

Scottish charity number: SC004487
Congregation number: 010102

St Stephen's Comely Bank Church of Scotland, Edinburgh

Annual Report and Financial Statements
Year ended 31 December 2025



St Stephen's Comely Bank Church of Scotland, Edinburgh

Contents of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

	Page
Report of the Trustees	1 - 3
Report of the Independent Examiner	4
Receipts and Payments Account	5
Statement of Balances	6
Notes to the Financial Statements	7 - 10

St Stephen's Comely Bank Church of Scotland, Edinburgh

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 December 2025

The Trustees present the annual report and accounts for St Stephen's Comely Bank Church of Scotland, Edinburgh (SSCB) for the year ended 31 December 2025.

Reference and administrative information

Charity name: St Stephen's Comely Bank Church of Scotland, Edinburgh
Charity registration number: SC004487
Congregation number: 010102
Contact address: Church Office
10 Comely Bank Road
Edinburgh
EH4 1DW
Website: www.comelybankchurch.com
Bankers: Bank of Scotland, 43 Comely Bank, Edinburgh, EH4 1AF

Constitution and governance

SSCB is a Church of Scotland congregation established under the unitary form of constitution.

The Elders serving on the Kirk Session are the trustees of the charity and have been chosen from those members of the church who are considered to have the appropriate gifts and skills. The minister, who is a member of the Kirk Session, is elected by the congregation and inducted by Presbytery. The Kirk Session is responsible for the recruitment, appointment, induction and training of new trustees, when required.

The Kirk Session met eleven times during the year, with meetings considering both the practical and spiritual matters of the church. Routine business is dealt with by circulation of papers.

The Trustees who served during the year were as follows:

Rev George Vidits	Minister and Moderator	
Rev Daniel Carmichael	Interim Moderator	(1 January 2025 - 29 March 2025)
Alison Franks	Session Clerk/Finance Convenor	
John Baggaley		
Veronique Chittleburgh		
Douglas Reid		(appointed 10 August 2025)
Jacqueline Young		

Day to day oversight for financial matters is delegated to the Session Clerk and Sarah Robertson, a member of the congregation who carries out the bookkeeping. The Minister and Session Clerk hold title to both the church and the manse on behalf of the members.

Objectives and activities

SSCB is an evangelical congregation of the Church of Scotland, with one objective: to make God's ways known to all. This is done through our worship together each Sunday; meetings for prayer, encouragement and teaching; offering homegroups for small group ministry and discipleship; ministry to the older members of our community through our lunch club; youth ministry in our local schools and community; the provision of meeting space for Guides, Scouts and other community groups; and special events.

St Stephen's Comely Bank Church of Scotland, Edinburgh

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 December 2025

Achievements and performance

Thanks be to God that we experienced His faithfulness in the year gone.

We are thankful for many things this year:

- We are filled with gratitude that the Lord healed and restored our minister, George, after major heart surgery. He and Emma shared with the congregation that they were grateful for the many prayers and for the many people surrounding them with their loving care.
- We are thankful to the Lord for His goodness to us as a church family. For the faithful ministry of Martin Pearce as our locum during George's absence, then as our Families Pastor later in the year; for Douglas Reid who joined our ministry team in the second half of the year; for our staff team - Kenny, Pamela and Moira - and for the many volunteers who minister to our church family and community.
- We are thankful for our ministry and outreach in all its guises – to children and families through our new monthly Family Services, our weekly Babies and Toddlers Group and our monthly Comely Play events which have been so successful this year. For schools ministry at both Broughton High School and Flora Stevenson Primary School, for Rock Solid and for Inspire; and this year especially, for the level of access we are gratefully offered by the schools who value our input. For Lunch Club for our older community which continues to be a blessing to all who attend. For our homegroups which continue to be a place for discipleship and care for one another. For those who serve on a Sunday morning – both upfront and behind the scenes – able to serve using their gifts and talents be it in praying or cooking or making music or technology. For the administration that goes on unseen by most of us – managing the hall users, maintaining the buildings and garden and keeping the monthly rotas and the finances up to date.
- We are blessed with so many gifted people who love the Lord and delight in serving Him - their service is such a great encouragement to us all.

We are thankful too that our relationships with our Parish Grouping family continue to strengthen and grow. The next 12 months will be focussed on pushing forward with a framework for us to effectively work together to minister to our combined parishes.

By God's grace and the generous legacies of John Ballantine and Cathy Powell, we were able to repair and revarnish the floors of our halls and began the renewal of our Audio-Visual systems in the church.

We finished the year with 115 members (2024: 111 members). 3 new members were welcomed to the family by transference of certificate and a further 4 were welcomed by giving their profession of faith in church. We had one baptism – baby Kimberly – and George carried out 3 funerals. We have around 20 children and young people who are part of our Inspire, Sunday Club and creche communities.

None of what we do at Church would be possible without the commitment of our faithful community of members who volunteer in so many ways to serve. Our sincere thanks to you all.

Financial review

Principal sources of funding

The Church is primarily funded by church members through their offerings and the Gift Aid thereon. It should however be noted that we have an emerging trend of a decreasing number of high value givers as those members either move on elsewhere or reduce their giving due to changes in circumstances.

The Accounts for the year are set out on pages 5 to 10. They have been restated this year back to the simpler Receipts and Payments Basis of accounting which is available to all charities with annual income of under £250k. This means that our figures for 2024 have also been restated on the same basis to provide comparability.

St Stephen's Comely Bank Church of Scotland, Edinburgh

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 December 2025

Financial review (continued)

Results for the year (continued)

The Accounts for the year are set out on pages 5 to 10. The Receipts and Payments Account on page 5 shows a deficit of £34,330 (2024: surplus of £126,039), comprising a deficit on unrestricted funds after transfers of £34,724 (2024: surplus of £134,007) and a surplus on restricted funds after transfers of £394 (2024: deficit of £7,968).

Reserves

It is the policy of the church to maintain unrestricted funds of approximately three months of unrestricted expenditure. This allows sufficient funds to enable the ongoing work of the Church to be maintained. Per the Unrestricted funds note 6, the general fund at 31 December 2025 amounted to £41,378 (2024: £16,675) which meets this level. Restricted funds amounted to £19,789 (2024: £19,395).

Signed on behalf of the Trustees on 12 March 2026.

Alison Franks

Alison Franks
Session Clerk

St Stephen's Comely Bank Church of Scotland, Edinburgh

Report of the Independent Examiner to the Trustees for the year ended 31 December 2025

I report on the accounts of the church for the year ended 31 December 2025 which are set out on pages 5 to 10.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The Charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). The Charity's Trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (d) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1) (c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeks explanations from the trustees concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent Examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations (as amended), and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations (as amended)

have not been met, or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Helen White

Helen White CA
Director

Cornerstone Accounting Ltd
Chartered Accountants

11 Erngath Road
Bo'ness
EH51 9DP

Date: 31 March 2026

St Stephen's Comely Bank Church

Receipts and Payments Account

For the year ended 31 December 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted fund	Restricted funds	2025 Total	Restated		2024 Total
					Unrestricted fund	Restricted funds	
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Receipts							
Offerings and donations		64,072	33,833	97,905	67,525	32,881	100,406
Gift aid recovered		14,616	5,947	20,563	13,523	6,668	20,191
Grants	2	278	3,350	3,628	-	1,500	1,500
Legacies		5,000	-	5,000	135,267	-	135,267
Youthwork activity income		-	490	490	151	170	321
Hall letting income		16,443	-	16,443	20,344	-	20,344
Key deposits		40	-	40	-	-	-
Deposit interest		784	-	784	-	-	-
Total receipts		101,233	43,620	144,853	236,810	41,219	278,029
Payments							
Giving to Grow contribution		62,886	-	62,886	60,735	-	60,735
Presbytery dues		1,323	-	1,323	1,102	-	1,102
Staff salaries		8,325	40,643	48,968	7,818	36,624	44,442
Minister's expenses		640	-	640	1,306	-	1,306
General ministry expenses		1,946	-	1,946	518	-	518
Ministry group expenses		-	5,153	5,153	-	5,992	5,992
Other mission costs		78	739	817	-	-	-
Church repairs and maintenance		6,091	6,857	12,948	2,836	4,834	7,670
AV and website costs		11,912	-	11,912	-	-	-
Manse repairs and maintenance		1,025	-	1,025	864	2,376	3,240
Manse council tax		4,032	-	4,032	3,738	-	3,738
Other building costs		-	-	-	270	-	270
Church utility and water costs		8,797	-	8,797	9,723	-	9,723
Insurance		7,537	-	7,537	6,888	-	6,888
Church office and IT costs		1,653	-	1,653	4,656	301	4,957
Catering, hygiene and cleaning costs		1,327	-	1,327	895	-	895
Charitable donations	3	8,000	-	8,000	-	-	-
Independent examination		180	-	180	144	-	144
Bank charges		15	-	15	-	-	-
Card machine costs		9	15	24	98	16	114
Other expenses		-	-	-	256	-	256
Total payments		125,776	53,407	179,183	101,847	50,143	151,990
Surplus/(deficit) for the year before transfers		(24,543)	(9,787)	(34,330)	134,963	(8,924)	126,039
Transfers		(10,181)	10,181	-	(956)	956	-
Surplus/(deficit) for the year after transfers		(34,724)	394	(34,330)	134,007	(7,968)	126,039
Total funds brought forward		151,942	19,395	171,337	17,935	27,363	45,298
Total funds carried forward		117,218	19,789	137,007	151,942	19,395	171,337

The notes on pages 7 to 10 form part of these financial statements.

St Stephen's Comely Bank Church

Statement of Balances

As at 31 December 2025

	Opening balance £	2025 Deficit for year £	Closing balance £	Opening balance £	2024 Surplus for year £	Closing balance £
Bank and cash	171,337	(34,330)	137,007	45,298	126,039	171,337
Total assets	171,337	(34,330)	137,007	45,298	126,039	171,337

Represented by:

Unrestricted fund	6	117,218	151,942
Restricted funds	7	19,789	19,395
		137,007	171,337

Statement of assets

Church	No value provided	No value provided
Manse (at cost)	520,000	520,000
Gift aid due	4,669	5,286
Listed Places of Worship grant	3,280	-
Overpayment of Giving to Grow	533	-
Other debtors	154	749
Merchiston Funds due	-	1,850
	528,636	527,885

Statement of liabilities

Church utility costs	1,500	1,734
Bills due	-	1,774
Key deposits	340	300
Minister's travel costs	320	240
Pensions due	222	172
Independent examination fee	180	144
	2,562	4,364

The financial statements on pages 5 to 10 were approved by the Trustees on 12 March 2026 and signed on their behalf by the undernoted:

Alison Franks

Alison Franks
Session Clerk

St Stephen's Comely Bank Church

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2025

1. Accounting policies

Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) and the Regulations anent Congregational Finance approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2007.

Basis of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis. All voluntary income, income from tax recoveries on Gift Aid and bank interest is accounted for when received. Expenditure is recognised when paid.

Receipts and payments account

For the purpose of the receipts and payments account as shown on page 5, funds are defined as follows:

Unrestricted funds comprise grants and other income received for the objects of the church without further specified purpose and are available as general funds.

Restricted funds comprise income which has been received for the objects of the church and specified for a restricted purpose within these objects by the donor.

2. Grant income

During the year, we received the following grants:

	2025 £	2024 £
North Merchiston Mission fund		
Edinburgh Presbytery mission grant	1,850	-
Families Outreach fund		
Church of Scotland grant for summer intern	1,000	500
Youthwork fund		
Church of Scotland mission grant	500	1,000
General fund		
Listed Places of Worship Scheme - VAT recovery fund	278	-
	3,628	1,500

We extend our sincere thanks to all those who have granted us funding for our outreach.

3. Charitable donations

The Trustees have agreed that all income received as legacies will be tithed with 10% of these receipts being ringfenced to donate to charity. This year, the following donations were made:

	2025 £
Crossreach	2,000
International Justice Mission	2,000
Scripture Union Hungary	2,000
Scripture Union Scotland	2,000
	8,000

St Stephen's Comely Bank Church

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2025

4. Transactions with Trustees and related parties

During the year, one Trustee (the Minister) received reimbursement of travel expenses totalling £720 (2024: £1,546) and benefitted from the payment of Council Tax on the manse of £4,031 (2024: £3,738). No other Trustees received remuneration or expenses, other than the direct reimbursement of items purchased on behalf of the church (2024: nil).

All Church of Scotland congregations contribute to the National Stipend Fund which bears the costs of ministers' stipends and employer's contributions for national insurance, pensions and housing and loan funds. Ministers' stipends are paid in accordance with the national stipend scale which is related to years of service. For the year under review, the minimum stipend was £32,433 and the maximum stipend (in the fifth and subsequent years) was £39,856.

There were no transactions with related parties in the year.

Total donations received from Trustees in the year amounted to £30,811 (2024: £25,740).

5. Volunteer time

The Church relies heavily on the contribution of significant volunteer time for the delivery of its programme of activities. This has not been quantified for the purposes of these accounts.

6. Unrestricted funds

	Balance at 01.01.25	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Balance at 31.12.25
	£	£	£	£	£
General fund	16,675	100,733	(105,849)	29,819	41,378
Designated legacy fund	121,740	-	(11,912)	(40,000)	69,828
Designated tithe fund	13,527	500	(8,015)	-	6,012
Total unrestricted funds	151,942	101,233	(125,776)	(10,181)	117,218

Explanation of funds

The General Fund represents all income and expenditure relating to the primary focus activities of the charity, other than those for which funding is restricted.

The Designated legacy fund represents a ring-fenced legacy received in the year to be used at the Kirk Session's discretion.

The Designated tithe fund represents 10% of the value of a legacy received in the year which the Kirk Session use to contribute to charitable causes.

St Stephen's Comely Bank Church

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2025

7. Restricted funds

	Balance at 01.01.25	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Balance at 31.12.25
	£	£	£	£	£
Youthwork fund	-	22,007	(33,813)	11,806	-
Families Outreach fund	8,752	3,500	(9,643)	-	2,609
Lunch Club fund	812	2,037	(1,563)	(700)	586
Baby and toddler fund	261	1,343	(409)	(1,000)	195
Eco fund	1,561	-	-	-	1,561
Fabric fund	8,009	-	(4,572)	-	3,437
AV replacement fund	-	12,500	(2,285)	-	10,215
Church lunch fund	-	383	(458)	75	-
Hungary youth mission trip	-	-	(579)	-	(579)
North Merchiston mission fund	-	1,850	(85)	-	1,765
Total restricted funds	19,395	43,620	(53,407)	10,181	19,789

Explanation of funds

The *Youthwork fund* represents donations received to fund youth work in the church, including the salary of the Youth Worker.

The *Families Outreach fund* holds grants and donations received to fund a Families Outreach worker.

The *Lunch club fund* represents donations received and payments made for the provision of the monthly lunch club. The transfer out in the year was a donation made from the Club to the Church.

The *Baby and Toddler fund* represents the income and expenses managed by our Baby and Toddler group. The transfer out in the year was a donation made from the Group to the Church.

The *Eco fund* represents donations received and payments made by the church Eco group.

The *Fabric fund* holds grants and donations received in relation to the upkeep of the church building.

The *AV replacement fund* represents a donation received this year specifically for the replacement of our audio visual equipment in the Sanctuary.

The *Church lunch fund* represents funds donated and costs incurred in providing our monthly church family lunch.

The *Hungary youth mission fund* represents funds raised and spent on our youth group mission trip to Budapest in July 2026.

The *North Merchiston mission fund* represents funds received this year from Presbytery to be used to promote the church's activities in the area and in mission work.

St Stephen's Comely Bank Church

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2025

8. Restatement of comparatives

The accounts have been restated this year from the Accruals method back to the Receipts and Payments basis . This has resulted in the following adjustments to the comparatives this year:

2023 brought forward reserves

2023 reserves, as previously stated	849,534
Deduct:	
Fixed assets - church manse	(800,000)
Income due but not received	(5,180)
Add:	
Bills due but not paid	944
2023 reserves, restated	45,298

2024 surplus

2024 surplus, as previously stated	125,796
Deduct:	
Income due but not received	(7,885)
Bills from 2022 paid	(944)
Add:	
Bills due but not paid	3,892
Income due from 2022 received	5,180
2024 surplus, restated	126,039
Restated 2024 reserves carried forward	171,337