

Orthodox Parish of St. Ephraim the Syrian

Worshipping at: Saint Clement's Church, Bridge Street, Cambridge, CB2 1UF

Treasurer:

Mr Simon Connell, Treasurer
Orthodox Parish of St Ephraim
the Syrian Cambridge,
C/O Saint Clement's Church,
Bridge Street,
Cambridge, CB2 1UF

ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 31st JANUARY 2025

Registered Charity No. 1111702 in England and Wales

This note should be read in conjunction with the Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss comparisons for the 2024/2025 and 2023/2024 financial years.

OVERVIEW

The Treasurer of the Orthodox Parish of St. Ephraim the Syrian Cambridge (and author of this report) is Mr Simon Connell.

Here we outline the state of our parish finances and the main things that have changed between February 1st 2024 and January 31st 2025.

As at 31st Jan 2025, the Parish had total assets of £295,303.25

INCOME

The parish's total income for the 2024/2025 financial year was £66,024.68 (excluding payments into the Building Fund, Discretionary Fund and interest from our savings accounts). This total income was down 10.8% on the previous year.

Specifically:

General parish income through standing orders and one-off donations was £22,377.00, which is down 20.0% on the previous year.

In-church collections (the collection bowl and our contactless 'GoodBox' donation machine) are down by 15.0% at £14,952.31.

Candle money is down by 10.0% at £10,717.22.

The PayPal account was opened in early 2012 and since then has been receiving donations made by donors using the 'Donate' button on our website. This year £8,115.00 was given to the parish through the 'Donate' button. This is down on the previous year by 6.3%. Some donors continue their recurring payments through the PayPal system.

Our Reserved Funds are discussed below under a separate heading.

EXPENSES

With the ongoing cost of living crisis our income has been severely impacted as can be seen in the previous section. Our everyday expenses have remained largely the same but we have managed to see the Balance Sheet improve by £19,552.13. This is due to taking care of our Charitable Donations and less claims for Travel Expenses.

Furthermore we see a significant reduction of £6,255.00 paid out in overall Stipends. This is due to only having a visiting priest usually attending two weekends per month, rather than a dedicated, full-time priest (see the recent developments section below).

GIFT AID

A claim to HMRC for a Gift Aid refund was made this year for the year beginning April 6th 2023. We also made a Gift Aid Small Donation Scheme claim (GASDS) on the collection money (up to the maximum amount which is on £8,000 of collection money giving a GASDS refund of £2000). In total then the Gift Aid refund was £7,511.22.

CHARITY DONATIONS

This years donations (£2,000 to Jimmys night-shelter, £1,500 to the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies and £1,500 to the Cambridge City Foodbank) were made within the timeframe of the 2024/5 financial year. However only the CCFB and IOCS payments register in this years Profit and Loss report because the payment to Jimmy's was made by cheque and was not cashed in by them until 7/2/2025.

Prior to this we made an additional donation of £500 to Jimmy's night-shelter in the late summer after they requested additional help in one of their email bulletins.

A further £300 of a £2,500 loan made two years ago to a parish member has been paid back within this report's financial year.

In summary, the two charity donations that fell within the year (£3,000) plus the additional payment to Jimmy's (£500) minus the loan repayments (£300) therefore totalled £3,200. This is the figure that shows up as Charitable Donations on the Profit and Loss report.

RESERVED FUNDS

Since 2005, the parish has had a 'Building Fund', intended to assist in the purchase of a Church building and hall, or the sharing of a building. We are now well established renting and sharing St. Clements church in Cambridge.

Some parishioners prefer that their donations should continue to be set aside for Church building related expenses (Icons etc). This varies from person-to-person, though almost all prefer to pay into our general funds.

During the financial year presented here we had no outgoings from the Building Fund.

We pay Church rent which has now been increased from £1,381.41 to £1435.71 per month (as of 1st Feb 2024) in accordance with the CPI inflation rate. The rent however comes out of our general funds, not the Building Fund.

The Building Fund on 31/1/2025 stands at -£3,125.20. This figure is negative because we have used up all the donations made by parish members specifically towards Building related expenses. A small amount of money continues to be donated towards the fund.

Funds reserved for the Building Fund do not show up on the Profit and Loss report, because whilst funds have been donated for this purpose they are not considered as profit since they were designated for our use of a designated Church building. They do however appear as long-term liabilities on the Balance Sheet and comparisons can be made with the previous year.

We have a 'Pilgrimage Fund' which is money set-aside for pilgrimages in general. Visits to Walsingham and Ely have already taken place. There is £236.44 left over for future pilgrimages – no change from last year. This fund value can also be seen on the Balance Sheet.

We have a 'Discretionary Fund' set aside for helping parishioners suffering financial hardship through the Cost of Living crisis. We started the fund on 25/8/2022 with an allocation of £2,000 from parish funds. Since then parishioners have made generous donations into the fund (although nothing this year). We made a three grants totalling £1,406 this year to enable several people to attend conferences. The fund value is now at £2,763 and this appears on the Balance Sheet.

Sadly our parish priest (Archpriest Raphael Armour) passed away on July 25th 2023. We set up a special fund: the 'Fr. Raphael Memorial Fund' as a focus for parishioners and others to contribute towards all the expenses incurred by his passing away. The negative value of the fund shown on the Balance Sheet indicates that all the money allocated and donated plus a little extra has been spent. There has been no change to the fund value since the previous year.

All transactions in and out of all the reserved funds have been included in the overall income and expense figures submitted to the Charity Commission, although as already discussed they do not appear on the Profit and Loss report.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND ONGOING ISSUES

With the passing of Archpriest Raphael Armour in July 2023 we no longer have a permanent priest.

We get significant visits: usually two weekends each month from Archpriest Fr. Joseph Skinner for Vespers and Liturgies and also for major feasts. Increased expenditure on Visiting Clergy Stipends can be seen on the Profit and Loss report.

Now that Father Joseph is a Trustee and is visible on our Charity Commission page his first Chairman's report can be seen as part of this document.

FINANCIAL PROCEDURE

On the 31st Jan 2025 the Parish had eight operating bank accounts including a Barclays current account, a savings account with Santander, a PayPal account, a Treasurers Reserve account with Triodos and an instant access charity account with Virgin Money. Recently we opened a high-interest account with Hampshire Trust Bank, and a pair of accounts with the Co-op. See the Balance Sheet for the amounts in each of these accounts.

We can claim Gift Aid tax refunds on all donations by Standing Order, Individual donations and donations made through the Donate button on the website. The donors must be paying sufficient UK tax and have completed a Gift Aid form provided by the treasurer. Standing Order forms and Gift Aid forms can be downloaded from the Parish website.

We will not be attempting to claim Gift Aid on the Pilgrimage fund, Discretionary fund or similar where donors or parish members get something back for their money, as this would be inappropriate or even considered money laundering.

We also continue to take advantage of the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS) where we can claim tax back on donations made in Church to the collection pot (cash or contactless) which is passed around the congregation. As of April 6th 2019 GASDS donations must be £30 or less. We cannot use the GASDS mechanism for candle money or Prospora because the rules state that if something is received for a donation then that donation is not eligible. Because of this the candle money and collection money are counted and paid into the Barclays Bank account separately. This GASDS refund is capped at £2,000.00.

We use 'Quickbooks Online' to track our finances and generate financial reports.

Normal expenses are authorised by the Treasurer and the Priest (or possibly the Churchwarden or Secretary). Any two signatures are required. Major expenses (those over £1,000) require authorisation of the Parish Council, while any transaction relating to real estate is authorised by the Trustees.

As far as I am aware the financial reports I have produced are compliant to the Charities Act 2011.

Simon Connell (Treasurer), May 9th 2025.

Orthodox Parish of St Ephraim

Financial Activities

February 2024 - January 2025

		TOTAL	
	FEB 2024 - JAN 2025	FEB 2023 - JAN 2024 (PY)	CHANGE
Income			
Bookstore Sales	2,351.93		2,351.93
Candle Money	10,717.22	11,913.16	-1,195.94
Collections	14,952.31	17,583.07	-2,630.76
Donate Button	8,115.00	8,657.40	-542.40
Gift Aid Refund	7,511.22	7,860.03	-348.81
Standing Orders	22,377.00	27,985.89	-5,608.89
Total Income	£66,024.68	£73,999.55	£ -7,974.87
TOTAL	£66,024.68	£73,999.55	£ -7,974.87
Expenditures			
Administrative Expenses		485.00	-485.00
Bank Service Charges	894.06	1,002.23	-108.17
Insurance	2,677.65	2,547.25	130.40
Professional Fees	80.00		80.00
Total Administrative Expenses	3,651.71	4,034.48	-382.77
Bookstore Restock	542.14		542.14
Charitable Causes			
Charity Donations	3,200.00	14,000.00	-10,800.00
Total Charitable Causes	3,200.00	14,000.00	-10,800.00
Choir-Related Expenses	487.99	412.99	75.00
Consumable Supplies	2,053.58	4,118.37	-2,064.79
Candles Purchase	1,585.19		1,585.19
Wine Purchase	71.25		71.25
Total Consumable Supplies	3,710.02	4,118.37	-408.35
Equipment and Non-Consumables	3,167.26	1,705.00	1,462.26
Hospitality Expenses	590.89	235.58	355.31
Rent			
Church Rent	17,228.52	16,576.92	651.60
Room Rent	1,281.00	581.00	700.00
Total Rent	18,509.52	17,157.92	1,351.60
Stipends			
Deacon's Stipend	2,400.00	2,000.00	400.00
Parish Priest's Stipend		12,600.00	-12,600.00
Treasurer's Stipend	5,175.00	4,800.00	375.00
Visiting Clergy's Stipend	8,430.00	2,860.00	5,570.00
Total Stipends	16,005.00	22,260.00	-6,255.00
Travel Expenses	31.00	1,085.20	-1,054.20
Total Expenditures	£49,895.53	£65,009.54	£ -15,114.01
NET OPERATING INCOME	£16,129.15	£8,990.01	£7,139.14
Other Income			
Interest Income	3,422.98	2,133.42	1,289.56
Total Other Income	£3,422.98	£2,133.42	£1,289.56
NET OTHER INCOME	£3,422.98	£2,133.42	£1,289.56
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	£19,552.13	£11,123.43	£8,428.70

Orthodox Parish of St Ephraim

Balance Sheet Comparison

As of January 31, 2025

	TOTAL		
	AS OF JAN 31, 2025	AS OF JAN 31, 2024 (PY)	CHANGE
Fixed Asset			
Tangible assets			
Candle Stands	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00
Choir Music	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00
Furniture	4,000.00	4,000.00	0.00
Garments and Coverings	7,200.00	7,200.00	0.00
Iconostasis	110,000.00	110,000.00	0.00
Icons	18,000.00	18,000.00	0.00
Vessels	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00
Total Tangible assets	£143,400.00	£143,400.00	£0.00
Total Fixed Asset	£143,400.00	£143,400.00	£0.00
Cash at bank and in hand			
Barclays Current	98,952.32	24,087.72	74,864.60
Co-op Building Fund Current Account	5.00		5.00
Hampshire Trust Bank	5,000.00		5,000.00
PayPal	4,093.16	19,204.61	-15,111.45
Santander	32,174.81	81,320.93	-49,146.12
Triodos Treasurer's Reserve	78,530.06	76,634.56	1,895.50
Virgin Charity Dep Acct	76,547.90	75,874.30	673.60
Total Cash at bank and in hand	£295,303.25	£277,122.12	£18,181.13
NET CURRENT ASSETS	£295,303.25	£277,122.12	£18,181.13
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year			
Current Liabilities			
Discretionary Fund	2,763.00	4,169.00	-1,406.00
Fr. Raphael Memorial Fund	-2,478.04	-2,478.04	0.00
Total Current Liabilities	£284.96	£1,690.96	£ -1,406.00
Total Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	£284.96	£1,690.96	£ -1,406.00
NET CURRENT ASSETS (LIABILITIES)	£295,018.29	£275,431.16	£19,587.13
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	£438,418.29	£418,831.16	£19,587.13
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year			
Building Fund	-3,125.20	-3,160.20	35.00
Pilgrimage Fund	236.44	236.44	0.00
Total Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	£ -2,888.76	£ -2,923.76	£35.00
TOTAL NET ASSETS (LIABILITIES)	£441,307.05	£421,754.92	£19,552.13
Charity funds			
Opening Bal Equity	143,083.26	143,083.26	0.00
Retained Earnings	278,671.66	267,548.23	11,123.43
Surplus/(Deficit)	19,552.13	11,123.43	8,428.70
Total Charity funds	£441,307.05	£421,754.92	£19,552.13

ORTHODOX PARISH OF ST EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN, CAMBRIDGE

Charity No: 1111702

Principal Office: Parish Church of St Clement, Bridge St, Cambridge

Trustees as at 31st January 2025:

Very Reverend Archpriest Joseph Skinner (Richard Henry Joseph Skinner) (Chair)

Ms Valentina Futoryanova (Churchwarden)

Mr Simon Connell (Treasurer)

Ms Elena Lileeva (Secretary)

REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JANUARY 2025

1. Introduction

The Trustees are the Rector, Churchwarden, Treasurer and Secretary of the Parish for the time being. The Parish continues to worship at St Clement's Church, Bridge Street Cambridge, in accordance with the Licence Agreement signed with the Parochial Church Council of St Clement's in March 2018. The arrangement with St Clement's has continued to work well during the year under review.

The Trustees are pleased to report that the Parish of St Ephraim has continued to demonstrate resilience and vitality during the past year, maintaining its core activities and adapting to significant changes within the community.

2. Activities and Achievements

The parish has maintained a stable pattern of worship, with regular services led by a priest held on two weekends per month, supplemented by additional services during major feasts and Lent. On other weekends services are led by the Parish Deacon or Reader. Whilst, because of the shortage of priests, it has not yet been possible to restore a full cycle of Eucharistic worship, this predictability has contributed to the stability and cohesion of parish life.

The community has welcomed a steady influx of new members, including approximately ten catechumens currently undergoing instruction. Catechesis is provided both in person and online, ensuring accessibility and support for all newcomers.

The parish choir continues to uphold a high standard of liturgical music, contributing significantly to the spiritual life of the community. The liturgical life of the parish has been enriched by the introduction of a limited proportion of Church Slavonic in consideration of the significant number of Russian-speakers among the parishioners, including some recently arrived from Ukraine whose English is quite limited. Nevertheless, English remains the primary language of worship in this international community. A significant development during the year was the parish's transition to the Julian (Old) calendar, a decision made after careful consultation and with the aim of fostering unity with the diocese as a whole.

3. Governance and Structure

The parish benefits from a mature and robust governance structure, with responsibilities shared among clergy, wardens, the treasurer, and a dedicated team of volunteers. The Trustees apart from the

Secretary are also members of the ecclesiastical Parish Council, in accordance with the ecclesiastical Parish Statutes adopted in 2010. These largely govern the internal life of the Parish and its relation to the Diocese of Sourozh of the Russian Orthodox Church, to which it is canonically attached.

The first general meeting of the Parish for some time was held on September 15th, 2024. The meeting was well attended and there was a lively discussion on a number of subjects, including the appointment of a new parish priest and the merits of changing to the Julian (Old) calendar for the purposes of liturgical worship.

During the year under review, Archpriest Joseph Skinner was appointed as Rector of the Parish by His Grace, Bishop Matthew of Sourozh. Fr Joseph was subsequently appointed as a Trustee by the existing Trustees by a Deed of Appointment dated November 10th, 2024. The Trustees have continued to oversee the effective management of parish affairs, ensuring compliance with statutory and ecclesiastical requirements.

4. Challenges and Risks

The parish continued to face the challenge of adapting to the loss of its long-serving priest, Father Raphael Armour, who departed this life suddenly on July 25th, 2023. Fr Raphael had served the Parish for some 20 years, leading it through some challenging times and overseeing a steady growth in the numbers and variety of parishioners. By his tireless dedication to serving the people, despite his increasing health problems, Fr Raphael earned the love and respect of all the parishioners, as well as many others in Cambridge and beyond. He is and will be greatly missed, but the vitality of the Parish today stands as a testament to his ministry. His widow, Matushka Carolyn Anne Armour, continues to be a quiet and beloved presence at the heart of the community.

On the whole, the community is responding with resilience, drawing on its strong internal structures and the support of the Rector and visiting clergy. The Trustees recognize the ongoing need to encourage new vocations to the priesthood from among the community to ensure the long-term sustainability of parish ministry.

5. Future Plans

The Parish will continue to prioritize stability in worship and community life, the integration of new members, and the ongoing development of its liturgical and educational activities.

Efforts will be made to further strengthen governance, encourage wider participation in parish activities, and support the recruitment and training of new clergy.

The search for a permanent and dedicated place of worship, which has been ongoing for some years now, needs to be intensified. Given property prices in Cambridge, it will be necessary to raise a significant sum of money for this to become a realistic possibility.

The Trustees wish to record their appreciation for the dedication and support of all members of the parish community during this period of transition and growth.

Archpriest Joseph Skinner

Chair of the Council of Trustees

October 2nd, 2025

Independent Examiner's Report to the Church Council St. Ephraim's the Syrian Church Cambridge

Respective responsibilities of Church Council and Examiner

The members of the Council are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Council considers that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- *examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act

- * to follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act

- *to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general direction given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with these records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matters have come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- *to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act

- *to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirement of the 2011 Act have not been met or;

2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

A. Dean