

Charity Registration number: 1160436

ST THOMAS BAPTIST CHURCH
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

ST THOMAS BAPTIST CHURCH
PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

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ST THOMAS BAPTIST CHURCH
LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

CHARITY NAME	St Thomas Baptist Church	
CONSTITUTION	The Church is part of the Baptist Union and its constitution follows their guidelines as laid down in the Baptist Trusts for Churches 2003.	
PASTOR	Mr Stephen Cousley	
TRUSTEES	E Bailey	(appointed 18 April 2000)
	P Evans - Secretary	(appointed 01 April 2008)
	R Turner	(appointed 26 March 2019)
	H Prideaux	(resigned 21 March 2023)
	A Collins	(appointed 20 April 2021)
	G Curran	(appointed 20 April 2021)
	W McKenna	(appointed 22 March 2022)
	A Daniel	(appointed 21 March 2023)
	T Darby-Clark	(resigned 04 April 2023)
ADDRESS	St Thomas Baptist Church Dorset Avenue Exeter EX4 1LZ	
CHARITY NUMBER	1160436	
BANKERS	HSBC 250-251 High Street Exeter EX4 3PZ	
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER	Mrs S Truran FCCA FCA Bush & Co Limited Chartered Accountants 2 Barnfield Crescent Exeter EX1 1QT	

ST THOMAS BAPTIST CHURCH
TRUSTEES' REPORT
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

The Trustees, present their report together with the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on page 11 and comply with the Church Constitution, the Charities Act 2011 and the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102).

Objectives and Activity

St Thomas Baptist Church is a charity whose principal purpose is the advancement of the Christian faith. This can be done in a number of ways including the church demonstrating love and concern for our members and friends, but also for the community around us. We provide public benefit to the local community in this way through our local outreach activities, allowing the community to interact with us. We also provide support for those who gather with us and who are included in our fellowship.

We continue, as St Thomas Baptist Church, to be grateful to the Lord for his ongoing providence and provision to us as the church continues to grow after the pandemic. We continue to "know Christ and make him known" in so many ways, as our mission statement suggests.

2023 will be remembered as an historic year for our church. In February 2023 we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the opening of STBC on this site. An excellent weekend was had by all. There was a social evening on Saturday followed by two of our previous ministers, Reverend David Bird and Peter Fowler, preaching in the morning and evening on the Sunday respectively. We are grateful to those members and friends who have left the church in the past but who returned to celebrate and thank the Lord with us. We are also grateful to those members and previous pastors who are unable to attend but who sent their well wishes onto us. As part of the day we also remembered those who had been sent out from the church to the mission field or to pastoral roles elsewhere.

As a church we should formally record our thanks to our pastor Stephen Cousley, ably supported by Joanna and the family, for all his hard work during this year as pastor of our church. We were delighted that Stephen managed to have his long-awaited sabbatical from March to May 2023. We know that this provided a much-needed break for him and for the family, including a family holiday to the US, but also time for reflection and study.

We are extremely grateful to all the deacons within the leadership team who stood up to the plate during the pastor's sabbatical and helped in so many ways, including leading many of the meetings, as well as the members who did the same. I don't think many of us quite realised how much work Stephen did in the church until he took three months off! We were very grateful to the visiting ministers including some of our own previous fellowship who came and preached so faithfully during that time.

As a church we cannot function without our leadership team and we are so grateful to the deacons on the leadership team for their unstinting support and faithful attendance during the year. Hugh Prideaux stood down for personal reasons in early 2023 and our thanks go to Hugh for his service as a deacon and more recently as an elder. His wisdom, leadership and teaching have been much appreciated by the church.

ST THOMAS BAPTIST CHURCH

TRUSTEES' REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

We were delighted to welcome Ann Daniel as a new deacon after the AGM in March 23 and Phil Evans was re-elected as an elder. Tom Darby-Clark stood down as a deacon in March 2023.

Alan Collins' role as church treasurer but also as support to the Church Secretary and Hannah as COM has been much appreciated. After much prayerful consideration Alan Collins applied to join Moor College in Sydney, Australia in early 2024 to commence pastoral studies and Alan gave notice of leaving the church (and the country). The leadership were very grateful to Richard Turner who was then elected as Church Treasurer.

Towards the end of 2023 we started regular leadership team away days with a whole day away in East Devon. This proved to be a very important and reflective time for all of us as we considered the Lord's vision for the church moving forward.

We were also delighted in the summer of 2023 to commission Amy Cousley as she moved into an intern role in Grace Church in Bath, working with young people. We were grateful to those who supported Amy both financially and prayerfully

Also in the summer of 2023, we were pleased again to join with our US brothers and sisters for an outreach mission. As last year it was great to see so many people attend the church during the week and to share our testimonies across the Atlantic. The Saturday fun day was once again well attended and a great opportunity for us to witness to the community. Once again, our team worked extremely hard during that week to support our visitors and to reach the community. We are also grateful to those members and friends who provided accommodation for our visitors. We trust God for conversions from this work. We were also pleased to hold a community Coronation Street party in May 2023 as we celebrated the coronation of King Charles III with a street party, games and an epilogue.

During 2023 we had one baptism and no weddings. At the end of 2023 we had 77 members having received seven members into the fellowship during the year. During this year we have prayerfully considered the possibility of a search for an Assistant/Associate Pastor work alongside Stephen. We have had preliminary discussions with the Southwest Baptist Association (SWBA) and look forward to this progressing in 2024, if it is God's will.

We are also immensely grateful to all our employed staff including Stephen Cousley as our pastor, Hannah Torpey Blaylock as our Church Operations Manager and Becky Shotter as our Families, Children and Youth Coordinator (FCYC). We were pleased to welcome Becky back into work after her maternity leave and wish her well in her revised role with reduced hours working with families and young people, while we consider options for a potential job-share starting in 2024.

We continue as a church to offer a variety of regular weekday events, as well as our services on a Sunday, which provide support to members of the surrounding community. These include the Toddler group which meets on Wednesday, the Thursday Drop-in group and the Friday Youth group. Once a month we hold a 'Soup and Sweet' as well as the Thursday Drop-in group which provides an opportunity for members and friends to have food prepared for them.

Likewise, we continue to support members of our congregation through our six home groups that meet in members' homes every fortnight, alternating with our weekly prayer meeting in the church. We continue to support our members who have been bereaved in the Bereavement Support Group, as well as our students from the University who join us each year and who are supported through their own dedicated weekly meeting.

ST THOMAS BAPTIST CHURCH

TRUSTEES' REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

We continue to preach through various topics and books of the Bible on Sundays and various themes are addressed, from a biblical perspective, in our home groups. We have, since the pandemic, continued to live stream our services (if appropriate) on YouTube which has further increased engagement with those who do not normally attend in person, as well as supporting those members who for various reasons are unable to physically attend the church.

Contribution made by volunteers

Apart from our three paid employees, much of our activity of the church is undertaken by volunteers and without them it would not be possible for the church to provide many of its services for the fellowship or the community. We have many different people volunteering to do various jobs around the church, many of them unseen. We are, as ever, immensely grateful to all our volunteers, especially those who have gone above and beyond to keep people connected during the lockdowns.

Achievements and Performance

The main achievements of the charity are identified above, as well as our benefit to the wider society particularly in our local community and St Thomas.

We do however continue to support church missionaries elsewhere both in the UK and beyond and during the year a sum of £22,025 was given to Mission and other charitable causes.

Financial Review

The church made a deficit in the year of £10,529 (2022 – surplus £16,366). Total income decreased by 12.75% compared to 2022 with a 14.26% decrease in offerings and donations. Total expenditure increased 6.62% compared to the previous year.

Total cash funds amounted to £84,582 at 31st December 2023 of which £12,333 is held in restricted funds - £11,253 of this being held for building improvements.

God remains faithful, and we continue to seek to use his resources in a way that honours him. This year, a deficit was budgeted to use some of the accumulated surpluses from previous years; this is reflected in this year's accounts. While income looks to be significantly down, it should be noted that in 2022 significant income was received to support Ukraine, and therefore, this is not a surprise. A further deficit budget has been set for 2024 to make the best use of the surplus held by the church.

Reserves Policy

The reserves policy is to retain between 3 and 4 months unrestricted expenditure which is approximately between £23,000 and £32,000. At the year end, the church's reserves totalled £71,205 (net current assets less restricted funds).

The budget set for 2023 was set as a deficit budget of £7,055 allowing some of the excess reserves to be spent.

Structure, Governance and Management

The charity is governed by its constitution.

The church is an unincorporated association.

ST THOMAS BAPTIST CHURCH

TRUSTEES' REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Trustees (the elected leadership team) are elected at the church AGM to stand for three years, before needing to stand for re-election. Office holders (Secretary & Treasurer) are appointed or re-appointed each year at the AGM. Church elders (apart from the Minister) are also elected by the AGM, with a three-year term, according to the constitution.

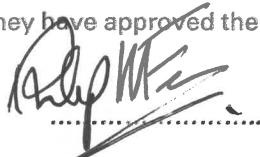
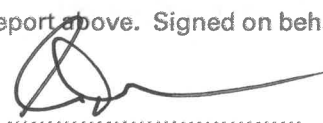
Philip Evans, Hugh Prideaux and Stephen Cousley continued to be elders of St Thomas Baptist Church during this year, in accordance with the constitution, although Hugh Prideaux retired as a deacon and an elder in March 2023, we are very grateful to Hugh for all the work that he has undertaken as both deacon and elder. Philip Evans and Alan Collins were elected as Church Secretary and Treasurer respectively and continued to serve during this year. Both are supported by various members of the Fellowship who assist them, particularly in the Treasury team working with Alan, and Hannah, the Church Operations Manager, working with the Church Secretary, who is also her line manager.

The following individuals have been elected by the church membership to stand as trustees for the church during the last twelve months.

Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year
Elizabeth Bailey	Deacon	
Ann Daniel	Deacon	Elected as deacon in March 2023
Tom Darby-Clark	Deacon	Stood down as Deacon on March 2023
Alan Collins	Church Treasurer	Stood down as church treasurer and deacon in December 2023
Gary Curran	Deacon	
Philip Evans	Church Secretary & Elder	Re-elected as elder in March 2023
Hugh Prideaux	Elder	Stood down as elder and deacon in March 2023
Wendy Mckenna	Deacon	
Richard Turner	Deacon and Treasurer	Elected church treasurer in December 2023

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above. Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature

Full name

Philip Evans

Richard Turner

Position

Church Secretary

Church Treasurer

Date

14.10.24

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF ST THOMAS BAPTIST CHURCH

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of St Thomas Baptist Church (the Church) for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are set out on pages 7 to 14.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Church you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Trust are not required to be audited and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act"). In carrying out my examination I have followed the directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Church as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

S. Truran

Mrs S Truran FCCA FCA
Bush & Co Limited
Chartered Accountants
2 Barnfield Crescent
Exeter
EX1 1QT

Date: 7 OCTOBER 2024

ST THOMAS BAPTIST CHURCH
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
RECEIPTS							
Donations	3	119,314	560	119,874	138,067	1,750	139,817
Charitable activities	3	6,113	-	6,113	4,443	-	4,443
Investment income		-	-	-	145	-	145
Total receipts		125,428	560	125,988	142,655	1,750	144,405
PAYMENTS							
Employment costs	4	61,533	-	61,533	58,907	-	58,907
Missionary and charitable giving	5	21,440	585	22,025	30,925	21,440	35,792
Youth ministry costs		1,229	-	1,229	1,012	-	1,012
Church premises		16,294	-	16,294	14,267	-	14,267
Administrative expenses		17,618	-	17,618	5,647	45	5,692
Church weekend/ student weekend/ away day		4,976	-	4,976	3,603	4,976	3,603
Local outreach		12,840	-	12,840	8,766	-	8,766
Total payments		135,932	585	136,517	123,127	4,912	128,039
Net receipts		(10,504)	(25)	(10,529)	19,528	(3,162)	16,366
Transfers between funds		(25)	25	-	(43)	43	-

ST THOMAS BAPTIST CHURCH
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Note	2023			2022		
		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
		£	£	£	£	£	£
TOTAL CASH FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD		82,778	12,333	95,111	63,293	15,452	78,745
TOTAL CASH FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		72,249	12,333	84,582	82,778	12,333	95,111

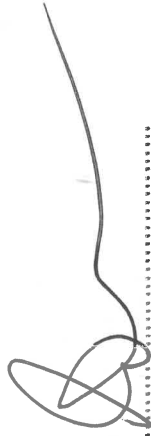
ST THOMAS BAPTIST CHURCH
STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £
CASH FUNDS						
Cash at bank	72,249	12,333	84,582	82,319	12,333	94,652
Petty cash	-	-	-	459	-	459
	72,249	12,333	84,582	82,778	12,333	95,111
OTHER MONETARY ASSETS						
Gift Aid receivable	3,686	-	3,686	6,135	-	6,135
Other debtors	-	-	-	892	-	892
	3,686	-	3,686	7,027	-	7,027
INVESTMENT ASSETS						
Share valuation	276	-	276	279	-	279
ASSETS RETAINED FOR CHARITY'S USE						
Land & buildings – Church & Manse	2,234,188	-	2,234,188	2,234,188	-	2,234,188
Fixtures and fittings	23,583	-	23,583	27,745	-	27,745
Computer equipment	192	-	192	256	-	256
	2,257,963	-	2,257,963	2,261,189	-	2,262,189

ST THOMAS BAPTIST CHURCH
STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

LIABILITIES				
Independent Examiner's Fee	1,320	-	1,320	1,800
Missionary Liability	-	-	-	2,175
Employment tax	1,064	-	1,064	-

The notes on pages 11-14 form part of these accounts. These accounts were approved by the trustees on and signed on their behalf by:



 R Turner - Treasurer

ST THOMAS BAPTIST CHURCH
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The receipts and payments accounts have been prepared under the Charities Act 2011 using a receipts and payments basis.

Income

Offerings and donations are recognised when received by or on behalf of the Church. Gift aid tax refunds and the gift aid small donations scheme are recognised on a cash basis.

Expenditure

Expenditure is included when paid and includes any VAT which is not recoverable.

Assets Retained for Charity's Use

Assets retained for Charity's use are valued on the following basis:

Land and buildings	- Insurance cover value
Fixtures & fittings	- Market value
Computer equipment	- Market value

Investment Assets

Investments are valued at market value at 31 December.

All investments are held within the UK.

Other Monetary Assets

Assets are recognised at the amounts due to the charity which will provide a benefit.

Liabilities

Liabilities are recognised at the amounts obligated to be paid by the charity.

Unrestricted and Restricted Funds

Unrestricted Funds represent the funds of the Church that are not subject to any restrictions regarding their use and are available for application on the general purposes of the Church.

Designated Funds are funds that are not subject to any restrictions but have been set aside by the trustees for future expenditure or commitment. By earmarking funds in this way, the trustees set up a designated fund that remains part of the unrestricted funds of the charity.

Restricted Funds are where the income has been raised for specific purposes, for individuals or for specific events.

Going concern

The trustees consider there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

ST THOMAS BAPTIST CHURCH
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

2. RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Balance B/Forward	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Balance C/forward
	£	£	£	£	£
Mission fund	-	560	(585)	25	-
Camp fund	398	-	-	-	398
Church plant fund	682	-	-	-	682
Building project fund	11,253	-	-	-	11,253
Local outreach fund	-	-	-	-	-
Total Funds	12,333	-	-	-	12,333

The Mission Fund continues to support various mission projects both at home and abroad.

The Camp Fund was set up to fund young people, particularly those from families on low incomes to go on evangelistic summer camps. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, no camps took place in the current year.

The Church plant fund is monies given for a potential new congregation to be planted in the future. There was no movement in this fund during the year.

The Building project fund was set up to enable the construction and equipping of a functional church office and additional church building improvements.

Previous Year

	Balances B/Forward	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Balances C/Forward
	£	£	£	£	£
Mission Fund	2,901	1,750	(4,912)	261	-
Camp Fund	398	-	-	-	398
Church Plant Fund	682	-	-	-	682
Building Project Fund	11,253	-	-	-	11,253
Local Outreach Fund	218	-	-	(218)	-
Total Funds	15,452	1,750	(4,912)	43	12,333

ST THOMAS BAPTIST CHURCH
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

3. Income

Donations received during the year are broken down as follows:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Offerings and donations	101,268	119,773
Gift aid tax refunds and GASDS	18,606	20,044
	<u>119,874</u>	<u>139,817</u>

Income from charitable activities received during the year are broken down as follows:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Coffee mornings/ Soup & Sweet	839	951
Youth group Subscriptions & Other income	1,712	191
Junior Church	225	220
Church Weekend/ Student Weekend/ Away Day	3,337	2,702
Sundry income	-	379
	<u>6,113</u>	<u>4,443</u>

4. EMPLOYMENT COSTS

Total employee's remuneration for the year amounted to £61,533 for three employees. Gross salaries amounted to £54,002. Employers' NIC amounted to £1,270 after claiming the employment allowance. In addition, pension contributions of £6,261 were paid.

There were no employees with remuneration above £60,000.

ST THOMAS BAPTIST CHURCH
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

5. MISSION GIVING

Grants were made to the following organisations in the year:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Baptist Missionary Society	1,800	1,800
ICE Trust (Schools Mission)	2,040	2,040
Retired Baptist Ministers Housing Society	-	200
Baptist Union Home Mission	1,980	1,980
Exeter University Evangelical Christian Union	500	559
Spurgeons	-	867
Haven of Hope Youth Development Programme	-	4,000
London City Mission	-	14
St George's Morden	1,175	905
Love into action	1,175	1,358
Mission Aviation Fellowship	1,175	1,355
Rwanda Hope Mission	1,175	1,355
Trans World Radio Limited	1,175	1,485
Moldova	8,880	-
Ukraine	-	17,594
Other givings	950	280
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	22,025	35,792
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6. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS/TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

No trustee, nor any person connected with them, received any remuneration or other contributions from the charity during the year. No reimbursement of expenses in respect of services provided by the trustees has been made or is due to be made to any of them in respect of the year.