

# Reflections 2023-24



*“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me to  
preach good news to the poor”.*

*Luke 4.18.*

Reflections 2023-4– a review of activities and financial statements

This is a report of various activities as submitted that have occurred throughout the year 2023-4.

It is not meant to be comprehensive.

### **Data Protection**

We are responsible for keeping all data held securely and do so in line with Church of England guidelines.

A copy of the Data Protection Privacy Notice can be found in the church and in the Parish Centre.

## Vicar's Letter

*"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor" Luke 4.18.* Jesus read these words from the scroll in the synagogue at Nazareth from *Isaiah 61* the reference in *Luke 4.18-19* and declared with authority that the Isaiah passage *"was fulfilled in their hearing"*. Authority was a major mark of Jesus' ministry. *"What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out"* Luke 4.36. This was because Jesus knew who he was and what he should be doing, which gave him clarity and authority. At the end of Matthew's gospel we are also told who we are and what we should be doing and whose authority we have so we can also be clear about the mission God calls us to *Matthew 28.16-20*. We have a longstanding heritage at St Thomas' of seeking ways of working out how to share this message of Jesus, and will continue to do so in the future.



The passage from Luke's Gospel formed the basis for a recent leaders' away day at Christ Church Thornton. We gathered there to discern what God was saying to us about His vision for St Thomas' church. The contributions from that day together with a recent survey we did amongst church members will help to shape our Mission Action Plan for the next phase of our ministry. This will be presented in more detail soon. However, three common threads emerged, Healing, Generosity, Prayer. Very soon we will begin to implement Healing Services as a regular feature on the service rota. Prayer is developing and Generosity is a hallmark of St Thomas'.

I want to say thank you to all of you. Thank you for who you are and what you do in His service individually and together. Using the analogy of Paul, we are one body with many parts *1 Corinthians 12.12* and as he goes on to say, when the parts all work together the body is healthier. So, thank you for enabling the body of Christ to work together in a healthy way. I am so thankful for everyone who pulled together this year. From the website, to Facebook, YouTube, online prayer provision, prayer walkers, children's provision, emotional and spiritual health, financial sacrificial giving, site security, newsletters, Standing Committee, PCC, Warden, pastoral phone calls, prayer line, Prayer ministry, admin, constant revisions to the service schedule and worship styles (thank you worship team). Thank you sound desk volunteers. Thanks to Anne Sinar for safeguarding expertise. Holy Dusters, Gardening Team and anyone who does anything.

### Team News

This year we were blessed that LJ joined us for her curacy. She has already made a significant contribution with her preaching and leading. She has also started 2 successful initiatives, Tuesday Church and Toddler Group on Thursday mornings, both during term time. We were also blessed to receive a grant from the Blackburn Diocese Parish Vision Fund for £40,000 over 3 years which enabled us to employ Nicola Anderson as a Family and Community Engagement Worker.

We continue to be blessed by Vicky and Yvonne, our LLM's (Licenced Lay Ministers) and have a growing group of ALM's (Authorised Lay Ministers): Glenys Cole, Diane O'Hagan, Sue Atkin, Kathleen Smith, Nicola Anderson, Denise Moorby, Andy Smith (Vision Champion), Emily Rowley.

Thanks to Alison O'Brien for wellbeing provision and retreat days in partnership with St Thomas' & Ashar. Thank you to Alison Wilkinson, our treasurer for her hard work this year and for the attached accounts for the year. And to everyone for the attached reports which are a small sample of everyone's hard work.

### Finally

We said farewell to our faithful brother in Christ Joe Atkin who went to be with the Lord Jesus on Christmas Day 2023. We are grateful for his dedication to the prayer tree and the maintenance team on Thursdays and all he contributed to St Thomas' over the years. He will be missed but we know he is in the Lord's care.

God Bless you,

Dave O'Brien

## **Curate's reflections**

First of all, thank you for welcoming me at St. Thomas'. It's been a joy getting to know people in the church and in the community over the last eight months, and I feel like I've settled back into life in Blackpool.

Although July feels like a long time ago, the deanery week of mission gave me a good initiation into life as part of this church, as we litter picked and cleared out the alleyway as a sign of God's love for this community. I'm looking forward to making plans for another week of mission this year and seeing the fruit that God will bring through it.

As part of our passion to reach out into the community, we started a Toddler group in October that meets in the parish centre every Thursday morning during term-time. We have had great feedback from some of the people who attend, and my prayer is that the group will continue to grow and be a safe space for parents/carers and their young children.

In November, we started Tuesday Church, which is aimed at families with primary school aged children. We start in church with an informal, interactive service and then we finish in the parish centre with a hot meal. We began small in number, but now have a good regular group of families attending and even inviting their friends.

In February we had a pancake party which about 70 people attended. My favourite thing about it was that it was a mix of people from our Sunday congregation, our Tuesday congregation, and people from the local community!

Over the next year, I'm looking forward to planning more events that bring people together and invite people to journey deeper in their relationship with God.

## **PCC Report Glenys Cole**

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is responsible for the maintenance of church buildings and, with the incumbent, for deciding how the church's money is to be spent. The PCC will have on it one or more members of the Deanery Synod, who have an important role in linking the parish into the wider structures of the Church of England. Additionally, the Parish Safeguarding Officer and the Treasurer serve as co-opted members providing special functions on behalf of the PCC. The Wardens and Licensed Lay Ministers are ex officio members of the PCC. The Church Members elect a number of people to be on the PCC. The number of elected members depends on the number of church members on the electoral roll. Currently, St Thomas' has nine elected members.

As is usual in Church of England PCC's, elected members serve for 3 years and then stand down for at least one year.

We welcomed the appointment of Alison Wilkinson as our new Treasurer who is keeping us informed of the details of our financial situation and guiding us to any action to be taken.

We are very grateful to Alison and welcome her to the PCC and the Church.

We welcomed LJ as our new Curate and she is attempting to bring me into the world of technology.

The PCC meets about five times each year including the first meeting directly after the AGM (usually in April). although there are now no rules governing the number of meetings.

The items on the agenda always include:

the Finance Report from the Treasurer,

the Electoral Roll Report,

reports on the Building and Fabric and the progress of the Quinquennial recommendations,

reports from the safeguarding Officer, the Family Engagement Worker and the Deanery Synod representatives,

Mission Action Planning, and Outreach and Community Reports,

correspondence received and significant future dates.

The signed and approved PCC minutes are displayed on the notice board in the church lounge.

The Standing Committee meets in between the PCC meeting dates and whenever else it is required to meet. The Standing Committee can respond more quickly to an urgent item as and when necessary and always with delegated authority from the PCC according to the terms of reference.

Current Standing Committee members are; Dave Obrien, LJ Tiffney, Nicola Anderson, Pauline Matthews, Glyn Sinar, Andrea Smith, Alison Wilkinson (Treasurer).

During this year the PCC has been in serious discussion about the future of the Parish Centre Building, about the expense of maintaining the building and about the safety of its use and are working with the Diocese to try to address these problems. The PCC had commissioned several surveys to be carried out and the Diocese and Contractors have attended meetings to look for a way forward. Discussions are still ongoing and a small Committee has been formed to concentrate on these matters.

The PCC spent an “away day” at Christ Church, Thornton where we were royally welcomed and looked after, to pray and consider our future vision for the church. Making disciples, Being Witnesses, Growing Leaders and Inspiring Children and Young People were the main areas of discussion.

Many thanks to those who faithfully serve as PCC members both as elected and ex officio members. The Annual Parochial Church Meeting will take place on 29 April 2024 when there will be an opportunity for new church members to be elected to the PCC.

The PCC Membership from April 2023 was as follows:

Dave O’Brien	Incumbent
David Wilkinson	Incumbent
LJ Tiffney	Incumbent
Susan Atkin	Elected until 2025
Glenys Cole	Elected until 2026
Pauline Matthews	Elected until 2026
Diane O’Hagan	Elected until 2026
Glyn Sinar	Elected until 2025, Electoral Roll Officer
Andrea Smith	Elected until 2024
John Smith	Elected until 2024
Ken Warrender	Elected until 2024
Alison Wilkinson	Treasurer – ex officio PCC Officer
Nicola Anderson	Warden – ex officio PCC Officer
vacancy	Church warden- ex officio PCC Officer
Anne Sinar	Safeguarding – ex officio PCC Officer
Denise Moorby	Ex officio (Deanery Synod Rep )
vacancy	Ex officio - Vision Champion
Yvonne Blazey	LLM
Vicky Bentley	LLM

## Warden Report

This year has been one of much learning. Pauline's training prior to my starting and support in this first year has put me in good stead and readied me for much of what the role entailed and I am super thankful for that. Thanks to all the former wardens for sharing their knowledge with me of all that makes St Thomas' a great church and for Denise for standing as my assistant warden. I also want to thank those who stepped up when I was recovering from my surgery. Being able to recover and then gently come back blessed me greatly and that could not have been done without all who helped. I'd like to thank a few people who have come alongside me and helped with practical aspects. For Alan who has crawled around in dust on the top of the organ loft to reduce draft, John Smith who has helped with the insurance paperwork, Billy with his whole arm down the gutter drains and Andrea coming to council run forum session to help me grasp as many opportunities that are out there to bless the church and community as possible.

It's been great working with Dave, LJ and David W as well as with Alison W and the PCC. Many of the successes of this year would not have come about without their work. I have been so very grateful to Dave for his openness to my odd ideas and methods and for his support throughout this year.

Week to week there have been many varied tasks as warden, from flooding bathroom mid service, new railings, and security lights on the steps, to asbestos and electrical surveys. I'm loving learning new skills and finding the contacts for these things. I still have much to learn but am enjoying the challenges.

The biggest tasks undertaken this year have been the insurance policy review and getting all that paperwork in order, upgrading the heating in the Parish centre to provide a space for much more comfortable sessions throughout the seasons, changing the rubbish collection to recycling so to reduce our effect on this beautiful world He created. I take on the baton from Pauline and Vicky in trying to get our last problematic utility meter changed to a Smart meter. This has been the longest saga and one I hope to complete this year.

Much of my early days as warden were spent understanding how things worked and finding out where things were and what we had. We have been able to sell many things that were in attics which we were never going to use. There was a gymnastics trampoline that the circus bought, a tug of war rope which was sold to a sailor and a floor polisher that was sold to a methodist church in Chorley. It's been great to bring in some funds by this and see things go to a good home. One lady who bought the silk flowers from the former pedestals did so for her daughter to have a part of their wedding day in the home and God's blessing through them to bring peace to the home. The long awaited, soon to be reinstated, new Wayside Pulpit has been upcycled from a school.

Thank you to all in the congregation who have welcomed and cheered me on as I find my feet. All your smiles and chats after services are great and I enjoy getting to know you all. Sometimes the practical tasks hinder that, but I hope to be found approachable.

I look forward to what blessings and opportunities this coming year will bring and I pray that all within the Church family will be encouraged to seek Gods plan for their lives. God bless you all richly.

Nicola Anderson

## **NIGHT PRAYER – Vicky Bentley**

‘Save us, O Lord, while waking and guard us while sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ and asleep may rest in peace.’

These words come from the Church of England’s service of Compline or Night Prayer. I have had the privilege of recording a short Night Prayer on a weekly basis since the beginning of the first lockdown in 2020. Thank you to Irene (Leak) for contributing to Night Prayer over the year too. Night Prayer is a time at the end of the day to be quiet before God, listen in prayer and hear His Word, sometimes with a reflection, at other times just allowing the Bible passage to speak to us directly.

We have used different styles and approaches which people have responded to, and thank you to those who have ‘liked’ the Night Prayer on the St Thomas’ YouTube Channel and those who have viewed the recordings on the church’s Facebook page.

The restrictions of those lockdowns 3 and 4 years ago have led the church to explore different ways of reaching people with the word of God, including the use of social media, encouraging them to think about who Jesus is and, hopefully, helping to bring the viewers/listeners closer to God and go deeper in faith.

There is, however, a quietness about Night Prayer, an openness to the move of the Holy Spirit to still hearts and minds, to let go of the things of the day that has passed and to rest in God.

‘Into Your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit’.

## **Deanery Synod – Pauline Matthews, Denise Moorby**

The main function of the Deanery Synod is to discuss and reflect on matters of the Church of England as they affect the Deanery and Parish we are in. They also act as a forum for the airing of Parish views on any common problems.

Since the last APCM report in April 2023, there have been several Deanery Synod meetings attended by myself and Pauline Matthews. Primarily we have discussed our church’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats in an effort to make our churches more appealing to all ages and in particular to young people and families.

We have planned and organised joint mission events in our churches such as “Love Where You Live” and “No More Knives” and are planning to hold a cross Deanery Mission next year, Summer 2024 in line with Vision 2026.

Bishop Philip attended our forum on 6 November 2023 and we were richly blessed.

Our Treasurer, Rita Templeton sadly passed away and she will be missed. Steve Wardle was appointed to replace her.

Pauline and I will continue to attend Deanery Synod meetings and report back to the PCC on a regular basis.

Blessings

Denise Moorby

## **Pastoral Care Team (Authorised Lay Ministers)**

Members of the Pastoral Care Team (ALMs) look out for anyone missing services due to illness or other circumstances and we are the first line of support to all church members. We have arrangements in place to notice and respond to those who are missing in Church.

We contact everyone we know who would have been coming to church, to ensure their needs are met and to pray for them.

We are available to pray for anyone needing prayer after each service in Church. We visit those who are housebound and consider it a privilege to take communion to them if they wish.

We have undergone safeguarding training as recommended by the Diocese.

We have attended sessions and courses provided by Ashar and presented by Alison O'Brien and her team and feel better equipped to minister to those struggling with emotional and spiritual health.

Our training from the Diocese is ongoing.

Whilst we have arrangements in place to notice and respond if anyone is missing services, going into hospital or residential homes, it is still helpful if members of the congregation let us know of anyone in the Church who needs pastoral care or support.

We would also appreciate your prayers for us as a team and whilst the people below are entitled ALMs, we are joined by Anne Sinar, Lisa Haskett, Alison O'Brien, Irene Leek, Alan Hodgson and Alison Wilkinson to help us provide all that is needed to pastorally care for our congregation.

A list of Authorised and Licensed Lay Ministers is set out below. If you need Pastoral Care or Support let us know – we are here for you. We would appreciate your prayers for us.

### **Authorised Lay Ministers (ALM)**

Nicola Anderson  
Sue Atkin  
Glenys Cole  
Denise Moorby  
Diane O'Hagan  
Emily Rowley  
Andrea Smith  
Kath Smith

### **Licensed Lay Ministers (LLM)**

Vicky Bentley  
Yvonne Blazey

## **Electoral Roll – Glyn Sinar**

The electoral roll is the list of church members who are entitled to vote at the APCM and stand for election to the PCC. Joining the electoral roll is an important way of confirming your commitment to the St Thomas' community and to the vision of the church. If you're a regular attender at St Thomas' you should be on the electoral roll. In April 2003 there were 92 names on the roll. Since then, 8 new names have been added and 1 deceased member has been removed. The current number on the electoral roll is 99.



## **Newsletter – Vicky Bentley**

Each week the Newsletter has been available at the back of church as folk have walked in for the Sunday and Wednesday services.

The aim of the Newsletter has been to let everyone know the services that are coming up and to highlight specific important news about St Thomas Church and people associated with it. It also seeks to inform the congregation of wider issues – things happening in the Deanery, the Diocese and the national church.

Thank you to all those who have contributed to the Newsletter over the last year. It is hoped that you don't take it and then put it to one side but take note of what is being said. Please use the Newsletter as you would do the Prayer Letter, as a basis for praying to God for all the things that are happening in and around our church and the community. It is important that we don't just look inward but look to see what God is doing in His world and with the people around us.

If you have any ideas or suggestions for the Newsletter going forward please do have a chat with me. Thank you for taking the time to read the Newsletters week by week and may God continue to inspire us to spread the Good News of Jesus.

## **The Prayer Tree – John Smith**

The prayer tree is a way in which requests for intercessory prayer can be made to me (I recently took over from Joe Atkin, who as many of you know, was the contact for many years, but Joe sadly died last Christmas). After obtaining the details of the prayer request, I then send it on by email to far more members of our Church, who will then be praying for the person and their situation requested. The current telephone number for a request is 07757968574. If you have access to a mobile phone, please initially send a text, asking me to get back to you, not forgetting to provide your phone number! I will then get in touch as soon as possible. If you ring from a landline and there is no reply, please leave your name and number and just state prayer request and I will call back as soon as I can.

John Smith

## **Safeguarding Report - Anne Sinar**

In this day and age it is vital that we safeguard our children and vulnerable adults. We are ever conscious that this world is a dangerous place with people out to take advantage of others, either in person or online. Here at St Thomas' we take safeguarding very seriously. All our volunteers are DBS checked in line with their roles.

We have acquired a few new volunteers this year with the start of Toddler Group and Tuesday Church. All our volunteers have completed the Church of England Basic and Foundation Safeguarding Training on-line. Notices are displayed in church and the Parish Centre giving details of whom to contact in an emergency or to report a concern. The Parish Safeguarding Policy has been updated and approved by the PCC in line with Church of England guidelines and a copy is displayed in church and on the church website. A copy of the full guidelines and advice is available from the church office. The PCC has also approved the policy for ex-offenders worshipping or volunteering.

The Church of England has introduced Parish Safeguarding Hubs, an online tool to audit our safeguarding profile and to enable the Parish Safeguarding Officer to determine the strength of safeguarding in the church. This proved to be a great deal of work initially but will make the Parish Safeguarding Officer's role easier in the future as it allows us to track DBS checks and training that need renewing more easily.

We are ever thankful to God for protecting our young people and vulnerable adults in our church.

## **Worship Team – Glyn Sinar**

The Worship Team serves our Church by offering musical worship in the Sunday services and other meetings and events as needed. We meet for practice on Thursday nights in Church from 7pm till 8.30pm, with praise, fellowship and working together.

During the year new programmes of worship have evolved – the full team at 10.30am morning service now reflects a more traditional Anglican approach to hymns and worship music; while at the evening service the more intimate format taken now sees just one or two musicians replacing the high praise band approach of the past.

We were sad to say goodbye to Thomas Henley in June. Aside from Thomas's official supporting role, his flair and experience in church music high and low brought us some new insights. His work with us was appreciated greatly and we follow his work in Windsor with interest and fondness.

The team here continues to grow with three new members joining in recent months, and we invite anyone (young and old) with musical gifting and a worshipping heart to contact one of the leaders for information about joining our worship team.

Glyn.

## **Baptism Team - Kath Smith**

Following several very difficult years for everyone, it was good that in 2023 we were able to see more people and families enquiring about Baptism at St Thomas' for their children. In recent months, we have been able to help prepare several families for Baptism, who have now had their children Baptised at St Thomas' Church. I am pleased to say that we are continuing to work alongside David our Vicar to help more people to be welcomed into our Church family through the Baptism of their children at St Thomas'. We thank you for your love and prayers in welcoming them all to our Church family.

## **Hospitality**

We provide hospitality for all services and events happening in the Church and Parish Centre. The team is many and varied and over the years St Thomas' has been proud of its reputation to provide this practical service in many ways.

Hundreds of cups of tea and coffee have been faithfully served every Sunday and Wednesday. Many thanks to everyone who has provided hospitality throughout the year.

## **Holy Dusters - Pauline Matthews**

The Cleaning team meet every Tuesday morning 9.30am till 11.30.

It's so nice to have a team you can rely on every week. We all know what jobs we are doing and just get on with it. It's a job we are all happy to do with no stress involved. Our morning ends with tea biscuits, Bible reading and prayers.

Pauline Matthews

## **Gardening Team – Pauline Matthews**

Thursday mornings 10.00am – 12.30pm

How did we do in 2023? Better than expected. The weather is in charge - we went from very hot to very wet and then freezing cold.

I was happy with what we managed to grow with the small team.

Crops that did well were beef tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, kale, cucumbers and some lettuce. Veg that the slugs had a feast on were broad beans, broccoli and cauliflower. I hope we can do better 2024. If anyone wants to come along and have a go it's so rewarding and good fellowship. We were very blessed with a donation from a member of congregation to purchase a new ride-on mower. It will be a great help with the grass cutting. A big thank you to all the team. We meet up Thursday morning - weather permitting.

## **MPower - Vicky Bentley**

Some of you may well have heard of a programme called MPower being run in the Blackburn Diocese. I have been a part of the team that delivers this programme for some 4 or 5 years now.

There are folk from St Thomas' who have completed the programme and gone on to be Authorised Lay Ministers (ALM).

So, what is MPower?

The background is that the Church of England has looked to help renew the Church in urban areas. Our own Bishop of Blackburn, Bishop Philip has spoken at General Synod more than once on this subject.

The aim is to encourage and resource evangelism in estates/urban areas; to foster new forms of church life in such areas and support the raising up of new leaders (lay and ordained) from and for the urban church.

The MPower programme is run over 9 months and is aimed at people who do not necessarily learn academically, in fact, it is specifically for people who have been turned off in the past by having to do assignments, write essays or take exams. This programme seeks to be authentic; it is about the environment in which we live, the real-life issues that are being faced and the relevance of the Gospel of Christ to the people we serve.

It seeks to give the participants confidence in telling their story about what Jesus has done in their lives and to be prepared to take on new challenges to spread the Gospel.

There are 3 'terms' or units to the programme:

Personal Transformation

Mission and Evangelism

Leadership

There is no formal entry requirement, but the participants must have spoken with their Vicar and have the backing of the church to take part.

There is also no formal assessment. The only thing that is required is for each participant to run some sort of mission event. Most mission events, in the past, have been socials with a definite and distinct Gospel message somewhere in them, like a coffee morning with the participant telling their faith story for about 5 to 10 minutes. Other examples of mission events have been providing a Messy Church session, an evening of choir singing, a quiz night, tea/coffee and cakes at the local community centre, an ecological event to educate about God's creation and how we should look after it, a prayer tent outside the church or in the market place. Every one of these has included the Gospel message. If you would like to know more please do have a chat with me.

## Life Association – Steve and Lisa Haskett

### Mumbai, Maharashtra

In September, another two boys joined the home. Ansu, aged 11 and his brother Prince, aged 9 (pictured below, far left). They were both born in the red-light district in Mumbai and had never attended school. The boys have now settled and are attending school regularly after initially struggling with the new routine.

Vishal (pictured below, far right) was a young boy who Solomon and Sunita rescued from the streets and adopted into their home at age 8. He lost his father when he was 6 years old and was abandoned by his mother. Vishal survived for two years on the streets in Mumbai, assisting a blind man selling books on a railway bridge. Vishal is now 27, he is married to a lovely young woman, Kapala, and they are expecting their first child in a few months. Vishal owns his own auto rickshaw, which provides for his family. Without Solomon and Sunita's love and care, Vishal would have been vulnerable to trafficking and other dangers.



### Andhra Pradesh, Gannavaram

There are 150 students attending the school in Gopavarapugudem, and around 80 children attend the afterschool provision. The children receive extra tuition which will enhance their education, giving them better prospects for the future. The children also receive a nutritious evening meal.

In Machilipatnam, around 80 children attend the afterschool provision, receiving the same care as at Gopavarapugudem.

Also, in Machilipatnam, the New Life Tailoring Centre was launched. This will enable the women from impoverished backgrounds to earn an income to support their families. A cohort of ten women train for six months and learn how to use a sewing machine, needlework, textiles, and pattern cutting. The first cohort of women have recently graduated, and each student received a certificate of achievement and a sewing machine with all the accessories they need to carry on after their training.



### Thiravallure, Tamil Nadu

The third cohort of women have completed their tailoring course and graduated on the 30th of September. Like the New Life Tailoring Centre, ten women train for six months, receive a certificate of completion and a sewing machine with accessories to enable them to earn a sustainable income and support their families.

At the beginning of September an after-school provision was started in Balasamutram village. Pastor Anburaj and the team have worked hard to transform the building into a beautiful, colourful learning space for the children. Like the other after-school projects they will receive extra tuition and an evening meal.





**Madurai**

We now support two afterschool provisions in neighbouring villages.

Paraman Patty Centre – Regular classes are held in the after-school provision. Positive changes have taken place regarding the children’s behaviour and educational performance. Two of the older girls have gone on to college and both girls, their parents, and people of the village recognise the life transforming improvements in their performances because of attending this project.

Alagureddy Patty Centre - Tuition classes in Alagureddy Patty are going on well with children getting to know the importance and value of such tuition classes and the villagers are commenting on the positive impact the tuition centres are having on the children.



Arulagam Hospice, a residential home for adults and children with HIV/Aids.

The children in Arulagam Hospice are studying well and keeping good health. They are going to school regularly. Regular medical check-ups and treatments are carried out and nutritious food is provided regularly.



We would like to express our heartfelt thanks for your generosity in supporting the work of Life Association.

Lisa Haskett  
Operations Manager

## **St Thomas' Blackpool in Partnership with Ashar Bringing Hope -Alison O'Brien**

Reflections from Alison

This past year it has been a privilege to continue to develop an Emotional WellBeing Resource Centre within St Thomas, we are delighted that we now have a new pod that we are using for counselling appointments, we were blessed by a grant from Blackpool Council and a generous gift from an individual that enabled us to buy and build a pod with lighting and heating. We would love this space to be commissioned and prayed over.

Brew & Chat continues to be led by Denise and the team offering a safe and warm space with people available to listen and chat. We have had several visits from other church leaders looking at how we run, and wanting to set up a similar space in their churches.

Well Done to such an amazing team.

### **The Bereavement Group: The team: Denise, Lisa, Joan and Ali**

This has taken time to grow and develop; we have an amazing team that support those who are now using the service and the group is working. We have put an ad in a local magazine which has brought people in and are hoping to send a flyer with a letter to local GP surgeries and Funeral Directors and hoping to offer this service as social prescribing referral.

We have put on several courses and retreat days from St Thomas Church: Art Therapy, Cooking on a Budget, Retreat Day: Resting in God – These have been a success, and the feedback has been excellent which is marketing St Thomas as a well-being resource hub.

### **Prayer Line Phone**

The prayer line continues to be manned by an amazing team which is on a rota system, please continue to pray for the those who ring in for prayer and the team who answer the phone. There have been a few prank callers but please pray that those who need prayer will ring in.

*Testimony: The prayer line was a huge support at the point of crisis and the person who prayed for me was brilliant and I felt blessed that there was someone available for me.*

We have connected in with Blackpool Foodbank Network, which is an excellent networking forum promoting community resources. We have the privilege of hosting one of their meetings which raises the profile of St Thomas' in the wider community.

Through Ashar we continue to support Comfort Café providing an Emotional WellBeing Practitioner to work out of the Parish Centre, signposting alongside one to one appointments.

## Finance Report - Finance Report – 2023

I took over as the Treasurer fully in February of this year which I found a very daunting task. Chris is still overseeing what I do but I am starting to understand much of what needs to be done. The 2023 financial accounts have been prepared and independently examined and are appended to this document.

We would like to thank everyone who has given so generously this year, particularly to mission work and towards a new boiler. We also received a £1,000 from the diocese which covered supplying hot water to the toilets.

In 2023 our income decreased from £133,010 in 2022 to £107,090. However, if we take out £36,278 of grant monies and £500 from a legacy, our general income also declined from £62,700k in 2022 to £60,800 a reduction of about £1,900. The grant monies received during 2023 relate to £10,000k of further funds from the Henry Smith Foundation, £3,000 from Blackpool Council for youth, £5,000 towards the purchase of the pod and £250 towards home mission from George Fisher.

Spending increased significantly in 2023 increasing to £119.8k from £71k mainly due to essential repairs and remedial work that had been left over the previous year due to waiting for a decision regarding the building. It was communicated to us this year that the Church Commissioners were no longer funding such building projects. £34.6k of this expenditure was grant monies paid out, mainly for the pod and from Henry Smith. The Parish Share was paid in full, a total of £42.6k. Utility bills have also greatly increased this year.

At the end of the year, we have over £35,000 in our CCLA deposit account and over £48k in our current accounts. However, over £18k of cash is held in our general fund which relates to grant monies and we are forecasting a significant reduction in cash held during 2024. This is due to building expenses, utility bill increases and a reduction in giving.


During this year, we applied for a contactless payment machine to the Diocese which we managed to get for £50 and the PCC also made the decision to gradually migrate our regular giving to Parish Giving, which would relieve Vicky and the treasurer much of the admin for this. This year has been a hard year for us financially and we need to trust God for his continued provision.

I would personally like to thank Chris Brambles for his ongoing support, Nicola Anderson for her hard work in raising money and obtaining grants, Vicky Bentley and Pauline Matthews for all they do in counting and banking collections, managing the cash account and especially to Vicky for all the work she does with regard to Gift Aid and providing the treasurer with such detailed spreadsheets. Thanks also go to Rebecca Murdoch who has reviewed and certified the accounts for us.

Alison Wilkinson

St Thomas' PCC Treasurer  
March 2023

## Independent Examiners Report on the Accounts

<b>Report to the trustee/members of</b>	<b>Parochial Church Council of St Thomas' Parish Church</b>		
<b>On Accounts for the year ended</b>	<b>31 December 2023</b>	<b>Charity no. (if any)</b>	<b>1132312</b>
<b>Set out on pages</b>	<b>1-5</b>		
<b>Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner</b>	<p>The Charity's Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (Under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (The Act) and that an independent examination is needed.</p> <p>It is my responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine the accounts (under section 43 of the Act)</li> <li>• To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 43(7)(b) of the act), and</li> <li>• To state whether particular matters have come to my attention</li> </ul>		
<b>Basis of independent examiner's statement</b>	<p>My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the Trustees concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do NOT provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do NOT express opinion on the accounts.</p>		
<b>Independent examiner's statement</b>	<p>In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the Trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proper accounting records are kept (in accordance with section 41 of the act); and</li> <li>• Accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act: or</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached</li> </ol> <p><i>Please delete the words in brackets if they do not apply</i></p>		
<b>Signed:</b>	R J Murdoch 	<b>Date:</b>	19-2-2024
<b>Name:</b>	Rebecca Jane Murdoch		
<b>Relevant professional qualifications or body (if any):</b>	Chartered Tax Adviser		
<b>Address:</b>	3 Mount Road Fleetwood FY7 6EZ		



	notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
		£	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>						
Voluntary Income	<b>2a</b>	61329	36278	-	97607	101636
Activities for generating funds	<b>2b</b>	1342	-	-	1342	348
Income from investments	<b>2c</b>	1405	-	-	1405	327
Church activities	<b>2d</b>	6352	-	-	6352	9761
Other incoming resources	<b>2e</b>	384	-	-	384	938
<b>TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES</b>		<u>70812</u>	<u>36278</u>	-	<u>107090</u>	<u>113010</u>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>						
Cost of generation voluntary income	<b>3b</b>					0
Fund raising trading costs	<b>3c</b>					390
Church Activities	<b>3a</b>	85246	34651		119897	70596
Governance costs	<b>3d</b>					0
<b>TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>		<u>85246</u>	<u>34651</u>		<u>119897</u>	<u>70986</u>
Incoming/outgoing Resources		-14434	1627		-12807	42024
Unrealisable gains (Losses) on investment assets						
on disposal	<b>5a</b>					
on revaluation						
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>						
Balances B/FWD 1 January 2023		78471	18080		96551	54527
Balances C/FWD 31 December 2023	<b>8</b>	<u>64037</u>	<u>19707</u>		<u>83744</u>	<u>96551</u>



## NOTES

- 1a Debtors relates to Gift Aid recoverable from April 2023 giving and is an estimate  
b Restricted balances £19707  
c There are no material debtors or creditors  
d There are no Payments in Advance or Receipts in Advance  
e Equipment is not considered material and any expenditure has been written off  
f Assumed that material adjustments if over£500  
g 2023 accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis  
h Grant balances of £19707 are included within general funds

<b>2 INCOMING RESOURCES</b>					<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>2a</b>	<b>Voluntary Income</b>	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	<b>2023</b>		<b>2022</b>
					<b>£</b>		<b>£</b>
	<b>Planned Giving</b>						
	Gift Aid donations	35940			35940		38938
	Tax Recoverable	10339			10339		12077
	Other	2875			2875		790
	Collections	8968			8968		6754
	Gift Days	2707			2707		3957
	Grants (general)		36278		36278		20987
	Donations, appeals	0			0		252
	Legacies	500			500		17881
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>61329</b>	<b>36278</b>		<b>97607</b>		<b>101636</b>
<b>2b</b>	<b>Activities for generating Funds</b>	<b>1342</b>			<b>1342</b>		<b>348</b>
<b>2c</b>	<b>Income from Investments</b>						
	Dividends and Interest	<b>1405</b>			<b>1405</b>		<b>327</b>
<b>2d</b>	<b>Income from Church activities</b>						
	Church Hall letting	4172			4172		8649
	Fees and other	0			2180		1112
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6352</b>			<b>6352</b>		<b>9761</b>
<b>2e</b>	<b>Other Incoming resources</b>	<b>384</b>			<b>384</b>		<b>938</b>
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>		<b>70812</b>	<b>36278</b>		<b>107090</b>		<b>113010</b>

					TOTAL		TOTAL
					2023		2022
3	RESOURCES EXPENDED		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	£	£
<b>3a</b>	<b>Church Activities</b>						
	Mission Overseas		2440			2440	332
	Mission Home		3616	2500		6116	632
	Parish Share Paid		44902			44902	41000
	Clergy Expenses		1744			1744	1064
	Other Ministry costs		3658			3658	5340
	Parish Centre costs		4135			4135	4375
	Church Activity costs		16200			16200	13368
	Repairs and Maintenance		8402	8494		16896	1746
	Bank Charges		149			149	159
	Grants (general)			23657		23657	2580
	Sub Total		<b>85246</b>	<b>34651</b>		<b>119897</b>	<b>70596</b>
<b>3b</b>	Generation of Voluntary income Cost of appeals etc						0
<b>3c</b>	<b>Fund raising costs</b>		0			0	390
<b>3d</b>	<b>Governance costs</b>		0			0	0
	<b>Total Resources Expended</b>		<b>85246</b>	<b>34651</b>		<b>119897</b>	<b>70986</b>

No payments were made to any member of the PCC, persons closely connected to them or related parties except for payments to the Pastoral Trust.

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5	FIXED ASSETS			2023			2022
				£			£
	<b>(a) Tangible</b>			0			0
	<b>(b) Investments</b>			0			0
	At estimated market value						
	<b>Total</b>			<b>0</b>	-	-	<b>0</b>

6	Debtors						
	Gift Aid to be claimed	1a		6000			6000
	<b>Total</b>			<b>6000</b>			<b>6000</b>

7	Liabilities						
	Due within one year			nil			nil
	Due after one year			nil			nil
	<b>Total</b>			<b>nil</b>	-	-	<b>nil</b>

8	<b>FUNDS</b>	<b><u>2023</u></b>	-	-	<b><u>2022</u></b>
		<b><u>£</u></b>	-	-	<b><u>£</u></b>
	General Fund+	<b><u>48244</u></b>	-	-	<b><u>53015</u></b>
	Youth Fund	<b><u>500</u></b>	-	-	<b><u>2500</u></b>
	Mission Fund	<b><u>0</u></b>	-	-	<b><u>6036</u></b>
	General Reserve Fund	<b><u>35000</u></b>	-	-	<b><u>35000</u></b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b><u>83744</u></b>	-	-	<b><u>96551</u></b>
9	<b>BANK RECONCILLIATION</b>				
	Current account	<b><u>3833</u></b>	-	-	<b><u>7800</u></b>
	Money Master account	<b><u>44635</u></b>	-	-	<b><u>53397</u></b>
	Sub Total	<b><u>48468</u></b>	-	-	<b><u>61197</u></b>
	CBFCE Deposit account	<b><u>35210</u></b>	-	-	<b><u>35210</u></b>
	Sub Total	<b><u>83678</u></b>	-	-	<b><u>96407</u></b>
	Cash held	<b><u>66</u></b>	-	-	<b><u>144</u></b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b><u>83744</u></b>	-	-	<b><u>96551</u></b>

+ includes £19707 of restricted balances