

St Ursula's Church Berne



Annual Reports for 2023

Contents

Archdeaconry Synod	36	Junior Church	11
Buildings & Infrastructure	27	Magazine	29
Chaplain's Report	3	Master Rota	29
Charity and Mission	34	Music	30
Christmas Bazaar	17	Pastoral Care	31
Church Council	24	Patchwork/Needlework Group	30
Churchwardens	10	Safeguarding	14
Crèche	10	Spring and Autumn Sales	26
Eco Church	33	Summer Fête	16
Electoral Roll	37	Thun Services & Congregation	9
Flowers	32	Treasurer's Report	18
Fundraising	23	Vestry	38
Garden	26	Webmaster	38
Information	40	Worship, Prayer & Study	7

Each report has an author who can be contacted for further information.

Up-to-date contact information is available on our website and our Facebook page.

St Ursula's Church

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CHAPLAIN'S REPORT



This year, we have continued to see many encouragements in the life of St Ursula's as we have tried to build on the positive developments of the previous year. At the AGM last year, I emphasized that we wanted to continue to work to grow our congregation, encourage study, prayer and fellowship, and build up our ministry with children and families. New priorities for the year were to work towards setting up House Groups and to consider the pastoral care in the church.

1. Growing our congregation: Most Sundays there are new faces at church and it has been wonderful to welcome new families and some younger adults over this year. As with the previous year, attendance generally averages 70 adults, but now with up to 20 children. If everyone who comes to church sometimes attended every week, there would be regularly 150 people in church.

The congregation is composed of a rich variety of ages and nationalities and it is good to celebrate this. Our Racial Diversity Group has encouraged greater ethnic diversity among those reading, leading intercessions and serving as sidespeople. We enjoyed celebrating our ethnic diversity at our Pentecost international lunch and this coming summer we are planning an African event.

2. Children and Families: This has been a priority for me throughout my time at St Ursula's and it is good to see steady growth in this area of our church life. We have welcomed more new families and children this year. The Junior Church and Crèche are growing and I am very thankful for all the teachers and helpers who put so much time and effort into this. A couple of new teachers and helpers joined us this last year, but we are always looking for more help so if you would like to get involved in this challenging but rewarding ministry, do let us know.

The monthly All Age Services are now a regular feature of our church life and give us the opportunity for everyone to worship together, with the older children taking roles in the service and the younger children often engaging with the talk. In August we held a Children's Activity Day with 25 children attending for an action-packed fun day on the theme of 'creation'. We are planning another Activity Day this summer.

It has been good to see the older children receiving communion regularly and we are planning another course this coming year to prepare another group of children (those who are baptized and over 7 years old) to receive communion.

We now have contact with more than 20 children and their families. The next challenge is to provide something for our teenagers and I hope we can develop this during the coming year.

3. Bible Study, Prayer and Fellowship: This has remained a priority for this year and we have offered a varied programme, both in person and via Zoom. See my separate report for details.

4. House Groups: One of the priorities I outlined at the AGM last year was to set up House Groups as a way of encouraging study, and deepening faith and fellowship. The Council had a Day Away in September to discuss the best model for House Groups and the process for setting these up. We considered membership and leadership of the groups, possible materials, frequency of meetings, training, safeguarding and other issues. A proposal was then put forward to the church at an Open Forum meeting on 21st January, 2024 (this meeting was delayed as I was ill in December). We invited those who were interested in joining a House Group to send in their feedback. We are now in the process of setting the groups up. Though we are unable to provide for everyone's preferences, we hope to set up two groups in Bern and one in Thun. The groups will start as soon as all the leaders and hosts have been able to do their safeguarding checks and training. Please be patient as this will take some time!

5. Pastoral Care in church: This was another priority set for this last year. We have a couple of new members of the Pastoral Care Team. This is now composed of Archana Jacob, Chris Sager, Patricia Schwager, Donna Goepfert, Cecily Klingler, Sandra Peter, and the Chaplain. The group responds to requests for prayer from anyone within the church, sends cards and makes phone calls and visits when appropriate. The team send cards not only to those who are sick or distressed but also to mark the anniversary of a child's baptism.

We have been reminded that it is important that we are all aware of one another's needs and seek to show care and concern. Care for people with depression was one of the priorities I mentioned last year. The session we held on Mental Health and the Christian Faith in October was an opportunity to learn about the needs of those who are suffering mental health challenges and to consider how we can offer support as a church. This session was very well attended, and I am very grateful to the panel (composed of members of our congregation with experience in mental health issues) who responded to the various concerns raised. Since we held the session, several individuals have felt much more able to raise concerns of mental health with me and with others.

I hope that the House Groups will also help us in our pastoral care as a church as we seek to show kindness and support to one another.

As I look back over this year, I am deeply thankful for all these encouragements in our life as a church, and for all the many people who give so generously to support our ministry, mission and fellowship. I am especially thankful to our two Churchwardens, Martin and Sue, for their time and energy in supporting the

**THANK
YOU!**

work of the church and also supporting me personally. I am grateful for their positive attitude, loyalty and commitment. Additional thanks to Sue for the huge amount of work involved in being Treasurer as well as Churchwarden. I am also very thankful to Maria, our Administrator, who is so calm and gracious and efficient and does such an excellent job.

Thank you to members of TCom who do a lot of work behind the scenes on our buildings and technical issues, and for the gardening team who work on our church grounds. Thank you to our magazine team who have worked hard for a large part of this year to produce the magazine. It is sad that this has now come to an end as Querida retired as editor and no one has been willing and able to take on that job. We hope to find other ways of keeping in touch with everyone. Thank you to Cecily and Maxine, our safeguarding officers, for their hard work in this area of church life and for their reminder that we all need to be involved in making sure we offer a welcoming and secure church environment for all. Let us remember that safeguarding is important not only in relation to children but also in relation to vulnerable adults. We also need to be aware that abuse does not only mean sexual abuse; there are a variety of forms of abuse including, for example, financial abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. Let us keep alert and care for and protect those who are most vulnerable.

I am very grateful to the fundraising team for all their hard work in organising the Summer Fête, Christmas Bazaar, and Autumn and Spring Sales. The numbers attending these events have increased this year. This year we also held a Time and Talent Auction which was a great success. We always need more help, however, so if you can get involved, do let Maria in the office know.

Thank you to all those who serve the church in many different ways as readers, intercessors, musicians, sidespeople, welcomers, altar servers, Junior Church teachers and helpers, those who look after the building and technical issues, those organising events and refreshments after services, and others serving in countless other ways. There are too many to mention everyone by name.

The year has included much joy in the community with several new members, baptisms of both children and adults, and a joyful confirmation service with Bishop Robert. We have also mourned the recent death of Dorothy Beriger and the tragic death of Olivia Long. As a Christian community, I hope we can help to carry one another's burdens as we share both our joys and our sorrows together.

As I give thanks for all that has gone on this year, I want to thank Archana and James for their ministry and support. Please pray for Archana in her ministry as Licensed Reader this coming year, and also for James as he is ordained Deacon in June. This will be a big day for James and the beginning of a new relationship with St Ursula's as he begins his ministry and training here as Self-Supporting Curate. We look forward to all that James will contribute to our church life. Please remember, however, that James will still be working as lecturer at Fribourg

University so the time he will be able to give to St Ursula's will be limited. Please pray for James as he begins his new ministry with us, and for me as I take on the role of training incumbent.

I also want to thank Peter Hawker for his ongoing prayerful support, and to particularly thank David for all his love and support and for all the gifts, talents and time he has given so generously to the life of St Ursula's this last year. As you will know, we have recently begun a new work pattern. David is now employed by St Ursula's as part-time Assistant Chaplain. He will be licensed in due course. At the same time, I am reducing my hours a little, so that I can take two days a week off (rather than one day as in the past). We hope this new work arrangement will be of benefit to everyone.

So what are the priorities as we look to this coming year?

I hope we can continue to build up the congregation in faith and prayer and also to grow in numbers, to continue and strengthen our work with children and families, to maintain and develop a varied programme of Bible study, prayer and fellowship and develop our mission in every aspect.

I would like to outline three specific priorities for this coming year:

1. Get the House Groups established: We hope that the groups will be ready to start in the Summer or Autumn and that over this coming year the members of the groups will develop a good level of openness, confidence and trust in one another. We pray that these groups will help to deepen our faith, fellowship and mutual pastoral care.

2. Start a group for our teenagers: We now have a number of teenagers in our congregation and we plan to start up a group for them during the service, once a month. James Morgan and Sandra Peter will hopefully lead this group. As and when it is possible, we hope to be able to build on this and plan further events, outings and activities for the group.

3. Seek to engage in social projects for refugees, the homeless, and those with problems of substance abuse. I am aware that members of the congregation of St Ursula's are on the whole well educated and well off. Apart from the donations box for the Passantenhilfe, and our support of charities, we are not actively engaged (as a church) in working with those from different social backgrounds. I would like us to consider how we might be more engaged in this as individuals and as a church.

As we look back over this last year with thankfulness, let us look ahead with confidence, remembering that it is not our church but God's church, and he will give us the resources we need if we trust in him.

Revd Helen Marshall

WORSHIP, PRAYER AND STUDY

Worship

• Services at St Ursula's: It has been a joy to have been able to hold all our services in person this year after all the restrictions of Covid. We have continued to welcome new people at our services, including more families and several people in their 20s and 30s. Our average Sunday attendance is around 70 adults with a growing number of children (up to 20). A



highlight of this of the year was our Easter Day Eucharist in 2023 when we had over 120 people in church and ran out of seats. It was a very joyful occasion!

Christmas services went well and I was very grateful to David and Archana for taking some of the services when I was unwell.

There have been several other special services this year, including the confirmation service with Bishop Robert in September.

I know that some people come to services only occasionally. I would like to encourage more people to make a commitment to worshipping regularly on Sundays as part of our Christian discipleship.

• Music: I am very grateful to the musicians who work on a rota basis to lead the music in our worship. We are always glad to welcome new musicians to join this group.

• Thun services: Services continue twice a month. The group is small but with a strong sense of fellowship and mutual pastoral care. We are hoping to set up a Thun House Group this coming year.

• Other Churches and Services: The small group at Neuchâtel decided this year that they would like to hold services on a Sunday morning, and so David and I have stopped taking a monthly mid-week service there. Retired clergy or lay people are now taking their services, twice a month on Sundays. I continue to lead an Anglican Eucharist at the Old Catholic Church in Olten from time to time. Ecumenical services in Bern continue: I presided at the service in the Münster in January, and took part in the service to mark the anniversary of the war in Ukraine, and the Nacht der Religionen service, both at the Old Catholic church. St Ursula's has continued to host the Chrism service for fellow chaplains in Switzerland to renew their ordination vows. There have been several online Diocesan services during the year. David has also taken services at the Anglican church in Basel.

• Communion for the housebound: I continue to take communion to a small number of people of our fellowship who cannot attend worship at St Ursula's. If

the rules in the Diocese change, then lay people may be able to share in this ministry.

Prayer

- Lectio divina: The group has continued to meet (online) on a Thursday morning, to reflect on a short passage of Scripture and use that as a basis for prayer. There is a core group of 5-8 people who attend regularly, and others join us from time to time. These sessions have been a consistent source of spiritual nourishment and mutual encouragement; they both build up the faith of individuals and strengthen our sense of community. Come and join us!
- Morning Prayer and Night Prayer during Lent: During Lent, we have had various discussions on prayer (see below) and have encouraged people to join us online for Morning Prayer. It has been a great encouragement to do this: 5-15 people have joined us regularly. We have also said Night Prayer together after our Lent sessions.
- Intercessions: I am very grateful to those who lead the intercessions in church. These are very well done and much appreciated by many. It has been very good to welcome several new intercessors this year. If anyone else is interested in joining in this ministry, do ask me for more details.
- Prayer with individuals: This continues to be an important part of my ministry, whether it is praying with someone who is sick or in trouble, or offering materials and practical guidance about prayer. I also sometimes pray with people on the phone.
- Prayer Materials in my email messages: At the end of my weekly messages, Being Church in Strange Times and at All Times, there are usually resources for prayer (poems, prayers or meditations). I often get very positive feedback about these.

Study

- Online and in person: We have continued to offer a range of different opportunities for study, some online and some in church. Typically, in-person meetings are on Sunday after church to benefit from the fact that people have already made the effort to get here, while Zoom meetings are on weekdays, including our regular Tuesday evenings.
- Online Bible studies and discussions: This year we had sessions studying the story of Joseph. During Lent, we have discussed different aspects of prayer, learning and sharing resources together. Numbers at these study sessions vary, usually between 10-20 people. When the House Groups start, we will be reviewing what we offer in terms of online Bible studies.

- Talks and Discussions in church: We have held a variety of talks and discussions after church. Perhaps the most significant was the session on Mental Health and the Christian Faith when we invited questions on this topic and a panel of people from the congregation with experience in this field sought to respond. We gave out two resource sheets: one with practical information about emergency help and support groups and the other with short Biblical quotations to encourage faith during dark times. This session was attended by a very good number (50 adults) which illustrates how relevant this concern is to many people and the need to be open about it in church. Another important discussion was the Open Forum about House Groups as the new proposal about House Groups was put forward and members of the congregation were able to make comments and ask questions.
- Men's Group: The Men's Group has continued to meet. The meetings are usually on a Saturday morning with breakfast, and have included interviews with one of the members as well as Bible study. The friendship, support and prayer that the group offers is valued by many. A big thank you to David and James for organizing this and to those who have hosted the group.

Revd Helen Marshall

THUN SERVICES & CONGREGATION



Generally a Eucharist service takes place at the lovely Chapelle Romande near Thun Station on the first and third Thursday of the month, from 18:30. We are usually around 8 to 12 people. The congregation at Thun met 17 times in 2023, including the Christmas carol service. The collections raised CHF 1'751 in 2023, excluding the carol service. The costs to rent the church were CHF 810. The collection at the carol service is dedicated each year to Cecily's Fund, and in 2023 this raised CHF 350. The carol service draws many people from the area, and is always followed by refreshments donated by the Thun congregation.

In 2024 we will start with a House Group once a month, and this is very fitting, as that is how the Thun congregation first started many years ago. All are welcome to come along and join us at a service. The website has the up-to-date list of when services take place (as we do have some breaks for holidays).

Sue Higson

CHURCHWARDENS

2023 has been a good year with an increase in attendance at all our services. It is also the last year for Martin as warden, as he will step down at this AGM. He has been a very good warden, quietly taking on all those little duties that need doing, but nobody wants to do, plus he is always there every Sunday bright and early. Sue is very happy not to have had to do that.



The council has rewritten all the guidelines in 2023 for things like Sidesperson, Coffee duties, Reader, Welcoming, Intercessions, Server, Junior Church etc. You can find them under Guidelines on the website. The Church Inventory has also been completed in advance of the AGM.

Sue spent quite some time refining the package for Helen and David so that it is transparent for the authorities and fair to both Helen and David, whilst being affordable for the Church. We are looking forward to seeing many positive benefits of this decision, including a better work-life balance for Helen and a growth in our Church numbers.

There have of course been some challenges in 2023 which we won't go into here, but that is what our Church life is like. There are times of joy, and times of sorrow. Some people are happy with all our decisions, and some are not happy with certain decisions. We did set up the email address feedback@stursula.ch and we have had very little feedback, which could be good news, but maybe it just means that nobody knows about it.

Susan Higson and Martin Browne, Churchwardens

CRÈCHE

The Crèche offers the little ones an enjoyable experience and allows their parents to focus on worship. In 2023, there were often between 0-3 children. Crèche took place on most Sundays except on the Sundays of the All-Age Service and on some few other occasions (some summer Sundays, around the turn of the year, etc.). There is a small but dedicated group of Crèche helpers. This group needs to grow (and the Crèche leader should have been more active to make it grow) since we currently don't have enough helpers, and in particular leaders, to do Crèche in the lower hall with two grown-ups present. Instead, Crèche was held in the upper hall in the same room as Junior Church. This was clearly not ideal since the smallest ones sometimes distracted the older children. On the bright side, it allowed the Crèche children to occasionally join the singing at the beginning of Junior Church and it allowed some younger Junior Church attendants to flexibly switch to Crèche in case they weren't ready for focusing for a full session yet.

Dominic Roser, Crèche Coordinator

JUNIOR CHURCH

Acknowledgement to Teachers

Our Junior Church classes thrive thanks to the dedication of our teachers, helpers and Chaplain. A heartfelt thank you goes out to each one of you for your invaluable contributions. A warm welcome to our newcomers, and sincere gratitude for your willingness to support our mission. If you're interested in joining our team and playing a role in nurturing the spiritual growth of our youth, please speak to me, to Helen or to any Junior Church teacher for more details.



Charitable Engagement

For several years, Tear Fund has been the focal point of our charitable endeavours at Junior Church. Each week we remind the children about the project we support through Tear Fund and encourage contributions to our weekly collection. As well as helping the children in Uganda, we hope it helps our children learn to be grateful for their blessings.



tearfund.ch
Hinsehen. Handeln.



Educational Resources

"ROOTS" serves as the cornerstone of our teaching resources for Junior Church, offering comprehensive materials to guide our lessons throughout the year. Developed by a Christian charitable organization, "ROOTS" provides invaluable teaching content, drawing from ecumenical perspectives. The weekly materials are based on the lectionary.

Explore more at: www.rootsontheweb.com

Sunday Junior Church

Each Sunday, our Junior Church members have a dedicated space within our service. Once a month, we hold an All Age service, welcoming attendees of all generations to participate. On other Sundays, our Junior Church classes take center stage. Prior to these sessions, the children receive an introduction to the

day's topic as part of the opening worship in church.

‘Creation Fun’ - Children’s Activity Day

24 children, with 13 parents came together to learn more about the creation season. The children were assigned to one of the five groups, depending on their age. Everyone had a good time and, hopefully, learned a little more about creation. Thanks to all those who came along, to all the helpers and especially to Helen and to Jackie (from Zurich) who planned and organised the event. We hope there will be many more like it.



Nativity Celebration

In December 2023, our children took part in the Nativity Play, with our talented narrator bringing the story to life. It was a joyous occasion where people of all ages came together to celebrate this special time during our Nativity Play Service. The children gathered around the manger, singing a medley of traditional carols accompanied by our music group. Behind the scenes, our Junior Church teachers and Crèche helpers provided invaluable support, from encouraging the children to selecting costumes and handling all the necessary preparations.



A heartfelt THANK YOU to EVERYONE involved.

Ruby Wildhaber



Ed: This photo was taken during the Easter service 2024.

SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Aim: We at St Ursula's are committed to:

- *The care and nurture of a respectful pastoral ministry with all children and adults.*
- *The safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable.*
- *The establishing of safe, caring communities that provide a loving environment where there is a culture of 'informed vigilance' as to the dangers of abuse.*

An atmosphere of good practice for safeguarding is essential for us at St Ursula's.

Safeguarding checks are required for all those working with children and young people or vulnerable adults (Pastoral Care Team) at our church. All JC/Crèche leaders and helpers as well as Pastoral Team members must renew their safeguarding checks and training every 3 years. It is an ongoing process to ensure that all



have completed or renewed their safeguarding checks and training. We do have a limited number of Junior Church and Crèche Leaders and helpers, and all must have fulfilled their safeguarding checks and trainings. This can be a challenge at times, especially with the Crèche, but we must always be sure that we are keeping to our Diocesan Safeguarding Policy. More helpers for the Crèche would relieve this situation so please do consider if you could help here!

Hosts and leaders of the new House Groups which are being set up also require Safeguarding Checks and must complete the required safeguarding training.

Our council members must complete the required safeguarding training ('Basic Awareness' and 'Foundations') as well as the 'Domestic Abuse' online training.

A wider group of people in our church, i.e. those who are in a visible position in their role during the Sunday worship, e.g. sidespersons, readers, intercessors, servers etc. also need to undergo a more basic form of a safeguarding check.

Our council must approve our St Ursula's safeguarding policy each year. Council has approved a Chaplaincy Domestic Abuse Statement for St Ursula's.

All forms of domestic abuse are wrong and must stop. We are committed to promoting and supporting environments which:

- ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse.
- protect those vulnerable to domestic abuse from actual or potential harm.

- recognise equality amongst people and within relationships.
- enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to appropriately and consistently.

St Ursula's also takes the position that any form of bullying or harassment perpetrated by any member of the laity or clergy towards another person is totally unacceptable.

We adhere to the June 2022 Diocese in Europe Antibullying and Harassment policy.

Safeguarding training takes place by online or virtual video training sessions.

Diocese in Europe Training Pathway

Basic Awareness Online Course: This course is recommended for anyone who wants to achieve a basic level of awareness of safeguarding.

Foundation Course Online Course: The Foundation Course is required for everyone who has safeguarding responsibilities, or if their church role involves contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.

Leadership Course Virtual training: The virtual training course is required for anyone who has safeguarding leadership responsibilities or is responsible for leading activities involving children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.

Risk assessments must be completed for all church meetings and events at St Ursula's. This is part of ensuring that our church is always a safe place for all, at all times.

All hall users must also agree to following our safeguarding policies unless they can show that they have their own adequate safeguarding policies in place. This is not such an easy matter to achieve but we are working on this.

A link to safeguarding is found on the front page of our St Ursula's website with further links to relevant information. As well, safeguarding documents can be found on the Diocese of Europe website: www.europe.anglican.org under the heading of Diocesan Policy and Guidance/Safeguarding. A revised Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and Guidance was released in October 2019, aligned with the National Safeguarding Team's Parish Safeguarding Handbook, and adapted and expanded to suit the requirements of our international diocese. Our St Ursula's Safeguarding policy is displayed on the noticeboard in the church hall. We encourage everyone to read these documents, as safeguarding is a matter for the whole congregation.

Safeguarding Sunday is a safeguarding awareness raising campaign for churches run by the charity Thirtyone:eight. Each November, thousands of churches from diverse backgrounds and traditions across the UK come together to reflect on their own safeguarding journey, and to highlight and celebrate all the good work

that is being done by so many behind the scenes to protect vulnerable people. Last year it was not possible to hold the Safeguarding Sunday at St Ursula's on the official date of 19 November. We did have a display about Safeguarding in the church hall after the church service on 12 November. However, this did not seem to be an ideal alternative as there was not much interest shown. We hope that this year there can be a Safeguarding Sunday service at St Ursula's on 17 November.

Should you ever feel there is a concern in our church about a safeguarding issue, then it is essential to report this to the Chaplain or the Safeguarding Officer or the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. Such matters are always kept strictly confidential.

Finally, a reminder to all parents that they are responsible for supervising their children once the Junior Church and Crèche sessions have ended.

Contact: Cecily Klingler, St Ursula's Safeguarding Officer - Tel: 031 302 48 59 or 076 425 48 59, email: safeguarding@stursula.ch

Maxine Wildhaber: St Ursula's Asst Safeguarding Officer - Tel: 076 349 40 42, email: safeguarding@stursula.ch

Cecily Klingler, St Ursula's Safeguarding Officer

SUMMER FÊTE 2023

A splendid Summer Fête

Our Summer Fête 2023 took place on Saturday 10 June. We were happy to welcome many people at our premises and see both old and new faces browsing our stalls. We were blessed with good weather and everyone had the chance to enjoy the homemade treats and our lovely garden where we also had the bar, the grill and of course our always popular crumpets.



Fun children activities for our tiny world travellers were kindly provided by Little Bears Bern (aka Parents and Tots), an international English speaking playgroup meeting at St Ursula's every Wednesday morning. Check their website here: www.littlebearsbern.ch.

A big THANK YOU to all who helped with the Sale as well as to all those who came along to support us. Also, a big thank you to our gardening team for keeping our garden tidy, beautiful and welcoming. Our next Summer Fête will take place on Saturday 1 June. See you there!

Church Office

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR 2023

St Ursula's Christmas Bazaars have always been perfect for getting everyone into the festive mood. In 2023 too, we had it all: delicious Christmas cakes, crumpets and homebaked goods, our beautiful Christmas wreaths and decorations, patchwork and other fine Christmas gifts, mulled wine and mince pies, second-hand books, children's activities, tombola and a raffle. We were also happy to welcome some old and new stalls from independent sellers. We hope to see them again in the future. Our restaurant was open on both days and our visitors could enjoy our mouth-watering dishes on offer.



Organising the Christmas Bazaar has never been an easy task. Many things behind the scenes may even go unnoticed. For example, we need to move furniture around a lot, even empty the church of all the chairs in order to set up the stalls. And for this we need many helping hands. With the much-appreciated effort from all our volunteers, their passion, patience and dedication we managed to overcome all difficulties once again in order to come together and spread Christmas joy all around us.

All our volunteers worked really hard and dedicated lots of hours of their personal time. So, a big THANK YOU to all of them for their help, their support and generosity.

We hope that everyone who helped with and attended the Bazaar had a great time and that we were able to bring the Christmas spirit into everyone's homes.

Our next Bazaar will take place on Friday 22 November and Saturday 23 November 2024. Save the dates!

Church Office



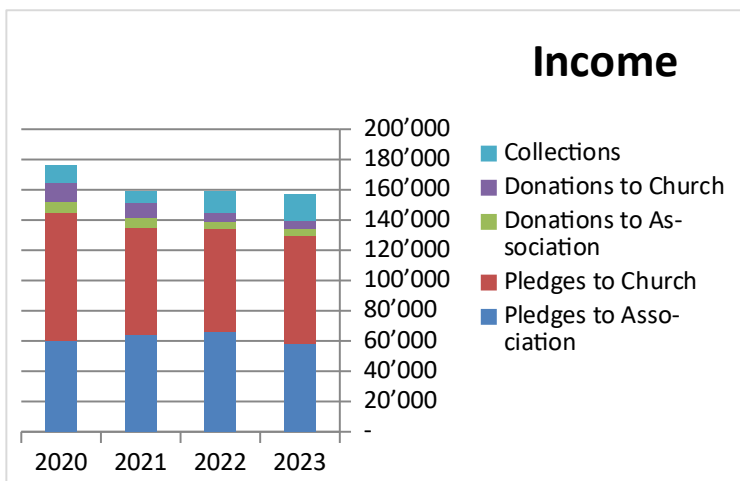
TREASURER'S REPORT

Dear all,

I am happy to report that our finances in 2023 came in better than budgeted with a small excess overall of CHF 2'670. This shows that everything we do in giving, saving, or raising money counts. The Charitable Association had an excess of income over expenditure of CHF 27'156 and the Church had a deficit of income over expenditure of CHF 24'485. The Church had spent around 20'000 on running, cleaning and maintaining the premises, and as the Charitable Association is permitted to spend on the building, we made a transfer of CHF 20'000 from the Charitable Association to the Church. The remaining deficit comes out of the reserves that the Church has. The Charitable Association also put CHF 5'000 in the building fund and the remaining excess of CHF 2'156 in its reserves.

As Treasurer I am very happy with the result, and we can see that my message about the needs of the Church is being well received as the money taken in collections as well as given to the Church increased by 5.5% in 2023, whereas the Charitable Association saw a drop in receipts as people moved their giving from the Charitable Association to the Church. We are not yet back to the levels of 2020 however, and I would encourage you all to think about your giving to our Church in 2024.

If you look at the consolidated Income statement we can see that the pledged giving actually decreased by CHF 4'500 overall. This is due in part to the deaths of some of our faithful givers, as well as at least one donor forgetting to make their payment.



Expenses overall were in line with the prior year and below budget. This is partly due to a release of unused charitable allocations back into the result. This is therefore a one-off effect.

Rental income increased significantly and our events were also a very welcome source of funds. A big thank you to all who helped make our events such a success. There is a separate report on fundraising.

I hope that you have all read the churchwardens' message about the new working arrangements for Helen and David. I have been asked about the financial consequences of this decision. It will of course increase our costs, however, not by as much as you may fear. We were renewing the package for Helen in any case, as her initial 5 year term was up. This meant we had to revise the whole package to reflect more accurately the benefits in kind, like the house and the health costs paid. This has been achieved by increasing the salary to a more realistic level, comparable to local clergy, and then deducting the house rent and health costs etc after the AHV and Pension deductions. This means the employer's and the employees' contributions are higher in both cases. This is where we have higher costs in any case, and these would have been incurred if we had not changed the working arrangements. However it also means that as the benefits in kind paid to Helen also have to cover David, by employing him, we cover a large amount of the benefits in kind we included in the 100% salary of Helen in his salary, so the extra cost at the end is just 6% for the combined employment of Helen and David. P.S. this is complicated, so don't worry if you don't understand it. I will try and explain in more detail at the AGM. I have every faith in our community that the extra funds needed will come in. I also pray that this new arrangement will benefit us all as a community and also Helen and David in their work here.

The accounts are included in this booklet. There is a combined Income and Expenditure statement that shows the Charitable Association and Church combined. Another one shows the Church only compared to the previous year, and the third shows the split of the combined one between the Charitable Association and the Church (ed: these two are not included, but can be available on request). Finally there is the balance sheet. Notes are available and will be distributed at the AGM or are available on request - just send me an email.

I am also excited to announce that the Diocese in Europe has granted us a digital giving machine, which allows visitors to make donations to the Church via their bank card. There is a special discounted fee also available to us to receive the money from Sumup, so I am hopeful that this will encourage spontaneous giving. The giving via the machine goes to our work in the Church, and is not eligible for tax relief.

I also announced some time ago that I will be officially retiring from my employment in 2025, and as I want to travel a bit initially, this will be my last year as Treasurer, and I hope to stand down at the next AGM. However, so far nobody has expressed any interest in learning the ropes and assisting me in the coming year. Please pray that we might find a suitable person to be the next Treasurer, or a good solution for the book-keeping, as this can also be done by a separate person to the Treasurer.

Best wishes,

Susan Higson, Treasurer

FINANCIAL REPORT

St Ursula's Church/St Ursula's Charitable Association

INCOME	note	Year 2023	Year 2022	Budget 23
Income from Community	1	157'074.07	159'325	162'000
<i>Pledged giving</i>		129'424.60	134'074	135'000
<i>Donations</i>		10'398.33	10'766	11'000
<i>Collections</i>		17'251.14	14'486	16'000
Income from events	2	30'663.84	31'769	35'000
Income from other sources	3	26'042.04	20'934	21'700
<i>Contribution to costs: hall</i>		23'120.58	17'177	18'200
<i>Other</i>		2'921.46	3'758	3'500
		-	-	-
Income from Thun	4	1'751.00	1'359	1'400
Income from Neuchatel	4	445.60	667	660
Permanent activities income	5	4'651.45	3'096	5'050
<i>Magazine</i>		3'195.20	2'051	4'000
<i>Books and Cards</i>		221.00	279	250
<i>Coffee</i>		1'198.75	732	750
<i>Other</i>		36.50	34	50
Financial income	6	2'194.63	1'610	1'500
Forex gain				-
TOTAL		222'822.63	218'760	227'310
DEFICIT		-	10'720	1'923

31.12.2023

EXPENDITURE		Year 2023	Year 2022	Budget 23
Personnel-related costs		129'828.90	129'794	132'275
Stipends and remunerations		89'637.94	88'270	90'035
Travelling expenses		3'473.50	3'055	3'000
Other personnel costs		36'717.46	38'469	39'240
Running costs		41'753.24	46'088	44'818
<i>Premises</i>	7	34'379.98	38'603	38'000
<i>Office</i>	8	667.70	873	850
<i>Telephone and Internet</i>		925.07	549	550
<i>Insurance</i>		2'488.00	2'352	2'352
<i>Property tax</i>	9	1'884.60	2'440	1'800
<i>Vestry</i>		750.86	860	860
<i>Ministry and Hospitality</i>		406.87	255	250
<i>Subscriptions and advertising</i>		250.16	156	156
Youth and Junior Church		144.83	641	800
Cost of food sold		4'436.99	5'048	5'100
Permanent activities expense		3'156.85	2'324	2'820
<i>Magazine</i>		2'722.55	2'009	2'500
<i>Books and cards</i>		93.00	137	140
<i>Coffee</i>		316.30	179	180
<i>Other</i>		25.00	-	-
Diocese/Deanery	10	17'067.00	17'670	19'000
Charity incl allocations	11	22'820.35	25'000	24'000
Financial Expense		354.59	406	420
Forex loss	13	589.41	2'508	
TOTAL		220'152.16	229'479	229'233
excess before allocations	12	2'670.47	-	-

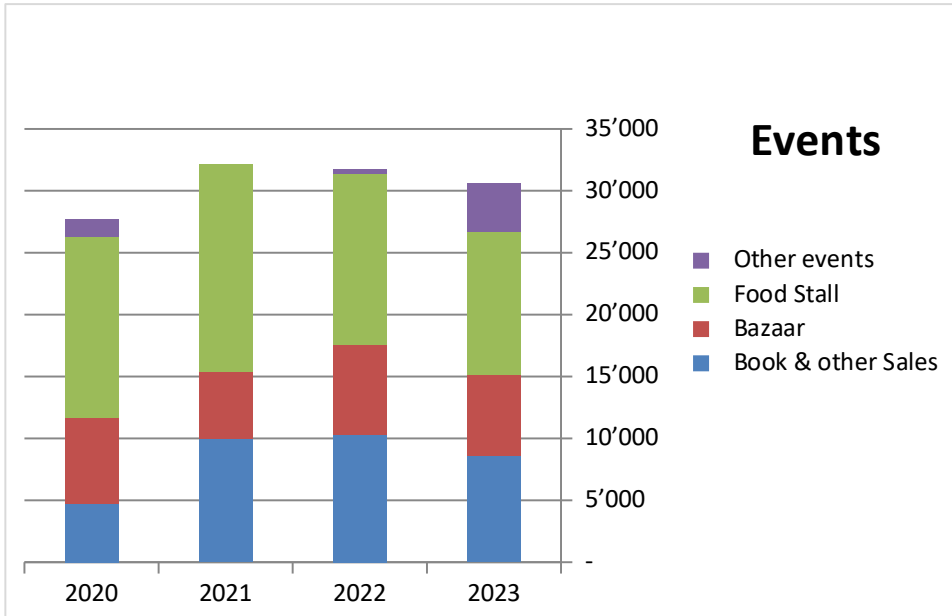
**The notes to the accounts are available from the treasurer upon request.*

Balance sheet
St Ursula's Church and St Ursula's Charitable Association

Balance sheet						
CHF						
Assets		31/12/2023	31/12/2023	31/12/2023	31.12.2022	31.12.2022
		Church	Association	Total	Church	Association
Cash and Bank						
Current accounts + Petty cash						
CH		60'180.91	110'164.93	170'345.84	74'875	103'006
UK		15'584.68		15'584.68	19'274	
Deposit accounts						
CH UBS	B1	40'000.00	50'000.00	90'000.00	30'000	50'000
Total Cash and Bank		115'765.59	160'164.93	275'930.52	124'149	153'006
<i>Stocks on hand</i>	<i>B2</i>	1'033.30	-	1'033.30	1'369	-
debtors and monies due	<i>B3</i>	3'483.00	-	3'483.00	1'119	565
Withholding tax due		108.10		108.10		
Total other assets		4'624.40	-	4'624.40	2'488	565
Fixed assets						
Expense and Income for following year	<i>B4</i>	1'639.60	233.90	1'873.50	1'558	-
Pension assets		122.50		122.50	123	
total Assets		122'152.09	160'398.83	282'550.92	128'317	153'571
current liabilities						
creditors	<i>B5</i>	- 8'466.74	- 1'884.60	- 10'351.34	- 13'126	- 13
Staff remunerations and expenses due		- 1'817.60	-	- 1'817.60		
collections to be paid out		- 2'570.30	- 1'050.00	- 3'620.30		
due within 1 month		- 12'854.64	- 2'934.60	- 15'789.24	- 13'126	- 13
owed between the Church and Association		-	-	-		
provisions	<i>B6</i>	- 817.35	-	- 817.35	- 1'112	- 3'250
funds held for others	<i>B7</i>	- 1'814.55	-	- 1'814.55	- 1'815	-
excess of assets over liabilities		106'665.55	157'464.23	264'129.78	112'264	150'308
Capital reserves						
Contingency reserve		- 80'509.85	- 41'177.79	- 121'687.64	- 84'660	- 39'022
Ministry Training Fund		- 10'122.40	-	- 10'122.40	- 11'235	-
Building and Development Fund		- 15'000.00	- 116'286.44	- 131'286.44	- 15'000	- 111'286
non liquid capital		- 1'033.30	-	- 1'033.30	- 1'369	-
Net Worth		- 106'665.55	- 157'464.23	- 264'129.78	- 112'264	- 150'308
Annual result showing movement in capital reserves						
<i>result before allocations (negative is excess)</i>		24'485.49	-27'155.96	-2'670.47	-	0.00
<i>Support from Assn to Church</i>		20'000.00	-20'000.00			
Result after support		4'485.49	- 7'155.96	- 2'670.47		
Movements on reserves						
<i>Addition to Building fund</i>			-5'000.00			
<i>movement on contingency reserve</i>		4'485.49	-2'155.96			
		4'485.49	-7'155.96			
non liquid capital movement to contingency reserve			-335.70			

FUNDRAISING REPORT

Where would we be without our dedicated team of people, who cook, bake, organise, sort food, sort books, sell, sew, and plan for our fundraising events every year? Well the Church would be over CHF30'000 poorer for a start. Every year our events raise that amount of money.



In addition, our Book and Food sales, as well as the Summer Fête and Christmas Bazaar, bring in many people from all over the area. Many come year after year to meet friends and buy their jams or crumpets, or stock up on books etc. Our sales, therefore, have a valuable outreach element, bringing in people who may not be regular churchgoers, but who might become one in the future.



Our extra event in 2023 was our Talents auction where we had 28 different lots on offer. This was a great success bringing in nearly CHF 2'000.

Then as a spin off from the auction we had a guided walk from Bremgarten, which many could join each paying a modest ticket price.

We had fabulous weather for this, and a lovely tour of the Roman remains led by Cecily.

This is something that we really need to organise again in 2024. Has anyone any ideas

for an insider tour?

Susan Higson, Treasurer

CHURCH COUNCIL

This report covers the life of the outgoing council, from the first meeting after last year's AGM until this AGM. There is one exception - the last meeting in April is not included as this was held after the date for the annual reports to be submitted.



This council had 13 members - 1 clergy, 1 lay reader, 2 churchwardens, 2 archdeaconry synod representatives, 6 elected members and 1 co-opted member.

This year council usually met once a month, but the dates varied quite a lot. Without the April meeting, there were 9 business meetings this year with an average attendance of 9.7 people (minimum 9; maximum 12). There were two occasions where one or two council members joined the meeting via Zoom. And some council members had to join the meetings later, as the starting time of 19:00 did not fit with their work or other commitments.

There was an additional special meeting in February for the discussion of just one topic - the use of the "Prayers of Love and Faith" resources, as commended by the General Synod. This was held on a Sunday after the church service and was the only meeting attended by all council members.

Sometimes, business had to be done between council meetings. This was done by email in accordance with item M29 of the Church Representation Rules. These topics were mainly the approval of risk assessments or other papers.

At the first meeting after the AGM, held on 25 April, the various council officers - lay vice chairperson, secretary, treasurer, electoral roll officer, safeguarding officer, standing committee - were appointed. In addition, the safeguarding policy was approved.

As always, council handled a good variety of topics at its meetings. There is the regular, routine business needed to keep the church running. This includes finance, deciding on dates and times of various events and reviewing them after they have taken place. Additionally, care of the property is important, together with replacing and repairing equipment.

Various groups have the opportunity to report to council at each meeting. Usually reports are only received from the treasurer and from TCom (Technical Committee). Safeguarding and risk assessments are also on the agenda of each meeting, although neither of these has been a big topic this year. Council also supports the work of other groups such as the "racial diversity" group, the charity committee, the music group and the Junior Church and Crèche.

Council handled many topics this year, some of which are briefly mentioned here:

More than 100 people completed our photo permission form which meant we could take a new group photograph on 2 July. This is now used on the website and in various publicity material.

The council held a day away in September. The topic for discussion was “House Groups”. Since then, council has been working on setting up some groups, an Open Forum was held and we hope the groups will be set up soon.



Job descriptions / guidelines are available for many of the tasks done by volunteers in the church e.g. sidesperson, reading, leading intercessions, making coffee. These were all reviewed by council in the course of this year. And you can find them on the website.

Council held several discussions about improving the quality of singing in church. We support Helen’s selection of music - she tries to choose better known hymns and songs. Since the autumn, the melody lines of the hymns and songs which are not in our “red” hymn book (Ancient and Modern) have been printed on the readings sheet along with the words. The words of all the hymns and songs have also been projected on the screen. Council would welcome any feedback on these two steps.

Helen’s contract was due to expire in March 2024. Council unanimously agreed with the bishop’s decision to extend it. Council also supported changes to the employment package, which include appointing David as Assistant Chaplain.

Querida decided to give up editing the magazine at the end of 2023 - after 13½ years. It proved impossible to find a new editor, so council reluctantly decided to discontinue the magazine. A small group was set up to look at ways of communicating with the congregation and others. This is an ongoing task, but you should already have seen some changes - on the website and elsewhere.

Throughout the year, council members are pleased to welcome newcomers and talk to existing members of St Ursula’s. If you would like more information about what the council does or if you would like to give some input please contact any council member.

Tricia Carrick (Council Secretary)

SPRING AND AUTUMN SALES 2023

We are happy to report that both our Spring Sale on Saturday 11 March and our Autumn Sale on 9 September were successful. We were delighted to welcome many people at our premises, not only regular but also new visitors, who came to browse our stalls and enjoy a cup of coffee with home-baked cakes or the delicious lunch dishes provided by our amazing team of volunteers. As always, the second-hand books, the crumpets, the homemade jams and the food stall were popular.

A big THANK YOU to all who helped with the Sales (without forgetting to mention the International School students, without whom we would have struggled), as well as to all those who came along to support us.

Church Office

GARDEN

The Gardening Team met in varying numbers on 5 occasions during 2023. We like to meet around 9:30 and garden until midday, stopping for a drink/snack break half way through. When half a dozen volunteers spend a couple of hours together, the garden is transformed. On good weather days, we enjoy a picnic together at the end.

The Council decided and had a Jubilee Tree planted in February 2023 in accordance with Queen Elizabeth's wish to grow a Green Canopy in celebration of her 70th Jubilee in 2022. This *Cornus Controversa* tree is growing in the front Church Garden, marked by a plaque donated by the British Embassy.



The rest of the year was dominated by general garden maintenance... sweeping, raking, weeding, pruning, tying in, trimming, hedge cutting and where necessary watering from our own water barrel (which was cleaned in the summer when all too soon it was empty).

A robin and a male blackbird often visit me when alone in the garden, and I believe we have a visiting badger. New and small shrubs have been squashed and I have now made small pyramids of sticks around susceptible plants to avoid more damage. They are there for a reason!

We were unable to distribute the leaf compost in 2023, but live with the hope of extra manpower in early summer 2024, so that we can collect and use the next leaf harvest.

Alison Beindorff

BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Problems TCom dealt with since last year's AGM

Minor interventions are not listed

1. During heavy rains, water penetrated into the laundry room of the Chaplain's house

A removable water barrier was installed. No water penetration since.

2. Blinds on the western side of the lower hall didn't work.

The strings were broken. Outside help was required to replace them.

3. Full drains

The 2 drains on the western side of the hall tract were about to overflow. TCom needed outside support to pump them out.

4. Internet out of order for several hours

This occurred twice. TCom found out that the reason was a Kirchenfeld-wide power failure, confirmed by BKW. No prewarning. The second time the switch-back was erratic and required TCom intervention to restart the Gateway Router.

5. Clogged roof water drainage

The rain water drains on the western side of the hall building and the north-western side of the church were clogged. Removing needles and leaves from the roof and the vertical drainage pipes didn't solve the problem. External help was required because roots were growing into the horizontal part of the drainage system.

6. Several interventions in the Church office

The desktop didn't start-up in the morning, printing was not possible, no Internet access or the telephone didn't work. This was caused by a switched off monitor or by pulled-out cables. The telephone worked again after a reboot.

7. Microphone cabling in the Church

A short circuit occurred for unknown reasons.

8. Cupboard doors

Hinges were ripped out of the wooden frame and needed to be refitted.

9. Urinal

The urinal was overflowing because the drainage was clogged by paper towels. This caused the water to overflow all the way to the kitchen. A sieve was installed.

10. Coffee machines

The water didn't heat up. It was caused by mishandling.

11. Lightning rod on the tree in the front yard

The lightning rod needed to be reinstalled to prevent children from climbing up the tree.

12. Garden shed roof

The roof was damaged by leaning heavy beams against it. The broken part was replaced.

13. Lower hall lighting problem

About half of the fluorescent tubes didn't turn on. They were replaced by LED tubes.

14. Network and data security

The LAN (Local Area Network) was redesigned according to current standards. This included the installation of a new Network gateway router, a Network Adaptable Storage (NAS) together with the change of the IP Address and moving the op-centre from Helen's office to the Workroom. Also some wiring problems were resolved.

15. Weird noises in the attic of the Chaplain's house

The source was not found, they disappeared again.

16. Replacing of the Desktop in the church office

The data of the office Desktop was moved to the NAS and and the Desktop was replaced by a Laptop.

17. Upper hall main door

The bronze washers on the hinges were worn and caused the door to scrape on the floor. Ball bearing washers were installed.

18. Dripping taps of the wash basin in the guest room of the Chaplain's house

New washers were installed.

19. Wireless microphone outage

The microphone cable lost contact to the transmitter. The cable needed to be repaired.

20. Fallen off blind cover

The cover of the blinds on the western side of the upper hall fell off. It needed to be reinstalled.

21. Sermon recording

Some recordings were disrupted. The problem was located and solved by changing the operating procedure.

22. Inspection of the electrical installation

EWB conduct the periodic inspection of the electrical installation. Two minor issues were found and fixed.

23. Water dripping in the lower bathroom of the Chaplain's house

It was caused by leaves on the roof.

24. Printer and TV problem in the Chaplain's house

The TV configuration and David's private printer was an ongoing issue and still is.

25. Chaplain's house: installing smoke/fire detector in the kitchen

Helen and David asked for a smoke/fire detector to be installed in the kitchen over the stove. This was done.

26. Vacuum cleaner not working

The dust bag was full and needed to be replaced.

27. Beamer overheating

The beamer switched off during a service in November. It was caused by overheating. The air filter needed to be cleaned. The task was added to the 3-year tasks of TCom.

TCom/Hans Goepfert

MAGAZINE

Our February - March 2024 issue was the last one to be produced in this format. Querida, who had been our editor for the last 13½ years, stepped down from the post at the end of 2023. We were not able to find anyone to take on this task, so council have reluctantly decided to discontinue the magazine. The purpose of the church magazine was to inform readers of the services and events at St Ursula's, to teach about Christianity and to reach out to the English-speaking community of Berne. You can currently find the above information at www.stursula.ch.

Magazine Collating

Every second month about 250 magazines were sent out. They were already folded and stapled, but it was nice to have some volunteers to help insert any flyers and put the magazines into the envelopes. Usually we were two or three doing the job.

Annemarie Walthert & Church Office

MASTER ROTA FOR SERVICES

After the changing service patterns of the COVID years we have returned to our former routine of six rotas compiled every month for readers, intercessors, chalice assistants, servers, sidespersons and welcomers. The Master Rota shows all assignments for these duties for all the services in a particular month.

Last year we had a total of 60 services; the Master Rota was based on a list of 25 volunteers as of December 2023. A big THANK YOU to all for your loyal support!

New volunteers are urgently needed as sidespersons, welcomers and servers. If you would like to give something back to St Ursula's (apart from financial support), ask one of the rota members involved, our chaplain Helen, or myself about it. We would be happy to answer your questions and to welcome you in one of our rota teams.

Ruth Freiburghaus, Rota Coordinator

PATCHWORK/NEEDLEWORK GROUP

We are a few ladies who share a common interest in patchwork and needlework in general. We are a social group and during the year our main goal is to produce useful, saleable items for the annual Christmas Bazaar. We exchange ideas, help and encourage each other.

We meet on Friday mornings in the church hall from 9:00 to 12:00. We have coffee/tea, and something small to eat during the morning and are pleased to be able to use the kitchen for that purpose.

We are pleased to welcome a member from the past and a new member who is knitting, but we need more participants in order to continue, so please feel free to come and see what we are doing. Our work is not about perfection - goodwill and interest are sufficient.

We do have supplies some of which have been kindly donated, and are always glad to receive these.

We have had a donation of linen tea towels which can be embroidered (easy cross-stitch) so if anyone would like to do this at home we can get you started with the materials needed.

Feel free to contact us directly:

Silvia: 031 972 17 83, Helen: 079 741 68 27,
Liz: 078 734 94 50,
St Ursula's Church Office: 031 352 85 67.



MUSIC



This year has unfortunately seen a reduction in the number of musicians able and willing to contribute to leading the music in our services. At the end of 2023, the group playing at St Ursula's only had six members - Brian, Manuel, Peter, Tony, Tricia and Vaibhav. On most Sundays, there are one or two musicians - but on some special occasions there have been more. Tony and Judith continue to contribute to the music at the services in Thun.

Helen continues to select the hymns and songs that we sing. The musicians usually choose the music played before and after the service and during communion. As the singing during communion was not good, since the summer we have had instrumental music then instead of worship songs.

As some people like statistics (well, I do!), here are some: In 2023 we sang 126

different hymns and songs (excluding the children's songs) in our services at St Ursula's. Of these, 54 were from *Ancient and Modern*; 38 from *Worship Today*; 16 from *Hymns Old and New*; 13 from the Christmas Carol Sheet and 5 others. We sang 66 of these hymns and songs only once in the year; 23 twice; 21 three times; 10 four times; 4 five times and 2 six times. The most popular, being sung six times each, were AM 203 "O praise ye the Lord" and WT 34 "Be still for the presence of the Lord".

Unfortunately in 2023 we were no longer able to appreciate the sung liturgy as there was no one able to play it. However, we hope to change that in 2024.

In the course of 2023, various people commented on the poor singing in church, so council agreed to two changes:

- printing the melody line of the songs which are not in "Ancient and Modern" on the "readings" sheet each week,
- projecting (again) the words of all the hymns and songs.

These both seem to be positive steps. Any feedback you have would be welcomed by the musicians and the council.

In 2024, we really, really need some more musicians to join the group so that we can continue to contribute to our worship - on Sundays and other occasions. Please pray for this - and ask anyone you know who might be able to help.

Tricia Carrick (on behalf of the music group)

PASTORAL CARE

The Pastoral Care Team has grown this year. The members include: Donna Goepfert, Archana Jacob, Cecily Klingler, Sandra Peter, Chris Sager, Patricia Schwager and myself. (Associate members who join in with praying for those who request prayers but do not attend meetings include: Barbara Winfield, Art Funkhouser, Lynn and Brian Morgan and Chloë Hodler.)



The Pastoral Care Team pray regularly for those who request our prayers. (If you would like the team to pray for you or with you please let me know.) They also send cards and make phone calls. Visits are generally only made to those who can be counted as 'friends'. Visiting on a more 'official' capacity needs to be done in pairs with at least one of the pair having completed all the Safeguarding training up to Leadership level. All the group have undertaken some Safeguarding training and are in the process of getting Safeguarding clearance.

The Team also send out cards to families and individuals on the first anniversary of a baptism. This reminds us that we are called to share in the joys as well as the sorrows of members of the congregation. As part of this wider understanding of pastoral care, we seek to offer welcome and encouragement to visitors and new members of the congregation. The welcome team also helps with this.

During this last year, we held a session on Mental Health and the Christian Faith which reminded us that we are called to be a community where those who are struggling with their mental health find friendship and support.

It is important to remember that pastoral care is not just to be left to a few people. We are all called to care for one another. We hope that the new House Groups when they start up soon will encourage mutual support and care.

During this coming year, we are planning two healing services (5 May and 29 September) which will provide an opportunity for formal prayer for healing during the service, and time for an informal chat and prayer after the service. David and myself will be offering the formal prayers. The members of the Pastoral Care Team will share with us in offering informal prayers after the service for those who request this.

Revd Helen Marshall

FLOWERS

As far as I can remember, there have always been flowers in Church on a Sunday in St Ursula's - as in most churches (the times of Lent and Advent being exceptions).

Preparing and choosing of nature's abundance for floral arrangements, to enhance God's church and worship, is a special joy and privilege for our team. Sources are: fields, woods, gardens, market stands, garden centres and shops.



We take it in turns, usually once a month. We give our time and costs as an offering to the Lord. We, that is Chris, Patricia (Tik), Stephanie and myself Chloë. At least two more ladies in the team would be much appreciated! No skills needed (except love of flowers) - all of us have learnt by doing.

On special occasions, such as Easter, Pentecost or Harvest festival we team up to decorate.

Would anybody like to join us? Just give me a call: Chloë 078 754.26 26

Chloë Hodler

ECO CHURCH

In 2020 we earned a bronze award as an eco-church - one of the many churches in the Church of England who have taken significant steps towards respecting the world around us. We aim to keep pressure on our environment as light as we can, encouraging everyone to waste less, to use less fuel, to love our neighbours by not heating up their climate, by not killing off the plant and animal life that sustains them, by not clogging up their roads. Last year has been a year of putting ideas into practice, but doing far less in terms of gathering ideas - of steady pressure rather than radical action. Perhaps we need new energy - from you?



We have made our buildings more energy-efficient. We have made church catering less wasteful - we try to avoid “junk food”, “disposable crockery”, and to provide a tip every week how members can do likewise. We are lucky that many of our council members and our congregation - including Helen herself, of course - are so ecologically committed. It is tempting for me, as Local Environment Officer, to put my feet up and relax!

There is still much work to do. I keep in touch with my fellow LEOs in the other chaplaincies around Switzerland, and we pool ideas. The diocesan Caring for Creation team in London also circulates ideas, and the charity A Rocha International from its base in Geneva encourages us and provides advice as well.

Since 2022, the Diocese has had a Net Zero Working Group, seeking to reduce the balance of greenhouse gas emissions in every chaplaincy to zero: this needs input from every part of the church, to monitor our heating and lighting energy use, our insulation efficiency and our travel patterns - not just Helen and David's, but of everyone.

There is a next step. Our Eco-church award is as yet only a bronze one. Silver and gold still lie before us. For that, creation care must become an instinct, a way of life. It is nice if neighbours can share a lift to church, but some do not realize that within a short walk of church, six different bus or tram routes can whisk us to other parts of the city within a few minutes. I do not fly to England - I go by train (and not just because it is almost carbon neutral, but because it is just as quick and far more comfortable (though the railways' labour relations could be improved!)) How many of us think, when we fill our washing-up bowl, that this is expensively-produced drinking water - are we using it carefully? For our behaviour to the world around us, and to all our neighbours, should truly reflect our love.

Hector Davie

CHARITY AND MISSION

The task of the Charity and Mission Team is fourfold:

- To draw up a proposal towards the end of the year for Council on how to allocate the church's charity giving.
- To keep in contact with the organizations we are supporting.
- To pass on news about the organizations to the congregation.
- To help our church family pray faithfully for the people we support with our gifts.

For many years St Ursula's church has set aside 10% of the pledged giving for charitable and missionary work. This year CHF 25'000 was allocated for charitable support, which is 11.4% of the church income.

After we prayerfully reviewed the list of organizations supported in previous years, council then approved our allocations proposal, and the funds were distributed in 2023 as follows:

Allocations for Charity Payments 2023

Local	CHF
Discretionary (to be used locally)	700.00
AKiB Passantenhilfe	1200.00
AKiB (new: low threshold legal advice/counselling for Migrants in Bern)	1200.00
Regional	
Bishop's Lent Appeal (Resourcing Ministry in Rabat, Morocco)	1000.00
Bishop's Advent Appeal (Anglican Communion Fund South Asia for women in Pakistan & S. India, Aid for Hpa-An Diocese in Myanmar after rat plague))	1000.00
International	
Partner Sein (Old Catholic Relief organization)	3700.00
A Rocha International	2700.00
Cecily's Fund, Zambia	2700.00
Children's Convalescent Home, Talagolla, Sri Lanka	2700.00
Holy Land Institute for the Deaf, SALT Jordan	2700.00
Refuge Egypt, All Saints Cathedral Cairo, Egypt	2700.00
Scripture Union South Africa, Life Skills Project	2700.00
Total	<u>25000.00</u>



In addition to the allocated payments, we also made dedicated payments as shown in the financial report.

Our yearly Mission Sunday service on 12 February was an All-Age service. Our chaplain Helen gave a talk helped by the Junior Church children about the charities we support at St Ursula's and the Anglican 5 Marks of Mission.

A Pumpkin Soup Meal at St Ursula's organised by Yvonne Bomonti and helpers raised funds for Swiss friends of Cecily's Fund on 19 November and a Benefit concert was held in Bern on 22 November.

Our customary Harvest Festival was held on 8 October. After the Harvest Service we had an auction of the Harvest gifts and the proceeds of the auction went to our Tearfund Schweiz project, Kigezi Diocese Water and Sanitation project (KDWSP) as always. The Junior Church has resumed having their Junior Church collections for the TearFund Schweiz KDWSP project and have had one or two JC sessions about the project.

On 7 July, we had a visit from Father Jamil Khadir with his newly wed wife, the new Director of the Holy Institute for the Deaf in Salt (HLID), Jordan. He was accompanied by Stephan Killgus from the German Friends of the HLID and Rafael Graf who is the new President of the Swiss Friends of the HLID. Unfortunately, the date was not ideal for us (start of the summer holidays) as only three of our Charity team could be present and no other church members came although they were invited. The talk however was very encouraging about the work and outreach of the HLID and Father Jamil encouraged members of our church to visit and have a 'hands on' experience at the HLID. Both Stephan and Rafael have worked there.

Our local charity project, the Passantenhilfe Food and Toiletries Collection continues to be supported by our congregation who bring items along to church on Sundays. Church members can also bring their food items directly to the Passantenhilfe Office. The numbers of needy persons continue to increase due to the rising costs of living. The Passantenhilfe are very grateful for these food, toiletry, and winter clothing items. The Charity Team is grateful for Art Funkhouser who takes the collected items regularly to the Passantenhilfe Office.

We do thank our church family for its continuing support in the past year. We encourage all of you to keep the institutions we support in your prayers. Please check the board in the church hall for our charity focus displays and information about other charities and missions. Unfortunately, as our St Ursula's magazine no longer exists, we can no longer give our bimonthly charity focuses here. Our Charity and Missions Team is brainstorming to find other means of giving you updates and news about our charities.

The Charity and Mission Team:

Chaplain, Hector Davie, Donna Goepfert, Esther Hutchison, Cecily Klingler, Pieter Perrett, Contact person: Cecily Klingler, 031 302 48 59 or cecily@klinglerfamily.ch

Cecily Klingler

ARCHDEACONRY SYNOD

Everyone knows what a diocese is, and the work of a bishop in looking after it and guiding it safely. Below our bishop, Robert Innes, and a team of leaders who support him, there are other teams, too, which try to co-ordinate the church's work in a specific area - they are known as archdeaconries, and we are lucky in Switzerland that the ten largest chaplaincies (Geneva, La Côte, Lausanne, Vevey, Montreux, Neuchatel, Berne, Basle, Zurich, Lugano, with their satellite congregations) can meet to discuss common problems which afflict us all locally in a synod twice a year. (The clergy meet more often in a "chapter meeting" to discuss their own concerns.)



Hector Davie and Maxine Wildhaber represent St Ursula's lay congregation on the Swiss synod, and Helen is a member ex officio. Our other clergy are also entitled to attend. We are led by our Archdeacon, the Venerable Dr Peter Hooper, who lives in south-western France, and has the double burden of coordinating the work of the French chaplaincies in the (separate) Archdeaconry of France as well as facing our distinctively Swiss issues.

These issues include our Swiss Archdeaconry Christian education programme, SACEP, together with occasional training sessions and seminars. We sponsor an annual choir festival and an annual retreat. In 2023, the choir festival was in Basle at the end of May. We also try to work together with the Old Catholics (the Christkatholische Kirche / Église Catholique-Chrétienne), and support their mission agency, Partner Sein.

Synod met only once in the period under review, at St Andrew's Zurich on 30 September 2023. Members could optionally attend via Zoom, but this made counting votes and moving amendments very difficult - we plan to avoid such "hybrid" formats in future.

Archdeacon Peter Hooper introduced the meeting, and Synod had a valuable Bible study with Dr Clare Amos, our Diocesan Director of Lay Discipleship, on the nature of discipleship. The rest of the morning was taken up with electing officers and committees, as this was the first meeting of the 2023-2026 triennium.

After lunch Synod discussed future meeting plans - in person, via Zoom, and perhaps a third meeting extending over two or three days. We also hope to plan

meetings for people with common interests from different chaplaincies (churchwardens, youth workers, communications providers, for example).

The last item of formal business was about the environment. The Archdeacon presented the Diocese's plan "Caring for Creation". This requires wide support from all chaplaincies, particularly in the achievement of net zero carbon emissions by 2030, and active collaboration by all chaplaincies, including ours, in surveys of building construction, insulation, fuel use and travel. More information is on the diocese's website - see <https://www.europe.anglican.org/caring-creation>. Synod was asked, but failed, to find an Archdeaconry Environment Officer (AEO) to coordinate and encourage the work of the local officers in the chaplaincies. Our meeting concluded with a celebration of the Eucharist.

For more details about the things we discussed, ask any of our synod members.

Hector Davie

ELECTORAL ROLL

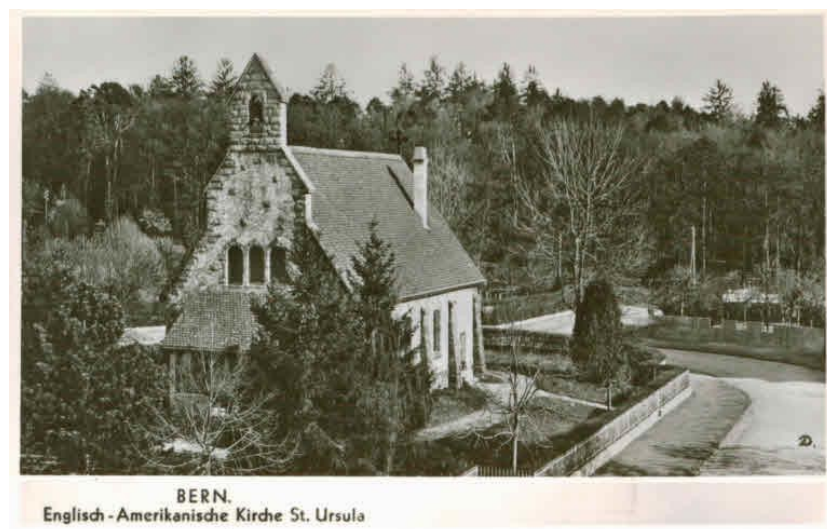
The Electoral Roll is the list of the full voting members of St Ursula's. These are the people who can vote at the AGM and propose candidates for election. After being on the Electoral Roll for at least six months, people can also stand for election.

Every year, the Electoral Roll is revised under the direction of council. This year, the revision was completed on 31 March. There were 12 additions and 1 deletion. So the number of people on the Electoral Roll in 2024 is 115.

Since the revision, the Electoral Roll has been displayed on the notice board in the church hall.

If you would like more information about the Electoral Roll please contact me.

Tricia Carrick, Electoral Roll Officer



VESTRY

The vestry provides everything needed for church services: communion wafers (regular as well as gluten-free), wine, candles, the church linen and silver.

Our church administrator is in charge of buying all supplies. I am grateful for her reliable support. There is not a central source of “vestry items” in Switzerland, for example the gluten-free wafers come from Germany, the candles from a candle manufacturer in Givisiez etc. So we often have to plan months ahead to make sure that the vestry items arrive on time.



Donna Goepfert and Mary Mead shared the washing of church linens: all items used for communion as well as the altar and side table cloths.

I was initiated into the care of the vestry last Spring by Ruth Freiburghaus and took over officially a few months later. In the following months, I cleared the cupboards of unusable or half-burnt candles and attempted a general clear-out. I will carry on with this project in the coming year. A big thank you goes to Ruth for all her help, guidance and advice.

Mary Mead & Church Office

WEBMASTER

In this changing age of mass media, mass influencers, artificial intelligence, cyber this and cyber that, it is easy to lose sight of the patient spider, busily building, industriously rebuilding and patiently waiting in the shadows. But without a network of communications, Isaiah’s prophecy of good news being brought to the humble would be massively hindered. The Gospel is a message, and keeping it secret, keeping it to ourselves is not what it is about.

We have used “the web” since 1996 as one of many ways to let others know about us. In 2023, this became a theme for discussion, particularly as your Council set up a group to consider how to keep our members in touch with what is going on - Querida Long’s retirement as magazine editor prompted thoughts about what mix of web pages, social media, newsletters, notice sheets and personal contacts would fit our purpose best. We would value your thoughts on the topic!

Over the past 28 years, St Ursula’s has amassed a wealth of information, not all of it useful information. People still benefit from listening to old sermons (www.stursula.ch/Sermons/) and reading Helen’s regular letters (www.stursula.ch/Coronavirus.html). There’s a lot more - look at our sitemap (www.stursula.ch/sitemap.html). We are working to keep our information more

up-to-date, with more people involved in keeping pages current - my thanks for all who have provided input!

We have made greater use of the Church of England's overarching website, A Church near You (www.achurchnearyou.com - try it out now!). This is an excellent way of making new contacts and of staying in touch generally.

Over the year, over 17'000 real people visited our website (several million visits were paid by the automated search engines which try to harvest and to index our information). Real people like to know what's on, whether they are involved in any forthcoming services, they like to listen again to the Sunday sermon and to keep in touch with Helen's letters. By trying to provide for their needs, we can take one small step along the path towards including ever more people in God's work here where we are.

Hector Davie, Webmaster



INFORMATION ABOUT ST URSULA'S CHURCH

St Ursula's Church is one of the nine Swiss chaplaincies that have a resident chaplain (minister) and together form the Archdeaconry of Switzerland. This is part of the Anglican Diocese of Europe which stretches from the Canary Islands to Ankara, from Moscow to Morocco.

The church was built in 1906 on a site that had been given to the community by the British-Berne Land Company. An American lady, Mrs Castleman from St Louis, provided the bulk of the money for the building as an offering of thanks for the near miraculous recovery of her adopted daughter, who was treated at the clinic of the famous Professor Kocher.

The hall and the house were added in 1959 and then extended (thanks to a windfall grant from the Canton of Berne) in 1992. An English Missionary Society, the USPG, helped to support the church from its earliest days. Since 1977, however, the chaplaincy has been fully self-supporting, relying solely on its members and well-wishers for its financial support.

St Ursula's has a long tradition of ministry to all English-speaking people in the Canton of Berne and beyond. It also provides a home for Christians from many different denominations and cultural backgrounds. Regular worshippers are encouraged to add their names to the Electoral Roll and so play a full part in the life of the church. Details of how to join the Electoral Roll can be obtained from the Churchwardens or any member of the Church Council.

Current Members of the Church Council

Churchwardens:

Martin Browne	079 953 96 76
Sue Higson	076 690 50 88

Lay Members:

Michael Agoba	078 811 19 46
Martin Browne	079 953 96 76
Tricia Carrick (secretary)	031 971 27 71
Sue Higson	076 690 50 88
Archana Jacob	031 859 64 12
Lilian Morgan	026 543 00 84
Pieter Perrett	032 665 49 70
Chris Sager (vice chair)	
Ruby Wildhaber	078 808 75 15

Lay Representatives to Archdeaconry Synod:

Hector Davie	031 971 27 71
Maxine Wildhaber	076 349 40 42