



# Financial outcomes of the Fabrique d'église du Sacré-Coeur in 2023

## Introduction

The following report provides an overview of the Établissement's budgetary developments for 2023. Following a deficit in 2022, the budget returned to a stunning surplus in 2023. This was largely thanks to the church roof replacement project scheduled for 2024, for which we organized special collections and limited reparations to recurring roof damages. The primary objective of 2023 was securing repair of the church roof, which had deteriorated significantly. We were successful in launching a call for tenders and selecting the winning company. Reparation work was scheduled to begin in early 2024, despite the fact that we have not acquired 100% of the necessary money, which will be an important goal for 2024.

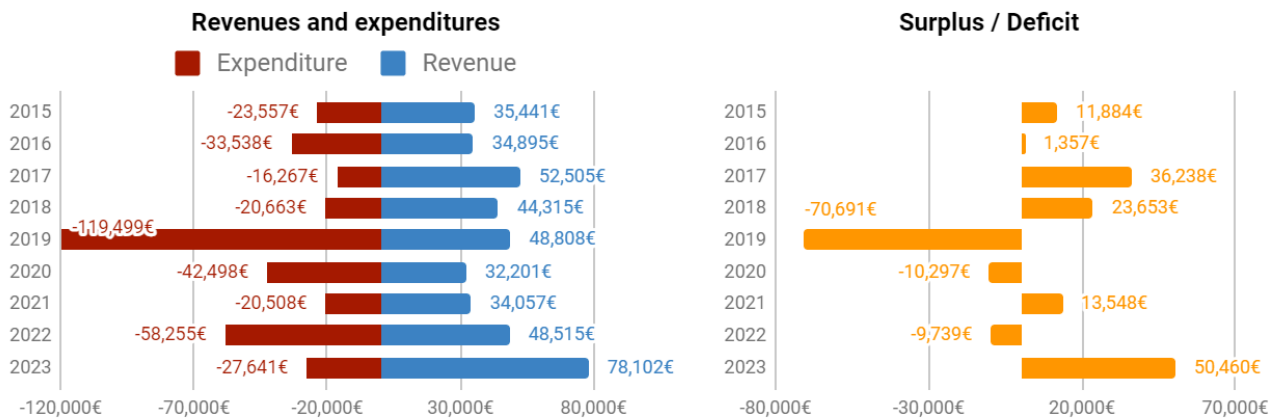
From an administrative standpoint, as of 2023, new legislation governing the operation of local religious groups went into effect. The general term 'fabrique d'église' has been replaced with 'établissement'. Nevertheless, since all 'establishments' were required to have a name, the church council chose the previous name 'Fabrique d'église du Sacré-Coeur' (FE). The new legislation also established a new accounting system. For the purpose of this report, we opted to simplify the presentation of financial results.

The main developments in 2023 were:

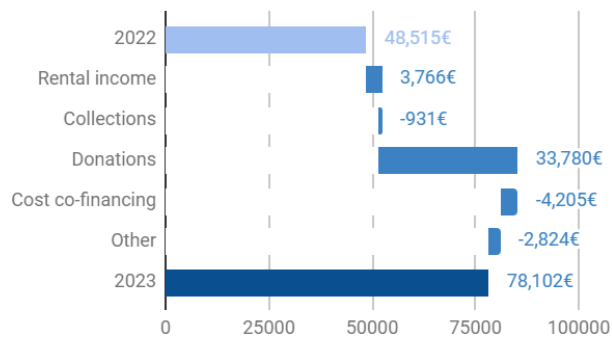
- A large increase in revenue as a result of generous contributions from the faithful for the church roof repair project (almost half of the target amount was collected).
- Mass collections remain poor, falling far short of meeting the church's basic running costs such as energy, insurance, and general maintenance.
- Energy prices fell, easing pressure on energy costs.
- To preserve resources for the church roof, capital expenditures were kept to a minimum.
- Purchase a few liturgical items (e.g., incensory, oil candles with stands and glass protectors, holy water sprinkler) to help make each mass more solemn.

## The balance of revenues and expenditure

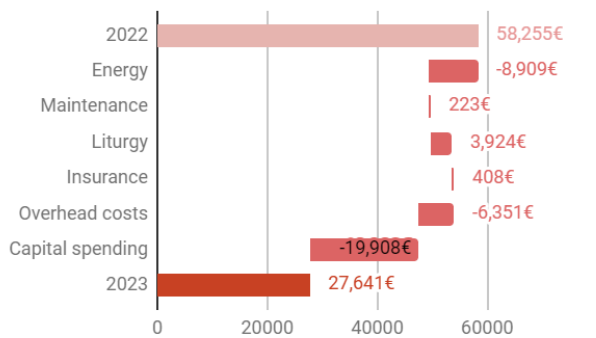
After a deficit year 2022, the FE budget closed 2023 with a relatively high surplus of 50,460€. The revenue surged 60% vis-à-vis 2022 reaching 78,102€ - the highest in 10 years. This was thanks to a special collection for the church roof reparation planned for 2024. Expenditure was below historical averages declining by almost 53% compared to the previous year to 27,641€. Limited investments, lower energy costs, and lower outlays on real estate tax were the main drivers of the decline.



**Change components revenues 2022-2023**



**Change components expenditures 2022-2023**

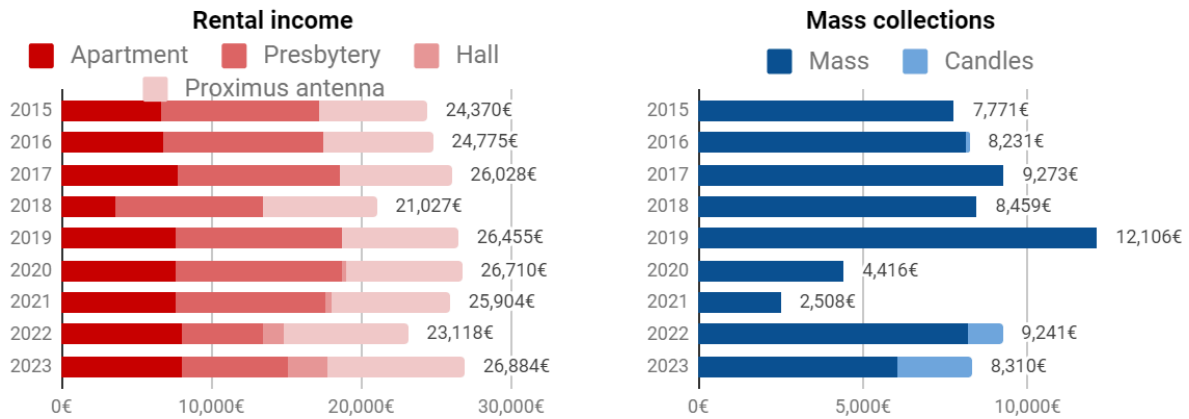


## Revenues

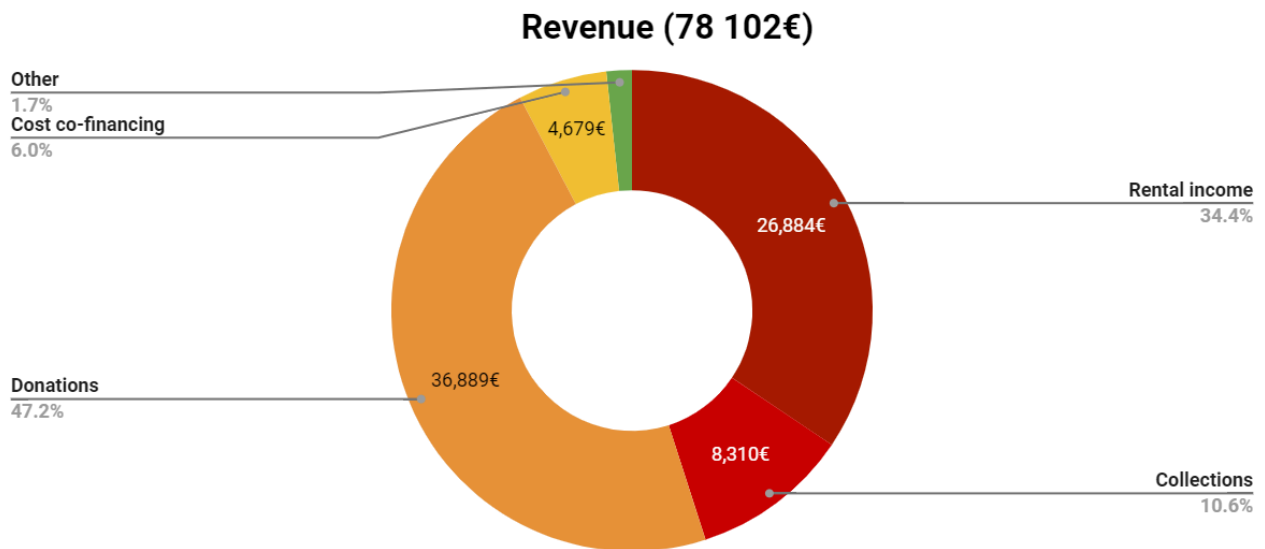
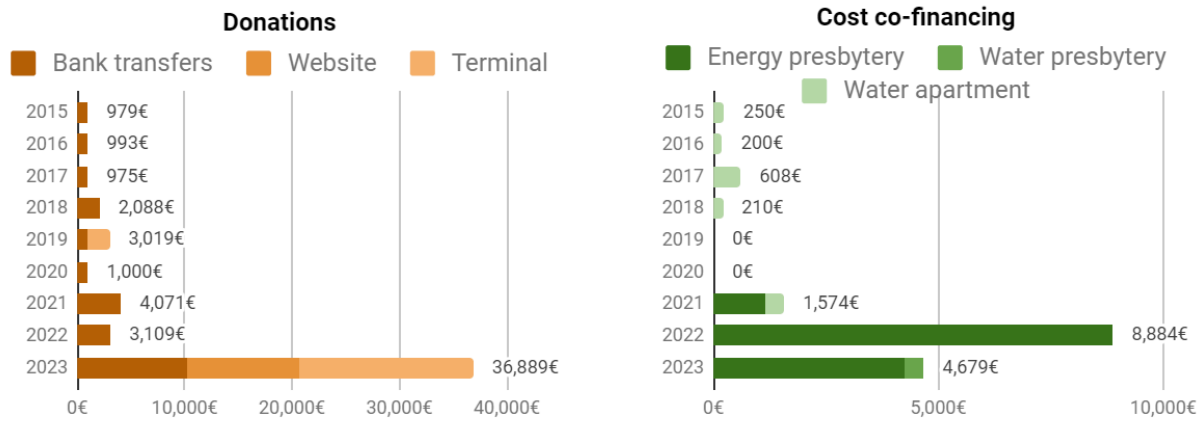
- 1. Rental income:** In comparison to prior vintages, we consolidated rental inflows under a single heading, which now includes money from renting (i) the church apartment, (ii) the presbytery, (iii) the hall in the church basement, and (iv) the Proximus antenna. The observed increase in presbytery rent is misleading because it is influenced by Father Marek's early rent payment for the first half of 2022, which occurred at the end of December 2021. The presbytery rent has remained unaltered. However, rental income from the church basement hall increased by around 80% to 2,600€. Revenue from the Proximus antenna, which is indexed annually, climbed by around 10% to 9,114€.
- 2. Collections:** As of 2022, this category includes, in addition to ordinary mass collections, revenues for votive candles, which had been previously credited to the 'Unité Pastoral Meiser'. The observed drop is slightly misleading. In terms of mass collections, the year 2022 was artificially high because the Slovak community (SKM) transferred collections for the March-December 2021 period in January 2022. The average monthly collections actually grew by about 20% in 2023. Nonetheless, they remain relatively modest, at 286€, far from covering even the church's basic operating expenditures like energy, insurance, and general maintenance. The earnings from votive candles more than doubled, reaching



2,270€. After deducting candle costs, net revenue was 908€, or 2% of the gross amount.



- Donations:** This category contains both recurring and one-time donations. This revenue increased about 12-fold in 2023 to 36,889€ as a result of the faithful's generosity for the church roof repair, which is scheduled for 2024. Contributions were made through a variety of methods available to the faithful, including bank transfers, online donations, and card payments, with the option to give at a payment terminal following each Sunday mass. Given the low level of mass collections, the FE will look at ways to encourage the faithful to make contributions on a more regular (monthly) basis in order to ensure the church's operational costs are more steady and sustainable.
- Cost-cofinancing:** The FE assumed responsibility for the presbytery's energy contracts in mid-2021. The presbytery tenants pay 80% of the energy bills, with the FE covering the remaining 20%. Under this category, we record the presbytery tenants' contribution to gas and electricity use in the presbytery, which decreased by about 50% in 2023 due to lower energy prices. Furthermore, occupants of the church apartment contribute to the cost of water due to the shared water connection. Because the water provider Vivaqua had problems issuing invoices in 2022/2023, the co-financing of water usage will be charged to the apartment tenants only in 2024.
- Other:** This minor category contains non-regular revenue that doesn't appear elsewhere. This revenue amounted to 1,340€ in 2023, and included a subsidy for replacing the chimney in the flat next to the church, as well as a small amount of the insurance payout for damage to the church roof in 2022.



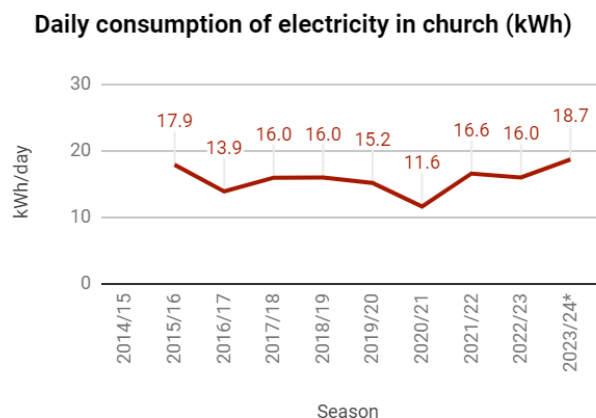
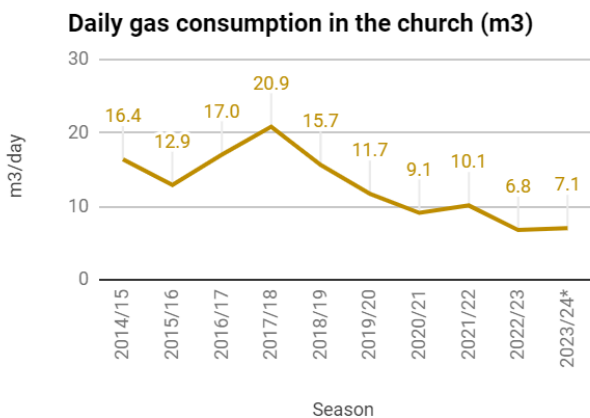
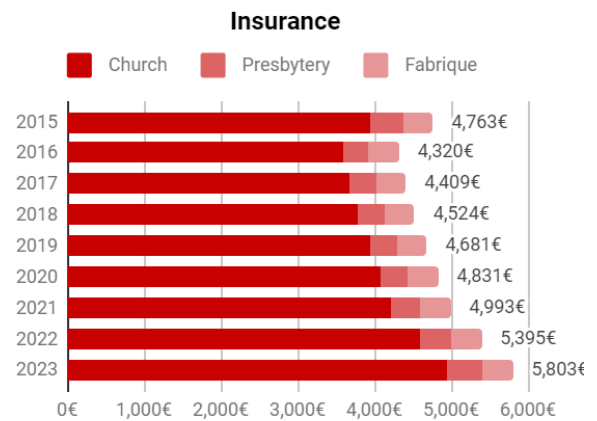
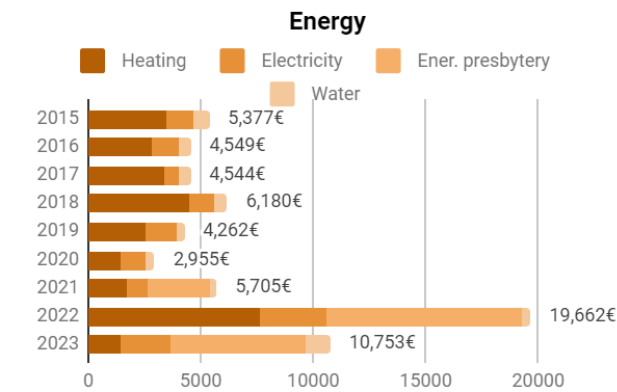
## Expenditures

1. **Energy:** Lower energy prices resulted in a 45% reduction in gas and electricity spending thanks to lower monthly advances and refund of excess energy expenditures in 2022.
  - a. Church (gas): Compared to 2022, heating costs in 2023 fell by more than 6,000€ to 1,412€. There were multiple factors that contributed to the decline. First, as of May 2022, the monthly advances had dropped by nearly half to around 222€. Second, the annual settlement for the 2022/2023 heating season resulted in a refund of approximately 2,050€. On the contrary, as part of the 2022 annual settlement for the 2021/2022 season, we had to pay 3,666€. We anticipate that energy expenses will stabilize in 2024, given gas usage appears to have decreased slightly (see graph) and energy prices have remained fairly stable.
  - b. Church (electricity): Electricity expenses fell by a quarter in 2023, to 2,268€. Current monthly advances total around 162€, and we estimate them to climb somewhat in the coming period due to an increase in electricity use over the prior



period (see graph). This was owing to rising use of the church basement hall, which resulted in a greater need for heat pumps to warm the space.

- c. Presbytery: Energy costs (gas and electricity combined) fell by 30% in 2023 to 5,985€, owing to the same trends as in the church. As previously stated, tenants pay 80% of the presbytery energy costs, with the FE covering the remaining 20%. With the planned repair and insulation of the presbytery roof in 2024, energy consumption is predicted to decrease slightly in the next heating season, potentially resulting in decreased gas expenses.
- d. Water: Water expenditures for both the church and the presbytery grew to 1,088€ in 2023, owing primarily to troubles with the provider Vivaqua's invoicing system, which delayed invoice issuance in 2022. The delayed sums were charged in 2023. Whereas presbytery residents cover 80% of their water consumption, apartment occupants who are linked to the church water line cover fully their consumption.

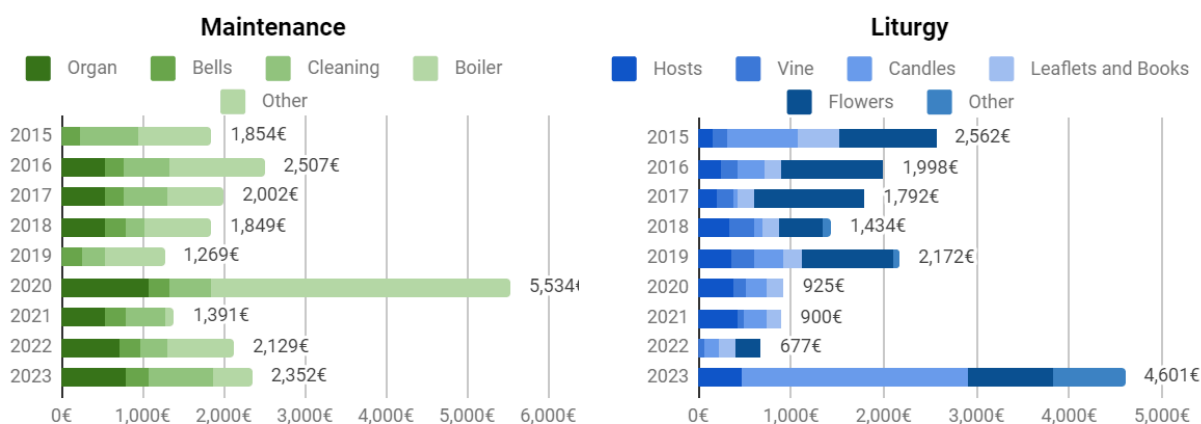


- 2. **Insurance:** These expenditures include fire insurance for the church and presbytery, as well as insurance to cover the FE's third-party liability. These expenses increased by 7.5% to 5,803€ in 2023. On average, insurance accounts for 27% of operating expenditures.
- 3. **Maintenance:** Recurrent maintenance costs are fairly constant and include cleaning the

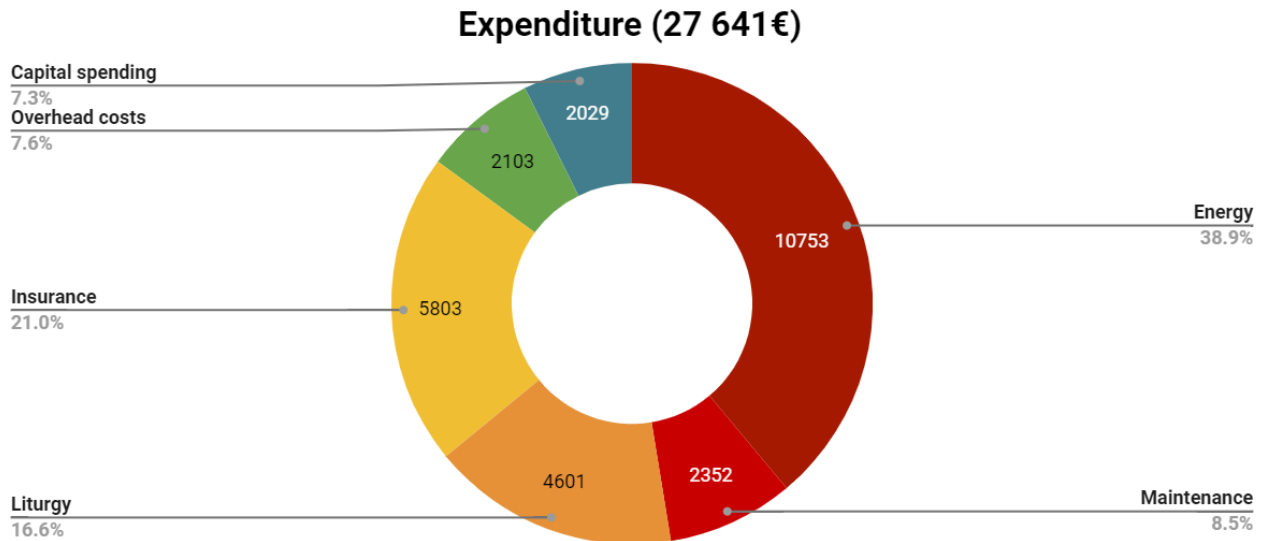
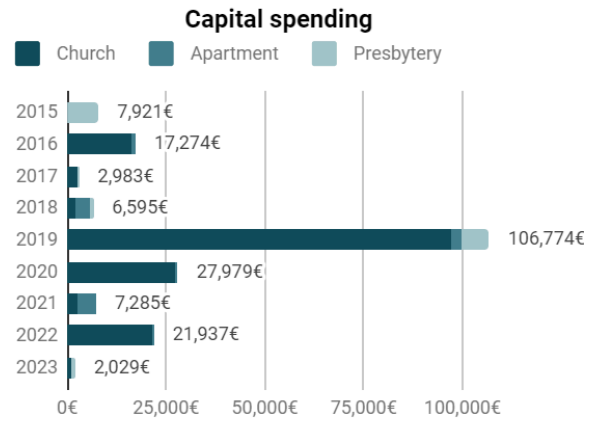
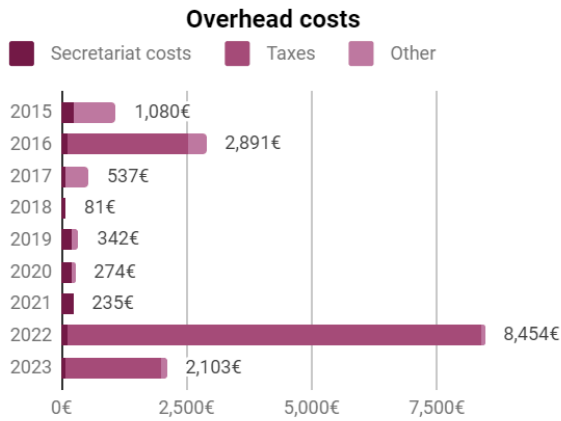


church, annual servicing of the organ, bells, boiler, and extinguishers, as well as consumable purchases (e.g., light bulbs). In 2023, these expenses increased by 10% to 2,352€. The primary driver of the rise was the purchase of two vacuum cleaners (one for the church and one for the basement hall) to facilitate cleaning. In addition, the cleaning lady hired through the local employment agency (Agence Locale pour l'Emploi) was asked to clean the church basement hall as well as the chapel.

- Liturgy:** Liturgical expenditure covers various groups, including hosts, vine, candles, liturgical books, flowers, and liturgical object purchases. These expenditures climbed nearly sevenfold to 4,601€ in 2023, for two reasons. First, we replenished the stock of votive candles, paying approximately 2,384€, which should last roughly two years. Second, to make the liturgical celebration more solemn and reverent, we purchased several liturgical items, including oil candles with glass protectors and stands, an incensory, and a holy water sprinkler, for a total cost of 722€. Furthermore, as of 2023, the FE fully covered the costs of flowers, which were financed in the previous period by the Slovak community.



- Overhead costs:** The main expenses in this category are property tax on the presbytery building, secretariat expenditures such as printing services, and web hosting and bank fees. In 2023, this expenditure fell by 75% to 2,103€ mostly due to lower real estate tax outlay (although it increased on an annual basis) since in 2022, we were required to pay the real estate tax retrospectively for four years, for the period 2018-2021.
- Capital spending:** This category is quite volatile because in addition to regular smaller repairs it also includes larger one-off investments. In 2023, this spending fell by more than 90% to 2,029€ as we limited capital spending in anticipation of the church roof renovation in 2024 (see Box). A small repair to the church roof and some electrical work in the church basement cost 1,097€. In the presbytery, we had to deal with basement flooding caused by heavy rains, which cost us €932. No investment was made in the church flat.



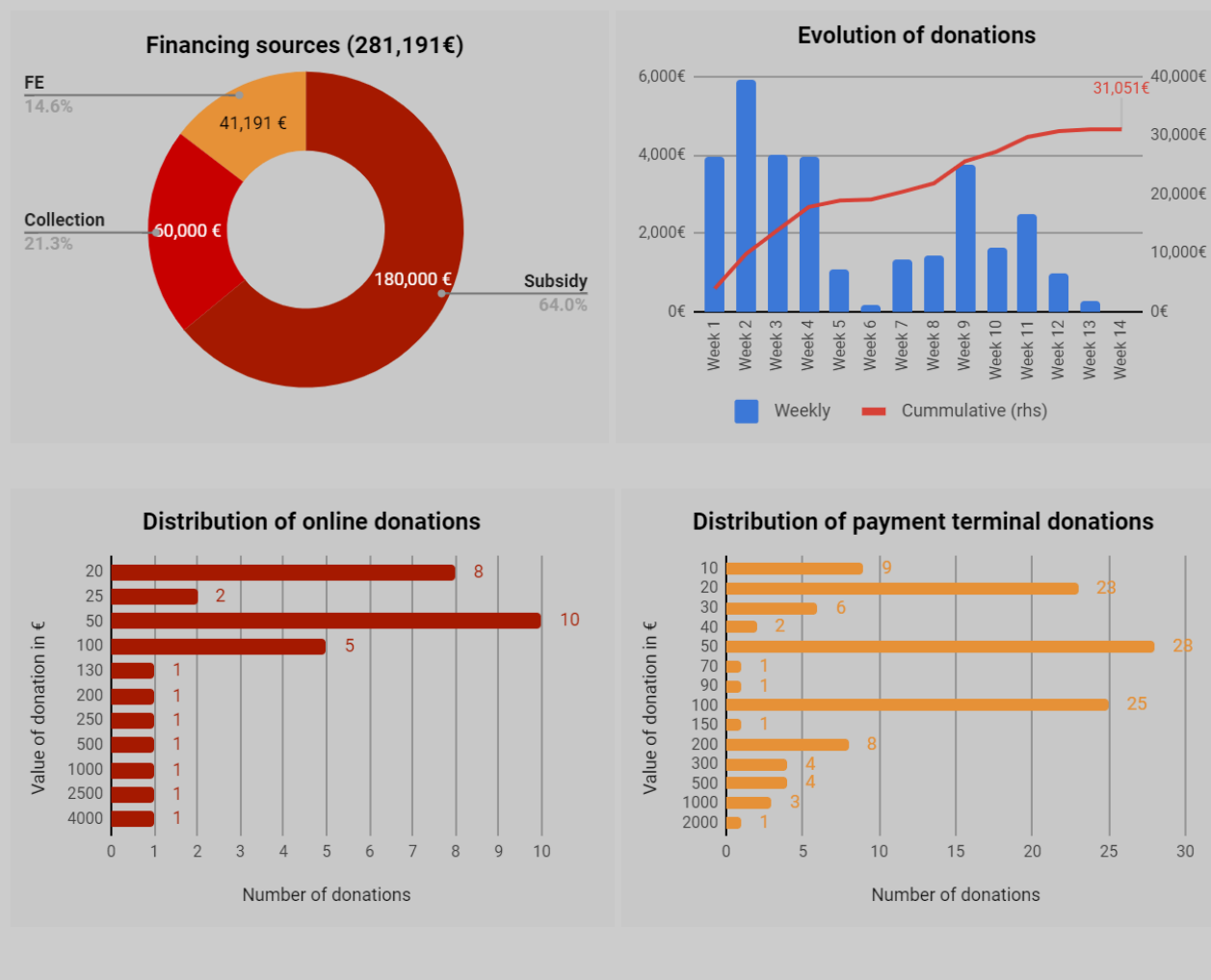
#### Box - Church Roof Renovation

For more than a year, puddles of water within the church have been a regular feature of mass celebrations, as has their cleaning after each storm. While the first signs of a problem with the church roof were discovered in 2017, the situation did not appear imminent. In response, the FE began looking for means to finance the reparations. One of the possibilities pursued was to identify a company that would install solar panels while also financing roof repairs. Despite efforts, this avenue has produced no results. As a result, in 2021, the FE decided to request a subsidy of 180,000€ from the Brussels municipality (based on a received price offer and the FE's financial situation). While the Commune approved the subsidy in October 2021, it did not notify anyone at the FE. This meant that the FE had to reconsider where to acquire resources to fund the reparations.



As the situation worsened in 2022, the FE decided that repair was necessary and that the prospect of a bank loan would be considered. Later in the year, the FE accidentally discovered that the subsidy was approved. This provided motivation to begin arranging the steps required for the project. Necessary paperwork for the public tender was completed in September 2023, and in October, the winning business with a price offer of 281,191€ was chosen. At the same time, the FE began a special collection after each Sunday mass at the end of September to help fund the project, with a goal of 60,000€. By the end of the year, about half of this target was reached. While most people contributed with sums up to 100€, a number of faithful made donations of several thousands euro (see graph).

The renovation should begin in the first half of March and take 50 working days.







## Annexes

Revenue				
Category	2022	2023	Change (EUR)	Change (%)
<b>Rental income</b>	<b>23,118€</b>	<b>26,884€</b>	<b>3,766€</b>	<b>16.3%</b>
<i>Apartment</i>	8,040€	7,971€	-69€	-0.9%
<i>Presbytery</i>	5,400€	7,200€	1,800€	33.3%
<i>Hall</i>	1,440€	2,599€	1,159€	80.5%
<i>Proximus antenna</i>	8,238€	9,114€	876€	10.6%
<b>Collections</b>	<b>9,241€</b>	<b>8,310€</b>	<b>-931€</b>	<b>-10.1%</b>
<i>Mass</i>	8,178€	6,041€	-2,137€	-26.1%
<i>Candles</i>	1,063€	2,269€	1,207€	113.5%
<b>Donations</b>	<b>3,109€</b>	<b>36,889€</b>	<b>33,780€</b>	<b>1086.4%</b>
<i>Bank transfers</i>	3,100€	10,264€	7,164€	231.1%
<i>Website</i>	9€	10,452€	10,443€	112530.8%
<i>Terminal</i>	0€	16,173€	16,173€	na
<b>Cost co-financing</b>	<b>8,884€</b>	<b>4,679€</b>	<b>-4,205€</b>	<b>-47.3%</b>
<i>Energy presbytery</i>	8,884€	4,257€	-4,627€	-52.1%
<i>Water presbytery</i>	0€	422€	422€	na
<i>Water apartment</i>	0€	0€	0€	na
<b>Other</b>	<b>4,164€</b>	<b>1,340€</b>	<b>-2,824€</b>	<b>-67.8%</b>
<i>Interest</i>	0€	0€	0€	na
<i>Other</i>	4,164€	1,340€	-2,824€	-67.8%
Expenditure				
Category	2022	2023	Change (EUR)	Change (%)
<b>Energy</b>	<b>19,662€</b>	<b>10,753€</b>	<b>-8,909€</b>	<b>-45.3%</b>
<i>Heating</i>	7,590€	1,412€	-6,178€	-81.4%
<i>Electricity</i>	3,029€	2,268€	-761€	-25.1%
<i>Ener. presbytery</i>	8,610€	5,985€	-2,626€	-30.5%
<i>Water</i>	432€	1,088€	656€	151.7%
<b>Maintenance</b>	<b>2,129€</b>	<b>2,352€</b>	<b>223€</b>	<b>10.5%</b>
<i>Organ</i>	714€	799€	85€	11.9%
<i>Bells</i>	264€	273€	9€	3.3%
<i>Cleaning</i>	324€	796€	472€	145.5%
<i>Boiler</i>	699€	0€	-699€	-100.0%
<i>Other</i>	128€	485€	357€	280.1%
<b>Liturgie</b>	<b>677€</b>	<b>4,601€</b>	<b>3,924€</b>	<b>579.5%</b>
<i>Hosts</i>	0€	463€	463€	na
<i>Vine</i>	68€	0€	-68€	-100.0%
<i>Candles</i>	164€	2,437€	2,273€	1383.1%
<i>Leaflets and Books</i>	178€	0€	-178€	-100.0%



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<i>Flowers</i>	267€	930€	663€	248.4%
<i>Other</i>	0€	770€	770€	na
<b>Insurance</b>	<b>5,395€</b>	<b>5,803€</b>	<b>408€</b>	<b>7.6%</b>
<i>Church</i>	4,584€	4,959€	374€	8.2%
<i>Presbytery</i>	417€	450€	33€	8.0%
<i>Fabrique</i>	394€	394€	0€	0.0%
<b>Overhead costs</b>	<b>8,454€</b>	<b>2,103€</b>	<b>-6,351€</b>	<b>-75.1%</b>
<i>Secretariat costs</i>	116€	98€	-17€	-15.0%
<i>Taxes</i>	8,267€	1,873€	-6,394€	-77.3%
<i>Other</i>	72€	132€	60€	83.3%
<b>Capital spending</b>	<b>21,937€</b>	<b>2,029€</b>	<b>-19,908€</b>	<b>-90.8%</b>
<i>Church</i>	21,687€	1,097€	-20,590€	-94.9%
<i>Apartment</i>	250€	0€	-250€	-100.0%
<i>Presbytery</i>	0€	932€	932€	na