

# Society for the Study of Theology

Promoting excellence in the study of Christian Theology by facilitating and shaping theological thought, conversation and community.

[www.theologysociety.org.uk](http://www.theologysociety.org.uk)

## **Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2024**

### **Annual Report**

#### **1. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

##### **Summary of Objectives**

‘The Society is established for the advancement of education, specifically to promote excellence in the study of Christian theology, in the UK and internationally. The Society aims to support all those engaged in theology, across the full range of approaches and church traditions; to facilitate and shape theological thought, conversation and community; to identify and discuss important themes, questions and dialogues which call for theological engagement; to explore the nature of, and to foster, theological integrity, responsibility and vocation; and to promote understanding of, and engagement with, theological work across a wide range of contexts including the academy and the churches.’

[www.theologysociety.org.uk/about-us/constitution/](http://www.theologysociety.org.uk/about-us/constitution/)

##### **Summary of Public Benefit**

The Executive Committee keeps the Society’s activities under review to ensure that they continue to reflect its aims. In carrying out this review, it makes reference to the Charity Commission’s general guidance on public benefit and in particular to its supplementary public guidance on the advancement of education for the public benefit. The Society ensures it meets the requirements of the Charity Commission through its Constitution.



## **Additional Activities**

The Society consolidated its work around Theology, Race, and inclusion. The 2024 conference featured plenary contributions from Lauren Winner and Carlton Turner, among others, in response to members' feedback about the importance of better representation of GMH scholars.

Some of the Society's membership addressed an open letter concerning the war in Gaza to the Committee, which was signed by a large number of theologians (some members of the Society and some not). The Committee presented a response to this letter at the AGM, where, following a spirited discussion, it was agreed that (1) the Society would establish a hardship fund for academics affected or displaced by the crisis in Gaza; and (2) the Society would conduct a review of the ethics and policies of its banking partners. In addition to this work, the Committee has begun planning an online event to facilitate a dialogue and reflection about the complicity of theology in the conflict. The event is designed in accordance with the Society's stated and charitable aims, and is due to take place in September 2024.

Discussions have also been initiated with Christian Aid, in order to explore ways of making the Society's annual conference more accessible and more representative of a range of voices and issues that are pertinent in theology. Additional bursary support from The Queen's Foundation has also been secured, to support more GMH delegates being able to attend the annual conference.

## **2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

### **Members and Subscriptions**

The total membership of the Society dropped from 527 to 419. Student membership rose from around 141 to 208 and there were around 35 international members. The drop in membership is largely attributable to the increase in membership fees coupled with the many members whose automatic contribution was not updated to reflect the new fees and who opted not to respond to numerous notices to update their fees or discontinue active membership in the society. Legacy contributions from those whose fees no longer cover active membership have been added to the bursary fund.

To extend the financial support that the Society is able to make available to students and other conference participants on lower incomes, all members continue to be warmly encouraged to raise their subscription payment to £10 per £10,000 of income.

An additional £1900 was received this way, which was transferred directly to the Bursary Fund.

### **Postgraduate Conference**

SST financially supported a postgraduate conference, which took place 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> September at New College, The University of Edinburgh. The conference theme was Hope. Invited speakers include James Eglinton, Katherine Hockey and Selina Stone. Prof Rachel Muers, Chair of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh, gave a formal welcome. The conference was well-attended, and Dr Calida Chu represented the SST Committee. Ruby R. Alemu and Elilo Ezung co-organised the conference.

**Gunton/Webster Prize** (sponsored jointly by *The International Journal of Systematic Theology* and *The Society for the Study of Theology*)

The 2024 Prize was on the theme of 'Theologies of Peace', and the winning essay was written by John Olson, Lecturer in Historical and Systematic Theology at Oriel College, The University of Oxford, with the title: 'Loving and Letting: A Constructive Reading of Genesis 1'. This essay features in Volume 27, Issue 2 of *IJST*. The Society's contribution to the Prize is the award of a sponsored place at its Annual Conference at Warwick University.

The 2025 Prize will be awarded to an essay on the theme of 'Sacraments'.

### **3. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

The Society for the Study of Theology is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). It is constituted by the Constitution adopted by the Annual General Meeting of the Society on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2019. The Constitution can be found on the SST website.

As a CIO, the Society for the Study of Theology is eligible for VAT exemption on some goods and services it provides (e.g. conferences and advertising). Accounts are prepared in accordance with English and Welsh charity law.

Executive Committee members, who act as the Society's trustees, are elected by the AGM in accordance with section 7.6 of the Society's Constitution, available at <https://www.theologysociety.org.uk/about-us/constitution/>

The Committee meets at least twice annually, immediately before and immediately after the annual conference. In recent years, a third meeting in the summer has been

added to the meeting schedule for the Committee. By tradition, the AGM is consulted on the conference theme two years in advance.

#### **4. REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

##### **Correspondence**

Dr Scott Midson  
Secretary, Society for the Study of Theology  
S1.1 Samuel Alexander building,  
University of Manchester,  
Oxford Road,  
Manchester,  
M13 9PL  
Email: [scott.midson@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:scott.midson@manchester.ac.uk)

##### **2023-24 Executive Committee and Trustees**

Prof David Clough	President	2022- 24
Prof Robert Beckford	Vice-President	2023 -
Dr Scott Midson	Secretary	2023 -
Rev'd Dr Andrew Shamel	Treasurer	2022 -
Mr Alexander Douglas	Assistant Secretary	2023 -
Dr CL Nash	GMH Representative	2023 -
Dr Shavaun Shodeinde	GMH Representative	2023 -
Dr Nina Kurlberg	Safeguarding Officer	2021 - 24
Dr Selina Stone	Elected Member	2023 -
Dr Calida Chu	Elected Member	2021 - 24
Rev'd Rachel Noel	Elected Member	2023 -
Ms Florence O'Taylor	Elected Member	2022 - 25

#### **5. FINANCIAL REVIEW**

##### **Bursary Fund**

Awards were made to 56 eligible bursary applicants, waiving or reducing their conference costs by £50, £100 or £200. The total amount of bursaries awarded was £7900. Bursaries were funded by increased subscriptions and donations from Members and from Society reserves.

Bursaries were also awarded through the SSST-BIAPT BAME bursary fund, established to increase access to the conference for BAME scholars. Funded jointly by £500 from The Susanna Wesley Foundation and SST, this scheme awards a number of bursaries, based on need of between £50, £100 and £200. Bursary recipients who were members of the scheme's named partner institutions had the option of applying for an additional grant from those institutions.

## 6. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

A. RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS				
	30-Jun-24		30-Jun-23	
	£	£	£	£
General Fund – Unrestricted fund				
Receipts				
Membership receipts				
Subscriptions and Donations	£10578.00		£7323.00	
Transfer to Bursary Fund	-£8400.00		-£5500.00	
Use of e-mail lists	£150.00	£2328.00	£506.57	£3385.93
Conference receipts				
Conference fees	£39993.00		£26833.40	

Accommodation and meals	£32988.00		£31116.60	
Publisher stands and attendance fees	£0.00		£650.00	
Reception sponsorship	£0.00	<b>£72981.00</b>	£0.00	
<b>Bank interest</b>		<b>91.88</b>		<b>57.00</b>
<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>75400.88</b>		<b>£62486.57</b>

## **Payments**

### **Administrative payments**

Website	£1321.30		£2594.13	
Billing	—		£3.29	
Committee expenses	211.51		£1816.17	
Secretary honorarium	£1250.00		£1250.00	
Treasurer honorarium	£1250.00		£1250.00	
Assistant Secretary honorarium	0.00	<b>£4032.81</b>	£0.00	<b>£6913.59</b>

### **Conference payments**

Committee travel	£115.15		£105.30	
Conference centre	£59000.65		£47667.04	
Event insurance	£81.00		£81.00	
Plenary speaker travel	£988.00		£313.07	

Clerical support	£2122.20		£1440.00	
Office costs	£0.00		£251.14	
Conference refunds	£2444.54		£512.00	
Transfer from bursary fund	-£8400.00	<b>£56351.54</b>	-£5500.00	<b>£44985.86</b>
<b><i>Postgraduate conference</i></b>		<b>£687.93</b>		<b>£0.00</b>
<b><i>TRS-UK donation/association fee</i></b>		<b>£250.00</b>		<b>£250.00</b>
<b><i>Banking and payment facilities</i></b>		<b>£3194.65</b>		<b>£2894.68</b>
<b>Total Payments</b>		<b>£64516.93</b>		<b>£55044.13</b>
<b>Excess of Receipts over Payments</b>		<b>£10883.95</b>		<b>£7442.44</b>
Bank accounts at start of period		£25438.65		£23151.45
Bank accounts at end of period		£36322.60		£30593.89

year to  
30-Jun-24

£                      £

year to  
30-Jun-23

£                      £

**Bursary Fund —  
Restricted fund**

*Receipts*



Donations	£2203.00	£2626.00	
Transfer from Subscriptions & Reserves	£6197.00	<b>£8400.00</b>	<b>£5500.00</b>
<i>Payments</i>			
Transfer from bursary fund		£8400.00	£5500.00
<b>Excess of Payments over Receipts</b>		<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£0.00</b>
Bank accounts at start of period		£5000.00	£5000.00
Bank accounts at end of period		£5000.00	£5000.00

#### B. STATEMENT OF ASSETS AT THE END OF THE PERIOD

	£	£
Community Directplus Account	£36,322.60	£25438.65
Select Instant Access Account	£10310.86	£10155.24
<b>Total bank accounts</b>	<b>£46,633.46</b>	<b>£35593.89</b>

#### DECLARATION

*The Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 under the Charities Act 2011. It was approved by the Executive Committee by e-mail consultation and was signed on its behalf by the President and the Treasurer.*

**Prof David Clough**  
**President**

**Dr Andrew Shamel**  
**Treasurer**

## **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT ON THE ACCOUNTS**

This report is on the financial statements of the Society for the period ended 30th June 2023, which are set out on pages 6 to 9.

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. They consider that an audit is not required for this period under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility: to examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act; to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act); and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

My examination was carried out in accordance with 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 the 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.

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that: proper accounting records are kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act; or to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



**Mr Giles Dobson, MRICS**

9th May 2024

Almancil House, Church Road, Carlton, Newmarket, CB8 9JZ