

# **St Ursula's Church Berne**



## **Annual Reports for 2024**

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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



Chaplain: Revd Helen Marshall

Assist. Chaplain: Revd David Marshall

Curate: Revd James Morgan (from 29 June 2024)

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## CHAPLAIN'S REPORT

We have continued to see many encouragements in the life of St Ursula's this year, 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 grow our congregation, and develop our ministry with children and families. Priorities for the year also included establishing the new House Groups, starting a teenager group, and considering how we reach out to the marginalized. During the year we also prioritized the formation of a new Eco Group and taking practical steps to work towards the Silver Eco Church award.

1. Growing our Congregation: We continue to welcome new people into our congregation, including some new families, teenagers and young adults. The number attending worship can vary between 50 and 100 adults, with the average being around 75. Many people comment on the fact that our congregation is made up of people from many different nationalities; something we celebrate with our annual Pentecost lunch. Our Racial Diversity Group has suggested a variety of ways we can celebrate our diversity and ensure that everyone feels welcome to participate in the different activities of the church. (*See the Racial Diversity Group report*).

Despite the number of people attending our services increasing, the number on the new electoral roll has decreased. This is because some older members have not re-joined and some newer members do not want to be on the electoral roll for whatever reason.

2. Children and Families: Although some of our families have moved away this year, we have also welcomed several new families. There are usually between 10 and 20 children and young people under sixteen on a Sunday. The children make an invaluable contribution to our weekly services, through their interesting, intelligent and sometimes surprising comments during the children's talk. I am very thankful for those who put time and effort into teaching and helping in Junior Church and Crèche. We always welcome new teachers and helpers. (*See the Junior Church report*). We have continued with our monthly All Age service, seeking to involve children and young people more fully in our services. We ran another course for 7 older children to receive communion this year and we had a full and lively service in December when these children received communion for the first time. The Children's Activity Day took a lot of time and effort to organize, but sadly it was less well attended this year. We have decided not to run another activity day this coming year.



3. New Teens Group: A new group started last April, meeting once a month during the Sunday service. The group has gone through ups and downs with a small

number attending some meetings, but since the beginning of 2025 it seems to be building up. Some of the young people have read in the Sunday service and we hope to encourage them to take a more active role in the life of the church. There are 11 young people on the list (aged between 12 and 16) and there have been 8 attending the last couple of meetings. (*See the Teens Group report*). I am very thankful to both James and Sandra for leading this group between April and November 2024. Since November, James has been leading the group with a different helper each session (for Safeguarding reasons). Please pray for James and pray for new leaders. If you are interested in this very important ministry do speak to me or James. Let us pray that this new group will continue to grow in numbers and in faith and friendship.

4. 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 Worship, Prayer and Study report for details*).

5. House Groups: House groups finally started up this last year after almost a year of reflecting and planning. There are three groups: two in Berne (a Tuesday group and a Thursday group, meeting most weeks) and one in Thun (meeting monthly on a Thursday). The groups have 10-12 members, though there are not always this number of people attending each session. I hear very good reports from the groups: members appreciate being able to study the Bible, ask questions, share concerns, pray together and support one another. David and I have met with the leaders of the groups several times to encourage them in their faith and to talk through any organizational issues. A very big thank you to the leaders and the hosts of these groups.



6. Reaching out to the Marginalised: This was another priority set for this last year. We have not got very far with this, but James gave a talk recently about his volunteer work with the Drop-In Day Centre of the Heilsarmee. This was well attended and I hope it will prompt further thought and reflection. I hope we can continue to think about ways we can welcome and support refugees and those who suffer from physical disabilities, mental health issues and addictions. We continue to collect donations for the Passantenhilfe and these donations are very warmly received.

7. Environmental Concerns: Our Council Day Away this last year focused on Eco concerns and how we could move forwards in working towards our Eco Church

Silver Award. A new Eco Group was formed with several younger members who have a passionate energy and concern about these issues. This led to an Eco Forum in January 2025 which was very well attended and positively received. The responses to the survey conducted at that Forum are the basis for our next steps. (See the EcoGroup Report).

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, Sue and Pieter, for their time and energy in supporting the 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. As Sue steps down as Churchwarden this year, we need to pray for a new Churchwarden. I am also very thankful to Maria, our Administrator, who is so cheerful, gracious and efficient and does such an excellent job.

During this last year, TCom came to an end. I want to express a VERY BIG thank you to all the members of TCom for all they gave of their time, skill and energy over many, many years. They did a huge amount in looking after the buildings, the IT and the sound desk, and we are very grateful for all their time and commitment. Since the TCom members stepped down at the end of October, we have sought to build up three teams of volunteers to help in these areas. A big thank you to them.



Thank you too to our gardening team who work on our church grounds. 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. These events are always appreciated by those who attend, although the amount of money raised has been rather less this year. We need to reflect on the best way forward concerning fundraising.

Thank you to all those who serve the church in so many different ways as readers, intercessors, musicians, sidespeople, welcomers, altar servers, Junior Church and Teens Group 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. We rejoice in the recent births of Summer Cameron, Gabrionel Chandra, Jesse Aduba and Lydia Kilchmann. There have been two baptisms this last year: Praise Aduba and Summer Cameron. We look forward to the baptisms of Gabrionel, Jesse and Lydia in the near future. We also grieve with those who have lost family members this last year, and we especially remember Querida, Markus and Sam after Olivia's unexpected death. Her memorial service was a very sad but memorable occasion. I also took a memorial service for Annegret Kapossy who was well known by several people in the congregation. I hope and pray we will continue to share our joys and sorrows together, and support one another as a Christian community.

During this last year, James Morgan was ordained Deacon at a joyful service in Brussels. I am very grateful for his ministry over this last year and all he has contributed to the life of the church. I know this has been very much appreciated. We look forward to his ordination as a Priest at the end of June. Hopefully this service will be held in St Ursula's. Please keep James, Lilian and the family in your prayers, and remember that James is a Self-Supporting Curate, and he continues his work as lecturer at Fribourg University and therefore only has limited time to give to St Ursula's. Please also pray for Archana, our Lay Reader. Archana has had a demanding year with work commitments, and it looks like this will continue in the foreseeable future. Archana and I are in close contact, and we will continue to assess how she might be able to be involved in ministry as her circumstances allow it. I am very grateful to her for her continued prayer and support.

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 he has given to the life of St Ursula's this last year. Since March 2024, David has been employed by St Ursula's as part-time Assistant Chaplain and I have been able to reduce my work hours a little. I am grateful for this and I am sure everyone has benefited from David's rich ministry (including his preaching and teaching, pastoral work, and leading of the Men's Group) during this year.

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 strengthen our work with children and families, and especially to build up the new Teens Group. I also hope that the House Groups will be further established and prove to be a rich source of blessing, both for those who attend and for the wider church. We will also seek to continue to move forwards with practical steps to encourage one another to care for the environment and live more sustainably.

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

1. Build up the Teens Group and encourage new leaders and helpers.
2. Review our giving and our fundraising events. This will be the topic of our Council Day Away this year.
3. Consider how we welcome new members to the church, explain the different activities of the church, and encourage reflection on what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

As we review this last year, let us be thankful for all that has been good. Let us also look ahead with trust and confidence, remembering that it is not our church but God's church, and he will give us the guidance, wisdom and 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 worship together over this last year and to welcome new members and visitors. Our average Sunday attendance is around 75 adults and 13-15 children and young people under sixteen. We have sought this year to involve a wider range of people of different ages and nationalities in our services. The Eucharists on Easter Day and Pentecost were particular highlights, as was David's Licensing service with Archdeacon Peter Hooper, and the special service in December at which several children received communion for the first time. It was a joy seeing so many people in church on these occasions. Thank you to those of you who come regularly, Sunday by Sunday. I hope we can all include regular Sunday worship as an important part of our Christian discipleship.



• Music in worship: We continue to sing both traditional hymns and modern worship songs in our services, seeking to hold together the different traditions within the congregation. We are hoping also to sing songs from other cultures and in other languages from time to time, and occasionally to include choral items as we did last Easter Sunday. I am very grateful to the musicians who serve on a rota to lead the music in our worship. We are always glad to welcome new musicians to join this group, especially as Vaibhav will sadly be leaving us this year.

- Thun services: Services are now held once a month, as the Thun House Group also meets once a month. The Thun group is small (5-10 attending the services and up to 12 attending the House Group) but with a strong sense of fellowship and mutual pastoral care. We had a very joyful Thun Carol service this year with nearly 50 people attending.
- Other Churches and Services: In December, we held the traditional carol service at the Heiliggeistkirche, together with Bruder Klaus Roman Catholic church. This was a lovely service and well attended by members of the two congregations and people of the town. I took part in the Ecumenical Service in January which was held in the French church this year. I was unable to attend the Nacht der Religionen service this year, but others from St Ursula's attended. St Ursula's again hosted the Chrism Service for fellow chaplains in Switzerland to renew their ordination vows and this will take place again here this Holy Week. There have been several online Diocesan services during the year. David has also taken several services at the Anglican church in Basel, which is in interregnum.
- Communion for the housebound: I continue to take communion to those who are housebound, sick or in hospital and who cannot attend worship at St Ursula's.

## Prayer

- Lectio Divina: The group has continued to meet (online) on a Wednesday morning, to reflect on a short passage of Scripture and use that as a basis for prayer. We usually reflect on one of the readings which will be read in church the following Sunday. There is a core group of 5-8 people who attend regularly, and others join us from time to time, including some who live further afield (one is in Florence!). 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 as we learn from one another. Come and join us!
- Morning Prayer during Lent: During Lent last year we encouraged people to join us online for Morning Prayer (and 5-15 people joined us each day). We will be doing the same this year too and everyone is welcome.
- Lent Quiet Morning: A special time for scripture reading, reflection, silence and prayer is planned for this Lent (15 March in church).
- 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 the ministry that David and I offer, 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 at All Times*, there are usually resources for prayer, (poems, prayers or meditations). I often get very positive feedback about these.

## Study

- Talks and Discussions in Church: We have held a variety of talks and discussions after church. In 2025 these included the Eco Forum (attended by 60 people), and a talk by James Morgan about his volunteer work at the Drop-In Day Centre of the Heilsarmee.

- Alpha Course: David and I led an Alpha course this year. It was very much appreciated by the 2 people who attended and led to some very stimulating discussions and deepening faith and commitment. We are open to doing this again, hopefully with more people.

- Men's Group: The Men's Group has continued to meet approximately every 6 weeks, with typically around 12 people attending. The meetings are on a Saturday morning with breakfast, and have included Bible study and discussions of various topics. The group also enjoyed a Quiet Day together in Adelboden. The friendship, support and prayer that the group offers is valued by many. A big thank you to David and James for leading this group.

- Ladies' Breakfast: A group of 12 women in the church met recently for breakfast, followed by a Bible study on Mary and Martha. This was very stimulating and encouraging with everyone taking part. There was a strong desire to do it again!

- House Groups: Regular Bible study takes place in the weekly House Groups. The studies are based on the readings from the previous Sunday. The preacher sends out their sermon with some suggested questions for further reflection and discussion. A big thank you to all the House Group leaders and hosts.

*Revd Helen Marshall*



## CHURCHWARDENS

### Wardens' report including Fabric report

2024 has been a positive year with increased attendance at all our services. The main challenge for the wardens came as a result of the decision by TCom to disband at the end of October 2024. TCom has played a crucial role in maintaining our premises, running the sound desk and maintaining our IT systems for many years. Their experience has been invaluable, so the decision to disband required us to adapt quickly.

The decision was made to divide the work into three teams, sound desk, IT management and the building maintenance.

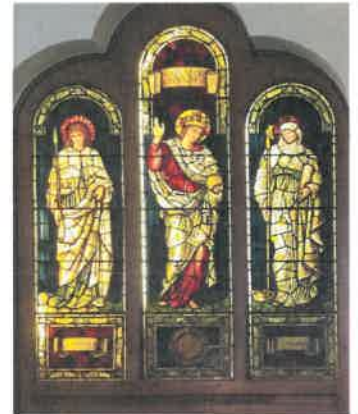
**Sound Desk:** we managed to quickly form a team of volunteers to manage the sound desk, although council also made the decision at the same time not to project the words of the hymns/songs. There are three reasons for this:

1. To allow the team to get more experience before adding the complexity of projection.
2. Operating the projector requires significant concentration, limiting the operator's ability to engage in the spiritual aspects of the service.
3. Our current projector is old and unreliable; it can fail part way through a service.

A big thanks to all our sound desk volunteers - Dmytry, Vinitha, Jonathan, Adiza, and Pieter.

**IT Management:** we were very fortunate to find Mike in our congregation who came forward as a volunteer. Mike is incredibly well qualified to deal with all our IT requirements. While the handover has taken some time, we are thankful that no major issues have arisen. We also managed to get a number of free licences for Microsoft 365 and so are slowly migrating administration, chaplaincy and council work to this platform. A big thanks to Mike Whitfield and Susan Spälti for taking on these tasks.

**Building Maintenance:** so far we have been fortunate that no major issues have arisen; however, we do have a team of volunteers that can be contacted. Sue is also working on finding a paid tradesman to be our emergency call out and go to person for all other tasks. The budget for 2025 will be adjusted accordingly. If you would like to join the maintenance team, please let Sue know.



**Building fabric:** thanks to the efforts of TCom, the church building is in good condition. However, as part of our ongoing care for the church building we are looking at some specific issues:

- the space around the organ needs attention, as musicians have reported it being cold there.
- the Men's toilets are now designated as unisex, as they have handicapped facilities, making access easier for those using wheelchairs or mobility walkers etc.
- roof maintenance is becoming a priority. The house roof and hall roofs, which are over 50 years old, could have solar panels if they were newer. These will likely need work in 2025 or 2026. The church roof itself cannot support solar panels, but should be inspected.
- the upper hall blinds will be removed due to maintenance issues. With our triple glazed windows, they are no longer necessary. Their removal will save future repairs and maintenance costs.
- the kitchen remains on our list for an upgrade, including new appliances and an improved layout.
- the church house bathroom will require renovation at some point, but this is not planned for 2025.

**NetZero project:** The Diocese in Europe is actively promoting the NetZero initiative and the wardens are responsible to implement measures related to that in the Church. This goes beyond our Eco Church measures as the goal is to achieve net zero emission by 2030. As part of this, we are exploring Solar energy options for electricity and heating, which is currently gas-based.



**Changes in Warden Roles:** Sue has decided not to stand for re-election as warden at the current AGM. She feels it is not feasible to continue with both roles of treasurer and warden. As no treasurer has been found, it may be easier to appoint a new warden or an assistant warden to ensure the responsibilities of the role are effectively managed.

Sue has been a dedicated warden for many years; her contributions have left a lasting impact, and while she is stepping down from this role, we are very grateful that she will continue to be involved in the IT and Maintenance teams, as well as the gardening team.

Contact us under [feedback@stursula.ch](mailto:feedback@stursula.ch) if there is anything you wish to bring to our attention.

*Sue Higson and Pieter Perrett, Churchwardens*

## THUN SERVICES & CONGREGATION



In 2024, our Eucharist service took place at the lovely Chapelle Romande near Thun Station on the first Tuesday of the month at 18:00. We were usually around 5-12 people. In December, we had our annual Carol service which draws many people from the area, and is always followed by refreshments donated by the Thun congregation. This year the refreshments were served outside with us warmed by a fire, which was a great atmosphere, even if everyone smelt of smoke the next day.

Our housegroup meets on the third Thursday of each month, also at 18:00, and this has proved to be a very supportive and valuable group. Some members were apprehensive to start with, but now enjoy coming to the group, which is usually hosted by Donata in the centre of Thun. The time together allows us to study a bible passage as well as share concerns and pray for each other.

If anyone would like more information about the Thun service or housegroup, please contact Helen, or come along to a service on the first Tuesday of the month. The dates are on the website.

*Sue Higson*

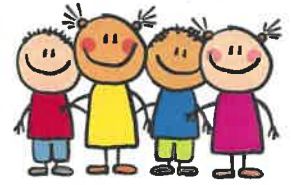
## CRÈCHE

The Crèche offers the little ones an enjoyable experience and allows their parents to focus on worship. In 2024, there were often no or very few children. Hence, we decided that Crèche helpers start helping with Junior Church with a special emphasis on looking after the youngest ones in case they - possibly together with their parents - are present. For this purpose we have toys ready in the Upper Hall.

*Dominic Roser, Crèche Coordinator*

## JUNIOR CHURCH

This year (2024) the number of children on our list increased to nineteen. This naturally fluctuates as people come and go. So we were pleased to welcome some new families and sad to say goodbye to others.



This year we had an average of 8 children in Junior Church and Crèche each Sunday, with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 19 - this was on the Sunday when we were preparing the Nativity Play. The irregular attendance makes it hard for teachers to prepare, as they never know whether they will have any children in their group.

We have a great team of five teachers and three Crèche helpers. But we would certainly welcome more to join us. After seven years, Ruby unfortunately had to step down from leading Junior Church because of work commitments. We want to thank her for her faithful years of teaching and hope she will be able to come back and join us again soon.

### **Teaching**

This year, we have adapted our teaching to try to fit better with our children - as they are getting older. For example, we have had almost no children in Crèche this year. So from October, we have been holding Junior Church and Crèche all together. We have three helpers each Sunday: one for the under three's, one for those aged three to six and one for those aged seven and over. However, the boundaries are flexible, depending on a child's ability. Most of the time - singing, games, activities etc - is spent together, but we do split into groups for the story telling. This was agreed mainly to give the older children a chance to read the story in the bible itself and to have time to discuss it. At the same time the younger children have more age-related activities.

### **Activity Day**

We held an activity day on the 24 August on the subject of "God Feeds Us". It was disappointing that only 12 children attended. However, those of us who were there certainly had fun. There were 8 adults leading and organising, together with the parents who stayed with the children under 6.

### **Nativity Play**

This took place during the service on 15 December. Nine children had speaking parts - and they all knew their lines and said them very well. There were also three angels and five shepherds. So, in total 19 children took part - accompanied



by our excellent narrator and two readers. Everyone present seemed to enjoy it, and many commented on how much they appreciated the addition of the story of the birth of John the Baptist.

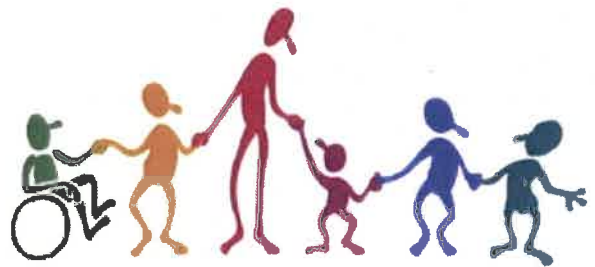
*Tricia Carrick (on behalf of the Junior Church)*

## **SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

### **Aim:**

At St Ursula's, we are committed to:

- Caring for and nurturing a respectful pastoral ministry with all children and adults.
- Safeguarding and protecting all children, young people, and adults when they are vulnerable.



- Establishing safe, caring communities that provide a loving environment where a culture of 'informed vigilance' regarding the dangers of abuse is fostered.

Safeguarding checks are mandatory for all individuals working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults at our church. Junior Church/Crèche leaders, helpers, and Pastoral Team members must renew their safeguarding checks and training every three years. It is an ongoing process to ensure that all have completed or renewed their safeguarding checks and training. We currently have a limited number of Junior Church and Crèche leaders and helpers who have fulfilled their safeguarding requirements. While this is challenging, we must adhere to our Diocesan Safeguarding Policy. More helpers for the Junior Church would alleviate this situation, so please consider if you could assist!

Hosts and leaders of our now established house groups also require safeguarding checks and must complete the necessary safeguarding training.

All council members must complete the required safeguarding training, including 'Basic Awareness', 'Foundations', and the 'Domestic Abuse' online training.

A broader group of individuals in our church, such as sidepersons, readers, intercessors, and servers visible during Sunday worship, must also undergo a basic safeguarding check. Our council approve our St Ursula's safeguarding policy annually.

The council has approved a Chaplaincy Domestic Abuse Statement for St Ursula's. We firmly believe that all forms of domestic abuse are wrong and must end. We are dedicated to promoting and supporting environments that:

- Ensure all individuals feel welcomed, respected, and safe from abuse.
- Protect those vulnerable to domestic abuse from actual or potential harm.
- Recognize equality among individuals and within relationships.
- Enable and encourage concerns to be raised and addressed appropriately and consistently.



St Ursula's also assumes that any form of bullying or harassment perpetrated by any member of the laity or clergy towards another individual is unacceptable. We adhere to the June 2022 Diocese in Europe Anti-bullying and Harassment policy.

Safeguarding training is available online or through virtual video training sessions.

### **Diocese in Europe Training Pathway:**

**Basic Awareness Online Course:** Recommended for anyone seeking a basic understanding of safeguarding.

**Foundation Online Course:** Required for everyone with safeguarding responsibilities or whose church role involves contact with children, young people, and/or vulnerable adults.

**Leadership Course Virtual Training:** Required for anyone with safeguarding leadership responsibilities or who leads activities involving children, young people, and/or vulnerable adults.

Risk assessments must be completed for all church meetings and events at St Ursula's to ensure a safe environment for everyone. All hall users must also agree to follow our safeguarding policies unless they can demonstrate that they have adequate safeguarding policies.

A link to safeguarding information is available on our St Ursula's website, along with further links to relevant resources. Safeguarding documents can also be found on the Diocese in Europe website:

<https://www.europe.anglican.org/resources/safeguarding-diocese-europe>

A revised Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and Guidance was released in October 2019, aligned with the National Safeguarding Team's Parish Safeguarding Handbook, and adapted to meet 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 matters for the entire congregation.

Should you ever feel concerned about a safeguarding issue in our church, please report it to the Chaplain, the Safeguarding Officer, or the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. Such matters will always be treated with strict confidentiality.

Here also a reminder to all parents that they are responsible for supervising their children once the Junior Church and Crèche sessions have concluded.

Finally, as most of you will have heard, towards the end of 2024 the Archbishop of Canterbury had to step down from his position due to a serious safeguarding case involving failure to adequately address safeguarding issues within the Church.

This serves as a reminder that accountability and transparency are essential in creating a safe environment for all, highlighting the necessity for safeguarding measures to prevent future incidents and ensure that the well-being of all individuals remains a top priority.

Thank you to you all for your support.

Contact Information: Cecily Klingler, St Ursula's Safeguarding Officer, Tel: 031 3024859 or 076 4254859, Email: [safeguarding@stursula.ch](mailto:safeguarding@stursula.ch)

Maxine Wildhaber, Assistant Safeguarding Officer, Tel: 076 349 4042, Email: [safeguarding@stursula.ch](mailto:safeguarding@stursula.ch)

Cecily Klingler, St Ursula's Safeguarding Officer

## 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 six years, the Electoral Roll has to be completely renewed. This is in accordance with the Church Representation Rules (CRR 6). So we had to do it this year - 2025. This means that everyone who wished to be on the Electoral Roll had to complete an application form - even if they were already on the Roll.

The closing date for applications was 2 March. At the meeting on 3 March, council approved the list. This now has 87 members, down from 2024, which was 115.

However, there is a positive aspect: 8 new people have joined.

Since the renewal, the Electoral Roll has been displayed next to the doors of the church and 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*



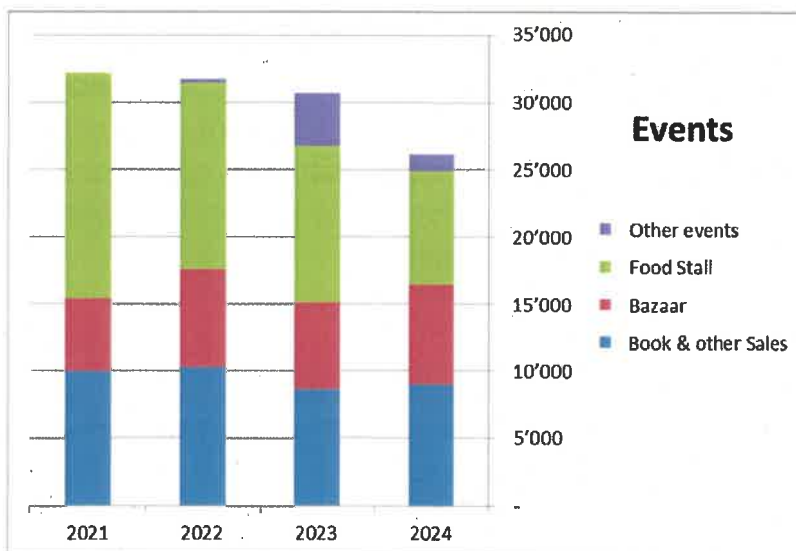
## TREASURER'S REPORT

The past year was basically in line with budget, although we managed a smaller overall deficit than expected due to more income into the Church where the income from the community increased overall bringing in CHF 9'226 more than budgeted. This compensated for the reduced income from events and with the slightly higher income from renting out our premises; our income was CHF 4'902 over budget.

The budgeted deficit for the Church was CHF 29'937 and the actual deficit was just CHF 650 more at CHF 30'047. Of this deficit CHF 21'000 was covered by the Charitable Association towards maintaining the premises. In return, the Church transferred the CHF 15'000 balance it had in the Building Fund to the charitable association. This was done to consolidate the fund in one place as there are several high maintenance costs foreseeable in the future. Compared to the year 2023, costs are up CHF 10'936 due to the increased personnel costs, and income is up CHF 5'374. This includes a one-off increase due to the write-off of funds held for others up until the last year end which was agreed by council to be released to Church funds. Office costs look high because in previous years, part of the photocopying costs was transferred to magazine printing, which of course no longer happens. We are also now renting a new and more economic printer. Premises costs are detailed in the main report. Heating consumption is significantly lower than in 2018 and as costs have increased, the reduced usage has mitigated the impact of increased costs.

### Fundraising

We struggled a lot with fundraising events in 2024. The sales were less well attended than other years, including the all-important Bazaar when we were hit with so much snow. We also could not get food supplies so easily from the UK in these post-Brexit times, so the food stall made a lot less money than in previous times. We tried some pop-up bake sales, and are looking into other ideas for the next year. Advertising and marketing is also a challenge, as well as finding volunteers to help at events, especially in the kitchen.



### St Ursula's Charitable Association

The Charitable Association maintained a good level of income which it uses for building work and charity giving. CHF 23'000 was giving to charities, which is approximately a third of the Association's income and 10% of the consolidated income of the Church and the Association together. The Charity Committee's report gives more information about this aspect of our work.

### Giving from the Community

There were 85 people regularly pledging in 2024. This is an increase over 2023, but still less than in 2021.

Over the years we have had several of our long term pledgers die, or others have reduced or stopped their giving due to changing circumstances. The number of givers is now increasing, and this increase also includes younger members of our congregation. The average giving has dropped slightly as a number of givers now split their giving, so that the Church also receives enough.

The collections on a Sunday also increased, helped by the

introduction of the Twint codes as well as the "Give a little machine" in the church hall. This means that it is not necessary to always have cash on a Sunday. Some givers also give something for the collection via a standing order. Dedicated collections including the carol services raised an additional CHF 9'392 in the year which was given to Charity.

	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Number of pledgers</b>				
Church	83	45	48	62
Association	48	44	41	48
<b>unique</b>	103	70	68	85
<b>average giving in year</b>				
Church	960.76	1657.23	1599.15	1357.0
Association	1491.2	1596.9	1538.1	1355.7
<b>Income from the Community.</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Pledges to Association	64'480	65'920	58'305	61'785
Pledges to Church	70'210	68'154	71'120	63'330
Donations to Association	7'098	4'344	4'759	3'290
Donations to Church	9'533	6'422	5'640	20'802
Collections	7'749	14'486	17'251	19'093
	159'070	159'325	157'074	168'301

### Capital reserves

It is generally recommended that we hold 6 months expenditure as contingency reserves. Therefore the contingency reserve for the Charitable Association was reduced and the money put into the building fund. Below is an overview of our reserves at 1.1.2025. The contingency reserve in the Church is currently enough, but continuing deficits will have an impact in the future.

We expect to have to spend money on the Church and House roofs in the close

future, and possibly on the Church Kitchen in the Hall. If we spend money on the roof then this would also include solar panels. The almost CHF 150'000 in the current fund is probably not enough to cover all the expense.

	Contingency reserve	Ministry Training Fund	Building Fund	non liquid capital
<b>St Ursula's Church</b>				
balance 1.1.2024	CHF -80'509.84	CHF -10'122.41	CHF -15'000.00	CHF -1'033.30
Transfer to Charitable Assn			CHF 15'000.00	
offset non liquid capital	CHF -609.80			CHF 609.80
2024 result- deficit	CHF 30'047.19			
Transfer in from Charitable Assn	CHF -20'000.00			
<b>Closing balance 31.12 2024</b>	<b>CHF -71'072.45</b>	<b>CHF -10'122.41</b>	<b>CHF -</b>	<b>CHF -423.50</b>
<b>Charitable Association</b>				
balance 1.1.2024	CHF -41'174.79		CHF -116'286.44	
transfer in from Church			CHF -15'000.00	
2024 result- excess	CHF -27'165.07			
transfer to Church as support	CHF 20'000.00			
transfer to Building fund	CHF 18'339.86		CHF -18'339.86	
<b>Closing balance 31.12 2024</b>	<b>CHF -30'000.00</b>	<b>CHF -</b>	<b>CHF -149'626.30</b>	<b>CHF -</b>

**In Conclusion,** St Ursula's Church is blessed with an increasing attendance which is being financed disproportionately by the older and more established members of the congregation. Some people seem reticent to pledge regularly, and this may be because our need is not clear enough. Relying on the older members of our congregation is clearly not a sustainable option. There is a lot going on in the Church now, with House and study groups, the Men's group as well as the Ladies' group, and now with our increased focus on the environment and going for Silver. The Church has a good reputation in Berne, and I believe it will continue to grow. God will continue to bless us, but we cannot permit ourselves to be too complacent.

Some may remember that it was my intention to resign from the Treasurer role this year; this is in combination with retiring from my job. However due to being unable to find a replacement or an assistant treasurer, I will be carrying on for the next year or so. If anyone would like to learn the ropes, please feel free to contact me.

*Sue Higson, Treasurer*

## FINANCIAL REPORT

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

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>Church 24</b>	<b>Assn 24</b>	<b>Consolidated</b>
<b>Income from Community</b>	<b>CHF 103'225.77</b>	<b>CHF 65'075.00</b>	<b>CHF 168'300.77</b>
<i>Pledged giving</i>	<i>CHF 63'330.40</i>	<i>CHF 61'785.00</i>	<i>CHF 125'115.40</i>
<i>Donations</i>	<i>CHF 20'802.37</i>	<i>CHF 3'290.00</i>	<i>CHF 24'092.37</i>
<i>Collections</i>	<i>CHF 19'093.00</i>		<i>CHF 19'093.00</i>
			CHF -
<b>Income from events</b>	<b>CHF 26'533.44</b>		<b>CHF 26'533.44</b>
			CHF -
<b>Income from other sources</b>	<b>CHF 28'021.55</b>		<b>CHF 28'021.55</b>
<i>Contribution to costs: hall</i>	<i>CHF 24'891.50</i>		<i>CHF 24'891.50</i>
<i>Other</i>	<i>CHF 3'130.05</i>		<i>CHF 3'130.05</i>
			CHF -
<b>Donations for charitable use</b>	<b>CHF 81.10</b>	<b>CHF 500.00</b>	<b>CHF 581.10</b>
			CHF -
<b>Income from Thun</b>	<b>CHF 1'706.00</b>		<b>CHF 1'706.00</b>
<b>Income from Neuchatel</b>	<b>CHF 222.80</b>		<b>CHF 222.80</b>
<b>Permanent activities income</b>	<b>CHF 1'807.93</b>		<b>CHF 1'807.83</b>
<i>Magazine</i>	<i>CHF 134.00</i>		<i>CHF 134.00</i>
<i>Books and Cards</i>	<i>CHF 278.36</i>		<i>CHF 278.36</i>
<i>Coffee</i>	<i>CHF 1'298.47</i>		<i>CHF 1'298.47</i>
<i>Other</i>	<i>CHF 97.10</i>		<i>CHF 97.10</i>
			CHF -
			CHF -
<b>Financial income</b>	<b>CHF 2'719.79</b>	<b>CHF -</b>	<b>CHF 2'719.79</b>
<b>Forex</b>	<b>CHF 814.52</b>	<b>CHF -</b>	<b>CHF 814.52</b>
<b>TOTAL Income</b>	<b>CHF 165'132.90</b>	<b>CHF 65'575.00</b>	<b>CHF 230'707.80</b>
<b>DEFICIT</b>	<b>CHF 30'047.19</b>		<b>CHF 2'882.22</b>

**31.12.2024**

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>Church 24</b>	<b>Assn 24</b>	<b>Consolidated</b>
<b>Personnel-related costs</b>	<b>143'333.52 CHF</b>	<b>- CHF</b>	<b>143'333.52 CHF</b>
Stipends and remunerations	121'760.24 CHF		121'760.24 CHF
Travelling expenses	1'897.27 CHF	- CHF	1'897.27 CHF
Other personnel costs	19'676.01 CHF		19'676.01 CHF
<b>Running costs</b>	<b>29'016.85 CHF</b>	<b>15'212.13 CHF</b>	<b>44'228.98 CHF</b>
<i>Premises</i>	<i>23'584.01 CHF</i>	<i>11'511.33 CHF</i>	<i>35'095.34 CHF</i>
<i>Office</i>	<i>2'126.16 CHF</i>	<i>49.00 CHF</i>	<i>2'175.16 CHF</i>
<i>Telephone and Internet</i>	<i>468.10 CHF</i>	<i>- CHF</i>	<i>468.10 CHF</i>
<i>Insurance</i>	<i>860.30 CHF</i>	<i>1'767.20 CHF</i>	<i>2'627.50 CHF</i>
<i>Property tax</i>	<i>- CHF</i>	<i>1'884.60 CHF</i>	<i>1'884.60 CHF</i>
<i>Vestry</i>	<i>721.39 CHF</i>		<i>721.39 CHF</i>
<i>Ministry and Hospitality</i>	<i>738.35 CHF</i>		<i>738.35 CHF</i>
<i>Subscriptions and advertising</i>	<i>518.54 CHF</i>		<i>518.54 CHF</i>
<b>Youth and Junior Church</b>	<b>237.98 CHF</b>		<b>237.98 CHF</b>
<b>Cost of food sold</b>	<b>3'344.71 CHF</b>		<b>3'344.71 CHF</b>
<b>Permanent activities expense</b>	<b>927.58 CHF</b>		<b>927.58 CHF</b>
<i>Magazine</i>	<i>214.40 CHF</i>		<i>214.40 CHF</i>
<i>Books and cards</i>	<i>412.58 CHF</i>		<i>412.58 CHF</i>
<i>Coffee</i>	<i>300.60 CHF</i>		<i>300.60 CHF</i>
<i>Other</i>	<i>- CHF</i>		<i>- CHF</i>
<b>Diocese/Deanery</b>	<b>18'724.51 CHF</b>		<b>18'724.51 CHF</b>
<b>Charity incl allocations</b>	<b>- 700.00 CHF</b>	<b>23'072.03 CHF</b>	<b>22'372.03 CHF</b>
<b>Financial Expense</b>	<b>294.94 CHF</b>	<b>125.77 CHF</b>	<b>420.71 CHF</b>
Forex			- CHF
<b>TOTAL Expense</b>	<b>195'180.09 CHF</b>	<b>38'409.93 CHF</b>	<b>233'590.02 CHF</b>
<b>excess before allocations</b>		<b>27'165.07 CHF</b>	

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

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

	note	31.12.2024	31.12.2024	31.12.2023	31.12.2023
<b>Assets</b>		<b>Church</b>	<b>Charitable Association</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Charitable Association</b>
<b>Cash and Bank</b>					
<b>Current accounts + Petty cash</b>					
CH		36'610.47 CHF	34'648.98 CHF	60'181 CHF	110'165 CHF
UK		16'939.00 CHF		15'585 CHF	
<b>Deposit accounts</b>					
CH UBS	B1	40'418.95 CHF	145'000.00 CHF	40'000 CHF	50'000 CHF
<b>Total Cash and Bank</b>		<b>93'968.42 CHF</b>	<b>179'648.98 CHF</b>	<b>115'766 CHF</b>	<b>160'165 CHF</b>
Stocks on hand	B2	423.50 CHF	- CHF	1'033 CHF	- CHF
debtors and monies due	B3	540.00 CHF	- CHF	3'483 CHF	- CHF
Withholding tax due	B3	333.70 CHF		108 CHF	
<b>Total other assets</b>		<b>1'297.20 CHF</b>	<b>- CHF</b>	<b>4'624 CHF</b>	<b>- CHF</b>
Fixed assets		- CHF	- CHF	- CHF	- CHF
Prepayments & deferred expense	B4	2'450.50 CHF	- CHF	1'640 CHF	234 CHF
Pension assets		125.00 CHF		123 CHF	
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>97'841.12 CHF</b>	<b>179'648.98 CHF</b>	<b>122'152 CHF</b>	<b>160'399 CHF</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>					
creditors		- 4'539.10 CHF	- 22.68 CHF	- 8'467 CHF	- 1'888 CHF
Staff remunerations and expenses due		- CHF		- 1'818 CHF	
collections to be paid out		- 3'516.64 CHF	- CHF	- 2'570 CHF	- 1'050 CHF
<b>due within 1 month</b>	B5	<b>- 8'055.74 CHF</b>	<b>- 22.68 CHF</b>	<b>- 12'855 CHF</b>	<b>- 2'938 CHF</b>
provisions - AHV		- 7'817.02 CHF	- CHF	- 817 CHF	- CHF
funds held for others		- 350.00 CHF	- CHF	- 1'815 CHF	- CHF
<b>Total Net Worth</b>		<b>81'618.36 CHF</b>	<b>179'626.30 CHF</b>	<b>106'666 CHF</b>	<b>157'461 CHF</b>
<b>Capital reserves</b>	B6				
Contingency reserve		- 71'072.45 CHF	- 30'000.00 CHF	- 80'510 CHF	- 41'175 CHF
Ministry Training Fund		- 10'122.41 CHF		- 10'122 CHF	
Building and Development Fund *		- CHF	- 149'626.30 CHF	- 15'000 CHF	- 116'286 CHF
non liquid capital		- 423.50 CHF	- CHF	- 1'033 CHF	- CHF
<b>Total Reserves</b>		<b>- 81'618.36 CHF</b>	<b>- 179'626.30 CHF</b>	<b>- 106'666 CHF</b>	<b>- 157'461 CHF</b>
<i>please see note B6 for the movement on the reserves</i>					
*Building and Development fund reserve has been transferred from the church to the charitable association. Some of the Charitable Association contingency reserve has also been transferred to the building fund					

## CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

### **Festive Joy Despite the Snow!**

St Ursula's Christmas Bazaar has always been a highlight of the festive season. Our 2024 event was no exception! However, this year's festive celebration came with an unwelcome addition of heavy snow over Berne that caused the city to come to a near standstill. All forms of travel, cars, trams, buses and even tains, were delayed or simply unable to move.

Yet, despite the wintry chaos, we were more than happy to welcome everyone who braved the snow to join us for the celebration.

On both days of the Bazaar, guests had the pleasure of tasting crumpets, Christmas cakes, treats, and hot mulled wine and mince pie, while enjoying the stunning wreaths and decorations on offer, patchwork, as well as other unique holiday gifts.

We were also happy to see that our tombola, raffle, and children's activities brought joy to all ages.

We were also thrilled to welcome independent stallholders (at least those who were able to make it to the church), adding variety to our market. Meanwhile, our restaurant provided a cosy retreat where visitors could warm up and enjoy delicious home-cooked meals.

Organizing the Christmas Bazaar is no small task, and this year's snowfall made it even more challenging. From clearing and setting up the stalls to ensuring a welcoming atmosphere, it was a true team effort.

A special **THANK YOU** goes to everyone who tirelessly cleared the walking paths, ensuring visitors could safely reach the church. Your hard work, dedication, and shovelling skills were invaluable, and we are deeply grateful for your efforts!

We hope that everyone who attended left with a little piece of Christmas magic to take home, and that the joy of the season filled every heart.

### **Save the dates**

Our next Christmas Bazaar will take place on Friday 21 November and Saturday 22 November 2025. We look forward to welcoming you once again – hopefully with a little less snow!

*Church Office*



## CHURCH COUNCIL



This report covers the life of the outgoing council, from the first meeting after last year's AGM until this AGM - without the meeting in March which took place after the closing date for these reports. The first meeting was held immediately after the AGM on 28 April; it was solely to appoint the various council officers. In addition, the safeguarding policy was approved.

The membership of this council changed during the year. Initially council agreed to co-opt David Marshall and James Morgan. But after David's licensing in September and James's ordination in July, they both became ex officio members. Unfortunately, Emanuel decided to leave St Ursula's about half-way through the year. So, at the end of this year, the council had 13 members - 3 clergy, 1 lay reader, 2 churchwardens, 2 archdeaconry synod representatives and 5 elected members.

The council met once a month (except in August), alternating between Sundays after church and Monday evenings. There was no meeting when all council members were present (the maximum attendance was 11). The average attendance was 9.6 people.

As always, council handled a 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. Along with risk assessments and keeping an eye on safeguarding topics.

This year a lot of time was needed for maintenance matters, as TCom (the "Technical Committee") disbanded itself at the end of October. Without the support of TCom for the projection of the slides containing the words of the hymns and songs, council decided to go back to the use of hymn books and a print-out of the words of the songs which are not in the hymn book. However, a new team has been set up for ensuring sound amplification and the projection of notice slides before each service. And this is working well.

The council day away, held in June, was on the topic of the environment. This was followed up with the setting up of a new "Eco" group and holding an Open Forum for the whole congregation on a Sunday in January.

Communication became a topic - with a group being set up to make proposals on the website, the church's database and general communication within our church community, especially after discontinuing the magazine. Council approved a paper on "Good Communication" which is available to all.





Safeguarding is always an important topic and, this year, council had to get our hall and church users from other groups to complete new forms which need to be sent to the diocesan office. This includes the requirement for the supervision of children.

Financial matters occupied a certain amount of council's time. The regular sales are no longer providing as much income as they have done in the past. A couple of "Pop Up" sales were popular, but did not produce a large amount of money. This is a topic council will have to return to, since we cannot continue to reduce our reserves every year.

All church groups have the opportunity to report to council at each meeting. Several new groups have been set up during this year.

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 2024**

Our Spring Sale in 2024 took place on Saturday, 9 March, and our Autumn Sale on Saturday, 7 September. It was a delight to have so many visitors—old friends and new—come and browse our stalls, enjoy a cup of coffee with freshly baked cakes, and indulge in the delicious dishes prepared by our brilliant team of volunteers.



As always, some of the best-selling items were our second-hand books, home-made jams, crumpets, and food stall.

### **A Huge Thank You to Our Volunteers!**

All these activities would not be possible without the tireless work, passion, and kindness of our volunteers. From setting up the stall to serving food and keeping things going, your dedication is greatly valued. Special mention must go to the International School students, whose help was invaluable in making the Sales a success.

### **Calling All Cooks!**

Though we enjoy all who have volunteered, we also need people who would be willing to cover the restaurant for one or more of our Sales. If you like cooking and would like to be involved in this wonderful community endeavour, we'd be

delighted to hear from you!

Again, THANK YOU to everyone who helped, visited and supported us—we simply could not have done it without you! We look forward to welcoming you to our next events: Spring Sale 2025: 22 March, Autumn Sale 2025: 6 September.

*Church Office*

## **MEN'S GROUP**

St Ursula's Men's Group has met roughly every six weeks through the last year, with a longer break over the summer. We meet from 9:30 to 11:00 on a Saturday morning. Often we have met in Church House but with numbers now sometimes over a dozen it is usually easier to meet in the upper hall at church. Sessions have been led by James Morgan and David Marshall.

We talk over a bring and share breakfast before moving to a discussion of various kinds. This has included Bible study, discussing global politics and praying for the needs of the world, a session introducing the Church of England's Morning Prayer and praying it together, and a conversation/interview with a member of the group which allows us to get to know him better, learning about his life-story, work and faith.

In June 2024 we held for the first time a day retreat for twelve of us from 10:00 to 16:00. We were very grateful to Lilian Morgan for arranging for us to have use of her family's holiday house at a lovely spot near Adelboden. David provided some teaching on the parable of the Prodigal Son and the day included extended times for quiet reflection and prayer. We were very grateful to Lilian and James for enabling this to happen at such a perfect location and hope this event can be repeated, whether at the same place or elsewhere.

We email information about meetings to all those men over 18 in the church who have asked to be kept in the loop, and would always be glad to add new names to the list and to welcome newcomers to our fellowship - anyone interested should let David or James know.

*David Marshall and James Morgan*

## GARDEN

The Gardening Team met three times during 2024, on Saturdays of the weeks 12, 29 and 42. If anyone has time to help me on a weekday, please let me know.

This year only general garden maintenance was undertaken due to lack of additional volunteers and we had to pay for external gardening help in cutting the hedges.

Many hands do make our church gardening easier. However the hedge cutting is a man's job, and any additional help for a couple of hours on this day would be greatly appreciated. We all help with the tidying up of cuttings.

We were able to distribute our compost on to the hedge roots and they really do seem to say thank you with their abundance of fresh green leaves in the Spring. The hedgehog hideaway was also slightly enlarged.

A fourth morning was planned on the Friday prior to the Christmas Bazaar but that became a snow clearing exercise.

*Alison Beindorff*



## MASTER ROTA FOR SERVICES

In 2024 we continued with 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 59 services (-1 compared with 2023); the Master Rota was based on a list of 26 volunteers (+1 as of December 2023). A big THANK YOU to all for your loyal support!

While there are 20 readers on my list, with two needed for most services, and 10 names for intercessors (one for each Eucharist), there are only five sidespersons and four servers. Which means that **new volunteers are urgently needed** for these two rotas, especially as several members are on more than one rota. 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*

## RACIAL DIVERSITY GROUP

St Ursula's is endowed with a rich mixture of nationalities, and we praise God for this diversity. Racial diversity has the potential of adding knowledge and flavour of how faith is both practised and received in different people groups. This makes the practice of Christianity more realistic, especially noting that our faith, just as it was in Jesus' time, is greatly influenced (negatively or positively) by our culture, level of education, state of peace and even the level of poverty. While racial diversity has great potential of being a strength, it can equally become challenging and perhaps overwhelming in a church especially as it grows bigger. Every community perceives faith and therefore practises Christianity differently. There are people groups who are more vulnerable than others just because of where they come from; some have stronger emphasis on certain practices than others. These differences in either perception or practice, if not well understood, may create division and/or suspicion and eventually cause great hurt in a people worshipping the same God and attending the same church.

The Racial Diversity Group seeks to understand different communities and how they integrate their culture and traditions into their practice of faith. This group seeks to understand what vulnerabilities and sensitivities to different issues exist in our church and the surrounding society, and how therefore we can make things better to the glory and worship of God amongst our church members.

In the recent past, to help the church community understand different cultures, we have initiated culture celebration days starting with our African brothers and sisters. This celebration day included food, music, and some information on how different African communities integrate culture and faith. We have also encouraged people of different nationalities to contribute as readers, intercessors, sound desk team, welcomers, and on the church council. Recently, we have even initiated teaching of African worship songs and choruses to the children in Junior Church; a service kindly being offered by Janiffer.



The Racial Diversity Group meets regularly to discuss any matters of racial concern within the church community and how we could make the love of Christ more visible within St Ursula's. We are hoping to reach out to more communities for the cultural celebration days which may additionally include dresses and ornaments from the different communities attending our church. We are also hoping we could expand further the volunteer groups serving as readers, intercessors, welcomers, or even in the music group.

Our hope is that the racial diversity in our church may make us celebrate and experience the love of Jesus Christ more wholesomely as people of one faith, and one God, now and for ever more.

The Group includes Jorum Kirundi, Michael Agoba, Vinitha Jacob, Ruth Njengere, Pieter Perrett, Martin Browne, Maxine Wildhaber and Helen Marshall.

*Jorum Kirundi*

## SUMMER FÊTE 2024

Our 2024 Summer Fête was a success with a good mix of old and new faces attending on Saturday, 1 June. Our gardens were abuzz with laughter, conversation, and the aroma of home-baked treats.

Guests strolled through our stalls, discovering unique finds and delicious treats. We were also delighted to have Judith Josi to sign her two wonderful children's books on the day. She kindly donated all the proceeds from the book sales of the day to St Ursula's – a very thoughtful act that we thank her for deeply.



Little Bears Berne (aka Parents and Tots) provided exciting activities for our young adventurers, so even the tiniest visitors had a fantastic time. More details on this international English-speaking playgroup, which meets at St Ursula's on Wednesday mornings, can be found at: [www.littlebearsBerne.ch](http://www.littlebearsBerne.ch).

A HUGE THANK YOU to everyone who worked together to make this event a success – our fantastic volunteers, our hardworking gardening team (who keep our garden so beautiful), and, of course, all who came to join in and support us.

**Save the date!** Our next Summer Fête will be on Saturday, 21 June 2025. We hope you can join us again for another day of fun, food, and community spirit!

*Church Office*

## TEENS GROUP



With a handful of teenagers attending our services week after week in early 2024, Sandra and James began to organise meetings during services, once a month from April to June. After the summer break, we started the school year with a pizza and movie night in August, met twice a month from September to December, and ended 2024 with a Christmas programme (baking cookies, informal service, and meal). As the number of teenagers attending our meetings varied greatly, we went back to once a month and now have

an average of eight teenagers (out of eleven on our list).

Our focus from January to June 2025 is the Lord's Prayer, exploring what it tells us about God and how we can put some key teachings into practice. We have also planned two informal Friday evening meetings. Finally, it is good to see that some of our teenagers have started to take part in the All-Age services, for example, helping with Bible readings and music. This ministry is not only fun but also very meaningful because we know how important it can be in helping our teenagers grow in Christ. We are grateful for the support from parents and Council. We ask you to pray regularly for each of our teenagers and that our ministry team will grow.

*James Morgan*

## MUSIC

This year (2024) the number of musicians able and willing to contribute to leading the music in our services has remained constant. However there are still only six members, so 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.



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 some people like statistics (well, I do!), here are some: In 2024 we sang 131 different hymns and songs (excluding the children's songs) in our services at St Ursula's. Of these, 64 were from "Ancient and Modern"; 34 from "Worship Today"; 18 from "Hymns Old and New"; 13 from the Christmas Carol Sheet and 4 others. We sang 85 of these hymns and songs only once in the year; 16 twice; 16 three times; 5 four times; 4 five times and 1 six times. The most popular, being sung

seven times each, were AM 247 “I heard the voice of Jesus say” and WT 34 “Be still for the presence of the Lord”

In 2024, we were able to re-introduce the sung liturgy and now usually use this on the fourth Sunday of each month. It is appreciated by a number of our congregation.

Any comments you have on the music would be welcomed by the musicians and the council.

*Tricia Carrick (on behalf of the music group)*

## PASTORAL CARE

The Pastoral Care Team includes: Donna Goepfert, Archana Jacob, Cecily Klingler, Chris Sager, Patricia Schwager, Helene Vogt, 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). We pass on the names of those who request prayers via WhatsApp. Alongside prayer, the group also send cards and make phone calls. Members of the team have also kindly baked cakes for me to take with me when I visit people who are sick or in need.

The members of the Pastoral Care team generally only visit those who can be counted as ‘friends’. Visiting in 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. Pastoral care is not just about supporting people when they are sick or in need.

It is also important to remember that we are all called to care for one another. We hope that as a church we can offer welcome and encouragement to visitors and new members of the congregation. The welcome team also helps with this. The House Groups also provide a place of mutual pastoral care where people can share concerns, pray together, and find support and encouragement.

As we did last year, we will be holding two healing services during the coming year (30 March and 28 September) which will provide an opportunity for formal prayer and anointing for healing during the service, and time for an informal conversation and prayer after the service. David, James and myself will be offering the formal prayers and anointing. The members of the Pastoral Care Team will share with us in offering informal prayers after the service for any who request this.

*Revd Helen Marshall*

## ECO CHURCH

This year we celebrate five years as an eco-church - one of many churches working together to respect God's world. We encourage everyone to waste less, to love our neighbours by enriching the plant and animal life that sustains them, by not poisoning their air or clogging up their roads. Towards the end of 2024 a new eco-group was formed to draw new energy - from you? Come to its next workshop.



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 how many of our members - including Helen herself, of course - are so ecologically committed. At the end of 2024 it is time for me, as “Local Environment Officer” (LEO) - the point of contact between A Rocha, who administer the Eco-Church scheme, the diocese, and St Ursula's, to relax!

St Ursula's is not alone. The LEOs in the other chaplaincies around Switzerland pool thoughts. The diocesan Caring for Creation team in London also gives us ideas, especially in the area of fuel efficiency (“net zero”). The charity A Rocha International from its base in Geneva provides encouragement and advice.

Our Eco-church award is as yet only bronze. Silver and gold still lie ahead. Creation care has to become 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. When I go to England, I go by train (and not just because it is almost carbon-neutral, but because it is just as quick as flying and far more comfortable). I think whenever I use a tap or a WC, that this is expensively-produced drinking water - am I using it carefully? This is part of our attitude to the world and to our neighbours, and it reflects our love.

*Hector Davie*



## ST URSULA'S ECOGROUP

The EcoGroup at St Ursula's was formed to build on the church's existing environmental efforts and to work towards achieving the Silver EcoChurch Award. The group is committed to leading with positivity and action, encouraging sustainable practices within the church community. The members of the EcoGroup are Arno Ratzinger, David Marshall, Emmanuel Lehmann, Helen Marshall, Kathryn Jones, Marielouise Slettenhaar-Ket, Pieter Perrett, Sue Higson (with Alex Hibberts joining us for a while).



Since its formation, the group has organised an open forum to gather input, launched an email newsletter with practical sustainability tips, and is planning events such as Earth Hour and a session on green finance. With a focus on eco-friendly lifestyles and community engagement, the EcoGroup aims to inspire positive change and strengthen St Ursula's role as a leader in caring for creation.

*Marielouise Slettenhaar-Ket*

## 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.



Sometimes the candles burn down messily. In "emergencies" replacements can be purchased at local shops.

Mary washes the church linens i.e. all items used for communion and altar and sidetable clothes.

The information above is mostly a repetition from previous reports - unlike the outside world "vestry-life" doesn't change much from year to year. I try to keep the dust at bay and the cupboards and drawers reasonably tidy.

If you are still awake, thank you for reading this rather dull missive.

*Mary Mead*

## CHARITY AND MISSION

This past year has been another strong and meaningful year for the Charity and Missions Team at St Ursula's. We give thanks to God for the generosity of our congregation, which enables us to set aside 10% of our church income for our charity and missions work. Through this, we have continued to support various organisations dedicated to serving the vulnerable, both locally and internationally.

Our team, consisting of Revd Helen Marshall, Donna Goepfert, Cecily Klingler, Hector Davie, Esther Hutchison, Pieter Perrett, Maxine Wildhaber and Susan Spälti (our newest members) has been actively engaged in maintaining and developing these important partnerships. Esther Hutchison has served faithfully for many years on our team. She will be stepping down now and we would like to thank her here for her service - she has been an invaluable member of the team. Our meetings are always coordinated so well by Cecily Klingler, who ensures all documentation and administration are in place, making our discussions and planning highly effective.

### Key Highlights of 2024-2025

#### 1. Updated Charity Brochure

This year saw the publication of a newly updated **Charity and Missions Brochure**, providing clear and accessible information about the organizations we support. Special thanks to Susan Spälti, our newest team member, for her work in revising and updating this important resource.

#### 2. Mission Sunday: 23 February 2025

Our most recent event was **Mission Sunday**, where we had the privilege of welcoming **Revd Dr. James Morgan, our Curate**, as our guest speaker.

On this Mission Sunday, Revd Dr. James Morgan's sermon on the Nicene Creed emphasised mission as both faith and action. Following the service, he gave a special presentation on the Drop-In Centre in Berne (Aufenthaltsraum), illustrating how providing a welcoming space for the vulnerable reflects the Church's mission to serve and bring hope. The Sunday collection was donated to support their vital work. See picture from Mission Sunday.



#### 3. Ongoing Support for Charities

St Ursula's continues to support a diverse range of charities, focusing on poverty alleviation, refugee assistance, legal support for foreigners, environmental stewardship, and mission work in education and healthcare. Some of the key organizations we support include:

- **Rechtsberatungsstelle** - Providing legal assistance to foreigners in Berne at risk of deportation.
- **Partner Sein** - The Swiss Old Catholic relief agency, with whom we work closely together.
- **Refuge Egypt** - Supporting refugees from Sudan and elsewhere with emergency aid, education, and advocacy.
- **Cecily's Fund** - Helping vulnerable children in Zambia access education.
- **ena (formerly TearFund Schweiz)** - Supporting the Kigezi Diocese Water and Sanitation Project in Uganda.
- **A Rocha** - A Christian environmental organization working globally.
- **Holy Land Institute for the Deaf (Jordan)** - Providing education and support for hearing-impaired children.
- **Talagolla Convalescent Home (Sri Lanka)** - Caring for poor and sick children needing recuperation.
- **the Lifeskills Education Project (Sakh'ulutsha)**, run by Scripture Union South Africa.

We are immensely grateful for the prayers, financial support, and involvement of our congregation, which make all of this possible. God's blessings continue to flow through the generosity of St Ursula's community, helping us extend love and support to those in need.

If you would like to learn more, please do not hesitate to reach out to any member of the Charity and Missions Team.

*With thanks,*

*Pieter Perrett (on behalf of St Ursula's Charity and Missions Team)*

## ARCHDEACONRY SYNOD

Below the Bishop in Europe, Robert Innes, and his supporting team, there are other teams, too, co-ordinating the church's work in areas called archdeaconries. 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 regularly in a synod to discuss common problems. (The clergy come together more intensively 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 our Chaplain, Helen, is a member ex officio. Our other clergy can also attend. We are led by our Archdeacon, the Venerable Dr Peter Hooper, who lives in south-western France, and has the dual task of supervising 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 2024, the choir festival was in Holy Trinity Church in Geneva on 4 & 5 May. We also seek to work together with the Old Catholics and support their mission agency, Partner Sein.

Synod met twice in 2024. The first meeting was on 22 June, by Zoom, and covered mainly matters of internal administration. Relevant to us was the decision to use the archdeaconry's own reserves to pay for the activities it sponsored, and not to recoup them from individual churches, except for asking the chaplaincies to contribute (mostly) 500 francs each towards the archdeaconry's support for Partner Sein.

Our second meeting was at St Andrew's Zurich on 5 October, with a special invitation to each Swiss chaplaincy to send its youth workers ("youth" defined as anyone under thirty), its treasurers and churchwardens to join us, with the opportunity for a relaxed evening in preparation for an early start.

On the Saturday morning after Morning Prayer, Archdeacon Peter Hooper introduced the formal session with a study and discussion on "Mission in Changing Times", a key feature of the new Diocesan Strategy, Walking together in Faith. Synod noted that mission leads to growth - in numbers, in faith and in service, and presentations from Vevey, Berne and La Côte illustrated this. It was also noted that the diocese had funds available for missionary opportunities.

After lunch, Synod got together in separate breakout groups to discuss the consequences for youth strategy, finance, data privacy and matters of common interest. These led to establishing further contact groups for wardens and treasurers. After the groups reported back, the synod concluded with Evening Prayer.

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

*Hector Davie*



BERN  
Englisch-Amerikanische Kirche St Ursula

## WEBMASTER

In 1993, Tim Berners-Lee at CERN in Geneva made his “universal linked information system” available for the public to use. Three years later, St Ursula’s adopted “the web” as a way telling others the good news about us. Your Council has set up a group to look at what we communicate - to whom and how. The mix of electronic and personal, visual and spoken media remains a lively topic, and we are lucky to have members with talents in many of these fields.

We have a mass of information. Not all of it useful, not all is easy to find, not all is clearly presented. People like hearing old sermons ([www.stursula.ch/Sermons/](http://www.stursula.ch/Sermons/)) and keeping up with our news. There’s a lot more - look at our sitemap ([www.stursula.ch/sitemap.html](http://www.stursula.ch/sitemap.html)). We are working to have with more people involved in keeping pages current, and very soon, a new communications team - headed by Chris Sager and Susan Spälti - will make a revitalized website available - keep alert for news!

We have continued to make use of the Church of England’s overarching website, A Church near You ([www.acny.com](http://www.acny.com) - try it out now!). This is an excellent way of making new contacts and of staying in touch generally.

We try hard to find what people like to see on our website, and use statistical surveys to find what is most keenly read. We would be eager to spread “the Good News”, but people are just as keen on more trivial matters: next week’s services and whether they are involved in any of them; listening again to the Sunday sermon and keeping in touch through Helen’s letters. We seek to provide for their needs, and to include as many people as we can in God’s work. It is always gratifying, though, when a visitor says “I found you through the web.”!

*Hector Davie, Webmaster*



## BOOK SALES

### SECOND-HAND ENGLISH BOOKS

Since the negative impact of the pandemic on our sales, income from the books has slowly recovered. Last year we made approximately CHF 4,700 from all our book sale events, including the bazaar. While this figure is still down on pre-pandemic levels (2019: CHF 6,493), it is a very pleasing result nonetheless.

Having said that, the trend away from reading physical books continues. In the German-speaking part of Switzerland, for example, book sales fell once again in 2024, by 1.8%. There are multiple reasons for this. Not only have social media and streaming services become more influential (around one million people watch Netflix every day in Switzerland), but more people are now buying ebooks and audiobooks compared with a few years ago. This means that we must work harder to keep our book sales attractive, as they are not just a source of income, but of outreach too.

My wonderful team - Judy Chisholm, Katrina Fenner, Donna Goepfert, Jenny Haller, Diane Lohri, Mary Mead, Patricia Schwager, Rachel Huguenin, Alison Beindorff and Alison Winzenried - makes the hard work of sorting the books and running the sales very worthwhile. Without their loyal support and creativity, the book sales would not be possible. My thanks go to them and indeed to everyone who continues to support us.

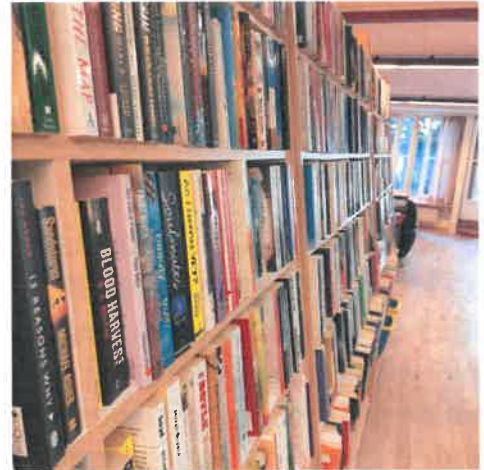
May I take this opportunity of also thanking the members of TCom (Hans Goepfert, Edi Wildhaber and Rolf Klingler), who for many years set up and tidied away the bookcases for the sales and carried out much-needed repair work on the wheels to ensure the bookcases remain fit for purpose in the future. In TCom's place, Dmytry has kindly stepped in to help us, so thank you Dmytry!

Finally, a reminder about book donations. Please only donate **PAPERBACK NOVELS IN ENGLISH IN VERY GOOD CONDITION**. Hardbacks, old or dirty books, and foreign-language books must be disposed of\* and this costs time and money.

THANK YOU!

*Allison Masciadri*

\*Did you know that second-hand book shops dispose of around 400 kilos of books every day?



## **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:**

Sue Higson

Pieter Perrett

#### **Lay Members:**

Adiza Babatunde

Tricia Carrick

Vinitha Jacob

Chris Sager

Susan Spälti

#### **Lay Representatives to Archdeaconry Synod:**

Hector Davie

Maxine Wildhaber

ST URSULA'S SALES IN 2025



St Ursula's  
Church

Spring Sale  
22 March

Summer Fête  
21 June

Autumn Sale  
6 September

Christmas  
Bazaar  
21 & 22  
November