

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF ST. THOMAS, BLACKPOOL.

England & Wales · Charity number 1132312

Details

Other names ST. THOMAS CHURCH. BLACKPOOL.

Status Registered

Legal form Previously excepted

Registered 2009-10-23

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

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Activities

Objects: Promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church.

Activities: Provision of religious services within the parish of St Thomas's Blackpool

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Organisations, Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Services
- **What:** Religious Activities
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** UNDEFINED. IN PRACTICE, LOCAL
- Blackpool
- Lancashire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£106,032	£104,210	-	-
2023-12-31	£107,090	£119,897	-	-
2022-12-31	£113,010	£70,986	-	-
2021-12-31	£82,375	£88,855	-	-
2020-12-31	£82,236	£82,833	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Andrea Smith		2024-04-28
Andrew Vernon		2024-04-29
Anne Sinar		2025-04-28
Delroy Smith		2025-04-28
Denise moorby		2025-04-28
Diane Ohagan		2023-04-17
George Binns		2025-04-28
Glenys Cole		2023-04-17
Jayne Godbeer		2025-04-28
Jean Moody		2025-04-28
Joan Metcalfe		2024-04-29
Pauline Matthews		2023-04-17
Rev David OBrien		2025-04-28
Yvonne Blazey		2025-04-28
Zoe May		2025-04-28

Accounts

Reflections

2023-2024



“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...”

Hebrews 1.1-2

Reflections 2024-5– a review of
activities and financial statements

This is a report of various activities as
submitted that have occurred
throughout the year 2024-5.

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



“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...”

Hebrews 1.1-2

These two verses in Hebrews begin an introduction in the first chapter which describes the Deity of Jesus. Jesus is no ordinary man. In fact the whole letter to the Hebrews is focused on who Jesus is and what He has done and continues to do for us. In short the focus of Hebrews and the New Testament is Jesus. He is the message, he is the Gospel, He is our ministry, He is our vision and our reason for being church.

I could quite rightly mention many people in this introduction to Reflections and in many ways it would be appropriate to do so. However, you know who you are. My part is to say thank you to each of you who is a member of St Thomas' Blackpool, because in short, without you, there is no church. Without you, ministry wouldn't happen. So I want to thank every single one of you for who you are and for what you bring to the ministry in the Gospel. Your personality is unique and the gifts of the Holy Spirit you have been given are vital for the health of the church. And as each one of us focuses on Jesus we will also bear the fruits of the Spirit.

When we set our sights on Jesus and the more we do so, we begin to reflect Him to those around us. The end result should be that we show Jesus through our lives. We all work incredibly hard in our service for God and I am truly grateful for this. However, the mark of success, if we can call it that, is the measure in which people see Jesus in us or not. If people can't see Jesus, we need to ask why. If they do see Jesus they have their sight and vision set upon the One who is the Saviour and restorer of lives.

So, to return to Hebrews: Jesus is the message, Jesus is the Gospel, Jesus is our ministry, Jesus is our vision and Jesus is our reason for being church. One of the songs we sing at St Thomas' begins like this: "I just want to speak the name of Jesus". Amen to that! Let's also show him through our lives!

Very much looking forward to sharing this year with you in looking towards Jesus and showing Him to our community together with you in partnership in the Gospel.

Be Blessed

Revd Dave.

Curate's reflections

Curate's reflections

After the joy of being priested last summer, I feel like I'm well into the flow of curacy. I've really enjoyed building relationships with people both in the church and in the community, and I'm thankful for the privilege I have of witnessing what God is doing in our parish.

Our Toddler Group has now been running for over a year and a half, and it's been a joy to welcome in lots of toddlers and their parents and carers during that time. Each week we explore a story from the Bible together through crafts and messy play, and we have a growing team who help with the planning and preparations. I continue to pray that this will be a safe space for parents/carers and their young children.

Tuesday Church has also been running for about a year and a half, and we have grown a fairly stable congregation of about 30-35 people. A particular highlight was the scratch nativity that we had before Christmas, where we dressed up and told again the nativity story with songs and prayers. This term, we have been exploring the encounters that Jesus has with different people and reflecting on what it means for us to encounter Jesus. I am always amazed at the brilliant questions that the children and their parents/guardians ask me, and I hope their curiosity to know more about God will continue!

From the connections we have built through Toddlers and Tuesday Church, we have had three families bring their children to be baptised. There was also another family who brought their daughter to be baptised, and these are always joyous occasions.

I'm now in my final year here at St. Thomas', but my curacy won't be finished until around February 2026 so I'm not leaving any time soon. I've learnt so much already during my time with you, and I'm looking forward to what the next few months have in store for us!

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 Electoral Roll and the 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 PCCs, elected members serve for 3 years and then stand down for at least one year. 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:

Finance Report from the Treasurer,

Electoral Roll Report,

Warden's 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 approved and signed 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 O'Brien, LJ Tiffney, Pauline Matthews, Andrea Smith, Nicola Anderson, Glyn Sinar.

During this year the PCC has still been seriously concerned about 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. During this year it has become apparent that the Diocese are unable to carry on their initiative to work with building partners to develop the whole site, and so the Vicar with a small working group and with the approval of the PCC is looking into other ways to repair, develop and improve the church Building and the Parish Centre. In my last report I welcomed Alison Wilkinson as the PCC Treasurer and you will see from her report that she has been a very welcome addition to the PCC, working really hard to keep us financially legal and making sure our finances are on track.

Many thanks to those who faithfully serve as PCC members both as elected and ex officio members.

The PCC Membership from April 2023 is as follows:

Dave O'Brien	Incumbent
David Wilkinson	Licensed
LJ Tiffney	Licensed
Susan Atkin	Elected
Chris Brambles	Elected
Diane O'Hagan	Elected
Glyn Sinar	Elected
Glenys Cole	Elected
Pauline Matthews	Elected Deanery Synod Representative
Joan Metcalfe	Elected
Anthony Clegg	Elected
Andy Vernon	Elected
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 Representative
Andrea Smith	Ex officio - Vision Champion
Yvonne Blazey	LLM
Vicky Bentley	LLM

If anyone would like more information about the PCC or is interested in becoming elected as a member, i would be happy to talk with you.

Thank you to PCC members for always being cooperative as I try always to keep us on track according to the Diocese and the Charity Commissioners.

Electoral Roll – Glyn Sinar

The Electoral Roll is a list of those over 16 years currently worshipping at St Thomas' Church and taking an active part in its meetings and activities. Every Church of England parish has a list, reflecting its membership, and governing the make-up of the parochial church council (PCC) and deanery synod.

The numbers on the Roll are reviewed annually, during the weeks leading up to the annual parish council meeting (APCM), but every six years it is completely renewed. 2025 is such a year, and in February the old Roll ceased to operate. Notice was given of the renewal process, allowing anyone who worships at St Thomas' church to update their membership.

The Electoral Roll is also one indicator of our Church growth – when the old roll last operated there were 101 members (of whom 21 were resident in our Parish, with the remainder living in other parts of Blackpool and the Fylde). The numbers on the current roll now total 96 (a small drop). There has been an increase in the number of members resident in the Parish (23). Of the total membership, 26 are new members on the Roll.

If you have never been on our electoral roll or have not yet filled in a renewal form, and wish to consider becoming a member of St Thomas's, you can obtain a form from Dave our Vicar or LJ, or speak to the Electoral Roll Officer (Glyn Sinar).

If you are already on the electoral roll you are entitled to a vote at the APCM meeting on 28th April. The list came into force on 13th April 2025 and is displayed (names only) on the notice boards in Church.

Warden Report – Nicola Anderson

As the APCM comes round on the end of my time as warden, I look back to consider all the opportunities I have had to serve the church, and at the many tasks that have needed to be completed.

This year we have had some real highs and some lows, but through it we have been blessed, by God's Protection, of no major damage to the buildings in the storms that the country has faced. We have had more hall hire opportunities, and we have completed many maintenance checks to comply with the insurance company's requirements on the church. We will have that in the near future for the Parish Centre also. We have made adaptive changes to the church sanctuary, at minimal cost, by upcycling items and selling on other items to cover the costs, making it a less cluttered space. We have kept church spending low by creative sourcing of resources too. From second hand railings, mugs and lamps to breathing new life into upcycled cupboards and chairs, sourcing candles creatively and contacting neighbours with skills to fix things where possible.

One of the biggest tasks this year was trying to improve the security of the whole church grounds. The old padlocks on gates around church over time seized up or fell apart. The CCTV quality didn't help us in preventing problems when the grounds were not secured. We have finally upgraded the padlocks to reinforced steel ones around the whole site which are less likely to rust. A large piece of work was done to get quotes to replace the CCTV system so that it covered the problem areas more, and so the quality was better able to capture people's faces. A grant was applied for but sadly declined, as we had not had time to report enough of the incidences we faced. This was a shame, as it's been daunting locking up in the winter months and people appearing from the stairwells and from behind the BBQ, under the influence of substances.

One of the other projects this year has been trying to remove practical hindrances to worship for all who wish to attend our church. This includes items such as cushions, lamps, taller chairs and changes to steps or doorways. God is blessing us with new people attending consistently, and just as He welcomes everyone, we have tried to do the same. Seeking ways not only to make attendance possible but also to enable engagement in serving. We still have a long way to go in this but God is raising people up in his way for this.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to serve God through being warden over these last two years. It has been a joy not only have part in helping things happen, but also in how many of you I have got to know better and all the many community people I have met while going about the practical tasks. A special thanks to Alan for helping and teaching me practical skills I didn't know before and to John Smith for his help with all the insurance administration. Thank you to those who have taken up roles that assisted me in the work. Thank you also to those who have donated towards items like the church flowers and hot water boiler. Thank you again to those people who have stepped in on the occasions when I was not able to be present. Finally, to Dave and LJ for managing through, even when things have been difficult at times.

I wish those coming into the role after me every blessing and pray for the flourishing of the church

Gardening Team – Pauline Matthews

Thursday mornings 10.00am – 12.30pm

Thank you to the faithful ones who have been part of the team in 2024 – every Thursday, weather permitting, from March to November – Sue Atkin, Vicky Bentley, Alan Hodgson, Jean Moody and Doreen Tallents.

We have cut the grass all around the church and parish centre buildings as well as the church car park. Bulbs were planted, bushes and trees were pruned, borders weeded and the allotment developed with all sorts of vegetables and salad crops, unfortunately not all successful because of the weather....too much rain and not enough sun, and the slugs have stayed faithful!

We also revived the wildflower corner on Caunce Street/Devonshire Road.

We are already planning 2025, so any donations of compost would be gratefully received.

Looking forward to a plentiful harvest to share with church members and the community.

If you would like to join us, new members are always welcome and remember you get a brew, biscuits and fellowship for your labours

Community and Family and Engagement Worker - Nicola Anderson

This role of Community and Family Engagement Worker has given me many great opportunities to serve God.

I hope to share some of these whilst holding the people's identities in confidence.

The activities of this ministry are varied and often rarely seen, as it's building relationships to help people connect and come to a place where they have the opportunity to meet Jesus. Here are a few of the varied ways and special moments.

- Working with a mum in her housing struggles last year, we now have started a Bible study using the youth alpha videos. We have worked through various situations in life from bereavement, work struggles, concerns for the children, all while studying who Jesus, God and the Holy spirit are, why evil things happen and how to read the Bible and pray, and so much more. Even though the house issues still remain, this mum seems to have greater hope and assurance that God watches over her and loves her dearly.
- Working with a person struggling with addiction by giving him time 3 times a week to come into church and meet God at the altar for lighting a candle and praying together. After relapses he came back. One day he prayed a personal cry to God to not let him have alcohol and he has been 2.5 months sober at the time this report was written. This is particularly a miracle as it was his first Christmas and new year with sobriety since he started drinking many, many years ago. He often now stays for services too.
- One person I met in Comfort Café when I was asked to give him information on the bereavement group. This was over a year ago and he joined that group, then joined Warm Space and is now teaching others how to play chess. He also now consistently attends the evening services on Sundays.
- Another person joined Brew and Chat but, in his own words, 'didn't think he would like it'. He got more and more comfortable with us and got talking about past experiences, and his situation sounded like the story of the prodigal son. We got a chance to read that story from the Bible together. Someone else shared the Gospel with him and he now attends the morning service regularly. From timid to confident enough to share his testimony to the congregation: this is what God can do in people's lives.
- Supporting a family when relationships got challenging in the home and no one could see a happy Christmas on the horizon. We as a church prayed for them and this 'saved Christmas' the mum said. We helped ease home stress triggers in practical ways like a listening ear over a brew and giving a holding cross to help them improve the communication. This gave us more and more natural ways to connect with the different members of the family. Mum has now joined both the Toddlers Group team and attends the Bible study group mentioned above. The whole family now enjoy coming to church both midweek and Sundays and one of the daughters has expressed the understanding of what it is to be a Christian, and loves reading her new Bible. It's both a joy and privilege to have the opportunity to engage with them and bring them into the family for the church.
- Helping support a family as they deal with legal challenges that have been building stress for all of them over the last months. Just meeting with them and breaking down the tasks and offering support, hearing the struggles, and letting them know we are praying for God's hand on the situation, has helped them rally and get the application process underway. Continuing to pray into this as results are awaited is another way we are supporting our community.
- There is a lady who has been through the ALM MPower training, who comes to run Visions for Evangelism activity past a listening ear, seeking for help to have the confidence to do it. She knows she is hearing God and it's great to hear what He is doing. We recently went on some suicide awareness training with a community engagement worker I know, and this has grown her desire to serve the most vulnerable in the community. There are other trainings areas in the pipeline which we at St Thomas' Church will be able to provide our warm welcoming venue.
- There have been opportunities to walk with people through hardship, like the house fire on Peter Street when the community were in shock at the tragic loss of life. We were able to open the church for prayer, and I was able to entertain some children of single mums while they gave witness statements to the police.
- Working on the alleyway in the past and linking in with the PACT meetings brought about the joint venture of the Warm Space session on Thursdays from 1-4pm from November, providing a comfortable, relaxed

space with games, colouring books and calm for anyone seeking it. We have had almost 20 new people coming in, who would not otherwise have come in for church services, enjoying hot soup, bread, brews and biscuits with them. We have handed out around 30 warm gift packs including a thermos, blanket, hand warmer, little chocolate bar as well as the Gospel message. It's been wonderful for growing the self-belief in many who were apprehensive. One lady has boldly joined the team and spoken of how much it has increased her tolerance and boldness to engage with people she does not know. It has been such a success that we have deemed it worth continuing beyond the planned date of finish, adding 4 more weeks and finishing end of March. It's a joy to work in partnership with the worker from a secular agency. She herself has said how surprised she was at how comfortable she has felt in the church, adding that it is her favourite group out of all the ones she does in the week. We feel that this group has not been about the quantity of people we give soup to, but more about quality of the care and connections we have built with the people who have come. This has given us a greater opportunity to connect with those around the church and something I will be encouraging the church to be willing to host in years to come over the colder months. Its also shown how much people love playing games like dominoes, learning to play chess or challenging themselves to a tricky jigsaw. We plan to keep this in mind and see if that's something we start or add into another aspect of church community life.

These are some of the ways this role as Community and Family Engagement Worker has given me chance to make a difference to our community, in the name of St Thomas Church. I know the title of the role leads some to think I am a children's worker but this is less about the children and more about being God's hands of compassion to those on the edge, those for whom church is not yet the safe supportive family and fellowship that I hope others see it as. When there are things limiting someone from coming to find Jesus, that's where I feel called to, sometimes in creative ways, to reach out a supportive hand and remove the barriers. I believe that preparing activities for the children to do when they attend Sunday services helps parents to feel comfortable bringing them in. It also gives chances to present the sermon in visual ways so that they can take on board the meanings of the Bible passages shared, hopefully helping them in the future to attend into adulthood. A church that welcomes and values all generations is one with a long future of sharing the Gospel. Jesus is waiting with arms open to welcome everyone and I pray that as I do this role we would be a church that does the same.

I am grateful to the Trusts that have given St Thomas' Church the grants which make this role possible and for the support of the Church as I am trusted to make these connections in the Church's name.



Holy Dusters - Pauline Matthews

We have a lovely Church cleaning team who turn up every Tuesday morning and have been very faithful for many years. It's been good to welcome a new volunteer to join us this year. Our morning finishes with a cuppa, reading a Psalm and prayers.

Deanery Synod – Pauline Matthews, Denise Moorby

The main functions of Deanery Synods are to discuss and reflect on matters of the Church of England as they affect the deanery and the parish we are in. They also act as a forum for airing of parish views on any problems.

There have been three meetings this year

July 11th 2024 St Stephen on the Cliffs

We were welcomed by Fr Andrew Teather who led Evening Prayer. Rev Peter Lillicrap opened the meeting, giving an update since the last meeting.

SSMI (Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment) will provide funding for 30 youth workers and 15 community outreach workers across the diocese. Further information to be given at the November meeting by Carolyn Barton (Director of Vision Delivery). Vision 2026 will be refreshed for 2033 concept and discussed at the February meeting.

November 2024 Holy Trinity South Shore

Welcome and opening devotion by Rev Tracy Charnock. Rev Peter Lillicrap introduced Carolyn Barton, who gave an overview of the history of the grant application (SSMI) which consists of £1.1 million over 9 years from the Central Church of England in response to a bid from the diocese. This money is to fund 30 full time workers in children and youth work and 18 part time workers (2 days a week) to work in mission and outreach. Recruitment and selection will be in stages: 5 full time and 3 part time posts in the first phase. All the posts are for 7 years, and the parishes involved will need to pay 10% of the costs to start off, increasing over the years.

Blackburn Diocese are requesting all clergy who have served for 7 years to take a 3-month sabbatical. This is for the health and wellbeing of the clergy.

25th February 2025 All Saints Anchorsholme

This was a joint meeting with Poulton Deanery. Bishop Philip introduced the Vision Refresh by stating that we are to listen to God's discernment for Vision 2033. The Vision statement will include:

1. Unity of purpose
2. Plan for Growth
3. Using resources well
4. Recruitment

He explained that we are currently in a year of prayer and consultation to discern where God is leading the church next. We should pray for vibrant, Christ-centred churches where the whole family is served. We need to pray for giving and receiving between churches, the deanery and diocese. We should be missional and outward focused and be confident people of faith. We must make sure our buildings are fit for purpose and be confident for growth: "God of Mission, who alone brings growth to your church, send your Holy Spirit to give vision to our planning, wisdom to our actions, joy to our worship and power to our witness. Help our church to grow in numbers, in spiritual commitment to you and in service to the local community. Through Jesus Christ. Amen"

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 and 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.

Pauline Matthews is in training to become an Anna Chaplain. Anna Chaplaincy is a ministry aimed at equipping churches to pastorally and spiritually support their older church members and communities

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 Leak, Alan Hodgson, and Andréa Smith 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.

Authorised Lay Ministers (ALM)

Nicola Anderson
Sue Atkin
Glenys Cole
Pauline Matthews
Denise Moorby
Diane O'Hagan
Kath Smith
Anthony Clegg

Licensed Lay Ministers (LLM)

Vicky Bentley
Yvonne Blazey

Vision Champion – Andrea Smith

Hello my dear friends of St Thomas'

Introducing myself, I am Andréa Smith and have been worshipping at St Thomas's for a little over thirty years.

In the summer of 2023, after completing the "MPower" and small group training courses with the Diocese, I had the privilege of being made ALM and offered the Vision Champion (VC) position for the church.

What exactly is the VC role?

Back in 2016 when the Diocese laid out their 10 year mission plan they requested that one or more persons within each church take the mantle to help them achieve their various objectives and though I have added the job description defined by the Dioceses for clarity, I feel a more personalised outline of my role is due. Nic Hall took this position originally, however it was with great sadness due to his passing, that I was offered the role as an individual. Though I would have liked to have worked alongside Nic, I took on VC with a continued passion that he himself showed the role.

So, as I started my journey an initial meeting between myself, Reverend Dave and the Diocese agreed that the role was to take an adaptable form in any way that we feel was contributing to the church.

From the beginning my desired overall vision has been to bring unity and community back into our congregation and to support, develop and mature our family at St T's and the outside parish.

I identified from the start various ways I thought this could be achieved long term (eg inter-service gatherings, study groups, ladies' days, friendships groups) but before I moved forward with these aims I wanted to settle into being a VC and ALM, learning how the church operates as well as developing my own skills of prayer and communication. An assigned contact from the Diocese has supported me in the role, and regular communication with other local VCs in South Shore and Preston have helped me along the way.

Now as time has passed I have felt more comfortable and the role has naturally turned myself into a person of support and "go to" source for other areas of the church in need. eg, I assisted in sourcing soft-play mats for the new mothers and Toddler Group and after launching an appeal at my place of work for toys and gifts, we were able to distribute these to families at Christmas. A light was found for Joan on keyboard. The role of VC has allowed me to work positively alongside other members of the congregation.

Myself and our warden Nicola complement each of our roles. We attend a quarterly "Blackpool Together" network group at the Winter Gardens to gather helpful information for our parish and gain fruitful contacts (one of such led to our free Wi-Fi installation).

Vicky Taylor kindly organised our first ladies' evening, more on that later. Furthermore, LJ is supported with her fortnightly ladies' study group, so if any ladies are looking to join a house group please don't hesitate to reach out to either of us.

I look forward to chatting and getting to know more of you as time goes on. But more importantly I am excited to see individuals flourish, so that together we can witness to others the amazing glory of God. Peace, blessings and love to you all,

Safeguarding Report - Anne Sinar

Safeguarding in the Church of England has certainly been in the news this year. Here at St Thomas', as in many local parishes, we are very aware of the need to safeguard our young people and vulnerable adults. Anyone wanting to volunteer in any of our groups needs to be DBS checked and complete Basic, Foundation and Domestic Abuse training. Those in a more leadership role also need to complete the Leadership Training, which involves a more in-depth look at safeguarding, and even includes some written work to be submitted to the diocese. I am pleased to report that all 22 of our volunteers currently registered have been DBS checked and have completed the relevant training.

The Church of England has introduced The Parish Dashboard, which is an online resource enabling Parish Safeguarding Officers to monitor and update their compliance with Safeguarding regulations. Although daunting at first it is very helpful to PSOs as it automatically reminds them when someone's DBS is due (every three years) and also when training is due. It is regularly updated by the PSO and Vicar to include all church groups and volunteers, and also those other groups using the church buildings. We are currently 94% compliant with the safeguarding standards. The missing 6% will be addressed when the new PCC takes office.

We held a Safeguarding Sunday on 24th November, when the PSO gave the congregation information about safeguarding and stressed that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Members of the church are good at reporting if they think there is a safeguarding issue. The PSO then discusses this with the Vicar and if they feel it is necessary they will refer the issue to the diocesan safeguarding team. The diocese has been very supportive in helping us deal with issues that have arisen. The diocese also sends out a regular Safeguarding newsletter and holds regular meetings for PSOs on current issues and updates to the Dashboard.

The Safeguarding policy can be found on the notice board at the back of church and on the church website. There is a copy of a more in-depth policy and information booklet at the back of church and also a copy of the Safeguarding Handbook, although this is currently being rewritten by the National Safeguarding Team.

Many thanks to all those volunteers and leaders who take safeguarding so seriously and help us to protect our young people and vulnerable adults.

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.

Men's Ministry Relaunch - Revd Dave

This is a brief update of the relaunch of men's ministry at St Thomas' Blackpool. In October 2024 a Biblical group of 12 men went for a curry evening. It was a very enjoyable occasion at which we decided to organise more events. In February 8 men went to a Christian Vision for Men in Leyland. An inspirational evening where we heard the testimony of former police detective Paul Gask. The mixture of social and spiritual input seems to be the way to go and is a non-threatening way to introduce men to the Christian community and ultimately to faith in Jesus. There is clearly a desire and need to organise more events in due course. So watch this space!

Thank you for your prayers and support

Worship Team – Glyn

Our aim is to magnify God and lead people into His presence through music and worship. We meet on Thursday nights in Church and the Parish Centre from 7:00 till 8:30pm.

We are a small team and our practice times during the last year have at times been limited (particularly during the bleak winter months) by illness, safeguarding concerns, work and other commitments, and bad weather! However, our desire is to place worship of our Lord front and central to our church life, and in January we were pleased to welcome into the team not one but two drummers (Jacob and Reece). It has been a pleasure to see Jazbur's progress on the guitar

In addition to providing worship through music at the Sunday services, team members have sung and played at various external events including the day of prayer led by the Lancashire Prayer Group, community carol singing events and several weddings and funeral services. We also took part in the worship and training event hosted by the Blackpool Church (St John's) in October, focussing our vision.

We continue to seek to give God our excellence and have recently moved from the south-east corner, with its severe spatial limitations, to the chancel area. The move has not been without its challenges (practically and musically), but the principal aim has been to use architectural features of our church to enhance and focus the sound as intended.

Thanks is extended to Alan Hodgson for his dedicated work maintaining the cabling and connectivity and equipment throughout the year. I would also like to thank Alan, Joan, Alison and Diane for their support in leading and choosing songs, leading worship at various times in different services. Particular thanks also go to Anne, Chris, Nicola, Philip, Jazbur, Dave and LJ and all who have diligently worked with the technology to project the liturgy and lyrics successfully and control our sound system.

Anyone with musical gifting and a worshipping heart interested in our worship team please contact us.
Glyn Sinar (Worship Team Leader).

Friendship – Andréa Smith

Alison O'Brian, Vicky Taylor and myself are excited to announce that we are introducing a new ladies get together group. It is simply called " Friendship" with our slogan being " Ladies strong in the Lord " because we are (Mal 3v17) God's precious jewels!

We will be meeting every FIRST THURSDAY of the month In the PARISH CENTRE 2 pm until 4 pm.

The format will likely take a guest speaker or event, combined with coffee, cake and chat.

A suggested £1 donation per meeting would be appreciated (if able or wish to do so) to help contribute towards refreshments. An open plate collection may be offered to certain charitable speakers.

We are also in the process of organising a couple of evening events outside of St T's later in the year. Details announced nearer the time.

We do look forward to you joining us for fun, fellowship and food.

Blessings

Life Association – Steve and Lisa Haskett

Mumbai

The boys are all thriving and their education is progressing well; they are diligently pursuing their studies and preparing for their annual exams at the end of March. A teacher comes on alternate evenings to give extra support for the boys in their education. A new minibus has been provided for the boys' home which will enable them to travel to the park in the evenings and weekends where the boys enjoy a game of cricket. The park is quite a distance from their home, so it will be a blessing for them to transport them to various places.



Our project partner in Mumbai also ministers to a marginalised community in the slums. Torrential downpours during the monsoon season damaged the roofs of their homes and we were able to send funds to supply new good quality tarpaulins to provide shelter and safety. We have been able to fund this through our disaster relief fund.



Andhra Pradesh

The school has moved temporarily to another venue nearby because the original school building has become unsafe due to the adverse weather affecting the structure of the building. The school will continue to run at the temporary venue until a permanent building can be found. There are currently 190 children attending the school during the day and around 90 children attend the afterschool tuition. The children in 10th grade classes (aged 14-16 years) have all passed their 10th board exams. The children have recently celebrated Republic Day, a national holiday commemorating the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of India.



The students at the tailoring school have just completed their training and have now graduated. This is the second cohort of women to have trained at the centre and for the time being this will be the last cohort; however the tailoring school in Tamil Nadu will continue as normal.



Tamil Nadu

The New Hope Tailoring School ministry is progressing well. So far, five cohorts of students have successfully completed their studies. The fifth cohort of women completed their training in October. The six months they spent at the school were truly life-changing, as they gained practical skills, received training, and experienced God's love. Upon completing their training, each woman was gifted a free sewing machine as a token of love and support. Coming from poor backgrounds, these women can now stand on their own feet, earning an income to support their families and provide education for their children. The New Hope Tailoring School has been a great blessing, transforming the lives of many underprivileged women. The sixth cohort of students began training in November. Ten women from poor backgrounds have joined and are now regularly attending their classes, which include practical sessions. Each day, the classes begin with prayer, songs, and Bible reading.

The tuition centre has been a source of learning and blessings for children and families in the community. Daily classes are held in the evenings for two hours by two dedicated teachers. Each child is given individual attention to ensure they learn effectively. Nutritious food and snacks are provided to keep the children healthy and energised. The children successfully completed their half-year exams in December. Each class begins with a prayer and Bible reading, instilling good values in the children.



Madurai

Arulagam Hospice

The children are keeping well and enjoying their studies. The ambulance is very helpful in transporting the residents to medical appointments for regular check-ups. A small kitchen garden has been developed in the grounds where vegetables have been harvested. Poultry farming and sheep rearing have also been started.



Afterschool Tuition

The two tuition centres are running well with 50 children between the ages of 5-16 attending each centre. The children are provided with nutritious food and snacks. Christian values are taught in the classes and weekend activities are available where the children learn life skills and self-care.



Bihar

Last year we began a partnership with a Christian mission hospital in Bihar that also serve the local community through its health and development programmes focusing on the poor and marginalised. Two new afterschool tuition centres were started in local villages which we support. The centres have made a significant impact by helping children from poor and marginalised families improve their educational skills and build a strong foundation for their future. Bihar is the most impoverished state in India, with over 52% of people living in extreme poverty. We are pleased to share that later in the year we will be supporting three more tuition centres.



The temperatures in Bihar plummet during the winter months with night times becoming bitterly cold. Many vulnerable children don't have adequate clothing during these months, and some children have been known to die because of this. We were able to send funds to provide warm clothing. Blankets, hats and jumpers were distributed to 1900 vulnerable children to help them withstand the cold and no doubt save lives.

We would like to thank you very much for your generosity in supporting Life Association and helping to make all this happen.

Lisa Haskett, Operations Manager

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

Reflections from Alison O'Brien (Ashar Bringing Hope)

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 & a Chat continues to be led by Denise and the team which continues to offer 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 are 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 supports 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 a social prescribing referral.

We have put on several courses and retreat days from St Thomas Church: We have had 2 church visits teaching emotional health and wellbeing at The Coach House Church, Stockport and held a teaching day on Neurodiversity at St Thomas' and look forward to more teaching in the future.

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 appointment.

Thank you for all your partnership and support.

With Blessings

Alison

Ashar Bringing Hope

Finance Report - Finance Report – 2024

The 2024 accounts have been prepared and independently examined and are appended to this document.

This year we have been greatly blessed with grants. We have received the following grants:

£40,000 over 3 years from the Parish Vision Fund to cover a salary for Nicola Anderson, who is our Family and Community Engagement Worker. We have also received another £5000 from the Duchy of Lancaster to support the salary for 19 hours per week.

We also received a grant of £1000 to support work of Drift Church which runs weekly and this has enabled them to buy and set up equipment. In April, we received another £10,000 from the Henry Smith Fund which supports the food for both the Toddler Group and Tuesday Church as well as various specific needs of the people within the parish and local community who need specific support.

In 2024 our expenditure was much less but our grants increased. We also raised over £3000 on Gift Day and I would like to thank everyone so much for their generosity. However, although expenditure is down, our general income from giving alone has reduced from £61,329 in 2023 to £60590 so the general trajectory is that giving is decreasing but grants have increased. This shows that we are becoming much more dependent on grants.

At the end of the year, we have over £35,000 in our CCLA deposit account and over £50k in our current accounts. However, over £34k of this relates to grant monies and we are forecasting a reduction in cash held during 2025. This is due to general expenses, utility bill increases and a reduction in giving. Thankfully, we were able to pay our Parish Share in full

Gift Aid

A number of people have now changed over to the Parish Giving Scheme which has been enormously helpful and reduced some of the workload. It also means that Gift Aid can be received every month. However, it is not suitable for everyone to give through Parish Giving and so quite a few people still give through the envelope scheme. I would like to thank Vicky for her hard work and faithfulness in doing the Gift Aid for both St Thomas and St Thomas' Pastoral Trust and for managing the cash accounts so carefully.

Many people give money faithfully every week to St Thomas' and I would like to thank them for their faithfulness and generosity. I would personally like to thank Chris Brambles for his ongoing support and would also like to thank Pauline Matthews and Vicky Bentley for counting the collection each week so faithfully over many years. Very kindly, Antony Clegg and Andrea Smith have now taken over counting the money and I am very grateful to them both. Thanks also go to Rebecca Murdoch who has reviewed and certified the accounts for us.

Alison Wilkinson

St Thomas' PCC Treasurer

February 2024

Independent Examiners Report on the Accounts			
Report to the trustee/members of	Parochial Church Council of St Thomas' Parish Church		
On Accounts for the year ended	31 December 2024	Charity no. (if any)	1132312
Set out on pages	1-5		
Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner	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. It is my responsibility to: • Examine the accounts (under section 43 of the Act) • To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 43(7)(b) of the act), and • To state whether particular matters have come to my attention		
Basis of independent examiner's statement	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.		
Independent examiner's statement	In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention 1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the Trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that: • Proper accounting records are kept (in accordance with section 41 of the act); and • Accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act: or 2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached <i>*Please delete the words in brackets if they do not apply</i>		
Signed:	 R J Murdoch	Date:	20/02/25
Name:	Rebecca Jane Murdoch		
Relevant professional qualifications or body (if any):	Chartered Tax Adviser		
Address:	3 Mount Road Fleetwood FY7 6EZ		

Statement of financial activities for the year ending 31 December 2024

	notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds		Total 2024		Total 2023
		£	£	£		£		£

INCOMING RESOURCES

Voluntary Income	2a	60590	32743	-		93333		97607
Activities for generating funds	2b	945		-		945		1342
Income from investments	2c	2736		-		2736		1405
Church activities	2d	8644		-		8644		6352
Other incoming resources	2e	374		-		374		384
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		<u>73289</u>	<u>32743</u>	-		<u>106032</u>		<u>107090</u>

RESOURCES EXPENDED

Cost of generation voluntary income	3b	0		-				0
Fund raising trading costs	3c	0		-				0
Church Activities	3a	76161	28049	-		104210		119897
Governance costs	3d	0	0	-				
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		<u>76161</u>	<u>28049</u>	-		<u>104210</u>		<u>119897</u>

Incoming/outgoing Resources		-2872	4694	-		1822		-12807
Unrealisable gains(Losses) on investment assets								
on disposal	5a	0	0			0		0
on revaluation		0	0			0		0
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS								
Balances B/FWD 1 January 2024		64037	19707			83744		96551
Balances C/FWD 31 December 2024	8	<u>61165</u>	<u>24401</u>			<u>85566</u>		<u>83744</u>

Statement of Assets as at 31 December 2024

[illegible]

NOTES

1a Debtors relates to Gift Aid recoverable from April 2024 giving and is an estimate

- b** Restricted balances £24,401
- 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** 2024 accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis
- h** Grant balances of £24,401 are included within general funds

2 INCOMING RESOURCES					TOTAL		TOTAL
2a	Voluntary Income		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	2024	2023
						£	£
	Planned Giving						
	Gift Aid donations		33107			33107	35940
	Tax Recoverable		12575			12575	10339
	Other		0			0	2875
	Collections		8914			8914	8968
	Gift Days		3330			3330	2707
	Grants (general)		0	32323		32393	36278
	Donations, appeals		2664	350		3014	0
	Legacies		0	0		0	500
	TOTAL		<u>60590</u>	<u>32743</u>		<u>93333</u>	<u>97607</u>
2b	Activities for generating Funds		<u>945</u>			<u>945</u>	<u>1342</u>
2c	Income from Investments						
	Dividends and Interest		<u>2736</u>			<u>2736</u>	<u>1405</u>
2d	Income from Church activities						
	Church Hall letting		5824			5824	4172
	Fees and other		2820			2820	2180
	TOTAL		<u>8644</u>			<u>8644</u>	<u>6352</u>
2e	Other Incoming resources		<u>374</u>			<u>374</u>	<u>384</u>
Total Incoming Resources			<u>73289</u>	<u>32743</u>		<u>106032</u>	<u>107090</u>

3a	Church Activities						
	Mission Overseas		721	350		1071	2440
	Mission Home		1923			1923	6116
	Parish Share Paid		36805			36805	44902
	Clergy Expenses		7516			7516	1744
	Other Ministry costs		4638			4638	3658
	Parish Centre costs		3377			3377	4135
	Church Activity costs		13676			13675	16200
	Repairs and Maintenance		7349			7349	16896
	Bank Charges		156			156	149
	Grants (general)		0	27699		2	23657
	Sub Total		76161	28049		104210	119897
3b	Generation of Voluntary income Cost of appeals etc						
3c	Fund raising costs		0	0		0	0
3d	Governance costs		0	0		0	0
	Total Resources Expended		<u>76161</u>	<u>28049</u>		<u>104210</u>	<u>119897</u>

					TOTAL		TOTAL
					2024		2023
3	RESOURCES EXPENDED		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	£	£

4. No payments were made to any member of the PCC, persons closely connected to them or related parties **4** except for payments to the Pastoral Trust.

5. FIXED ASSETS

				2024			2023
				£			£
	(a) Tangible			0			0
	(b) Investments			0			0
	At estimated market value						
	Total			<u>0</u>			<u>0</u>

6	Debtors						
	Gift Aid to be claimed	1a		4000			6000
	Total			<u>4000</u>			<u>6000</u>

7.	Liabilities						
	Due within one year			nil			nil
	Due after one year			nil			nil
	Total			<u>nil</u>			<u>nil</u>

8	FUNDS	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
		<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
	General Fund+	<u>50566</u>	<u>48244</u>
	Youth Fund	<u>0</u>	<u>500</u>
	Mission Fund	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	General Reserve Fund	<u>35000</u>	<u>35000</u>
	Total	<u>85566</u>	<u>83744</u>

9 **BANK RECONCILIATION**

Current account	<u>5366</u>	<u>3833</u>
Money Master account	<u>44860</u>	<u>44635</u>
Sub Total	<u>50226</u>	<u>48468</u>
CBFCE Deposit account	<u>35210</u>	<u>35210</u>
Sub Total	<u>86436</u>	<u>83678</u>
Cash held	<u>130</u>	<u>66</u>
Total	<u>85566</u>	<u>83744</u>

+ includes £24,401 of restricted balances

	notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds		Total 2024		Total 2023
		£	£	£		£		£
INCOMING RESOURCES								

Voluntary Income	2a	60590	32743	-		93333		97607
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Church activities	2d	8644		-		8644		6352
Other incoming resources	2e	374		-		374		384
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		<u>73289</u>	<u>32743</u>	-		<u>106032</u>		<u>107090</u>

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Governance costs	3d	0	0	-				
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FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

[illegible]

NOTES

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b Restricted balances £24,401
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g 2024 accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis
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	Fees and other		2820			2820	2180
	TOTAL		8644			8644	6352
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Total Incoming Resources			73289	32743		106032	107090

					TOTAL		TOTAL
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3d	Governance costs		0	0		0	0
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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.

5	FIXED ASSETS			2024			2023
				£			£
	(a) Tangible			0			0
	(b) Investments			0			0
	At estimated market value						
	Total			0	-	-	0

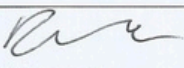
6	Debtors						
	Gift Aid to be claimed	1a		4000			6000
	Total			4000			6000

7	Liabilities						
	Due within one year			nil			nil
	Due after one year			nil			nil

	Total			<u>nil</u>	-	-	<u>nil</u>
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8	FUNDS	<u>2024</u>	-	-	<u>2023</u>
		<u>£</u>	-	-	<u>£</u>
	General Fund+	<u>50566</u>	-	-	<u>48244</u>
	Youth Fund	<u>0</u>	-	-	<u>500</u>
	Mission Fund	<u>0</u>	-	-	<u>0</u>
	General Reserve Fund	<u>35000</u>	-	-	<u>35000</u>
	Total	<u>85566</u>	-	-	<u>83744</u>
9	BANK RECONCILIATION				
	Current account	<u>5366</u>	-	-	<u>3833</u>
	Money Master account	<u>44860</u>	-	-	<u>44635</u>
	Sub Total	<u>50226</u>	-	-	<u>48468</u>
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	Sub Total	<u>86436</u>	-	-	<u>83678</u>
	Cash held	<u>130</u>	-	-	<u>66</u>
	Total	<u>85566</u>	-	-	<u>83744</u>

+ includes £24,401 of restricted balances

Independent Examiners Report on the Accounts			
Report to the trustee/members of	Parochial Church Council of St Thomas' Parish Church		
On Accounts for the year ended	31 December 2024	Charity no. (if any)	1132312
Set out on pages	1-5		
Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner	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. It is my responsibility to: • Examine the accounts (under section 43 of the Act) • To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 43(7)(b) of the act), and • To state whether particular matters have come to my attention		
Basis of independent examiner's statement	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.		
Independent examiner's statement	In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention 1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the Trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that: • Proper accounting records are kept (in accordance with section 41 of the act); and • Accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act: or 2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached <i>*Please delete the words in brackets if they do not apply</i>		
Signed:	 R J Murdoch	Date:	20/02/25
Name:	Rebecca Jane Murdoch		
Relevant professional qualifications or body (if any):	Chartered Tax Adviser		
Address:	3 Mount Road Fleetwood FY7 6EZ		

Accounts

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

Report to the trustee/members of	Parochial Church Council of St Thomas' Parish Church		
On Accounts for the year ended	31 December 2023	Charity no. (if any)	1132312
Set out on pages	1-5		
Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner	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. It is my responsibility to: • Examine the accounts (under section 43 of the Act) • To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 43(7)(b) of the act), and • To state whether particular matters have come to my attention		
Basis of independent examiner's statement	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.		
Independent examiner's statement	In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention 1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the Trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that: • Proper accounting records are kept (in accordance with section 41 of the act); and • Accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act: or 2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached <i>*Please delete the words in brackets if they do not apply</i>		
Signed:	R J Murdoch 	Date:	19-2-2024
Name:	Rebecca Jane Murdoch		
Relevant professional qualifications or body (if any):	Chartered Tax Adviser		
Address:	3 Mount Road Fleetwood FY7 6EZ		

Registered Charity Number 1132312**Statement of financial activities for the year ending 31 December 2023**

	notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds		Total 2023	Total 2022
		£	£	£		£	£

INCOMING RESOURCES

Voluntary Income	2a	61329	36278	-		97607	101636
Activities for generating funds	2b	1342	-	-		1342	348
Income from investments	2c	1405	-	-		1405	327
Church activities	2d	6352	-	-		6352	9761
Other incoming resources	2e	384	-	-		384	938
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		<u>70812</u>	<u>36278</u>	-		<u>107090</u>	<u>113010</u>

RESOURCES EXPENDED

Cost of generation voluntary income	3b						0
Fund raising trading costs	3c						390
Church Activities	3a	85246	34651			119897	70596
Governance costs	3d						0
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		<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	5a						
on revaluation							
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS							
Balances B/FWD 1 January 2023		78471	18080			96551	54527
Balances C/FWD 31 December 2023	8	<u>64037</u>	<u>19707</u>			<u>83744</u>	<u>96551</u>

FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

[illegible]

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

2 INCOMING RESOURCES					TOTAL		TOTAL
2a	Voluntary Income		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	2023	2022
						£	£
	Planned Giving						
	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
	TOTAL		61329	36278		97607	101636
2b	Activities for generating Funds		1342			1342	348
2c	Income from Investments						
	Dividends and Interest		1405			1405	327
2d	Income from Church activities						
	Church Hall letting		4172			4172	8649
	Fees and other		0			2180	1112
	TOTAL		6352			6352	9761
2e	Other Incoming resources		384			384	938
Total Incoming Resources			70812	36278		107090	113010

						TOTAL		TOTAL
						2023		2022
3	RESOURCES EXPENDED		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	£		£
3a	Church Activities							
	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		85246	34651		119897		70596
3b	Generation of Voluntary income Cost of appeals etc							0
3c	Fund raising costs		0			0		390
3d	Governance costs		0			0		0
	Total Resources Expended		<u>85246</u>	<u>34651</u>		<u>119897</u>	-	<u>70986</u>

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.

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

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

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

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

+ includes £19707 of restricted balances

	notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds		Total 2023		Total 2022
		£	£	£		£		£
INCOMING RESOURCES								

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				£			£
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	(b) Investments			0			0
	At estimated market value						
	Total			0	-	-	0

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+ includes £19707 of restricted balances

Independent Examiners Report on the Accounts			
Report to the trustee/members of	Parochial Church Council of St Thomas' Parish Church		
On Accounts for the year ended	31 December	Charity no. (if any)	1132312
Set out on pages	1-5		
Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner	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. It is my responsibility to: • Examine the accounts (under section 43 of the Act) • To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 43(7)(b) of the act), and • To state whether particular matters have come to my attention		
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Signed:	R J Murdoch	Date:	19-2-2024
Name:	Rebecca Jane Murdoch		
Relevant professional qualifications or body (if any):	Chartered Tax Adviser		
Address:	3 Mount Road Fleetwood FY7 6EZ		

Accounts

Reflections 2022



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

Luke 4.18.

Reflections 2022- a review of activities and financial statements

This is a report of various activities as submitted that have occurred throughout the year 2022.

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 from the scroll in the synagogue at Nazareth Isaiah 61 the verses we have as 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 is 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 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. I pray as we do we will be sure of who we are in God and what He wants us to do.

First of all let me 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.

This year Vicar's letter also includes our Mission and Outreach report, which will be clear by what follows.

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, Wardens, pastoral phone calls, prayer line, admin, constant revisions to the service schedule and worship styles (thank you worship team).

Mission and Outreach

Together this past year we held mission and outreach events:

A Film night and Fun Day

A Science and Wonder Day

A week of mission 'Love Where You Live': alleyway clear up and renovation, litter picking, BBQ, made good links with our community.

Let's move forward together this year trusting in God. After all He is our reason for all that we are and all that we do and through Him be a blessing to this community and parish of St Thomas' remembering history is His Story. With this in mind, this year I am delighted to share that we are holding the following Mission and Outreach events:

31 March-1 April 24 hour prayer

29-30 April George and Joan Fisher visit with Fun Day

9 July, 6pm Prayer Event Blackpool Church/St John's

16-23 July Love Where You Live Mission Week

29-30 July Andy Kind Comedy Night and Sunday morning invitation service

Remembering where this letter started. Jesus was anointed for the Father's mission. So are we.

God Bless you,

Dave O'Brien

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 Electoral Roll and the Child Protection Officers 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 PCCs, elected members serve for 3 years and then stand down for at least one year

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 Children and Youth 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, Pauline Matthews, Andrea Smith, Nicola Anderson, Glyn Sinar.

During this year the PCC has been strongly concerned about 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.

We have been without a Treasurer for most of the year and are very grateful for the help of Chris Brambles who has kept us informed of church accounts and any action to be taken.

Alison Wilkinson has agreed to take over as Church Treasurer and will be appointed at the next APCM. We are very grateful to Alison and welcome her to the PCC and the Church.

Many thanks to those who faithfully serve as PCC members both as elected and ex officio members.

The PCC Membership from April 2022 is as follows:

Dave O'Brien	Incumbent
Steve Haskett	Licensed
Nicola Anderson	Elected
Susan Atkin	Elected
David Jeffery	Elected
Diane O'Hagan	Elected
Glyn Sinar	Elected
Andrea Smith	Elected
John Smith	Elected
Ken Warrender	Elected
Josh O'Brien	Elected (now resigned)
Vacancy	Treasurer - ex officio PCC Officer

Pauline Matthews	Warden - ex officio PCC Officer
vacancy	Church warden- ex officio PCC Officer
Anne Sinar	Safeguarding - ex officio PCC Officer
Denise Moorby	Ex officio
Matthew Jackson	Ex officio
vacancy	Ex officio - Vision Champion
Yvonne Blazey	LLM
Vicky Bentley	LLM

Wardens' Report - Pauline Matthews

This last year has been very challenging trying to get the necessary work done in church.

We finally managed to complete the outside wall repairs to the parish centre, following the storm damage that happened at the beginning of the year.

The electrical work needed in church, which I have been sorting out for the last 3 months, is being done in the next 2 weeks. We will all be able to see each other as we have had 30 lights not working.

There is still more work to be done when funds allow.

The mission was hard work but very rewarding, with the alleyway clearance and litter picking throughout the parish. We had a great team that worked well together and met some lovely people in the community.

I am sure many of you know this is my last year as Churchwarden. It is time to pass the baton on. Nicola has come forward to be the next Churchwarden and I know she will do a good job. Nicola has been by my side learning the job over the last year and is more than capable. I would like to say a big 'Thank you' to you the congregation for your patience when we tried new things. A big thank you for all the support and help, it is a team effort and we have known God's amazing grace. It has been a privilege to be part of St Thomas church family. We are so blessed to have such a faithful worship team.

Thank you to Rev. Dave who has been so easy to work with, showing God's love to us all.

I will still be around to do other jobs with the cleaning and gardening teams.

All I have done has been with God's strength, grace and love.

I pray you all know God's peace and love.

God Bless, Pauline

MONDAY NIGHT PRAYER - Vicky Bentley

Night Prayer has been recorded each week, except for Bank Holidays. This is a time of prayer and reflection at the end of the day. A time to centre on God, release things of the day and pray for the world, our community and ourselves.

One of the prayers used in Night Prayer:

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

Prayer is a discipline - that's not a negative thing, it is so positive, being open to God, listening and resting in Him.

I will repeat what I wrote last year, quoting the Diocese of Blackburn website:

"Prayer is opening your heart and life to God to allow Him, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and with Christ to pray in, for and with you."

Prayer is what God is doing in your heart"

In 2022, Millie (from the Blackpool Ministry Experience) came on placement with us and very kindly shared the recording of a Night Prayer. As we go forward into 2023 others will join this ministry and provide Night Prayer using their God-given gifts.

Thank you to a prayer warrior from MPower (see a separate report on MPower in this Reflections) who gave me the following:

*As I come to the end of this day,
remind me, Lord, that Your love for me never ends.*

*As I lay down to rest in this bed,
remind me, Lord, to rest in You.
As I enter my dreams
remind me, Lord, of the dreams You have for my life.
May I always walk the paths You place before me.
Protect me this night
that I will rise in the morning to another day made by You.
Bless to me this night, Lord.
(words by David Cole)*

Deanery Synod - Nicola Anderson, 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 in April 2022 there have been several Deanery Synod meetings attended by myself and Nicola Anderson. Primarily we have discussed S.W.O.T. - our churches' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in an effort to make our churches more appealing to all ages, and in particular to young people and families.

We have planned mission events in our churches and are planning to hold a cross Deanery Mission next year, Summer 2023, in line with Vision 2026.

Archdeacon David Picken attended the last meeting when he discussed the Diocesan Vision.

Our Area Dean Rev. Peter Lillicrap has been absent through ill health and we have been praying for his speedy recovery. In the meantime Rev. Dave O'Brien has been standing in to take over Area Deanery Synod duties.

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

Your prayers would be appreciated.

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 and 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 Leak, Alan

Hodgson, and Andy Smith 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.

**Authorised Lay Ministers (ALM)
Ministers (LLM)**

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

Licensed Lay

Vicky Bentley
Yvonne Blazey

STEWARDSHIP SCHEME AND GIFT AID - Vicky Bentley

'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'

A big 'Thank You' to all those who diligently give through our Stewardship Envelope Scheme or by direct debit/standing order.

Week by week regular, responsible giving helps to fund the work of the church locally and regionally.

Giving of our time, talents, energy and money is a heart response to what God has done for us in Jesus.

There is an economic cost to running the buildings we have, providing the different activities and maintaining the grounds – that is a reality just as it is for each one of us at home, particularly now with the rising energy bills.

How wonderful too that when folk who pay tax are willing to make a Gift Aid declaration. Gift Aid is a vital way in which money donations to the church can be increased. The Government pays back to the church 25p for every £1 given by tax payers, so long as we have a Gift Aid declaration form from that person.

Again in 2022, as happened in 2021, the Gift Aid added around £10,000 to our revenue. Please understand, however, that the numbers of tax payers in our church is limited at the moment. If you are a tax payer, even if you don't want to have a box of weekly envelopes but you do want to give to the church, it would really help if you would talk with me about the possibility of Gift Aiding your donation.

If you would like to know more about our Stewardship scheme, either by using the weekly envelopes or by standing order, or you want to know more about Gift Aiding your donation, please do see me and we can talk further.

Thank you,

Newsletter - Vicky Bentley



We continue to produce the weekly Newsletter with the service schedule for the forthcoming weeks together with notices and upcoming events.

The Newsletter is available in church week by week and many thanks to Jeannette (Brambles) for posting it on St Thomas' website.



children AND YOUTH



Many thanks to all those who pass on their notices for publication and also to those who provided photographs used in the

Newsletter – a few of which are shown in this report.

The photo on the left shows some of the craft work done in Starting Point, the brew and chat group which meets in church each Monday afternoon. You may remember that at Christmas there was a memory and prayer tree in the front entrance of church where people placed crocheted hearts to remember, specifically, babies that had died but also all those we have loved and lost.



The Newsletter is printed on the other side of the Sunday Link which has reflections on the Sunday reading and thoughts on the various aspects of the Church. The Newsletter also shows the Psalm set for each day from the Church of England lectionary.

“But how can people call for help if they don’t know who to trust? And how can they know who to trust if they haven’t heard of the One who can be trusted? And how can they hear if nobody tells them?” (Romans 10: 1)

Last year I wrote about looking to the future and what the plans and hopes were for the young people at St Thomas'. It continues to be true, there are so many opportunities to reach young people and share the love of Jesus across Blackpool but this requires people willing to do that work. The kids’ work needs your support and prayer.

I would firstly like to give a huge thank you to those that have supported the children's work over the 2 years I have been at St Thomas'. Anne has been incredible at keeping our club running smoothly by signing everyone in, welcoming the young people into the club and making food for families and young people. Glyn has been faithfully supporting the club by providing worship songs and providing a safe environment where kids feel comfortable at the club and Sunday service. Lisa has been a lifeline to me when I need a craft activity and has been wonderful and looking after the children through conversation and games. Dave has been diligent in his support for the kids’ work and his involvement in the school. Louise and Thomas have joined the club recently and have both been excellent and fruitful members of the team.

The successes that we have seen with the young people would not have been possible without, firstly, the work of the Holy Spirit within our ministry but also the good and faithful work of these people who have supported every part of the kids’ work at St Thomas'. I thank you all for your love and support during my time at St Thomas' Church.

children AND YOUTH



The next phase for the kids' work was to establish a youth group with the kids that were moving on from the kids' club but we needed people to help lead that. Unfortunately, we were unable to start our own youth club but an amazing opportunity came about through this. The aim has continued to be the same; I want to see churches working together to support young people across Blackpool. At the start of this academic year, Blackpool Church - St. John's started a youth group alongside their Alpha course. This gave us an opportunity to work together. Therefore, since they

started, I have been helping out and taking the youth from St Thomas' and Gatehouse church. This has been amazing and is a big reason why we are seeing young people now attending our Sunday service.

As many of you will know, my time at St Thomas' church is coming to an end and I will be moving on after March to the next chapter in my life. Please keep me in your prayers as I continue to work with young people across Blackpool and wherever else God sends me.



Our focus is always the same: Give God all of the glory, proclaim his name unashamedly and encourage young children to listen and follow God. We have continued to make sure that every Wednesday we share a short story or bible verse alongside an interactive talk with the kids. This is usually based on the talk on Sunday mornings. We also have a worship song with actions at the end of the session that will also be played on a Sunday morning to link the club with the Sunday service. This has been encouraging as we are starting to see more young people respond to invites to

join us on a Sunday morning. It has been wonderful to see so many of our young people starting to attend church and take an active part in our Sunday mornings.

Dave and I have been leading various assemblies over at Devonshire Academy which has been an amazing opportunity to share God's word with the children in our local area. As I walk around the community during the week, many children and families run up to me to talk about the assemblies and children's events. I thank Dave for his diligent work within the school and his passion to link the church with the school. Please pray for the continued kids' work within St Thomas' Church as well as the wonderful work being done in the schools.

This has been a challenging 2 years. It is never easy working with young people but is always rewarding and an honour to be able to share the good news of Jesus to the young people and families in the community. I pray that this good work will not end when I leave and that the children will continue to attend church on a Sunday morning and build relationships with those that attend. I thank those that have welcomed the young people into the church through conversation and a welcoming smile. If you would like to see the young people growing in their understanding and faith, St Thomas' needs your support. Please pray for the young people or offer your time to help the church run activities for the young people.

Please contact me about the children and youth work:
Children.stthomaschurch@gmail.com

The Prayer Tree - Joe Atkin

My name is Joe Atkin and I have been running The Prayer Tree for many years on behalf of St. Thomas Church.

The object of The Prayer Tree is for people who for various reasons need prayer for themselves or for someone they know who needs prayer. I have a list of people who once I have received a prayer request, I send out the prayer request for them to pray over.

Over the last 12 months most of the prayer requests that have been sent out have been answered with the people who have been prayed for have recovered, this shows that the power of prayer is so powerful and wonderful. Thank you to everyone on the Prayer Tree for all your Prayers.

The Prayer Tree also informs the church when a church member is ill or is in hospital or has passed away. Our Vicar Rev. Dave O'Brien is a great believer in prayer and also in The Prayer Tree. Blessings Joe.

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.

All our volunteers have completed the diocesan safeguarding training, either on-line or in person. 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.

We have been invited to participate in Safeguarding Hubs, a diocesan online tool to audit our safeguarding profile and to enable the Parish Safeguarding Officer to determine the strength of safeguarding in the church. This is ongoing.

Thankfully, this year we have not had to respond to any serious concerns and we are ever thankful to God for protecting our young people and vulnerable adults in this way.

Worship Team - Glyn Sinar

St. Thomas's Worship Team serves the Church through leading worship of God and releasing gifting through musical worship. We meet on Thursday nights in Church from 7pm till 8.30pm to praise and to practice together.

2022 began at a low point for St Thomas's worship group. With social distancing requirements lifted, it seemed ironic when we were allowed more than two singers, that there were only two, plus three musicians. Sadly Nic Hall, worship leader and blues guitarist, passed away in May and he is sadly missed. It was our privilege to have known him as a Christian friend and brother and to share our music with him at St Thomas's over many years.

Nonetheless, during the year we have enjoyed contributing musically to successive Mission events held in Church and in the Parish, widening our repertoire to include Bob Dylan and Coldplay! The team have continued to show dedication in worship and commitment, in singing and playing hymns and songs week by week. Since the pandemic the demographic make-up of our church has changed and we recognise the need for our music to reflect this as we choose, learn and introduce new material to the congregation. We are thankful to our Youth Worker, Matt, for his resourcefulness in finding family-friendly music. As well as helping the children with craft and learning materials during services he also managed to join us on drums *and* teach actions to songs!

Since the new year the group has four new members, and we pray and seek to expand further! 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.

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. This year we have provided food at Kid's Club on the last Wednesday of the month, had a hotpot supper and a barbeque at the Mission and a tea party for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. That is in addition to the hundreds of cups of tea and coffee that have been faithfully served every Sunday and Wednesday. More recently we have been providing lunch for the MPower course on a Thursday. Many thanks to everyone who has provided hospitality throughout the year.

Holy Dusters - Pauline Matthews, Marion Hornby

The Cleaning team meet every Tues morning 9.30am till 11.30

We are a friendly bunch and are very committed. When we have finished our jobs we have a cuppa and biscuits and we also have a time of prayer and Fellowship.

Gardening Team - Pauline Matthews

Thursday mornings 10.00am - 12.30pm

The garden team have worked hard this last 12 months and we have had some laughs along the way. We have had some success in growing some veg and will try again this year to

improve on what we have learnt. Our team has reduced in numbers as Joe has had to retire due to his health. A big thank you Joe for all your hard work and commitment every week. You will be missed. We welcome new helpers who enjoy Gardening and fellowship. Big thank you to all volunteers; Doreen, Vicky, Sue, Denise, and Wendy.

MPower - Vicky Bentley



MPower is a programme of training run in the Diocese and I am very happy to be part of the team that delivers this programme. The programme has been available each year for the last 4 to 5 years. In 2022 the largest number of lay people in training in the Diocese were on MPower with 4 groups – one in Accrington, Lower Darwen, Preston and Blackpool. St Thomas' provides the home of the Blackpool group each week.

The purpose of MPower is to train and equip people to share the good news of Jesus in urban communities. It is simply for anyone who loves Jesus and its unique style means it is particularly suitable for people who are nervous of education and learning. There are no written assignments but there are practical exercises to undertake during the 9 months of the programme.

MPower is for Christians from all church traditions and our tutor team represent the diversity of the Church of England. It is led and supported by those who live, work and are transforming their urban communities and share their experiences to enable the MPower participants to make a difference in their own communities. We have seen God do amazing things through the folk that have been on MPower, including the mission events they have planned, run and followed through.

There are three core units to MPower:

- Personal transformation (getting yourself ready)
- Evangelism (telling others)
- Leadership (leading others to tell others)

If you want to know any more, please do have a chat with me.

Life Association - Steve and Lisa Haskett

At the beginning of last year, we began to support three new projects as well as the existing projects we support. One of those was a new day care provision for thirty vulnerable children. We were also able to support a new after-school project to enhance the education of fifty vulnerable children. Another new project was a tailoring school which saw ten women who are widowed or close to destitution trained for six months in textiles, needlework, and the use of sewing machines. Each woman receives a sewing machine at the end of their training to enable them to support themselves with a sustainable income. Another ten women are currently undertaking training and will graduate in the next few weeks. These projects have been very successful and will continue this year.



We visited India in November last year and were very impressed by the work going on there. We saw some potential new projects and have committed to take on another three projects this year. Another afterschool club in a nearby village to the previous one in Madurai. Another tailoring school providing similar training at a village in Andhra Pradesh. We will also be sponsoring ten children who live in a hospice for children and adults with HIV/aids.

On behalf of us all at Life Association, may we express our sincerest thanks for the continued prayers, support, and donations we have received from St Thomas'.

Steve and Lisa Haskett

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

April 2022 - April 2023

It has been a year of growth for several projects, Ashar on behalf of St Thomas's

Counsellor provision for Comfort Cafe

Ashar on behalf of St T's has put a counsellor in Comfort Cafe to work alongside the team and their service users. The trustees of Comfort Cafe came to the vicarage to discuss what we could offer and how that would work. We agreed that myself, Alison, representing Ashar, Rev Dave representing St Thomas' and Vicky Bentley would be invited into the discussion on behalf of both Ashar and St Thomas'.

The Comfort Cafe Trustees agreed that Gwen and myself and the person who would go into Comfort Cafe would all stay in communication, to be transparent and to enable myself as supervisor for the work to be the point of contact not the counsellor. That way we put a 3 month trial in place. The trial was a great success and we have appointed as a contractor for three years, a Mental Health Practitioner on a self employed basis.

Gloria has now been doing the role for the past 8 months and is loving it. She sees on average 8 people, interactions of varying lengths - the feedback from Gwen and her trustees is a huge thank you to St Thomas' and that the service provided by Gloria is amazing and making such a difference.

This has led to several referrals into Brew & Chat (Starting Point) and for counselling.

Counsellors

Ashar now has 2 counsellors and 1 emotional wellbeing practitioner, working from the vestry and the vicarage. Dave secured a grant for a pod and we have got the relevant quotes. We have a company in mind who have done a site visit. We are waiting for permission from Blackpool Council which is taking rather a long time, but I am sure it will be up and functional by the summer.

In the meantime we are working from church and are able to offer up to 8 sessions per person and can extend sessions on an individual basis.

Events

Ladies Day

We ran a successful Ladies Day where we had 62 ladies. The feedback was fantastic - God meeting deep needs and several folks finding fresh anointing and direction.

Emotional & Spiritual Well Being Course: Identity, Self Esteem, Stress & Anxiety, Depression, Anger, Grief Loss & Living

We have run the Emotional & Spiritual Wellbeing course four times over the past year, twice on line and twice from the church. The online course had a larger number but they came from across the country and was opened up to the Diocese, The groups in church were smaller in number, 10 and 7.

We have been approached to put on more events, which we hope to do in the autumn.

Retreats from St Thomas's Church - Day Events

Day Event - Confident and Unashamed - planned for the Autumn.

Brew & Chat - Monday afternoons

This group continues to grow and the team does an amazing job.

Each week we are seeing new folk. Some regulars have developed, which is a great compliment. Ladies from a local residential home and their carers shared that the young adults they bring find it makes a huge difference to them. We have huge smiles and they achieve goals such as going to the counter for their own cup of tea. Such a small thing to us but a massive achievement - such a privilege. This space offers a space for people to talk one to one, as well as joining in with others on a discussion topic. We also offer a simple craft. Brew and Chat crocheted the Christmas stars for remembering child bereavement. The team leaders are myself, Denise and Nicola -we have a great team of Dianne, Vicky and Lisa, who also keeps us on rota. Thank you team.

We have a number of the team trained as Mental Health First Aiders

We are continuing to support the Diocese as well as local churches and clergy.

Thank you to all that support the work of Ashar at St Thomas'.

Alison O'Brien

Finance Report - 2022

The 2022 financial accounts have been prepared and independently examined and are appended to this document.

We continue to thank God for His blessings and we can be assured that if we continue to be faithful in all aspects of our lives, He will be faithful to us. I would like to thank all those who have given so generously in 2022 and particularly for continuing your stewardship giving during the year.

In 2022 our income increased to £113k from £82.4k in 2021. However, if we take out £19.2k of grant monies and £17.9k from a legacy, our general income/giving rose slightly to £75.9k from £73.4k. The grant monies received relate to £10k of further funds from the Henry Smith Foundation and £9.2k from Blackpool Council for Pods on the church grounds.

Spending reduced significantly in 2022 reducing to £71k from £88.9k. Parish share was paid in full, a total of £41k. This is less than we had originally believed as we were able to negotiate a reduction in our share for 2022. Utility bills were less than we had expected due to 2 significant refunds received during the year.

Our cash balances at year-end remain healthy with over £35,000 in our CCLA deposit account and over £61k in our current accounts. However, over £19k of cash is held in our general fund which relates to grant monies and we are forecasting a significant reduction in cash held during 2023. This is due to cost pressures rise and an expected Parish Share commitment of over £50,000.

I would personally like to thank Pauline Matthews and Vicky Bentley for all they do in counting and banking collections and managing the cash account and to Rebecca Murdoch who has reviewed and certified the accounts for us.

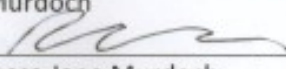
Finally, thanks to everyone who has helped this past year in making the job of acting treasurer so much easier for me and to Alison Wilkinson who has agreed to step in and take over the role.

Chris Brambles

St Thomas' PCC Acting Treasurer

March 2023

Independent Examiners Report on the Accounts

Report to the trustee/members of	Parochial Church Council of St Thomas' Parish Church		
On Accounts for the year ended	31 December 2022	Charity no. (if any)	1132312
Set out on pages	1-5		
Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner	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. It is my responsibility to: • Examine the accounts (under section 43 of the Act) • To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 43(7)(b) of the act), and • To state whether particular matters have come to my attention		
Basis of independent examiner's statement	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.		
Independent examiner's statement	In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention 1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the Trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that: • Proper accounting records are kept (in accordance with section 41 of the act); and • Accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act: or 2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached <i>*Please delete the words in brackets if they do not apply</i>		
Signed:	R J Murdoch 	Date:	5 th March 2023
Name:	Rebecca Jane Murdoch		
Relevant professional qualifications or body (if any):	Chartered Tax Adviser		
Address:	3 Mount Road Fleetwood FY7 6EZ		

Registered Charity Number**1132312****Statement of financial activities for the year ending****31 December 2022**

	note s	Unrestrict ed Funds	Restrict ed Funds	Endowme nt Funds		Total 2022	Total 2021
		£	£	£		£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES							
Voluntary Income	2a	82436	19200	-		10163 6	78372
Activities for generating funds	2b	348	-	-		348	0
Income from investments	2c	327	-	-		327	39
Church activities	2d	9761	-	-		9761	3964
Other incoming resources	2e	938	-	-		938	0
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		<u>93810</u>	<u>19200</u>	-		<u>11301</u> <u>0</u>	<u>82375</u>
RESOURCES EXPENDED							
Cost of generation voluntary income	3b	0	-	-		0	0
Fund raising trading costs	3c	390	-	-		390	606
Church Activities	3a	69476	1120	-		70596	88249
Govenance costs	3d	0	-	-		0	0
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		<u>69866</u>	<u>1120</u>	-		<u>70986</u>	<u>88855</u>
Incoming/outgoing Resources		23944	18080	-		42024	-6480
Unrealisable gains(Losses) on investment assets			-	-			
on disposal	5a		-	-			
on revaluation			-	-			
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS							
Balances B/FWD 1 January 2022		54527	0	-		54527	61007
Balances C/FWD 31 December 2022	8	<u>78471</u>	<u>18080</u>	-	-	<u>96551</u>	<u>54527</u>

Parochial Church Council of St Thomas'
Blackpool
Statement of Assets as at 31 December
2022

FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

[illegible]

NOTES

- 1a** Debtors relates to Gift Aid recoverable from April 2022 giving and is an estimate
- b** Restricted balances £18080
- 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** 2022 accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis
- h** Grant balances of £18080 are included within general funds

2 INCOMING RESOURCES

					TOTAL		TOTAL
2a	Voluntary Income	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	2022		2021
					£		£
	Planned Giving						
	Gift Aid donations	38938		-	38938		40848
	Tax Recoverable	12077		-	12077		10963
	Other	790		-	790		911
	Collections	6754		-	6754		12779
	Gift Days	3957		-	3957		3871
	Grants (general)	1787	19200	-	20987		9000
	Donations, appeals	252		-	252		0
	Legacies	17881		-	17881		0
	TOTAL	82436	19200	-	101636		78372

2b	Activities for generating Funds	348		-	348		0
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2c	Income from Investments						
	Dividends and Interest	327		-	327		39

2d	Income from Church activities						
	Church Hall letting	8649	-	-	8649		2435
	Fees and other	1112	-	-	1112		1529
	TOTAL	9761	-	-	9761		3964

2e	Other Incoming resources	938	-	-	938		0
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Total Incoming Resources	93810	19200	-	113010	82375
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						TOTAL		TOTAL
						2022		2021
3	RESOURCES EXPENDED		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	£		£
3a	Church Activities							
	Mission Overseas		332		-	332		3325
	Mission Home		632		-	632		4200
	Parish Share Paid		41000		-	41000		37207
	Clergy Expenses		1064		-	1064		1127
	Other Ministry costs		5340		-	5340		10452
	Parish Centre costs		4375		-	4375		6891
	Church Activity costs		13368		-	13368		14853
	Repairs and Maintenance		1746		-	1746		2219
	Bank Charges		159		-	159		0
	Grants (general)		1460	1120	-	2580		7975
	Sub Total		69476	1120	-	70596		88249
3b	Generation of Voluntary income Cost of appeals etc		0	-	-	0		0
3c	Fund raising costs		390	-	-	390		606
3d	Governance costs		0	-	-	0		0
	Total Resources Expended		69866	1120	-	70986	-	88855

- 4** 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.

5	FIXED ASSETS
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				2022			2021
				£			£
	(a) Tangible			0			0
	(b) Investments			0			0
	At estimated market value						
	Total			0	-	-	0

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

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

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8	FUNDS	<u>2022</u>	-	-	<u>2021</u>
		<u>£</u>	-	-	<u>£</u>
	General Fund	<u>53015</u>	-	-	<u>10027</u>
	Youth Fund	<u>2500</u>	-	-	<u>2500</u>
	Mission Fund	<u>6036</u>	-	-	<u>7000</u>
	General Reserve Fund	<u>35000</u>	-	-	<u>35000</u>
	Total	<u>96551</u>	-	-	<u>54527</u>
9	BANK RECONCILLIATION				
	Current account	<u>7800</u>	-	-	<u>2397</u>
	Money Master account	<u>53397</u>	-	-	<u>16779</u>
	Sub Total	<u>61197</u>	-	-	<u>19176</u>
	CBFCE Deposit account	<u>35210</u>	-	-	<u>35210</u>
	Sub Total	<u>96407</u>	-	-	<u>54386</u>
	Cash held	<u>144</u>	-	-	<u>141</u>
	Total	<u>96551</u>	-	-	<u>54527</u>

**Parochial Church Council of St Thomas'
Blackpool**

Page 1

**Registered Charity Number
1132312**

**Statement of financial activities for the year ending
31 December 2022**

	note s	Unrestrict ed Funds	Restrict ed Funds	Endowme nt Funds		Total 2022		Total 2021
		£	£	£		£		£

INCOMING RESOURCES

Voluntary Income	2a	82436	19200	-		10163 6		78372
Activities for generating funds	2b	348	-	-		348		0
Income from investments	2c	327	-	-		327		39
Church activities	2d	9761	-	-		9761		3964
Other incoming resources	2e	938	-	-		938		0
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		<u>93810</u>	<u>19200</u>	-		<u>11301</u> <u>0</u>		<u>82375</u>

RESOURCES EXPENDED

Cost of generation voluntary income	3b	0	-	-		0		0
Fund raising trading costs	3c	390	-	-		390		606
Church Activities	3a	69476	1120	-		70596		88249
Govenance costs	3d	0	-	-		0		0
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		<u>69866</u>	<u>1120</u>	-		<u>70986</u>		<u>88855</u>

Incoming/outgoing Resources		23944	18080	-		42024		-6480
Unrealisable gains(Losses) on investment assets			-	-				
on disposal	5a		-	-				
on revaluation			-	-				
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS								
Balances B/FWD 1 January 2022		54527	0	-		54527		61007
Balances C/FWD 31 December 2022	8	<u>78471</u>	<u>18080</u>	=	-	<u>96551</u>	-	<u>54527</u>

Parochial Church Council of St Thomas'
Blackpool
Statement of Assets as at 31 December
2022

Page 2

FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

[illegible]

NOTES

- 1a** Debtors relates to Gift Aid recoverable from April 2022 giving and is an estimate
- b** Restricted balances £18080
- 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** 2022 accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis
- h** Grant balances of £18080 are included within general funds

2	INCOMING RESOURCES
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					TOTAL		TOTAL
2a	Voluntary Income	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	2022		2021
					£		£
	Planned Giving						
	Gift Aid donations	38938		-	38938		40848
	Tax Recoverable	12077		-	12077		10963
	Other	790		-	790		911
	Collections	6754		-	6754		12779
	Gift Days	3957		-	3957		3871
	Grants (general)	1787	19200	-	20987		9000
	Donations, appeals	252		-	252		0
	Legacies	17881		-	17881		0
	TOTAL	82436	19200	-	101636		78372

2b	Activities for generating Funds	348		-	348		0
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2c	Income from Investments						
	Dividends and Interest	327		-	327		39

2d	Income from Church activities						
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	Church Hall letting		8649	-	-	8649		2435
	Fees and other		1112	-	-	1112		1529
	TOTAL		9761	-	-	9761	-	3964

2e	Other Incoming resources		938	-	-	938		0
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Total Incoming Resources			93810	19200	-	113010		82375
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					TOTAL		TOTAL
					2022		2021
3	RESOURCES EXPENDED		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	£	£

3a	Church Activities						
	Mission Overseas		332		-	332	3325
	Mission Home		632		-	632	4200
	Parish Share Paid		41000		-	41000	37207
	Clergy Expenses		1064		-	1064	1127
	Other Ministry costs		5340		-	5340	10452
	Parish Centre costs		4375		-	4375	6891
	Church Activity costs		13368		-	13368	14853
	Repairs and Maintenance		1746		-	1746	2219
	Bank Charges		159		-	159	0
	Grants (general)		1460	1120	-	2580	7975
	Sub Total		69476	1120	-	70596	88249
3b	Generation of Voluntary income Cost of appeals etc		0	-	-	0	0
3c	Fund raising costs		390	-	-	390	606
3d	Governance costs		0	-	-	0	0
	Total Resources Expended		69866	1120	-	70986	88855

- 4** 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.

5	FIXED ASSETS
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2022			2021
£			£

	(a) Tangible			0			0
	(b) Investments			0			0
	At estimated market value						
	Total			0	-	-	0

6	Debtors						
	Gift Aid to be claimed	1 a		6000			6000
	Total			6000			6000

7	Liabilities						
	Due within one year			nil			nil
	Due after one year			nil			nil
	Total			nil	-	-	nil

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8	FUNDS	2022	-	-	2021
		£	-	-	£
	General Fund	53015	-	-	10027
	Youth Fund	2500	-	-	2500
	Mission Fund	6036	-	-	7000
	General Reserve Fund	35000	-	-	35000
	Total	96551	-	-	54527
9	BANK RECONCILLIATION				
	Current account	7800	-	-	2397
	Money Master account	53397	-	-	16779
	Sub Total	61197	-	-	19176
	CBFCE Deposit account	35210	-	-	35210
	Sub Total	96407	-	-	54386
	Cash held	144	-	-	141
	Total	96551	-	-	54527

Independent Examiners Report on the Accounts			
Report to the trustee/members of	Parochial Church Council of St Thomas' Parish Church		
On Accounts for the year ended	31 December 2022	Charity no. (if any)	1132312
Set out on pages	1-5		
Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner	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. It is my responsibility to: • Examine the accounts (under section 43 of the Act) • To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 43(7)(b) of the act), and • To state whether particular matters have come to my attention		
Basis of independent examiner's statement	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.		
Independent examiner's statement	In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention 1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the Trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that: • Proper accounting records are kept (in accordance with section 41 of the act); and • Accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act: or 2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached <i>*Please delete the words in brackets if they do not apply</i>		
Signed:	R J Murdoch R J Murdoch	Date:	5 th March 2023
Name:	Rebecca Jane Murdoch		
Relevant professional qualifications or body (if any):	Chartered Tax Adviser		

Address:

3 Mount Road
Fleetwood
FY7 6EZ

Accounts

Reflections 2021



“Now my eyes will be open
and my ears attentive to the
prayers offered in this place”

2 Chronicles 7:15

This is a report of various activities as submitted that have occurred throughout the year 2021.

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 Report



Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever. *Hebrews 13.8*

Jesus Christ is able to do what we read he could do in the Scriptures. He can raise the dead, heal the sick, set the captives free, perform miracles and more than this, He has conquered death and Hell and He also lives forevermore. Being the same doesn't mean He is static; it means He is faithful and steadfast. So, amidst the massive changes that Covid has brought to our daily lives, one thing stays the same, the Gospel message. It is the same message because humanity has the same need of salvation from sin and healing of broken lives and our broken world. It is the same because the solution is the same, Jesus our Saviour.

That's why it is so pleasing to see St Thomas' family passionate about sharing the Good News of Jesus in many different ways, by word and by presence because it is still the same life changing message and our greatest task and the purpose of the Church.

So, thank you for those who pray, prayer walkers, house visitors, pastoral team, brew & chat team, sound desk, overheads, musicians, cleaners, preachers, service leaders, children's workers, online prayers, warden, PCC members, gardeners, everyone and anyone who is serving the Lord, thank you and bless you. And to Pauline our warden who keeps me on the straight and narrow and commits so much to St Thomas'.

We will see reports including, Emma, Deanery Synod Joe, Life Association Steve and Lisa, Night Prayer Vicky/Nic, Prayer Tree Joe, Children and Youth Matt, Warden Pauline, Worship Team Glyn, Outreach/Mission Yvonne, Finance Simon, Hospitality Anne, PCC Glen, Pastoral Care Glen, Ashar Alison, Newsletter Vicky, Safeguarding Anne, Electoral Roll Mike, Prayer Guide John, Baptism ministry Kath, Cleaning Pauline, Gardening Pauline and many others. Bless you all.

All this against the backdrop of emerging from lockdown and getting back to church life and looking at ways of sharing our faith with this community. We have a mission planned for March and another in August. Plus, the desire to create an ongoing missional culture.

Because Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever. *Hebrews 13.8*

Thank you,

Blessings,

Dave
Revd Dave O'Brien



Curate's Report - Emma

With thanks to God for all that he has accomplished in and through us this year.

After much prayer, consultation and reflection, we launched our 'Pilot' intergenerational service in July 2021. The format stuck and has become our regular Sunday morning offering, providing the space for a relaxed worship atmosphere, opportunities for discussion and getting to know God and one another in a deeper way, and chance for the whole family, of all generations, to worship together as ONE. Thank you for your patience as we have tweaked and continue to tweak the format. Thank you for coming along and getting involved, even and especially when it has pushed you out of where you would be most comfortable. We have been incredibly blessed to see many new faces join us in the last year and our continuing prayer is that we would maintain the welcoming atmosphere and outward-looking focus that has enriched our church family this year.

Over the last 12 months, our focus has been on prayer for God to give us a fresh vision for the community we serve, that we might be a blessing as we ourselves have been blessed by the abundant love of Jesus. And haven't we seen the fruit of that?! The mission week in March saw over 300 people through our doors. The church grounds were buzzing with life and excitement! The Holy Spirit is at work in our neighbourhood; let's catch the wind of the Spirit and allow him to blow us where he leads.

On May 28th, we will be holding a Wonder Day at St Thomas' which will be another amazing opportunity to invite our community into our building to explore the interconnectedness of life through science and faith. We will be blessed with the presence of Bishop Jill ... and Archbishop Stephen Cottrell, the Archbishop of York!

After two wonderful years with you, we Swarbricks will be saying goodbye this summer with a heavy heart for all that we leave behind, but with excitement for the next stage of the journey as God calls us to Lytham. Thank you for all your love and kindness that you have lavished upon us as a family. We will miss you and will always remember these years with joy.

Wardens' Report - Pauline Matthews

Hello Church,

How we all need each other! And how we need Jesus even more!

Another year gone so fast. It's been as busy as ever as we come out of lock-down. We have made changes to the layout inside the church to make it more child friendly and for the future. It's been so good to welcome new people into our services.

On the practical side, we have some big jobs that we still need to do as it does rain in through the roof in quite a few places. We did manage to get the hand microphone mended and new light bulbs replaced. I am trying to sort out the faulty heating timer but that has not stopped ensuring that the heating is on in church when needed.

It was a challenge keeping up with all the rules and regulations regarding Covid and making sure that church is as safe as it can be. Everything I have faced over the last year has been done with teamwork and thank you, the congregation, for being so patient.

A big "Thank you" to Revd Dave for his encouragement and for all your support. God's Grace.

Every Blessing,
Pauline

PCC Report - Glenys Cole

As with everything, 2021 has continued to require us to be extra careful as we adhered to all the Covid changes and regulations. The PCC has continued to meet either by zoom or when restrictions were eased, in person, always keeping strictly to the regulations of social distancing. A special thanks to our Warden Pauline for her hard work in making sure everyone was safe and services continued with as little disruption as possible.

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 Electoral Roll and the Child Protection Officers and the Treasurer serve as co-opted members providing special functions on behalf of the PCC. The Wardens and Licensed Readers 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. Current membership is as follows:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Date elected to PCC</i>
Vicar Rev Dave Obrien	Incumbent
Rev Steve Haskett	Licensed
Rev Emma Swarbrick	Licensed
Vicky Bentley	co-opted as Licensed Reader
Yvonne Blazey	co-opted as Licensed Reader
Pauline Matthews	ex officio as Warden
Denise Moorby	ex officio- Deanery Synod
Joe Atkin	ex officio - Deanery Synod Rep
Simon Clark	co-opted as Treasurer
Anne Sinar	co-opted as Safeguarding Officer
Matthew Jackson	co-opted as Children and Youth Worker
Nic Hall	co-opted-Vision Champion until 2026
Glenys Cole	2018 - elected until 2022
Michael Kilshaw	2018 - elected until 2022
David Jeffery	2020 - elected until 2023
Andrea Smith	2020 - elected until 2023
Josh O'Brien	2020 - elected until 2024
John Smith	2020 - elected until 2024
Ken Warrender	2020 - elected until 2024
Vacancy	from 2022
Vacancy	from 2021

The above details mean that at the APCM on 25 April, we will need to elect four church members to be PCC members, one for one year and three for three years. Anyone wishing to be considered for election must be on the church electoral roll.

Standing Committee members are: the Vicar, Joe Atkin, Pauline Matthews (Warden) Simon Clark (Treasurer), Glenys Cole (PCC Secretary). Following the end of the term of office of some elected members, the PCC will need to elect two new members.

The PCC meets several times a year, including the first meeting directly after the AGM (usually in April). There are now no regulations concerning the number of meetings to be held. The signed and approved PCC minutes are displayed on the notice board in the Church Lounge.

PCC members have been committed in their attendance and their actions and have been extra diligent to make sure they act in the best interests of all our congregations.

The Standing Committee met either on zoom or in person as and when necessary to deal with any urgent business and to be informed of the financial situation.

Simon Clark stood down as Treasurer at the end of 2021 and we will greatly miss his detailed information at meetings. Our grateful thanks to Simon are recorded in the PCC minutes and a message conveyed to him to record our thanks for hard work. We are therefore without a Church Treasurer but Chris Brambles has kindly agreed to help out in paying our accounts until a permanent arrangement can be made.

At their meetings the PCC business included the financial situation, buildings and grounds, children and youth report, the electoral roll and safeguarding, correspondence and significant dates. Discussions concerning the structural survey of the Parish Centre were ongoing and reported at each meeting.

Please be assured that the PCC will continue to work prayerfully on your behalf to carry out its duties with commitment and integrity.

Glenys Cole
PCC Secretary

MONDAY NIGHT PRAYER - Vicky Bentley

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

Deuteronomy 33: 27

The Lord Almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end.

Amen.

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

Who made heaven and earth.

These are the usual opening sentences to Monday's Night Prayer – a time to sit quietly and reflect on the day that has passed, becoming aware of the presence of God and allowing Him to still our hearts and minds.

Prayer is a discipline – that's not a negative thing, it is so positive, being open to God, listening and resting in Him.

To quote the Diocese of Blackburn website:

*“Prayer is opening your heart and life to God to allow Him, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and with Christ to pray in, for and with you.
Prayer is what God is doing in your heart”*

Monday Night Prayer has been recorded since April 2020 and made available on the church's YouTube channel and the Facebook page. Thank you to those who have given feedback saying that they have found Night Prayer helpful to them. We often reflect on one or two readings set for the particular Monday night and the Psalm set has sometimes been used to frame the prayers.

At the end of the day, we say:

In peace we will live down and sleep;

For You alone, Lord, make us dwell in safety.

Night Prayer - Nic Hall

I would like to thank Dave (the Vicar), and Vicky for the opportunity of presenting the Friday Prayer for the past year. It was a time to just reflect for ourselves, think around the scriptures (and yes some politics and Rock and Roll too). We had lots of deaf input through my stepson

Martyn, and Joanne too including a signed hymn from St Thomas which reached maybe a thousand people and was shown in schools across the country so thanks to Martyn, our little stump of a church shining its beacon into living rooms across the country and further. It is a privilege to be with you in your homes, and I know we have been in the homes of Buddhists, Krishna Temple, and other groups across the country; but most of all it is to sit with you in prayer, together, every Friday, and invite God to send his angels into each of our homes to bless and keep us safe that I love, a blessed year for me. Nic

Deanery Synod - Joe Atkin, Denise Moorby

You may be wondering what the functions and purpose of the Deanery Synod Meetings are. The main functions of Deanery Synods are to discuss and reflect on matters of the Church of England, as they affect the Deanery and the Parish we are in. They also act as a forum for the airing of Parish views on any common problems.

In the time since the last AGM in May 2021, there have been three Deanery Synod Meetings. The first Deanery Synod Meeting on Monday 9th July 2021 was held at Holy Trinity Church. The second Deanery Synod Meeting was held at St Paul's North Shore, on Monday 15th November 2021,

The Third Deanery Synod Meeting was held on Tuesday 22nd February 2022 at St Mark's Church Layton.

A full report on these Three Deanery Synod Meetings will be given at the Church AGM in April 2022

Pastoral Care Team (Authorised Lay Ministers)

Earlier this year our position was formally recognised by the Diocese and at a service in the Cathedral we were authorised as lay ministers (ALMs), bringing an extra sense of caring and responsibility as we recognise and care for the people in our Parish and Church Community. We are currently involved in additional training provided by the Diocese.

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 and we have arrangements in place to notice and respond to those who are missing in Church.

Throughout the pandemic, and especially through the various lockdowns we have, on a regular basis, contacted 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 depending on the circumstances of any Covid restrictions.

We have undergone safeguarding training as recommended by the Diocese.

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

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.

A list of Authorised Lay Ministers is set out below. If you need Pastoral Care or Support let us know - we are here for you.

We would also appreciate your prayers for us as a team.

Nicola Anderson, Sue Atkin. Glenys Cole, Denise Moorby, Diane O'Hagan, Kath Smith

St Thomas' Baptism Team - Kath Smith

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

STEWARDSHIP SCHEME AND GIFT AID - Vicky Bentley

'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'

A big 'Thank You' to all those who diligently give through our Stewardship Envelope Scheme or by direct debit/standing order.

Week by week regular, responsible giving helps to fund the work of the church locally and regionally.

Giving of our time, talents, energy and money is a heart response to what God has done for us in Jesus.

There is an economic cost to running the buildings we have, providing the different activities and maintaining the grounds – that is a reality just as it is for each one of us at home.

It is great, therefore, when people, who pay tax, are willing to make a Gift Aid declaration. Gift Aid is a vital way in which money donations to the church can be increased. The Government pays back to the church 25p for every £1 given by tax payers, so long as we have a Gift Aid declaration form from that person.

In 2021, the Gift Aid added around £10,000 to our revenue. However, please understand that the numbers of tax payers in our church is limited at the moment. If you are a tax payer, even if you don't want to have a box of weekly envelopes but you do want to give to the church, it would really help if you would talk with me about the possibility of Gift Aiding your donation.

If you would like to know more about our Stewardship scheme, either by using the weekly envelopes or by standing order, or you want to know more about Gift Aiding your donation, please do see me and we can talk further.

Thank you,

Newsletter - Vicky Bentley

Every week for 2 years a newsletter has been printed on the back of the Sunday Link sheet. At first, when we didn't meet for church services, the newsletter and Sunday Link was sent out to everyone we had an address for. Over time, as we have gathered again in church the sheet has still been available at the back of church Sunday by Sunday as well as being sent out to those who are housebound or have had periods when they couldn't get to church.



The newsletter has been used to publish the service details of the coming weeks and any special news related to church. It also has the lectionary readings for the forthcoming week showing where there are feast days or days when saints and notable people of faith are remembered.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed news and photos so faithfully for the newsletter over 2021. A few examples are shown here, including the photo of our lovely Authorised Lay Ministers (ALM) outside Blackburn Cathedral following their special service.



And how could we forget the Rickshaw challenge along the whole promenade - completed by Revd Dave and Revd Steve, well, to be fair, it was mostly Revd Steve as Revd Dave lost his way on the tram tracks! (August 2021) Matt and Rosie joining us, Barbara going off to be ordained and take up her post as Curate at Preston - so many memories from last year. Give thanks to the Lord, His love endures for ever.



The Prayer Tree - Joe Atkin

My name is Joe Atkin and I have been running The Prayer Tree for many years on behalf of St Thomas Church.

The object of The Prayer Tree is for people who for various reasons need prayer for themselves or for someone they know who needs prayer.

I have a list of people who once I have received the prayer request, I send out the prayer request for them to pray over.

The Prayer Tree also informs the Church when a Church member is ill or is in hospital or has passed away.

Our vicar Rev'd Dave O'Brien is a great believer in prayer and also in The Prayer Tree.

Safeguarding Report - Anne Sinar

It has been more important than ever this year to ensure that our children are kept safe, and thanks go to Barbara and then Matt as he took over in May for ensuring that our contact with children has been maintained.

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. Here at St Thomas' we take safeguarding very seriously. All our volunteers are DBS checked in line with their roles. The Church of England had recently updated the guidance on DBS checks and we are now required to complete them every three years in line with government policy. All our volunteers have completed the diocesan safeguarding training, either on-line or in person. Notices are up in church and the Parish Centre giving details of who to contact in an emergency or to report a concern. The Parish Safeguarding Policy was updated last year and is available via the church website and a copy of the full policy and advice can be obtained from the church office.

Thankfully, this year we have not had to respond to any serious concerns and we are ever thankful to God for protecting our young people and vulnerable adults in this way.

Worship Team - Glyn Sinar

Worship Team aims to worship God, serve the body and release gifting through worship. We meet on Thursday nights in Church from 7pm till 8.30pm.

In 2021 live music in church replaced time spent making recordings for inclusion in live-streaming. For much of the year however the social distancing requirements of the covid pandemic restricted this to one or two people singing.

Sadly, our drummer, Frank Hulley, passed away in September and he is sadly missed. It was a privilege to play with him and to remember him in our music. We thank his family for carrying out his wishes that the drum-kit and percussion instruments continue to be used at St. Thomas's.

We also welcomed our new Youth Worker Matthew Jackson and his wife Rosie, bringing new musical talents to the team and encouraging our children to enjoy musical worship.

We are exploring possibilities for a team to control visuals and audio amplification systems (PA). Anne Sinar and Chris Brambles now help regularly but we need more people willing to serve in this area.

Anyone with musical gifting and a worshipping heart who wants to join worship team please see one of the leaders.

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's has been proud of its reputation to provide this practical service in many ways. Due to lockdown, we had been unable to provide any hospitality this year and greatly missed chatting over coffee and food but thankfully we have been able to restart this ministry recently

Holy Dusters - Pauline Matthews

Tuesday mornings from 9.45am - 11.30am.

It has been quite a challenge over the last year keeping the church clean, sanitised and Covid friendly. We have a very loyal team (along with me, Marion, Gordon, Denise, Doreen, Nic and Vicky (in reserve !)) who turn up every week in all weathers. We all have our jobs to do and cover for each other for holidays and sickness. We put the world right in our time together and finish our morning with a cuppa and biscuits, Bible reading and prayers. We are a happy bunch and we will always welcome new people to join the team.

Gardening Team - Pauline Matthews

Thursday mornings 10.00am - 12.30pm

We have had a few challenges over the last year including the sit-on mower breaking down. We did get a repair done, however the problem continued. I think it needs to go to the scrap heaven.

It's always been a joy to garden, cutting grass, planting flowers, maintaining the church grounds and even trying to beat the weeds from taking over. Again, there is a faithful team (Joe, Sue, Doreen, Wendy, Vicky with myself) who are always willing to get stuck in.

We are happy for anyone to join us every Thurs morning from March through to November. We do stop for a cuppa and a biscuit. We are looking forward to next season.

Thank you to team for all the hard work.

Life Association - Steve and Lisa Haskett

2021 was a challenging and yet remarkable year for us at Life Association. In the midst of all the pain and heartbreak experienced in India, we saw the Lord's amazing provision at work, meaning we could continue to educate, feed, clothe and house some of India's poorest children. We were also able to start new work, providing much needed food aid and vaccines to help battle Covid-19. We were also able to provide funds for new beds in one of our partner children's homes and building repair work to the home and 2 partner schools.



We are excited to share that we have agreed to support three new projects during the course of 2022. One of those is a new day care provision for thirty vulnerable children. We also will support a new after-school project to enhance the education of fifty vulnerable children. Another new project will see ten women who are widowed or close to destitution trained for six months in textiles, needlework and the use of sewing machines. Each woman will receive a sewing machine at the end of their training to enable them to support themselves with a sustainable income.

On behalf of us all at Life Association, may we express our sincerest thanks for the support and donations we have received from St Thomas's. We are so grateful for this, and all your support over the last 12 months.

Steve and Lisa Haskett

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

Counselling

The last year as we have journeyed through the impact of the pandemic, Ashar has continued to offer counselling using the vestry space and a therapy room in the vicarage and also used zoom. Zoom has enabled us to see more clients safely and has also meant that the Shropshire therapists have been able to support our community as clients have logged in for a zoom appointment which has been a blessing as distance wasn't a problem and helped with the ethical dilemma re autonomy especially for those in St Thomas' which has given folks a choice of therapists. The Diocese is referring individuals into Ashar as are other churches in the North West which has associated St Thomas' with a counselling and psychological wellbeing service.

Starting Point - Monday Afternoon drop in for a brew and chat

We have continued with the Monday afternoon Starting Point which is a space to have a brew and chat. We have developed an amazing group of volunteers and the lovely Lisa does our rota. The Monday afternoons are growing and we have a regular few folks attending.

Two testimonies

A young lady who attends from a local home - Carer: 'She has found her people' Cuppa and a chat:

'Thank you, the space has been a life saver'

We have also had contact from an NHS Health and Well-being support worker to ask if they can advertise and use the service

Training Events

'Active Listening'

We have run two courses: one online and the other at St Matthews Burnley. The training was facilitated by Vicky Bentley & Ali O'Brien

Mental Health First Aider Training

We paid for a training day for those who expressed an interest in becoming a mental health first aider, there were 16 delegates 10 of which were from St Thomas' – Congratulations to all. So, St Thomas' now have a small team of 10 who are qualified level 2 mental health first aiders.

The qualification is valid for 3 years when a refresher course is required.

Prayer Training

Prayer Phone and re commissioning of the Prayer Corner

Emotional & Spiritual Well-Being zoom meeting

Monday Evening zoom meeting at 7pm – this meeting has run throughout the pandemic and will continue for as long as it is needed, we have up to 16 folks from around the country including a core team from St Thomas'

Some of the testimonies from these meetings:

'This zoom meeting that has got me through'

'I don't know what I would have done without the support of the group it has been a life saver'

'I have risked sharing when before I was too nervous to speak'

'I shared afraid and God turned up'

We have also run two six- week courses running March through May looking at Emotional & Spiritual Health: Identity, Self Esteem, Anger, Depression, Stress & Anxiety, Grief Loss & Living - which were well attended from around the Diocese. Bishop Jill and Bishop Philip have asked if we run any courses could we share them with the Diocese and they will be happy to promote and advertise.

Prayer Line

We continue to offer a prayer line and say a huge thank you to the team that are on the prayer line rota. The prayer line has been a vital connection for a few individuals in need of prayer whether that be a church member or someone walking by and seeing the sign. Whilst the phone isn't ringing all the time, we have seen a couple of folks use the prayer line and then they have attended Sunday morning service. So, we continue to offer access to prayer outside of services.

We are praying as we move into this next year as we have been given a grant to support emotional and mental health well-being from St Thomas'

Outreach - Yvonne Blazey

This last year has been a different year for outreach to our community. We haven't been able to do what we have done in last few years with Covid changing our way of life but God has

opened new doors to reach the community. Prayer has been the forerunner of this last year and opportunities through my work with Street Angels has opened up to show the love of God to people in recovery who have had broken lives. We have seen our morning and evening attendance increase in the services and some being baptised and others waiting for the next baptism service. Denise and I have faithfully delivered cards with the intent to engage with the community and invite them to St Thomas's. We also follow up and chat with people on the doors to try find out if they have any needs that we might help them with but our hope is to point them to the Saviour. Please continue to lift up all the new converts in prayer and prayer that we will see God doing amazing things in this coming year too.

St Thomas' Weekly Prayer Letter - John Smith

Our Prayer Letter is prepared weekly. It is made available on paper Church and there are also links to it electronically within the Church Website pages and on our Face Book page. Each week the Prayer Letter provides themes for daily prayer. These include prayer for our Church, for those who we know and those named who are ill or have recently been bereaved, for our nation and for situations in our world, for charities and for our local community. You can also use the prayer letter as a resource to help you think and pray for situations which are on your heart during the week, which the prayer letter may not show. As Christians, we know God hears our prayers, including our intercessory prayers - Although we may not always see or understand how, we also know that our God does hear and answer our prayers. As the children's Worship song goes, always remember that: ***"Prayer is like a telephone for us to talk to Jesus, Prayer is like a telephone for us to talk to God, Prayer is like a telephone for us to talk to Jesus. Pick it up and use it every day - He'll always hear our call!"*** ('Prayer Phone' - David Mudie & Paul Crouch)

Finance Report - 2021

The 2021 financial accounts have been prepared and independently examined and are appended to this document.

We continue to thank God for His blessings and we can be assured that if we continue to be faithful in all aspects of our lives, He will be faithful to us. I would like to thank all those who

have given so generously in 2021 and particularly for continuing your stewardship giving during a time of reduced services and general church activity.

In 2021 we saw our income stabilise and was similar to the previous year. Mainly through planned giving and the open plate collection we had a total income in 2021 of £82,375 including our gift day that raised a total of £3,871. Our income was also bolstered by grant payments of £9,000 including a further £5,000 from the Henry Smith Foundation that is being used to support those in need in our parish. Gift day money is being used to carry out essential repairs to the church and Parish Centre as well as support the ongoing costs of running the church.

In terms of what we spent in 2021, this totalled £88,855 including the full payment of our parish share to the Diocese of £37,207. The other significant item of expenditure continues to be the cost of utilities - heating and lighting in the church and Parish Centre.

Our balances at year-end remain healthy with over £35,000 in our deposit account and over £19,000 balances in our current accounts. However, we do have significant cost pressure in 2022 with another large Parish Share commitment of over £50,000 and our utility costs will continue to rise in line with inflation.

I would personally like to thank our churchwardens Pauline and Vicky Bentley for all they do in counting and banking collections and managing the cash account.

Finally, thanks to everyone who has helped this past year in making the job of treasurer so much easier for me and in particular thank you to Chris Brambles who provides me with help and support throughout the year on all matters financial!

S R Clark

St Thomas' PCC Treasurer

February 2022

Independent Examiners Report on the Accounts			
Report to the trustee/members of	Parochial Church Council of St Thomas' Parish Church		
On Accounts for the year ended	31 December 2021	Charity no. (if any)	1132312
Set out on pages	1-5		
Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner	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. It is my responsibility to: ☐ Examine the accounts (under section 43 of the Act) ☐ To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 43(7)(b) of the act), and ☐ To state whether particular matters have come to my attention		
Basis of independent examiner's statement	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.		
Independent examiner's statement	In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention 1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the Trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that: ☐ Proper accounting records are kept (in accordance with section 41 of the act); and ☐ Accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act: or 2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached <i>*Please delete the words in brackets if they do not appl</i>		
Signed:	R J Murdoch	Date:	2022
Name:	Rebecca Jane Murdoch		
Relevant professional qualifications or body (if any):	Chartered Tax Adviser		
Address:	Mount Road Fleetwood FY7 6EZ		

	not es	Unrestrict ed Funds	Restrict ed Funds	Endowm ent Funds		Total 2021	Total 2020
		£	£	£		£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES							

Voluntary Income	2a	78372	0	-		78372	77973
Activities for generating funds	2b	0	-	-		0	844
Income from investments	2c	39	-	-		39	305
Church activities	2d	3964	-	-		3964	3114
Other incoming resources	2e	0	-	-		0	0
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		<u>82375</u>	<u>0</u>	-		<u>82375</u>	<u>82236</u>

RESOURCES EXPENDED

Cost of generation voluntary income	3b	0		-		0	0
Fund raising trading costs	3c	606		-		606	1331
Church Activities	3a	88249	0	-		88249	81502
Govenance costs	3d	0	-	-		0	0
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		<u>88855</u>	<u>0</u>	-		<u>88855</u>	<u>82833</u>

Incoming/outgoing Resources		-6480	0	0		-6480	-597
Unrealisable gains (Losses) on investment assets		-	-	-			
on disposal	5a	-	-	-			
on revaluation		-	-	-			
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS							-597
Balances B/FWD 1 January 2021		61007	0	0		61007	61604
Balances C/FWD 31 December 2021	8	<u>54527</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	-	<u>54527</u>	<u>61007</u>

Parochial Church Council of St Thomas'
Blackpool
Statement of Assets as at 31 December
2021

Page 2

FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

[illegible]

NOT
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- 1a** Debtors relates to Gift Aid recoverable from April 2021 giving and is an estimate
- b** Restricted balances £0
- 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** 2021 accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis
- Parish share has been underpaid in previous years £17,000 (2016) and £22,899 (2017).
It is assumed this will be written off over time. As this is technically a donation and not a liability the deficit has not been included under the liabilities column.
£13,300 written off in 2021
- h** Grant balances of £1460 are included within general funds

2	INCOMING RESOURCES
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					TOTAL		TOTAL
2a	Voluntary Income		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	2021	2020
						£	£
	Planned Giving						
	Gift Aid donations		40848		-	40848	41242
	Tax Recoverable		10963		-	10963	12057
	Other		911		-	911	2066
	Collections		12779		-	12779	5442
	Gift Days		3871		-	3871	8166
	Grants (general)		9000		-	9000	9000
	Donations, appeals		0	0	-	0	0
	Legacies		0		-	0	0
	TOTAL		78372	0	-	78372	77973

2b	Activities for generating Funds		0		-	0	1000
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2c	Income from Investments						
	Dividends and Interest		39		-	39	305

2d	Income from Church activities						
	Church Hall letting		2435	-	-	2435	2130

	Fees and other		1529	-	-	1529		984
	TOTAL		3964	-	-	3964	-	3114

2e	Other Incoming resources		0	-	-	0		0
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Total Incoming Resources			82375	-		82375		82392
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Page
4

					TOTAL		TOTAL
					L		L
					2021		2020
3	RESOURCES EXPENDED		Unrestrict ed Funds	Restrict ed Funds	Endowm ent Funds	£	£

3a	Church Activities						
	Mission Overseas		3325	0	-	3325	295
	Mission Home		4200	0	-	4200	0
	Parish Share Paid		37207		-	37207	4169
	Clergy Expenses		1127		-	1127	0
	Other Ministry costs		10452		-	10452	476
	Parish Centre costs		6891		-	6891	3877
	Church Activity costs		14853		-	14853	5704
	Repairs and Maintenance		2219		-	2219	1866
	Pastoral Fund		0		-	0	5
	Grants (general)		7975		-	7975	3930
	Sub Total		88249	0	-	88249	300
3b	Generation of Voluntary income						6565
3c	Cost of appeals etc		0	-	-	0	8150
3d	Fund raising costs		606	-	-	606	2
	Governance costs		0	-	-	0	-
	Total Resources Expended		88855	0	-	88855	8283

4 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.

5 FIXED ASSETS

				2021			2020
				£			£
	(a) Tangible			0			0
	(b) Investments			0			0
	At estimated market						

	value						
	Total			0	-	-	0

6	Debtors						
	Gift Aid to be claimed	1 a		6000			6000
	Total			6000			6000

7	Liabilities						
	Due within one year			nil			nil
	Due after one year			nil			nil
	Total			nil	-	-	nil

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8	FUNDS	2021	-	-	2020
		£	-	-	£
	General Fund	10027	-	-	16507
	Youth Fund	2500	-	-	2500
	Mission Fund	7000	-	-	7000
	General Reserve				
	Fund	35000	-	-	35000
	Total	54527	-	-	61007
9	BANK RECONCILLIATION				
	Current account	2397	-	-	24007
	Money Master				
	account	16779	-	-	1725
	Sub Total	19176	-	-	25732
	CBFCE Deposit				
	account	35210	-	-	35210
	Sub Total	54386	-	-	60942
	Cash held	141	-	-	65
	Total	54527	-	-	61007

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 28th February 2022

and signed on its behalf by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D O'Brien', written in a cursive style.

(PCC Chairperson)

The Notes form part of this account

Accounts



Reflections 2020

*"The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you; the LORD
turn his face toward you and give you peace."*

Numbers 6:24-26

St Thomas' Parish Church – Blackpool
“Together we are building the Kingdom of God”

Reflections 2020 – a review of
activities and financial statements

This is a report of various activities as
submitted that have occurred
throughout the year 2020.

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 Report



History is His Story

To say it's been a strange year would be a massive understatement! Unprecedented? Perhaps in our lifetime yes but not the first time the world has faced plague or pestilence. The Black Death was classed as a pandemic killing anything between 75-200 million people across Europe, Asia and Africa between 1346 to 1353. The Great Plague of London 1665 to 1666 killed 100,000, approximately a quarter of the population and devastated the village of Eyam in Derbyshire (Source: Wikipedia and good history books). Thankfully we haven't seen those figures. If we had, we would be looking at 15 million dead out of a UK population of around 60 million. Staggering numbers from which we have so far been spared. Nevertheless, there is no doubt Coronavirus has affected us all in some way, either through lockdown restrictions or suffering from the effects of the virus ourselves or family members and friends.

At the beginning of the first lockdown a year ago I recorded a short video for Facebook reflecting on how the church in the past had responded to plague and pestilence. Their response was to turn to God. In the Book of Common Prayer 1662 based on earlier editions there are prayers for good weather, thanksgivings for childbirth, prayers for the sovereign, Parliament and prayers for every condition of life. There's even a thanksgiving prayer for rain. I don't think this one was written in Lancashire! Each is a recognition that God is in ultimate control. I mentioned two prayers in my video. The first one *In the time of any common Plague* and the second one a thanksgiving *For Deliverance from the Plague, or other common Sickness*. The whole thought process of the historic church was framed through the lens of Scripture and faith in God.

This is a reminder to us whether in Pandemic or not our focus as Christians is God. Ultimately, He has our lives in His hands. The past, present and future belong to Him "*I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was, and is to come, the Almighty"* Revelation 1.8. I know this has been the focus of the church family at St Thomas'. We have faithfully used the priestly blessing prayer in *Numbers 6.24-27* declaring it and praying it over our community as a recognition that God wants the best for all people and a recognition that He is in control.

Remembering He is our focus gives stability and solid foundations for faith in the midst of constant changes, risk assessments, weddings cancelled. In some cases 4 different dates for wedding couples. Baptisms shunted on to different dates and the buildings locked. Funerals with limited numbers and congregations staring at you with face masks on. At times looking like a 1970's sci-fi movie. In all this *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith Hebrews 12. 2*. Let us also remember the work of God can only be done in the power of God *Acts 1.8*. I cannot do what God calls me to do without His power. Neither can I or any of us do what God has called us to do without one another *1 Corinthians 12. 12-31*.

There was a worry from some people that they had nothing to report this year. But let me reassure you that you have all tried to do the best you could under very trying circumstances. Don't forget all the years of faithful service you have already given and you all know full well you'll make up for it once some kind of normality resumes. I am so thankful for everyone who pulled together this year. From the website, to Facebook, Youtube, livestreaming, online prayer provision, prayer walkers, children's provision with the weekly activity packs, emotional and spiritual health, financial sacrificial giving, site security, newsletters, Standing Committee, PCC, Wardens, online congregations, pastoral phone calls, prayer line, Alpha course, the Bible Course, building feasibility study (you know who you are!), help with interviews, admin, constant revisions to the service schedule and uncertainty about worship styles and last of all for June. Who stood by me when I was pulling my hair out, kept me rooted and gave me style tips.

Let's move forward together this year trusting in God. After all He is our reason for all that we are and all that we do and through Him be a blessing to this community and parish of St Thomas' remembering history is His Story.

Blessings,

Dave O'Brien



Curate's Report

What a strange time to start at a new church! First of all, thank you so much for your welcome of me and the boys; in a very short period we began to feel at home here at St Thomas'. It has been difficult to get to know people, as I would naturally love to chat to you all and get to know you over coffee.

The main body of my work over the last 7 months has been to pray for the parish and the community and to pray for God's vision for the church in the coming months as we emerge from lockdown and the effects of Covid lessen. It has been good to join with you in morning prayer over Facebook Live each Thursday morning.

It is a passion of mine to get praying. After a push in the early autumn, a number of groups came forward to say they had formed prayer bubbles to support and encourage one another. If you would like to be a part of a prayer bubble and haven't joined one yet, do get in touch – it's not too late!

Before Christmas we ran the Bible Course over Zoom that was attended by about 12 people. It was excellent to get together and to learn about the over-arching story of the Bible from Genesis through Revelation. Before Christmas we also collected stars crafted by members of the church and then distributed them around the community for people to take and put on their trees. These seem to have been noticed and well-received by the community.

In January we began an Alpha Online Course which has fluctuated in attendance from around 12 at the beginning to a core group of 6/7. It has been a joy to see people exploring their faith. We hope to run another course in September in person, God willing.

I have been working with Jon England on a new website for the church, which is almost ready to go live!

My work is fun and varied and I look forward to being able to be more collaborative as we are able to do more activities face-to-face.

Blessings, Emma

Wardens' Report - Denise Moorby, Pauline Matthews

Where has 2020 gone? And what a tough year it has been. We have had church open, church shut and church on zoom, who would have seen this coming? In all of this we have managed to keep in touch with all our church family through the faithful support of Sue, Glenys, Diane, Denise, Anne and myself with weekly phone calls. I never expected to tell people they could not come to church. We have still been busy making the church ready for the changes during lockdown. Jobs have still needed to be done - Fire safety checks, cleaning, repair to kitchen boiler, PAT testing all electrical items and keeping the grounds tidy from weekly rubbish that gets thrown on the site.



During this last year, Denise has also dealt with health issues, with thyroid problems which, thanks be to God, have been resolved to the extent that the doctors have given her a date for her second hip replacement. It has been a blessing to work in partnership with Denise and also with our Vicar, David, together with all the PCC members. In 2020 too, what a delight to welcome Emma as our Curate together with her sons, Joa and Mikey. I would also like to thank the Worship team for all their hard work and all those who have helped to get services on line. Thank you for all your support.

I know that God has a plan and a purpose for us all and look forward to new beginnings.

Blessings, Pauline and Denise.

PCC Report

As with everything, 2020 has been like no other but the PCC has continued to meet either by zoom or when restrictions were eased, in person, always keeping strictly to the regulations of social distancing. A special thanks to the Wardens for their hard work in making sure everyone was safe and for ensuring that the track and trace system was in place.

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 Electoral Roll and the Child Protection Officers and the Treasurer serve as co-opted members providing special functions on behalf of the PCC. The Wardens and Licensed Readers 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.

Current membership is as follows:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Date elected to PCC</i>
Rev D O'Brien	Vicar
Simon Clark	co-opted as Treasurer
Pauline Matthews	ex officio as Warden
Denise Moorby	ex officio as Warden/Deanery Synod
Anne Sinar	co-opted as Safeguarding Officer
Nic Hall	co-opted-Vision 2026 Champion
Joe Atkin	ex officio – Deanery Synod Rep
Yvonne Blazey	co-opted as Licensed Reader – non-officer
Barbara Houghton	co-opted as Licensed Reader – non-officer
Josh O'Brien	co-opted until APCM as Youth Rep
Sue Atkin	2017
Vicky Bentley	2017
Jeannette Brambles	2015 –extended as Church Rep.
Carol Dearden	2017
Alan Hodgson	2017
Glenys Cole	2018 – PCC Secretary
Michael Kilshaw	2018
Ian Waite	2018

Standing Committee members are – the Vicar, Joe Atkin, Simon Clark (Treasurer), Denise Moorby (Warden), Pauline Matthews (Warden) Glenys Cole (secretary)

The PCC meets usually 4 times a year, including the first meeting directly after the AGM (usually in April) but due to Covid 19 restrictions, was held in October 2020 in line with Diocesan advice.

In 2020, The PCC resolved that due to the unusual circumstances, no changes be made to the PCC membership until the following APCM in 2021.

The signed and approved PCC minutes are displayed on the notice board in the Church Lounge.

PCC members have been committed in their attendance and their actions and have been extra diligent to make sure they act in the best interests of all our congregations.

The Standing Committee met either on zoom or in person as and when necessary to deal with any urgent business and to be informed of the financial situation especially due to the lockdown circumstances.

At their meetings the PCC business included the financial situation, buildings and grounds, children and youth report, grounds and security, the electoral roll and safeguarding, correspondence and significant dates. Discussions concerning the structural survey of the Parish Centre were ongoing.

We welcomed Emma as our curate and Steve Haskett who has been licensed to officiate at services.

Please be assured that the PCC will continue to work prayerfully on your behalf to carry out its duties with commitment and integrity.

Glenys Cole
PCC Secretary

Night Prayer – Vicky Bentley

“The eternal God is Your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” Deuteronomy 33 v 27

These are words from the start of Night Prayer and how true they are. When the first lockdown started on 23rd March last year, I think many of us came to appreciate more fully the words from Deuteronomy.

On-line services started very early on in the process, giving folk the opportunity to access worship together even if we were at home. Because Night Prayer was provided in church on Monday evenings before the pandemic, it was only right that the service should still go on. So, after the on-line Good Friday reflections, I challenged myself to come to terms with the technology and record Night Prayer, with prayers, readings and reflections, every Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

As time went on, with public worship opening up, closing and now re-opening, what a delight it was that Nic (Hall) took on recording Night Prayer every Friday and I continue with the service every Monday.

Reflecting back on that first Night Prayer on Friday 22nd April, here are words from Psalm 118, the Psalm set for that evening:

“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures for ever.”

Yes and Amen to that, how good has the Lord been – you will have your stories from this past 12 months, mine include going deeper with God with the blessed discipline of reading His word and reflecting on it. My heartfelt thanks to all who have watched and joined in with the Night Prayer – available on the church’s website/youtube channel and on social media. Praise God that His word speaks to us – sometimes challenging, sometimes comforting but always, when we allow it to speak into our hearts, we come closer to God.

Closing words from the full Night Prayer service:

“As the night watch looks for the morning,
so do we look for You, O Christ.”

Deanery Synod – Joe Atkin, Anne Studd, Ian Studd

You may be wondering what are the functions and purpose of the Deanery Synod Meetings. Well the main functions of Deanery Synods are to discuss and reflect on matters of the Church of England, as they affect the Deanery and the Parish we are in . They also act as a forum for the airing of Parish views on any common problems.

In the time since the last AGM in October 2020, there have been two Deanery Synod Meetings.

The first Deanery Synod Meeting on Monday 9th November 2020 was always intended to be an open meeting, however in view of the COVID 19 situation the meeting was carried out via a Zoom meeting.

The second Deanery Synod Meeting planned for Monday 8th February was once again held via Zoom due to COVID19 restrictions.

A full report on these two Deanery Synod Meetings will be given at the Church AGM in April 2021 if allowed by COVID19 restrictions.

Blessings Joe.

Pastoral Care Team – Sue Atkin, Glenys Cole

As you can imagine the arrangements for Pastoral Care have changed out of all recognition based on the very unusual circumstances we could never have imagined.

At the very beginning of lockdown, when we never envisaged or expected such a dramatic and extended change in how we could stay in contact as a caring church, when everything around us was as it had never been before, we prayerfully agreed that as a much reduced team, we would somehow stay in contact with every church member.

As a team we have managed to contact every church member at least once every fortnight by telephone or text message to chat, find out if they have any problems we can help with and to provide prayer where needed.

Whilst at first it seemed like desperate measures, the advantages are that we have been able to get to know people we would not normally meet if they attended a different service and we often were too busy to get to know everyone.

Church members have received our calls with some gratitude and apart from the serious business of care we have had jokes and stories and a real sense of unity as we put up with the inconveniences of lockdown.

Whilst the church has been closed, services have been provided on line and for those who could not access these Vicky Bentley has provided a weekly letter providing church notices and morning and evening readings and photographs to cheer us up. I know from our phone calls that the weekly newsletter is much appreciated and gratefully received so thank you Vicky.

Some of us have been manning the prayerline displayed on the banner on the church railings and when the regulations allowed, prayer walking around the Parish.

We would appreciate your prayers for us as a team and look forward to continuing to contact you with love and prayers.

Pastoral Team

Newsletter – Vicky



When the first lockdown was announced in March 2020 several new ways of being 'church' came into being; the effect on our way of life called for new ideas of keeping contact. One of those ideas was to send out a weekly Newsletter, printed on the reverse side of the Sunday Link, a publication which St Thomas' has subscribed to over many years.

The Newsletter included encouragement as well as any news from the church, the Diocese and the national C of E. Many thanks to all those who also shared photos of plants and flowers from their gardens or those spotted on their walks, a few are provided here to give a flavour.



The Newsletter also contained the morning and evening readings given in the Anglican Lectionary used throughout the Church of England in the year. The Lectionary notes the days when saints, teachers of the faith and martyrs are remembered and, from time to time, information about these people were given in the St Thomas' Newsletters.

Thank you to everyone who has given feedback on the Newsletter over these last 12 months, it is so heart-warming that these have been so well received and helped many in their isolation, keeping the link (sorry about the pun) with our church family.



CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRY



Well this has certainly been an interesting year for the Children and Youth department. With the majority of it spent under lockdown conditions, this has meant that meeting physically has not been possible for all of our children and youth activities as well as for Café Church. This has been incredibly disappointing, especially with it being my last year in role at St Thomas' before I move on to serve my curacy this summer.

We have really missed our children and young people! We have therefore made every effort to maintain contact with our families by handing out packs each week outside the parish centre and then, as lockdown restrictions tightened, visiting around 50 children on their doorsteps weekly in order to take a pack with some activities, crafts and snacks. Trying to maintain a connection with the church has always been our main priority. This has also enabled us to identify other ways we have been able to help families during this challenging time.

So as I sign off for the last time from this rather brief summary of our last year, can I say what an absolute privilege it has been to serve in this role for the last 12 years. We truly have amazing children and youth who our church has never failed to very graciously support. I could not have done this job without a great team of people around me who also so freely gave their time and gifts. Thank you for this as well as for all your encouragement and prayers over the years. I too will continue to pray for you and also for the new children and youth worker who I wish every success – they inherit a fantastic job in a wonderful community.

God bless, Barbara



The Prayer Tree – Joe Atkin

My name is Joe Atkin and I have been running The Prayer Tree for many years on behalf of St Thomas Church.

The object of The Prayer Tree is for people who for various reasons need prayer for themselves or for someone they know who needs Prayer.

I have a list of people who once I have received the prayer request, I send out the prayer request for them to pray over.

The Prayer Tree also informs the church when a church member is ill, or is in hospital or has passed away.

Our vicar Rev'd Dave O'Brien is a great believer in Prayer and also in The Prayer Tree.

Blessings Joe.

Safeguarding Report - Anne Sinar

It has been more important than ever this year to ensure that our children are kept safe and thanks go to Barbara and her team for ensuring that our contact with children has been maintained through weekly activity packs and home visits.

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. Here at St Thomas' we take safeguarding very seriously. All our volunteers are DBS checked in line with their roles and it is good that this year we have had to do more DBS checks as more volunteers come forward. It is now five years since we completed the majority of our DBS checks so we are going into a round of renewing these checks over the next few months. All our volunteers have completed the diocesan safeguarding training. Notices are up in church and the Parish Centre giving details of who to contact in an emergency or to report a concern. The Parish Safeguarding Policy was updated this year and is available via the church website and a copy of the full policy and advice can be obtained from the church office.

Thankfully, this year we have not had to respond to any serious concerns and we are ever thankful to God for protecting our young people and vulnerable adults in this way.

Worship Team – Glyn Sinar



For so many groups and organisations this year of Lockdown and pandemic has been a challenging one in many ways. Being unable to meet and worship together with music - even to practice together, could have been one long frustration, but we have continued to meet virtually, and found new opportunities to create music for worship via the technology. We were already affected due to illnesses and the need for some of our group to self-isolate. In the early weeks of the first lockdown we became aware (hilariously) of Zoom's limitations for group singing (believe me those multi-windowed clips on TV take a

LOT of pre-staging and advanced equipment!). Our meetings turned swiftly into online discussions, with prayer and some Bible study, and online fellowship.

Instead we found opportunities to develop understanding and skills in mixing, song recording and online video publishing via YouTube, Facebook, Soundcloud and other social media. We recorded over 60 worship songs which have been used by Barbara and others as part of daily worship services. A number of these songs are now included in 5 CD albums which are available in limited numbers for personal worship.

The re-opening of Church in the summer brought new issues. Social distancing measures limited the make-up of the team, and we needed to balance sound output for livestreaming against that required for the congregation. This remains an on-going challenge, particularly since our church building is poorly provided with access to fast broadband / wi-fi due to its physical location.

During this last period of lockdown we said goodbye to Ginny Chamberlain who has joined another church nearer to her home.

While church is now open again it is clear that the pandemic will continue to impact our ways of worship for the foreseeable future. Our focus appears to have shifted to a reliance on technology, but importantly we fix our eyes on Jesus. We have received some delightful comments on the music from worshippers who've joined us from around the world. Above all we long for the days when we will be able to sing together to praise God loudly and express our response to His love and faithfulness. For now though it has enabled us to re-examine our hearts and ways of worship. The world is changing, and the worship group is and will continue to change as we adapt; but one song reflects the beautiful truth of God in Jesus: 'You never change'.

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's has been proud of its reputation to provide this practical service in many ways. Due to lockdown we have been unable to provide any hospitality this year and greatly miss chatting over coffee and food. Hopefully we will be back soon.

Holy Dusters – Marion Hornby

Holy Dusters have continued to clean the church each week. Dust doesn't seem to understand lockdown. Thanks to all the volunteers who have faithfully given up their Tuesday mornings to continue this work.

Gardening Team – Pauline Matthews

This last year has seen our team reduce in numbers as our volunteers have moved on. We thank them for all their hard work. We have still managed to keep on top of the weeds and grass mowing and cutting back shrubs. The flowers and shrubs around the church continue to grow, despite lockdown!

Life Association

Since 1993 Life Association has been reaching and serving some of the poorest communities in India through schools, children's homes, church plants and training. All our projects are run by local churches and Christian leaders, so that local people are empowered to deal with the problems particular to their own area. We currently have eight projects which are in Kishanganj in Bihar, Orai in Uttar Pradesh, Mumbai, Gannavaram and Machilipatnam both, in Andhra Pradesh and Vellore in Tamil Nadu. Many children are taken care of in these projects, given access to a loving home and a Christian education which will give them more opportunities in life and a chance to escape the poverty to which they have been born into.

During the lockdown due to Covid, the schools had to close. At this time we were able to use the buildings to distribute food parcels to those most in need.

Our vision for the future is to build on the projects that we are already supporting, raising funds to expand the projects but also identify needs in other parts of India and when the funds allow to open up more projects.

Steve and I have now taken over the day to day running of Life Association and we are hoping to spend at least 25% of our time in India visiting the projects. We are very grateful for the use of the office space in St Thomas's parish centre for this ministry. We look forward to sharing more information with you in the coming months.



St Thomas' Blackpool in Partnership with Ashar Bringing Hope

I want to begin this report by saying a huge 'Thank You' to all those who have supported and been involved in the work of Ashar here at St Thomas' To say it has been a strange year would be an understatement, as we produced the timetable of events working in partnership with St Thomas' for 2020 -2021 there was no way we could foresee how the year would have unfolded, however in-spite of lockdown we have been able to do amazing things.

Courses & Group Work

The year began with the introduction of our first course - **Active Listening Skills** which was very well attended giving a strong foundation to begin to look at how to grow a team of volunteers and create a resource hub that would offer support for those suffering from emotional and mental health issues.

Ashar has had the privilege of running some in house training alongside offering Blackburn Diocese our **Exploring Emotional & Spiritual Health Course** looking at: Identity, Self Esteem, Stress & Anxiety, Depression, Anger, Living with Loss. This has been very well attended and we have been asked to run it a second time.

Drop In (Church & On Line)

There was a vision to offer a 'Drop In Space' building upon the good foundations laid by TLC to develop a well-being resource hub supporting good mental and emotional health. However, only weeks into the launch of this drop in, we had to adjust due to the covid pandemic and lockdown. Like many organisations we had to adapt to working to an online platform, this has meant concentrating on building a core group of volunteers and moving the Drop In on line to 'Bring a Brew & Chat' which runs each Monday at 1pm for an hour, where anyone can log in and chat. We offer a listening ear and some self-help tips and have been able to extend this to other areas of the country.

Counselling

We have also been able to offer a number of one to one counselling sessions working from the Vestry which is a lovely safe space.

Prayer Line We have also launched a prayer line which is a dedicated mobile telephone, manned on rota system for those who have undertaken the training to offer prayer support and active listening and guided conversation.

For further information and details of how you can be involved or support Ashar in St Thomas' contact Alison O'Brien at alison@ashar.org.uk or www.ashar.org.uk or 07531391812

The vision of Ashar is to provide an emotional, spiritual and mental health well-being resource which bridges the gap between the church, health care professions and community. Through, drop In Groups, Training & One to One Counselling or Well-Being Appointments Ashar is a registered charity which seeks to resource and support local church.

Finance Report - 2019

The 2020 financial accounts have been prepared and independently examined and are appended to this document.

We continue to thank God for His blessings and we can be assured that if we continue to be faithful in all aspects of our lives, He will be faithful to us. I would like to thank all those who have given so generously in 2020 and particularly for continuing your stewardship giving during a time of reduced services and general church activity.

In 2020 we saw a small drop in income, through planned giving and the open plate collection the year. We had a total income in 2020 of £82833 including our gift day that raised a total of £8188. Our income was also bolstered by a grant payment of £5000 from the Henry Smith Foundation which is being used to support those in need in our parish. Gift day money is being used to carry out essential repairs to the church and Parish Centre as well as support the ongoing costs of running the church.

In terms of what we spent in 2020, this totaled £82833 including the full payment of our parish share to the Diocese of £41690. The other significant item of expenditure continues to be the cost of utilities - heating and lighting the church and Parish Centre.

Our balances at year-end remain healthy with over £35,000 in our deposit account and over £25,000 balances in our current accounts. However, we do have significant cost pressure in 2021 with another large Parish Share commitment of over £42000 and our utility costs will continue to rise in line with inflation.

I would personally like to thank our churchwardens Pauline and Denise as well as Vicky Bentley for all they do in counting and banking collections and managing the cash account.

Finally, thanks to every who has helped this past year in making the job of treasurer so much easier for me and in particular thank you to Chris Brambles who provides me with help and support throughout the year on all matters financial!

S R Clark

St Thomas' PCC Treasurer

Independent Examiners Report on the Accounts

Report to the trustee/members of	Parochial Church Council of St Thomas' Parish Church		
On Accounts for the year ended	31 December 2020	Charity no. (If any)	1132312
Set out on pages	1-5		
Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner	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. It is my responsibility to: • Examine the accounts (under section 43 of the Act) • To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 43(7)(b) of the act), and • To state whether particular matters have come to my attention		
Basis of Independent examiner's statement	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.		
Independent examiner's statement	In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention 1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the Trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that: Proper accounting records are kept (in accordance with section 41 of the act); and Accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act: or 2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached <i>*Please delete the words in brackets if they do not apply</i>		
Signed:	 R J Murdoch	Date:	11/2/2021
Name:	Rebecca Jane Murdoch		
Relevant professional qualifications or body (if	Chartered Tax Adviser		
Address:	113 Abercrombie Road Fleetwood FY7 7AY		

	notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds		Total 2020		Total 2019
		£	£	£		£		£
INCOMING RESOURCES								
Voluntary Income	2a	77973	0	-		77973		75771
Activities for generating funds	2b	844	-	-		844		4115
Income from investments	2c	305	-	-		305		341
Church activities	2d	3114	-	-		3114		6527
Other incoming resources	2e	0	-	-		0		0
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		<u>82236</u>	<u>0</u>	-		<u>82236</u>		<u>86754</u>
RESOURCES EXPENDED								
Cost of generation voluntary income	3b	0		-		0		0
Fund raising trading costs	3c	1331		-		1331		2139
Church Activities	3a	81502	0	-		81502		84977
Govenance costs	3d	-	-	-		0		0
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		<u>82833</u>	<u>0</u>	-		<u>82833</u>		<u>87116</u>
Incoming/outgoing Resources		-597	0	-		-597		-362
Unrealisable gains(Losses) on investment assets		-	-	-				
on disposal	5a	-	-	-				
on revaluation		-	-	-				
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		-597	0	-		-597		-362
Balances B/FWD 1 January 2020		61604	0	-		61604		61966
Balances C/FWD 31 December 2020	8	61007	0	-		61007		61604

FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

		2020		2019
	notes	£		£
FIXED ASSETS	5			
Tangible		nil		nil
Investment		nil		nil
TOTAL		0		0
CURRENT ASSETS				
Gift Aid to be claimed (estimate)	6	6000		4000
Investment		0		0
Cash at Bank and in hand	9	61007		61604
TOTAL		67007		65604
LIABILITY				
Payments due in one year (estimate)	1c	0		0
TOTAL ASSETS		67007		65604
		-		-
		-		-
		-		-

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 15th March 2020

and signed on its behalf by



(PCC Chairperson)

The Notes form part of this account

NOTES

- 1a** Debtors relates to Gift Aid recoverable from April 2020 giving and is an estimate
- b** Restricted balances £0
- 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
Assumed that material adjustments if over
- f** £500
- g** 2020 accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis
- h** Parish share has been underpaid in previous years £17,000 (2016) and £22,899 (2017).
It is assumed this will be written off over time. As this is technically a donation and not a liability the deficit
has not been included under the liabilities column.
- i** Grant balances of £2435 are included within general funds

2	INCOMING RESOURCES
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					TOTAL		TOTAL
2a	Voluntary Income	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	2020		2019
					£		£
	Planned Giving						
	Gift Aid donations	41242		-	41242		39730
	Tax Recoverable	12057		-	12057		10200
	Other	2066		-	2066		1470
	Collections	5442		-	5442		9932
	Gift Days	8166		-	8166		13738
	Grants (general)	9000		-	9000		0
	Donations, appeals	0	0	-	0		701
	Legacies	0		-	0		0
	TOTAL	77973	0	-	77973	-	75771

2b	Activities for generating Funds	1000		-	1000		4115
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2c	Income from Investments						
	Dividends and Interest	305		-	305		341

2d	Income from Church activities						
	Church Hall letting	2130	-	-	2130		5360
	Fees and other	984	-	-	984		1167
	TOTAL	3114		-	3114	-	6527

2e	Other Incoming resources	0		-	0		568
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Total Incoming Resources		82392	0	-	82392	-	87322
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						TOTAL		TOTAL
						2020		2019
						£		£
3	RESOURCES EXPENDED							
3a	Church Activities							
	Mission Overseas		295	0	-	295		701
	Mission Home		0	0	-	0		2150
	Parish Share Paid		41690		-	41690		40580
	Clergy Expenses		476		-	476		1202
	Other Ministry costs		3877		-	3877		1635
	Parish Centre costs		5704		-	5704		3176
	Church Activity costs		18665		-	18665		22292
	Repairs and Maintenance		3930		-	3930		12041
	Pastoral Fund		300		-	300		1200
	Grants (general)		6565		-	6565		0
	Sub Total		81502	0	-	81502		84977
3b	Generation of Voluntary income Cost of appeals etc		0	-	-	0		-
3c	Fund raising costs		1331	-	-	1331		2139
3d	Governance costs		0	-	-	0		-
	Total Resources Expended		82833	0	-	82833	-	87116

- 4 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.

5	FIXED ASSETS						
				2020			2019
				£			£
	(a) Tangible			0			0
	(b) Investments			0			0
	At estimated market value						
	Total			0	-	-	0

6	Debtors						
	Gift Aid to be claimed	1a		6000			4000
	Total			6000	-	-	4000

7	Liabilities						
	Due within one year			nil			nil
	Due after one year			nil			nil
	Total			nil	-	-	nil

8	FUNDS	<u>2020</u>	-	-	<u>2019</u>
		<u>£</u>	-	-	<u>£</u>
	General Fund	<u>16507</u>	-	-	<u>23904</u>
	Youth Fund	<u>2500</u>	-	-	<u>1894</u>
	Mission Fund	<u>7000</u>	-	-	<u>650</u>
	General Reserve Fund	<u>35000</u>	-	-	<u>35000</u>
	Munch Fund	<u>0</u>	-	-	<u>156</u>
	Total	<u>61007</u>	-	-	<u>61604</u>
9	BANK RECONCILLIATION				
	Current account	<u>24007</u>	-	-	<u>7779</u>
	Money Master account	<u>1725</u>	-	-	<u>8313</u>
	MUNCH account	<u>0</u>	-	-	<u>156</u>
	Sub Total	<u>25732</u>	-	-	<u>16248</u>
	CBFCE Deposit account	<u>35210</u>	-	-	<u>45210</u>
	Sub Total	<u>60942</u>	-	-	<u>61458</u>
		-	-	-	-
	Cash held	<u>65</u>	-	-	<u>146</u>
		-	-	-	-
	Total	<u>61007</u>	-	-	<u>61604</u>