



TRUSTEES REPORT 2023

Structure, Governance & Management:

Trustees who have served between 1st January 2023 and the date of this Report:

Minister and Chair: Rev Joan Grindrod-Helmn

Church Coordinators

And Secretary: Liz Spence and Julie Wightman

Church Treasurer: Jean Barr

Elders: Henry Crosier

Kay Hetherington

Madeline Russell

Wade Sherman

David Wilkinson

Margaret Wilkinson

St James's Alnwick is a member church of the United Reformed Church in Great Britain which was established by the 1972 United Reformed Church Acts. The church has its own Constitution and Governing Documents as approved by the Church Meeting.

The Trustees (serving Elders) are elected by the Church Meeting of St James's Alnwick URC. Management decisions are taken by the Trustees' Meetings and formally ratified by the Church Meeting. All management decisions are approved by consensus or majority at properly constituted meetings.

Objectives and Activities

The object of the Charity is the advancement of the Christian faith for the benefit of the public in accordance with the Scheme of Union of the United Reformed Church.

To meet this objective, the Charity supports the wider councils of the United Reformed Church through giving and participation. The Charity also provides regular acts of worship, promoting Christian teaching which is in accordance with the traditions of the United Reformed Church. The Charity recognizes the importance of working with other faith communities on an ecumenical basis and is an active member of Christians Together in Alnwick.

The Trustees are aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and believe that this requirement is met by the activities set out in the reports below.

Further and more detailed, information on the activities of the Charity may be found in the extracts below, taken from Reports provided by the Minister, the Church Co-Ordinator and Secretary and the Treasurer.



MINISTER'S ANNUAL REPORT (EXTRACT)

Year Ending: 31.12.23

Office Holder: Rev. Joan Grindrod-Helmn

Aims: To oversee the workings of the church and provide both practical and spiritual care for those in need.

Activities: To lead worship and have oversight of all worship events.

To provide pastoral care for those in need.

To encourage and nurture the faith.

To support those who volunteer their services in the church.

To represent the church in the community and the wider church.

REPORT: I always seem to start AGM reports writing that many things haven't changed since last year and what should I say that isn't a repeat, but this year is a bit different. This year, because this will be my last annual report, has led me to think back over not just last year, but the past 22 years. So, if you'd indulge me, a bit of reflection on 22 years.

What have been the "highs"? There have been many. Obviously, the redevelopment in 2007/08. When we redeveloped there were many changes and we all adapted and even thrived. We shared space with the congregation at St. Paul's and a special relationship was formed. Redevelopment gave us a functional building that is well used by the community, a part of our vision for the future. I am thankful for the people of vision that designed and oversaw that project but also all of you for the tireless efforts of fundraising and support that made it happen. The ecumenical friendship of the churches and their clergy has been amazing.

But, of course, there are also "lows", which are natural and how we can recognise the "highs" when we have them. There are 22 years of familiar faces that are no longer with us and yet so many that I remember with fondness. There are even churches now closed that I remember. We currently don't have an organised Mission/Outreach programme - we cannot become inward looking in these challenging times. Some things have a life and need to be reinvented; some things fail. But that doesn't mean we never try again.

You may be thinking, certainly COVID was a "low". Yes, it was. We lost many things due to COVID. But we also learned many things, too. When change was forced upon us it was amazing how quickly we adapted and moved on. It was surprising to see the numbers of people try things like Zoom and find they could do it. Despite lockdowns, we stayed connected to each other. COVID, for all its negatives, gave us space and permission to do things differently.

Throughout 22 years the biggest "high" for me has been all the people who have been and are currently associated with this church. There is amazing talent here, but even more important there is amazing faithfulness here. Over 22 years I have been blessed with Elders and many others who work so hard, mostly behind the scenes. I give thanks particularly to our Church Secretaries and Treasurer, who shoulder so much of the work, but they do so knowing that if they ask for help it will be forthcoming. I give thanks for the gifts we have in music and worship leadership. To our Organists, many thanks for your music that lifts our spirits. To the worship group, thanks for being courageous and creative! We have a growing tech team, well done for getting us over our phobia of screens! To our Junior Church Leaders, thanks for your gifts with the young people each week and thanks to all the helpers. I give thanks for our Newsletter Editor and his brilliant work on the Pilgrim Ways as well as general techie knowledge when needed, he has been a blessing to the whole church. There are so many people whose small efforts keep this place going, I am so lucky to have so many willing hands to get the work done. Thank you all. For your support, for your friendship, for your good humour, for your patience, for your forgiveness. I have been blessed with you all.

2024 will see this church go into vacancy for the first time in 22 years. There are many changes to come. There will be "highs", there will be "lows" and there will be everything in between. One thing I am sure of, this church will rise to whatever challenges it faces. The church is much, much more than its minister. The church is all of you, caring for each other and sharing the load for each other. So, I leave this church in good hands. Upheld by God's grace, with the strength of Christ and the daily encouragement of the Spirit, all will be well. Don't be afraid, turn your face to the future and get stuck into the next chapter of God's story in this place.



Church centre Coordinator Annual Report (EXTRACT)

Year Ending: 31st December 2023

Office Bearer: Liz Spence

Joint Church Secretary: Julie Wightman

REPORT: 2023 has been a year of preparing for change. Two major changes affecting us will be Joan's retirement in April 2024, which will be a sad time for everyone and the proposed changes to ministry in North and Mid Northumberland due to come in April 2025.

Preparing for a vacancy is never easy and we are very aware of how hard Joan works. It is 20+ years since St James's was in vacancy and we now have a much smaller membership, so the workload will be greater. It will be important to work together to support each other.

The URC strategic change to have one minister for the whole of North and Mid Northumberland from 2025 has involved us being part of a group meeting with the other Mid and North Northumberland churches (Wooler, Amble, Rothbury, Longframlington and Glanton), getting to know each other better and to develop a model of working together for the future. This work is still ongoing, but the changes are unlikely to happen before 2026.

We are aware that our congregation is aging, and this is reflected in our membership numbers this year (down from 79 to 75) but Worship attendance has stayed at a similar level as last year with an average of 38 in the morning and 12 at the two evening services a month. We wish to thank our Pulpit Supply Secretary for her diligence in providing pulpit supply on a regular basis (as well as all the other roles she plays) and the Worship Group for their valuable support.

We had no weddings or baptisms this year, but unfortunately, had several funerals of church members and friends that included one non-serving Elder.

St James's has always been active within the community, and we provide a venue for many Christians Together in Alnwick and Ignite meetings. We are also the venue for the Ukraine Homing Group and the Guides, Brownies, and Rainbow group.

Our building is very well used. We have noticed a reduction in corporate users but an increase in charity and community use, which means that we don't generate the income as before the pandemic, but we are pleased to provide subsidised rates to local charities and the community.

As it is 15 years since the redevelopment of St James's when all our equipment was new, some items of equipment are needing major repairs or replacement, which is reflected in our expenditure. We are planning a phased project to become eco-friendlier and more cost efficient.

Our newsletter has gone out by email and post all year and, for those that wish to receive it, the snail mail version includes the URC Sunday Devotion. We thank our Editorial and Printing team for their work.

Next year will be a difficult one for our congregation. We shall have to adjust to the changes ahead of us, which will not be easy, but we have been assured of support from the Northern Synod. Our Church family has always pulled together and I know that you will continue to support the Elders with action and prayer.

As our Minister Joan prepares for her retirement in April 2024, we thank her for her ministry, support, and guidance over the last 22 years. Nothing was too much trouble and, her unwavering support for St James's through the good times – and the bad are much appreciated. She will be missed, but we wish her a happy and healthy retirement.



CHURCH TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT (EXTRACT)

Office Bearer: Jean Barr

Year ending: 31st December 2023

General Expenditure: We welcomed a reduction in our Ministry & Mission payments to the URC Trust from £34,118 in 2022 to £30,501 in 2023 and appreciated the reimbursement from URC Northern Province for the cost of Manse Insurance. Going forward, NP Trust will cover our Manse Insurance in their Blanket Policy. While most areas of our expenditure stayed close to or within budget, the notable exceptions were Utilities, Audio Visual Equipment and Maintenance costs. Rising Electricity and Gas costs continue to be a concern and we intend to monitor those in 2024. In 2021, we made the decision to invest in new Audio-Visual equipment to facilitate and improve our worship and the final payment was made this year. Our Lift is now 15 years old and essential repairs in 2023 cost £2,250. Ongoing technical and plumbing problems with our commercial dishwasher proved expensive and the decision was taken to replace this.

While no Legacy Grants were made in 2023, Church Meeting agreed to make donations of £500 to a local Community Centre and £825 each to Ignite and Shelter. We also paid over £3,750 in funding for Ignite, a local Christian charity who focus on youth and schools' work, this funding having originated from URC Northern Province Trust. Other donations and outreach funding made were also covered by matching income. Including the above, total expenditure in 2023 was £82,682 against a budget of £70,846.

General Income: Thanks to the continuing support of our congregation, our Offertory Income, at £35,500, remained close to budget and similar to 2022. Halls income, at £13,796, exceeded budget, as did Donations and Gift Aid income. Including the matched funding for the expenditure items reported above, our total Income was £68,903 against a budget of £58,965. Net Expenditure was (£13,780) and the General Fund carries forward £35,922 into 2024.

Wood Legacy Fund: While 2022 saw a decrease in the value of our investments, 2023 has seen an increase from £97,264 brought forward to £107,595 which we will carry forward to 2024.

Commitment for Life Fund Commitment for Life income is received from direct gifts, and from tax recovered on gift aided offerings. The total paid over to URC in London in 2023 was £700. We have chosen to support Israel & Palestinian Territories from this fund.

Once again, our gratitude goes to all our congregation and friends for the continuing support of our church, both financial and pastoral. Our thanks go once again to our Minister, the Elders and the members of the Finance & Property committee for their invaluable work and support. Special thanks also go to our Examiner of Accounts, for availing us of his time and expertise.



**ST JAMES'S ALNWICK URC CHARITY
POTTERGATE, ALNWICK**

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

TO

31ST DECEMBER 2023

CONTENTS

	Page No
Statement of Financial Activities	1
Balance Sheet	2
Notes to the Financial Statements	3 - 6
Treasurer's Statement	7
Independent Examiner's Report	8

ST JAMES'S ALNWICK URC CHARITY

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST December 2023**

		2023			2022	
		Unrestricted Fund	Restricted Funds			
Notes	General Fund £p	Flower Fund £p	Commitment For Life £p	Total 2023 £p	2022 £p	
INCOMING RESOURCES						
Incoming Resources from generated funds:						
Voluntary Income	2	53,221	-	628	53,848.19	64,024
Activities for Generating funds	3	14,570	-	-	14,570.13	13,490
Investment Income	4	55	-	-	54.59	3
Other Income	5	430	-	-	429.60	1,166
Total: Incoming Resources		68,275	-	628	68,902.51	78,682
RESOURCES EXPENDED						
Charitable Activities:						
Ministerial Costs	6	35,441	-	-	35,440.53	38,868
Costs of Church Activities/Refurbishments	7	41,175	8	-	41,182.68	48,753
Donations for Specific Purposes and						-
Restricted Funds passed on	8	5,360	-	700	6,059.03	3,756
Total: Resources Expended		81,974.73	8	700	82,682.24	91,378
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before other recognised gains/(losses)						
		(13,700)	(8)	(72)	(13,780)	(12,696)
Net gain (Loss) on revaluation of investments						
		10,331	-	-	10,330.72	(25,783)
		(3,369)	(8)	(72)	(3,449)	(38,479)
Total funds b/fwd 1 January 2023		146,553	341	72	146,967	185,446
Total funds c/fwd 31st December 2023						
		143,184	333	-	143,518	146,967

BALANCE SHEET**AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2023**

		2023			2022
		Unrestricted Fund	Restricted Funds		
		General Fund £p	Flower Fund £p	Commitment For Life £p	2023 £p
					2022 £p
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible Fixed Assets	9	-	-	-	-
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors and Accruals	10	-	-	-	761
Bank and Cash Balances		37,172	333	-	51,050
Investment at current Market Value		107,595	-	-	97,264
		<u>144,767</u>	<u>333</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>149,076</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES					
Creditors payable within one year	11	1,583	-	-	2,110
		<u>1,583</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,110</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS	12	143,184	333	-	146,967
TOTAL NET ASSETS		<u>143,184</u>	<u>333</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>146,967</u>
THE FUNDS OF THE CHARITY					
Unrestricted Income Funds:		143,184	-	-	146,553
Restricted Income Funds		-	333	-	413
		<u>143,184</u>	<u>333</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>146,967</u>
Held in Investment, Current and Deposit A/C's					

APPROVED by the Trustees Meeting held on 21.3.24

and signed on its behalf by the Revd J Grindrod-Helmn (Chair)

The notes on pages 3 to 6 form part of these financial statements

ST JAMES'S ALNWICK URC CHARITY
NOTES TO THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1a Basis of Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities issued by the Charity Commission and the United Reformed Church guidance. The accruals basis of accounting has been adopted where deemed relevant and the principal accounting policies set out below have been applied.

1b Fund Accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the church in furtherance of its charitable objectives. Restricted funds are subjected to restrictions on their expenditure imposed by the donor, or contained in the terms of a grant.

1c Tangible Fixed Assets

Property: The church and manse premises are not included in the balance sheet because reliable cost information is not available and valuation would incur significant costs which would be onerous compared with the additional benefit gained by the user of the Accounts. A note of the insurance valuation is shown in Notes to the Accounts - No 9.

Furniture and Equipment: The contents of the premises are not capitalised in the accounts because expenditure incurred on the property was written off in the year it was incurred. See again Notes to the Accounts - No 9

1d Incoming Resources

All voluntary giving is included in the financial statements for the period in which it is received. For purposes of clarification, tax refunds claimed from gift aided donations have been recognised as income when the refund of tax is received. Legacies are accounted for when their receipt is certain and can be properly quantified. All other income is generally recognised when it is received, including VAT which may be recoverable under the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme. Increase or Decrease in Market Value of Investments is taken from the report provided by our Fund Manager at 31st December in the current year.

1e Resources Expended

The URC Ministry & Mission Fund contribution is paid regularly and is included in the financial statements for the year to which it relates. Resources expended are recognised in the period in which they are incurred and include attributable VAT. (See also note 1d above). They are allocated to the particular activity to which they relate.

As most of the management and activity of the church is carried out by volunteers, this intangible cost is not included in the financial statements as this voluntary contribution to the life of the church is incalculable.

1f Taxation

As part of the United Reformed Church, the church is an excepted charity within the meaning of the Taxes Acts. Accordingly, it is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income and capital gains received to the extent that such income or gains are applied to exclusively charitable purposes. No provision for taxation has been made in these financial statements.

2 VOLUNTARY INCOME

	2023			2022
	Unrestricted Fund	Restricted Funds		
	General Fund	Flower Fund	Commitment For Life	Total 2023
	£p		£p	£p
Offerings	35,500	-	-	35,500
Legacies and Funeral Gifts	-	-	-	-
Donations	3,496	-	-	3,496
Specific Causes - Collections and Income	4,860	-	491	5,351
Insurance Reimbursements	-	-	-	-
Warkworth URC Shared Costs	517	-	-	517
HMRC - Gift Aid Recovered	7,475	-	136	7,611
Grants Received:	-	-	-	-
URC Northern Province - Reimbursements	1,373	-	-	1,373
	53,221	-	628	53,848
				64,024

3 Activities for Generating Funds

Fundraising Activities / Events	774	-	-	774	914
Use of Premises	13,796	-	-	13,796	12,410
Sale of Book - History of St James's	-	-	-	-	166
	14,570	-	-	14,570	13,490

ST JAMES'S ALNWICK URC CHARITY
NOTES TO THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

4 Investment Income

The charity holds current and deposit accounts
with Lloyds Bank, Bondgate, Alnwick

Bank Interest	55	-	-	55	3
	55	-	-	55	3

5 Income Resources from Other Charitable Acts

Weddings and Funerals	100	-	-	100	200
Sundry income	330	-	-	330	966
	430	-	-	430	1,166

Total Income	68,275	-	628	68,903	78,682
---------------------	---------------	----------	------------	---------------	---------------

6 Ministerial Costs

Ministry & Mission Fund

The church contributes to the central URC costs of training and providing ministers (including the centralised payment of stipends, pension contributions and other benefits for ministers), running the denomination and the wider missions of the national church. Total unrestricted expenditure in 2022 was £19.4m, 84% of which related to ministry costs. The major funding is provided through the Ministry & Mission contributions from local churches.

Ministry & Mission fund	30,551	-	-	30,551	34,128
Minister's Car Allowance	1,366	-	-	1,366	1,366
Manse Costs	3,524	-	-	3,524	3,375
	35,441	-	-	35,441	38,868

7 Costs of Church Activities

Church and Halls Costs:

Cleaning, Kitchen and Event Supplies	5,689	-	-	5,689	5,464
Heat, Light & Telephone	8,306	-	-	8,306	5,276
Insurance & Rates	5,828	-	-	5,828	5,654
Repairs & Renewals, Planned Mntnce	12,467	-	-	12,467	17,940
Office Expenses and Booking Software	274	-	-	274	224
Printing, Photocopying and Publicity	1,845	-	-	1,845	3,173
Bank Charges	142	-	-	142	108
	34,551	-	-	34,551	37,838

ST JAMES'S ALNWICK URC CHARITY
NOTES TO THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

	2023			Total 2023 £p	2022
	Unrestricted Fund	Flower Fund	Restricted Fund		2022 £p
	General Fund £p		Commitment For Life £p		
Worship and Teaching Costs					
Worship, Licences and Music	2,612	8	-	2,620	2,440
Pulpit Supply	933	-	-	933	761
Junior Church	-	-	-	-	23
	3,545	8	-	3,553	3,224
Other Programmes					
Outreach	48	-	-	48	-
N Northumberland Day Hospice	-	-	-	-	2,000
Ignite	825	-	-	825	2,000
Shelter	825	-	-	825	-
Gallery Youth	-	-	-	-	1,000
Pottergate Centre	-	-	-	-	1,000
Taxi Fund	589	-	-	589	213
	2,287	-	-	2,287	6,213
Other Expenses					
Wedding & Funeral fees	-	-	-	-	-
Sundry Expenditure	524	-	-	524	1,126
Subscriptions	110	-	-	110	110
Carbon Footprint Offset - Americas Portfolio	158	-	-	158	242
	791	-	-	791	1,478
8 Specific Donations and Restricted Funds Passed On					
In 2023, we are supporting Israel & Palestinian Territories					
Commitment for Life Payment	-	-	700	700	809
URC Northern Synod - Ignite Donation	3,750	-	-	3,750	-
Specific Causes - Payments	1,610	-	-	1,610	2,948
	5,360	-	700	6,059	3,756
Total Expenditure	81,975	8	700	82,682	91,378
9 Tangible Fixed Assets					
Premises:					
For the reasons stated in Accounting Policy note 1c, the church and manse buildings are not evaluated in Tangible Fixed Assets. For insurance purposes, the sums insured are: church buildings - £8,066,920 (2022 - £7,456,04) ; manse £684,183 - (2022 -£563,420)					
10 Investments					
Balance brought forward	97,264			97,264	123,047
Drawn down 2023	-			-	-
Net unrealised investment gain/(Loss)	10,331			10,331	(25,783)
Balance carried forward	107,595	-	-	107,595	97,264
Investments comprise the balance of The Gordon Wood Legacy, invested in a Standard Life Elevate General Investment Account. Within that account, the principal holding (c99%) is in a Liontrust Sustainable Future Managed Income Fund. The balance of the account is held as cash in a money market account.					
11 Debtors and Accruals					
Accrual has been made for the following income	£	£	£	£	
No Accrued Income	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
12 Current Liabilities and Provisions					
Provision has been made for the following expenditure	£	£	£	£	
St Cloud State University - Recharges March to Dec	1,200			1,200	
Balance of Christmas Donations to Shelter and Crisis	50		-	50	
Connor Weightman - Plumbing	333			333	
	1,583	-	-	1,583	

ST JAMES'S ALNWICK URC CHARITY
NOTES TO THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

12 Restricted Funds

The church accounts include two Restricted Funds, where the monies can only be used for the specific purpose for which they were entrusted to the church. These monies are not at the disposal of the Church Meeting for any other purpose:

- 1) Commitment for Life Fund - the church takes part in the URC initiative to support specific projects on an on-going basis.
Income for the full year is usually paid over to the URC on an annual basis at the end of each year
- 2) Flower Fund - Bequest of £500 was received during 2012.

The movements in the Restricted Funds during the year were:

	2023			2022
	Flower Fund	Commitment For Life	Total 2023	£
Balance b/fwd	341	72	413	1,341
Direct Giving	-	491	491	815
Gift Aid Income	-	136	136	66
Total Income:	341	700	1,041	2,222
Restricted Funds Passed On	8	700	708	1,000
Accrued Expenditure - Specific Causes	-	-	-	809
Accrued Income	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditure:	8	700	708	1,809
Balance to carry Forward	333	-	333	413

ST JAMES'S ALNWICK URC CHARITY
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

TREASURER'S STATEMENT

I have prepared the financial statements on pages 1 - 6 for the year ended 31st December 2023

Signed: *Jean Barr*
Jean Barr

Date *1st March 2024*



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

St James's Alnwick URC Charity

On accounts for the year
ended

31st December 2023

Charity no
(if any)

1089954

Set out on pages

1 - 6

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31st December 2023.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

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

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Date:

7/3/2024

Name:

JOHN WRIGHT

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

ACIB, AII

Address:

ARBOYDOR 7 STEPPY LANE,
LESBURY, ALNWICK,
NORTHUMBERLAND NE66 3PU

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners)

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.