



HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

COUNCIL REPORT – November 2024 to January 2025

Your Council met twice during this period, once in November and once in January. In December Daphne invited us to a social evening at her flat, which was most enjoyable and an opportunity to relax and get to know each other better.

Review of 2024 objectives and Setting objectives for 2025

At our January meeting, under Daphne's guidance, we reviewed what progress we had made in 2024, implementing our objectives, in line with our overall Vision & Strategy (available on the website). On the whole, 2024 was a good positive year in which a number of objectives were achieved. Our congregation numbers have remained stable and in some cases registered some growth. Our offering has been extended by the development of a quarterly Eucharist with prayers for healing, laying on of hands and anointing, which has been well received. We have continued to build up our spiritual life as a congregation with a rich offering of bible studies and courses. Our Youth ministry is flourishing. The summer and Christmas fairs were good as fundraisers but also have helped to get new people involved. The one area it was felt that more development was needed was in our outreach. All this is positive and gives us a good basis to continue to develop our worship and congregation into 2025.

In terms of 2025, we identified 5 priorities, to be worked on in within the framework of our Vision & Strategy. These are in brief:

- To build up our Christian discipleship amongst our adults and young.
- To increase involvement in leadership of church life amongst our adults and young.
- To develop the outreach of our community.
- To develop the scope, planning and funding of phase 2 of Building Tomorrow.
- To endeavour to repeat a surplus financial result.

The plan to achieve these priorities is being reviewed, after comments and suggestions from Council at the January meeting and will hopefully be adopted at the February meeting.

Worship and Congregational Development

Worship over Advent and Christmastide was rich and varied, starting with our traditional Advent Carol service, our regular Advent worship, including a nativity play written by Eleanor Catterall and a new Christmas Songs of Praise, which attracted a wide level of participation. There was a significant increase of attendance at the two Christmas Day services (9 am, 41 compared with 22 in 2023, 10.30, 79 compared with 37 in 2023. Midnight Mass attendance was similar to 2023, however the service was shared on-line for the first time, an initiative which was appreciated. The Nine Lessons and Carols in St Pierre attracted a full house. However the collection at CHF 4'775 was disappointing and it was noted that many neither gave in cash or electronically. It appears that some people, outside of our own congregation, see the service as a free concert. Any ideas on how we can nudge people into contributing, whilst respecting that this is a service of worship and celebration, open to all, would be welcome.

Council was pleased to learn that eight members of our congregation have signed up for a Congregational Worship Leaders (CWL) course delivered by our Archdeaconry. The participants are sponsored by our Chaplain and Council. Once they have successfully completed the course and have

fulfilled all safeguarding requirements, they will be able to lead some aspects of worship relating to a Service of the Word.

Daphne also informed Council that Godwin Appiah was ordained as Deacon of the Province of West Africa. Gordon has been a regular attendant at Holy Trinity and is often to be seen serving at Holy Communion. In order to minister in the Church of England, including our Diocese, he will have to undertake the Church of England selection and training processes. He will join the Enquirers group this autumn. We congratulate Godwin on his ordination as Deacon in Acra and our prayers go with him on the next stage of his vocational journey.

Children and Young People

During November, Daphne and Armel had separate meetings with the parents of our Junior Church and Youth Group. The purpose of the meetings was to explore with parents the teaching and activities provided and to ask for their suggestions as to any areas which could be developed. In general, parents' level of satisfaction was high. They suggested that children could be encouraged to play their instruments during some of the services and the possibility of a trip to Taizé this summer. They also met with the older group (14-18). The youngsters expressed interest in serving outside of the church, an interest which we are keen to support by enabling them to participate in outreach projects.

Safeguarding (from Carol Brown, our Safeguarding Officer and Rawsette Whyte, our Assistant Safeguarding Officer)

Safeguarding has hit the headlines with the publication of the Makin report into the abuse perpetrated by John Smyth and the subsequent resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures in the hierarchy of the church and its failure to respond appropriately to a number of cases has caused lots of anger, upset and reflection. Improvements are already in train, as indicated by reports from the independent INEQE audits of dioceses and, as already planned, General Synod will decide on the exact form of independent oversight at its February meeting.

On a chaplaincy level here in Geneva, safeguarding is thought of and acted upon in everything we do and is supported by the Council and Chaplain. The safeguarding team would like to reassure you we take our responsibilities seriously. We are also supported by a strong Diocese Safeguarding team from the Diocese in Europe.

Members of the congregation who volunteer in various roles from helping in church to leading children and youth groups have undergone appropriate vetting checks and training. Our safeguarding records detailing this are up to date and under constant review. Risk assessments are undertaken for events within our community to try and make them as safe as possible.

It is also important to remember that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, so we can all play a part in helping our Church to be safe and welcoming. Let us pray for a culture where no one is afraid to speak out, however small or large their concerns and we do not have the belief "that nothing bad would happen here".

If you would like to talk to someone confidentially about an issue relating to safeguarding – please contact our safeguarding team. The email address is: safeguarding@holyltrinitygeneva.org Further information can be found on the HTC website, including details of how to contact our Diocese Safeguarding team directly.

Environment

We were awarded our A Rocha Eco Church silver award at the end of last year. Our thanks go to Mary Talbot whose tireless advocacy of environmental issues inspired many of us to contribute to this achievement. The next challenge is the Gold award – this is quite a step up and requires environmental thinking to be embedded in the daily life of our church and community. As I write this, we have been invited by Daphne to take part in the A Rocha "plastic free February" challenge. This is an opportunity for each of us to take a good hard look at the role plastic plays in our daily life and find alternatives or ways of recycling.

Finance

Michael Gunton presented to the January Council the preliminary accounts for 2024, which will be finalised for the AGM (4th May). As you know, Michael is standing down as Treasurer after many years of dedicated service. We are immeasurably grateful to Michael who has been an outstanding Treasurer. His dedication to his task, his unstinting giving of his time and wise steering of our finances went well beyond reasonable expectations of this role. I.J. Aghanya took over as Treasurer, with effect 1st January. IJ is a husband to Elspeth and father of three boys, Benjamin, Samuel and Alistair, all of whom worship regularly at Holy Trinity. He grew up in Nigeria and in Scotland where he attended school and university. He has lived in Geneva for the last 16 years, most of which have been spent working within the financial services industry. He is a qualified British Chartered Accountant, with an MBA in Finance. He has a passion for tennis, boxing and playing the piano. We look forward to working with I.J.

Communications

You will have noticed that the electronic noticeboard is now functioning in the porch. It provides information for visitors and the congregation alike on services, forthcoming events and a short history of our church. Our website continues to be regularly up-dated and it is now possible to find the texts of most of the sermons delivered at Holy Trinity on the website under the “Worship” tab and then “Sermons”.

Building Tomorrow

The exciting news is that the Choir Stall frontages are in the final stages of manufacture in the UK. Mark is hoping to arrange transport for the second week of February. We are planning a dedication service for the completed Choir Stalls for the evening of Sunday 2nd March. In terms of planning for Phase 2, a matter of some concern is finding alternative accommodation whilst our hall and forecourt are out of action. One option would be containers. A working group, led by Pierre Laravoire have visited portacabins, currently being used to house a school, to start investigating this alternative. The Building Tomorrow Committee are holding an information session for the congregation to share with you the work on scoping, planning and funding Phase 2, on 23rd February after the All Age Service. Do try and come along to find out more and ask your questions.

Deep Dive 2024 Priorities – Community and Social Outreach

At our November meeting Council considered in depth our priority to foster Community and Social Outreach at Holy Trinity. We were joined in our discussions by Christine Damary. Our major outreach programme in Geneva is our work with the Jardin de Montbrillant. During the year 7 lunches were served to over 300 people each time and in December 350 Christmas packets were prepared. Christine commented that not enough was known in the church about these activities and who volunteers. She suggested that the lunch teams could be thanked during services to make the outreach more visible and perhaps encourage others to volunteer. In terms of outreach further afield there had been fairly limited activity in 2024. There was general agreement that widening our outreach should be a priority for 2025 and we should endeavour to leverage our multi-national congregation, many of whom have links and knowledge of projects where support from Holy Trinity could make a difference. There was discussion of setting up a group of volunteers to lead and give more structure to our outreach and which could act as conduit for ideas of projects from the congregation. If you have ideas for projects where we could help, or if you are prepared to serve on a working committee to give our outreach structure and guidance, do contact Daphne, or any member of the Church Council. Let us all try together to share what God has given us as a community here in Geneva more widely.

We look forward to working hard in 2025 to serve you, our congregation and to progress together in our discipleship.