

**The Orthodox Christian Community of
St Constantine the Great, York**

**Trustees Annual Report
for the period
1st January 2025 – 31st December 2025**

Charity number 1201173

Structure Governance & Management

Names of Trustees that served during the year:

Rev Michael Alexander – Chair

Rev Christopher Bennigsen – Secretary

Melissa Bryan – Treasurer

Natalia Dowding

Rev David Hoskin

Peter Comley – Safeguarding Officer

The Orthodox Christian Community of St Constantine the Great, York (St Constantine's) is a CIO with a Foundation Constitution, and its trustees are appointed by members. The trustees meet quarterly and in between those meetings the Church Council meets to deal with operational discussions and decisions. The Council consists of all Trustees plus six elected members.

We take safeguarding very seriously and our Safeguarding Officer ensures that all Trustees and relevant congregation members are DBS checked and are up to date with their safeguarding training. The Trustees are notified of any safeguarding concerns and any relevant outcomes.

Objectives

The objectives of St Constantine's are to promote the Orthodox Christian faith; to advance Orthodox Christian education; to sustain the well-being of the Orthodox Christian community in York and the surrounding area; to assist in the relief of poverty locally, nationally and internationally; to support other charitable objectives as the trustees may from time to time decide.

Activities and Achievements

Church Services

From the beginning of 2025, following Fr. Michael Alexander's hospitalization for heart surgery and extended convalescence, Sunday services returned to the previous cycle of weekly Parish Matins and Divine Liturgy. This pattern continued through the Lenten and Paschal/Pentecost services until early July, when Fr. Michael's health required a less committed regime of 3rd & 6th Hours and Divine Liturgy. An attempt was made to re-introduce Parish Matins in

September, but Fr. Michael's continuing health proved this unsuitable and there was a return to the pattern of Hours and Liturgy. In addition, once or twice in this period, Reader Services were offered by the Deacons and Readers owing to Fr. Michael's return to hospital for some further medical procedures. Nevertheless, the regular pattern of Sunday service was maintained and the changes in the form of the services made no significant or lasting impact on church attendance. In fact, the parish was able to be a little adventurous and on 29th May (Ascension Day) a Divine Liturgy was served in the Zouche Chapel of York Minster, where the parish was joined by some members of the York Minster congregation and also a group of catechumen families from the newly-formed St. Hilda Mission in Halifax. This was followed by a picnic in the Minster Gardens.

Thanks to the good offices of Fr. Richard Duffield of the RC Chaplaincy at the University of York, we were also able to hold some evening services at More House chapel; the student chaplaincy house. This included Great Vespers on the eve of St Constantine (our patronal saint) in May which was preceded by a picnic in the garden and the planting of bee-friendly flowers both at More House, and in the grounds of York St John University. This event was organised alongside other Orthodox parishes in Greece and Turkey as part of an international project called 'Blossoming Beezantium' which aims to highlight Byzantine culture and history and Byzantine thought of the bee as the ideal prototype for human collaboration and their critical role for sustaining life on the planet.

As previously mentioned, none of these alterations had any problematic effect on attendance. Average Sunday attendance rose to 57 (43 adults and 14 children). During this same period twelve adults and four children were received into the Church; seven through Baptism and nine through Chrismation. Our registered membership at the end of 2025 was 151 (112 adults and 39 children).

Ordinations

In February, we were visited by H. E. Met. Silouan for his annual episcopal visit to the parish. During this visit, Met. Silouan ordained Sdn. Christopher to the Diaconate and Rdr. Maximos to the Subdiaconate. Joseph Ford was also tonsured as a Reader. The Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was followed by a parish lunch in the University. An evening meal was held in a restaurant with the bishop and all members of the clergy and their wives.

Education and Development

Catechism classes for those seeking membership of the church have continued successfully, as the figures for reception show. These have been conducted, according to a set syllabus, by Fr. Dn. Christopher, Sdn. Maximus and Rdr. Thomas.

In Great Lent Rdr. Thomas gave a series of talks on the writings of the Church Fathers together with the service of Compline in the Chapel, which were well attended. The talks were recorded for those unable to attend. Also, the Orthodox Christian Society of St. Edwin at YSJ University sponsored some talks by clergy members and also some film shows on matters of the Faith and Lives of the Saints.

Sdn. Maximus continued to train and develop our choir and also began to train and support choral activities at the newly-created mission of St. Hilda in Halifax and in September both he, Fr. Michael and Fr. Dn. Christopher assisted at the reception of a large group of catechumens in a service led, by H. E. Met. Silouan. Sdn. Maximus has continued to give support and training to the Halifax choir.

Pilgrimage

We held a pilgrimage to Hinderwell, near Whitby, in July. Thanks to the generosity of the Rev. Capt. Malcolm Jackson, we were able to use the Anglican parish church to hold a moleben service with the canon to St. Hilda, followed by the blessing of the ancient well, dedicated to St. Hilda, the churchyard. We were joined by members of St. Hilda's mission in Halifax and were warmly welcomed by the Methodists in the same village for lunch in their church hall after the service was concluded.

Children's Activities

There is a regular Sunday School run by Dia. Naomi Bennigsen and Mrs. Katherine Melissa Bryan which meets before the Divine Liturgy in one of the side chapels. Due to new members joining our community, this now averages at about 7/8 children each Sunday.

Over 2025, two main series were completed. One on the Sundays of Great Lent, in which the children each made books, and another series on elements of the Divine Liturgy. This series concluded with a presentation of items from the altar for the children to see led by Fr. Dn. Christopher and Fr. Michael.

Another Nativity Play was also performed by the children on the Sunday before the Nativity. We continue to provide colouring and educational material for the children to engage with during the Divine Liturgy as well.

Charitable Activities

We had a number of collections for a York homeless charity, Carecent, during the year, with donations in food and cash. We have given financial support to some parishioners who have been experiencing temporary hardship during this period, in accordance with the constitution of the Parish Trust.

We also became involved with the York Besom Project which through the various churches in the City of York provides help and support to the deprived families within the City. A small group of parishioners provided help to a single mother and her son by spending a day painting her second bedroom and preparing the hall, stairs and landing for painting. The parish also collected items to put together two Christmas Hampers full of food, essentials and Children's toys for two such families.

Financial Review

We do not receive any external funds. We rely on donations from our congregation.

Our total income for 2025 was £23,124, which is a decrease of £611 from 2024. Planned giving, collections and donations increased £1,117 from last year, however, Gift Aid recovered was £2,270 less than last year. That is because the last claim of the year totalling £2,274, was not received until 2026. A part of this income was the sale of a wall calendar, both internally to our own parishioners, and also to other communities within our Archdiocese. This is the third year we have produced such a calendar.

Total Expenditure was £23,021, which was £11,736 more than 2024. There were several reasons for such a big increase. Firstly, in our search for a church initiative this year we called upon the services of an architect and an iconographer to review one of the buildings we are interested in bidding on. The cost for these services was £1,129. Secondly, the parish paid for the publishing of the new Gospel Book for several parishes to try. The full cost for this was £5,750 and half was paid in 2025 with the remaining to come out of 2026. Lastly, we invested in new vestments, candle stands and altar ware.

We launched our 'building fund' fundraising campaign in December as we aim to purchase a church in 2026. Parishioners were asked to pray during December and return their pledges in January 2026. £300 was collected for the fund in December. Last year we had £25,000 designated to a building fund and this was added to the Restricted Building Fund after the launch of the fundraising campaign.

Therefore, our Unrestricted Fund had a surplus of £932, increasing the fund to £10,495 and the Restricted Building Fund finished the year with a surplus of £24,171.

Fund Analysis					
	Unrestricted	Building Fund Designated	Charity Collections Restricted	Building Fund Restricted	Total
Balance at 1 January 2025	£9,563	£25,000	£Nil	£Nil	£34,563
Income	£22,346	£Nil	£478	£300	£23,124
Expenditure	(£21,414)	£Nil	(£478)	(£1,129)	(£23,021)
Transfers		(£25,000)		£25,000	£Nil
Balance at 31 December 2025	£10,495	£Nil	£Nil	£24,171	£34,666

Reserves Policy

Our reserves policy equates to £8,000, this will be reviewed next year as we look to purchase a building. At the end of 2025, our unrestricted cash reserve was £10,495.

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Michael Alexander, Chair

09 March 2026

Melissa Bryan, Treasurer

09 March 2026



Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date
	1/1/2025		31/12/2025

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Planned Giving	13,418	-	-	13,418	12,383
Planned Giving - Building Fund	-	300	-	300	-
Collections at services	2,000	-	-	2,000	1,563
Candles	872	-	-	872	769
Other Donations	1,687	-	-	1,687	2,042
Gift Aid recovered	2,627	-	-	2,627	4,897
Trading Income	1,210	-	-	1,210	1,420
Investment Interest	532	-	-	532	429
Specific Charity Donations	-	478	-	478	232
Sub total	22,346	778	-	23,124	23,735
A2 Asset and investment sales,					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	22,346	778	-	23,124	23,735
A3 Payments					
Parish Share	3,234	-	-	3,234	2,390
Clergy Costs	525	-	-	525	501
Premise Hire	-	-	-	-	75
Mission Giving and Donations	2,309	478	-	2,787	2,066
Church running expenses	12,778	-	-	12,778	2,938
Administrative	2,077	-	-	2,077	1,812
Other Expenses	46	-	-	46	901
Building Costs	-	1,129	-	1,129	-
Cost of Raising Funds	445	-	-	445	602
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	21,414	1,607	-	23,021	11,285
A4 Asset and investment					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	21,414	1,607	-	23,021	11,285
Net of receipts/(payments)	932	(829)	-	103	12,450
A5 Transfers between funds	(25,000.00)	25,000	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	34,563	-	-	34,563	22,113
Cash funds this year end	10,495	24,171	-	34,666	34,563

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment to nearest £
B1 Cash funds				
	Bank current account	10,495	417	-
	Deposit Account	-	23,754	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	10,495	24,171	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds
		to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets				
	Gift Aid Claim not paid until 2026	2,274	-	-

	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-

Details	Fund to which asset	Cost (optional)	Current value
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

Details	Fund to which asset	Cost (optional)	Current value
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

Details	Fund to which	Amount due	When due
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
		Michael Alexander	
		Melissa Bryan	