May 22, 2018

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND *ANNUAL REPORT*

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May 22, 2018

1. MINISTER'S REPORT

Over a year gone already, and the Auditoire experience delights more and more! Sharing in worship, fellowship, learning and pilgrim journeying together has been a joy and a privilege.

We love the city, and we love the congregation. Connections have strengthened and deepened, and cords of love have assuredly been wound around our hearts.

The rich rainbow-coloured tapestry that is our worshipping community brings enormous enrichment, and the deep faith and faithfulness of so many committed people makes this a congregation warm in welcome and heartfelt in care for one another. We are truly blessed. Roll on 2018!

Laurence Twaddle

2. KIRK SESSION

2017 has been a year of change for the Session, an opportunity for the elders and minister to get to know one another as we work together. During the year, elders David Wood and Felix Allender stepped down from the Session. When David retired he and Hazel left Geneva to return to England. Felix stepped down from the Session in the summer after many, many years of faithful service to the church. We were able to mark both these events with a meal together and expression of our thanks.

The Session felt the time was ripe to appoint new elders to replace those who had left. In March 2018 we added 3 elders to the Session, Lyndsey Bochaton was ordained and admitted and Jane Mackenzie and Christine Buhler rejoined the Session. We look forward to working together.

Recently, the Eglise Protestante de Geneve (EPG) approached us to propose talks about the use of the Auditoire. The building is owned by the EPG and we pay for our use of it. The proposal was that, while the Madeleine church is being renovated for an extended period, the Swiss German parish should share the Auditoire with us. Additionally, the children's programme of the EPG would also use the Auditoire for children's activities during the week.

Talks are ongoing at present on a variety of issues ranging from timing of worship services, to access to the Auditoire for those with mobility issues and how the children's work would impact the Auditoire. One benefit could be that the Auditoire would be open to the public more often during the week, which does not happen at present. From experience we know that whenever we do open the church door the very many visitors to the Old Town do come flocking in to the historic building.

We plan to have a picture board with details of our elders displayed in the Salle but please speak to any of our elders if you have ideas about what our church could be doing or if you have any questions.

Alice Tulloch, Session Clerk

3. FINANCE REPORT
(prepared on the basis of pre-audited accounts)

2017 FINANCIAL REPORT (prepared on the basis of pre-audited accounts)

Key Points

- Although the Church was budgeting for a minor deficit, in 2017, it actually managed to achieve a **net surplus of CHF 15,345**. This resulted mainly from income holding essentially steady, while expenditure was lower than budgeted, mainly due to lower employment costs than planned.

- Freewill Offering (FWO) income increased notably, although to some extent this was offset by decreases in cash donations and offerings. The **increase in FWO** is to be encouraged, but the Church needs to ensure that other sources of income can also be brought in and are not simply moving from one type to another.

- **Church Fair income was received largely as planned**, reflecting a solid performance.

- The most **significant savings on budgeted expenditure** were seen in terms of employment costs, including the renovation and upkeep of the Manse. The current Minister did not technically start employment until after the start of January 2017, and Manse costs are not expected to decrease, so the 2017 level of expenditure is likely to increase in future.

- **Additional costs need to be anticipated** in addition to those seen 2017, principally in view of the employment costs associated with a full-time Minister (especially in the potential, future case of a Minister below retirement age with dependent children), and in view of increased Presbytery fees envisaged from 2018 onwards.

- At the same time, it should be noted that the Church's relatively strong position in 2017 was further reflected by the fact that it **met all of its commitments and produced a modest surplus without additional support** such as that received from the Salvesen Trust, which remains available to Churches in the International Presbytery which are unable to avoid an operating deficit.

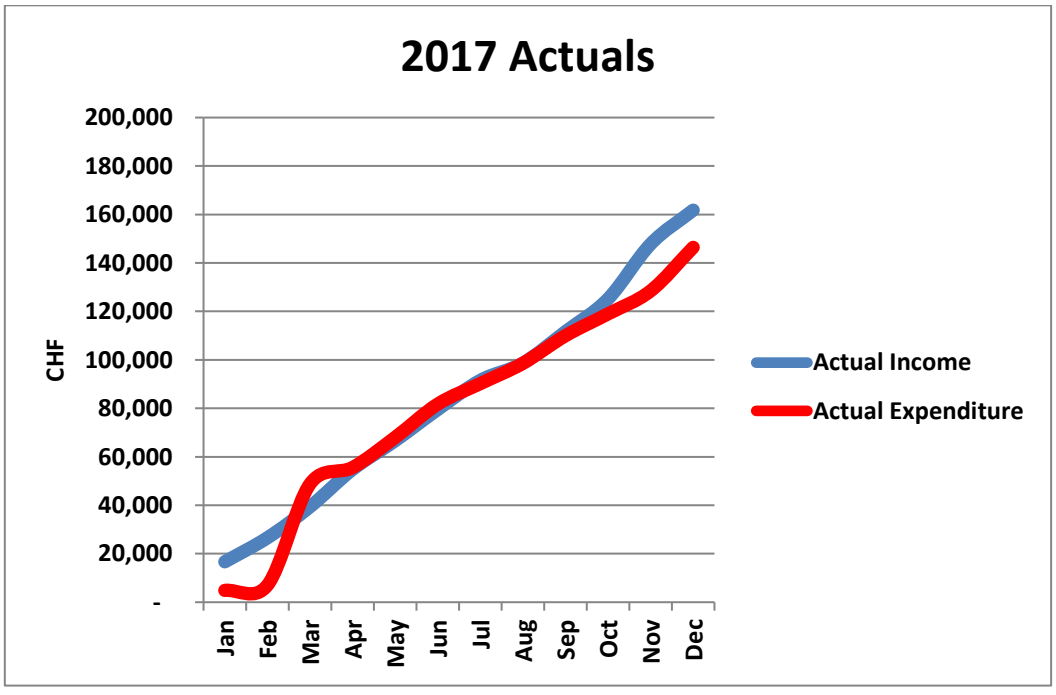
- To summarize, **the Church is essentially fit for purpose in a financial sense, for the immediate future**. It is able to meet its commitments but if it is to expand on those commitments, it will need to make sure that it can find the funds to do so. It will need to

exercise caution in moving forwards, since the surplus margin more than halved since that seen in 2016, but it is still there.

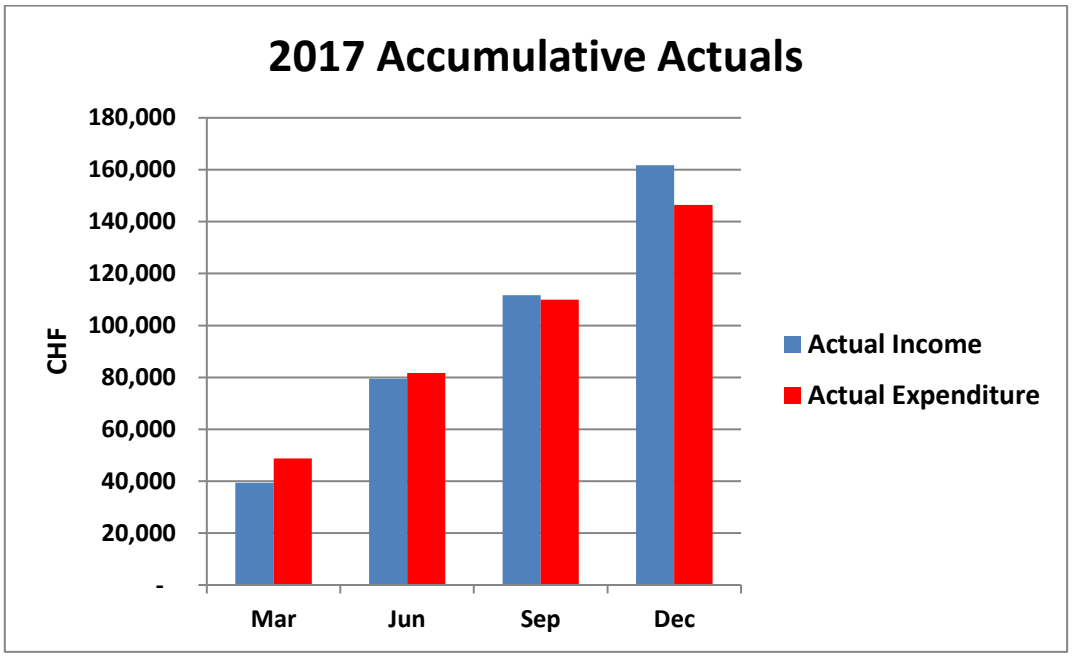
- Of course, **the Church is much more than a financial institute**. The funds spent in 2017 have allowed the Church not only to keep functioning with a full-time Minister, but also to invest in several initiatives to strengthen its work and message. If it can grow from this success to achieve more, then it certainly has the basis from which to take this ahead.

Budget and Performance (excluding Mission income and expenditure)

The overall picture referred to above can be best seen in a graphic form. The budgeted income and expenditure were expected to be almost equal (the projected deficit was CHF 2,520). As a result, actual income and expenditure should have stayed closely together, which was broadly the case on average until the end of the year:



The overall surplus resulted from the extent to which the actual income was higher than the actual expenditure, which can be most easily seen from a quarterly perspective:



It is worth noting that technically, the Church was operating at a slight deficit up to the middle of 2017. This was partly driven by some high-cost, one-off expenditures during that period, and the installation costs of the new Minister. The increase in income, which later offset that, derived not least from the strong performance of the Church Fair in November 2017, and was also complemented by higher levels of giving traditionally seen towards the end of the year.

Aberrations in expenditure levels could be smoothed out if necessary (for example, the annual Auditoire charge could be met through quarterly rather than annual instalments, although transaction charges would provide enough reason not to do this), but this is not critical. The Church does not have such a tight cash flow problem at present.

What is interesting, however, is the surge in income seen towards the end of each year. Although driven heavily by the Church Fair, that is not the sole driver itself, and it raises some interesting questions. Does the Church Fair catalyse donations for some reason ? Is giving in some sense "seasonal" as it were ? Are there more people in Church in general at the end of the year ? These are questions which a financial perspective can only raise, not answer, but in considering them, there may be some useful answers for the Church to discover. In this, as in other ways, I hope that the Church's finance functions can help to enrich and strengthen its life.

Mission

While leaving discussion of the Church's actual Mission work to that section of the report to the Congregation, from a financial perspective, 2018 saw a total income of CHF 35,174. This was split at approximately CHF 26k for work in Nepal and CHF 9k for work in Malawi.

Although reflecting a fall in Mission income from the extraordinary level seen in 2016 (CHF 46,786), this was still the second highest level of regular Mission income seen in a single year. The fall was felt by the contributions to Malawi, income for Nepal projects remaining

consistent with 2016. Owing to reasonably high levels of cash carried forward from 2016, the Church was still able to sustain financing for both projects over the year, although it effectively utilized most of the reserve for Malawi by the end of the year. Levels of support for Nepal remained dependent on a handful of very high contributions, so its overall stability can also remain open to question.

The greatest question for the Church's Mission work, financially speaking, is thus one of sustainability. Allowing for the absolute fall in support levels from 2016, the overall trend in recent years has still been largely positive, and much good has been achieved through what the Church has provided. However, with increased income levels, comes the increased risk of committing more support than can necessarily be sustained in the longer term. In the case of Nepal, this seems to be less of a risk owing to its relatively large donor base, of which our Church is only one member, but in Malawi, there is a much heavier reliance on the support from Geneva. The critical points for consideration at this juncture would seem to be:

1. How to ensure a reasonably reliable, core income base for Mission work?
2. How to engage with supported partners in a way which promotes realistic expectations of support which can likely be met?
3. How to engage with other supporting donors to reduce the risk of lower income levels?
4. How to encourage investment of support to enhance self-sustainability in the longer term?

Conclusion

The Church finished 2017 in a favourable situation. Without external support, it operated within a net surplus, met its commitments, and continued much of its vital work. Tighter margins demonstrate that there is little room for complacency, however, and future risks need to be identified and addressed (mainly concerned with expenditure levels increasing, and difficulties in ensuring sustainability). Nonetheless, the basis is there from which to work, and with a combination of wisdom and courage, together with (the less ecclesiastically sounding) sound management, it should be confident in moving ahead.

If anyone would like to ask further questions or discuss ideas concerning the Church finances, please feel free to get in touch on mackenzieje@hotmail.com. I can't always promise to respond the same day, but I'll do my best to get back to any points or issues as soon as I certainly can.

With best regards,

Ewart MacKenzie
Treasurer

4. FREE WILL OFFERING (FWO) SCHEME



Firstly, a thank you –
Jürg Strittmatter officially stood down from his role as the Church's Freewill Offering Treasurer at the end of 2017, a position he has held since 2010, to be replaced from 2018 by Tom Snow.

Never an extrovert, Jürg has nonetheless made an extraordinarily valuable and dedicated commitment to the life and work of the Church during the time in which he held the role of Freewill Offering (FWO) Treasurer, a role he . FWO givings have grown considerably in recent years, forming the largest single income source in 2017. Jürg managed these with consistent skill and attention to detail. He also oversaw the registration of the organized Mission contributions (the informally known "blue envelopes", as opposed to the FWO "pink envelopes"). These arrangements allow for a more predictable and consistent support to the Church, and provide the additional incentives of tax certifications, which Jürg always provided in a responsive and timely manner.

As well as carrying out his FWO responsibilities, Jürg was a valued member of the Finance Sub-Committee, providing expert knowledge and familiarity with the Swiss public, legal and financial sectors. His readiness to help in many of these areas enabled the Church to navigate several awkward issues without most of the Congregation needing to be aware that they even existed.

Not only that, Jürg has always been an extremely down to earth, and caring person. When I assumed the role of Treasurer in 2013, there was an incredible amount of work to be undertaken which, in all honesty, I simply did not properly understand. Many former Treasurers and others helped generously with this, but nobody more so than Jürg who acted as a de facto mentor over several years. Always available to help with any issue, consistently cross-checking accounts with FWO records, and providing any back-up requested, I came to realise that it is people such as Jürg who form the real backbone of the Church, no matter what role they play.

The Church can remain confident that, of course, Jürg is still with us in case of any advice or issue for which nobody else has the answer. After stepping down from his role, we wish him and Eleanor (also always most generous in supporting the ongoing work) all the best for a more relaxing life as Church members in a less stressful context.

From 2018, we wish Tom all the best as he assumes the role and takes on the work so faithfully carried out by Jürg.

Ewart MacKenzie

From Tom - I am very pleased to take the reins from Jürg Strittmatter as FWO and Mission Projects Treasurer. Thanks again to Jürg for his many years of service to the Church in this capacity, and for leaving the accounts so well-organized for his successor. ☺

2017 FWO Overview

In 2017, the Free Will Offering scheme generated CHF 92'853 in income, 3.7% lower than 2016, and 1.7% lower than expected donations for the year. The total number of donors participating in the FWO scheme also decreased from 53 to 50. On the bright side, the average annual donation per donor increased, from CHF 1'820 to CHF 1'857.

January - December	DONATIONS 2017	BUDGET 2017 EXPECTED DONATIONS	*DONATIONS VS BUDGET 2017*	DONATIONS 2016	*DONATIONS 2017 VS 2016*
ENVELOPES	34'523	33'179	*4.1%*	38'288	*-9.8%*
BANK TRANSFERS	58'330	61'300	*-4.8%*	58'170	*0.3%*
GRAND TOTAL	**92'853**	**94'479**	*-1.7%*	**96'458**	*-3.7%*

DONORS	2017	*CHF / donor / year*	2016	*CHF / donor / year*
ENVELOPES	23	*1'501*	26	*1'473*
BANK TRANSFERS	27	*2'160*	27	*2'154*
total	**50**	***1'857***	**53**	***1'820***

2018 Estimate and Long-term Trends

For 2018, FWO income is estimated at CHF 90'000, based on pledges and estimates based on giving in 2017. This estimate is highly dependent on the activity of a small number of donors: our top donor accounts for 16% of estimated FWO income, and our top 10 donors account for 49%.

The past several years have seen a gradual decline in income generated by the FWO program, reflecting decreased participation, and a slight decrease in donations per participant. I would be happy to discuss ways in which we might encourage increased participation in FWO, including encouraging more people to consider participation by bank transfer (where donations tend to be more consistent and higher on average), and by highlighting the tax benefits for Geneva residents.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 est.
total donors	59	53	57	60	53	50	50
total donations	114'956	104'809	108'058	107'280	96'458	92'853	90'000
CHF / donor	1'948	1'978	1'896	1'788	1'820	1'857	1'800

Thank you very much for the opportunity to serve the Church as FWO/MP Treasurer. If you have any questions or suggestions for improvements, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

Tom Snow
sneaux@gmail.com

5. CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE

The Congregational Committee met five times in 2017 and covered a wide range of topics related to the temporal affairs of the church. Finance, fabric, mission and fundraising were regular agenda items. Other topics discussed included access for persons with disabilities, acoustics in the Auditoire, review of the church website, recording of sermons, the Church Fair and issues related to the instalment of the minister early in the year.

The Annual Congregational Meeting (ACM) took place on Sunday 21 May following the morning service; business covered included:

- noting details of the 2016 unaudited accounts
- adoption of the 2017 budget
- appointment of auditors for the 2017 accounts
- reception of the 2016 Annual Report
- election of members to the congregational committee.

Members are elected to serve a three-year term of office. As of the 2017 ACM elected members of the Congregational Committee were:

- Ewart MacKenzie, Lesley Reddy, Lidian Shark and Peter Tulloch to serve until 2018
- Grace Ansah, Han Broere, Douglas Murray-Jones and Vivienne Talbot to serve until 2019.
- Nan Braunschweiger, Christine Buhler, Christine Bunn and David Hogg to serve until 2020

The same day the Eglise protestante de Genève held a series of events in town throughout the day on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation; members of the congregation were warmly encouraged to participate.

All in all, 2017 was a very busy and exciting year for the Congregational Committee and, I trust, an interesting, fulfilling and enjoyable one for all its members.

Nan Braunschweiger

6. ECO-CONGREGATION

In 2017 the Church of Scotland Geneva welcomed its new reverend, Rev Laurence Twaddle, and briefed him about work of the Eco-congregation initiative and related activities in Geneva. End of November the congregation newsletter included a special feature article on climate change (How do we as Christians respond?), following the annual climate convention (UNFCCC) meetings held in Germany that month.

Cornis Van der Lugt

7. MISSION PARTNERSHIPS

Our mission partnerships, and how you can help.

What are our mission partnerships?

Our Church has two active mission partnerships outside Geneva: with Ekwendeni Mission Hospital in northern Malawi, and the Nepal Leprosy Trust (NLT) in Lalgadh, Nepal. These provide Christian help and assistance for highly vulnerable people in two of the world's poorest countries.

The Ekwendeni Mission Hospital Youth Centre receives, tests, treats and counsels young people likely to be affected by HIV/AIDS, and by poverty-related issues, from a wide surrounding area. The Centre supports over 300 local youth clubs, feeds vulnerable children, promotes Income Generating Activities for young people, helps with village vegetable gardens and (re)building of houses and stock barns, and promotes social and sporting activities (the girls' netball team and the boys' basketball teams are local champions!).
We are the only major source of funds for the Youth Centre. Our core support pays the salaries of the Youth Leader (Shupo Kumwenda), the caretaker of the centre, and a handyman. Other funds from concerts and events have been dedicated to the youth feeding programme and to help with school fees for orphans.

Over the years, several groups and individuals from Geneva have visited Malawi, normally for two weeks or so, and we have welcomed young Malawians in return. These visits have often been life-changing for both sides. Geneva participants' life directions have been changed by experiencing the joys, needs and challenges of life in Ekwendeni, and young Malawians have returned home with fresh ideas and contacts made in Geneva to put into practice.

Our contacts with the Nepal Leprosy Trust originate from our Elder, Dr Graeme Clugston, and his Nepali wife, Meena. In Lalgadh, they provide "salt and light" through medical work and Christian outreach. Lalgadh is in the hot, steamy lowlands of the major river system that feeds from Nepal into Bangladesh. In this area, leprosy is still a major health issue, and Lalgadh is the world's busiest leprosy hospital as well as a major general hospital for an area containing hundreds of thousands of people in Nepal and across the border in India. Leprosy sufferers are treated free, while other patients make financial contributions for their treatment.

We directly support the salaries of one local doctor and nurse. In addition, individual members, and the congregation as a whole, have supported the construction of a newly-opened Children's Unit, where sick children can be given the special care, love and attention they need.

In the decade-plus that Graeme and Meena have been there, they have experienced earthquakes and monsoon flooding on top of all the difficulties of working in a mainly Hindu region of a mainly Buddhist country, where Christians are often regarded with mistrust. Nevertheless, the work has grown rapidly and Lalgadh is a major general and speciality hospital in southern Nepal. Following the major earthquake in 2015, NLT worked incessantly to bring food, building supplies, health care and other relief to affected villages in mountainous areas around. And at major Christian festivals and on Sundays there is a joyous

atmosphere in the hospital and in the local church.

Church members can pledge regular support for the two programmes via our Freewill Offering scheme, either via the "blue envelopes" placed in the offering plates on Sundays, or by bank transfer to the Church's account. In either case, you may specify which programme you wish to support. If the direction of the donation is not specified, your funds are divided equally between the two. The money received for mission is counted separately from the day-to-day Church account. All that comes in, goes out. We normally make transfers to the two programmes twice yearly. If you wish to make a pledge to our mission programmes, please contact Tom Snow, our Freewill Offering treasurer (sneaux@gmail.com) or speak to our Minister any Sunday.

Peter Tulloch for the Mission Committee

8. ECUMENICAL LINKS

As mentioned in last year's report, the composition of our congregation means that our Church is itself ecumenical. This greatly facilitates our links with the Rassemblement des Eglises et Communautés Chrétiennede Genève (RECG) and Témoinger ensemble à Genève/Witnessing together in Geneva (TEAG), amongst others.

It was through TEAG that we learnt of plans by the Fédération des Églises Protestantes de Suisse (FEPS) to organize a whole series of activities in 2017 to celebrate the Reformation, including special events for young people held in Geneva on the weekend of 3 to 5 November 2017. These were planned in conjunction with the Eglise Protestante de Genève (EPG) and we were invited to assist with any English-speaking young people who might attend. In the event, on the Saturday, we opened the Auditoire to the visitors and explained the important role that it played in the world-wide spread of the Reformed Faith. We used some English, a good deal of French and, thanks to Jürg Strittmatter, a lot of Swiss-German. On arriving for our Service the next morning, we found the Auditoire full to overflowing with young people, but hey all left within 20 minutes, removing their beamer and screen as they went. Altogether it was a most successful weekend for FEPS and the EPG and we were pleased to have been able to provide some support, small though it was.

It was also through TEAG that we made contact with Dr Jean-François Mayer, a Swiss historian and expert in comparative religion who impressed us by his knowledge of the subject and his enthusiasm for sharing it with others. We joined with Holy Trinity Church in inviting him to give a talk on Christianity in Switzerland which was held on the evening of 21 February this year. It was well attended by people from many churches and it was clear that Dr Mayer would have continued to discussed matters until late into the night if he had not had to catch a train back to Neuchatel.

Cursillos #67 and #68 were held in May and November 2017 respectively and #69 and #70 will be held on the weekends of 3-6 May and 1-4 November 2018 : all involving a members of our Church.

Arthur Askew

9. WEB-SITE

The main objective of the Church website is to provide information that is helpful for visitors to Geneva looking for a place of worship. As such it provides an important external window onto our church community.

We are able to assess this role from the statistics we collect. Of the over 5'800 site visits during the past twelve months, 33% were from Switzerland, 26% from the USA, 16% from the UK, 10% from France and the remaining 15% were from the rest of the world.

Over the past year we added special links for Advent and Lent reflections. The regular reports from our mission projects in Ekwendeni, Malawi and Lalgadh, Nepal are available on the site as well as announcements for concerts in the Auditoire and popular events like the Annual Church Fair and Ceilidh. There is a link to the Church's Science and Faith Project with videos and summaries of the conferences that we organized at the John Knox Centre in 2015 which we encourage you to visit.

Two new innovative features that have been added to the site in 2018. These are a link to the Reverend Twaddle's Podcast which stores audio recordings of the Sunday's sermon. Recently we have added an easy-to-read version of our welcome page.

We would like to remind members of the congregation that in addition to the main web site pages there is a Facebook link that anyone can use to add their own contribution in the form of comments, photos, and announcements.

Eric Gerelle

10. CHURCH FLOWERS





I would like to say a **very big thank you** to all those who have contributed flowers during the year and especially to Laura Lindop, Chris Sutton and Veronika and Ronny who created beautiful arrangements in the Auditoire for Easter Sunday morning. A big thank you also to

all those who made donations for Easter flowers and bought the arrangements at the end of the Service. We were able to contribute CHF 536.00 towards church funds.

I believe that flowers add so much to the atmosphere of our worship each Sunday, so I appeal again to members of the congregation to add their names to the flower rota, which stands beneath the notice board in the Salle, **and** let me know if you wish a dedication to be made in the Order of Service

- to remember the passing of a loved one,
- or on the occasion of a celebration,
- or for the sheer joy of seeing fresh flowers brightening the Auditoire on a Sunday morning to glorify God...

Offers of flowers, donations and arrangers are always welcome – there are a lot of Sundays in the year!

Janet Askew,
Flower Co-ordinator





11. SUNDAY SERVICE BIBLE READING

I would like to, once again, express heartfelt thanks to our relatively small but extremely loyal band of regular and occasional readers of the bible passages at our Sunday services at the Auditoire.
I have recently overhauled the entire list so that those who are no longer able to offer to read due to other commitments, incapacities, or just the sheer demands of everyday life, no longer

feel pressured or guilty. It goes without saying that anyone who has left the group will be warmly welcomed back at any time in the future.
Of course, if you have considered joining the readers (or even if you haven't) we can never have too many people and would be delighted to welcome you to the group. Reading in church is not as daunting as it may seem but is, hopefully, as ever, an enriching experience for all concerned.
Do please contact me by email at **nicolahollyman@hotmail.com** to find out more. The word of God is to be shared with all.

Nicola Hollyman
nicolahollyman@hotmail.com

12. MUSIC IN THE CHURCH

This church is always full of music. First and foremost, we are a great congregation for singing!

Then we are so fortunate in having a brilliant organist in Rebecca MacDonald, who is supported on her occasional breaks by a wonderful team of replacements in Linda Revkin, Peter Billington, Oscar Colliar and now Alan Woodbridge, as well as other organists who help us out from time to time.

Solo singers and instrumentalists also contribute a great deal to our musical life – such as Nicola Hollyman, Georgina Cofie, Oscar and Emilie Colliar, Mak Ikeda, and Judith Broeksmit.

In 2017, after Lucie Goodman's departure as choir director, we were fortunate in having three successive excellent choir leaders in Kirsty Griffiths, Pauline Resseguier and Katie Johnson. Our hopes for a longer-term stay by Katie were dashed when her husband, Colin, was offered a new post in the USA. We wish Katie and her family well and all blessings in their new life. Katie produced a wonderful Christmas carol service with the help of many visiting, or returning, singers including members of Colin's family.

Currently, the adult choir is still enthusiastic, but diminishing in numbers and lacking a leader. We no longer sing anthems – only introits – and we are not sure how long this can continue. Minister and congregation appreciate the choir's role in leading worship, but it is an increasing challenge. We desperately need a number of new singers, and a new choir director/music coordinator.

We need to think seriously about how to continue, revive and vary our musical life.
All suggestions are welcome!

Peter Tulloch

13. YOUTH CHOIR

This year, for the first time in 15-odd years of running a children's/youth choir in the Church of Scotland Geneva, I did not get a particularly enthusiastic response from parents and young people about practising and preparing music for worship. So, I am taking a break, although Nicola and I have agreed that if any young people do want to sing, they can always contact us and we'll start up the practices again. And, if anyone has missed hearing the children sing, please encourage them to make music for worship again!

Rebecca MacDonald

14. SUNDAY LUNCHES

On the last Sunday of each month lunch is provided after church service. The numbers attending vary from 15 to 35 which is a catering challenge for the cooks. The lunch gives those who attend the opportunity to meet others and enjoy conversation round the lunch tables. We often have a wide range of people attending, including visitors.

Although the aim is mainly to provide an opportunity to eat together there is usually a small profit each month which goes to church funds.

Many thanks to all those who help with providing food, serving it and washing up afterwards. We can always do with more helpers, either to cook or to help on the day.

Alice Tulloch

15. CRECHE

All children aged under four are welcome to attend the crèche, whether regulars or visitors. The crèche is greatly appreciated by parents as it allows them to maintain church attendance, to have a break from parental duties, and to have an opportunity to chat with other members of the congregation at a busy stage of their lives. The crèche is also an opportunity for children to feel comfortable being part of the church family from a young age.

In 2017, the crèche welcomed several new families. A breakfast for parents of crèche-age children was organized in October 2017, with the aim of enabling the parents to get to know each other better and to work together to establish a rota.

A rota has now been established, however we have not yet reached the target of having two helpers on duty per week, which means that some parents have to stay in the crèche area to supervise their children rather than attending the service. A continuing aim for the coming year will be to encourage additional volunteers to assist with the crèche, to enable parents to attend the service at least once or twice a month.

Lyndsey Bochaton

16. SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Sunday School continued to follow the Godly Play program this year. Our objective was also to let the children stay for the first Bible reading in church before coming up to the Salle. This emphasises the central role of the Bible in learning about God and permits the children to feel more part of the Service. They have been appreciating the fun songs that are often included in the all age talk and we've been singing some of them during Sunday School too.

Our numbers have remained stable although some families have moved away and new ones have arrived. The average number of children per class this year was between 6 and 15.

We continued our support for the Lalghad Leprosy Hospital with our bake sales. For Christmas the children brought gifts to put under the Christmas Tree in our continued support for the 'Terre des hommes' organization which takes care of children in hospitals in Geneva far from their homes (very often from third world countries).

This year one of our Sunday School teachers, Julie Burson, left the team in December, because her family moved back to the USA. We thank Julie for her good work while she was with us.

Furthermore, after 11 enriching years as Sunday School team leader, I have decided to stand down as from the end of this school year. It has been a great pleasure to work with all the children over the years and I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the members of the team, the parents and the congregation for their wonderful support and encouragement.

As yet we have not found someone to replace me, so if you know of anyone, or feel called to work with our children, please contact the minister. The team will now include, Jenny Rietbergen, Starr Benyon, Arthur Askew, Gilbert Owusu-Manu, Georgina Cofie and David Hogg.

Once again, a sincere thank you to everyone.

Freda Craeye

17. YOUTH GROUP

The youth group continues to meet every Sunday except the first Sunday of each month when the young people stay in church for the Communion service.

In September, the minister invited the youth to a pizza evening at the manse to get to know each other better, and four youth were able to attend. In October, we looked at the Reformation and you can still see the information we compiled on the notice board in the youth room. Other topics looked at in Bible study during the year were the 10 commandments, the Christmas message, the Lord's Prayer and Apostles' Creed, Jesus' presentation at the temple, Jesus in the temple as a boy, John the Baptist and Jesus' baptism, Jesus calls the disciples and the start of his ministry, Jesus' teaching / parables and miracles.

In March we had a very informative and interesting talk from Cornelis van der Lugt on our obligations to look after God's creation.

We will conclude the year looking at the crucifixion and resurrection and Paul's ministry.

We finished last academic session with a visit to the Reformation Museum where the youth had a chance to use a replica of the first printing press. We were very sorry to say goodbye to Lidian Shark who retired to the USA at the end of the year. Antoinette Djamen and Franklin Ngantcha joined the teaching team in the autumn and we are delighted to welcome Ailsa Craig who has just started to lead, too.

Christine Colliar

18. WOMEN's BIBLE STUDY

The Bible study has met less frequently than previously because members have not been available, but we continue when we can on Tuesday mornings in members' homes. Having spent much time on the Old Testament, and Isaiah in particular, we have now moved on to look at how the Old Testament is used within the New Testament both through direct quotes and more indirect influences. We would welcome any women who would like to join us whether on a regular basis or not.

Alice Tulloch

19. WOMEN'S GROUP

The Women's Group continues to meet on the first Monday of every month at the World Council for lunch. The Group is open to any women who would like to join.

I would also like to express many thanks to Gillian Friedly for hosting a wonderful Annual General Meeting last June.

There will be a new programme of events available after the summer. Details of this year's annual general meeting will be announced soon.

Christine Bunn

20. LENTEN STUDIES 2017

There were two Lenten Study groups this years, based at the Manse, and gathering around the themes and issues raised by the book " 40 stories of Hope".

The CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND gathered the amazing accounts of prisoners whose lives had been turned around and transformed by the Christian faith - and invited us to consider what we might learn from these astonishing changes in the lives of men and women, people who never dreamt there could be anything good in their life,

any possibility of their becoming different people - their sins forgiven and their life given meaning.

The studies were searching and humbling - and offered a sensitive insight into just how tough some folk have it, and how blessed we are if we know stability, love and opportunity.
As a reminder of the power of the Christian gospel still to heal and bless - the Lenten Studies were a creative and uplifting pointer to the meaning of Calvary and the hope of Easter.

Lawrence Twaddle

21. CHURCH FAIR AND CEILIDH

The 2017 Church Fair was considered a success by all those involved, as well as by those who came to look and buy. There was a steady stream of people all day, and is often the case with our Fair, many were from other Churches or from the local community. We were fortunate enough to have the Geneva Pipes and Drums perform for us throughout the morning, adding to the general ambience.

The evening Ceilidh continues to be a successful event on the Geneva calendar. It raised CHF2'000 which contributed to the net takings on the day of CHF14'400.

A lot of hard work for everyone involved, from stallholders to making the publicity happen, to all those volunteers who turn up on the day and make it happen. I believe we also had some fun! A huge thank you to you all.

This year's Fair will be on **Saturday 24 November 2018.** I hope we can count on your continued support for another successful Fair.

Christine Buhler

22. FICTION AND GIFTWARE STALL

This feature of our church life was launched by a lively lady who was born in a Canadian Church of Scotland manse. Later, she was to become a teacher at the original campus of Geneva's International School and, among many other achievement, our congregation's first female Elder.

Initially, her plan was to recycle books in English as a way of counteracting the ridiculous prices then being charged by the two major local distributors but before long the original three banana boxes were brimming with donations just as the shelves still do to this day.

We now also offer greetings cards for all occasions, Scottish souvenirs and Celtic jewellery, while also welcoming all who stop by, whether to purchase, ask for information, or just a friendly chat.

All this, thanks to the support of many helpers over the years who now include Antonia Bruce, Claire de Reynier, Lily Geissburger (who keeps the books in such splendid order), Joan Reilly, Mary and me.

Don't hesitate if you'd like to join us, even if it's only once or twice a year and remember it's always possible to swop "duty" dates if ever needed.

The entire proceeds that we've raised in the past 35+ years have been allocated to the maintenance of the church's ministry in and around Geneva, an outreach which, I'm sure, many of you will also endorse as a very worthy cause.

In reiterating our appreciation of your past support and encouragement, we also hope we can count on your continuing patronage and friendship.

So, do stop by to say "hello" whenever you can.

God bless,

Ritchie Pannetti and Mary Couper

PS: While we are delighted to receive donations of books, videos, cards, etc., regretfully we do not have the space to accommodate household equipment, toys, and other sundry items, so please do not bring these to the Salle. Thank you for your understanding.

Mary Couper & Ritchie Pannetti

23. USHERS ROTA

The Ushers are normally the first people newcomers and visitors meet when entering the church. Many positive comments have been received regarding the warmth of the welcome. As well as greeting those attending Church each week, ushers carry out a number of other tasks related to the smooth-running of the service.

We typically have around 30 ushers. With two serving each Sunday, each usher is on duty around once per quarter. The roster is published twice per year in April and October for the following six months. If anyone has an interest in joining the Usher rota, please contact Arthur Griffith.

Thank you to all involved for serving the church in this way, and for the continuing warm welcome to regulars and visitors attending the Church of Scotland in Geneva.

Arthur Griffith