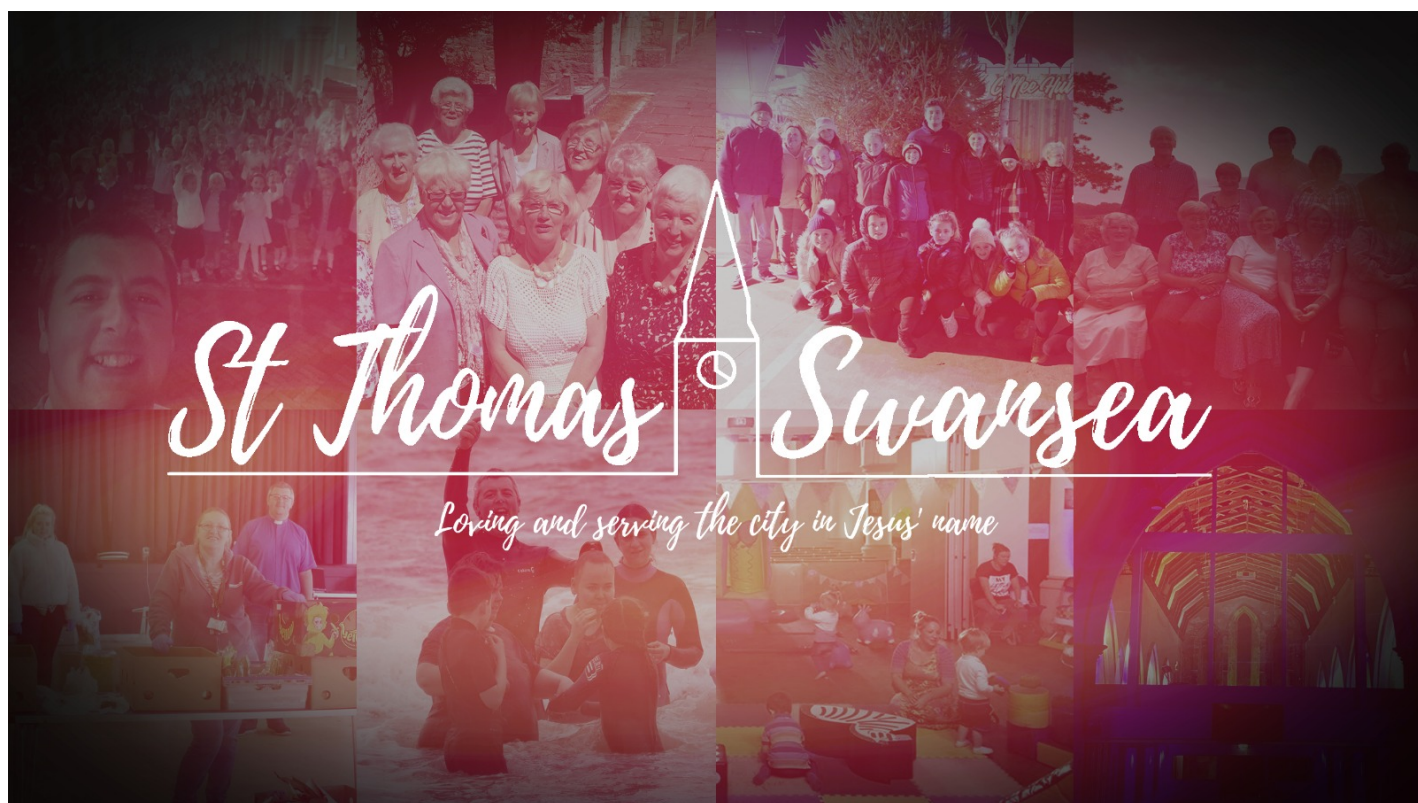


# St Thomas Swansea



## Annual Report 2021/22



## Staff Team

**Vicar:** Rev Steven Bunting MBE  
07816421683  
[vicar@sts.church](mailto:vicar@sts.church)

**Operations Manager:** Rachel Bennett  
01792 455671  
[Rachel.Bennett@sts.church](mailto:Rachel.Bennett@sts.church)

**Café Assistants:** Marisa Rosser and Lynne Miners

**Grounds Keeper:** Russell Fuller

## Social Media and Communications

Parish Website: [www.sts.church](http://www.sts.church)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/stthomasswansea](https://www.facebook.com/stthomasswansea)  
Instagram: @Stthomaswansea  
Twitter @Stthomasswansea

## Weekly Services

Sunday: St Thomas 10.30am (breakfast at 10.00am)

Wednesday: St Thomas 11.30am (followed by community lunch)

## Statistics

Electoral Roll : 56

Avg Attendance Sunday: 55  
Family Service :80

Avg Attendance Wednesday: 12

Dear Friends,

The last 12 months have again been incredibly challenging for us all as individuals and as a church. We have journeyed again through the tightening of restrictions, the easing of restrictions, to no more restrictions. This has without a doubt taken its toll on each one of us.

Despite this journey, we have enjoyed settling into the work and ministry within the completely redeveloped and repurposed St Thomas Church, which is without doubt having a significant impact on the community. With a growing congregation and a social outreach programme that saw over 50,000 meals delivered in 2021.

Now more than ever, we want to be a church that looks up in worship to God, looks in for discipleship and pastoral care and looks out as we witness and serve our community.

However, a special mention must be made to those members of the church and community that give of their time and finances to assist in the work that we do here. I will always remain grateful to each of them. It is also essential that as we seek to grow in 2022 we commit to going deeper into our relationship with Jesus through gathering, through prayer, through reading scripture and serving the church family.

2022 will see significant challenges as we look to put ourselves on a balanced financial footing and remove a dependency on short term grants. We also rejoice in the appointment of our new Bishop John Lomas and look forward to the renewed vision and missional opportunities that will present us.

I want to place on record my thanks to the leadership team of the church and a particular thanks to Barbara Somerford who has served the church as treasurer for many many years! Also a huge thanks to Robert Smith as he stands down as Vicars warden after serving nearly 7 years. This is our church, and we are loving and serving the city in Jesus' name.

With love and prayers

Steve







## Church Services

Encouragement and equipping matters to us and we've been committed to encountering God's love as well as inspiring one another to make a difference in His world. However, during these COVID-19 times, we've been learning how to live a gathered and scattered life like never before with services taking place online for 16 months and with in-person services beginning again in May 2021.



Our services include a time of sung worship, prayer, reflection, and communion to strengthen our lives and seek to know the presence of Jesus for ourselves and our communities.

As we met online for our services, we also participated in a 'week of prayer' and completed the 'unanswered prayer course' together.



We returned to the newly refurbished St Thomas Church in May 2021 followed by a delicious church lunch to mark the opening of the building.

We were also delighted to host our first Alpha in early 2022, which was a simple but life-changing course for those in attendance.

We are consistently encouraged as we love God, grow as a family & increase in hope! There are always new people to be served, reached, and blessed and as we continue to seek God in this coming year, it is



our expectation to welcome more individuals and families through our doors.

## Boys Brigade

The Boys Brigade and Girls Association is a significant and important part of the church family, with over 70 children attending across two evenings each week. It's been a fantastic year welcoming back the children into the church building for face-to-face evenings, under the new restrictions in May 2021.

In July, a group from our eldest sections, walked 14 miles as part of the relay towards the Cop26 summit in Glasgow.



On Sunday 11th November, 13 children from the from our Boys Brigade and Girls Association represented the BB at the National Remembrance Service at the Cenotaph in London. It was a great opportunity for these young people to represent the city and march in front of the Armed Forces, Veterans, and members of the

Royal Family.

Later in November around 50 of our members, from 5 to 14 years old, braved the cold to take part in the Swansea Christmas parade. They looked amazing, as they spread the good news of Jesus, claiming 'light shines in the darkness'.

As we approached Christmas another group of Boys Brigade children helped to pack a significant amount of the





1,000 blessing bags that [St Thomas Swansea](#) were giving out to bless the local community.

Earlier this year, each BB section took part in a bake off to raise money for Red Nose Day, selling their delicious bakes at our family service and raised a fantastic £80. We have had a fantastic first year back together, with fun, informative and excellent activities. We couldn't be prouder of these young people and couldn't be more thankful for the leaders who contribute each week to this ministry!

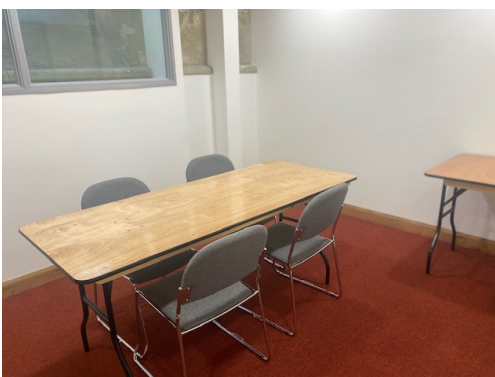
## Weddings

Weddings with us in St Thomas Swansea are great! Hosting a couple's most special day is an absolute treat, and the Vicar, has clocked up more than 65 weddings with lots already booked in for 2022/23!



We love to partner with couples to ensure their day includes everything they want. More than this, to prepare the couple for a life of long-lasting marriage together.

People increasingly love to use St Thomas as their wedding location and our facilities as the party and celebration venue for afters with a bar. The new refurbished building has been designed to provide wedding receptions, conferences and other paid for services with all profits going to social outreach programmes like our food poverty and baby bank.



## Meetings

Within the newly refurbished building, we have several meeting rooms that are



hired each week, including the foot clinic, the benefits office, the housing office and foodbank and agency meetings, which in turn continue the work of loving and serving the community.

## **Funerals**

The loss of a loved one can be a very difficult time and over the past year we have cared for and supported 83 families.

## **Tiny Toms**

In September 2021 we relaunched our toddlers group, moving it from St Stephens to St Thomas and rebranding it 'Tiny Toms'. Although we have had to work within the ever-changing restrictions, each week we are fully booked and have a waiting list.

The purpose of Tiny Toms is to facilitate a welcoming, loving, and safe place for parents and carers to attend with their young children between the ages of 0-4 years old. Tiny Tom's also strives to create an environment for children to learn how to play together whilst have enriching learning experiences through play, story time, crafts, and playtime. We also create a space for parents and carers to meet others; to realise they aren't on their own and to encourage them further in their parenting and caring journey.



## **Foodbank**

In March 2021 we made our new home in the St Thomas Church building. We have a fantastic team that assist with food collections, sorting of stock and bag packing. We are the only foodbank in Swansea



open 5 days per week and we see over 100 individuals through our doors each week.

## Surplus Food and Fare Share

Each evening we have a group of volunteers who collect surplus food from supermarkets throughout the city. This food is then brought back to the church, is sorted and distributed the following day for the public and food bank users. This is a fantastic way to help reduce food poverty and food waste in our community. We are very excited to further this, later this year with the community fridge project.

We also do a weekly collection from Fare Share. Fare Share is an organisation that takes quality, in date surplus food and redistributes it around Wales to charities, schools and communities. Each week we assess what we can best use our food collection for. For example, several items can be used by our foodbank, others can be given out as surplus food, or other items can be used for our community lunch. Recently we have increased our membership tier to allow us to serve even more people in need in the local area.

## Baby Basics

We also made the Baby Basics charity a new home in St Thomas Church. This year we have supported new mothers and families including teenage mums, people seeking asylum and women fleeing domestic abuse and trafficking and those who are struggling to meet the financial and practical burden of looking after a new baby. We have provided much needed essentials and equipment including prams, Moses' baskets, and highchairs.

## The Spire Café



When the restrictions eased in May 2021, we opened our community café, also known as the Spire Café for sit in and take away options. Over the summer period we served mid-week roast dinners and fish Friday specials, delivering between 30-50 meals each week to our local community.

We have since enhanced our menu over time, offering the popular 'Spire' breakfast, tasty burgers, and delicious milkshakes and much more. We have also hosted and catered for the Electoral College of the Diocese of Swansea and Brecon, the Lord Lieutenant's AGM, the Christian Vision for Men's breakfast, the COP26 Prayer Breakfast and several wedding receptions.



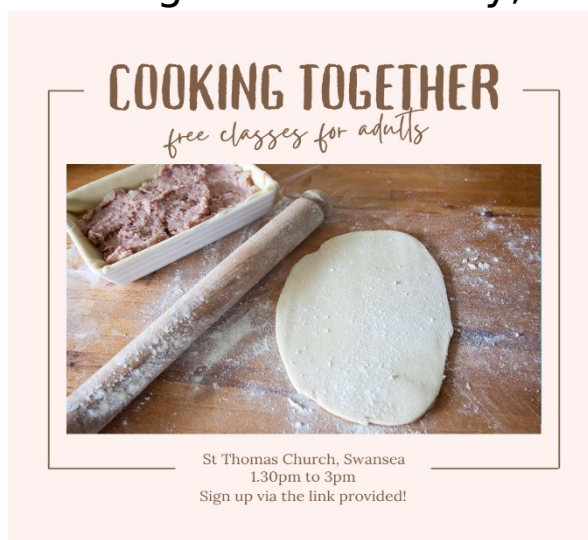
Each week we have also hosted and catered for a free community meal which sees between 20-40 people attend each week. This free weekly community meal encourages members of the community, particularly those who are older and more isolated to come together for a two-course meal and social activities with others.



## Cooking Together

Also, within the Spire Café we have a training kitchen facility; a core aspect of its usage is to train adults and children to utilise ingredients whilst cooking nutritious and affordable meals.

With an increase in numbers of those accessing foodbank parcels, some of the recipients face the problem of not knowing what to do with the 3-day essentials they receive in their emergency food parcels.





We are passionate about ensuring the recipients can make the most of their limited resources. In the autumn term we ran a series of classes called 'cooking together' to increase confidence in the kitchen, whilst educating those on how to make the most of their food parcels and keep families going during their time of need.

All those in attendance left with more confidence in the kitchen and encouraged to try new things, whilst also enjoying a tasty meal each week for themselves and their families.

## Summer of Fun

Throughout July and August, we hosted 5 weeks of 'summer fun' for local families and children, with a wide range of sessions. From breakfast and board games, bake-offs, messy play, science experiments and family film afternoons – lots of fun was had. This was also a fantastic opportunity to provide a fun and free environment for families, and the refurbished church was fantastic for meeting all the needs and helping facilitate all the different types of sessions.



## Breakfast and Board Games

Over the past year it has become more apparent through the work of our food bank that families, especially children are particularly vulnerable and have trouble accessing adequate food. There are worrying trends indicating that provision over the summer holidays may cause additional pressure on families.



Throughout August and the October and February half terms we provided daily hot breakfasts for families along with an opportunity for some fun with the added element of board games.



# Christmas

As we approached the Christmas period, we planned many different outreach sessions and church services. However, due to the tightening of restrictions and the increase in Covid-19 cases, we had to re-evaluate these and cancel several of our plans.

However, we delivered a 'Santa Breakfast' which was a free event for the families in our community. We realised that not every family will be able to attend alternative paid events such as these elsewhere with their children. Therefore, we wanted to host a free family alternative to bring Christmas joy without the financial pressure on families this year.

We also partnered with HTB's Love Your Neighbour campaign to enable us to bless and meet the needs within the community. We committed to distributing 1000 blessing bags over the Christmas period through match funding. The blessing bags consisted of festive treats and a voucher for a warm meal in our church café. We sadly had to cancel the Christmas nativity, however we filmed it instead for it to be made available online.

Thankfully, we were able to have our Carols in Remembrance Service, our Christmas Eve 'Christingle' service and Christmas Day service. We also had the joy of cooking a two course Christmas Day meal for over 80 people.

## 2022/2023

We are loving and serving the community of St Thomas and the city



of Swansea more than ever before, through foodbank, baby basics and other community initiatives.

We are also excited to develop discipleship opportunities within our church family, explore additional children's work possibilities on a Sunday morning and host another Alpha course later this year.

We also look to build our identity as a resource church to support the mission of God across the whole Diocese of Swansea and Brecon wherever we can.

We continue to pray for God's direction and blessing in all that he has in store for us in 2022/23.

Thank you for journeying with us!

"Father, we hold before you our family in the Diocese of Swansea and Brecon  
and we open our hearts and minds to your Spirit: Bless us as we gather  
in your name; Guide us as we grow into the likeness of your Son;  
Lead us by your Spirit to go out and make disciples of others.  
God of our journeying, be our way and our truth and our life;  
our beginning and our end. We pray through Jesus our Lord.  
Amen."

## **Independent Examiner's Report**

**To the Trustees of The Parish of St Thomas and Kilvey**

### **ANNUAL REPORT 2021**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the of the accounts of St Thomas and Kilvey charity for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

#### **Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and Examiner**

The Parish Council members of the Parish of St Thomas and Kilvey (henceforth referred to as the PCC) as trustees 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 charities accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Charities Act;
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Charities Act); and
- 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 records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

#### **Independent examiner's statement**

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

- The accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act' or
- The accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- The accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of the 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 as 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.

Signed:



Date: 26/10/22

Name: Mr Daniel Priddy BSc, MA, MCGI

Address: 34 Glan Rheidol, Aberystwyth, SY23 3GG