

The Church of St Mary- Great Sankey

Liverpool Road, Great Sankey, Warrington WA5 1RE



Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council

For the year ending 31st December 2024

St. Mary's, Great Sankey

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For the year ended 31st December 2024

A member of the West Warrington Church Team

1. Reference and Administrative Information

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St. Mary, Great Sankey is a charity registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. Charity registration number: 1180928.

St. Mary's Church is located on Liverpool Road, Great Sankey, Warrington, WA5 1RE. The parish is part of the Diocese of Liverpool.

Official correspondence should be sent to the Rev. Jeremy Tear, St. Mary's Church, Liverpool Road, Great Sankey, Warrington WA5 1RE

For the period 1st January 2024 until the date of approval of this report, the following people served as members of the Parochial Church Council:

Pioneer Team Rector Rev. Jeremy Tear
Chair

Churchwardens Jane Hampton (stepped down, April 2024)
John Taylor (appointed April 2022)

Elected members Amanda Adlington (resigned April 2024)
Pam Billingsley (appointed April 2024)
Janet Kerswell (appointed April 2024)
Lynn Parish (appointed April 2023)
Carole Rafter (appointed April 2024)
Joan Rotheram (appointed September 2022)
Keith White (resigned April 2024)

Ex-officio members Rev. Martin Thorpe, Pioneer Team Vicar (resigned September 2024)
Rev. Sarah Peppiatt, Pioneer Team Vicar

Deanery Synod Representatives Kate Forrest (appointed April 2023)

Electoral Roll Jean Lawrence

DBS Verifier and Safeguarding Officer Caroline Baskett (from July 2023)

Treasurer Paul Ng

Assistant Treasurer	Alvin Lau
Finance Assistant	Fiona Barnard, appointed 2018. Fiona was invited to attend meetings but could not vote. Fiona resigned as PCC secretary in April 2024 and has been replaced by Lisa Yu.
Assistant Warden	Kate Forrest and Ian Knight were re-appointed in April 2024 but are not members of the PCC.
Employees	Gail Cordon, Derek Bowden, Mick and Doreen Hartop, and Lynn Parish undertook ad hoc duties as vergers/bell ringers
Independent Examiner	P Carty FCA, 70 Longbarn Lane, Woolston, Warrington, WA1 4QR

2. Structure, Management and Governance

St. Mary's Sankey PCC is a body corporate and operates under the *Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956* and the *Church Representation Rules*.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All church members are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

Day to day management of the Church was delegated by the PCC to the Standing Committee: **Rev. Jeremy Tear** (Pioneer Team Vicar appointed 2015) **John Taylor** (Churchwarden from April 2022) and **Joan Rotheram** (Appointed April 2024)

The **Standing Committee** can be contacted by telephone as shown in the Church Suite app; Rev Jeremy Tear can be contacted by e-mail at: revjeremytear@gmail.com or phone on 01925-485288.

Safeguarding Procedures

The PCC has complied with its duty to have regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. Individual PCC members receive online training as and when deemed appropriate. The Safeguarding Officer undertook Diocesan training (after an initial session with Diocesan Advisor Ruth Reed in 2018) and the whole PCC received training in child protection policy and procedures during this session. All members of the PCC are in the process of completing DBS checks. We received additional training on GDPR by Helen Aghanian, our Church Administrator in 2018.

Risk Assessments

The PCC undertook a programme of risk assessments to identify their major risks, including for the church extension work. Procedures were then put in place to manage those risks and minimise their impact on the life of the church.

Financial Risk

An annual budget is prepared to ensure short-term viability. Actual results compared with budget are reported to the PCC every half year. The charity has two main sources of income; namely the giving by members to the Church by cash on plates, legacies, Parish Giving Scheme & envelopes; and baptisms, weddings and funerals.

The PCC review their investments regularly. Investments are only made in approved low risk funds.

All assets are insured. A review was carried out in 2018 to ensure cover at an appropriate level.

The PCC has approved internal and external controls for annual accounts.

- *Compliance with Law and Regulation*
A health and safety review has been undertaken by a member of the church with specific experience in this area. The PCC was appraised of the risks and the necessary requirements and these are undergoing compliance.
- *Operational risk*
Regular maintenance checks are done on the building by way of a Quinquennial on the structure and checks on internal electrical items like boiler, heating system, fire extinguishers, fire & security alarms.

3. Objectives and Activities

The general functions of the PCC are stated within section 2 of the *Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956*.

At St. Mary's our vision statement says that we desire 'to be a growing church making a growing difference'. We desire to grow both numerically, spiritually and through the facilities we offer.

When planning our activities for the year, the PCC gave consideration to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance to charities concerned with the advancement of religion.

Our activities in 2024 provided the following public benefits:

- Regular public worship open to all, both on Sundays, midweek and for funerals, weddings and baptisms. The Church has easy access and was awarded a '**Child Friendly Award**' in 2017 by the Liverpool Diocese and the bronze Eco Church award in 2022.
- The provision of sacred space for personal prayer and contemplation and praying for those who ask for assistance.
- Pastoral work, including visiting the sick and bereaved. Home Communion is taken out to some who are unable to attend church by a small authorised team.
- We held Christmas services in church for Great Sankey and Barrow Hall Primary Schools. Park Road Primary school children came into church for sessions and our Vicar went to share in their Harvest service. Kids Planet Nursery school attended Easter, Summer, Harvest and Christmas events and we went into nursery to read bible stories for pre-school children during the year.
- Sunday school activities for those aged 4-11 called 'Lightnings', in church.
- Supporting other charities in the UK and overseas with 10% of income, plus special collections. Also, practical support for the Food Bank in Warrington, and for children in need in our town through a Toy Service.
- We held a Summer and Christmas Fair to raise funds for the church and to provide opportunities for the community to connect with one another
- We have a monthly community lunch to provide a means for people to connect with each other and avoid isolation
- We rented out the church to a local Pilates teacher for weekly sessions, and occasionally to other bodies, e.g. Great Sankey Parish Council.

Churches Together in West Warrington

St. Mary's Church continues to work with other churches in West Warrington. This included a Churches Together Good Friday service and a Prayer Walk on Ascension Day. We also worked with other churches in West Warrington to share God's love through providing 'Open the Book' bible story telling sessions in local schools.

West Warrington Team Ministry

On a team note, St. Mary's is part of the West Warrington Team Ministry which comprises St. Mary's, Great Sankey; St. Paul's, Penketh; St. James', Hood Manor; and St. Philip's, Westbrook. The clergy meet together regularly, and the churches worship together on specific occasions throughout the year.

Church Buildings

A variety of general maintenance tasks were completed, and we began work on a new extension for the church, funded by the generosity of church members, grant making trusts, and the sale of the former church hall.

Charitable giving policy

At St. Mary's we give away a tithe (10%) of our annual giving through the Parish Giving Scheme, a weekly envelope scheme, standing orders and cash on the plate.

We also support the following charities: - Leprosy Mission, Church Army, Church Mission Society, The Children's Society, and The Food Bank in Warrington (part of the Trussell Trust).

4. Achievements and performance

Electoral roll

There were 102 people registered on the electoral roll at the APCM in 2024.

Worship

Average attendance at Sunday Services in 2023 was around 7 people attending the 8am communion service and around 54 adults/children attending an average 10am service. We also had a consistent figure of around 11 attending the Wednesday Holy Communion service.

Pastoral care and service to our community

It has always been a top priority of the church to care for members and to serve the local community. This takes place within both regular and special church services (including an annual memorial service for the bereaved), monthly home communion visits and through the Pastoral Care Team. The Vicar writes a monthly letter sent by email/post.

Growing in Faith

In spring 2024, we ran a Growing in Faith course, followed by The Talking Jesus course in the summer. In the autumn, we ran an Alpha course which was attended by members of the church and those connected to it.

5. Financial review

See Treasurer's Report.

Reserves Policy

We keep a reserve of £5,000.

6. Plans for the future

We undertook 2 Pyramid reviews with a member of the Diocesan Cultivate team as part of the Fit for Mission process and began to put into place objectives agreed regarding leadership, mission, discipleship, community, and worship.

Pioneer Team Rector's Report

2024 was a year of significant change within the life of the Team as Martin Thorpe retired as Pioneer Team Vicar at St. James' and Rebecca Lloyd came to the end of her curacy and currently awaits to be licensed as Assistant Priest at that church. Martin's retirement marked the end of 12 years ministry at St. James as well as a significant period of time spent as Vicar of St. Philip's prior to the introduction of the team. We can be thankful for much including his pioneering spirit which oversaw the introduction of the ACE and Sunday Supper Club congregations at St. James. I am grateful to Rebecca, Paul Smalley (the Local Missional Leader), Mike Cox and Julie Behan (the churchwardens) and other members of the PCC and Standing Committee at St. James who have helped to keep the 'show on the road' whilst they await the appointment of a new Vicar (to be shared with St. Barnabas). More than that, they have helped the church to grow in these last 9 months, which is a considerable feat, given the demands of a vacancy. But it does go to show what is possible, even in challenging circumstances.

Life has continued apace at St. Paul's and St. Philip's under the skillful guidance of Sarah Peppiatt, whilst also juggling the roles of being one of the Assistant Area Deans and the Fit for Mission Change leader. It has been encouraging to see the continued development of the Lifetime, Sunday Lunch and Café church congregations at St. Paul's alongside the existing Sunday morning service, as well as the ongoing ministries at the Oaks Centre. St. Philip's has continued to develop its worship opportunities with the introduction of Family Fishes to supplement its Little Fishes group and the Tea and Toast and Café services remain popular.

St. Mary's finally got underway with its long-awaited extension project in July, and I am pleased to report that finished in January 2025 (albeit with the inevitable snagging!). Its Messy Church service remained at a fairly constant number through the year, and it continues to draw people to its Alpha, Growing in Faith, and Talking Jesus courses.

Together across the Team, we shared in worship on a number of occasions last year. This began with the Ash Wednesday service at St. Mary's followed by the Maundy Thursday Communion service and vigil there, the last hour at the cross service at St. Philip's on Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil at St. James on Easter Eve. There were also joint confirmation services for children from St. Philip's and adults from St. Mary's in March, plus a joint confirmation service between St. James and St. Barnabas in May. Worship was also shared with other churches across West Warrington at the Good Friday service at Honiton Square, and the Thy Kingdom Come event on Ascension Day.

Regular monthly meetings were held of the clergy, Local Missional Leader at St. Philip's and churchwarden at St. Mary's, as well as the twice-yearly meetings of the Team Fund Committee. I am grateful to John Harrop, the Team Treasurer for continuing to oversee the use of team funds which supported not only the employment of the youth worker, Alex Stewart, between St. Mary's and St. Paul's, but also ongoing missional activities at St. Mary's, St. Philip's and St. James. Thanks also to Rosie Cox, the treasurer at St. James, who has continued to allow the team accounts to be reported within their accounts.

Finally, as the PCC's of our deanery churches vote on whether to go ahead with their involvement with the Fit for Mission programme, we stand on the cusp of significant change within the life of our team as we potentially move to become part of a larger single parish for Warrington. Please pray for wisdom for our PCC members as they vote on this important matter. As I prepare to leave the Team on 1 June with my last service at St. Mary's (do join us for the faith lunch afterwards!), I would like to end by saying thank you to all my clergy colleagues (Martin, Sarah and Rebecca) as well as my retired clergy colleagues (Steve, Mal and Andrew) and our local missional leaders (June, Marise and Paul) for all their help and support during my nearly ten years here in West Warrington. It has been a privilege to serve as the Team Rector and I hope and pray that the next ten years may be an equally exciting time in the life of our churches as we look to see what God is doing and to join in.

Jeremy Tear, March 2025

Pioneer Team Vicar's Report

2024 was the year the extension finally started in mid-July, and we took significant steps to complete it by the end of the year (finally completing it in mid-January 2025). I am very grateful to all who have worked so hard to make this happen including our project managers Andie Harper and Margaret Emsley (plus other members of the building team), our architect Bill Schafer, and our main contractors GAC. We have ended up with a quality build and I am pleased to say that we are making good use of it both for church and non-church purposes, so helping (in part) to realise our vision of becoming 'a growing church making a growing difference.'

But 2024 was, as ever, more than about buildings. Indeed, St. Mary's is primarily about people, and we should never forget that. It is a collection of people who come to worship God, week in and week out, and some only for special occasions, such as Christmas, Easter, baptisms, weddings, and funerals. In 2024, we trialled the first of our café style services in June and this went down well so we had another one on Advent Sunday. The PCC has agreed to continue with these on a termly basis to date. We also continued with our Messy Church on the third Saturday afternoon of the month, and this has provided a good way for young and old, those who attend other services and those who don't, to come together for crafts, worship, and food. If you have never been before, why not give it a go – it is suitable for all ages!

As well as worshipping God through services, it is good to grow in our faith through other ways as well. And so we continued with our growing in faith course in the Spring (during which we had Debbie Horley, Carl Taylor and Margaret Emsley confirmed at St. Philip's by Bishop John). We also ran the Talking Jesus course in the summer and the Alpha course again in the autumn. My thanks to Joan Rotheram and to Debbie Horley for helping with these courses and to all who provided food for the Alpha course. Our small groups continue to operate during the week, and we had various members take part in the ecumenical Lent groups as well.

In 2022, we were awarded the bronze Eco church award, a significant step along our journey of seeking to become a net zero carbon church by 2030. In 2024, we made significant progress to the silver Eco church award (and were subsequently awarded this in February 2025). My thanks to Margaret Emsley, Kate Forrest and Zarah Ross from Faiths4All for their help and support with this.

On a less positive note, we experienced a decline in numbers of about 10 per cent during 2024, our first decline since the pandemic. If we are to seek to reverse this and to grow, we will need to continue to reach out to others though things such as the Alpha course, our youth work now headed up by Alex Stewart our part-time youth worker, as well as to care well for those we already have contact with. My thanks to the pastoral care team – Lynn Parish, Caroline Baskett, Jean Lawrence and Sue Gibbons - for their help and help and support with this.

Finally, my thanks to everyone all for the financial support given this past year (particularly with the gift day for the extension) as well as the giving of your time and talents to enable the church to function. A big thank you to John Taylor, our churchwarden, who has been ably supported by Lynn Parish, Ian Knight and Kate Forrest as assistant wardens. Thanks too to the members of our PCC, to our church co-ordinators Margaret Emsley, Sue Chinn and Isabella Barton, to Paul Ng and Alvin Lau as our treasurer and assistant treasurer, and to all who are part of our various church teams and who help in various ways. Lastly, my thanks to the clergy - Martin (who retired in July) Sarah, Rebecca, Steve and Mal - for all their help and support this past year too.

Jeremy Tear, April 2025

Church Warden's Report

It's been another extremely busy year behind the scenes for the Church Warden Team this year. With my working away with the RAF, the vast majority of the day to day tasks has fallen on the shoulders of the Vicar and the Assistant Wardens, Ian, Kate and Lynn. We have had lots of assistance from Joan, in her final year on the PCC, as well. The other PCC members have regularly attended meetings and have represented the congregation well over the year, with some good discussions on the way forward. In April, we meet to make a final decision on Fit for Mission and by the time you read this report, we will have made a decision on the way forward for St. Mary's.

The disruption caused by the building of the extension caused lots of issues, including the tough decision to close the balcony temporarily to comply with fire regulations. This restricted a number of activities over the festive period. But!! We made it to the other side and our fabulous extension is already being used by the Church and local community. Thanks to Margaret and Andie for their project management.

Since Covid restrictions were lifted, our aim was still to protect the congregation as much as possible from any spread of any virus. The "Dual Cup System" for Communion seems to be working well and our plan is to retain this option going forward.

The individual teams running routine and special events have been outstanding again this year, the garden looks better than ever, successful community lunches have restarted and fayres happened. Thank you all so much for your support. The church lighting upgrade to LED makes us greener for the environment.

I end my annual report with a tribute to Jeremy. Over the last 3 years, I have discovered a lot about his dedication to St. Mary's, his attitude to life and his endless patience with a Warden whose brain is often full and forgets an awful lot. His attention to detail and his unsung work 'behind the scenes' is to be admired by all. Without a shadow of a doubt, Jeremy made our extension happen, and he has taught me to have real faith in my times of doubt. I wish him and his family the very best in his new endeavours in Liverpool and hope that you can all join us for the faith meal after the 10am service on 1 June 25.

It gets interesting after this, let's do it together.....

John Taylor, Church Warden

St Marys Church Great Sankey

Treasurer's Report

This is a Summary Report of the church's financial position as of 31st December 2024

1. Overall Balance and Fund balance details

The overall balance of Church funds amounts to £107,493 which was (£70,639) less than the 2023 balance.

These balances were split over several different bank accounts held by St Mary's. They represented several different funds set aside for the Church's operation.

1a) Church Hall Fund (Designated Fund) balance £78,019 which was a decrease in 2023 of (£70,345) due to the extension work being carried out on the church as agreed by the PCC.

1b) Building & Restoration & Roof Funds (Restricted Funds) balance £2,243 had an increase of £445 in donations in 2024.

1c) Community Lunch Fund (Designated Fund) balance £2,177 after the costs for food and the 1/3 of the net balance being transferred to the General fund towards Heating & Lighting as agreed by the PCC. This was an increase of £464 in 2024.

1d) General Fund (Unrestricted Fund) pays for the normal running costs of the church. The balance was £1,772 which was (£753) lower than 2023.

1e) Tithing (Restricted Fund) balance of £10,052 which is £672 higher than 2023. We have paid out £5,050 in charitable donations (listed below) and received income of £5,722.

Charitable donations had been made this year to:

Locally: Booklets for primary school leavers

International and others: Church Army, Leprosy Mission

1f) Garden and Flower Funds (Restricted Funds) The Garden fund balance was £218 which was made up income and expenditure during the year. The Flower fund balance was £89 which had no movements during the year.

1g) Other Restricted & Designated – Designated balance £7,358 Restricted balance £5,565.

2. Parish Share

The Parish Share is an amount payable to the Diocese as a contribution to the costs of clergy in the Diocese.

At the end of 2023 the balance owing was £45,381. The Parish Share contribution expected for 2024 was £68,101 whereas the PCC agreed that we could manage to pay £51,200. By end of December 2024, we paid £46,933, leaving a closing balance of £66,549. We settled the balance of 4,267 in 2025. For 2025, the expected payment is £53,132, and the PCC have indicated that we hope to pay £51, 200 once again.

3. Income

The income for the year amounted to £168,225, out of which £94,854.55 was extension-related. The usual (non-extension) income of £73, 370.45 was £17,365.47 less than in 2023, mainly due to less one-off grants and donations.

Regular giving, loose plate and ad hoc donations are down by £1,491 against 2023, the reason being perhaps the effect of fund-raising activities focusing on the extension project.

4. Expenditure

The Expenditure for 2024 was £238,864, where £165,170 was extension-related. The usual (non extension) expenditure of £73,694 was £46,364 less than that in 2023, mainly due to the Quinquennial work undertaken that year.

I would like to thank all the staff at St Mary's who continue to support the Church and myself with day to running, services and financial information.

The figures have been rounded and detailed figures can be found in the Church's full year end accounts (2024). The Parish share balance owed is a note to the accounts and not on the reports.

Paul Ng, St Mary's Treasurer

Planned Giving – Gift Aid Envelopes

The Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) continues to be the most popular way to donate to the Parish. This is the most advantageous way for the Parish, including a consistent and regular form of income, monthly receipt of gift aid (improving cash flow) and a reduction in the volume of cash to be counted by the volunteers each week. The monetary value of the PGS is considered elsewhere in the annual report. However, a small number of donors still use weekly donation envelopes presented on the collection plate and these donations still contribute significantly to the Parish income. In 2024 these donations amounted to £5,184, producing £1,296 in gift

aid reclaims. Loose cash donations via the collection plate amounted to £7,074. It is expected that this will produce £1,768 in tax relief under the Small Donation Gift Aid Scheme. These tax recovery estimates are subject to HMRC review. Leaflets detailing the Parish Giving Scheme are available in church if any donor requires further information.

Terry Finnegan, Gift Aid Coordinator

Electoral Roll Report

The total number of people on the new roll stands at 67.

Jean Lawrence, Electoral Roll Officer

Safeguarding Report

I took over the role of Parish Safeguarding Officer in June 2023 along with the role of Lead Recruiter. This has proved to be a challenging role, with some volunteers failing to recognise the importance of meeting the Church of England requirements, despite support from Jeremy who kindly arranged and led three safeguarding services in January 2025.

I have continued to review the filing system and spreadsheet log to help us to monitor and maintain compliance with DBS checks and safeguarding training updates.

As part of the Fit for Mission process we have now been allocated a Safeguarding dashboard to support our reporting and monitoring process. This will need to be populated with input from members of the PCC and will provide a useful tool for auditing and producing reports.

The Church of England is planning to carry out audits of Parish safeguarding compliance in 2026, so we will therefore all need to work together to ensure that St. Mary's can demonstrate compliance and is using the dashboard effectively. This is the responsibility of the Clergy, PCC, Churchwarden as well as the PSO. This shared work will be particularly relevant once Jeremy has left us.

Online safeguarding training remains a challenge for some volunteers who are less familiar with technology or don't have access. I am willing to meet with people on a 1-1 basis to assist with this and have contacted the Diocese to request training to deliver face to face sessions and am waiting for this to be arranged.

During my time in this role there has only been one safeguarding referral made to me. Following discussion and liaison with the Diocese it was confirmed there was no action required.

I would like to thank Jeremy for his support with this role and wish him well for the future.

Caroline Baskett, Safeguarding Officer

Sunday School Lightnings

In April 2024, Clare Grimes, Jane Pearson and I were supported by David Scarisbrick, Frances Knight, Caroline Kay and Sharon Sin-Pin Leung. Sadly, Frances Knight died in April 2024 and Caroline Kay was unable to help in the latter part of the year. Lynn Parish kindly helped when no cover was available.

The number of children attending in April 2024 was still low. However, since September 2024, we have seen an increase in numbers and now have a small group of regular attendees.

As part of the “Growing Faith” initiative, which encourages alternative ways of worship, we held our first intergenerational “Cafe Church” service in June. We received a lot of positive feedback and held our second Advent themed “Cafe Church” in December. Looking forward, we hope to hold a “Cafe Church” service once every 3 months.

Children and leaders continue to meet and sit at the back of church and leave after the first hymn, returning at the end of the service to rejoin parents and receive a blessing at Communion. Once work began on the church extension, with no access to the family room, children and leaders remained at the back of church. Sessions were relatively simple, aiming to create minimum disruption to the service. The children enjoy sharing their work with the congregation at the end of the service and joining in with instruments in the final hymn.

In October Jane led our first “Eco church” session, when the children ventured into the church grounds, completing activities based on the Landmark Trust’s “Autumn” theme. This was received with great enthusiasm. We hope to hold an “Eco” session each new season in the coming year.

In December the children performed a “Godly style” Nativity Play, in which the congregation took an active part. The Nativity was received with great joy and appreciation of the children’s efforts. At the end of the service, we were very sad to say goodbye to Clare Grimes. We really appreciate all the years of hard work that Clare gave to Lightnings and wish her every success for the future.

In January, we were excited to move into the new extension and look forward to adapting to our new space. We are also delighted to welcome Margaret Emsley, who has kindly volunteered to become a leader and look forward to working with her. Ideally, we need another helper to join the team. We continue to learn more about the “Growing Faith” initiative and are exploring new ways in which St. Mary’s can connect with school and home. We would like to pray for all the children within the West Warrington Team and wish them well on their journey through faith.

Jean Lawrence

Schools' Report

St. Mary's continued to have a good relationship with its local schools in 2024.

Great Sankey and Barrow Hall Primary schools came to church before Christmas for their annual services. Park Road Primary also came to visit the church in April and October, and I went take part in their School Harvest service.

Secondary school-wise, Martin Thorpe led the Great Sankey High School annual service of remembrance for former students and staff in March. Alex Stewart, our new part time youth worker, began working in Penketh High in January and quickly established a good working relationship there being invited to lead assemblies, take RE lessons and mentor children. He also set up a weekly drop-in session at the Penketh baths on Friday evenings.

I continued to go into the nursery to provide monthly bible stories for the rising 3s and pre-schoolers. The nursery also came to church at Easter, Harvest and at Christmas when I shared with them and their parents/grandparents the Christian meaning of these special seasons in the life of the church. They also came for their end of 'school' year visit in July.

I am grateful to all who helped me with the nursery and primary schools' services, to Martin and Alex for their work with our secondary schools, as well as to the members of St. Mary's who continue to go into local primary schools as part of the Open the Book teams. If you would like to be involved with this important part of our engagement with our local community, please let me or Alex know.

Jeremy Tear

Deanery Synod Report

It's been a busy year for Deanery Synod.

Deanery Parish Share (DPS)

An agreement about individual church contributions in 2025 was reached and has resulted in St. Mary's paying a lower parish share in 2025, for which we are grateful.

Clergy Deployment Plans and Deanery Parish Share (DPS)

The Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committee (DMPC) proposed a significant change to our clergy numbers from to 10 to 8:

- i. One appointment to St. Margaret's and St. Andrews.
- ii. One appointment to St. James and St. Barnabas.
- iii. One appointment to Christ Church, Padgate and Church Collective.

Fit for Mission (FfM)

- i. The Navigation Team has completed its survey of church and each church has been given a short list of outstanding jobs to be progressed.
- ii. The Finance Team has met fortnightly to look at how the centralisation of accounts could work and benefit parishes.
- iii. A series of meetings called The Cultivate Course was held for lay people to explore how we could take the Gospel “out” into our communities by looking for different ways of “doing church”.

Church Collective Update

Looking beyond the bounds of the existing deanery churches, Church Collective continues to work across the town, focussing much effort on The Youth Zone which regularly hosts 200-300 young people in any one session.

Jeremy Tear

10th Warrington (Sankey St Mary’s) Scout Group Report

It’s been another busy year for 10th Warrington Scouts with the group fulfilling its purpose; preparing young people with skills for life.

Our Squirrels section for 4 and 5 year olds has expanded and has been very popular and successful. The leader team have done a fantastic job and delivered some great experiences for the young people. In common with the other more established sections we are always in need of more adult volunteers to keep things running. If you know of anyone who might be interested in helping please get in touch.

All of the sections have run a varied and exciting programme with many craft activities, outdoor events, camps and getting involved in the local community. We’ve also attended all-age worship at Church and our beavers have got involved in some of the services.

We are happy to say that once again we are holding a spring bedding plant sale this year. Working with other Scout groups in the area we have a selection of great quality, professionally-grown plants for sale. Please support us if you can and visit our on-line shop at: www.warringtonwestscouts.org.uk/plant-sale.

Lastly, if you know any young people who are interested in joining scouts, or anyone who would be interested in volunteering with us in any way (not just section leadership, we are also looking for help with maintenance and trustee board members), please put them in touch and we will be happy to have a chat.

Thank you.

Ian Skilling, Group Lead Volunteer

Girlguiding Report

Our Cheshire Forest District has now been restructured as the numbers of girls and voluntary leaders have been affected since the Covid period. Bucking the trend our units have seen an increase in girls between 4-18 years.

In our area we have girls in 6 Units: 2 Rainbows units, 2 Brownie Units and 1 Guide and 1 Ranger Unit affiliated to St. Marys church. We have participated in leading the annual Girlguiding Carol service, Rainbows and Brownies have taken part in an All-Age service and collected Food for our food bank and toys for the town at Christmas.

One unit supports a local cancer charity, Claire House, and have also done their annual bulb planting and pots of spring bulbs have been given to those housebound and carers within Great Sankey.

Lynn Parish

St. Mary's Community Lunch

This year's run of Community Lunch was interrupted by building works at church which saw a postponement for 6 months. Community Lunch resumed in February 2025, taking advantage of the wonderful facilities of our new fully equipped kitchen.

We were very pleased that following the health and hygiene inspection in March this year, our grading was restored to the top rating of 5, the new extension having provided necessary implementations needed for this (hand washing area in kitchen and hot water to the toilet areas).

Jeremy continued with his "Thought for the Day" which is still well received by all attendees. Community Lunch is well appreciated by all our visitors who say they enjoy, not only the food, but the joyful friendly atmosphere provided by all the CL team.

Again, a huge thank you is extended to all the CL volunteers for their continued generous contributions each month to enable the lunch to be provided. Grateful thanks for giving so much of their time each month also in attending and running the lunch service.

Joan Rotheram, Community Lunch Leader

Alpha Course

The Alpha course has again been run successfully this year from September to December 2024 led by Jeremy, Debbie Horley and myself. Due to the building works at church, all of our meetings were held at the Vicarage.

The group this year included a good mix of ages which helped to encourage more varied opinions on the topics discussed. Over the duration of the course, we had an adequate number of volunteers who provided meals for each session. These were very much enjoyed

and appreciated. Grateful thanks to Emma, Jeremy's wife who hosted and cleared away after each meal, having also provided us with some of her delicious homemade desserts. Thank you, Emma.

The course away day was held at an old Methodist Chapel in High Leigh, Cheshire. It was a beautiful October day, very much enjoyed by all participants who were able to attend the day.

Feedback suggests that all course attendees gained much from the small group discussions which have enabled them to deepen their understanding, teaching, scripture and fellowship with one another. They also commented that they felt the course has aided their progress and personal development of their faith. Two participants went on to Confirmation in March 2025.

Joan Rotheram

Music Group

We meet most Thursday evenings and are blessed with 2 keyboard players, a flautist, drummer, 2 guitarists and 4 singers.

We have learned new, older and modern songs, including You Tube music in the service.

We always endeavour to enhance the worship and enjoy the challenges!

Lynn Parish and the Music Group

Traidcraft

I have had some opportunities over the last year to provide fairly-traded chocolate, tea, coffee and items for people to buy.

I supply the church with tea and coffee to maintain our support for Fairtrade.

Lynn Parish

Garden Report

At this moment of time, we have a trusty band of three staff with an additional two others who join us on specific days.

The trusty three are Eric McGonagle, David Scarisbrick and Kate Forrest. Derek Bowden is our 'Honorary President' conferred after many years of service. The additional two are Debbie Horley and Edmund Chiang.

A little history to set the scene. Derek and Bob Woodall in 2001, set up and established the Remembrance Garden where the ashes of any members of the church could be buried. Eric joined the team at the same time. David joined the team in 2010 and Kate joined around 2018. Members of the team included Jack Lloyd and Ted Rigby, both of whom left some years ago.

The church garden is large and extensive and is manageable if certain parts are left unattended. Despite this, Eric does a sterling job every week keeping the lawn well mown and every so often tackles the bushes, keeping them under control.

Two flower beds, one in front of the shed and the other one running down the side of the church are becoming established with a variety of perennials. Eric now is planting up annuals in a flowerbed by the main door as well as other parts of the garden.

During the year, on about four occasions, we are joined by Debbie and Edmund who have helped recently planting dwarf laurel bushes down each side of the ramp at the back of church leading into the new extension. We were also joined by Jeremy at that time. They have also helped also in planting up plants in the front such as crocuses and dwarf daffodils. Eric and David planted the rest of the bushes at the front of the new extension.

The church is keen to obtain a Gold Eco award, having recently gained the Silver one. To this end, apart from planting up more perennials and annuals in the garden, we have recently set up three new bird boxes, regularly fill the bird feeders and plan to clear a large grass patch by the side of the small stone memorial area and create a wild-flower garden.

Kate Forrest and Derek Bowden

Church Mission Society (CMS)

Church Mission Society (CMS) is an Anglican mission agency that seeks to share the love of Jesus with people in both word and deed around the world, including here in the UK. As a church, we support Eric and Sandra Reed, who are our CMS mission partners in the Philippines. They work on an organic farm and help local church leaders to reach out to their communities. They have two children, Peter and Atiyah, who are working and studying in this country. In 2024, we agreed to give £2,000 to support the Reeds from our tithing fund.

I am pleased to say that Eric and Sandra came to visit St. Mary's on 3 November to update us about their work. The PCC has also subsequently made an additional payment of £500 to support the Reeds in 2025. We are still looking for a new CMS representative to champion its work in our congregation, so if you would be interested in doing this, please let me know.

Jeremy Tear

Church Army

During the past year 12 people have taken the CA inFocus magazine, which includes prayers for individual evangelists and information about CA projects and Centres of Mission. Bing Liu, evangelist at Rochdale Centre of Mission came to preach and inform us about his involvement there. Following this the vicar and one parishioner made a trip to Rochdale to see Bing in action. We support him through our Giving Fund.

Church Army is facing a major upheaval in the way they operate by concentrating on their original remit to evangelise and seek “the lonely and the lost”, instead of focusing on social problems. Increased expenses and dwindling resources have also been a factor in decision making. Please continue to pray for all CA evangelists and the work they do in bringing the knowledge and love of Jesus into the lives of those who don’t know Him.

This will be my last report as I step back from being CA rep after 11 years. Please consider whether this is something you could take on.

Janet Kerswell

The Leprosy Mission



In the west “Leprosy” is almost a forgotten disease ... globally however 200,000 people are newly diagnosed each year ... that’s about two people every minute!

Leprosy has existed for over 4000 years and is even mentioned in the bible, written about 68 times! It is a devastating illness. Starting as a skin condition causing severe nerve damage leaving those affected, with severe deformities and disabilities. Left untreated, it can be contagious, meaning people become both unwell and socially isolated.

The Leprosy Mission was founded 150 years ago. Its current mission statement says, “Following Jesus Christ, we aim to bring about transformation, breaking the chains of Leprosy and empowering people to attain healing, dignity and life in all its fullness.”.

We at St. Mary’s continue to play our role in supporting this statement. Last year, I took over the role of church representative from Janet Kerswell who has been a faithful friend to the Mission for many years. Currently, several of our congregation support the work financially through home collection boxes, by direct debit and through supporting fund-raising events. If you would like to join them, please contact me. Prayer is also of vital importance and several of our congregation receive the Mission Updates via the “New Day” magazine and the yearly prayer diary.

In the next year I hope to hold two fundraising events and on Sunday 22nd June at our 10:00am service we will be welcoming the new Co-ordinator for the North West, Sam Stockill, to bring us up to date with the Mission’s work.

Janet Tanner

PCC Secretary's Report

There were 13 PCC meetings held in the year on 17th January, 21st February, 20th March, 28th April (after the APCM), 15th May, 26th May, 19th June, 17th July, 28th July, 18th September, 16th October, 20th November and 4th December (in the church or at one of the members' houses). No meeting is planned for August or around Christmas.

The APCM was held on 28th April in the church.

The PCC also reviewed the minutes from the Standing Committee meetings held on 4th January, 14th March, 1st May, 9th July, 4th September and 6th November.

Throughout the year, the PCC discussed various items besides standard church business. These included the Fit for Mission process and related decisions, LYCIG (Leading Your Church to Growth) actions, youth engagement activities, the approval for David Tanner to preach and/lead worship and for Alex Steward to preach, completing the pyramid review, achieving Fairtrade place of worship status, conducting an environmental awareness survey and obtaining Eco Church status, discussing the organisation of the racial justice exhibition and film screening, legacy bequests, and the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith. It also closely monitored the construction and completion of the extension while considering its best use and reviewing hiring rates and requests.

Lisa Yu, PCC Secretary

Children's Society Report

The Children's Society are a well-established national charity that help vulnerable and needy children, many in our local area. One of their traditional ways of collecting is to give people 'House Boxes', small sealed money boxes that people can place loose change in throughout the year. These are collected early in the New Year and administered by local coordinators. This year's collection raised over £800. We would like to thank all box holders and donors for their ongoing support for this very worthy cause. In recent years, our number of box holders has reduced and we would like you to consider taking on a box. After Easter, John will offer people the chance to do this; the difference between this method and traditional giving is that you can deposit as little or as much as you like, whenever able. A little bit of loose change can make a real difference.

The Christingle Christmas Eve Services were disrupted by our building work this year, but still raised a total of over £450 in church, close to last year's figure! Some people may also have donated directly through the Children's Society website. Many thanks to all who contributed so generously.

This brings the total amount donated to the Children's Society from St. Mary's Church in 2024-25 to over £1250, another fantastic response, which we hope to continue into 2026.

John and Claire Taylor

Church Magazine Report

The St Mary's Church Magazine is published bi-monthly and there were about 425 copies produced last year.

I collect all the material for the magazine and compose the finished article. I also collect the money for the magazine which is then forwarded to our Church Treasurer.

The magazine covers most of the events and occasions in then church and as a result we know what future events will be held.

A big thank you to Eric McGonagle, who does a sterling job in producing high quality photographs for the magazine.

Thank you also to Edmond Chiang, one of our Hong Kong friends, and Joan Rotherham who take the photographs in Eric's absence.

Many thanks also to Sue Gibbons and Clive Stannard for their help in distributing and collecting the money in for the magazines that they deliver. Sadly, Clive passed away this year.

Emma Thompson from Sankey Valley Methodist, who for many years printed the magazines, left the area with her husband John last July to settle in Edinburgh. Our magazines are now printed by Jamie at Cheshire Print.

With regards to the contents of the magazine I would ask all our readers to send myself or Eric anything that you may think would be of interest to our readers.

You will have noticed that Eric always has his camera with him - he has taken thousands of photographs which he still has.

Houghton's Funeral Directors is the only Advertiser we have now.

St Mary's Church Magazine Account: January – December 2024

Total income from sale of magazines and advert: **£452.00**

Total outlay for printing of 6 editions for the year: **£406.43**

This leaves a balance of **£45.57** which will go to church funds.

Jo Jackson, Magazine Editor

Eco Team Report

Work has continued during the past year on improving the environmental impact of St. Mary's Church in the categories of Worship and Teaching, Buildings, Land, Community and Local Engagement and Lifestyle. The ultimate aim was to be able to submit an application for a

Silver Eco Church award, following our Bronze award in 2022. To do this we now needed to achieve Silver status in each of the five categories (previously some categories could have remained at Bronze level as long as the overall score was at Silver level). Ultimately, as stated elsewhere in this report, we were awarded a Silver award in February 2025.

With support from Zara Ross from Faiths4Change we also conducted a Lifestyle Survey and followed that up with a “Lunch and Chat” event to discuss environmental lifestyle issues with members of the congregation. We will be using the information gained from these initiatives as we move forward with our “Eco Church” work and we especially thank Zara for her ongoing support.

At the same time, we are committed to working towards the Church of England’s Net Zero Carbon 2030 initiative, which also includes a commitment to Eco Church. Initiatives we have already undertaken, such as switching to a 100% green electricity tariff and having energy-efficient lighting installed throughout, are part of this initiative, but, moving forward we will also need to consider “big” initiatives such as solar panels and a heat pump.

As indicated by the Eco Church categories of Community and Local Engagement and Lifestyle, embedding environmentally friendly behaviour into our lifestyle is something that needs us all to be engaged in, so we thank you for your commitment to this. We would also welcome anyone who would like to join our team.

Margaret Emsley on behalf of the ECO team (Kate Forrest and Jeremy Tear)

Messy Church

We started 19 months ago and have a good team of helpers to facilitate the activities, story, worship and food.

We have had some (around 18 each month including helpers) who have come regularly and have come to experience this form of church on a Saturday afternoon.

We advertise personally, with baptism families, through the West Warrington Church Facebook page and through services in church.

Edmond kindly recorded a video to give people a taster of what and why we have Messy church. This has been played in the church during the service when other groups are in the church.

Ages range from 1-6, 7-12, 13-15, 25-85 years.

Lynn Parish and the Messy team

Small Groups

The small groups for study, prayer, care and witness have continued to meet throughout 2024 in people's homes throughout the parish, including in Lent when members of other churches in West Warrington joined to give them an ecumenical flavour.

During the year, the studies focused on the parables, with the exception of Lent when they followed the Churches Together course 'On the Third Day' which focused on the resurrection and what it means for us to live as resurrection people.

I am grateful to the group leaders who give their time and hospitality to lead the groups in different parts of our parish – Keith and Ali White, Janet Kerswell and Joan Rotheram, and David and Janet Tanner. If you do not currently attend one of our groups, why not give them a try? The groups meet on Monday afternoons, and Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. Speak to me or one of the group leaders for further details.

Jeremy Tear

Great Sankey, St Mary
Statement of Financial Activities
For the period from 01 January 2024 to 31 December 2024

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Receipts					
Donations and legacies	129,397.10	707.22	-	130,104.32	76,486.12
Income from charitable activities	10,196.16	-	-	10,196.16	6,878.00
Other trading activities	20,010.15	346.50	-	20,356.65	4,064.11
Investments	7,448.73	-	-	7,448.73	3,307.69
Other income	119.11	-	-	119.11	-
Total income	167,171.25	1,053.72	-	168,224.97	90,735.92
Payments					
Raising funds	4,997.50	-	-	4,997.50	421.73
Expenditure on charitable activities	232,316.05	1,550.76	-	233,866.81	119,636.42
Other expenditure	-	-	-	-	-
Total expenditure	237,313.55	1,550.76	-	238,864.31	120,058.15
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	(70,142.30)	(497.04)	-	(70,639.34)	(29,322.23)
Transfers:					
Gross transfers between funds - in	15,025.94	-	-	15,025.94	14,014.55
Gross transfers between funds - out	(15,025.94)	-	-	(15,025.94)	(14,014.55)
Other recognised gains / losses					
Gains/losses on investment assets	-	-	-	-	-
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	(70,142.30)	(497.04)	-	(70,639.34)	(29,322.23)
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	169,520.06	8,612.72	-	178,132.78	207,455.01
Total funds carried forward	99,377.76	8,115.68	-	107,493.44	178,132.78

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT (SORP 2015) TO THE PCC OF
ST. MARYS, GREAT SANKEY

I report to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St. Marys, Great Sankey on the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2024, as set out on the pages of your Annual Report, which comprise of the Balance sheet, Statement of Financial Activities, and the related notes.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND EXAMINER

The PCC are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. They consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed. I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Association of Accounting Technicians.

It is my responsibility to:

- 1- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- 2- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directors given by the Charity Commission (under section 125(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- 3- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

BASIS OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting reports kept by the PCC 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 PCC concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to the matters set out in the statement below.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT

No material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

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

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



P. Carty MAAT
Carty and Co Accountants Ltd
234 Manchester Road
Warrington
WA1 3BD

Dated: 04/04/2025