

# Annual Report

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|-------------------|---|
| Name of Charity:  | <b>The Parish of Saint Melangell</b>  |
| Operating name:   | <b>Saint Melangell's Orthodox Church</b>  |
| Charity Number:   | <b>1195091</b>  |
| Trustees:         | <b>Cyprian Astley (Chair)</b><br><b>Joseph Smith (Secretary)</b><br><b>Susan Fozard (Treasurer)</b> |
| Reporting Period: | <b>12<sup>th</sup> November 2021 – 11<sup>th</sup> November 2022</b>                                |

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## From the Rector

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I commend to you the following report of the Trustees – the first since our parish was granted status as a registered charity in the summer of 2021 – but not before offering some thoughts of my own. I apologise for its tardiness, which is the result of a combination of the busyness of life and our desire to get this right despite our inexperience. Important lessons have been learnt that will place us in a better position for next time.

When four of us began to meet informally to pray on the landing at the top of the stairs in what was then my home at the end of 2018, with services hurriedly translated from French and icon-stands that were really just music stands with pillowcases over them, it was simply unimaginable that we would one day be a functioning parish submitting a report of our work to the Charity Commission. Yet, a little over four years later, here we are doing precisely that.

Since those early days, people have left us and others have come, but the work continues with the gifts that are freely offered by you all in service of God. There have been trials along the way, not least of which was the question of whether we, as a small, new mission that had only recently found suitable and accessible location where we could worship publicly, would survive the various lockdowns resulting from to the COVID-19 pandemic.

By God's mercy, after 16 months without public worship, not only did we survive but, through the live-streaming of our services, we also reached people who might never otherwise have encountered us and who remain valued members of the extended family of our parish.

As we go through the busyness of day-to-day life, balancing church life with other commitments, it can be very easy sometimes to become disheartened at the ways in which we fall short of what we would like our outreach and worship to be. Taking time once a year to take stock is a good way for us to remind ourselves of what has been accomplished by the Holy Spirit working in, with, and through us, and that even when we are bogged down by practical matters, God is still working his wonders. The Trustees' Report shows that we were truly blessed over the course of

last year and there is much in which we ought to find encouragement and for which we should be grateful.

None of this would have been possible without the contributions made by each and every one of you in the form of time, effort, prayer, finances, and fellowship that you all offer so freely. For this I offer my wholehearted thanks.

Now we find ourselves at the next stage in the life of our parish, asking the blessing of God on our work. We are half way through the season of Lent, and as we focus on depriving ourselves of frivolities and luxuries of life so that we may focus on the eternal rewards promised to us by the Saviour, we must face the challenges that our new situation will bring as we settle into our new home from which we can reach out and proclaim the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ to the people of Greater Manchester, under the unwavering protection of the Most Holy Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary.

At her prayers, as well as those of St Melangell of Powys and the Holy Myrrhbearers, may the blessing of God Almighty - the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit - descend upon you and remain with you always.

With love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Cyprian" followed by a simple cross symbol.

Hieromonk Cyprian  
*Rector*  
*Chair of Trustees*

## From the Trustees

Dear members and friends of The Parish of Saint Melangell

As we have completed the first full financial year since becoming a registered charity, and the time has come to reflect and report on how we have fulfilled our charitable objects, it seems prudent to remind ourselves of what those objects are, as outlined in our Constitution:

*The advancement of the Orthodox Christian religion in its Western European liturgical, musical, and spiritual expression (known as the "Western Rite"), for the public benefit in the United Kingdom, by conducting public acts of worship and other religious devotional acts, and providing instruction in Orthodox Christianity by means in particular but not limited to public teaching and the dissemination of online and printed materials.*

*The advancement of such charitable purposes (according to the law of England and Wales) for the public benefit in the United Kingdom as the trustees see fit from time to time, in keeping with Orthodox Christian principles, in particular but not limited to defending human rights and the relief of those in hardship, by means including but not limited to the making of financial donations to individuals, as well as to charities promoting such purposes.*

*For the purpose of this clause, "Orthodox Christian" means the faith subscribed to by those churches commonly designated "Eastern Orthodox", "Oriental Orthodox", and "Western Orthodox".*

### Regular Worship

Throughout this year, we have maintained weekly worship in celebration of the Resurrection of Lord, with only occasional weekends without services.

At the start of the liturgical year, we were still in our previous pattern of Sunday Vespers (sometimes followed by Compline) each Saturday evening. However, in January 2022, we implemented a decision made at a parish meeting in October 2021, where it was unanimously agreed to move our primary worship to Sunday morning, which was made possible by our previous hire arrangement with Hope Methodist Church. This change was made in the hope that it would remove some of the barriers that some of our people were concerned that Saturday evenings placed in the way of more regular attendance.

Although this has not yet had the desired effect of increasing attendance, it did pave the way for a more canonically regular time for the Divine Liturgy when this became part of our pattern of worship in May of last year. For the remainder of the year, we celebrated the Divine Liturgy approximately once every month.

### Festal Services

Last year saw particular highlights in our worshipping life. In December 2021, we celebrated public services for Christmas for the first time since our community formed, in the form of Vespers and Vigils, for which we had a small number of visitors.

This was followed by another milestone in April 2022, as we celebrated some of the offices of Holy Week and Pascha publicly for the first time. For Palm Sunday, our

Methodist host congregation joined us for the outdoor Blessing of the Palms and the procession around the church. Upon entering the church, our two congregations then went to our own discrete services. Holy Friday was kept solemnly with None and Vespers, with the Veneration of the Cross and Burial of the Lord, respectively. The beautiful Paschal Vigil – the heart of the Christian year – saw only four of us in attendance. Nonetheless, this was celebrated almost in its entirety, save for the Divine Liturgy, as we were without a priest at the time. Special mention must be made of the labour of love of Bertram Wilkes and Jamie Sampson, who painted the paschal candle for us.

In August, we celebrated the Dormition and Assumption of the Mother of God, making use of the burial shroud that Reader Joseph had crafted and painstakingly embroidered for us over a period of weeks. This is a treasure that will now be used annually in our worshipping life together.

### **Occasional Services**

There was one request during last year for the blessing of a home. Father Cyprian was once required to offer prayers at the time of death. There were no weddings or funerals in the parish.

### **The Blessing of the Waters**

The custom of blessing an open body of water to commemorate the Baptism of the Lord in the River Jordan is a trademark feature of Orthodox worship, and happens in many parishes across the world. In January 2022, for the Solemnity of Theophany, we became the first Orthodox parish in Greater Manchester to do this for many years – perhaps ever – as we performed the Great Blessing of the Waters at the Manchester Ship Canal at Salford Quays. This was attended by approximately 25 people, providing an opportunity to offer public witness to our faith. The Mayor and Mayoress of Salford were in attendance for the blessing, which was followed by a Memorial service for those who have lost their lives in the waters of the canal over the years. We were delighted to have standard bearers present, as well as a bugler to play the Last Post and Reveille.

### **Catechesis**

Father Cyprian arranged for a group from our parish to take part in an online catechism course from January to April of 2022. This was run by Father Jacob Siemens of the Orthodox parish of St Theodore & Teilo in Cardiff, and provided a good opportunity for us to learn more about the Orthodox Christian Faith and life in Jesus Christ, and to interact with other Orthodox Christians from around the country.

Regular instruction and reflection on the way of life in Christ in the Orthodox Christian Faith is provided in the parish in the form of homilies on most Sundays. These are live-streamed via the parish Facebook page for the benefit of those unable to attend in person.

A copy of *An Introduction to God*, of which the parish had purchased a number of copies in the previous year, was given to an enquirer as a study text for discussion under the direction of Father Cyprian.

## **Pilgrimages**

It was intended from the outset that pilgrimage would form an important part of the spiritual life of our parish. However, after our pilgrimage to the shrine of our patron saint in 2019, this element of our life together had to be put on hold due to COVID-19. Happily, this resumed in March 2022, when we made a pilgrimage to St Elisabeth's Orthodox Church in Wallasey to take part in the services there and venerate the miraculous Kursk icon of Our Lady of the Sign.

Then, in September, we made a pilgrimage to the tomb and holy spring of St Bertram in Ilam, Derbyshire, where we were joined by other friends and by kind permission of the church council of the Anglican church of the Holy Cross, we celebrated the Divine Liturgy and an office of veneration at the tomb. This was followed by a convivial picnic lunch, before we climbed the hill to reach St Bertram's spring. Finally, we closed the day with Vespers before setting off for home.

While these experiences were made enjoyable by all who took part, we must offer particular thanks to Aristobulus, who drove the minibus for us on both occasions.

## **Ordinations**

At the end of April, some of our regular worshippers went on a retreat to the monastery of St Michael and St Martin at Bois-Aubry in France, and were delighted to spend time there in prayer and fellowship with Bishop Gregory and other members of our wider church family, celebrating with them a milestone in the life of our community, as we had a new acolyte, reader, and priest ordained to serve our parish. This has opened the door to a much fuller spiritual and sacramental life together, which we pray may continue to blossom.

## **Growth**

In May, we baptised another new member of the Church of Christ, having negotiated the use of St Alban's Anglican church in Broadheath, which had suitable facilities.

In May, we celebrated our first Divine Liturgy, which marked the beginning of a new pattern of worship for us – one that expresses more fully our Orthodox Christian identity.

## **Donations**

In January 2021 the parish made a donation of £100 to an individual in financial hardship.

Later in the year, the parish sent a cheque for £200 as a donation to the Albert Kennedy Trust. However, at the time of this report this cheque has not been redeemed.

## **Office Holders**

The trustees of our parish for the first year were:

- Father Cyprian (Astley) – *Ex Officio* Chair of trustees as Rector of the parish.
- Reader Joseph Smith – Secretary, appointed as trustee for an initial period of 3 years, with 2 years remaining to be served.
- Ms Susan Fozard – Treasurer, appointed as trustee for an initial period of 2 years, with 1 year remaining to be served.

When any trustee's service comes to an end, the board of trustees will decide whether to invite that individual to serve for a further term or to appoint a new trustee.

The Trustees would like to thank Ms Photini Brennan for her service as Parish Safeguarding Officer from last summer until October 2022. Photini has handed over the reins to Mr Aristobulus Kordemir, who has kindly agreed to fill this role.

### **Bereavement**

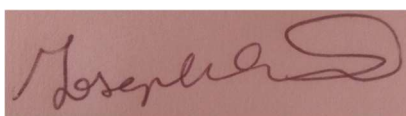
Amidst all of the positive and encouraging activity, last year was also marked by sadness. At the end of May 2022, we lost a very dear friend of our parish in the person of the Rev'd Derek Palmer. It is with Derek's enthusiastic permission that our worshipping life originally started at his home in Oldham in late 2018, and when we were unable to continue in our first public place of worship, Derek opened the doors of his own church to us at no charge. He gave generously to our parish, both financially and by donation of vestments and other items for worship, and Father Cyprian would like it noted that what he has learnt by extension from Derek's years of experience in parish ministry is invaluable, not to mention the emotional support he received from him in the face of the many trials that were encountered in the early days of getting our mission started.

Derek had intended to join the Orthodox Church after his retirement from active ministry in the Church of England. However, his quickly deteriorating health meant that he fell asleep in the Lord before this could take place. Several members of our parish community attended and took an active part in Derek's funeral services, which included many Orthodox elements. Let us all please to add his name to our personal diptychs and pray for him among the benefactors of our church.

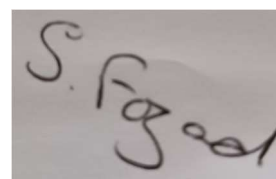
This Annual Report was approved by the undersigned Trustees of the Parish of Saint Melangell at the deferred Annual General Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2023.



Hieromonk Cyprian  
Rector  
Chair of Trustees



Reader Joseph Smith  
Secretary



Ms Susan Fozard  
Treasurer

## From the Treasurer

Dear friends,

The accounts for the financial year 12/11/2021 to 11/11/2022 are attached for your interest.

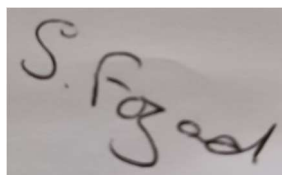
As our community has gone through a number of changes, we have successfully met the costs involved in our regular activities and been able to acquire a number of items that we have needed as our worshipping life has become better established. We have been able to fund our charitable aims throughout this period.

Special thanks are due to our regular and occasional donors, as well as to those who took part in the Marathon volunteer fundraiser.

While we did well last year, there are a few things to bear in mind. The first is that a number of costs were absorbed by private individuals and were not claimed back from the parish. While such generosity is always welcomed, it isn't something we can rely on to meet our running costs. Additionally, our costs now include insurance to cover our contents and liability, as well as a slightly increased monthly hire fee for our building.

As well as running costs, our new home in Wythenshawe has presented us with a number of opportunities for mission and outreach, which will require funds.

Therefore, let us pray for inspiration as we seek new and imaginative ideas to raise funds to allow us to continue and expand our work through the current year and into the future.



Susan Fozard  
*Treasurer*

### **Summary of Accounts for the Interim period from the Registration of our Parish as a Charity on 08/07/2021 until the beginning of our first Financial Year on 12/11/2021**

|                           | <b>Amount (£)</b> |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Income                    | 1571.00           |
| Expenditure               | 787.23            |
| Closing Balance 11/11/202 | 783.77            |

## Summary of Accounts for the Financial Year 12/11/2021 to 11/11/2022

|                            | Amount (£) |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Opening Balance 12/11/2021 | 783.77     |
| Income                     | 3657.01    |
| Expenditure                | 3640.25    |
| Closing Balance 11/11/2022 | 800.53     |

### Breakdown of Income

| Source                                    | Amount (£)     | Comment                   |
|---|----------------|---------------------------|
| Private Donations (Inclusive of Gift Aid) | 3217.79        | Inc. Net Gift Aid £501.94 |
| Easyfundraising                           | 74.98          |                           |
| Manchester Marathon Donation              | 364.00         |                           |
| Bank Account Interest                     | 0.24           |                           |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>3657.01</b> |                           |

### Breakdown of Expenditure

| Expense                          | Amount (£)     | Comment                    |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| Regular Building Hire Fees       | 1900.00        | Hope Methodist Church      |
| Occasional Building Hire Fees    | 90.00          | Baptism, Pilgrimage, &c.   |
| Regular Bank Account Fees        | 87.00          |                            |
| International Bank Transfer Fee  | 25.00          | Antimensium                |
| Parish Website                   | 244.20         |                            |
| Antimensium                      | 67.49          |                            |
| Communion Wine                   | 11.70          |                            |
| Flour                            | 1.75           |                            |
| Altar Light Glasses              | 75.50          |                            |
| Missal Stand                     | 38.70          |                            |
| Paschal Candle                   | 15.60          |                            |
| Altar Cross                      | 105.03         |                            |
| Baptism Gifts                    | 56.10          |                            |
| Sundry Non-Consumables           | 12.90          | Cruets, Towels, &c.        |
| Christmas Cards                  | 5.28           |                            |
| Candles                          | 19.20          |                            |
| Minibus Hire                     | 130.00         | Wallasey and Ilam trips    |
| DBS Certificates                 | 385.00         |                            |
| Hospitality                      | 26.00          | Meeting with Enquirers &c. |
| Travel expenses                  | 93.80          |                            |
| Duplicate Donation Reimbursement | 150.00         |                            |
| Hardship Donation                | 100.00         |                            |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>3576.45</b> |                            |