

Annual Report

Name of Charity: **The Parish of Saint Melangell**
Operating name: **Saint Melangell's Orthodox Church**
Charity Number: **1195091**
Trustees: **Cyprian Astley (*Chair*)**
Joseph Smith (*Secretary*)
Kieran Turner (*Treasurer*)
Reporting Period: **12th November 2024 – 11th November 2025**

From the Rector

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, and friends of our parish,

I think it is perhaps fair to say that the past year has been for us a time of uncertainty and change, during which we have been presented with many opportunities for acquiring the gift of patience. Decisions about our life, our location, and our future have rested in the hands of others. Yet during this time, we have persevered in our Orthodox life, both as individuals and as a community.

Uncertainty paves the way for trust in God, for faith, and for prayerfulness, and by God's mercy we have continued in our regular offering of worship, in examining our consciences and confessing our sins, in studying the Faith, and opening our doors and our hearts to those seeking the life in Christ.

In my own moments of impatience and anxiousness, I have been able to draw inspiration and stability from the flock that God has entrusted to my care. I see much of what you do so faithfully, both at worship and behind the scenes, in the friendships that you have formed and the social activities you do together, in the food and drink you provide for our social time together, in the practical assistance that you give to each other, in your openness in praying for each other and asking for each other's prayers, in the kind words of encouragement some of you offer to me from time to time, and I'm sure in much else that I haven't mentioned here.

As always, at the heart of all that we do together is our life in Jesus Christ, and I ask you to have that in mind as you read the following report from our trustees, giving thanks for all that God has worked in and through us, and with humility, praying that He may continue to reveal his will through us in the coming year.

With love in Christ,

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

Hieromonk Cyprian
Rector
Chair of Trustees

From the Trustees

Dear members and friends of The Parish of Saint Melangell,

Each year we must submit a report to the Charity Commission for England and Wales to demonstrate the ways in which we have met the aims qualify us for status as a registered charity.

While this is a legal requirement, it also serves as a useful opportunity for us to reflect on the fulfilment of our calling as an Orthodox Christian church in our circumstances, to live the life in Jesus Christ and to be a visible presence in the community of which we are part.

Here is a reminder of those charitable aims as they are 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.

Regular Worship

From October 2025, we have been able to return the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on Sundays to its more canonically proper time in the morning, and have restored the office of Lauds, providing a fuller pattern of Orthodox worship.

Vespers of Sunday continues to be prayed on Saturday evening at least once a month, and sometimes more frequently. This is in addition to the various feasts of the Lord, the Mother of God, and the saints, which we have celebrated throughout the year on weekdays and Saturdays.

Melangell Turner and Subdeacon Joseph Smith continue to work hard each week on the musical offering to God, and have recently been joined by Maria Smith-Bain to form the beginnings of a parish choir. As always, the purpose of the choir is to enhance and support the congregational singing and not to replace it, and we continue to encourage full vocal participation by the faithful.

Due to a shortage of altar servers, we still offer the Divine Liturgy and other services without their full ceremonial, and Father Cyprian often must sometimes step away from the altar to fulfil some of the duties of servers himself. It is our hope that men with suitable gifts will offer themselves in service to God in this way.

Occasional Services

There was one request for memorial prayers for the departed during the past year.

There was one request for the blessing of the home of a parishioner.

There were no weddings or funerals in the parish.

Pilgrimages

A pilgrimage to the burial site of St Cedd of Lastingham, planned for the 3rd of May, had to be cancelled due to lack of interest and insufficient numbers to make transport possible.

However, there was a pilgrimage to the shrine and holy well of St Winefride of Treffynnon on 27th September. This consisted of the Divine Liturgy and taking the waters, followed by a pub lunch. The day concluded with an Office of Veneration before the relic of St Winefride.

The Upper Room

In the summer of 2022, Father Cyprian approached the then rector of the Anglican parish of Christ Church, Moss Side, to enquire about the possible use of the space above their church hall, which had previously been used as a church by a Coptic Orthodox community but had been empty since their departure nearly 30 years earlier. At the time, the rector was preparing for retirement and was reluctant to commit the Christ Church community to a new arrangement.

In the spring of 2025, a providential city-centre encounter with a regular worshipper at Christ Church, who was a former work colleague of Father Cyprian, revealed that a new rector was about to be appointed and that there might be a benefit to making further enquiries. This we did, with the result that, after a period of negotiation with the Parochial Church Council of Christ Church, this space was made available for our use as a church from September.

A fundraiser was launched so we could purchase what was necessary, to which our friends and supporters responded with great generosity. Throughout September and October, members and friends of our parish community mobilised, giving up their evenings and weekends to set about the hard work of refurbishing the unused and tired space, cleaning, beautifying, and transforming into an Orthodox temple worthy of the worship of God. This was an encouraging example of the bonds that we have formed as a church community, and a sign of our common life and purpose.

The central location of our new church, which we have called *The Upper Room*, has already led to numerical growth, and the fact that we have it for our exclusive use has enabled us to expand the breadth of our services and other spiritual activities, and to provide greater flexibility with regard to the times confessions may be heard.

Mission and Outreach

We continue to post content semi-regularly on the parish social media – TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook – which generates awareness of elements of the Orthodox Christian Faith in its western expression and leads to engagement and enquiries.

Publications

The Saint Melangell Prayer Book, published by our parish in January 2024, continues to be a popular devotional aid, and a number of copies are purchased each month by those who use it to help sustain them in their daily prayers and spiritual lives in the Orthodox Christians tradition.

Charitable Donation

A donation of £200 was made to an individual to aid with financial difficulty.

Marathon Fundraiser

After a break in the previous year due to waning interest, we were able once again to send groups of volunteers to the Manchester Marathon and Half Marathon in 2025 to boost parish funds. We have come to rely on these events to cover our costs and we hope that, with increased numbers in our community, we might be able to send larger teams in the future.

Catechesis

Regular instruction and reflection on the way of life in Christ in the Orthodox Christian Faith continues to be provided in the parish in the form of homilies on most Sundays and feasts.

Our parish catechism course was run twice during the past year, and through repeated delivery and feedback has now been refined into a 13-week course, covering the following topics:

- The Creation
- The Fall
- Theophany and Revelation
- Holy Tradition
- The Creed
- The Church
- The Holy Mysteries I: Christian Initiation
- The Holy Mysteries II: The Life in Christ
- Prayer and the Communion of Saints
- The Holy Images
- Orthodox Customs
- The Divine Liturgy I: The Mass of the Catechumens
- The Divine Liturgy II: The Mass of the Faithful

Growth

This has been a year of numerical growth for our parish. Two new Orthodox Christians were baptised and chrismated at our parish on the night of Pascha (19th April) 2025, and a new catechumen was made on the eve of the Transfiguration (5th August).

At the end of the reporting period, most Sundays now see between 15-20 people in attendance at the Sunday Divine Liturgy, including university students for the first time.

A number of enquirers have reached out to us in recent months, some of whom are in regular or semi-regular attendance, and some of whom, at the time of writing, are soon to be made catechumens.

A New Font

The increased number of baptisms at our parish over the last two years meant that our previous practice of hiring another church with facilities for baptism by full immersion was no longer feasible, and we decided to have a font made for our own use. This would allow for baptisms to be performed in our own church immediately prior to the Divine Liturgy, thus enabling neophytes to receive the Holy Communion of the Lord's Body and Blood after their baptism and chrismation.

Our fundraiser for this purpose raised a small portion of what was needed, with the remainder of the cost covered by an anonymous donor. The font was used for the first time at Pascha 2025. It is designed in such a way that it can be dismantled and used as a table when not in use, which suits our needs and circumstances.

Regularising our Canonical Situation

Over the course of October and November 2024, some members of our parish became aware of certain questionable sacramental practices within the Orthodox Church of the Gauls that betrayed an ecclesiology not in keeping with the Orthodox Christian Faith, essentially expressing a fullness of communion with the heresies of the Latin and Protestant confessions.

This meant that it became doubtful whether our continued membership of this church would allow us to maintain a stable life in the Orthodox Christian Faith. Since that time, it has been revealed to our great disappointment that such practices, as well as the problematic beliefs that underlie them, pervade not just the Church of the Gauls but all three of the member churches of the Communion of Western Orthodox Churches. It seems that these problems have existed in these churches for some time but that our geographical and linguistic isolation from the other communities of this communion meant that it is only recently that we have become aware of the extent of them.

At our Annual General Meeting on 30th December 2024, the trustees decided to write to Bishop Gregory to try to resolve these matters in an Orthodox manner. When his responses were reviewed at the following trustees' meeting on 17th January 2025 and found to be unsatisfactory, the unanimous decision was taken to seek entry into another Orthodox jurisdiction where our Western liturgical and spiritual tradition would be honoured, and where we could have the assurance of faithfulness to the patristic and canonical Tradition of the Church, free from the opposite extremes of Ecumenism, on the one hand, and rigorism, on the other. Father Cyprian was tasked with exploring possible options that might result in the best outcome for our community.

Since that time a number of avenues have been pursued with the intention of maintaining a stable Orthodox life in Jesus Christ for our community and putting us in the best position to fulfil our charitable aim of advancing the Orthodox Christian religion. While there have been positive developments in this endeavour and signs of hope, at both the end of the reporting period and at the time of writing, the matter remains unresolved.

Office Holders

The trustees of our parish for the reporting year were:

- Hieromonk Cyprian (Astley) – *Ex Officio* Chair of trustees as Rector of the parish.
- Subdeacon Joseph Smith – Secretary
- Mr John Hopkins – Treasurer, until 18th June 2025.
- Mr Kieran (Edwin) Turner – Treasurer, from 24th June 2025.

We would like to express our gratitude to Mr John Hopkins for his service to our parish in the role of treasurer, which duty he undertook as a friend to our community when we needed assistance.

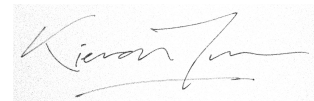
This Annual Report was approved by the undersigned Trustees of the Parish of Saint Melangell at the Annual General Meeting on 9th January, 2026.



Hieromonk Cyprian
Rector
Chair of Trustees



Subdeacon Joseph Smith
Secretary



Mr Edwin (Kieran) Turner
Treasurer

From the Treasurer

Dear friends,

Please find below the summary of our accounts for the financial year 12th November 2024 to 11th November 2025.

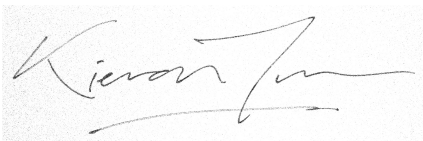
A few points of note:

- Our overall income and expenditure are both significantly higher than they have ever been in previous years. This is due in large part to the fundraiser and costs associated with the refurbishment of The Upper Room for use as our new church, and is therefore not reflective of our usual income and costs.
- Our website costs have reduced considerably as it is now hosted by a member of our parish, Mr Garry Bain, after we retired the services of a commercial provider.
- Our building hire fees are also lower than usual as we were granted a reprieve by Christ Church for month of October 2025 while our refurbishment continued amidst items belonging to the Christ Church community still in storage in The Upper Room.
- After a break in the previous year, we once again sent teams of volunteers to both the Manchester Marathon and Half Marathon. The donation from the latter was received after the conclusion of the financial year and is therefore not reflected in the figures below.

There are some easy ways in which we can improve the future stability of our finances:

- While cash given at church is welcomed, we are currently unable to claim Gift Aid on these donations. Donations made through our website qualify for Gift Aid and generate more income per pound for our parish.
- With increased numbers in our community, I hope that more of us might be able to take part in the Marathon and Half Marathon fundraisers in 2026. These events have traditionally been the source of a significant portion of our annual income.
- Our Easyfundraising account reveals that the amount of £16.25, which is the lowest we have ever received from this source, was generated by the activity of one person only. This could be significantly increased if more of our people were to use this resource.

I am pleased that, once again over this past year, we have been able to meet all of our costs and continue our mission due to the generosity and commitment of our parish community and supporters elsewhere, and I pray that this may continue into the new year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kieran Turner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mr Edwin (Kieran) Turner
Treasurer

Summary of Accounts for the Financial Year 12/11/2024 to 11/11/2025

	Amount (£)
Opening Balance 12/11/2024	1386.78
Income	9,434.78
Expenditure	10,179.47
Closing Balance 11/11/2025	642.09

Breakdown of Income

Source	Amount (£)	Comment
Private Donations (Inclusive of Gift Aid)	8667.71	Inc. Net Gift Aid of £1231.99
Travel Loan Repayment	400.00	
Manchester Marathon	348.00	
Easyfundraising	16.25	
Bank Account Interest	2.82	
Total	9,434.78	

Breakdown of Expenditure

Expense	Amount (£)	Comment
Regular Building Hire Fees	2564.99	
Regular Bank Account Fees	60.00	
Annual Insurance Premium	378.91	
Insurance Premium Adjustment	36.24	New church
Parish Website	27.00	
Candles & Incense	97.65	
Tealights	6.99	
Paschal Candle	58.68	
Battery-Operated Candles	39.99	
Hand-Painted Icons for the Screen	751.29	
Vigil Lamps & Delivery	255.00	
Vigil Lamp Brackets	14.97	
Motion Sensor Lights	41.99	Illumination for the stairs
Refectory Benches	396.00	
Rugs & Customs Charges	547.40	
Noticeboard	28.99	
Carpet Tiles	419.76	
Carpet Tile Links	54.37	
Wood Glue	5.41	
Plastic Putty	5.99	Repair to acolyte tapers
Sundry Refurbishment Costs	784.68	Various tools & equipment
Bibles	59.96	Catechumens & enquirers
Catechetical books	12.60	Gifts for enquirers
Printer Ink	180.11	
Printer Paper	6.99	
Parish Stamp	30.44	
Prayer Books	33.94	Canonical regularisation
Google One	39.95	Online sessions
Font & Accessories	1725.97	
Parish Retreat	900.00	Béthanie
Pilgrimage donation	50.00	St Winefride's Shrine

Charitable donation	200.00	
Clergy & visitor travel expenses	237.69	
Thirty-One:Eight Membership	79.50	Safeguarding organisation
DBS certificates	46.02	New trustee & renewals
Total	10,179.47	