

**PARISH OF THE RESURRECTION
SMETHWICK PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

ACCOUNTS

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

Parish of the Resurrection
Income and Expenditure Account
Year Ended 31 December 2025

INCOME

2024	2025	
	£	£
<u>VOLUNTARY RECEIPTS</u>		
Stewardship		
20,257 Stewardship giving		20,198
Collections at Services		
3,114 Loose collections	3,176	
316 Yellow envelopes	210	3,386
Voluntary Receipts		
4,836 Voluntary Receipts	-	-
Donations & Appeals		
127 Restricted donations	927	927
Gift Aid		
7,244 Gift Aid	5,398	5,398
Grants Received		
- LPW Grant	4,545	
1,250 Harlow Trust keble	-	4,545
<u>INVESTMENT INCOME</u>		
Dividends, Interest and Property Receipts		
6,613 Dividends	5,236	
149 Bank interest	301	
42,764 Sale of Investments	45,000	50,537
<u>CHURCH ACTIVITIES</u>		
Fees Retained		
1,899 Weddings, funerals and miscellaneous	1,051	1,051
Trading Activities		
27,501 Nursery	16,500	
12,800 Smethwick Church Action Network	10,800	
2,300 Room hire	4,000	
500 Polling station	-	31,300
<u>OTHER RECEIPTS</u>		
Agency		
3,931 Agency fees		3,403
Other		
- Insurance claim proceeds	28,742	
- Roberts and Brain	82	
1,500 Smethwick Church Action Network - heating	1,000	29,824
137,101		150,569
19,125 (DEFICIT) / SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR		
		(10,496)

EXPENDITURE

2024	2025	
	£	£
Mission Giving & Donations		
127 Water Aid/Christian Aid	537	
- Charitable donations	2,000	2,537
Common Fund		
42,000 Common Fund	48,000	48,000
Salaries, Wages & Honoraria		
4,380 Cleaner/Maintenance wages	4,559	
2,650 Organist & Music	3,170	7,729
Agency		
2,111 BDF	1,320	
1,320 Organist & verger	765	
400 Box - Laptop	-	
100 Sunday School	-	
- DG Retreat	250	
- DG retirement collection	250	
- Paul Langford	200	
- Time Flies celebration	26	
- Children's Society	50	
- Christmas party	107	
126 Funeral	300	3,268
Vicarage Costs		
762 BT	697	
45 DG expenses	30	
541 Water rates	599	
492 Alarm	506	
1,725 Decorating	-	1,832
Clergy Expenses		
1,047 DG expenses	406	
- NR expenses	260	
- Balint Group	80	746
Mission & Evangelism		
749 Easter & Christmas cards	467	
122 Expenses	107	
441 Sunday School books	-	
73 Poppy stickers	-	574
Church Running Costs		
1,737 Photocopier usage	2,110	
2,040 Accountancy	2,100	
120 Accountancy previous year adjustment	60	
207 Professional fees	-	
328 CCLI copyright licence	346	
1,315 Church WIFI	408	
- Piano tuning	105	
- Envelope systems	173	
6,066 Insurance	6,325	
2,104 Miscellaneous	273	
192 Office costs	703	
- Photocopier lease	751	
523 Funeral	-	
2,393 Parochial fees	-	
(253) Daisy Communications refund	-	
2,442 DG expenses	-	
- Phone sim	177	
- Church Supplies - Charles Farris	1,615	
- Hygiene	361	
- Zoom	276	
- Postage	231	
- Cleaning	395	
- Stationery	471	16,881
Church Repairs & Maintenance		
13,238 Church Repairs & Maintenance	62,259	62,259
Church Activities		
- Bibles, books and literature	405	
- Chocolates for schools	66	
994 Christmas tree , party , flowers , etc	338	
- Activity supplies	470	
81 Easter eggs	200	
413 Flowers	726	
- All Age Service	72	
- Time Flies celebration	174	
- GE Diocese training	20	
270 David's farewell party	697	
54 NR expenses	-	
190 Birthday & leaving gifts	83	
143 Sunday school party , etc	344	
66 Refreshments	-	
464 Church BBQ	-	3,595
Church Utility Costs		
3,833 Electricity	4,014	
17,988 Gas	7,560	
186 Water	217	11,792
Costs of Trading		
1,628 Nursery insurance	1,852	1,852
117,976		161,065

Parish of the Resurrection

Balance Sheet

		2025	2024
	Note	£	£
Assets			
Balance at bank	- Co-Operative current account	12,868	9,391
	- Co-Operative deposit account	15,017	29,006
	- West Bromwich Building Society	8,148	8,072
Cash in hand		134	134
		<u>36,167</u>	<u>46,603</u>
		36,167	46,603
Accruals		(2,100)	(2,040)
Investments			
CBF Deposit account		2,228	2,228
CBF Finance investments		<u>150,886</u>	<u>205,207</u>
		153,114	207,435
		<u>187,181</u>	<u>251,998</u>
Surplus account			
At 1st January		44,563	25,439
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year		<u>(10,496)</u>	<u>19,125</u>
At 31 December		34,067	44,563
Investments			
Capital fund 8001D	2	2,228	2,228
Investment fund 2228d	1	738	690
Investment fund 2313s	1	555	578
Investment fund 8001s	1	<u>149,593</u>	<u>203,939</u>
		153,114	207,435
		<u>187,181</u>	<u>251,998</u>

Parish of the Resurrection

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 December 2025

1. The Capital Investment in the Central Board of Finance Investment is made up as follows:

	£	£
(a) CBF Deposit Fund <u>CB3001576-001</u>		
Opening valuation	691	
Increase in valuation	<u>47</u>	
		738
(b) CBF Investment Fund <u>CB3001639-001</u>		
Opening valuation	578	
Decrease in valuation	<u>(23)</u>	
Closing valuation - 25 shares at £23.1227		555
(c) <u>CBF Investment Fund</u> <u>CB3020245-001</u>		
Opening valuation	203,939	
Sales	(45,000)	
Decrease in valuation	<u>(9,346)</u>	
Closing valuation - 8,819.85 shares at £23.1227		149,593
		<u>150,886</u>

2. Capital Fund movements were as follows:

	£	
<u>CB3020244-001</u>		
Balance forward 31 December 2024	2,228	
Increase in investment	<u>-</u>	
Balance forward 31 December 2025		<u>2,228</u>
		<u>153,114</u>



Holy Trinity Church, Smethwick

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Church Hill Street Smethwick B67 7AH

www.holytrinitysmethwick.co.uk



Welcome to our annual report. Thank you to all those who have contributed reports about their ongoing and varied ministries and thank you to Christine for putting the report together. As the reports reflect, this year, in which we said goodbye to Revd David and went into interregnum, is a period of challenge for us all. It is through God's blessings and thanks to the ministry of all the people...the whole congregation...that we continue to thrive as a church.

Revd Nick Ross

Wardens Report

Dear Friends,

It has been a privilege to serve as Churchwarden during the past year. I give thanks to God for His continued guidance and provision in the life of our church.

This year has been one of significant transition for the parish. We said farewell to Rev David after his faithful service to the church and community. His leadership, pastoral care, and dedication have been deeply appreciated by us all. A special send-off service was held in his honour, providing an opportunity for the congregation and wider community to express their gratitude and to wish him well in his future ministry.

Following Rev David's departure, arrangements were made for him to vacate the vicarage. This process involved liaising with the Diocesan Property Team, which at times proved challenging. The parish then entered a period of interregnum. This has also been my first experience of helping to lead the parish during such a time. I am grateful for the support, guidance, and mentoring previously given by Rev David, which helped prepare me for this responsibility.

However, there have been moments when this period has felt challenging. At times, I have felt there was a lack of confidence in my ability to carry out the role, which has occasionally led me to step back. Despite this, I have remained committed to serving the parish to the best of my ability and supporting the life and ministry of the church during this vacancy. I thank all who have encouraged and prayed for me.

The process of seeking a new vicar is ongoing. Lorna and I are working closely with the Archdeacon and the diocesan representative to discern the right appointment for our parish. We ask for your continued prayers during this important time of transition.

Regular services have continued throughout the year, including Sunday worship, midweek services, and special celebrations

such as Christmas and Easter. Attendance has remained steady, with encouraging participation in services such as intergenerational worship. We have also continued to livestream our Sunday services on Zoom, although at times technology has failed us. Thank you to those who worship with us online for your patience and understanding during these occasions.

I also had my annual meeting with the Area Dean, which was very informative. It provided an opportunity for him to explain what is expected of me and for me to raise any concerns.

I would like to thank David Dyke for agreeing to serve as second Churchwarden, and for all the support he has offered during this period.

The church building has been generally well maintained by David. During the year, the following works were completed:

- Routine maintenance of the roof and gutters
- Electrical safety checks and fire extinguisher servicing
- Heating system servicing
- Clearing the vestry and carrying out minor repairs

David has also worked with Nick on the recent risk and fire assessment, including visiting St Micheal's Nursery to assess the building and rental areas.

I am grateful to our clergy team for their faithful leadership, support, and dedication throughout this period. I am also grateful to our, readers, crucifers, acolytes, volunteers, and all who contribute to leading worship and nurturing the spiritual life of the congregation. A special thank you to Pauline for coming in every Sunday morning to prepare the sacrament table.

I also thank the congregation for their patience, support, and commitment during this period of vacancy. Your service is invaluable and deeply appreciated.

As we look to the coming year, I pray for continued growth in faith, fellowship, and outreach. I remain committed to serving God and our community faithfully.

May we continue to trust in the Lord's guidance, confident that He is at work among us, leading us into the future He has prepared. And may we continue to walk together in faith, united in Christ, supporting and encouraging one another as we seek God's will for the future of our parish.

Afia Owuso

Report of the PCC Secretary

Role of the PCC

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is the body that, with the vicar steers the life of the church in its mission, witness and service in the parish. The PCC will

- consult with the vicar on matters of general concern and importance to the parish.
- co-operate with the Vicar in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical
- consider and discuss matters concerning the Church of England or any other matters of religious or public interest
- Make known and putting into effect any provisions made by the Diocesan or Deanery Synod, giving advice to the Diocesan or Deanery Synod and raising any issues with them any matters the council feel appropriate.

The responsibilities of the PCC include: -

The church building

The quinquennial report

Insurance

Annual inspection and report

Terrier, Inventory and logbook

Other property

The conduct of the financial affairs of the parish

The PCC's role is crucial during an interregnum, as it ensures that the parishioners' needs are met and that the church continues to function effectively. The PCC's actions during this time are guided by the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 and other relevant legislation.

Report of PCC Meetings 2024

The PCC met 15 times during the year. At these meetings the following items were considered:

Approval of the accounts for 2024.

2025 Fees for occasional Offices.

Income and expenditure.

Various grants

Installation of a card machine

Dates Events and Services for the year.

Diocesan Common Fund contribution

Development of land opposite church.

Necessary building work as recommended in the Quinquennial and repairs.

Purchase of robes

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Stewardship

Revision of the Safeguarding policy and necessary action.

At the March meeting Rev Gould announced he would be retiring as our Vicar. Considerable time has been spent preparing for the requirements of a Section 11 meeting i.e a Parish Profile and the appointment of representatives of the PCC for the interviewing process

Regular reports have been received throughout the year from Deanery Synod, the Childrens Ministry, Liturgy groups and Safeguarding Issues. These have been discussed and their

recommendations considered.

The council has complied with its duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Christine Price

Secretary to the PCC

TREASURERS REPORT – 2025

Another year has passed, and we find ourselves reflecting on 2025.

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone who continues to support our Church through the Stewardship Scheme and regular offerings. Your generosity enables the worship, mission, and day-to-day life of Holy Trinity Church. The Stewardship Scheme is particularly valuable as it allows us to plan ahead with a clearer understanding of our anticipated income in these increasing difficult economic times.

Gift Aid remains an essential part of our income. If you are a UK taxpayer and have not yet completed a Gift Aid declaration, please consider doing so as the Parish can reclaim an additional 25p from the HMRC for every £1.00 donated. Our sincere thanks go to Margaret Foxall for managing our Gift Aid returns, which resulted in us receiving £5,397.66 last year. Margaret has also taken over recording the Stewardship contributions and we continue to count and record the money received on the plate each Sunday. If anyone would like to begin giving regularly through the Stewardship Scheme or would like more information about Gift Aid, Margaret will be very pleased to help.

We are also grateful for the additional donations received to buy the flowers that enhance our worship at Easter, Harvest, and Christmas; and provide Easter eggs and Advent calendars for the children. We also received a kind donation of £100.00 from Kuldip Singh in memory of the late Donald Ellis.

We continue to receive rental income from Smethwick CAN, and are thankful that St Michael's Nursery are making regular rental payments again, although there are still some arrears. The reduced VAT on our gas bills has also been a significant help during the year.

Charitable donations were made to The Church Mission Society, Ladywood Interfaith and three schools (Crockett's Community, Devonshire Junior and Galton Valley). These totalled £2000.00. We also collected £315.21 for Water Aid. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this worthwhile cause.

In 2025 we paid £48000.00 to the Common Fund which is the parish's contribution toward the cost of ministry across the diocese. The remedial works listed in the Quinquennial report have been completed and we successfully applied for a grant of £4545.56 from the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme.

The departure of Rev David has inevitably left a gap, and we thank him for all he contributed during his time with us. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to the Reverends Nick, Jo and Barbara plus our Church Wardens Afia and David for everything they have done to help hold things together during this period of transition. We look forward to 2026 and pray that a new Vicar will be found to lead us as we continue to move forward in faith. Thank you all for your support.

Jayne Dean

Warley and Edgbaston Deanery Synod report

February meeting held at St Michael and All Angels Bartley Green

Jan, Steven and Karen talked about aspiration and vision for reducing the operating deficit of the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) our relationship with the Church Commissioners and our next funding bid and Common Fund.

June meeting held at Christ Church Summerfield

Sara Moore(Vicar of Old Church Smethwick) spoke about her long standing ministry supporting refugees and asylum seekers.

Guy spoke about Later Life Ministry - Bereavement support at St Bartholomews.

Caroline from St Faith and St Lawrence told us they have welcomed young families with children joyfully engaging in worship. A small singing group now supports services growing in confidence.

October meeting held at St Hilda's Warley Woods

Church of England Birmingham

National Church Funding Award an opportunity for parishes to share their comments, reflections and raise questions with

+Michael , Bishop of Birmingham Jan Smart, Diocesan Secretary and Andy Winmill, Diocesan Directory of Mission.

Jenny Cannings

Deanery Synod Representative

Childrens Ministry

Our children's work continues to flourish. The children and young people contribute a great deal to our worship, in their reporting back and their lead in the inter-generational service. Please continue to pray and support the work of the Childrens

and Young Peoples Ministry team:- Lorna, Nina Gabriela, Sumaira, Ngozi Judith Rev Jo, and myself who week by week to nurture the children's faith and encourage them along the road of discipleship.

Sunday School Report

Our numbers on Sundays are often inconsistent with a core of around 5 regular children from the Church family. Although one very good reason for slightly lower numbers over the last year is that two young people have 'ascended' - Hope and Belle - and have joined the older group. Preparation can be difficult for the leaders as it is never known whether there will be three or as many as nine plus! Having enough flexibility to include the occasional influx is a challenge on a weekly basis. Our regular children take it in their stride and learning to mix with infrequent visitors becomes a worthwhile Christian lesson and gift in itself.

Also challenging is finding themes and appropriate materials for a wide span of abilities and ages, generally using the Roots programme along with Susan Sayers books. By and large the lessons reflect the liturgy of the day, alongside creative and fun activities, that hopefully reinforce the children's understanding of growing as a Christian.

It is lovely to watch the children mature in their faith and in their confidence in sharing with the congregation once back in Church.

Thanks are due to our safe guardians who offer their support and also to Gladys Spoon who has recently joined in preparing and leading lessons when her University course allows.

More adults would still make a difference, particularly to support the differences in needs between the early years and the older members. If anyone feels they would like to join the team you would be very welcome to spend time as an observer before deciding. Different approaches and styles by Christian

adults would widen and strengthen the children's growing Christian learning about God's great love for everyone.

Gabriela, Lorna and Nina

Ascenders

It is a joy to be involved with this group which now numbers 10 of very lively teenagers who contribute enormously to the life of Holy Trinity. Sadly leadership is still an issue as with Shomari's departure it has left only myself. Please consider prayerfully whether you could help with this group

Christine Price

Children's Society

The 2025 collection raised £651.27 for the Children's Society. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the annual collection, which allows the work of the Children's Society to continue, in matters such as:-

Children's rights and advocacy

Mental health and well being

Missing from home

Substance misuse

Young carers

Our donations, and those from other Churches, also enable The Children's Society to open new services. An example is the opening of a hub where young people can drop in and meet trained staff on a one to one basis, without needing an appointment or a referral. They will also be able to access group sessions, as well as using the physical support space to relax and feel safe.

By continuing to support the Society, you are providing children who feel isolated and neglected with a brighter future.

Helping them feel seen, valued, and empowered to overcome the challenges they face.

Thank you

Margaret Foxall

Church Missionary Society

We continue to support our CMS Missioner partner Dr Nicci Maxwell working as a paediatrician in South Sudan, a land with a lot of unrest. Life is uncertain and the security situation is precarious. She has frequent changes of staff and has to start again with new people and is not always able to get to the refugee camp to pursue her work there. Juba is still unstable, but she has plenty of fellowship and a lot of joy. She was unable to visit us this year, but she sends regular newsletters through CMS with updates on her work and requests for prayer newsletters

Coffee after Service

A big thank you to The Spoon Family, Ade and his boys, Shafiq and Family, Emeka, Ngozi and the girls, Pauline, Iman David Derricott and Hossein who take it in turns to provide the coffee after the service. This is such an appreciated service and our Sundays wouldn't be the same without it. Thank you from all who imbibe.

Christine Price

E-Prayer

Over 70 church members receive the weekly E-prayer sheet. Prayer is an integral part of our Christian life so the prayer sheet gives an opportunity for us to pray during the week. Prayers are requested for those we know who are sick or in need, our church life, our community, the world and ourselves.

In addition, any emergency need for prayer is circulated when it arises. Prayer is the powerhouse of our church so please do let me know if there is anything or anyone you would like to be included on the sheet: if you are not on the mailing list but would like to receive the weekly prayer requests, please let me know your e-mail address. christine_price@outlook.com

Christine Price

Flowers in Church

Over the past year we have enjoyed many opportunities to include flowers in church: including Harvest, Christmas and most recently we celebrated Easter with several displays of lilies and spring flowers. It is a joy to praise our God, using the gifts that He has given to each one of us. The 'language' of flowers can cheer us all, as we reflect on their beauty and fragrance. Thank you all for your gifts of time and finances which enables this beautiful way of bringing the church alive. See you all at Harvest!

Wendy Dyke

Grounds

Stuart, as usual mows the grass on the top part of the church grounds so it always looks tidy. The Council mow the area below the steps and down to the wall on the High Street path. I had to prune some trees on the High Stret area so that the Council could mow as the branches were too low for the mower to be got under

Each Sunday I walk round the boundary of the church to pick up bottles and cans thrown on the grass so it is tidy.

In Autumn there are always lots of leaves off the trees which filled many black sacks each week for a while. This year David Dyke has taken bags to the tip instead of us leaving them on the pavement opposite to be taken away.

I keep the tomb George Rich made tidy although we had one of the crosses taken and put sideways so I check every week that they are still there and up straight as they should be, I cover them with grease regularly as a deterrent to leave them alone.

I put weedkiller down on the paths around the church building and the areas between the wall and grass so the weeds are kept down. I have some artificial plants to put in the beds by the main path for Summer so I don't have to water them every Sunday. I do sometimes need to water Ivan's and George's pots to keep the plants from dying off.

Janet Cartwright

Liturgy Group

The group meets occasionally to review past services, to help plan future ones with the clergy and make suggestions for our worship.

This year the group has considered: -

The Lent programme, Holy Week and Easter Service

Monthly Intergenerational Service

The Remembrance Service

Remembrance Day Parade

The meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of each month and are open to anyone who has an interest in the worship of Holy Trinity. Do let me know if you would like to join us.

Christine Price

Secretary to the Liturgy Group

Music

There's not a lot to report on the music scene except to say we are so thankful to have Mikael Petersen as our organist. We do not have a choir but we have some good voices in the

congregation. We sometimes use YouTube to learn new hymns. We had our annual in-house "Songs of Praise" in the Summer with a wide variety of hymns chosen. We enjoyed our carol service at Christmas with everyone joining in the familiar carols.

Janice Hobday

Open Church

We meet on Wednesdays at 1.15 still a small group, Pauline joined us this year. We talk about what is going on in the world and on our own doorstep. We cannot put the world right but we have fun trying. We were not able to have a fund raiser for MacMillan Cancer this year due to Elaine having an operation and myself occupied with family matters. We did discuss meeting up for a meal and extending out to everyone. We went in December to the Toby Inn Quinton which was very successful and we hope to repeat it again in 2026. If you would like to join us talk to Elaine or myself.

Jenny Cannings

Telephone Ministry

It is delightful to have so many young people in church, but there is a proportion of our congregation (me included) that is ageing and becoming less mobile. The need for keeping in contact with members of the congregation who can no longer get to church is only going to grow over the coming years. For many but not all, a regular phone call for a chat is better than occasional visits. I have continued to call people throughout the year. Sometimes the news is sad, but it is always good to talk. I value it and those people I phone seem to value it too.

Maggie Ross

Trinity Fine Dining (TFD)

(Patron Dame Jennifer Cannings)

Curry Club, is no more. Long live Curry Club.

For many (happy) years, members of our church enjoyed a curry on the first Monday of each month. One Monday, the regulars, veering away from the usual topics of conversation, stamp collecting, topiary, rare tropical diseases etc discussed the possibility of expanding our dining experiences.

It was agreed to visit a variety of local eating establishments in the hope that we would encourage more people to join us. It was also acknowledged that some people who would not be keen to go out at night may attend a lunch time gathering. With that in mind we have completely revitalised our eating programme. I have listed below some of our more successful gatherings.

SAPHARI A world buffet, popular with those who have a healthy appetite. One of our group had 4 starters, 3 main courses and 7 puddings – no name no pack drill.

LIAM'S A hidden gem. Lurking behind an unobtrusive shop front, this excellent restaurant delivers food with a Mediterranean flavour.

QUINTON CARVERY Our daytime excursion. A good old fashioned carvery for those who enjoy a gravy meal.

NEMRUT Wonderful Turkish food and good for general fitness. Parking is very difficult, resulting in a decent walk from and to the car.

JOYTARA Indian food of the highest quality. (We haven't abandoned Indian food completely)

NATURAL GREEK RESTAURANT A marvellous ambience and superb food, although Mr.Dyke was disappointed that there was no "plate smashing" at the end of the meal.

So, listen out for news of further excursions to other fine dining establishments in the area. Don't worry if you missed our

earlier nights of fun and frivolity, we'll be returning to some of the above at a future date.

Should anyone have any suggestions, for places that serve "good grub" please speak to me, the Dame or our Church Wardens.

David Derricott

Welcomers

As you come into church on a Sunday you will be greeted by church member with smiles, hello and a service booklet. This is such an important role and we are very thankful for those who are on the rota and welcome us all.

Sadly this year several members, mainly due to health have had to retire and so there is a shortage of welcomers. What does it entail?

Arriving in church early, as near to 9.30 as possibly, a smile a warm greeting and handing out service booklets. If anyone is new make sure they find a seat and if you can introduce them to a neighbour and finally when the service starts sit at the back of the church to cover latecomers.

If you feel you could be a welcomer let me know please and I will add you to the rota

Christine Price

Women First

Women First have not met this year.

Jenny Cannings

Ministry Team Lead: Annual Report 2025

2025 was a momentous year for Holy Trinity, dominated, of course, by the retirement of Revd David Gould and beginning the long, hard process of seeking a new incumbent.

David had a splendid farewell service which he had largely planned himself. The church was full and alongside the regular congregation, we were delighted to welcome many of Revd David's family and friends, including the Right Reverend Justin Welby. We were also delighted to welcome representatives of Sandwell MBC, the Lord Lieutenant and all the local faiths, in recognition of all the work that Revd David has done in the wider community.

There is a strand of ministry work which goes on week by week, in which the congregation participates and of which it is therefore fully aware. Sundays come around every week and we have the joy of our main weekly service. The pattern of lay participation in Sunday ministry was well established during David's tenure and has thankfully continued into the interregnum. Special thanks to Christine for her work on rotas, to Janice for selecting hymns and to Mikael for playing the organ, but also to everyone who leads prayers or reads the lessons. David's departure has obviously meant a greater load of preaching and presiding for the ministry team, but we have also welcomed different clergy (including Archdeacon Jenny and Bishop Michael) to lead our services. As well as welcoming online worshippers on Sunday, Zoom has also allowed us to continue to offer a midweek BCP communion service and Morning and Evening Prayer. There have of course been baptisms (always joyful) and funerals (some tragic, some celebratory) through the year and the wedding of Gladstone and Tracey from our congregation. Thank you to Kes for her faithful Vergering.

The life of the Church is obviously not restricted to our acts of worship. The services themselves require planning (and a particular thank you to those who prepare our Intergenerational worship) but there is also the general

administrative and decision-making load carried by Standing Committee and PCC. Particular thanks musty go to Jenny as Chair, Christine as Secretary, and Jayne as treasurer in what continues to be a challenging financial environment.

We have also had to manage the challenging process of putting together a Church Profile which gives a true picture of Holy Trinity as it is and where it sees itself moving forward, but which equally takes accounts of the strictures and demands of Church of England Birmingham. After several alterations we are comfortable that what was put forward is something that gave a proper account of and introduction to the parish.

Smethwick Church Action Network (SCAN), which runs both Smethwick Foodbank and Smethwick Your Pantry (at the library), is a hugely important contributor to church funds through the rent they pay, but also an additional workstream for me and a number of congregation members in terms of trusteeship. Our very capable SCAN manager left at the beginning of May although she was thankfully able to offer continuing work until the end of the calendar year in terms of seeking funding. We spent a great deal of time and effort in advertising and interviewing for her replacement, but to no avail and we are still seeking a sustainable way forward with the very able staff we have. At the end of the calendar year, the Board had to recognise the triple challenge SCAN faces in terms of insufficient Trustees with insufficient time / expertise, a workforce struggling to cope, and a very difficult financial situation.

David was also deputy chair of Sandwell Faith Action Network (SFSN) which runs with council support. Unfortunately, the chair was our good friend Imam Nasir, who has also left. I have therefore had to step in, officially as a core member, but also chairing for the election of officers and for meetings where the chair and deputy chair are not in attendance. This, of course, is only one part of our interfaith ministry. Faithful Friends is 'dormant' at the moment, but we continue to play a significant role in collaboration with other places of faith. Just as this

means me attending and often speaking at Iftars, Vaisakhi, and Diwali celebrations, it also meant representatives of other faiths attending and reading at our Nine Lessons and Carols service before Christmas. Our work with other Faiths also comes into focus at Remembrance. In addition to leading my first cenotaph service, with a truly multifaith attendance, I have also led services at Holly Lodge High School and Galton Primary and spoken at the Sikh remembrance event at the 'Lions of the Great War' memorial.

Interfaith work does not stop with faith leaders and we were, of course, delighted to welcome the massed ranks of our three hugely diverse local primary schools: pupils, staff, and many parents to come into church for their Christmas celebrations. For many this is an important breaking of barriers between faiths.

Which brings us back to worship, to the end of the year and to the delights of Christmas. We still have a real Christmas tree. We still have a proper midnight Holy Communion service (not shifted earlier for convenience as many churches now do) and still manage to get up for our family Holy Communion service on Christmas morning.

It has been a joy and an honour to 'hold the fort' since David left, though impossible to do so within my proper hours. As that is the case, I pray, along with all of you, that we will soon have a new vicar to lead us on our next steps along the road.

Revd Nick Ross