



COUNCIL REPORT – May 2025 to July 2025

Your new Council met for the first time on 19th May and welcomed two new council members, Foluke Braimoh and Kei Oda. Council also met on 23rd June. As is our custom, there was no meeting in July

At our May Council, we discussed the arrangements and flow of the AGM, which had been held on 4th May. On the whole it was felt that the meeting had gone well and had been participative. There were however learnings for next year. The May date was felt to be late and we will endeavour to fix a date in April next year. The meeting overran the planned time by quite a wide margin. We will encourage questions to be sent in before the meeting – in this way they can be grouped and hopefully answered more efficiently in the meeting, thus saving time.

Glen Ruffle presented a report on the work and materials used by our Junior church to the May Council. Council is profoundly grateful to Glen and all those involved in working with our children in the Junior church. The report was the result of a review conducted in spring with the leaders and helpers in the Junior church. Since last September, Junior church has been using a programme entitled “God’s Great Story”, based on materials developed by a church in Canada. The materials are judged enjoyable and easy to use and the lesson plans comprehensive which saves preparation time. The main issue facing our helpers and leaders is in fact a result of their success, the numbers. On average around 20 children, aged between 4 and 11 attend on a Sunday. It would be highly desirable to be able to split the group into an older and younger cohort. To do this would require more volunteers and also more space than afforded by our current hall. We have been blessed by a devoted band of leaders and helpers for our children. If you feel you are called to help with our children, please don’t hesitate to have an exploratory chat with Carol Brown, one of the Churchwardens or Daphne.

Providing a safe environment for our children and vulnerable adults is an on-going concern of Council. Much of this work happens, perforce, behind the scenes to preserve confidentiality on sensitive issues. However, a public manifestation of this work takes place with every new Council as the Chaplaincy Safeguarding Policy and Domestic Abuse Statement for the current year are affirmed and adopted by the in-coming Council, signed by the Chaplain and Churchwardens and then displayed in our church and hall.

At our June meeting our Treasurer, IJ, presented the church accounts for the current year, up to end of May. Income is around CHF 9’000 lower than this time last year. We are hoping that some of this may be offset by what we can already see as rental income in June, however this is clearly something that Council needs to monitor closely as we move into the second half of the year. We are particularly concerned as we are very aware that the cuts in UN-related budgets may be a cause of worry to some in our congregation.

On the communications front the departures this summer of Emily, Glen and Eleanor, leave gaping holes in our communications team and in particular in managing our social media accounts. Michèle has kindly agreed to take on a significant part of the posting to the website, like service sheets and other information which gets put up on a weekly basis. Armored Duncan has stepped up to helping Nicholas Hacking with website postings and management of the e-notice board in the porch. However, we are actively looking for volunteers with communication skills and social media savvy to help with the social media. Good English writing skills are required as well as some discernment to know what and how to post on the social media in keeping with our mission as a church. This is an activity that can be done in your own time and for the most part on-line, so can be fitted into work or study schedules.

Eight of our congregation have taken part in the Congregational Worship Leaders (CWL) training. At the June meeting, Council authorized that they can take some services and deliver homilies in our church. They are, Armel Ayegnon, Ludo Claude, Ana-Victoria Hernandez, Hellen Kabiru, Michael Kabiru, Mary Talbot, David Todd and Aylwin Zabula. In July and August two of our Sunday evening services have been led by members of this group. Our Church worship will be much enriched by this active lay involvement and we thank our CWLs for the time and effort they have put into their training and their willingness to serve in this way.

As planned, Council reviewed the 2025 priorities at the June meeting. Discussion focused on the Worship and Congregation section of the document. Ideas to connect and integrate our young people into our services were explored. The review of the other objectives will be continued in the August meeting, in time to influence the autumn/winter programme. In particular we expect to be able to progress with our planning for implementing Phase 2 of Building Tomorrow. The congregational information sessions held on 11th May and 15th June were well attended and appreciated. We had feedback from those who attended that they now had a much better idea of what was entailed to renovate the existing hall and the reasons for creating a second basement level to provide increased space and functionality to achieve God's mission for us here in Geneva. The Building Tomorrow committee are now working on preparing the full costs and making a final appeal to our major sponsor.

We were delighted to learn in July, that our own Ludo Claude had been elected as a lay diocesan representative to the General Synod of the Church of England. Our Diocese has three lay representatives in the House of Laity at the General Synod, the other two are our own Mary Talbot and Robin Hall from Basel. The Swiss Archdeaconry thus has the monopoly of lay representation from the Diocese in Europe!

We were also pleased to be able to celebrate Daphne's 70th birthday, with her, on her return from holiday. Despite being in the middle of the holiday season many of you were present to raise a glass to her after both Sunday services on 3rd August.

We are also looking for a replacement for me in my role of Council Secretary. I have fulfilled the role as an elected member of Council, but in fact the role does not have to be a Council member. The full role includes working with the Chaplain on setting the agenda for the monthly meetings and then ensuring that Council receive the agenda and all the necessary documents in good time for the meeting. The Council Secretary takes the minutes at the meeting and then circulates them to Council for comment. The Council Secretary also writes this quarterly Council Report, to keep you the congregation informed of Council's work. The Council Secretary also helps with the organization and documentation of the AGM and takes the minutes. Not all of these tasks would need to be taken on immediately by a new person. At the moment Nicholas Hacking has kindly offered to take the minutes at the meetings until the next AGM, whilst I still work with Daphne on the agenda – so a gradual handover can be managed. I have certainly learnt much about how our church works from this role. If this is something that could interest you, please contact either myself or Daphne.

Stewardship and service have been something of a theme in this report. We give God thanks for the service of our new Congregational Worship Leaders and all those who do so much to ensure our community flourishes. We ask for God to guide each one of us as we examine what we could offer to the community. As outlined in this report we need volunteers to help with communications, leaders and helpers for our young people and a new Council Secretary. The service rotas and Sunday morning coffee rotas could also do with more volunteers to help spread the load. There may be other talents and ideas you could offer not covered in this report. I leave you with a picture of your churchwardens, past and present, sweeping the forecourt to tidy it up for a wedding this summer – there are infinite ways to help.



Ursula McGregor

4th August 2025