CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, GENEVA



ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL REPORT 2021

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A word from our minister

It was a tapestry.

The last year with its elements of newness, familiarity, achievement, unfinished business…and always people - woven into the tapestry that has been the twelve months since the last Annual Report.

The on-going business of congregational life, weddings, funerals, baptisms, hospital visits – all about people and their stresses, their joys, their anxieties and their dreams: all of us trying to offer real hands-on compassion in the name of Christ.

It was never dull.

But the quiet steady life of the church can sometimes go un-noticed in the tapestry as our eye is taken by the more dramatic and vivid moments…It's in the detail and seemingly small connections that we see the real work.

The vital moments which bring people together and give us a chance to know one another… where new connections are formed and old ones deepened…truths are explored and questions raised and sometimes answered.

Holy Week and Easter offered once again important opportunities to take the sometimes difficult journey into the central miracle of our faith…it was a special time.

Different ministries were brought and offered!

- The readers and pray-ers,
- Newsletter editor and Zoom operators…
- The musicians many, whose gift is great and whose role is crucial…
- The church leaders who work so hard and serve so faithfully,
- The congregation – who demonstrate, week after week, the two greatest graces a minister could look for… faithfulness and love.

After the losses of the last months…lost time together, lost opportunities to mix and mingle, to deepen love and strengthen bonds of affection, slowly we are coming back, coming to worship in the place that means so much to so many people.

It feels good.

So, the tapestry takes shape… a picture is emerging… one of positivity and promise… our bit in the big picture – our threads of many colours, a tiny segment of the on-going story of faith and pilgrimage that is the church in which we serve.

What will the next segment be like? Colourful, I'm sure!

Blessings,
Laurence

Laurence Twaddle (laurence.twaddle@gmail.com)

Worship

Zoom worship connection

During the first year of Covid we learned how to run worship entirely over Zoom, with sometimes over a hundred different connections joining us for worship on Sundays.

Over the second year with the opening of worship in the Auditoire once more, we added a new level of complexity in providing a hybrid worship experience that could be shared both by people in the building and those connecting online. We've learned some lessons, some of them rather hard ones, but we seem to have a working pattern.

We've also continued the online-only Wednesday lunchtime worship which everyone seems to really enjoy, with its shorter informal nature, friendly banter, and enjoyment of many different kinds of music.

Challenges with running a hybrid Zoom connection from the Auditoire include:

- Sometimes less than reliable Internet connections from the church
- We can get interference on Zoom anytime there is more than one microphone unmuted in church
- There is a balancing act between volume and interference, and knowing which mike we will need next
- Someone has to be physically present to unmute the next microphone when the focus of the service shifts - thanks to Lindy for her heroic efforts on this
- The two iPads we use as cameras and mikes can sometimes misbehave – aiming them can also be a challenge
- People sometimes stand somewhere we didn't expect, so there is no camera ready to show them
- Zoom itself can sometimes have an "off day" when things just don't work quite right, buttons don't work, or some people lose their sound or picture while others are fine – this is just something we have to ride out as best we can.

Some people have asked whether it would be possible for the services to be recorded from the Zoom session. In reality this isn't practical for us, even if we could get the technology to work reliably. We really want to show the congregation so that people at home feel more "present" in the worship, so would need to get written permission from everyone who might get into camera range for privacy reasons. This isn't an issue with a live-only stream.

As the pandemic travel rules have eased, my own business travel is starting to pick up again and I've also had family situations that prevented me from always being available, so I repeat the request from last year. If you have a decent computer and a good Internet connection, do please consider whether you can help out with running Zoom for some of the services. Many thanks to Laurence, Vincent, and others who have stepped in to help when I wasn't there.

Mark Jeffrey (mark.jeffrey@microsoft.com)

Ushers

2021 was an interesting year. After an extended period of not being able to meet in the Auditoire, face-to-face services resumed on 12th September, 2021. This presented considerable challenges. I

was away at the time, and would like to express special thanks to Sherree, Lindy, Nicola, Jane, and others who put the ushering protocols in place which allowed us to operate within the regulations of the time. These complicated the ushering role considerably, and our ushers found their way through this additional complexity with aplomb.

Since then, we have kept pace with the regulatory changes, to the point where our present processes are similar to those of pre-Covid times – today it is sometimes hard to believe pre-Covid actually existed!

During the period of on-line services, many ushers moved away or for different reasons were unable to continue ushering, which significantly reduced the number of people on the roster, thus increasing the frequency of ushering for those remaining. I thank everyone for their forbearance, and hope we can increase the number of ushers over the coming months. If you would be interested in serving the church in this way, please speak to me or drop me an email.

The usher's role involves greeting those attending church each week, and carrying out a number of other tasks during the service to ensure its smooth-running. These include making books available and collecting the offering. We normally have around 30 ushers. With two serving each Sunday, this means that each usher is on duty around once per quarter. The roster for the following six months is published twice a year, in April and October. Ushers are normally the first people newcomers and visitors meet when entering the church, and the warmth of this initial welcome has a big impact on newcomers' first impressions.

Thank you to all involved in serving the church in this way, and for the continuing warm welcome to regulars and visitors attending the Church of Scotland in Geneva. I end with a reminder to anyone who might be interested in serving our church as an usher to please speak to me or email me.

Arthur Griffith (griffith@bluewin.ch)

Bible readers

What a joy it is to be back in church… for some of us.

Of course, a great many people are not ready or able to join us at the Auditoire, and we are very lucky to be able to stream our services and be together that way.

As far as the Bible readings at our services go, however, our extensive list of available readers has shrunk dramatically.

My sincere thanks go to the stalwarts who are available to read in church, but we need some more willing volunteers. Reading God's word on a Sunday morning to the congregation is not as daunting as it might seem. Far from it! So, if you'd like to join us, please come and have a chat with me in church or contact me by email. Thank you.

Nicola Hollyman (nicolahollyman@hotmail.com)

Music

As no in-person services were held in the Auditoire until September 12 2021, I – together with Peter Billington, Oscar Colliar, Peter Tulloch and Alan Woodbridge - continued to produce videos of preludes and postludes for Zoom services until that date, when it was my great pleasure to play for a live congregation. Since that time, the two Peters, Linda Revkin, Alan Woodbridge, Nayoung Kim, and I have played for in-person services, surrounded by iPads. Apparently the sound quality of the organ voluntaries via Zoom is quite variable but it has been wonderful to play for a live congregation and to hear them sing!

We are still working on resurrecting the choir, which means there have been no introits or anthems. However, Mak Ikeda and Judith Peacock have stepped into the breach by performing (and arranging, in the case of Mak) special music to liven up our worship regularly – long may that continue! It was uplifting to have a Lessons and Carols Service in December 2021, which was greatly enriched by a solo rendition of "O Holy Night" by Nicola Hollyman, and also an Easter Sunday service in 2022 where Nicola sang, "Jesu, komm in meine Seele" by Telemann.
I hope that music in the church continues against all odds and that the congregation continues with its enthusiastic singing!

Rebecca MacDonald (rebdirks@gmail.com)

Sunday School

In 2021, Sunday School continued online, attended by children from age five to twelve, until the end of June 2021. Activities in June included a Family Service that was presented online by Reverend Laurence Twaddle, with Sunday School children doing readings from the Bible. The June/July newsletter of the congregation included a feature article on the presentation of Godly Play lessons online with the children, describing the approach and experience during Covid times.

After the summer break, we resumed Sunday School sessions in person at the Auditoire, joining in-person services and having the children upstairs in the Salle again as of September. With an improved Covid situation, the Sunday School Team continued to apply sanitary measures in the Salle, similar to what the kids were used to at school in Switzerland. Attendance was good, with up to ten children attending regularly. By the end of the year, our Sunday School children contributed to a video compilation and in-person singing of "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" at the annual Christmas Carols Service held in December. The video was shared with participants during an online Christmas eve service and with parents of our Sunday School children.

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

Congregational life

Kirk session

The triumvirate consisting of Jane Broere, Christine Buhler and Mary Couper who took over the responsibilities of session clerk when Alice Tulloch resigned last year seems to be working well. Christine has assumed the bulk of the task, ably assisted by Jane, who took on the elders duties rota and the organization of communion Sundays, and Mary, who is responsible for correspondence with the wider church and keeping the congregation up to date.

Session meetings have taken place every 6 to 8 weeks. Issues discussed have included the resumption of services in the Auditoire, the necessity of continuing the Zoom services and the importance of the Wednesday services and Bible studies. A highly successful 'Away day' was held in the Ecumenical Centre in Bossey. It has been agreed that this should be an annual event.

Recently, matters discussed have largely centred around the future direction of the Church of Scotland in Geneva with the possibility of closer links with the Scots Kirk in Lausanne seeming more likely in the light of the acute shortage of Church of Scotland ministers. Other topics covered include everyday matters: the Sunday School, Caring Group, the Crèche and the Choir.
Christine Colliar has joined the meetings in the role of observer. She has been accepted to study for Readership and is currently on a six-month placement in Lausanne.

Session members (as of May 2022)
Elders
Lyndsey Bochaton, Christine Buhler, Graeme Clugston, Jane Broere, Mary Couper, Ailsa Craig, Laurent Djamen, Nicola Hollyman, Jane McKenzie, Isabel Phiri, Joan Reilly, Alice Tulloch, Cornis van der Lugt, Rosaleen Walker

Ministers
Laurence Twaddle, Matthew Ross, Páraic Réamonn

Christine Buhler (buhlerchristine@hotmail.com)

Congregational committee

The congregational committee continued meeting successfully online throughout 2021. The online meetings had been initiated in 2020 as a direct result of the Pandemic restrictions and some members felt that the Zoom even provided an advantage especially for those who, for various reasons, would otherwise have been unable to get to the Salle. Attendance at the online meetings continued to be robust throughout the year.

The committee met five times virtually during the year (January, March, June September, and November) to discuss the temporal affairs of the church. Rev Laurence Twaddle opened and closed each committee meeting with prayer. Such items as finance, fabric, mission, the Auditoire, and general fund-raising were regularly discussed and reported on in the minutes.

The annual St Andrew's Fair was the subject of much discussion, and the venue was tentatively booked for November 2021; but sadly, the event was eventually cancelled due to the complexities arising from the pandemic related restrictions. Although this was very disappointing at the time, it did not come as a surprise. Further discussion led to a very successful 'virtual' Fair springing up in its place with the sale of pre-ordered cakes, jams, marmalade and Christmas cake from the Auditoire, members of the congregation being invited to pick up the items they had ordered in advance.

The Annual Congregational Meeting (ACM) was held virtually on Tuesday June 8 2021. The first part of the meeting covered business items:

- Approval of 2020 accounts
- Adoption of the 2021 budget

- Appointment of the auditors for the 2021 accounts
- Reception of the 2020 Annual Congregational Report
- Election of committee members where required

A lively question and answer session followed where many of the topics impactful to our church life were discussed.

The minister commented that he loved the energy, variety, richness of experience and spirituality of the members of the church, all of which was reflected in the report. He added that it was a stimulating report given that it has been a bad year for many people. He felt touched by the faithfulness of the members and their invaluable contributions to the life of the church.

Committee members
ACM 2019 to 2022
Grace Ansah, Sherree Atkinson-Bret, Marinda Kuhn, Fiona Parrott
ACM 2020 to 2023
Christine Bunn, David Hogg, Mwai Makota, Peter Tulloch
ACM 2021 to 2024
Nan Braunschweiger, Han Broere, Ewart MacKenzie, Douglas Murray-Jones

Sherree Atkinson-Bret (sherreeatkinsonbret@gmail.com)

Fabric sub-committee

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the church facilities were not used since mid-March 2020. Throughout 2021, the property was regularly inspected, kept clean and, during the winter, the heating in the Auditoire was kept at a minimum level.

As convenor, and together with the minister, session clerks, etc., I have been in regular contact with the General Trustees (building safety, risk and compliance, fire safety, health and safety departments) of the Church of Scotland Edinburgh in relation to the pandemic, health and fire safety practices and updating guidance on reshaping church life and looking after church buildings.

The convenor undertook a short (45-minute) Zoom online training webinar entitled ‘Introduction to basic fire safety principles’ which was given by the Fire Safety Advisor from the Church of Scotland General Trustees. This advisor recommended that our church in Geneva appoint a volunteer Health and Safety administrator/coordinator. There will be more Zoom meetings on fire safety in 2022; if any member of the congregation is interested in this subject, they should contact the convenor.

A proposal to place a defibrillator in the Auditoire is being brought before the Auditoire committee for funding and approval of its installation.

Progress is also being made to improve external accessibility of the Auditoire for persons with physical disabilities, and for wheelchair entry, by installing a lift. It is understood that this lift would be a donation from the Geneva Canton.

Douglas Murray-Jones (dmurrayjones@aol.com)

Eco-Congregation

In 2021 we were particularly focused on the theme of global climate change, in view of the conference of the UN climate change convention held in Glasgow last November. Harvest Sunday on September 26 included a sermon by Rev Laurence Twaddle on the theme of environment and climate. On September27, the Eco-Congregation coordinator also briefed the kirk session on progress in the climate negotiations, what was at stake at the Glasgow conference, and climate activities of the Eco-Congregation initiative with Church of Scotland and other churches during the run-up to the climate Conference of the Parties (COP). These included Climate Sundays held by many congregations, including our own with the Harvest Sunday service.

In June, Peter Tulloch attended one of the climate-focused webinars, hosted by the Church of Scotland Faith Impact Forum (formerly World Mission) and Christian Aid, focusing on the impact of climate change on the world's poorest people. It included moving presentations from Church of Scotland partners in Nepal and Malawi. Following this, an article by Peter and Cornis on climate and its developmental impact was published in the congregation newsletter. A leaflet on climate action and practical steps congregation members can take in their daily lives, including climate initiatives to support, was also created and distributed in September - October 2021.

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

Book and gift stall

As the old adage says, it was "for reasons beyond our control" that this activity was moribund in 2021 save for the unceasing diligence of Lily who continued to keep the bookshelves in impeccable order despite the lack of customers through – let us hasten to add – no fault of their own.

Now that we can socialize again, the stall can open up again and renew acquaintance – but only if we can recruit one, two, three or more (!) helpers.

Don't be diffident, many of the "retired" staffers are still around and will be happy to give a hand, advice and encouragement and in no time at all you'll be a seasoned staffer yourself.

Our aim is to form a team so that no one feels obliged to be on duty every Sunday and there'll always be someone around to help out if necessary.

So let's re-build that esprit de corps that worked so well before the pandemic.

If you feel that this is an activity that you'd enjoy and could fit into your own busy schedule, please get in touch for a chat and a cuppa (or a glass).

In the meantime, thanks to everyone for reading – and please stop by the Stall to renew acquaintance whenever you can.

Oh! And don't forget our souvenir items to take on your travels: all easy to pack, great value for money, and a heart-warming reminder that our congregation in Geneva is still holding its own.

Warmest greetings to everyone. We look forward to seeing you very soon.

Ritchie Pannetti (r.pannetti@bluewin.ch)

Coffee and tea

After almost two years, coffee and tea are again being served after church. It is very much appreciated as it provides an opportunity to meet other members of the congregation and also to welcome newcomers and visitors.

A very big thank you to all the volunteers who help prepare and serve coffee and tea each Sunday after church. A number of people have left and we are looking for more helpers so if you would like to join this team of volunteers, please contact either Hazel or Rosaleen and we will add your name to the next rota. It is a wonderful opportunity to get to know the congregation and also meet visitors.

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

Craft group

Our group continued to meet (Covid restrictions permitting) during 2021. Once again craft matters took a back seat, but the fellowship, company, and laughter were most welcome in difficult times. With the confirmation of a church Fair in 2022, we are, once again, creating a wide range of items for sale.

Christine Buhler (*buhlerchristine@hotmail.co*m)

Outreach

Mission partnerships

Thanks to the generosity of members, the congregation in 2021 was fully able to continue its support for our two mission partnerships in Ekwendeni, Malawi, and Lalgadh, Nepal. We were able to send substantial funds from the 2021 givings to both partnerships in early January of this year. This is a wonderful outcome in the difficult times of Covid-19. Thank you all very much indeed!

You will find detailed information about mission financing in the treasurer's report. Both of the partnerships depend heavily on our input, and we are the sole support for the basic work of the Youth HIV Information and Education Centre in Ekwendeni.

Please keep both Ekwendeni and Lalgadh in your thoughts, prayers and offerings throughout this year, and in particular pray for Shupo Kumwenda, the Youth Centre supervisor, and for Graeme and Meena as they face up to Graeme's medical issues in Australia.

May their work flourish in God's name!

Peter Tulloch (tulloch.peter1@gmail.com) for the mission committee

Ecumenical links

Our congregation has always been very ecumenically minded, but Covid-19 continued to limit how we were able to express this in 2021/22.

We have maintained our links both with the Rassemblement des Eglises et Communautés Chrétiennes de Genève (RECG, recg.ch) and with Témoigner ensemble à Genève/Witnessing together in Geneva (*TEAG: johnknox.ch/programme/temoigner*), although in both cases they were unable to maintain their usual range of activities. TEAG could not hold their annual gathering at the Ecumenical Centre in September 2021 on the occasion of the Jeûne genevois but helped to organize a regional ecumenical event in Onex on May 1 2022.

The main purpose of Cursillo in Geneva is to organize weekend retreats twice a year. Numbers 71 and 72 were held in May and November 2019 but #73 has been repeatedly postponed and was finally held from May 5 to 8 2022.

Arthur Askew (arthuraskewge@bluewin.ch)

Finance

Treasurer's report
This report on our finances in 2021 has been prepared on the basis of pre-audited accounts.

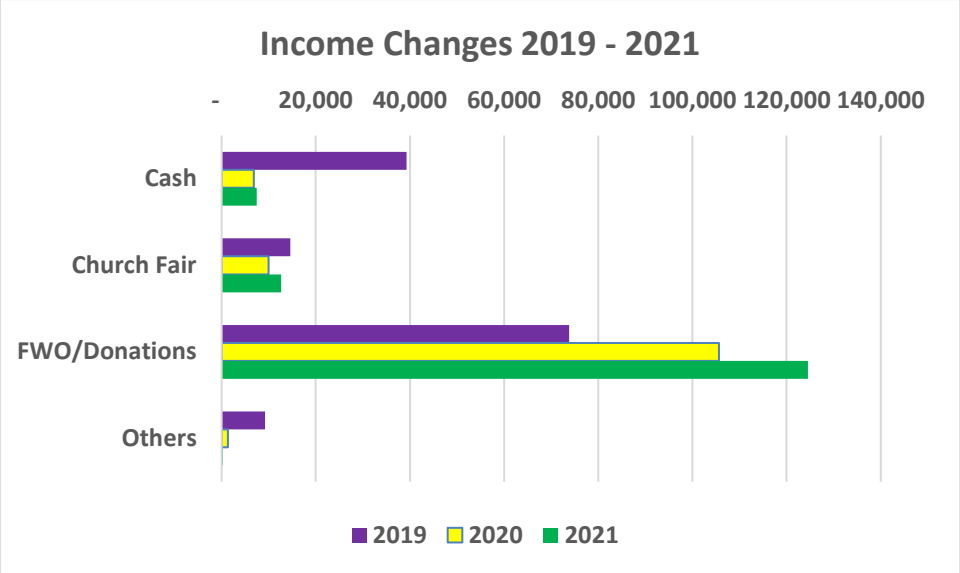
Congregational finances
It would be tempting and relatively easy to describe 2021 as a reasonably good year from a financial perspective and to leave it at that. After all, the congregation budgeted for a deficit of CHF 20,205 and ended up with a slight surplus of CHF 3,604. Income was CHF 13k higher than had been planned for and expenditures were CHF 9.7k lower than anticipated, CHF 2k lower than in 2020. So, while there might not have been a whole lot of extra cash to splash around (or even to bank as reserves, depending on your inherent level of caution), the net result was certainly no harm done, right? Compared with the CHF 19.6k deficit in 2020 under similar COVID-19 circumstances, that's presumably quite an improvement in fact?

Perhaps, but that last fact is quite telling in its own way. The main difference to 2021, as opposed to 2020, apart from COVID-19 no longer coming as much of a surprise, was that shortly after the congregation was presented with that CHF 19.6k deficit at the ACM in mid-2021, an extremely generous contribution of CHF 20,000 was received. The contributor would prefer not to be named, but the important point here is that it was a single contributor. Without the presumable inspiration of the 2020 deficit and the subsequent donation, nothing much would have changed. The deficit would have been CHF -16.4k. In and of itself, this isn't catastrophic but when these things start to accumulate over time, the net effect is devastating if they are not addressed.

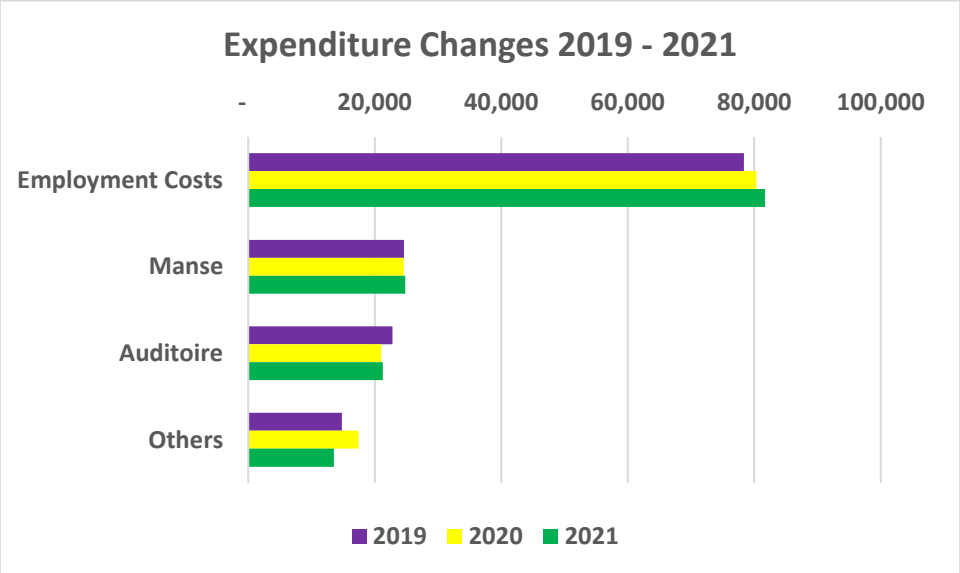
The point is probably easiest to grasp with a couple of graphs (see next page) to show the changes in income relative to the stagnant levels of expenditure over time. First of all, here are the trends in income over the past three years, moving from pre-COVID-19 into the pandemic period:

The main points to draw would be:
1. Cash income has fallen from almost CHF 40k in 2019 to under CHF 8k in both 2020 and 2021 (the resumption of physical services in late 2021 has so far had a minimal impact on this)
2. Online giving (FWO and donations) addressed this in part in 2020 by increasing to cover the effective cash loss but could not compensate for further losses in income due to a reduced church Fair, the cessation of fund-raising projects and the lack of Church lunches, bookstall income etc

3. Online giving in 2021 made up the difference essentially by virtue of the one-time donation of CHF 20,000 received in mid-2021
4. Expenditure levels are predominantly fixed costs and are highly unlikely to decrease over time (in fact, they are more likely to increase)



Against these, the corresponding changes in expenditure levels can be set:

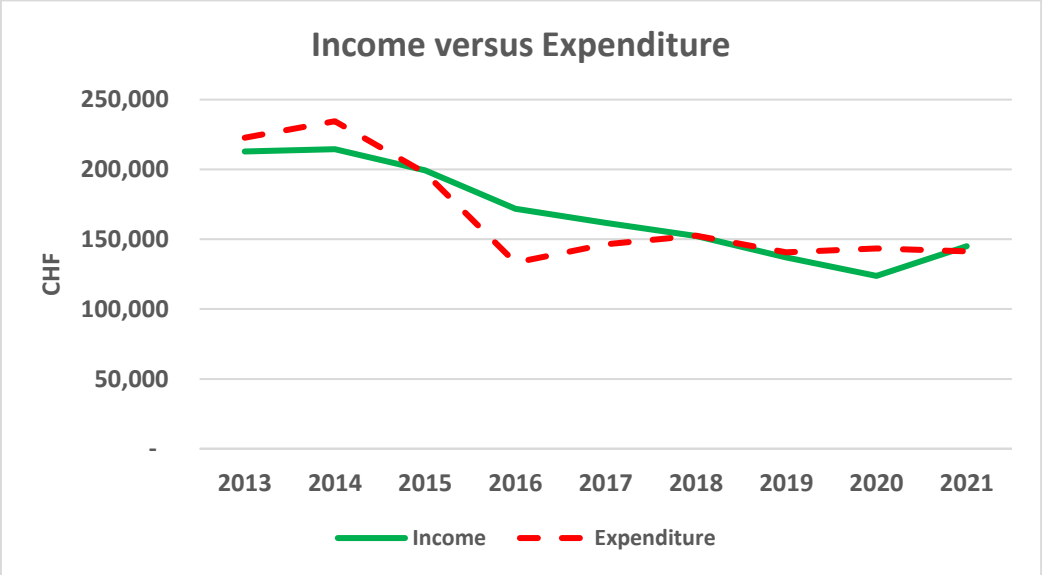


An honourable mention should also be accorded to the church Fair. Despite being a virtual event again in 2021, it raised an admirable CHF 12,606 (compared with CHF 9,941 in 2020 which was already very impressive) and certainly showed the congregation at its best as our community came together to make the event work in the best possible ways, while still maintaining the important income stream it represents from an accounting perspective.

So overall 2021 turned out all right.

The note of caution being sounded is because of the effect of that single, generous donation. It basically served to redress the trend in declining income levels seen since 2013.

Without that donation, there would have been no hook at the end of the green line representing income and that would have gone noticeably below the dotted red line representing expenditure which has been pretty much constant since 2016. Therein lies the problem: the requirements (shown by the expenditure over time) aren't changing but the income is – it's declining. Relying on one or two large donors to come in out of the blue is not a sensible planning strategy. That is not to disparage their generosity, or indeed anyone else's. All gifts to our work, large or small, are always very gratefully received. However, it does make for extremely difficult financial planning when the income stream is neither predictable nor guaranteed.



Of course, it would be easy at this point to leave it there and simply turn this report into a begging letter, haranguing the congregation to do more for its own church. However, that would be neither helpful nor fair. The congregation has already done an incredible amount. It has prevented the church from going bankrupt when the pandemic hit. It has compensated for the lack of visitors' contributions with what can only be donations from members of the church (casual visitors don't tend to set up regular bank transfers so this can be assumed to be an accurate assessment). It has kept the church Fair going and expanded on it over 2020, and much more besides. The question should rather be what can be done in terms of cutting expenses, expanding the congregation size and increasing income streams.

As noted before, cutting expenses is not much of an avenue. Short of replacing the Minister with a permanent locum position, getting rid of the Manse or quitting the Auditoire, the options aren't there, at least not on a useful scale. Expanding the congregation would be excellent for many reasons, not just financial but it lies somewhat beyond the financial remit alone. Nonetheless, it does factor in to the third area to explore and this is what has been taking place since the last ACM. At its ACM in 2021, the congregation asked the Finance Sub-Committee to look into what could be done to boost income. The work is still ongoing but various ideas have been pursued and expertise and experience sought from other anglophone churches in the Geneva area, the Church of Scotland's team in Edinburgh which supports congregations with fund-raising activities, private enterprises and others. Some of the more interesting ideas arising have included:

a) An increased online giving potential: the congregational website could be easily updated to accept online donations which would be particularly helpful for potential contributors who don't have a Swiss bank account

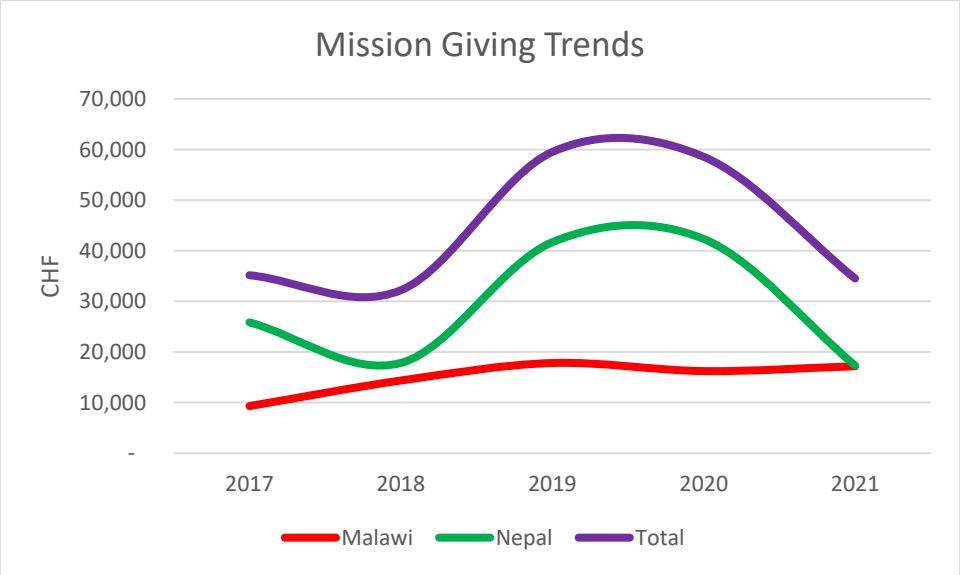
b) Quick Response (QR) codes: these could be used and applied in congregational materials (e.g., church newsletters, orders of service) to help people find easy ways to give
c) Integrating financial considerations into congregational life (e.g., by combining social and fund-raising activities, of which the St Andrew's Fair is the best example)
d) Holding a finance retreat: taking advantage of congregational brainpower and capacity for innovation by spending a day with members of the kirk session, finance sub-committee, music producers, educators, communications specialists and others, dedicated to income generation ideas
e) Re-organizing and re-energizing the FWO.

These and other ideas are moving ahead at present but it is hoped that the congregation will follow them and help them to move ahead. Many are aimed at as broad a base as possible and if the finance objectives can tie into the wider outreach of the congregation, so much the better.

To conclude, one of the key concerns for our congregational finances is that as many people as possible are aware of them and understand what both the challenges and the opportunities are. The 2021 year demonstrated some of this and also showed what could be done when members of the congregation reacted to these. The congregation is currently in a precarious position, inasmuch as it lacks a significant capacity to cope with a sudden loss of income (or a huge hike in expenditure, although the potential for the latter seems less likely). However, it is by no means on the edge of a precipice and careful management with a clear vision of the way forward should be able to use the existing commitment to reach a strong position.

Mission finances

What was achieved by the congregation's mission work is reported in the section on it in this report. Financially speaking, 2021 saw a total income of CHF 34,520. This was lower than the CHF 58,567 received in 2020 but the latter included a particularly generous, one-time donation of CHF 16k for Lalgadh Hospital in Nepal. Allowing for this, the difference between 2020 and 2021 was a reduction of CHF 8k. The income was split at approximately CHF 17.3k for work in Nepal and CHF 17.2k for work in Malawi. The reduction in Mission income during 2021 thus had a much greater impact on the funding for work in Nepal than in Malawi. The latter, however, only remained relatively constant.



Historically, giving levels for Nepal have been much less stable than those for Malawi although this is partly due to a couple of exceptional one-time donations for Nepal in 2019 and 2020. Responses

to earthquakes and other emergency events channelled through Nepal have also caused its levels to fluctuate more considerably. By contrast, the support for Malawi tends to be mainly for core mission work supported there by our congregation. There was a small amount sent in response to the need to reconstruct the summer hut in Ekwendeni following storm damage but it never reached a significant amount in absolute or relative terms.

The net effect is that the congregation retains sufficient levels of resources to keep supporting the key functions in both projects for which it has met long-term needs. However, it does not have much capacity to support a great deal beyond that. Additional work is almost always supported either by special contributions or by specific appeals. Our continuing support to Nepal has been able to sustain the apparent decline in income since 2020 mainly because the core levels were independent of the passing through of the one-off contributions. The support for Malawi gathered momentum in a somewhat slow but sure manner until around 2019, since when it has effectively stabilized. Like the congregation itself, our mission work (financially speaking) can continue at its current levels but is very vulnerable to any sudden loss of revenue.

The cash balances at the end of 2021 were CHF 7,990 for Nepal and CHF 11,789 for Malawi.

It is finally worth noting that the ongoing work to reinvigorate the FWO givings (see the section on FWO and above) may also serve to help mission finances. All FWO donations, whether to the congregation or to our mission work (or both) are tax deductible for Geneva residents. Hence the overall scheme is a good example of where congregational work and financial concerns can find common solutions to the benefit of all.

Note of appreciation

Following the generous assistance provided to the Church during 2020 on financial and tax matters, Mr Peter Rupf of SOFAD SA and his colleagues have continued to provide this guidance on a pro bono basis over the course of 2021. This has included the provision of payroll calculations and documents, and immensely valuable assistance with some quite awkward taxation requirements. The Church is extremely grateful and would like to thank Mr Rupf and SOFAD SA once more for all the time and help which they have provided in such a professional and friendly way.

Ewart MacKenzie, treasurer (mackenzieje@hotmail.com)

Free will offering (FWO) scheme

In January 2021, after the departure of Tom Snow, Han Broere temporarily took on the role of FWO treasurer. In September, I succeeded him in this role. Many thanks to Han for diligently keeping all the records up to date. As we transitioned to 2022, we were able to close the books on 2021, a year that was notably unconventional in that all the donations were by bank transfer. Through the FWO, we received CHF 74,210 for our congregational finances and CHF 34,270 for our mission projects. (CHF 50,850 was also donated by bank transfers that were not part of the FWO scheme.) Tax attestations were provided on request that specified the total personal donations within the congregational and mission FWO and non-FWO schemes.

In preparation for the return of in-person services, we re-established contact with the current FWO members by sending out the annual letter with the pledge form for 2022. Several have responded renewing their pledges. The annual letter and the start of services in the Auditoire also paved the way for re-issuing the pink and blue donation envelopes. Although the number of those who requested envelopes is small, the feedback I received about their use has been very positive.

For 2022, we foresee the work for reinvigorating the FWO as two-fold: 1) to increase the response to our pledge letter among FWO members and 2) to increase membership of the FWO scheme.

Many thanks for your generous support!

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

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Keep in touch!

Our kirk session maintains a confidential *contact list* of all those connected to our congregation: name, address, telephone, email.

If any of your contact details have changed in the last year or so, please update them by emailing Arthur Askew: *arthuraskewge@bluewin.ch*