums, a limited amount of new furniture has been purchased – sufficient to ensure comfort without over-furnishing, so as not to hinder any future renovation work.

The congregational committee approved an initial budget of CHF 10,000, which has not yet been fully used. Should it become necessary for the Church to fund the renovations independently, this budget will need to be revised.

Jane Broere (jane.broere@gmail.com)
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COMMUNITY

Sunday lunches

Our "Sunday lunch" formula with lunches held on the last Sunday of every month continued to be very much appreciated during 2025. Our menu of delicious and heartwarming homemade soups accompanied by a selection of cheeses in winter and lovely refreshing quiches and mixed salads in summer offered by the volunteer lunch team remains very successful with around 20 to 30 people consistently staying for lunch. The team has also offered an amazing variety of desserts and for those of us with a sweet tooth the lunches are an occasion not to be missed.

Various members of the lunch team were also active on other occasions too offering delicious refreshments at Easter time and during the Christmas period to mention a few.

Members of the Congregation and visitors alike have spoken warmly about the conviviality and moments of friendship experienced at the lunches so make a note of the dates and don't miss out!

Anyone wishing to join the lunch team or simply help our endeavours by occasionally contributing some cheese or desserts would be extremely welcome. Please contact Jane Broere *(jane.broere@gmail.com)* if that's the case.

Sherree Atkinson-Bret (sherreeatkinsonbret@gmail.com)

Burns supper

After a break in 2024, we held a very successful Burns night in the Salle on January 25 2025. This was attended by 54 members and friends of our congregation, the maximum number we could accommodate. We could easily have sold more tickets if we had more space available. Many thanks to

all those who worked so hard behind the scenes to make the night such an enjoyable evening of fun and friendship, while raising CHF1,660 for church funds in the process.

Jean Murray (jeancmurray@yahoo.co.uk)

FUTURE FOCUS

Neighbourhood groups

Our neighbourhood group project started in 2024 when our congregation joined the *Future Focus* programme, a Church of Scotland initiative that helps congregations look at where they are, where they have come from, and where they would like to be in two or three years' time.

Our congregation is very spread out. Some of us live in and travel to the Auditoire from other Swiss cantons and départements in neighbouring France. In autumn 2024, this led us to create five (now four) geographically based groups. The groups have designated coordinators (usually two) and one or more elders – not to oversee or run the groups (they run themselves!), but to liaise between them and the kirk session.

The purpose and objectives of the groups include:

- to get to know one another in a greater depth than is possible over coffee after worship
- to quickly welcome newcomers to our congregation strengthening our community
- to build support groups, both for spiritual and pastoral needs
- and to renew links with those now unable to attend church because of mobility issues. Each group is careful to ensure that no one is left out because of transport difficulties.

Activities since 2024 include:

- lunches
- Bible studies
- themed discussions
- art gallery visits
- a jazz evening organized in a local jazz club
- afternoon teas
- a dip in the lake
- a potluck supper
- BBQs
- Christmas carol singing

The idea is also to have fun and create good social connections within the congregation. Several groups make use of WhatsApp to stay in touch, make prayer requests, and provide pastoral care.

In February 2025, Hazel and Arthur Griffith hosted a lovely afternoon tea in their Nyon apartment, bringing together about 15 members of Neighbourhood Group 1 for delicious treats and wonderful fellowship.

In June 2025, Amy and Jason Leger hosted Neighbourhood Group 3 for a monster BBQ in their home and garden in Vernier, complete with a monster BBQ engine.

Neighbourhood Group 4 has started a Books of Faith group, organized by Hannah Woodhead. So far the group has discussed *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World* by Joanna Weaver, which has sold over a million copies. On June 22, it will explore *Hearing God's Voice* by Jonna Schuster, a guide to "listening prayer". The group meets on Zoom because NG4 is so widely dispersed and would be happy to welcome anyone in the congregation who wants to join them: for details, contact Mary Quément. (*maryquement@orange.fr*).

Feedback from the groups remains extremely positive, and there are lots of ideas for future events.

Sherree Atkinson-Bret (sherreeatkinsonbret@gmail.com), NG2,
with contributions from group coordinators
Hazel Griffith, Rebecca Dirks MacDonald, Mary Quément, and Chris Sutton

Book club

Since the 2025 report, the club has met five times to enjoy discussion on an eclectic range of genres:

- *I Know why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou
- *Dream Count* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens
- *When the Cranes Fly South* by Liza Ridzen
- House of Doors by Tan Twan Eng

Meetings usually take place in the Salle, and usually on Mondays at 14:30; but it is always possible to consider other options. We are a small, friendly group and are very open to any new members joining us.

Weather permitting, we hope to hold our next meeting in the Jardin Botanique, at 14:30 on Monday June 22. The book we are reading for that is *Orbital* by Samantha Harvey, winner of the Booker Prize in 2024. Precise details of the location in Jardin Botanique (or alternative inclement weather alternative) will be communicated via the order of service in the weeks preceding June 22.

Over the summer we will have time to read *Middlemarch* by George Eliot, described by Virginia Woolf as "one of the few English novels written for grown-up people", for the first meeting of the autumn; the date and venue is yet to be decided.

While I initially set up the group, members now each take turns to chose a book, organize the meeting and lead the discussion. Please don't hesitate to contact me by email if you are interested in the book club.

Gillian Friedli (gillianfriedli@bluewin.ch)

Joint congregational awayday

Awayday. *noun* [C] mainly UK A day you spend somewhere that is not your home or usual place of work

Our first ever joint awayday on September 27 2025 was a lot of fun! Thirty-six people, almost equal numbers from Geneva and Lausanne, met in the gym hall of the *Centre communal et scolaire* in Arzier-Le Muids to worship together, get to know each other a little, and think about our future as a linked charge. Rev Robert Simpson guided our discussions; we were also glad to have his wife, Susan, with us throughout the day, and her warm support and presence were much appreciated.

We began with praise, setting a warm and prayerful tone for the day. Through small-group conversations and plenary reflections, we got to know people we had only just met. A central focus was to name what has worked well in our congregations in recent years and how we can carry these strengths into the future, including clearer communication, regular joint gatherings, and opportunities to serve together.

At lunchtime, we picnicked, continuing conversations in an informal setting. The relaxed meal gave space for deeper connections and fresh ideas, with many commenting that the simple act of eating together helped us listen well and learn from one another.

We drew the day together in praise once more and concluded with communion in a large circle, a moving sign of our unity in Christ. We left having made new friends, encouraged by the sense of common purpose, and hopeful that this awayday will become an annual event that continues to strengthen our life and witness as a linked charge.

Christine Colliar (ccolliar@churchofscotland.org.uk)

St Andrew's Fair and Cèilidh

Our principal fundraising event is our annual fair and cèilidh. In 2025, we raised almost CHF12,000.

Even more important than the income generated is the ambience and the sense of community these produce. This is the one event where our whole congregation pulls together to make the day work!

In 2025, we were able to return to the more seasonal date of November 22, after the previous year's unseemly early date of November 2. As always, a large cast of stallholders, providers and servers of food and drink, Scouts, and Pipers, combined forces to make the day exciting and enjoyable.

The cèilidh continues to be a successful attraction for many wanting to spend an evening with excellent food, dance and music from the Lake Léman Band.

In 2025, after organizing the fair, on and off, over more than three decades, Christine Buhler stepped down. In her place, Jason Leger stepped up. "I have some very big shoes to fill," he said, but he filled them capably. (He has big feet.) Now he, in turn, is stepping down, because he and Amy are returning to the United States. We shall miss them!

Hence we are looking for a coordinator for this year's fair and céilidh. Or more likely, for a team of three or even four coordinators, to spread the load so that it doesn't become a burden to anyone. If you are tempted to volunteer, please speak to our session clerk Cornis *(cornis.lugt@gmail.com)*, our congregational committee secretary Nan *(ntbraunsch@bluemail.ch)*, or me.

Reserve the date St Andrew's Fair and Cèilidh: November 7 2026, Salle des Délices, Grand Saconnex

Páraic Réamonn (paraic.reamonn@gmail.com)

Creations (craft group)

The craft group continued to meet during 2025 in each other's homes. Our crafting abilities have diminished with the years, but we remain a like minded group who like to discuss all sorts of topics, over tea and cake. We continue to share friendship, laughter and fellowship, much appreciated by us all.

We still managed a stall for the annual St Andrew's Fair and hope to do so again in 2026.

Christine Buhler (buhlerchristine@hotmail.com)

MISSION AND UNITY

Mission here

We continued our support of Partage (the Geneva food bank) through collections of non-perishable food and other household necessities on the first Sunday of every month when we celebrate communion. This initiative gives us an immediate connection with the realities of the local Geneva community.

The Partage report on 2025 report states that the organization was able to distribute the equivalent of 7 million meals, through the support of some 17,250 adults and children in precarious situations each week. This helps us to understand the level of need in Geneva to which our congregation generously responds. The organization expresses its heartfelt gratitude for our involvement:

At a time when social challenges are increasing and many families are facing increasing difficulties, Partage expresses its deep gratitude to you. Your support goes far beyond a simple financial gesture. It embodies a concrete solidarity that allows us to pursue our triple mission: to fight against precariousness, to fight food waste and to contribute to professional reintegration.

Every donation made directly contributes to changing views, bringing welcome relief, and creating a positive and lasting impact within our community.

Additionally, we made financial contributions of CHF 1,000 each to three local causes:

- La Maison de Tara, providing end of life palliative care
- Alzheimer Genève, offering support to those living with Alzheimers and their families
- La Main Tenue Genève, a telephone service offering emotional support.

Nan Braunschweiger (ntbraunsch@bluemail.ch)

Mission elsewhere

Our mission committee oversees our congregation's support for mission elsewhere, namely our partnerships with the Ekwendeni HIV Youth Resource Centre in Malawi and the Lalgadh Leprosy Hospital in Nepal. Below, Jane Broere gives us an update on the youth centre.

The Youth Resource Centre, Ekwendeni, Malawi

The resource centre, built and funded by the Church of Scotland in Geneva, opened its doors almost 26 years ago and has had an important impact on the youth in the Ekwendeni catchment area. It is a safe place for youth to gather where they have their own space for HIV testing and counselling. They can also engage in activities which help to prevent HIV transmission, they can seek ways to advocate to other youth in the community and to educate themselves around new advances in HIV prevention, treatment and care.

Aims

1. Reduce the number of cases of HIV and AIDS in the Ekwendeni catchment area
2. Encourage the youth to come for testing and counselling at the resource centre
3. To empower the youth and create positive behaviour change around HIV and AIDS in the Ekwendeni catchment area
4. To improve life skills, education and good cultural practices

However, today's new challenges have meant that there is now a renewed need to focus on the HIV and AIDS pandemic and prevent further increases in new infections, particularly for youth. HIV/AIDS has not gone away. Today, with treatment, it is no longer the death sentence it once was.

The centre works with more than 64 youth clubs across the Ekwendeni catchment area and is dedicated to empowering young people through education, health awareness, and community engagement. Our programmes focus on helping youth prevent HIV/AIDS, reduce teenage marriages and pregnancies, address gender-based violence, and protect children from all forms of abuse. They deliver this work through integrated approaches including awareness campaigns, structured sports programmes, and targeted trainings.

Younger children are also welcomed and encouraged to attend the centre, as we believe it is never too early to learn positive values and good behaviour practices. Early engagement helps build strong foundations for healthy decision-making and responsible citizenship as they grow. Parents are reassured that their children are in a safe, supportive, and well-supervised environment where their wellbeing is a priority. The centre is only open to school aged children after school has finished for the day.

In 2025 thecentre held a comprehensive training involving youth from various clubs, focusing on HIV/AIDS awareness, mental health, positive mindset development, and suicide prevention. These sessions are part of the ongoing commitment to encouraging positive behaviour change among young people.

During the holiday periods, in 2025, the centre, in partnership with local youth clubs and the Ekwendeni Police, held a large-scale campaign on HIV/AIDS prevention and crime management. This initiative successfully raised awareness and promoted safer, more responsible behaviours among young people.

In addition, they implemented a targeted outreach campaign across five high-risk areas. Supported by a dedicated team of HIV counsellors, medical professionals, and youth workers, the campaign provided testing and education services. The youth band played a vital role in engaging communities through music and drama performances that delivered important HIV awareness messages.

Key outcomes from the campaigns

- 144 individuals tested for HIV
- Condoms distributed to promote safer practices
- Increased awareness through interactive community outreach activities

Sport continues to play a vital role in the Centre's work. It is a core entry point for youth engagement at the centre and a proven tool for positive behaviour change. Regular participation in structured sports keeps young people meaningfully occupied, reducing idle time associated with risky behaviours. Through coaching and team-based activities, participants build discipline, goal-setting skills, and accountability. Team environments strengthen peer support, communication, and respect for rules, which translate into improved decision-making off the youth. Evidence from the programmes shows that youth engaged in sports activities are more likely to attend trainings, access health services, and adopt safer behaviours, including HIV prevention practices. Sport therefore acts not only as recreation, but as a gateway to education, mentorship, and life skills development.

We are especially proud of the girls' netball team for their outstanding participation in the Malawi Top League. Over the years, they have achieved remarkable success, becoming district and national champions. In addition, several players have been selected to join the national netball team, highlighting the strength, talent, and potential of young women in our community.

For young people who are less interested in sports, the Centre offers a range of alternative activities to ensure inclusive participation. These include music, board games, cooking, and growing of crops. These

activities provide additional pathways for engagement, creativity, and skills development, while still promoting positive behaviour, teamwork, and a sense of responsibility.

They are very grateful to us, the Church of Scotland in Geneva for our continued support in making these initiatives possible. Together, we are empowering youth, promoting health, and building a brighter future for their communities.

As the sole financial supporters of this project, continued funding is essential to keep the centre open and its programmes running. Without this support, these vital services for young people would not be possible. We kindly encourage you to consider donating, either through the mission envelopes, bank transfer, or by speaking to a member of the Mission Committee. Your contribution will directly support and sustain the work of the Youth Resource Centre.

Jane Broere (jane.broere@gmail.com)

Communication

Once upon a time, we had a communications committee: Christine Buhler, Lindy Twaddle, and me. We never met! We were too busy producing newsletters or trying to keep our website up to date.

Now we would like to have a *proper* communications committee, whose first order of business will be to develop a thought-out strategy for all the ways we communicate as a congregation, both among ourselves and to the wider world.

In addition to newsletters and the website, we also have a FaceBook page, a somewhat inactive Instagram account, and an order of service. We have, if we choose to take them, various media opportunities in Geneva and its hinterland.

Since May 2025, Christine Colliar has used our Facebook page to provide encouragement and announce events, and to introduce Sunday services, with these introductions often taking the form of short video reels in which the locum greets the congregation.

Communication is not a substitute for what Christine Buhler calls, somewhat inelegantly, “bums on pews”. But good communication can help to get people through our door and into our common life – and that is what we need if we are to grow and flourish! Would you like to help?

Páraic Réamonn (paraic.reamonn@gmail.com)

Ecumenical links

Arthur Askew has been for many years the mainstay (sometimes, almost the only stay) of our local ecumenical involvement. Invariably, he began his reports with the words: “Our congregation has always been very ecumenically minded.” He is right about that. In 2025 and 2026, we have been exploring how that ecumenical mindedness might show itself more effectively in practice.

Christine Buhler and Cornis Van der Lugt have been in conversation with the *Église protestante de Genève* on how we may work more closely together, beginning with the Reformation Day service in the cathedral on October 25 this year. Watch this space!

In 2025, Rebecca Dirks MacDonald agreed to take over from Arthur the role of representing us on Témoigner ensemble à Genève (witnessing together in Geneva, TEAG). Here is her report:

I attended the TEAG celebration of the Jeûne genevois (September 11 2025) at Holy Trinity church, with representatives of small, community-based Protestant churches, some Orthodox churches as well as historical churches such as l'Eglise protestante de Genève, the Anglican Church, the Lutheran church, and some non-religious organizations. It was a vibrant encounter, with many young people singing in choirs and ministers praying in a variety of languages as well as a minister from India talking about the persecution of Christians in India. TEAG also held a service in Holy Trinity as part of the week of prayer for Christian unity where I made a presentation about the body of Christ. There are monthly meetings of the TEAG plenary and I was asked to provide a Biblical meditation for the February gathering. All presentations are made in English and French, and sometimes speakers address the group in Spanish.

REGG Rassemblement des Eglises et Communautés Chrétiennes de Genève

The Rassemblement (ecumenical gathering of the churches of Geneva) was founded in 1954, the same year as the second assembly of the World Council of Churches in Evanston. It takes its current name – Gathering of the Churches and Christian Communitis of Geneva – from a revision of its statutes in 1971.

Its 27 churches and communities span the Christian spectrum: Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestan (including the Quakers and the Salvation Army). They aim to respond together to their common calling as churches. They work together on the foundation of the Charta Oecumenica (the European ecumenical charter, revised in 2025).

Once a year, the 27 churches and communities meet in a general assembly. We are looking for two eager and willing volunteers to represent us at this assembly.

Christian faith 201: The Geneva English Cursillo community

A *Cursillo de Cristianidad* (a "short course in Christianity") brings people together for a long weekend – Thursday evening to Sunday night – for prayer and reflection, discussion and fun.

Today, it's a worldwide movement, supported by many mainline churches, but it began modestly, more than 80 years ago, among Spanish Catholics on the island of Majorca. Led by Eduard Bonnin, lay Catholics in 1944 began meeting for these long weekends. I suspect they were tired of priests telling them what to think and wanted to do some thinking for themselves! However that may be, the practice quickly caught on and spread.

The Geneva English Cursillo community has from the beginning been ecumenical, embracing Anglicans, Baptists, Catholics, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Presbyterians (that's us!), as well as evangelical and congregational churches such as Crossroads and Westlake. Like all Cursillo communities, it continues to be lay-led; but each Cursillo weekend invites a clergy team of three to add their tuppence worth.

Since Cursillo started in Geneva in 1983, more than a thousand Christians from these diverse backgrounds have taken part in a Cursillo weekend. Many have found this transformative, as they encounter themselves, one another, and God in unexpected ways.

From our own congregation, 79 people have participated. With the passage of time, many of these have moved on or even died; but if you would like to know more, you can speak to those of us who are still around. In alphabetical order we are:

Arthur Askew, Antonia and Michael Bruce, Christine Buhler, Christine Colliar, Alex and Freda Craeye, Lily Geissbuhler, Maria and Moises Oliveira, Fiona Parrott, Eleanor and Jürg Strittmatter, and me.

The next Cursillo weekend will be in the Cénacle (Promenade Charles-Martin 17, 1208 Genève), from November 5 to 8. It demands a significant investment of time and energy, but we can promise you that it bears fruit a hundredfold.

Páraic Réamonn (paraic.reamonn@gmail.com)

FINANCE

Treasurer's report

We got by in 2025, mostly because we didn't have a minister for seven months. Meanwhile, our mission income struggles to match our current mission commitments.
A longer version of this report can be found on our website

2025 saw the first year of a revised, more responsive budget and a switch to cash accounting in line with the requirements of becoming an officially registered, Scottish charity. From a numbers' perspective, it *appears* to have been a good year. The Church of Scotland Geneva owns no fixed assets –we rent the Auditoire, the Salle and the Manse. So our main expenditure is employment costs. In 2024, these

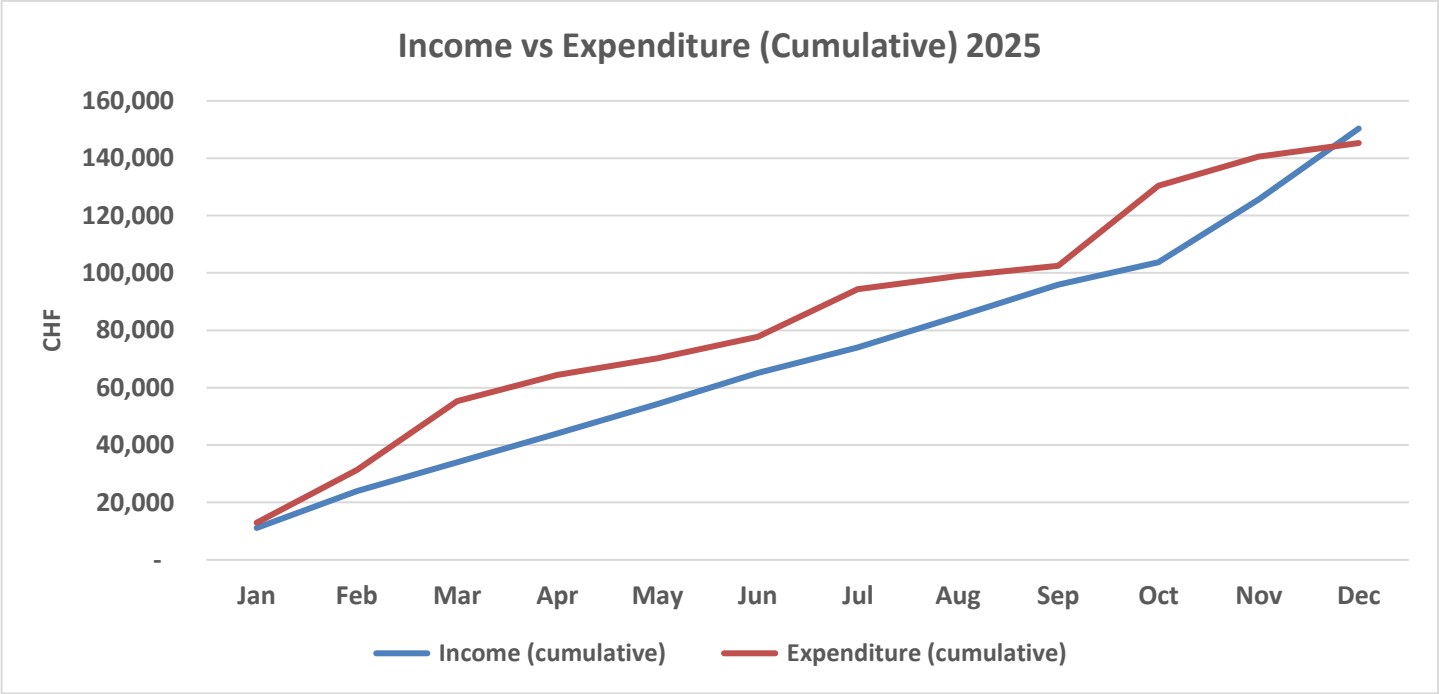
represented 58.6% of total expenditure. In 2025, including locum costs, they were down to 51.3%, and that was with a full-time minister for the first five months. If we then take out continued employment costs for the former minister for which we could not be reimbursed until 2026, they come down to 44.3%.

Technically, we made a surplus of CHF 5,155. Relative to a turnover of slightly less than CHF 160,000, that's hardly a significant surplus. Therein lies the problem.

Why things weren't so good

Had there been a full-time Minister in place throughout 2025, with no change in income, we would have been operating at a significant loss. At the time of writing, a joint nominating committee is seeking to recruit an associate minister, to be based in Geneva, for whose employment costs our congregation will be exclusively responsible. Without a significant growth in income in the years ahead, this will not be sustainable.

This is easy to see from the chart below, which shows the cumulative level of income and expenditure (excluding mission and the minister's farewell) across 2025. We ended the year with a modest surplus. But this level of income would not allow us to afford a full-time minister without running up a considerable deficit.



The downside of nothing going seriously wrong in 2025 is that not much attention has been paid to this.

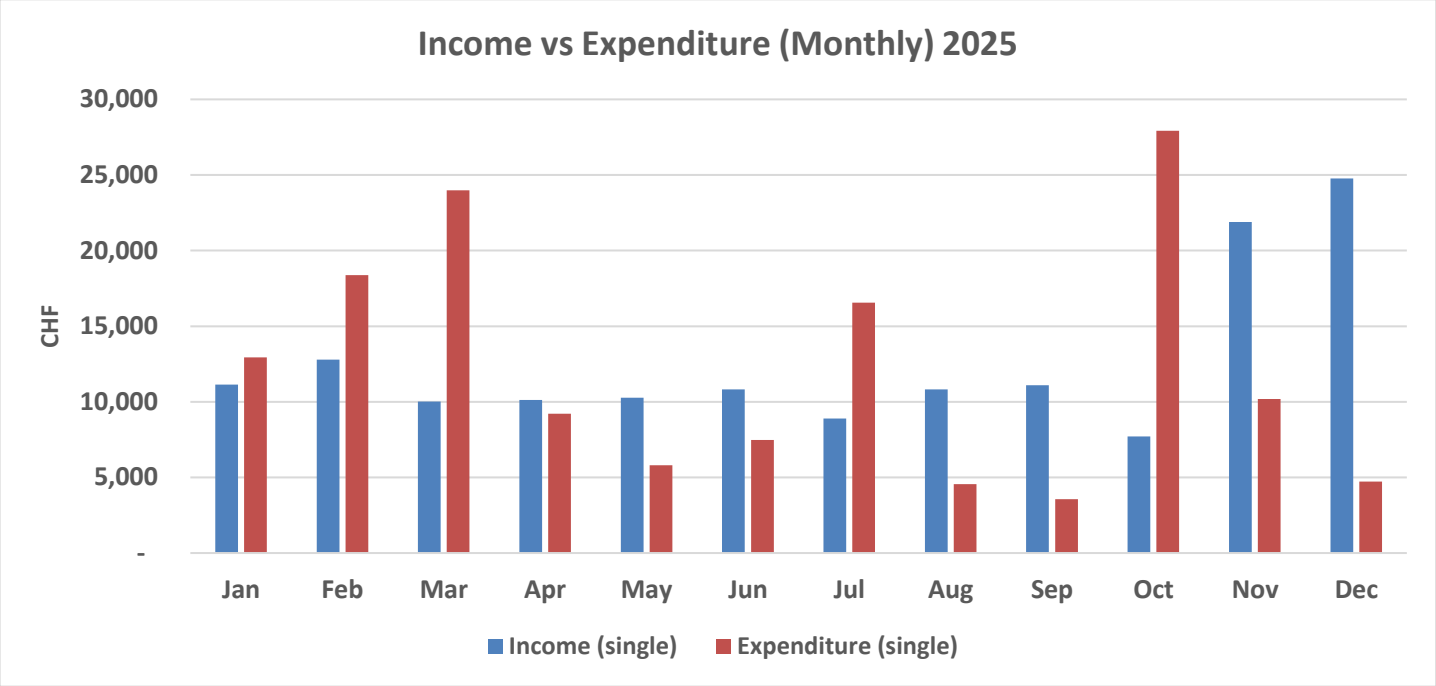
Our response to the financial crisis in 2023 was excellent and put us back onto a financially viable footing. However, over the course of 2024 and 2025, some complacency seems to have set in. Despite newsletter articles, congregational committee presentations and annual congregational reports, we appear to be at risk of settling into not worrying too much about a problem that hasn't happened yet.

This is more or less where we were just before the COVID-19 lockdown, which hit our finances quite severely and precipitated the 2023 crisis.

At present, it is unclear whether we can find volunteers to coordinate the St Andrew's fair and cèilidh. This has important financial consequences: about 8% of our income has come from the fair in recent years. This is more than the level of the surplus in 2025.

No income element in 2025 exceeded its budget level, nor did any one of them exceed the 2024 level, with the exception of special fund-raising, due mainly to the 2025 Burns Supper and the collection for the minister's farewell.

The farewell is an interesting case financially. A lot of enthusiasm generated a lot of funding, all of a sudden, from a lot of contributors. It would be a bit unseemly to go into specific amounts here but that isn't the point anyway. This is what we would like to see as a general rule, not just as a one-off: a decent flow of revenue from a wide spread of donors, most of them giving relatively small but still generous contributions. This is much lower risk in financial terms than a small number of generous contributors giving large amounts. The more our income depends on generous contributors, the more vulnerable it is to their leaving, for whatever reason.



Income exceeded expenditure in seven months out of twelve. When expenditure did exceed income, however, it did so by a considerable amount that was never equalled in the opposite direction until the last two months, with the St Andrew's Fair and generous end-of-year giving.

Changing the model

In 2025, and without a full-time minister for seven months, we have been getting by. However, if we are to have what we need, moving forwards, we need to ramp things up, generate some genuine drive and focus on some key goals.

Our members give generously of their time and talents, as we can see from the many reports above. However, we still need some high-energy initiatives, especially those which are outward-looking, for our congregation to be what it needs to be in the future. We look forward to the installation of an associate minister in Geneva who we hope will be a strong and energetic leader, and we need to be ready to pay for her or his service.

Financial analysis of the crisis identified in the second half of 2023 showed that the real issue we faced was one of falling numbers. This had a direct and measurable impact on the financial health of the congregation, but it was a much deeper problem. Our kirk session responded with the Future Focus initiative, reported on above. But our numbers still need to grow!

What we need, already now, is to be a congregation that sees where it wants to go and takes the practical and financial steps to get there. If enthusiasm and finance generate each other, then we can solve both sets of worries if we base our financial thinking on our plans to boost, grow and sustain our congregation.

Budget

The revised budget for 2026 and the provisional budget for 2027 are available on our website. As usual, the ACM needs to approve these. By way of a reminder, the revised 2026 budget represents what was presented and approved at the ACM in 2025, based on the best available information and analysis at that point. This is what has guided the Church's expenditure and set the targets for income to mid-2026. The revised version updates this in light of actual developments, subject to ACM approval. The provisional 2027 budget is the first step in the same model: the ACM is asked to approve this as the basis for the Church's operations in 2027 until the 2027 ACM when a revised version will be presented, together with a provisional budget for 2028.

2026 sees reductions in the budgeted levels for both income and expenditure. These are explained below. The overall target is now a surplus of CHF 57,500, up from CHF 34,585. This is probably not a good thing since it does not represent an increase in income expected, simply the expectation that a new, full-time associate minister will not take office until early 2027. The provisional 2026 budget was approved on the expectation that there would be a full-time Minister during 2026. The revised budget assumes that this will not happen. It may be an overly pessimistic assumption but the increase in locum costs is certainly fully justified up to this point. The assumptions are presented in detail in the budgets themselves but the main ones are:

Income

- Cash offerings will be CHF 5,000 lower than originally expected;
- Donations (paid mainly by bank transfer) will be CHF 12,000 lower than originally expected;
- There will be no fair at the end of the year.

Expenditure

- There will be no full-time Minister until early 2027;
- The Church will continue to use locum services for the remainder of 2026;
- Provision is made for increases in utility bills and unforeseen contingencies in light of the global, geopolitical situation and its impact on cost of living.

The 2027 provisional budget has been prepared on a more optimistic basis, assuming that the Church will have a full-time Minister again, that it will be able to contain employment costs better than before and that it will be able to increase the levels of cash and online giving. It is expected, however, that the Church Fair will not take place again. Overall, this would leave a deficit of CHF 6,500. While hardly ideal, this still reflects a realistic challenge which could be addressed under the leadership of a new Minister.

The principal assumptions are:

Income

- A successful outreach will be made to raise income and online donations;
- There will be no fair at the end of the year.

Expenditure

- There will be a full-time associate minister of pensionable age with spouse and children to support;

- There will be no further need for locum services;
- Costs of living and contingency cost levels will remain approximately consistent, at least in terms of CHF, which tends to be a strong currency.

The ACM is requested to approve the revised budget for 2026 and the provisional budget for 2027 as presented.

Accounts

The accounts are available on our website and can largely be read as presented in light of the report above. The main point to note is the impact of the change from accrual to cash accounting. This was effectively enforced across congregations in the International Presbytery by virtue of registration under the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator. Under accrual accounting, our statements allow for accrued receivables and expenditures where the transaction has been carried out in one year but relates to another. For example, if you pay your utility bill for the next year in advance of that year still to come, it gets accounted for against the next year's accounts where the benefit was received. Under cash accounting, you simply account for any transaction on the date it occurs, regardless of when the benefit is experienced. Cash accounting is simpler and less prone to error but it is also less accurate in terms of managing finances in a meaningful manner.

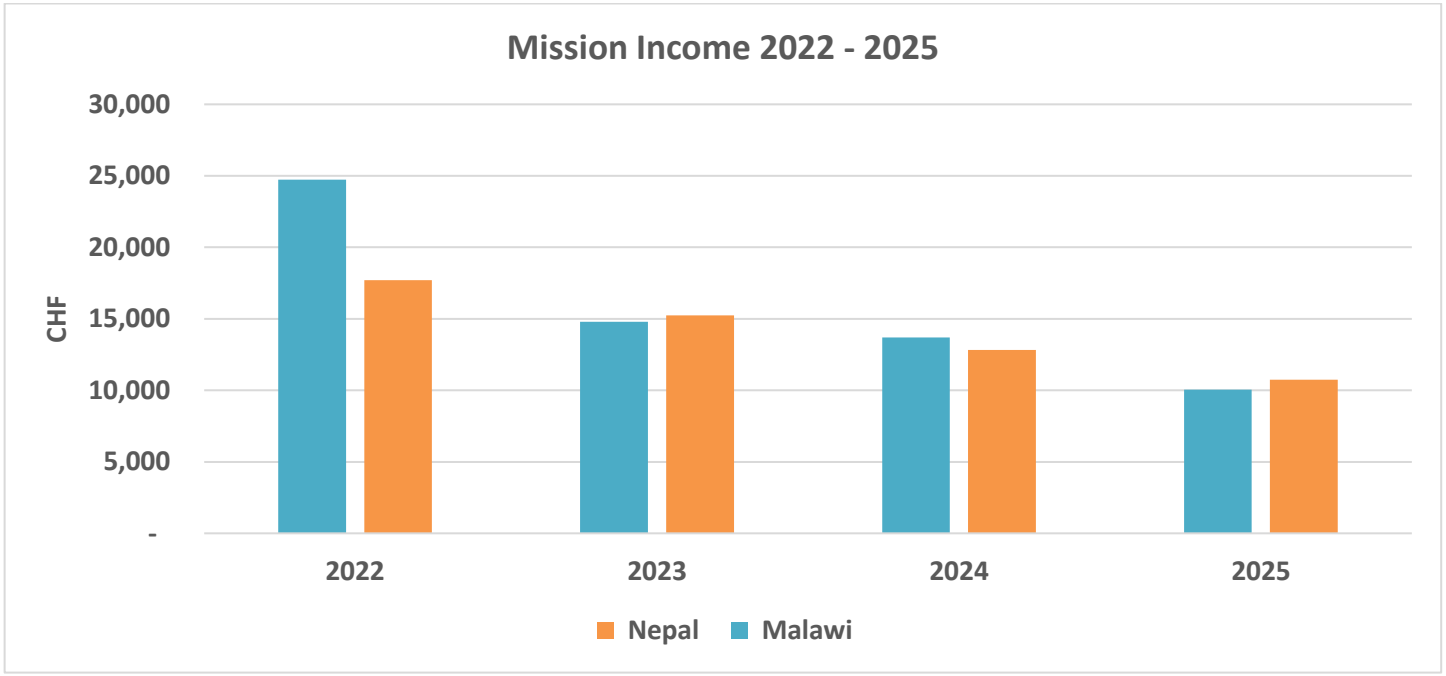
The main impacts on our annual accounts in 2025 are that the expenditures are higher than they should have been since we had to account for employment costs which would be refunded in 2026, as and when the transactions occurred. As noted above, this made the expenditures around CHF 10,400 higher than they might have had to be. It would also have prevented the need to present accounts for what is now determined the Church's General Fund, as distinct from the Mission Fund. This is because Mission can no longer be accounted for on the assumption that all Mission income is expensed in the year when it is received. Without accruals, the actual cash balance of mission income has to be shown but this cannot be combined with the rest of the congregation's resources since that could risk either causing a false impression of the other. In practical terms, it makes no difference to the level of resources available to mission or expensed by it, but it means that mission has to be displayed wholly separately in every respect in the accounts.

How long this will remain is an open question. The Church of Scotland in Edinburgh recognizes that national and local regulations in other countries have to take legal precedence over Scottish requirements but at present, the congregation's annual turnover remains less than CHF 500,000. Above that level, the canton of Geneva would insist on accrual accounting being used but unless and until that should be our position, we will remain with cash accounting.

Mission

Mission finances have also fallen considerably over the same period, declining by over 50% over the period 2022 to 2025. The decline was moderated by the visit of Graeme and Meena from Nepal during 2025, but the fall in revenue for the Malawi project since 2022 has been dramatic. Planned visits from Ekwendeni didn't go ahead, and the level of engagement has been less evident.

Adjusting figures to be comparable across the period 2022 – 2025 even with the change in accounting standards, the figure for mission income, and hence expenditure, is quite bleak. This is particularly the case for Malawi where the drop in annual income over the period has been almost 60%. It has been less pronounced in the case of Nepal; but, even there, income has still dropped by almost 40%. There are several explanations for this but they are outside the remit of the finance report.



At the start of 2026, we still had enough resources to continue to provide what has become our regular level of support to each project (i.e. approximately CHF 12,000 per annum). Without a boost in income over 2026, however, by 2027 it will have much less left to provide. First-quarter mission income in 2026 was just over CHF 2,000. Assuming this stays constant, it would give income of around CHF 8,000 by the end of the year. This would be considerably short of the CHF 24,000 level required for regular giving levels to continue in 2027.

Moving forward

Something has to change. If it doesn't, the Church of Scotland Geneva will drift – perhaps imperceptibly to start with but with a gathering momentum – towards becoming financially unsustainable and so lacking in resources that it has to close. That is not a pleasant prospect, but it's the stark truth.

The good news is that this isn't just around the corner yet.

There is not enough time to sit back and hope that it sorts itself out. We did that between the COVID-19 lockdown and 2023. However, at the end of 2023, our congregation showed what it was really capable of. That is what we are going to need to do again; and, for this, there is time.

We are perfectly capable of organizing pastoral, spiritual, fellowship and administrative events. There's tea and coffee after every service, every week. Probably no one can name every single committee and group that we run and host. The question is, how do we transform this energy into something which reaches out and grows our congregation and everything it does?

Put crudely, how do we manage our marketing? We can't rely on the same people to do everything. Reliance on a few big-ticket contributors is not a healthy strategy. We need to broaden our basis of support to make things happen in every respect.

The energy and ideas are there. The cash flow serves as a *de facto* measure of how well or not they're being put into action. The question facing us is, are we going to do what's needed or are we going to hope that somehow it just happens? We don't have the time or money to take the latter approach but we do have what it takes to make the former work and that is where we will need to move.

Acknowledgments

Many people serve to make our finances work and their time and energy should be recognized. Within the congregation, Mak Ikeda carries out sterling work as Freewill Offering Treasurer while Nan Braunschweiger is an exceptionally efficient and responsive dual signatory, enabling payments to be made every month. Han Broere provides his wisdom and guidance as chair of the finance sub-committee and is always available to support the finance work. Christine Buhler has dedicated considerable time to sorting out several of the HR (human resources) matters concerning tax and benefits which would have taken forever to deal with from a finance perspective but just a couple of phone calls for a professional like herself.

Andrew McCallum and Robert Walker again served as independent examiners for our 2025 accounts, and for this the congregation is extremely grateful. Their timely response meant that Geneva was one of a minority of congregations in the international presbytery that managed to comply with the tight deadlines in place due to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

We have received a lot of help as well from our friends and colleagues in the international presbytery. Of particular note is the support provided by Ms Jo Austen of the Malta congregation and also our counterparts in Lausanne, Mr William Wright and Mr Robert Kenneth.

The weekly work of the ushers on duty should not be overlooked either. The sterling efforts of Arthur Askew, Nicola Hollyman and Han Broere in paying the funds received each Sunday into the Church of Scotland Geneva account are much appreciated too.

No doubt, there are others who have helped considerably but whom I am guilty of forgetting just now. I would like to ask their forgiveness but to assure them that the work of all who contribute to financial management in our congregation is always appreciated.

Ewart MacKenzie (mackenzieje@hotmail.com)

Freewill offering scheme

The Freewill Offering scheme (FWO) members have been steadfast and dependable. The amount donated in 2025 was CHF105,000 for general funds and CHF 21,000 for missions, just slightly lower compared to 2024.

The FWO membership list has been pruned as people have moved away, but there have also been additions from external donors who requested to join the scheme in order to receive the cantonal tax attestations. We are holding steady with 48 donors, of which 27 have received tax attestations.

Many thanks to all the ushers and the bankers who keep the FWO operating smoothly and efficiently.

Makoto Ikeda (fw.treasurer.cos.geneva@gmail.com)

KEEP IN TOUCH!

Our kirk session maintains a confidential *roll* of members and others connected to our congregation: name, address, telephone, email. This also serves as an *electoral register* on those occasions when the congregation needs to voice its opinion by voting. If any of your contact details have changed recently, please update them by emailing our session clerk *(cornis.lugt@gmail.com)*

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GENEVA, linked with THE SCOTS KIRK, LAUSANNE

A lively international congregation
gathering people of many backgrounds and all ages
for worship in the Reformed tradition

Minister of the linked charge
Rev Dr Enikő Ferency
eferenczy@churchofscotland.org.uk

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Place de la Taconnerie 1, 1204 Genève

The Scots Kirk, Lausanne
Avenue de Rumine 26, 1005 Lausanne
Session clerk: Janet Shaner

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