

THE PARISH OF TORRISHOLME, THE ASCENSION INCLUDING WESTGATE, ST MARTIN

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025

VICAR:

Fr Damian Porter

CHURCHWARDENS:

Alan Forshaw

Janet Diamond



The Aims and Purposes of the Parochial Church Council

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Damian Porter, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the Church of the Ascension and St Martin's Westgate Community Centre complex.

Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible of all ages to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through Word and Sacrament. Being rooted in the Catholic Tradition of the Church of England, our worship is centred on the Eucharist.

We try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.

- Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the Church buildings and Community Centres.

The Church of St Martin at Westgate is used for worship by the Greek Orthodox Community at the weekends, and we hold some midweek worship and activities there.

Since the previous Annual Parish Meeting, the Parochial Church Council has met on 3 occasions. The average attendance being 10 PCC members.

The following reports were given at each meeting:

- Chairman/Warden's report
- Electoral Roll report
- Christian Stewardship report
- Treasurer's report
- Church Hall report
- St Martin's report
- Deanery Synod report
- Children and Youth Ministry report
- Safeguarding Officer's report. A safeguarding audit was carried out in the autumn.
- Churches Together in Bare & Torrisholme report

The following people have served on the Parochial Church Council during the year:

In addition to the Vicar and Churchwardens

- Mrs M Parkin (Secretary)
- Mrs K Thompson (Treasurer)
- Mr G Arkwright (Stewardship recorder)
- Mr D Wilde (Deanery Synod)
- Mrs H Higgs (Safeguarding Officer)
- Mrs J Hall
- Mrs K Anderton

- Ms J Phillip
- Mr C Barnes
- Mrs A Blacow
- Mrs C Sanderson
- Father Keith Fenton

Mrs Janet Damond (Churchwarden) is also a Deanery Synod Rep

Achievements and Performance

Worship and Prayer

This year has again seen good numbers of people attending our services and activities. We have a services schedule, which we believe is meeting the needs of the people of the parish family. The PCC is keen to offer a range of services during the week and over the course of the year that our community find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling.

We welcome into our Church people of all ages and from a wide variety of backgrounds.

All are welcome to attend our regular services. At the end of the year there were 185 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll, 97 of whom are not resident within the parish. The average weekly attendance, counted during October, was 120 adults and 47 children, but this number increased at festivals and especially at Christmas.

As well as our regular services, we enabled our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life. Through baptism we thank God for the gift of life, in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through funeral services friends and family express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and to commend the person into God's keeping. Over the past year we have celebrated 27 baptisms and 0 weddings and held 38 funerals either in our church or at the local cemeteries and crematoriums.

The Church Building and Church Hall Complex

Our buildings are generally in a good condition, and we try to invest resources each year into improvements and maintenance. Over the past year, we have had to do very little to the fabric of our buildings at the Ascension, but we have done extensive redecoration and external maintenance at St Martin's. During the week the halls are regularly used by a wide variety of hirers, all of which add to the provision for our local community, and the rental income is very useful for our parish finances.

Pastoral Care

Some members of our parish have been unable to attend church due to sickness or age. The clergy and pastoral visitors have visited church members who have requested it, and together with our informal pastoral care team has ensured that those who request it receive Holy Communion at home on a regular basis.

Our fortnightly "Breaking Bread" Mass and Lunch Club are instrumental in our mission to the elderly and housebound.

Mission and Evangelism.

We produce regular weekly sheets with news and information, and we make good use of the 'A church near you' website and our parish facebook page.

The church is a member of Churches Together in Bare and Torrisholme. The Churches Together group has not met but the clergy have met together frequently. There is a new Methodist minister in post.

The Financial Report

Financial Review – Treasurer's report

Total receipts of unrestricted funds were £211,869 and restricted funds of missions received were £1,373. Income this year was up on 2024 by over £79,000, due mainly to a very generous bequest of over £76,000.

£133,862 was spent from unrestricted funds to provide the Christian ministry and fundraising from The Parish of Torrisholme. Once again the Parish Share request has been paid in full.

Expenditure was less than in 2024 mostly due to less expenditure being needed for repairs and works on the Church and buildings.

The net result was an excess of receipts over payments of £78,006 on unrestricted funds. Adding bank and deposit balances brought forward at the beginning of the year, the balances carried forward at 31st December 2025 on unrestricted funds totalled £350,852.

Following advice from our auditor, we closed the Church Hall Investment account and transferred the balance together with the majority of the legacy received this year to our Church Deposit Fund at Blackburn which offers a better rate of interest for the funds.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Gordon Arkwright for the work he does with the Stewardship side and for banking our weekly collections and Alan Forshaw for his work with the Church Hall accounts, it certainly makes my role easier. Gavin Glennon has once again done a wonderful job auditing the accounts for us and we are very grateful for this work

Kathryn Thompson
Treasurer

Reserves Policy

We have in recent years always been able to meet all our expenditure and our Parish Share request. In the light of the Covid

pandemic, we recognise the need to try and keep the equivalent of one years turnover as a reasonable reserve.

Kathryn Thompson
Treasurer

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
PARISH OF TORRISHOLME
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2025**

Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025	Total Funds 2024
<u>ASSETS</u>				
Cash in Hand 4(a)	509.94		509.94	325.02
Bank Accounts 4(b)	69734.86		69734.86	75560.17
<u>CURRENT INVESTMENTS</u>				
Church Dep Fund - Legacy A/c	55789.98	1000.00	56789.98	56789.98
<u>PERMANENT INVESTMENTS</u>				
Sugden Legacy-Security Fund		412.48	412.48	400.82
<u>Other Investments/ accounts</u>				
Church Deposit Fund	224817.43		224817.43	117605.87
Church Hall Investment Account				23646.23
	<u>350852.21</u>	<u>1412.48</u>	<u>352264.69</u>	<u>274328.09</u>

Kathryn Thompson
Gavin Glennon

K Thompson
Gavin Glennon

Hon Treasurer
Independent Examiner 27 January 2026

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on

and signed on its behalf by:

D Porter
Rev. D Porter (Chairman)

3/2/2026

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
PARISH OF TORRISHOLME
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
1ST JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2025

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
<u>INCOMING RESOURCES</u>					
Voluntary Income	2(a)	135622.15		135622.15	56347.55
Activities for Generating Funds	2(b)	6364.34		6364.34	7992.98
Income from Investments	2(c)	9990.71		9990.71	4976.55
Church Activities	2(d)	55768.04		55768.04	56431.50
Missions Received	2(e)		1373.00	1373.00	762.95
Other Income	2(f)	4123.76		4123.76	6484.75
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		211869.00	1373.00	213242.00	132996.28
<u>RESOURCES EXPENDED</u>					
Parish Share		50500.00		50500.00	42000.00
Missions	3(a)		1442.60	1442.60	2650.18
Fund Raising Costs	3(b)	453.32		453.32	664.42
Church Activities	3(c)	31864.48		31864.48	37258.41
Church & Church Hall Running Costs	3(d)	32181.41		32181.41	37482.58
Church & Church Hall Repairs	3(e)	18863.59		18863.59	27746.04
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		133862.80	1442.60	135305.40	147801.63
NET INCOMING/ (OUTGOING) RESOURCES		78006.20	(69.60)	77936.60	(14805.35)
Balances brought forward at 1/1/25				274328.09	
Balances carried forward at 31/12/25				352264.69	

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
PARISH OF TORRISHOLME
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2025**

1. Accounting Policies

The financial statements have been prepared on an accrual basis in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 together with applicable accounting standards and The Charities SORP 2005.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The accounts include all transaction, assets and liabilities for which the PCC is responsible in law. They do not include the accounts of church groups that owe their main affiliation to another body, nor those that are informal gatherings of church members.

Funds

Unrestricted Funds are general funds which can be used for PCC ordinary purposes.

Restricted Funds represent income from trusts or endowments which may be expended only on those restricted objects provided in the terms of the trust or bequest and donations or grants received for a specific object or invited by the PCC for a specific object. The funds may only be expended on the specific object for which they were given.

Incoming Resources

Planned giving, collections, donations and Tax refunds are recognised when received. Grants and legacies are accounted for when the PCC receives the amounts due. All other income is recognised when it is received. Funds raised from social events, magazines and Fund raising is shown gross and expenses shown

separately as resources used. Rental income and interest is accounted for when received.

Resources Expended

Grants and donations are accounted for when paid over. The Diocesan Parish Share is accounted for when due, any parish share unpaid at 31st December is provided for in the financial statements as an operational liability and is shown as a creditor in the balance sheet. Amounts received specifically for mission are dealt with as restricted funds. All other expenditure is recognized when it is incurred and is accounted for gross.

Assets

Investments are valued at market value at 31st December. Consecrated and benefice property is not included in the account in accordance with s.96 (2)(a) of the Charities Act 1993. Expenditure on maintenance or improvement of the church, halls and vicarage is written off in the year it is incurred.

2. <u>Incoming Resources</u>	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2025	Total 2024
(a) Voluntary Income				
Planned Giving:				
Gift Aid Donations	29728.32		29728.32	31181.60
Occasional Giving	9621.00		9621.00	7039.16
Income Tax Recoverable	11188.23		11188.23	10453.72
Sum Up collections	4687.13		4687.13	2558.64
Collections	3535.15		3535.15	2332.43
Donations/Legacys	76862.32		76862.32	2782.00
	<u>135622.15</u>		<u>135622.15</u>	<u>56347.55</u>
(b) Activities for Generating Funds				
Fund raising:				
Coffee Money	1947.40		1947.40	1973.26
Lunch Club	1610.40		1610.40	1682.54
Autumn Fayre				1205.20
Craft Money				269.27
Cards	472.40			418.80
Plants	162.52		162.52	200.00
Xmas Fayre				1800.00
50/50	351.62		351.62	433.91
Crumble				10.00
Cribfest	<u>1820.00</u>		<u>1820.00</u>	
	<u>6364.34</u>		<u>6364.34</u>	<u>7992.98</u>
(c) Income from Investments				
Fixed Int	14.03		14.03	10.09
National Savings	237.11		237.11	181.55
Church Deposit Fund	2528.01		2528.01	2956.65
Church Deposit @ Blackburn	<u>7211.56</u>		<u>7211.56</u>	<u>1828.26</u>
	<u>9990.71</u>		<u>9990.71</u>	<u>4976.55</u>
(d) Income from Church Activities				
Church Hall Lettings	54171.04		54171.04	51513.50
Fees	<u>1597.00</u>		<u>1597.00</u>	<u>4918.00</u>
	<u>55768.04</u>		<u>55768.04</u>	<u>56431.50</u>
(e) Missions Received				
Childrens Society		566.50	566.50	449.15
Christingle		193.00	193.00	313.80
Bishops Harvest Appeal		130.00	130.00	
Friends of Holy Land		<u>483.50</u>	<u>483.50</u>	
		<u>1373.00</u>	<u>1373.00</u>	<u>762.95</u>
(f) Other Income				
Flowers	1367.00		1367.00	1198.00
BDBF Grant	1813.00		1813.00	2243.00
Candles	1012.10		1012.00	1097.75

Misc	15.00	15.00	636.00
Memorial Book	40.00	40.00	20.00
Albs			830.00
Books	90.00	90.00	265.00
Revaluation of Bond	11.66		
Walsingham Monies	<u>(225.00)</u>	<u>(225.00)</u>	<u>195.00</u>
	<u>4123.76</u>	<u>4123.76</u>	<u>6484.75</u>

<u>3. Resources Expended</u>	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2025	Total 2024
(a) Missions				
Childrens Society		566.50	566.50	736.05
Christingle		262.60	262.60	
Gaza Appeal				314.13
Kinkizi Diocese				800.00
Morecambe Bay Pulmonary				800.00
Bishops Harvest Appeal		130.00	130.00	
Friends of Holy Land		<u>483.50</u>	<u>483.50</u>	
		<u>1442.60</u>	<u>1442.60</u>	<u>2650.18</u>
(b) Fund Raising Costs				
Coffee	303.47		303.47	439.02
Lunch Club	149.85		149.85	158.49
Christmas Fayre				<u>66.91</u>
	<u>453.32</u>		<u>453.32</u>	<u>664.42</u>
(c) Church Activities				
Ministry:				
Vicar's Expenses	1314.90		1314.90	2295.55
Vicarage Expenses	9181.54		9181.54	9332.26
Sunday Schools	691.80		691.80	875.50
Organists	3380.00		3380.00	2910.00
Wages	7668.00		7668.00	8093.00
Stationery and Admin	993.47		993.47	1056.36
Photocopier charges	2541.36		2541.36	2356.69
Flowers	1155.00		1155.00	1306.00
Church Services	4643.85		4643.85	8252.15
Organ				588.00
Sundries	<u>294.56</u>		<u>294.56</u>	<u>192.90</u>
	<u>31864.48</u>		<u>31864.48</u>	<u>37258.41</u>

(d) Church & Church Hall Running Costs			
Electricity	4564.76	4564.76	4296.83
Gas	8314.82	8314.82	8741.17
Insurance	3237.12	3237.12	2963.14
Repairs & Renewals	10250.34	10250.34	14667.73
Cleaning Materials	1791.45	1791.45	2024.78
Garden Maintenance	511.00	511.00	972.93
Water Rates	2164.12	2164.12	1702.20
Phones	1347.80	1347.80	1863.80
Play equip			250.00
	<u>32181.41</u>	<u>32181.41</u>	<u>37482.58</u>

(e) Church and Church Hall Repairs			
Special Works including :			
Painting (ST. Martins)	10910.00	10910.00	
Boilers	7953.59	7953.59	
Kitchen			10517.00
Tower			14418.96
Chairs lounge/church			2810.08
	<u>18863.59</u>	<u>18863.59</u>	<u>27746.04</u>

4. <u>Assets</u>	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2025	Total 2024
(a) Cash in Hand:				
PCC Parish Of Torrisholme	4.04		4.04	.57
Church Hall	176.33		176.33	206.88
Flower Fund	<u>329.57</u>		<u>329.57</u>	<u>117.57</u>
	<u>509.94</u>		<u>509.94</u>	<u>325.02</u>
(b) Bank Accounts				
PCC Parish of Torrisholme	14369.77		14369.77	29615.43
Hall Account	<u>55365.09</u>		<u>55365.09</u>	<u>45944.74</u>
	<u>69734.86</u>		<u>69734.86</u>	<u>75560.17</u>

The Churchwarden's Report including a report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments

We are pleased to report that once again 2025 has not presented any problems relating to the church fabric. The Quinquennial Inspection was carried out in the summer - this did not highlight any major issues. It is fair to say that our church building is in good condition.

Sadly the same cannot be said of our pipe organ. A number of problems have been identified, which are expected to impact its sound quality. The estimated cost of repairs is prohibitively high. Discussions are taking place as to how to proceed, in order to achieve the best outcome and value for money.

A Wi-Fi system has been installed throughout the church complex. Not only does this benefit the work of the church but has also been welcomed by many of our user groups.

We would like as always to thank most sincerely all who continue to keep our church looking at its best by cleaning, polishing brass and silver, by arranging flowers, and by preparing for and assisting at our services - each job is so important and much appreciated. Thank you everyone.

Alan Forshaw & Janet Diamond- Parish Wardens

The Church Halls Report

Unfortunately, 2025 began within an unexpected expense involving the replacement of a shunt pump and ignition switches on our boilers, essential of course for the comfort of all. Five year electrical tests have been carried out, new batteries fitted to provide backup for our emergency lighting system, and as various lights fail, LED replacements are being fitted throughout the complex.

A major expense is looming as there is a need to replace the flat roof area covering the lounge entrance and toilets, kitchen, cupboard room, where several leaks are occurring and are beyond patching.

It is fortunate therefore that not only have we retained all our user groups but have acquired some new hirers: pilates sessions on two evenings, and Age UK soon to have two full days per week in our main hall and an increase in U3A groups. Our halls remain vital to the pastoral outreach of the parish as well as its financial stability. It is so important that all who enter our buildings feel welcome and I wish to thank all who help me in this. My thanks are also due to all, who take pride in keeping the whole complex and grounds in good order.

Alan Forshaw- Parish Warden & Halls Manager

St Martin's Fabric Report

It cannot be denied that 2025 has been a very expensive year for St Martin's. The extensive works mentioned in last year's report were carried out in the summer involving full exterior redecoration, necessary fabric repairs identified during this work, and very expensive scaffolding needed for the works. Alongside this work, the small meeting room and corridor were redecorated and new heavy duty carpet laid in the room.

At the beginning of the year, a new water heater was installed providing hot water to the toilet area areas. Further LED lights have been fitted in the foyer, toilets, corridor and meeting rooms, and at the end of the year a new underfloor pump for heating was required at an unbelievable cost. Hopefully, all the these will give many years of service.

On the positive side, all our regular hirers have been kept and a good income maintained. Overall, the centre and its site have a cared for appearance. This is much helped by the sterling work of Geoff Diamond (and Janet) in grass cutting, weeding and general tidying - a huge commitment for which we are all very grateful.

Alan Forshaw and Janet Diamond – Parish Warden

St Martin's of Tours, Westgate Annual Report



I write this in the last year of my 'House for Duty' appointment with you. As you may recall I came initially for a three year period which was extended for a further two years. Well, that time draws to a close in the Autumn of this year.

Whether this is good news or bad – my intention is to retire within the parish, so with the permission of the Incumbent and the PCC I hope to continue to work and worship with you.

I am pleased to report to you that the attendance here at St. Martin's remains steady, with a number of new faces. We

are well aware that some of this number are attending to gain access to Ripley. But it is up to us to make sure that their time worshipping with us is such that they want to continue attending St Martin's

Thursday afternoon Tea and Chat drop in continues, this is an important aspect of our outreach, providing a light but Christian environment for people to attend without any pressure. Let's hope and pray that the Holy Spirit sits around the table with us.

Our work with the Nursery / Pre School continues every week during term time for Stories, songs and activities.

Our outreach into the community also continues -

Last year I informed you of our intention to go out knocking on doors in the Westgate area, inviting them to come and join us. We did this, and enjoyed good conversations on the doorsteps, but as yet no long term commitment from the people we met. Thanks to the team who joined me in this venture. We plan to continue, so please include this

project in your prayers or come and join us. “The Harvest is rich, but the labourers are few.”

Thanks to all who help in any way here at St Martin’s, especially those who keep the cakes coming, It’s a miracle, the tins never seem to empty! Thankyou!

Fr Keith.

The Secretary's Report

Since the previous Annual Parish Meeting, the Parochial Church Council has met on 3 occasions. The average attendance being 10.

The following statutory reports were given at each meeting:

Chairman/Warden's report

Electoral Roll report

Christian Stewardship report

Treasurer's report

Church Hall report

St Martin's report

Deanery Synod report

Children and young people report

Safeguarding Officer's report.

Churches Together in Bare & Torrisholme report

I would like to thank Fr Damian Porter, Mr A Forshaw, Mrs J Diamond and all members of the Parochial Church Council for their help and support throughout the year.

Michala Parkin - Secretary

The Christian Stewardship Report

£29,728.32 was the total amount of contributions recorded for our Stewardship Scheme during 2025. This is slightly lower than the £31,009.60 recorded for 2024 but with the same number of participants - 72.

An opportunity to increase individual giving arose during October (although this can, of course, be done at any time) with the Giving For God exercise. Some 24 participants in our Stewardship Scheme took that opportunity, which should result in an increase of some £5000 during 2026.

A total of 67 responses were received during the Giving For God exercise and although 14 of these indicated 'no change' in the present giving arrangements, it has entailed adding a further 17 names to my Occasional Giving records of standing orders each month - an increase of some £800 per month.

Our claims for GiftAid from HMRC amount to £10,957.76 for 2025 and hopefully they will be paid with less palaver than was experienced with last year's claims. However, getting them delivered by Royal Mail to HMRC recently has been somewhat hit and miss. An excuse for late payment used to be "the checks in the post." Nowadays, it's more usual to claim poor service is due to the post is in the Czech!

Gordon Arkwright – Stewardship Recorder

The Mothers' Union Report



Church of the Ascension Mothers' Union Annual Report 2025



Our membership at the beginning of 2025 totalled 47. Two of our long-standing members, Dorothy Mingins and Ann Sykes are now in residential care and are no longer well enough to continue membership. Very sadly, Dorothy Plumb, an Indoor Member, died in March and her daughter, Diane Cocks, has now moved away. We welcomed Christine Murdoch and Linda Pyrah, who have recently joined our Branch.

Church of the Ascension Mothers' Union had another very busy year in 2025. We started the year in January with our Epiphany Service, led by Fr Marvin. February was our Annual Meeting, when Jenny Hebblethwaite stepped down as Branch Leader after six years in charge, including keeping us together throughout Covid. Five Committee members, Janet Diamond, Barbara Foulds, Mara Heywood, Elaine Speight and Jean Wilson, also resigned. Everyone was thanked most sincerely for their service and commitment to Mothers' Union; they all promised to continue helping and supporting the Branch.

Marvin Bamforth, Jacquie Stocks and Gay Westwood were nominated to join the Committee.

An urgent Committee meeting followed later in February, when the decision was made to run the Branch in a different way, through the Committee. All the tasks were shared out amongst Committee members and Branch members.

Due to the closure of St Chad's, Skerton, MU, Gay Westwood, Jane Entwistle and Margaret Raitt, from St Chad's MU were welcomed

into our Branch, along with Sheila Cumpsty as an Indoor Member, at our February Corporate Communion Service.

We held an Open Meeting in March, when members shared their ideas for speakers, activities and outings. Members were asked to bring to the April meeting a variety of groceries for the local Women's Refuge, to support our MU Bronze Award, in connection with the Rise Up Campaign.

Our April meeting had us all "Swaying" to music. We provided Easter Eggs and chocolates for the partners and children of prisoners in HMP Lancaster Farms, a Deanery project.

Our May Afternoon included the presentation of school children's underwear to Bryony from the Food Bank. Liz Turner gave a demonstration of Fabric Floral Bouquets and we all enjoyed Afternoon Tea.

We shared memories at our June meeting and started thinking about how to celebrate 2026 as the 150th Anniversary of the founding of Mothers' Union. Members also supported the Midsummer Tea and Chat at St James', Shireshead, on 3rd July, their 80th Birthday.

Fr Marvin talked about his work as Chaplain to Missions to Seafarers at our July meeting, which gave us insight into the many problems incurred.

We held a very successful Summer Fair at St Martin's, Westgate, in August, raising £551.10 for MU funds. Members attended the Archdeaconry MU Mary Sumner Day Service at St Hilda's, Bilsborrow.

Barry Lees, a local author, talked about his books at our September meeting, and several members bought copies. Members also attended the Deanery Festival at St Luke's, Winmarleigh, on 19th September. During the service Long Service Awards were presented

to Janel Diamond (25 years), Jean Rowley (40 years), Fr Marvin & Sue Bamforth and Jacquie Stocks (all 45 years).

We held a short service for our Link Dioceses in October, for the MU Wave of Prayer. This was followed by a super traditional floral bouquet demonstration by Emma Anderton of 'Flowers by the Bay'.

Gay and Geoff Westwood took us round the War Graves in France for our November meeting, with a talk and Power Point presentation entitled 'Will the last one out please shut the gate'.

Fr Tom gave an Advent Service for our December meeting. We held our annual Christmas Lunch at Morecambe Golf Club later in the month.

A busy year indeed!

MU members are very much involved in the life of the Church, as sidespeople and greeters, on Coffee & Tea rotas, and as PCC members. We provide the Baptism Anniversary cards, which Elaine Speight gives to all children baptised at the Church of the Ascension each year until they start Junior Church.

Our branch supports the Diocesan AFIA caravan on Westgate. Janet Diamond is actually involved on a weekly basis, with cleaning the caravan for visitors, including purchasing the grocery items for the gift box. Other members have provided the home-made cakes and presents for the children.

MU members also provided home-made cakes and biscuits and served them after Bishop Philip's closing service following his Diocesan Young People's Residential Event at Borwick Hall.

This report would be incomplete without a few thank yous. Many thanks to Fr Damian for all his support to Mothers' Union, to his

fellow clergy, Fr Tom and Fr Marvin, who are MU members, and to Fr Keith, who is always there for us. Thank you too to all the members of the Committee and to all our members for their commitment to support the MU, both locally, with the Deanery and all its projects, and in the Diocese.

Kath Bill

Action & Outreach

Our branch has continued to supply the local Food Bank in Morecambe. The collections have been of children's underwear and socks, for children 5 years to 16 years old, to supplement the school uniforms.

At Christmas we included toiletries in the collection for families.

This is a continuous project. Thanks you for your support.

Jenny Hebblethwaite

Addendum:

In December the Church of the Ascension gave to the Food Bank 41 toiletry bags, 271 pairs of children's knickers and underpants, 52 children's vests and 82 pairs of socks. These figures were given to MU Live website. These statistics help Mary Sumner House with their grant applications to seek funding for National MU projects.

Junior Church Annual Report

Structure:

Junior Church structure benefits from the breadth of skills brought by its parent volunteers; utilising a co-operative approach it aims to draw on personal strengths to enhance sessions.

The Junior Church team is made up of the following parent volunteers: Adelle Blacow, Joanne Bisgrove-Peel, Angela Wilkinson, Helen O'Hagan, Natasha Walker, Eve Walker, Helen Ratcliffe, Anna Saxon and James Unsworth. All of the volunteers hold a current DBS and have completed their safeguarding training.

The Junior Church team plan and prepare sessions on their nominated week. Where possible the sessions will follow the Church of England Lectionary with ideas provided by the Parish Priest, Father Damian. All Junior Church leaders have access to the Weekly@, Twinkl and other church resources to assist with planning the sessions.

Although Junior Church does benefit from the help of other parent helpers on an ad hoc basis, it is very much dependant on the parent volunteers named above to run throughout the year. More volunteers are required for Junior Church to continue in the future. Joanna Dent and Louise Potter continue with their invaluable roles 'behind the scenes' i.e., emails, nominal role, medical forms and DBS checks.

Junior Church is made up of Pre-School, Keystage 1 & Keystage 2 aged children. Weekly numbers can vary from 25 to 35 children as in the previous year. As much as numbers do fall slightly following the completion of Ripley admissions forms, numbers also rise with new Y4/5 children starting Junior Church, generally in the Autumn term.

We currently have 87 on the JC nominal role this year with varying attendance. There are 127 children on the main church attendance

list some attend both church and JC but there are a lot of children who just attend the church services.

Year 6, Keystage 3 & Keystage 4: 2 or 3 children often attend with their parents/siblings and help out. The Ignite group continues to meet once a month for high school aged children. There is also a reliable group of regular alter servers from this age group.

We continue to commence the Junior Church session with the children meeting in church for the first part of the service (paper signing in/out process by parent/guardian). They are then taken into the Hall by the Junior Church leaders before returning into church for the Eucharist/blessing. This provides approximately 45 to 50 minutes for the session. This is still working well and encourages parents/families to be part of the service.

Sessions run by the Junior Church leaders generally start with a short introduction of the session which sometimes includes a story and some role play followed by a craft activity either to take home or to become part of a church display. The leaders have access to a number resources to enable them to find the most appropriate activity for their session.

On Gift Day, the children were given an envelope that contained £10. £5 they could keep for themselves and the remaining £5 they needed to think of a charitable cause to donate it to either on their own or working together with friends. The children then shared what they had been doing when we returned in September, more information can be found on the display board in the ambulatory. Some children used their monies to purchase materials to bake cakes and make homemade bracelets to sell. Donations were made to the RNLI, Morecambe Bay Food Bank and St Johns Hospice.

In October 2025, Bishop Philip blessed our new Junior Church cross. This was specially made for us and lovingly decorated with finger

prints of our Junior Church children and leaders. Children take it in turns to carry this and lead us out of church following the cross.

Christmas 2025 saw Junior Church play an enthusiastic part in Crib Fest – Around the world in 80 cribs. This included baking for the very popular cake stall.

Ignite / Sparks Youth Group Report

Youth and Childrens work continues within the parish. This is in no small part due to the fantastic and dedicated efforts of our volunteer youth and children workers within the parish who help to organise, deliver, and maintain the ongoing mission and vision of the parish.

Our pattern of meeting and worship remains the same: we meet on the third Sunday of every month to explore a theme, study the scriptures, and to play some games (often with snacks or a meal during the session).

Themes are pre planned in advance by the team, with input from the clergy.

We have less young people 'on the books' at the moment but we look forward to building on this, especially when Fr Jean arrives as work with children and young people will be amongst his responsibilities.

Our thanks once again to our amazing team.

5th Morecambe Brownies Report

Since April last Year 5th Morecambe Brownies has continued to be a part of the church community with attending all the church parade services each month. We have also led a few services. In May 2025 we had a sleepover in the lounge. We had a company come in and set up special teepee tents for the girls to sleep in with fairy lights. We had a great evening of baking, games and watching a film on the projector screen.

We held a cake stall after the family service in May to raise money for our coach for our summer holiday. We had an incredible response to the girls cake stall and the church community were very generous with their donations, we raised £244. We helped out at the 80 cribs around the world event, some of us were washing up, helping on the stalls and clearing the tables.

We have worked on lots of badges and activities over the year, the Brownies have also worked on some at home and we were lucky to be able to present some of our girls with Bronze, Silver and Gold awards. During the summer term we planted some seeds in the garden area at the back of the hall and played some water games one night.

In July we had a fabulous and very hot weekend at Gullivers World. With the cake stall in May, the cost of the coach to get us there on Saturday and bring us back home on Sunday was reduced by half. The girls had 2 full days on all the rides in the park. We also got to take part in a scooter safari ride around the park in the evening once it was closed and we watched a puppet show. We slept in large caravans which slept 10. We had a very busy weekend and Brownie Owl had to go on the river rapids 4 times as each boat needed an Adult. She was very wet when she got off.

When we returned in September we were back in the garden making and flying rockets. We went to a Brownie event at Silver Sapling Campsite in Silverdale. The theme was “construction.”

We had a talk and demonstrations from Electricity North West. We also did lots of activities, one of our highlights was making houses out of biscuits and using chocolate spread to stick them together.

We have been involved in 2 Cinema Takeover Days at the Reel cinema in Morecambe. We have watched Lilo and Stitch and Zootropolis 2. We have done many crafts and held a french evening where we learnt french phrases and we tried some french food.

We organized an evening at the RLNI lifeboat station, we got to look at the boat, the equipment they have to wear, what to do in an emergency and we used the binoculars to look out to sea.

We also had an evening when Derian House came to tell us all about the centre and what they do there. Some of the girls then went away and held a fundraising event to raise money for them.

The new tables in the lounge have been a great addition for us as it's much easier for us to move them when we need to do activities on the wipeable floor. It's also great to easily stack on top of each other. We are looking forward to our weekend away in July to Guys Farm Activity Centre and hope we have some nice weather again like last year.

Many Thanks.

Hayley, Sally and all the Brownies at 5th Morecambe

Breaking Bread Lunch Club 2025

Breaking Bread Lunch Club is now in its eleventh year. We continue to meet on the first and third Thursdays of each month (Church Festivals excepted) in the Vestry Meeting Room for a light lunch of soup, sandwiches, cake, tea and coffee. This is always preceded by a short, simple, but very meaningful Eucharistic service in church at 12 noon.

There are over forty members on the register, with an average attendance of thirty-plus. We have a great team of refreshment providers and drivers. For various reasons we have, sadly, lost some members, but have gained new ones, and would like to welcome more, if anyone reading this would like to come along as a member or as a helper.

We had a Summer Party in August to celebrate our 10th Birthday, when a cake was cut by Joyce Brooks, our oldest, longest serving member, and Mary Davies, who was a helper at the very first meeting of Breaking Bread in September 2015. We also had a Christmas Party on 18th December, when over 30 members of the Bay Singers Choir entertained us to carols and Christmas songs.

No charge is made for Breaking Bread lunch; members are very generous in their donations, which are given to church once the cost of soup is taken out. Donations are roughly £70 - £80 per meeting.

On behalf of us all I would like to thank Father Damian for his help, guidance and support to Breaking Bread. Thanks too for his very meaningful services which he leads, along with Fr Keith, Fr Tom and Fr Marvin, who all take turns in conducting the worship.

Many, many thanks to the two teams of sandwich makers, soup stirrers, and cake bakers, who also set up the tables fortnight by fortnight, and who wash up and tidy everything away. Yvonne

Coupe, Jackie Foy, Carole Hammond, Jenny Hebblethwaite, Margaret Mellin, Viv Walker, Pam Winder and I make up the teams, joined by Janet Lee in September.

Another big thank you to the drivers, David Hammond, Liz Turner, Jeremy Suter, Fr Marvin and Fr Tom, and to Pam Gardner and Molly Ellis, who arrange vases of flowers for the tables.

Finally, another big thank you to Yvonne Porter, who writes all the birthday cards for members, along with Easter and Christmas cards, all of which are very much appreciated by everyone.

Kath Bill

The Deanery Synod Report

The Deanery Synod met on three occasions in the past year.

The first meeting on 24th June 2025 was held at St John's Sandylands. The Deanery Synod discussed the motion to request the National Church Institutions to develop a national strategy for the presentation, maintenance and development of our buildings. The motion had been put together by the deanery to put forward to the Diocese. This was to be put before the Deanery Synod on 19th July, then if passed, would go to General Synod. The motion was passed by unanimous decision. The evening was hosted by Dave Guest and the vicar at St John's and included a Geography quiz and a Jacob's' Join.

The meeting on 15th October 2025 at St Thomas' Lancaster focused on The Church of England Net Zero Programme. John Whitton led the meeting. He discussed the 5 marks of mission focussing on the fifth one : To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation to sustain and renew the life of the earth.

He discussed the largest emitters in the Diocese and how we could all work to reduce our energy footprint in parishes.

The meeting on 13th January 2026 at St Thomas' Lancaster was an Extraordinary Open Synod meeting, to which Churchwardens, PCC members, LLMs, ALMs, and Vision Champions were also particularly invited. The focus was 2026 Diocesan Centenary Mission. 2026 is the centenary celebration of The Diocese of Blackburn. The Rev'd Steve Haskett, Diocesan Renewal Lead, shared ideas and messages to encourage us all to engage with this exciting initiative. The landmark event (Big Day Out in Blackpool on 16th May) was discussed. The next Diocesan conference will be held in Liverpool in July 2026. All parishes are encouraged to host a weekend of mission and outreach on Friday 11th to Sunday 13th September. The meeting focused on what type of events we could host and who we wanted to reach out

to. We were asked to think about who was in our church circle and who we could reach out to . The power of invitation was explored. The elections to the quinquennium of the Synod was discussed.

Janet Diamond, Michala Parkin and David Wilde
Deanery Synod Representatives

Pastoral Care Group Report

The Pastoral Care Group meets monthly to feed back and plan for visits to those who are in any kind of pastoral need, and especially those who are ill, and those unable to come to church and who wish to receive Holy Communion at home. We also visit some care homes with both regular and occasional services and to offer Holy Communion to residents. We try to ensure that everyone has at least a monthly visit, and for some the need is more.

The Craft Group Report

“Knit and Natter, Craft and Chatter” meets at 7pm on the second and fourth Monday evenings in the Vestry Room.

Approximately 15 people (male and female) share their knitting, sewing, crocheting, skills, etc. on individual and joint projects, some personal and some for church. Some are present every month, others come when they can.

Evidence of our time and talents is seen on various stalls throughout our churches and buildings on different occasions. Any profits made go to church and charity.

We also all enjoy lovely fellowship together with a brew and a biscuit and / or home bakes.

This group reaches folk from beyond our congregation and has also brought in new people to our worshipping community. All are welcome.

Ascension Runners Group

Ascension Runners was established in September 2025 to promote safe, sociable running through the winter months. The group leader gained a Leadership in Running Fitness (LiRF) qualification through England Athletics, underpinning a structured 12-week programme of interval sessions for mixed ages and abilities. Between 8 and 14 runners met each Saturday morning on the prom (mixed ages and abilities) in all weathers, culminating in a group ParkRun — a first for several members. A post-session coffee at Costa became a weekly ritual!.

The second programme launched in Feb 2026 with full membership retention and some new additions, continuing through to May, with a further programme planned from September.

Dan Charnley

Lovely Ladies Group

Lovely Ladies is an informal gathering of some of the younger women in our church family. It is aimed at younger/ working age women who would value getting together but may not necessarily want the commitment of joining an organised group. The intention is to build a greater sense of community and belonging amongst this section of our parish family.

Over the past 18 months we have had two informal Christmas gatherings, enjoyed wreath making, a dance evening, a cookery demo, a summer walk, and a visit to the Uniform Bank.

This group has helped some of our younger women to make contacts and grow in friendship. We pray it will be a great blessing to our church family.

Mens Group Report

Our informal Men's Group has met roughly bi-monthly. We have been out for meals together, heard about the work of "Pastor Mick" in Burnley, enjoyed social evenings and enjoyed a Christmas Meal at The Lothersdale Hotel.

The group is made up of up to about 25 men, all of whom have some connection with our parish. Keep an eye on the notice boards and weekly sheets for details of future meetings/events. All men are very welcome!

Ecumenical Activities

An ecumenical service for the week of Christian Unity was held at The Ascension in January.

The United Service on Palm Sunday at Torrisholme Methodist Church was followed again by the walk up the Barrow carrying Palm Crosses. There was the usual Dawn Service on Easter Sunday where candles were lit to take back to both the Ascension and Torrisholme Methodist Churches.

Christian Aid envelopes were given out in all the Churches.

Carols in the Square on Christmas Eve was well attended. The money raised went to a local group – Bee Adventures, a charity that delivers outdoor experiences for children, young people and adults with needs.

These services help us to keep in touch and share fellowship with our local Churches and the community.

The Safeguarding and Vulnerable Adults Officers Report

We continue to use the Parish Dashboard online resource to monitor and update our Parish Safeguarding information.

Safeguarding within our Parish is included on every PCC agenda.

During the past year Alan Forshaw, Keith Fenton, Janet Diamond and Hazel Higgins attended and completed The Safeguarding Leadership Pathway, which was facilitated by Blackburn Diocese.

Hazel Higgins and Janet Diamond – Safeguarding Officers

THE LAST WORD! THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I always seem to begin these annual reports with similar words – that our life together in the Parish of Torrisholme and Westgate always seems to be busy, lively, and I believe wholesome! The past year has been no exception, so they apply again!

Our various groups and activities for all ages have continued to thrive, which is very encouraging, and I want to thank everyone who gives of their time to ensuring these activities happen.

We've maintained good attendances in our congregations, with new people joining us, which is always a wonderful thing. The continued regular worship and fellowship at St Martin's Westgate has continued to be a real blessing, and it's so good to see that work and ministry continuing to develop.

None of this can happen, of course, without committed people who work, individually and together, and often tirelessly, to ensure the work and ministry lives and flourishes. Our fabulous Churchwardens and PCC, and all those who work and minister with such faithfulness and commitment to enable all that you see in this report and so much more besides to happen here. Our musicians, sacristans, servers, our welcomers, readers, leaders and facilitators of groups and activities, those involved with safeguarding, those who visit and stay in touch with folk, those who brew up and bake, and share in the important work of hospitality. the those who help with flowers and decorations, adding so much beauty to our worship and all who help to keep our church buildings and grounds clean, tidy and welcoming for all the seasons of the year, and all the worship and activities they hold.

I am grateful beyond words for the work and ministry of my clergy colleagues. Fr Keith has been a wonderful presence and faithful servant of this parish over the past four and a half years. His “House for Duty” license will terminate later this year, but it is wonderful that he intends to remain local and still part of our parish family when he embraces “retirement” more fully. We look forward to welcoming Fr Jean Kouacou and his family early next year. They will be resident on Westgate, and as our Assistant Priest Fr Jean will work full time across the parish with particular responsibilities for continuing to build our work and ministry at Westgate, Christian Nurture across the parish and encouraging our ministry with children and young people. Originally from the Ivory Coast, Fr Jean and Isabelle and their family have made Lancaster and Morecambe their home for around 20 years, apart from the past few years spent at Adlington as Curate.

Fr Tom’s ministry and pastoral work has continued to be a great blessing and his friendship and support to me personally is much appreciated. Fr Marvin has been rather less in evidence this past year as he has been giving a great deal of time supporting parishes in vacancy across the deanery. Fr David and Christine Murdoch have also been a much welcomed addition to our parish family having recently retired to Lancaster. We are fortunate to have such a good team of assisting clergy in our busy parish community and I thank God for them all.

During the past year we have welcomed yet another new minister at the Methodist Church! Rev Melanie arrived in September, we meet as clergy regularly, and so ecumenical relationships continue to be good, as they are with our Greek Orthodox brothers and sisters, who share the building at St Martin’s on Westgate. In the year ahead it would be good to see further development with the renewal of an Ecumenical working group.

I was appointed Priest in Charge of the Parish of Christ Church Carnforth early last year following a period of Interregnum, with Fr Ryan Otley being licensed as the resident priest there. I'm happy to report that this has taken very little of my time really as Fr Ryan is thriving, there have been lots of encouragements and there are many signs of new life at Carnforth. It's good that together with Christ Church and St Barnabas' we continue to share in friendship and ministry as we all rejoice in our catholic tradition of worship and ministry.

It is good too that we play our part across the Deanery of Lancaster and Morecambe in many and varied ways, not least through Deanery and Diocesan Synod, and the mothers Union.

During the past year, I have continued to be active as a governor at Torrisholme School, now regularly lead assemblies and am present in areas of school life. Our links with the school have continued to grow. This is in no small part due to the leadership of the Headteacher and the welcome of the school community. Not part of the year we are reporting on here, but worthy of mention is the recent arrival of a new Headteacher in Mr Daniel Hargreaves – well known to us here and a real blessing to Torrisholme community.

I am involved on several Diocesan committees, including being Chairman of the Diocesan Property Committee, which also means serving on the Diocesan Board of Finance and Bishop's Council. I am also the Bishop's advisor for the Ministry of Reconciliation (Confession). I am grateful for the opportunities to serve the wider Church in this way.

The Parochial Council, after consultation with the congregation, chose two charities to support this year, alongside the usual fundraisers. We have supported Mercy Ships a faith-based

international development organisation that deploys hospital ships to some of the poorest countries in the world, delivering vital, free healthcare to people in desperate need; and the Lancaster Men's Club, a local charity created to support men of all ages in the Lancaster area with their physical and mental health through a wide variety of activities. I believe that we should be a giving church, so am pleased we have agreed this. We are currently working on ideas for next year!

We are richly blessed in this parish in that compared to many parishes we have buildings which don't generally present us with too many challenges in terms of maintenance, We like to ensure that our church and community buildings are fit for purpose and well maintained.

Well kept and well used premises are actually essential to a healthy church which makes a difference to the community around it. And I believe we do that already here, and discussions are now taking place about how we can make some improvements to our building, being a more accessible building, meeting the latest requirements on fire safety/ exits etc and meeting the challenge face by the news that our organ – of retained - requires major and very expensive work. It is good that as a parish we are making this an open conversation and are grateful to those who have shared views, thoughts and ideas.

There is always a danger of missing somebody out..... there are so many people involved in the life and worship of this parish... practically, prayerfully and financially too. So to each and every one, my heartfelt thanks.

It is my hope that over the next year we will continue to prioritise not only our buildings but also our work and ministry with all ages, seeking to ensure that people find in our parish community not only

a place of worship but also a loving and supportive family to be part of.

Our Diocesan Vision for the past few years has been “Healthy Churches which transform communities.” Looking ahead the strapline now becomes “All for Jesus”. When all we do is done for Jesus we will inevitable be a healthy church with a transforming presence in the communities we serve. I believe we are making a positive difference, and long may it last.

Finally, I must record my gratitude to my wife Yvonne, without whose constant love and support I know my ministry would be very much the poorer.

Fr Damian Porter, Vicar.