

*“Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic,
love one another, be compassionate and humble.”*

(1 Peter 3:8)



**St Thomas the Apostle Parish Church and
Kingfisher Church, Trowbridge**

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

7.30pm on Tuesday 30th April 2024

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1. AGENDA

1. Opening Worship
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of 2023 Meeting
4. Election of Churchwardens
5. Election of PCC Members
6. Presentation of Accounts for 2023
7. Election of Independent Examiner for 2024
8. Reports:
 - a. PCC Proceedings in 2023
 - b. Deanery Synod
 - c. Electoral Roll
 - d. The Fabric of the Church
 - e. Safeguarding
9. Presentation of Inventory and Log Book
10. 2023 Reports from Organisations
11. Any other matters of Parochial or Church concern*
12. Looking forwards – Vicar and Churchwardens

* Please notify the Vicar by the Sunday 28th April

**Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on
Tuesday 16th May 2023 at 7.30pm at St Thomas' Church**

APCM for St Thomas (inc. Kingfisher) Church

16th May 2023

7.30pm

Present: Allan Coutts, Mandi Archer, Wendy Armitage, Ruth Barber, Fiona Barnes, Mark Bennett, Janet Boffey, Anita Bowater, Martin Bridgewater, Natasha Bristow, Esther Brown, Alice & Stephen Bull, Jane & Richard Butler, Geoff & Kay Carter, John & Ruth Chettleburgh, Janet Chivers, Janet Coutts, Jo Deacon, Paul Edwards, Jamie Farnell, Yvonne Franks, Jenny & Martin Gailey, Ed Greening, Barbara Hakes, Geoff Heard, Martin Hewitt, Robert Jones, Andrew Judge, Gwen Kearley, Geoff & Pat Kerbey, Gordon & Stella Leeder, Shirley Meech, Linda & Philip Puttock, John Reynolds, Ivor & Val Saxby, Andrew Sharland, Helen Shields, Rob Slater, Gordon & Jean Stanford, Geoff Tate, Pam Thomas, Vicki Turner, Marjory Wade, Chris & Martyn Whittock, Judy & Kevin Wright, Lyndsey & Simon Wright

Apologies: David Bowater, Carrie Farnell, Angela Grist, Harriet Heard, Hannah NacNab, Frances Self, Dorothy & Richard Urwin

- 1. Opening Worship** – Allan started the meeting by stating that he is entering his final year as vicar of St Thomas' and St John's, he plans to retire in May 2024. Then he opened the meeting in prayer and Paul lead 2 worship songs.
- 2. Apologies** – see above
- 3. Minutes of 2022 meeting** – these were received and unanimously accepted.
- 4. Election of Churchwardens** – John Chettleburgh was proposed for churchwarden by Geoff Tate and seconded by Martin Gailey. Paul Edwards was proposed by Harriet Heard and seconded by Judy Wright. As there were no other nominations they were duly elected. Allan expressed gratitude to Paul and Geoff (who is standing down – see 'thanks' at end) for their service in the previous year and to John for his willingness to stand this year.

There have been 2 Deputy Wardens, Barbara Hakes, who is taking a break for a while, and Robert Jones (with responsibility for Holy Trinity). Geoff Carter and Mandi Archer are willing to be Deputy Wardens. Deputy Warden isn't an official post that needs electing, the first meeting of the PCC will approve them.

5. Election of Deanery Synod Representatives – Nominations were: Ruth Chettleburgh, nominated by Jane Butler, seconded by Vicki Turner. Marjory Wade, nominated by Judy Wright, seconded by Pam Thomas. Chris Whittock, nominated by Ruth Chettleburgh, seconded by John Chettleburgh. As there were no other nominations they were duly elected.

Allan expressed his thanks to Ruth Barber and Barbara Hakes for serving on the Deanery Synod for the last 3 years.

6. Election of PCC Members – Nominations were Alison Bennett, nominated by Ruth Barber, seconded by Stephen Bull. Natasha Bristow, nominated by Laura Young, seconded by Matt Young. Jamie Farnell, nominated by Paul Edwards, seconded by Helen Shields. Harriet Heard, nominated by Stephen Bull, seconded by Wendy Armitage. And Robert Jones, nominated by Andrew Sharland, seconded by Ed Greening. As there were no other nominations they were duly elected. Alison, Natasha and Harriet are elected for 3 years. Jamie and Robert are elected for 1 year. Those elected for 1 year can stand again next year.

A question was asked, how much the PCC would be involved in the process of finding a new Vicar? The Archdeacon will come to talk to the congregation, then a Parish Profile will be written. One Churchwarden from each parish will be on the interview panel. This process can't start until after Allan has actually retired. The meeting prayed for all the newly elected people, Churchwardens, PCC members and Deanery Synod Representatives.

7. Presentation of Accounts for 2022 – We ended 2022 with a deficit of £4000, this was less than anticipated due to increased giving, grants and careful spending. We have reserves that can be used to cover this. At the end of 2022 our reserves were £73,000.

2023 Budget – The PCC reluctantly agreed to a £15,000 deficit, this is now slightly reduced. A question was asked: with the rise in utility bills was this still realistic? Yes, this has been taken into account. Another question: given the need for a Treasurer, what does the job entail? Pat was originally a bookkeeper, the job has grown over the years, she feels that it would be good if more than

one person could be involved. There is quite a lot of work, but it can be done at any time.

8. **Election of Independent Examiner for 2023** – Oakensen have been doing them for some time, they are expensive but so are most accountants. Pat proposed to use them again, Jamie Farnell seconded. APCM agreed.

9. **Reports** – these show the life of the church.

a. PCC- a brief glimpse at what the PCC do.

b. Deanery Synod – Thanks to Barbara for her report.

c. Electoral Roll – Thanks to John for keeping it up to date.

d. The Fabric of the Church – Thanks to Paul & Geoff

e. **Safeguarding** – This is on the agenda every year and every PCC meeting. There is a change of personnel that the PCC will ratify in July. Barbara Hakes is standing down as Safeguarding Officer for Vulnerable Adults. Liz Atkins has offer to stand. She joins the team with Martyn Whittock (Children & young people), Jean Foy (Kingfisher) and Pat Kerbey (Admin).

The reports were proposed by Judy wright, seconded by Barbara Hakes, the APCM approved them.

10. **Presentation of Inventory and Log Book** – Paul explained that the inventory includes lots of things including plaques on the wall, silverware and books. The wardens keep this up to date. The log book, now electronic, records things done to the fabric of the building. A question was asked why we have to keep this information? The Church of England require it. We used to have to get it signed off every year, but his is no longer required.

Allan thanked Paul for keeping it up to date and Geoff for all the work he does maintaining the buildings. Although Geoff is standing down as Church Warden he will still be looking after the fabric of the buildings.

11. **2022 Reports from Organisations** – Read through the booklet and see the hard work that goes into the life of the church. Allan thanked all who wrote a report and all the hard work that goes on. Thanks were given to God that there is so much going on.

last year

12. Any other matters of Parochial or Church concern. A question was asked about the progress of the PCC Working Group set up to process feedback from last year's Church Weekend at Home.

PCC set up a working group, but it was delayed by Allan's illness. It consists of Allan, Alison Bennett, Martyn Whittock, Paul Edwards, Judy Wright and Hannah MacNab, and has since met five times. They plan to meet once more to complete the work they set out to do, have given an interim report to the PCC, will give a full report to the PCC on the 4th July and will give a precis to the whole church. The first 2 meetings looked at the vision of the church with reference to Bishop Andrew's talk at the Weekend with especial reference to the three images. These had been broadly affirming of our vision which we often express as: *Christ focused, Community Facing, Church Family*. The third meeting looked at questions raised at the Weekend and in the group sessions preceding it: church services, suggestions to introduce a staff team/steering group, recruiting volunteers, publicity, spotlight on ministries, social outreach (e.g. Coronation weekend), noticed how well Warm Spaces and The Island have gone, co-ordination with other churches through CATA. The other 2 meetings looked in depth at Kingfisher Church and 'mission on the meads', and Holy Trinity as our 2 major missions.

Allan then asked himself a question (!): are we going to continue to celebrate Communion in the same way we have been? No, the bishop has said we must return to a common cup by Pentecost, just over a week away. They have been turning a blind eye to the use of single cups, but no more. There will be two stations at the front with bread and a cup of wine at each. Non-alcoholic wine will be available in individual cups. Question were asked: 1. can you dip your wafer/bread? No, because there is a risk of contamination. 2. are we going back to using bread? We can if people prefer it, but Allan doesn't want to prepare it. 3. is it acceptable for people to write personally to the Bishop and Archdeacon, as there are many elderly and vulnerable members of the church who may feel excluded by this decision? Yes, they may. However, it was proposed that Allan should write to the Bishop on behalf of this meeting – proposed by Linda Puttock and seconded by Martyn Whittock. The meeting agreed.

Kevin Wright has expressed an interest in becoming a Verger.

13. Vicar's Address

Allan began by reiterating his decision to retire next year and stated some of his reason for his decision on timing. It gives him and Janet time to get things in place including a house and it gives the church time to put things in place to

ensure smooth running during an interregnum. Next year he will have been vicar of St Thomas' for 25 years and an ordained minister for 40 years. In his talk he looked back over a time of significant change in the parish both geographically, in the staffing, in styles of worship and in the activities the church does. He also mentioned the re-ordering of St Thomas' allowing more flexible use of the church and the significant improvements made to Holy Trinity. He mentioned the commissioning of Kingfisher church and the part St Thomas' plays in many town wide outreach initiatives. He went on to explain that all the good things demonstrate that we are in as good a place as possible for an interregnum (the full text of Allan's address is available from the Church Office).

Thanks in order of longevity! Presentations were made to three people who have served the church in major roles, but also by being who they are... in order of their length of service.

Wendy Armitage became Verger and cleaner 40 years ago, a role she shared with Hughie until his death. However, she has contributed to the life of the church in many other ways over the years, including as a Housegroup Leader, Tear Fund rep, flower arranging, cooking and baking (Allan said he will always remember Wendy's cakes!)

Barbara Hakes has worn many hats over the last 22 years: Verger, Deputy Warden, Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Officer, Deanery Synod Representative, Alpha and Cell Group Leader. Again, her contribution to the life of the church goes way beyond the 'jobs' she has done. She is taking a break from everything for now.

Geoff & Kay Carter were thanked for all they do. Geoff is standing down as Church Warden but will still be doing a lot for the church, including leading a fabric maintenance team. Geoff responded by stating how much the team has helped him. (Allan said he will also always remember Kay's cakes!)

Allan went on to explain that **Angela Grist** has retired from duties outside the church, but he is delighted that she will be continuing with her church work and hopes to get back into service leading/preaching as her health improves. However, she would like to identify a successor for her Mission Awareness role.

The meeting closed with the grace.

REPORTS

3. Core, Deanery and Administrative Activities

3.1 The PCC in 2023

The Parochial Church Council met six times during 2023 face to face. Each meeting starts with prayer and ends with the grace ensuring God is the centre of the proceedings; sometimes we are moved to pray for particular issues on the spot as they arise.

The PCC discussed and decided upon a wide range of subjects. Members act as trustees, looking after financial and other assets (such as the fabric of the Church buildings). The PCC connect with the wider Church of England, through Bradford Deanery and Salisbury Diocese, and in matters such as faculties (permission) for changes in buildings and furnishings. PCC members also act as a link with the congregation, able to bring matters of concern to the PCC and explain PCC decisions to members of the congregation.

The PCC receives regular reports from the Vicar. The Treasurer presents financial updates and the Wardens report on matters relating to the church buildings. During 2023, the PCC discussed and prayed over a wide range of other matters including:

- Mission on the Meads, Toms's and Women's Shed, The Island, Morning Brak
- Church giving at home and abroad
- Buildings Development – ongoing consideration of occasional services at Holy Trinity
- Reducing expenditure as much as possible and increasing income.
- Church Safety and Safeguarding policies

In particular the last two meetings have been considering Allan's retirement and creating a parish profile for a new incumbent. The PCC have approved a wider consultation process with the congregation so that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to the process. Support is being provided by our sponsors the CPAS and meetings with both the Archdeacon and CPAS are planned.

Please thank God for all the amazing service of wardens (Paul Edwards and John Chettleburgh this year), our treasurer Pat Kerbey, those involved in building development. Pray that suitable volunteers will come forward for the role of Treasurer.

Thank Him also for Allan who so ably chairs our meetings and will be greatly missed for his wisdom and tact. As we approach Allan's retirement we pray that God will guide us in His way and bless us in the year to come.

Harriet Heard (PCC Secretary)

3.2 Deanery Synod

Deanery Synod has met 3 times in June and Oct 2023 and Feb 2024. It is an exciting time within Bradford Deanery with many changes and opportunities.

At our first meeting Jane Palmer was inducted by the Arch Deacon as our new Rural Dean. Jane has a real knowledge of the parish and a real gift for building community and enthusiasm for mission. As well as a new Rural Dean we have had 4 new younger vicars/rectors recently join the Deanery at St James, Trowbridge, 2 in Melksham and at Winsley, it is great to have their fresh ideas and enthusiasm. There is currently an interregnum at Hilperton and Bradford on Avon and soon to be one at St Thomas', which means that by 2025 most of the Deanery will have new clergy in place.

The other exciting development is 'Making Jesus Known' initiative. This is central funding, available to fund missional projects. Salisbury Diocese has been identified as a pilot area and the Diocese is keen for one of the projects to be in North Wiltshire. The funding is for personnel not buildings and is for cross parish projects. Once granted, the funding is for 9 years. We have spent quite a lot of time mapping our areas and suggesting areas that could be developed. Jane and some of the clergy were attending induction courses to find out how to work with the Diocese to take this forward and will report back at our next meeting in June.

Your Deanery Reps are: Chris Whittock, Ruth Chettleburgh and Marjory Wade.

Chris Whittock, Ruth Chettleburgh and Marjory Wade

3.3 Electoral Roll

Every effort has been made to accurately update the Electoral Roll, through email, phone calls, personal contact, and home visits. We have lost a few members of our church family over the last year - but have also been joined by an encouraging number of few new faces. Total on the Electoral Roll now number 165.

John Reynolds, (Electoral Roll Officer)

3.4 Safeguarding:

We reviewed and updated our Safeguarding Policy at the first PCC meeting after the APCM, as we are obliged within the Church of England rules to do. We also have to reappoint our Parish Safeguarding Representatives at the same PCC meeting.

Martyn Whittock and Liz Atkins are our Parish Safeguarding Reps responsible primarily for safeguarding of children (Martyn) and vulnerable adults (Liz) at St Thomas' and Holy Trinity. Jean Foy is the Parish Safeguarding Rep at Kingfisher. But all three reps are available at any time.

We now have 66 church members DBS checked for their role within our churches. DBS checks now last just 3 years, not 5 years as previously. We also have different levels of training depending upon the role undertaken. Most of this training is done online through the Diocese of Salisbury website, although for a few people (leadership) there is a longer zoom training module. 95 % of those covered by DBS checks have undergone the required level of training.

Pat Kerbey, Safeguarding Administrator

3.5 The Parish Office

The last year in the office has had times of manic, 'Argh there's too much to do!' to more peaceful, 'Aah what can I do now? Sometimes

I'm not sure why the difference and sometimes it's obvious. I think I more or less have the hang of things now although that doesn't mean I don't make mistakes from time to time so my apologies in advance for when that happens.

Andrew and I continue to get the weekly newsletter and monthly magazine out electronically and physically. We put the services on Easy Worship, update the website, which this year meant a new look (thank you Andrew). Sorting out room booking takes a bit of time, we have a new group hiring part of the rooms for 3 days a week. We answer the phone and visitors to the office and so many other things I can't mention them all.

The next few months will see a real change for us with Allan's retirement things will be different, not only will we not have Allan to steer us, but the office will be moving from the Vicarage to the creche room.

I continue to appreciate the constant support I get from Pat, who is only a phone call away.

Frankie Smith

3.6 Youth Worker

I continue to strive to establish relationships with and between Secondary aged children in both church, youth groups and local schools.

During term time I continue to help facilitate Friday Night Games with the Apprentices as well as IMPAX on Wednesday evenings. I enjoyed attending my first Spree in June.

I now run GLOW lunchtime clubs in all three of the local secondary schools- Clarendon Academy, John of Gaunt and St. Augustine's. This has required the support of some members of the congregation who teach in these settings in providing classrooms and/ or extra supervision of which I am very grateful.

This academic year I have begun mentoring at John of Gaunt and see two students every week. I also now mentor at The Mead and see two

older primary students there in preparation for their transition into secondary school.

I have also done some Youth Work outside of term time. Over the summer holiday I helped support the Pop Up Youth Café in Trowbridge run by Youth for Christ which was another great opportunity to engage with youth in the area. Over October half term I helped organise and accompany a group of our Church Youth to Wilderness Worship- a Youth for Christ and WOLT collaboration day which involved lots of outdoor activities, rain, BBQ and worship in a big tent! I hope we will be able to attend again next September.

Hannah Cox

3.7 Cradle Roll

Children on the Cradle Roll are those who were baptised or dedicated at St Thomas' or Kingfisher Churches. They receive a birthday card from the church each year up to and including their 5th birthday. At the end of 2023 there were 20 children on the Cradle Roll.

Margaret Hewitt

3.8 Eco Church

Caring for God's creation is as important now as ever but so far we have been unable to make progress in applying for the Ecochurch Bronze Award.

Thank you to all of you who are faithfully doing your bit for the world that God has entrusted to our care through teaching and worship, through care of our buildings and land and through our lifestyles and in our homes and communities.

Andrew Sharland

3.9 Verger Report

I took on the role as Verger about six months ago and have gradually increased my duties to assist Allan as much as possible. I recently received a full set of church keys which has allowed me to increase my duties including the setting up the communion table, ensuring the

correct Altar cloth is fitted and clearing the altar table after the Service. The head count is recorded for both the main congregation and the four young people's groups. This is a requirement from the Diocese. The records are kept in a book designed to do this and I have set up a new booklet for the young people. We are averaging a head count of about 130 each week.

I have assisted in one Baptism since I took on the role and one funeral. We have four more baptisms and one wedding in the diary. I try to arrive about 20 minutes before any service and to assist people with their general enquiries etc. I recently purchased a Verger-Name-Badge to help identify my role. This proved to be useful at the recent funeral. In general, I keep an eye on things and trust they run smoothly to enable all of us to enjoy our times of worship together.

I am not available every Sunday, Judy and I tend to spend a lot of time away from home visiting family or away in our caravan. I would also like to go back to joining Judy on the monthly service she leads at St John's. Therefore, it would be very helpful if someone would like to assist me in the role as Verger.

Everything is running very smoothly; my only concern is that the Alter cloths are getting a bit tatty, and we are now using the gold one for both the gold and white alter cloth service's. I think this should be addressed.

Kevin Wright(St Thomas Verger)

4. Pastoral Care

4.1 Lay Pastoral Team

The work of the LPAs is to help the Vicar with the pastoral work of the church. We are, however, only the official wing of the caring that goes on in the church. During 2023 we continued an exploration, started during Covid, of how we could communicate with the groups within St Thomas' that have a significant pastoral role which resulted in a Pastoral Care Forum being held in early July. The aim of this meeting was to find out what is already happening, 'network' with one another,

and think about ways we might improve. It was a very useful and encouraging time together and it is hoped to repeat it in the future.

We continued to meet regularly and to compile the Prayers in the weekly newsletter. We also took Communion to those unable to attend, to visit, provide lifts and support many of the congregation. We also get to know new members and were pleased to be able to have a Welcome Tea, the first since pre-Covid, in October when Allan was able to officially welcome them and leaders of some groups gave one-minute overviews of their roles. This was a very busy and happy occasion which was enjoyed by all.

During the year Ruth Chettleburgh did the LPA training course and was licenced in January this year and is now a very welcome member of our team. Sadly, due to ill-health Alison Cook has had to stand down and we thank her for her wisdom and care over many years. Also, Marjory decided to stand down as team leader after 10 years and Liz Atkins has agreed to take on that role and will lead us forward into a new year of working to serve you in Christ's name.

Liz Atkins, Ruth Chettleburgh, Alison Cook, Rosemary and Keith Earley, Marjory Wade

5. Mission

5.1. Kingfisher Church

At **Kingfisher Church**, our mission continues to be 'bringing friendship, hope and healing' to the 'new' housing areas of Paxcroft Mead and Castle Mead. These are some of the regular ministry and mission activities /opportunities we're involved in.

Regular Mission activities

- Serving at Paxcroft Mead Parent and Toddler group as part of the organising team.
- Mentoring 18-20 children each week at our local primary schools
- Supporting the Resource Base at Castle Mead for children with special needs each week
- Members of the Governing bodies in our local schools
- Regular involvement with local litter picks each month.



Regular Ministry activities

- A worship service on Sundays each week in a local primary school so that we have a regular worshipping presence in the community God has called us to.
- An hour of prayer on Sunday evenings each week so that our mission and ministry is covered in prayer.
- Mid-week gathering with the Farnells' cell group each week so that we maintain good relational links with St Thomas.

In addition, in 2023 we engaged in the following activities to bless these communities.

- Running an annual community Easter Egg trail; 80 plus children took part last year & our link with staff at The Red Admiral Pub continued to be positive.
- Hosting a Dorothy House Coffee Morning and sharing the testimonies online of 3 people at Kingfisher for whom the hospice has been part of their personal journey.
- Taking assemblies & supporting the RE curriculum at our local primary schools.
- Delivering 'Living Nativities' at two of the local schools, involving a team of 12 people sharing a dramatic & interactive presentation of the Christmas gospel message.
- Successfully piloting an interactive & drama based 'Easter experience' at the two local schools presenting the meaning and significance of Holy Week

Members of the Kingfisher Church family are also regularly involved in other missional activities across the wider area including Impax, Street Pastors, Town Chaplains, visiting old people's homes and mentoring in local secondary schools.

Alison Bennett

5.2 Mission Awareness Group/Overseas Mission

This last year the group has been joined by Robert Jones as the CMS rep, Celia Russell as the Bible Society rep and Caroline Fone as the Mercy Ships rep. The other missions we support and their reps are Arab World (Ed Greening), Flame International (Andrew Sharland) and Ugandaid (Jane Bullock and Pauline Butler). We also support Compassion (through individual sponsorships - Ty Butler is our rep), Sudan and South Sudan through the Diocesan Link and Tearfund. Angela stepped down as the Mission co-ordinator and Mercy Ships rep. and Lyndsey Wright and Kevin Wright stepped down as reps for Tearfund and MAF respectively. Thank you for all your work as reps and Angela for leading the group over many many years.

Our programme in 2023 started with a visit from Azaria in February for the CMS focus. We were pleased to welcome Azaria back again this February 2024 along with her husband following their marriage last year. It was great to hear from them both and their heart for mission. In May we had a presentation and talk by Lyndsey focussing on Tearfund and their work in addressing the massive problem of rubbish. We heard a biblical basis, for us as Christians, to act.

In August Robert Jones went out to Bolivia with a team based in Birmingham.

Jan Ransom of Flame International came to speak in September on the urgency of mission at this time and for us to have 'clean hands and a pure heart.' She spoke of some of the recent missions Flame had been on.

In November Gareth Davies gave a well-received message for the Bible Society focus.

The Mission Awareness Group are encouraged and thankful for the wide support for mission at St Thomas' through prayer and finances both individually and as a church.

Andrew Sharland

5.3 Messy Church

We've had another good year at Messy Church and have run 6 sessions over the year. Between 5 and 10 families have come along each session, all from outside the Church plus team families.



We have a real core of families who return whenever they can and we've really been able to build relationships with them. It is a joy to see Dads coming along as well as Grandparents. We aim to have a wide variety of crafts, the food and messy ones are especially popular. We've recently started introducing a challenge which seems to engage the older boys when they've done their craft. If you have any ideas please let us know, woodwork? Science etc?

The time in Church is always lively and we aim to make the stories as interactive as possible. The singing times have really grown in joy and dancing which is great. We're trying to put over the idea that what we learn at Messy Church is for the whole of life not just Saturday mornings so are introducing Spiritual Takeaway Challenges, things like smiling at people, being kind, reading the Easter story together. This is growing slowly.

We're also trying to give the adults more opportunities to explore their faith so have run monthly Chat evenings since December and invited some couples we've known for some time. The discussions have been very open and wonderful. Please join us in praying that God will continue to lead us in this and work in all the lives of our families.

We're so grateful to our band of helpers who regularly come along and join us in interacting with our lovely families and to our faithful prayer partners.

The Messy Church Team

5.4 Parent and Toddler Group

We've had another good year at Toddlers, full of noise, fun and building relationships with our families.

After much prayer and discussion last summer we decided to stop using a booking system and also to stop running the afternoon sessions. Thankfully all of the families who attended the afternoon sessions have blended well into the morning group which we were concerned about. Interestingly numbers at the morning sessions have steadily grown since then reaching a high of over 45 children just before Easter. We continue to monitor this as busier sessions make relationship building harder and more difficult for families with young babies.

Our lovely relationship with Ruth Brooks-Martin who works for Spurgeons and runs New Parent, New Baby courses alongside our sessions continues to bear fruit with many young families moving into our group.

Our Summer event last year was held as part of the Church's Celebration of the King's Coronation. We held a Family Fun Session on the Sunday afternoon and many of our families came along. There were crafts, games for older children and a lovely picnic tea. Everyone had a wonderful time. Thank you so much to all the Church members who helped on that day.

Christmas and Easter have been celebrated by a telling of the stories and each child being given a book to hopefully look at through the year. Thank you to Martyn whose acting out of the stories always goes down well and to Allan for praying for the families for what was the last time.

So, thank you as always to our wonderful team and members of our Church family who support and pray for this work. Thank you especially to our Lord who hears those prayers and blesses us all in this work.

The Toddler Team

5.5 Mini Meet

Mini Meet continues to happen on Thursday mornings at St Thomas'. We run very small informal sessions and at present have 5 families on our register. We don't advertise the group but invite families who may need a little bit of extra support or company. This gives us the opportunity of getting to know the families quite well as well as relationships built between them. We also offer parents a short time in the Audrey Prentice Room to chat and have a coffee while we look after children, this is usually much appreciated.

Please join us in praying that as we spend time with these families, many seeds will be planted for God's kingdom and how to give opportunities for these seeds to grow.

The Mini Meet Team

6. Children, Young People and their Parents

6.1 Crèche, Scramblers and Climbers (3 – 7-year-olds)

Scramblers and Climbers have been busy this year, we usually have 7-10 children aged 3-7 attending, and often had a couple of 2 year olds with a parent. We share a bible story, may play a game, do a craft or cooking activity, and sometimes have a song or memory verse.

As numbers have been growing, we have made the decision to move a couple of the 7 year olds up to the next group slightly early, and also to ensure that the creche room is available for any children under 3 years. This means that the numbers are more manageable, and not across such a wide age spread, which was affecting the calmness and delivery of the sessions. The group is lead by Anita Bowater, Chris Whittock and Ruth Chettleburgh, with a helper on a monthly rota.

I have also been checking that the Creche is available for the youngest members of our church, those under 3 years and their parent / carer. Currently we have a Creche room, with toys, books and a speaker relay so that the service can be followed. There is also a soft corner with quiet toys at the back of church for those who would rather stay in

church. I am aware that the church office may need to be relocated to the Creche room in the near future, so the in church provision may be utilised more. I am hoping that there is someone who would be willing to take on the role of checking these areas are warm, have appropriate toys in and that any new commers know where they are if they wish to use them. Please have a chat with me if you have 5-10 minutes before a Sunday service to do this. Thank you.

Anita Bowater

6.2 Explorers (8 – 11-year-olds)

Explorers aged 7 to 11 meet every Sunday with Caroline Fone and Harriet Heard taking turns to lead supported by a helper. We love to learn bible stories through craft, drama and games. The children are brilliant at answering questions and provoking good discussions; their bible knowledge is really impressive and we adults really appreciate learning alongside them. It's a lovely group to help with - if anyone is interested in getting involved then please speak to Harriet.

Geoff & Harriet Heard

6.3 Pathfinders (11 – 14-year-olds)

Pathfinders aged 11-14 (Key Stage 3) meet on Sundays in the Audrey Prentice Room. The four leaders, Naomi Frost, Helen Shields, David Bowater and myself, share the session with a lovely group of young people who enjoy reading the bible, applying our insights to our lives, chatting about things that matter and some things that don't, praying and not least eating a wide range of edibles!

Our themes in the last year have included, The Fruits of the Spirit, Faithfulness on the Frontline and Discovering our true identity in Christ. As a Pathfinder leader it's always a joy and privilege to learn about following Jesus alongside the young people. We've enjoyed sharing some drama this year in All Age Services and in March we had a social outing tenpin bowling in Bath.

John Chettleburgh

6.4 Apprentices (14 – 18-year-olds)

Apprentices enjoyed the apologetics topic at the end of the academic year but since September 2023 we have moved on to a new topic “Pressure points”. We have had some very dynamic discussions around sessions from peer pressure to stealing. Now I feel we all know each other better, Apprentices are much more open to honestly chatting through different ideas and opinions. In September we also ran a joint session with Pathfinders discussing differing views in the Church on the LGBTQIA+ community where members of the Church were interviewed asking questions that the youth had helped prepare. Sunday mornings are well attended by on average seven young people each week. The Apprentices did very well with helping to lead Father’s Day, the All-Age Christmas Nativity and Mother’s Day services.

Hannah Cox

6.5 Friday Night Games

Friday Night Games Night continues to run each week in the Church Rooms for hot chocolate, cake, a catch up and board games for those children in years 10-13. We have six regular attendees from Church and another regular from St. James who attends fortnightly when their youth group does not run. We also occasionally have attendees from Impax.

Hannah Cox

7. Worship

7.1 Worship Teams

The worship team provided sung worship for Sunday services and events throughout the year. Team leaders (Paul, Judy, Jennie and myself) and our wider team of musicians and singers, brought a mix of worship styles ranging from contemporary to traditional, for young and less young. We have a heart to see God use our music to help bring us together in worship and closer to God. We seek to use our worship to lead us to a place of openness for his Spirit to transform us.

Team leaders met termly to plan and coordinate Sunday worship. In the year we had several people join the worship team which has been great. We have tried to meet collectively a few times a term for a whole team practise where we learned new songs and developed musically. These were a great opportunity for anyone interested in being involved in the team to come and have a go, without the pressure of a service. (Please do speak to me if you are interested.)

There were several other events when the wider team worked together in various mixes to lead worship. These included the church weekend away in October and Easter and Christmas events.

Thanks to all involved in these services and events for helping to make them so successful. Thank you also to our amazing PA & AV team who support us so well.

Carrie Farnell

7.2 Prayer Ministry

Prayer ministry is offered after most morning services at St Thomas'. God is faithful with many answered prayers and blessings received. We meet together monthly for prayer and reflection. We are currently small in number and we are looking to grow through 2024.

As I write this we are reflecting on and giving thanks for Allan's 25 years of leadership at St Thomas' and we are looking forward to all that God has in store for us individually, as families and as a church community during the interregnum and as we anticipate the appointment of a new vicar.

Andrew Sharland

7.3 Hospitality Team

Thank you to all who were responsible for welcoming and providing coffee in 2023. We had teams of two welcomers and two folk doing coffee, which meant that nobody had to do it more than once a month. It is really important to be available to welcome both existing members

and new folk and visitors, and to provide a drink and space to chat at the end of the service.

We have now managed to increase our welcoming team to three members each week and we now provide coffee in church rather than in the hall.

However some people drop out of rotas (for any number of reasons) and we would like to increase all the coffee teams to 3 (or even 4) so please consider if you could help in these important areas, thank you.

Geoff Carter and Pat Kerbey

7.4 Flower Team

The members of the Flower Team work on a rota to provide flower arrangements within St. Thomas' Church every week, except during Lent. Three times a year the whole team decorate the Church for Easter, Harvest and Christmas.

There are 6 members on our team, with no one person in overall charge. It would be lovely to have a few more, so new people would be most welcome, either on a regular basis or to help at Festival times. If you are interested in joining us or contributing to the cost, perhaps on a Sunday that has a special meaning for you, then please talk to Barbara Rogers or Marjory Wade.

Barbara Rogers

7.5 Audio and Media

During 2023 we have continued to make good use of the PA, AV and livestream systems in the St Thomas' church building.

Morning services are being livestreamed every Sunday morning, except for the all-age services, and we've also found the facilities are often in demand for weddings, funerals and other events. There are usually about 8-10 viewers watching the Sunday morning service live, and total viewing figures may reach anything from 30-80 people.

Rob Slater and Simon Wright manage the AV and PA, and are supported by teams of operators on a rota basis. We're grateful to all involved for managing these important facilities week by week. We would welcome

a few more people in each team; if you are interested then please speak to Rob or Simon.

Paul Edwards

8. Midweek Groups

8.1 Cell Groups

Seven small groups meet regularly at different times, with a total membership of 75 people from St Thomas' Kingfisher and St John's, providing excellent midweek fellowship and support. Most of the groups follow the 'cell notes' prepared by the preacher each Sunday morning, and some also try to have an outreach focus. During Lent, most groups come together for a central course at St Thomas'. I believe these groups will be even more vital during the forthcoming Interregnum. My thanks go to all the group leaders for their invaluable work.

Following the Church Weekend at Home in 2022, the PCC's Working Group discussed how we could increase the membership and effectiveness of our small groups. As a result, we met with representatives of all the groups for a very useful 'consultation' at the beginning of 2024 and a process of 'gentle reinvigoration' has begun. In particular, I am delighted that Alison Farnell has agreed to take on the role of 'Small Groups Coordinator/Encourager' which had been vacant since Jane Goldstone's death. Please pray for Alison as she gets to know the groups and leaders over the next few months.

Allan Coutts

8.2 Wednesday Women's Fellowship

We meet most Wednesday's either at church in the Audrey Prentice room or at Janet Boffey's house, usually 5 ladies attend. Occasionally we have speakers, last year Philip Hancock came to speak to us and in May Allan is coming to speak to us before he retires.

Janet Boffey

9. Social/Outreach

9.1 Men's Sport

Saturday morning between 8.40ish - 10am at Trowbridge Sports Centre remains a highlight of the week for a certain number of folks from St Thomas' and Kingfisher churches.

Usually between 7- 10 men and women turn up for a session of volleyball. Skill levels vary greatly but we all have fun and there is good camaraderie among the group. From May to September, The Peoples' Park in Trowbridge just in front of the bandstand, is the venue for our summer games. It's nice to get a wave from Ruben Dunning on bright days.

During this past year we were saddened to hear of the death of a former member of the group, Chris Peddley. Another player, Mike Parker who has been playing with us for well over 12 years, lost his wife through cancer in the autumn. Mike is a lovely guy. He and his family remain in our prayers.

John Chettleburgh

9.2 Church Weekend Away

Just over 90 people of all ages enjoyed (hopefully) the Church Weekend Away in September 2023 to Hebron Hall I Dinas Powys near Cardiff. The weekend consisted of a programme of teaching and worship; fun events, walking and sports (notably finding the snooker balls on Sunday afternoon!); and fellowship over food and coffee. Allan Coutts led the weekend, his last St Thomas' weekend before his retirement. Thank you to all involved in any aspect of organising and leading this weekend and we hope to return there in 2025 – meanwhile the weekend away on 2024 is to Viney Hill is September.

Pat Kerbey

9.3 Trowbridge Women's Shed



Since the Women's Shed began in October 2021, we have welcomed around 200 women through the door at Holy Trinity. The Team consists of Judy, Lyndsey, Claire, Shelley and Julie, and Yvonne who welcomes people in on the desk and takes the subs. We were able to contribute £600 to the running costs of Holy Trinity for 2024; the rest of the money is used for advertising and the website, and the majority used for refreshments, craft materials and subsidising the trips.

There are usually around 30+ women meeting every week at Holy Trinity to enjoy friendship, support, refreshments and crafts. Most are 60+ years old but increasing we are seeing younger women, some fitting it around their work patterns. During the school holidays we encourage the ladies to "Bring your Girlies to the Shed" and they join in with the crafts. A number of the ladies are sharing their skills and talents and are leading small groups, for example, felting, crochet, air-dried clay modelling and art.

The social prescribers are supporting a number of women by attending the Shed. One lady who is disabled, manages to get the bus from Calne on her own. Another lady who is 86, travels from Warminster. One of our members sadly died last year and I was privileged to take her funeral service and meet her family and friends, some of whom have stayed in contact.

Last Summer we enjoyed a trip to Corfe Castle and Studland, finishing in Swanage with fish and chips. This year we are going to Weymouth by train for a day out and Slimbridge later in the year. A number of friendship groups have formed and regularly go out together or meet for coffee on other days. For example, some of us went to see the

Royal Ballet Live Link, others have been to Parade House for afternoon tea or National trust.

We made The Twelve Days of Christmas in embroidered felt for the Christmas Tree Festival at St James Church. Some of the ladies are now attending events at our church and other churches. We have seen some come to faith and others renew their faith. We regularly pray after the Shed, for those who ask. There are an increasing number of faith conversations happening around the tables.

Please pray for the Team, who serve by putting out tables and crafts each week and provide support. Pray for everyone who comes through the door that they will experience the love of Jesus and go home refreshed.



Judy Wright

9.4 Morning Break

The Morning Break grew from the Warm Space Initiative and we have now been meeting for one year. During the winter months we meet in the Church Rooms on a Friday morning from 11.00 until 1.00 pm for coffee and a chat and then a light lunch of soup and a roll and perhaps cake too! In the summer we meet from 10.30 to 12.30 for coffee, cake and chat.

The Lord has been pleased to bless and encourage us during the past year with our group of 15 or so getting together and supporting each other in times of significant illness. We have also had the pleasure of welcoming some of our guests to the Carol Service, the Games Evening, the MenUnited Curry evening, and the Easter Monday walk. During the year we have leafleted the roads around the church and each drop has resulted in one or more people from the community coming to join us.

We have had two “special” events, one at Christmas and one at Easter when we had a more substantial lunch, gave our guests small gifts and had some entertainment, and these events were greatly appreciated by our guests.

The group is facilitated by 6 teams of volunteers and caters for any who would like companionship during the week whether they are just neighbours of the church or church members. Some of our volunteers are feeling that it is necessary for them to stand down because of health issues so if you fancy a nice chat, a delicious slice of cake and meeting new people why not come along one Friday and perhaps think about joining a team.

We are looking forward to what God has in store for us in the coming year.

Geoff Tate and Linda Puttock.

9.5 The Island

The Island for school years 7-11 has now been running for over a year and is a joy to be involved with. We have typically around 30 attending on a Tuesday afternoon and we play board or card games, snooker, badminton, table tennis, football and other games. There is also an Xbox and virtual reality headset available but interestingly whilst these proved to be the most popular to begin with sometimes we find no-one is using them at all as they prefer to be playing other 'real' games. The young people are really good at finding other members to play with, regardless of which school they attend, but also often engage the leaders to play, which we love of course. They have hot chocolate and donuts and Val Saxby's cookies, all for free and they really appreciate this. Some of them have reported that the Island is the highlight of their week and they like it because of its calm atmosphere. We love it when the members proudly show us school work or report a new baby in the family. We pray that they will feel loved and supported.

Geoff & Harriet Heard

10. Buildings

10.1 Fabric Team

There were no major projects on the fabric of our buildings during 2023, but quite a lot of work going on to maintain the buildings.

With regard to the collapsed boundary wall at Holy Trinity, it proved to be a very drawn-out process to work with Trowbridge Town Council to get the necessary permissions from both the diocese and the local authority. However, by the end of the year both the 'list B' permission and the planning permission were in place, with the expectation that the work could take place early in 2024.

When the heating season began in the autumn, we had persistent intermittent problems with the Holy Trinity heating. Although we've had work done that has improved this, it is still not fully solved. Also at Holy Trinity, we had a package of electrical work done to bring systems up to current compliance requirements, and we have a painter lined up to paint the outside doors in 2024 once the weather improves.

At the St Thomas' site we have been trying to manage our heating more actively, especially for the rooms and hall, so as to only heat the buildings when there are users on site. This is quite complicated to do, but hopefully saves us some money on gas and electricity. We have also been monitoring consumption more closely so as to understand how much energy we use and identify possible ways to save energy.

In 2024, as Allan and Janet move out of the vicarage, we are likely to need to move the church office from the vicarage to the room currently used for the creche, and we have started planning for work that will be needed to achieve this.

There is quite a list of other fabric jobs that we would like to do at both sites in 2024, but we're having to prioritise these so as not to have too many things on the go at once. John and Paul are grateful for the assistance of Geoff Carter and other people who help in maintaining our buildings.

John Chettleburgh and Paul Edwards

11. Trowbridge-wide Activities

11.1 Impax

Impax meets on Wednesday evenings at Paxcroft Mead Community Centre. On average there are about twenty children each week but we have had nearer to 30 some weeks! Some children attend Church but there are increasing numbers who do not. Each week there are volunteers who take it in turns to run games, give a talk about Jesus or help with signing in, subs, serving tuck and keeping children safe.

In 2023 we continued our social traditions with “Safari Supper” which involved a walk around the Paxcroft estate for different treats such as hot chocolate, hot dogs and cakes hosted by different Church families. We also had a “Fireworks Night” where IMPAX went to the White Horse in the dark for wide games, sparklers and cookies!

We had a Sleepover in the Church Rooms at the end of March. This started Saturday afternoon and included a treasure hunt around town, talks about how different people in the community serve Jesus, reflective prayer space, lots of games (including sardines in the Church!), star gazing, jacket potatoes, a lot of cake, movie and popcorn and then some sleep.. followed by attending Church to share what we had been up to and learn more about Jesus in Junior Church groups!

At the end of June 2023 we attended the Christian Camp Spree together. It had different venues for teaching and worship each aimed at young people of different ages and backgrounds so the children were able to choose the setting that suited them best. During these sessions two of our non- church youth gave their lives to Jesus- praise God! We enjoyed a huge number of activities on site including popular fairground rides, skateboarding, football tournaments and a talent show. We also enjoyed lots of lovely food and cake and enjoyed getting to know each other better. We are looking forward to attending again this June.

Hannah Cox



(Christian Action in the Trowbridge Area)

**'How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity'
Psalm 133 v1**

CATA is a loose association of churches providing an opportunity for us to work together to share the love of Jesus with Trowbridge, in both word and action. There are currently 12 member churches of which St Thomas is one and which has always played a leading role in supporting CATA. Forums to discuss, report and share are held every 2 months. The Officers currently serving are Chair - David Ross (Cornerstone Christian Fellowship); Deputy Chair - Geoff Tate (St Thomas); Communications – Chris Andrews (West Lavington Baptist Church and Cornerstone); Treasurer - Jean Covington (St John's West Ashton).

The main events each year are - The Good Friday March of Witness/Joint Easter celebration; Church in the Park; Praying over Trowbridge; the CATA Annual Celebration at St James Church and The Living Nativity. In addition to these annual events, CATA facilitates a number of initiatives including: Street Pastors; Town Chaplains; Soup Run; Storehouse Foodbank; Trowbridge Debt Advice Centre; MENUNITED Trowbridge.

As this report goes to press we have approached the Town Council to ascertain if there are ways in which we can work together. What is likely to come out of these exploratory discussions is the creation of the Trowbridge Community Action Forum. This will provide networking opportunities for local faith and community groups to share experiences and identify any overlaps or gaps in service. We have much to thank God for in the way churches co-operate in reaching out to the community.

Geoff Tate

11.3 Soup Run

Following a plea for additional help with the Soup Run we are now a bigger team which makes life easier. This has meant that we can now go back to our old routine of providing hot drinks/soup which was especially welcomed during the cold Winter nights.

We continue to do the 1st, 3rd and 5th Tuesdays on the ground floor of the multi storey car park. Big thanks go to all the sandwich makers from St Thomas', St John's and Kingfisher for their reliability and super sandwiches. Thanks are also due to the "Brown Cell" who put together Christmas goody parcels for us to hand out to the guests which were so much appreciated.

As is always the case, we never know how many guests will turn up but before going out we pray that there will be a sufficient amount of food. We also pray for safety for our guests and our team, a pleasant atmosphere and good conversations. If you can think to pray for us too that would be good,

Celia Russell & Joan Bond

11.4 Street Pastors

There is no one from St Thomas' currently going out with the Street Pastors.

11.5 MenUnited – Trowbridge

2023 was a really good year – with wonderful speakers at all the seven events at Trowbridge RFC. In response to popular demand, we now have an extra Curry Evening in November. The Rugby Club continues to offer an extremely good venue for us.

Prayer underpins everything we do, as we strive to follow God's vision for us in 1Timothy2 verses 1 to 8. Our Monthly Prayer Meetings are held at Bethesda Baptist Church – we have an interesting selection of guest speakers from Church Leaders.

The monthly Lunch Club, at The Kings Arms, has up to 25 men joining together for fellowship and a really good meal each month.

We have more than 220 men on our email Contact List extending well beyond Trowbridge.

Our Email Address: menutrow@gmail.com

Please pray that the Lord will continue to use MENUUNITED, to be an effective force in promoting Church Unity, reaching the unsaved and holding up our nation in prayer at this crucial time.

John Reynolds

We pray that everything we do will:

April 2024

ENCOURAGE

EMPOWER

and EQUIP

men to get the best out of life

John Reynolds

11.6 Town Chaplains

Another year has passed, seven years since we began this outreach in Trowbridge. Our leader Maree Farrimond visited several churches endeavouring to recruit some new people to join the team, it is still the same eight persons working on a rota basis each Wednesday morning visiting the shops and chatting with the staff. We have seen more opportunities to pray with people as we have gained their trust.

Despite changes within the town with shops closing and others moving, especially from the market in Castle Place, there is a sense of optimism as we visit and chat. We present a friendly face, a listening ear and a willingness to serve the retail community. It would be great to see some new people joining us so please pray about it, seek the Lord and see if He leads you to give up a couple of hours on a Wednesday morning. Trowbridge needs the Chaplains and the Chaplains need you.

If you are interested check out our Town Chaplain website or call Alice Bull at Kingfisher on 01225 755059 or myself, Barbara Hakes 01225 719292

Barbara Hakes

Appendix:

2023 Annual Report and Accounts for Annual Parochial Church Meeting 30 April 2024



Firstly, on behalf of the PCC a huge **thank you** to all those who gave to the finances of the church in 2023.

The audited accounts show that during the year our church income exceeded our expenditure by £1,400. This was a much better outcome than we had expected and was due to several factors: a greater use of the church rooms giving an increase in income of £3k; the increase in interest rates over the year gave us £3k on our deposit account; and we received the grant income of £5k on the high level works that were paid for in 2022.

On the expenditure side we saw an increase of £3k on our Deanery Share; salaries and pension contributions rose by £3.3k; and the cost of utilities across the St Thomas campus and Holy Trinity came in at a massive £18k. This was partly due to increased heating as our premises were used more and also some of this was for gas/electricity used in 2022 but which weren't billed for until 2023.

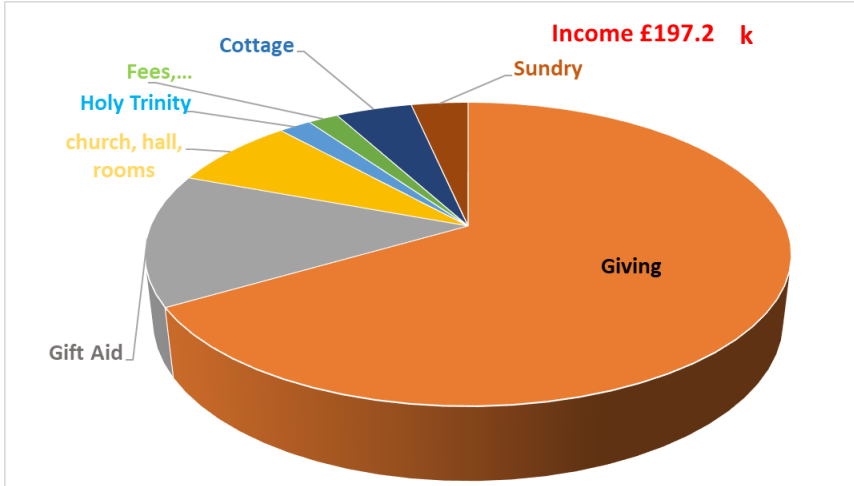
BUT this £1.4k 'profit' was incredible and **we give praise to God again for His incredible generosity.**

So again, a huge **thank you** to everybody.

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

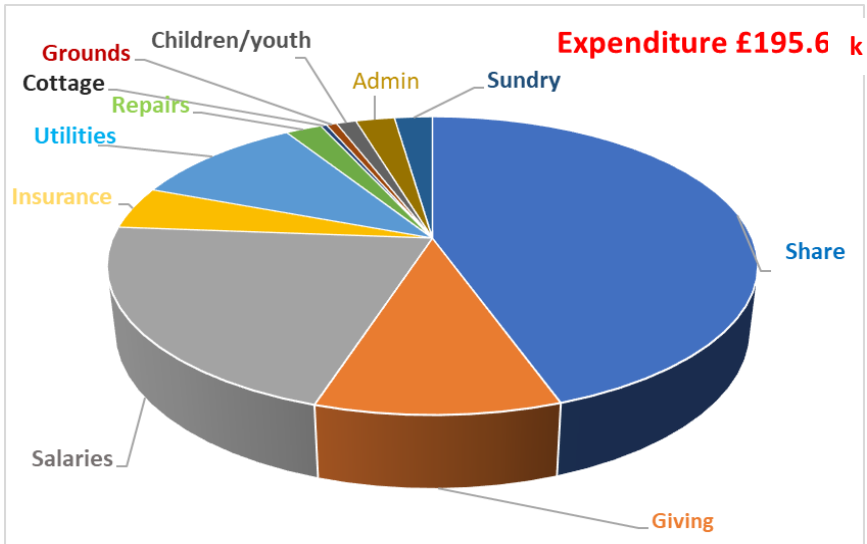
Ephesians 3:20,2

2023 income



Giving	131.3
Gift Aid	27.8
Church, hall, rooms income	15.0
Holy Trinity income	3.8
Fees, interest	3.6
Cottage	9.0
Sundry	6.7
	197.2

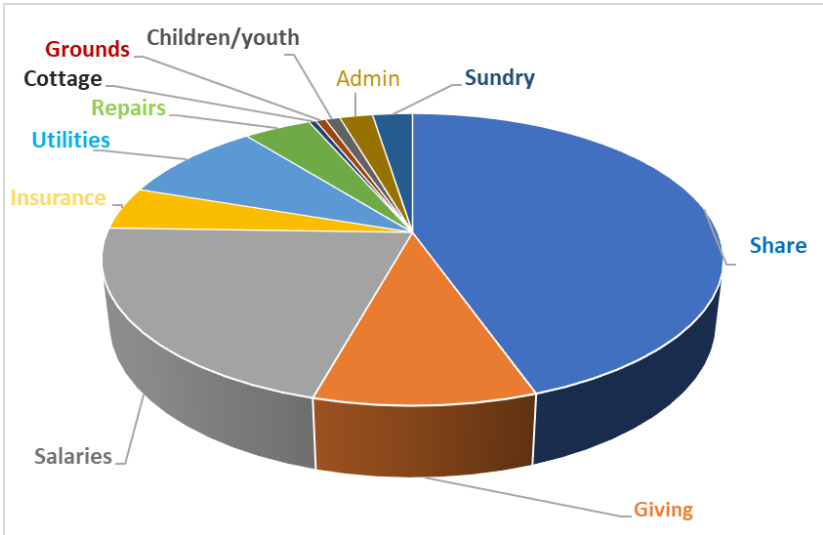
2023 expenditure



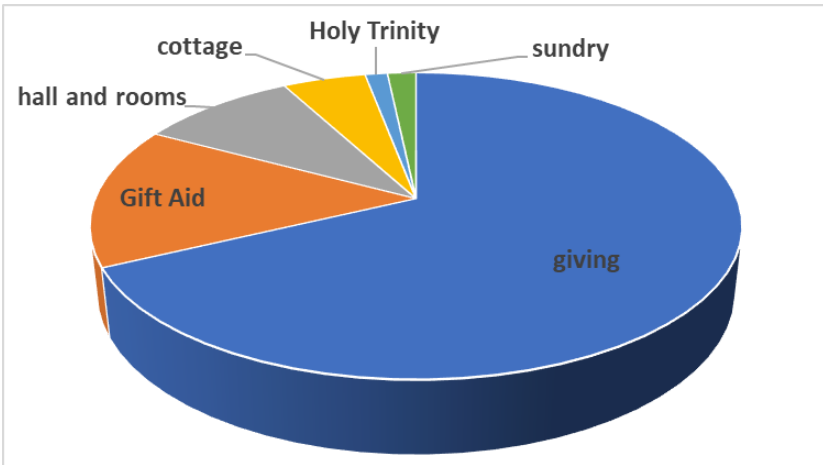
Share	87.3
Giving	20.1
Salaries	41.7
Insurance	9.0
Utilities	20.2
Repairs	4.2
Cottage	0.7
grounds	1.2
Children / youth work	2.3
Admin	4.5
sundry	4.4
	195.6

2024 budget as agreed by the PCC in January 2024

The PCC reluctantly agreed a £19k deficit budget. We had 'trimmed it' as much as possible, but leaves us with very little room for manoeuvre.



Income = £190.4K



Expenditure = £ 209.7K

All things come from You, and of Your own do we give You

Pat Kerbey, Treasurer