St. Mary's Bramall Lane, Sheffield

Annual Report 2025

47th Annual Parochial and General Meeting

Sunday 19th April 2026





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Sheffield St. Mary's Bramall Lane

Minutes of Annual Meeting of Parishioners and Annual General Meeting

Sunday 25th May 2025 at St Mary's Bramall Lane after morning service

46th Annual Meeting of Parishioners

The meeting opened with prayer.
1. Attendance and apologies
22 people were present. There were 7 apologies.
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 28th April 2024
Proposed Tom Mather, seconded Stephen Tozer Loft that these be accepted as a correct record. Agreed unanimously.
3. Matters arising from the Minutes
There were no matters arising.
4. Presentation of the Terrier and Inventory
The Terrier and Inventory were up to date and a record of this was signed.
5. Election of churchwardens
Nominated by Tom Mather, and Katherine Evans that Ann Brownhill be appointed churchwarden.
Nominated by Mabel Hove and Maureen Food that Miriam Cavanagh be appointed churchwarden.
Proposed Maureen Food, seconded by Roland Ballah that they be appointed churchwardens. Agreed unanimously.

46th Annual Parochial General Meeting

1. Attendance and apologies
   22 people were present. There were 7 apologies.
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 28th April 2024

Proposed Tom Mather, seconded Stephen Tozer Loft that these be accepted as a correct record. Agreed unanimously. There were no matters arising.

3. Election/Appointment of church officers

Deanery Synod
Claire asked that if anyone was interested in being a representative on Deanery Synod, would they talk to her. There were 2 vacant places for St. Mary's and it was a good opportunity to get to know what was happening in other churches
PCC Members
There were two places. Proposed Elaine Cox, seconded Caroline Adams that Tom Mather be re-appointed and proposed Mabel Hove, seconded Tom Mather that George Rees be re-appointed to PCC. Agreed unanimously. Claire was keen that places be available for GMH members of the congregation.

4. Presentation of Annual Report – Achievements and Activities 2024

Claire asked people to consider the report and pray about it. There had been significant change during the year especially affecting activities during the week. There had to be new ways of working

across St. Mary's. Work in the centre was continuing but staff were stretched. Proposed George Rees, seconded Dawn MacAllister. Agreed unanimously.

5. Presentation of accounts and financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2024

Claire thanked Andy for being PCC Treasurer and putting the accounts together and for the work he did for the church and centre, Margaret for banking the money collected and Alison for her work on accounts. The accounts had been examined by Faithstar and their report showed no concerns. The financial position was better than it had been the previous few years; giving had increased but costs had also increased. PCC was holding some money for the centre to enable the centre to have a better chance of getting grants. There was now a designated fund for building work and ongoing maintenance was paid from this. The accounts and financial statements had been approved by PCC. Proposed Giles Morrison, seconded Stephen Tozer Loft that these be accepted. Agreed unanimously.

6. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Proposed Tom Mather, seconded Mabel Hove that Faithstar be retained as the Independent Examiner. Agreed unanimously.

7. Electoral Roll Report

A new electoral roll had been done as required every 5 years. The number of people on it was 60.

8. Fabric Report

There was a lot of ongoing maintenance. It was over 20 years since the refurbishment had been done and much needed revisiting – for example, the fire doors needed work, which was being done in stages. Lighting had been upgraded to LED but meeting the CofE net zero targets would be a massive challenge. Proposed Miriam Cavanagh, seconded Caroline Wells that the Fabric report be accepted. Agreed unanimously.

9. Deanery Synod Report

Proposed Mabel Hove, seconded Maureen Food that the Deanery Synod report be accepted. Agreed unanimously.

10. Commendation of reports related to church activities

Claire commended that everyone read the other reports. It had been good to see Heather's work which was a real blessing. Claire thanked Karen, Chris, Matthew, Giles and others involved in any form of ministry; Jo, Clare and Jayne for their work with children; Miriam, Tracy, Mabel and George for their work with youth; the young people who teach us more than they knew: Elaine, Caroline and Christine for tea and coffee; Bolaji for setting up: Yo and Steve for music and Penny and Margaret for their service to PCC and who had stood down.

The Parish Church of St Mary's Bramall Lane, Sheffield

The 47th Annual Meeting of Parishioners
Sunday 19th April 2026 @ St Mary's

Agenda

1. Opening Prayer
2. Welcome and Apologies
3. Minutes of Meeting held on 25th May 2025
4. Matters arising
5. Presentation of Terrier and Church Inventory
6. Election of Churchwardens

The 47th Annual Parochial General Meeting
Sunday 19th April 2026 @ St Mary's

Agenda

1. Welcome and Apologies
2. Notification of items for AOB
3. Minutes of meeting held on 25th May 2025
4. Matters arising
5. Election/appointment of church officers:
   Deanery Synod – 2 representatives
   PCC members - 4 representatives
6. Presentation of Annual report – Achievements & Activities 2025
7. Presentation of accounts and financial statement for Year Ending Dec 2025
8. Appointment of Independent Examiner
9. Electoral Roll Report
10. Fabric Report
11. Deanery Synod Report
12. Commendation of reports relating to church activities
13. AOB

2025 Report and Accounts for the Parochial Church Council of St. Mary's Church, Bramall Lane, Sheffield

1. Reference and Administration Details

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St Mary's Parish Church, Bramall Lane.

Address: St Mary's Church, Bramall Lane, Sheffield, S2 4QZ.

St Mary's Church is a registered charity our charity registration number is 1211972 (Charity Registration Completed 3rd Feb 2025).

St Mary's is part of the Ecclesall Deanery of Sheffield Diocese in the Church of England.

The PCC is the sole member of St Mary's Bramall Lane Community Centre (registered charity 1094204).

Ex-officio

Revd Claire Dawson	Chair/ Vicar (Incumbent)
Revd Canon Karen Cribb	Associate Vicar
Ann Brownhill	Warden & PCC Secretary
Miriam Cavanagh	Warden
Giles Morrison	Reader
Andy Cribb	Treasurer for the PCC

Elected	**Year**
Tom Mather	2025 PCC Vice Chair
George Rees	2025
Steve Tozer-Loft	2024
Omobolaji Fawohumre	2024
Rolland Ballah	2024
Mabel Hove	2023
Yo Tozer-Loft	2023
Stevie Bratt	2023

The following are Trustees of St Mary's Community Centre:
Ann Brownhill
Miriam Cavanagh (Resigned August 2025)
Revd. Claire Dawson – Chair
Andy Cribb
George Rees
Tim Renshaw (appointed Nov 2025)
Terry Griffiths (appointed Nov 2025)

Bankers
HSBC, Carmel House, 49-63 Fargate, Sheffield, S1 2HD

Independent Examiner
Faithstar LLP, Spaces Acero, 1 Concourse Way, Sheffield, S1 2BJ

Quinquennial Architect
Wise and Maguire, The Danesmead Wing, 33 Fulford Cross, York, YO10 4PB

Insurance
Church contents, buildings and public liability cover is with the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group.

Safeguarding
St Mary's Church and Community Centre SAFEGUARDING POLICY is established in accordance with the Safeguarding Guidance and Code of Practice of the House of Bishops of the Church of England in line with "Promoting a Safer Church" https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/cofe-policy-statement.pdf

The policy was adopted in 2023 and is reviewed annually by the PCC. A Safeguarding Action Plan is also considered annually by the PCC and Board of Trustees for St Mary's Community Centre.

St Mary's Church and Community Centre is committed to Safeguarding being an integral part of our work and ministry and all officers, post-holders, staff and volunteers must agree to abide by and work within the procedures and guidance set out in this policy.

The Policy has 6 overarching policy commitments to which all St Mary's Church and Centre staff and volunteers are committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within St Mary's.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

Current:
SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Revd. Karen Cribb - 0114 223 0223
DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Sian Checkley - 01709 309149 / 07741 013775

2. Structure, Governance and Management

The affairs of St Mary's church are managed by a board of trustees known as the Parochial Church Council (PCC) which is a body corporate.

The actual constitution is set out in the New Church Representation Rules (2020) and are in effect Standing Orders.

During 2025 the PCC met on 6 occasions, a number of items of PCC business were conducted via electronic mail.

In November 2025 the PCC met with the Trustees from St Mary's Community Centre for St Mary's Community Centre AGM.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St Mary's the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent, the associate vicar, churchwardens, readers, deanery synod members and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the Electoral Roll of the church. All those who attend church are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and so are able to stand for election to PCC.

During 2025 the number on the Electoral Roll was 60.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance including deciding on how funds of the PCC are to be spent. New members are given guidance on the procedures and the scope of accountability of the PCC.

The Standing Committee currently comprises of the incumbent, associate vicar and wardens.

During 2025 the Incumbent Revd Dr Claire Dawson in addition to being Vicar of St Mary's was also licensed as temporary Assistant and Acting Archdeacon for Sheffield & Rotherham (until November 2025).

3. Objectives and Activities

St Mary's Church and Community Centre share an overlapping vision to see resilient, connected communities which create spiritual, mental, physical and emotional health. The Church and the Community Centre work together in a symbiotic relationship in order to maintain and promote St Mary's with due responsibility for the maintenance, care and repair of the fabric of the building and plant.

The Parochial Church Council (powers) Measure 1956 states:
'The PCC is required to cooperate with the minister in promoting, in the parish, the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.'

Responsibility for the care and well-being of everyone in the parish, regardless of religious affiliation or status, is enshrined in the Cure of Souls given by the Bishop in their license to the minister. This is echoed and matched in the pastoral and social responsibility laid upon the PCC.

In planning activities for the year, the PCC gave consideration to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance to charities concerned with the advancement of religion.

Throughout the year the PCC continued to focus on its three priorities: young people; diversity; and social justice.

Vision and Mission Statement

St Mary's is a hopeful community of people, of all faiths and none, and a place of Christian worship mobilised to break cycles of poverty, injustice and isolation.

Hopeful: Our faith equips us with a strong and lasting hope which encourages us to see beyond what is broken to new beginnings; we believe things don't have to be this way. So we offer a hopeful presence within our city, working with others to build resilience. We don't sidestep the real issues but face these with honesty and integrity.

Community: It is a basic human need to belong; building community is therefore a core principle at the heart of our ambition. There is a mutual accountability in community – everyone has a part to play. This is woven through everything we do.

All Faiths and None: St Mary's is a place of Christian worship and has been for nearly 200 years. The Christian faith encourages us to seek the common good, but this is not just the preserve of Christianity. St Mary's is a place where people of all faiths and none can contribute and work together for the good of the whole.

Mobilise: It is more than service provision … so we look for solutions in the lives of those we work alongside. We can achieve little if we work alone so we actively seek partners and to build networks which benefit the people we are working with.

Injustice: We are committed to naming and challenging all forms of injustice but also recognise our own failings as an organisation and seek to make amends. There are many injustices within our society and people experience prejudice and discrimination on multiple fronts. The individual can often be seen as the problem, but we believe the issues people face are more likely to be due to the structural inequalities within society. We want to be a learning community that can think and talk about these issues and become a voice for change.

Cycles of poverty: We are committed to going upstream. We want to work with people to address the complex roots of poverty rather than applying sticking plasters. If we can create opportunities for people to increase their resources of courage, creativity and resourcefulness then we will have a longer lasting impact.

Cycles of isolation: Our work is not just about providing material benefits; our intention is always to consider people as whole human beings. Isolation erodes people's courage and resilience and prevents people from flourishing; poverty and isolation often go hand in hand and reinforce each other. It is through intentionally creating opportunities for relationships and belonging that we hope to be able to challenge and break this cycle.

4. Achievements and Performance

We are pleased to be able to present to you the achievements we have made during that past twelve months. It is a joy to be part of St Mary's Community and to witness the many ways that as church and community we keep faith and hope alive at the heart of the City of Sheffield. Our worship on a Sunday is expressed in many ways throughout the week. In the lives of individual members as they go about their lives and work and witness and also in the life and work of St Mary's Church and Community Centre.
Above all we are called to serve and to uncover and celebrate God's presence and love in the world. We are called as salt and light, to be used well for the purposes of God. This can seem a rather lofty statement, but we also know that God works through the small grains of yeast and the mustard seed and all he calls us to be is faithful and to keep faith with him.
So, throughout the past twelve months, in season and out of season we have held faith together as a Christian community in the heart of the city and glimpsed something of the Kingdom of God at work in our midst. Not because of what we have been able to achieve and do ourselves but because of God's abounding grace.
This section of our annual report gives testimony to the ways in which God has shown his goodness to us.

Worship & Witness

Our main act of worship is 10.30am on a Sunday morning. In a world full on conflict where so many are not free to worship we are grateful of our freedom to be able to come together.
We have tried to encourage everyone to be apart of our worship: reading and praying; singing; welcoming; being part of the music group; help with communion; and teas and coffees. We have celebrated being able to draw on our rich cultural diversity; hearing the bible read in other languages and learning new songs from different parts of the world wide Christian community. Thank you to everyone who has taken part in our worship. Particular thank you to those who have been able to lead and share God's word - I have really valued sharing the leadership on Sunday with you all.
Easter and Christmas have been important times where we have been able to share our faith more widely. Our Good Friday event and Community Carols has drawn in a significant number of people from outside our normal worshipping community. Carols in the Golden Lion was a very moving way to begin our Christmas celebrations.
We are blessed by having a number of children and young people as part of our church. We are grateful for what we learn together and for what they teach us. We are also grateful for all those who work with our children on a Sunday and with our young people.
Once a month the Ukrainian Community hold an Orthodox act of worship – the Ukrainian Community are an important part of the life of St Mary's. They hold their Ukrainian Saturday Club at St Mary's and have done so since the outbreak of war – now some four years on. There is now a Ukrainian School that meets each Saturday enabling the Ukrainian children to remember their culture and language whilst being displaced.
Our Easter Day act of worship involved sowing our wildflower meadow – this blossomed by Pentecost and has been a haven for wild life. As a church we are committed to being concerned for our environment and are on the pathway to being a Silver Eco Church.
In February we opened the church building to support a demonstration: 'Life Against Knives'. This was in the aftermath of an horrific school stabbing resulting in the tragic death of Harvey Willgoose.

It was very moving to be able to hold space with Harvey's family and the wider community. The nave was full of lit candles as people were held in their grief.
In June we shared in an Intercultural Worship event held at St Mary's – joining together with other churches so we could learn and celebrate what it means to be an Intercultural Worshipping Community. We continue faithfully on this important journey.
Sadly, this year we have said goodbye to two very faithful and dearly loved members of St Mary's Community. Revd Martin Loft and John Ibbetson. Their funeral services where within a few days of each other. We will miss them both and are thankful for the life they have shared with us.
There have also been times of joy: we celebrated in September with Canon Karen Cribb forty years of ministry at St Mary's – amazing !!! And also, my own installation as Canon of Sheffield Cathedral in November.
We have seen a number of people being baptised this year both young and old (or older!). We continue to be blessed by people worshiping with us from many countries around the world. We have felt the pain, particularly over that last few months, with our Iranian friends whilst their country is in such turmoil and state of war.
Sunday remains our main time of gathering as a worshipping community. We have been able to offer a study group after church on a few occasions for people to learn more together about the faith that we share. Our shared meals after Sunday worship are an important time of fellowship and sharing. We have continued to meet in the week for prayer as part of St Mary's Prayer Community.
Membership at St Mary's remains steady but is always in a state of flux. People will join us for a short while and then their lives require them to move on. I am grateful that we seem to be able to welcome well and ensure that the stranger in our midst doesn't feel quite so strange – I guess we have all been strangers once and so know the value of a warm smile and a kindness.

Social Justice & Community Engagement

The connections between St Mary's Church and St Mary's Community Centre have strengthen over the past twelve months. There are many individuals from the church who are now embedded in the life of the centre. The two organisations are also working more closely together. Throughout the past year the work of St Mary's Community Centre has continued to break cycles of poverty, injustice and social isolation.
In November 2025 at the Community Centre AGM the PCC elected two new Trustees to St Mary's Community Centre: Tim Renshaw and Terry Griffiths. This broadened the scope of existing trustees and gives a better reach for the organisation across the city.
Throughout the week over 100 people will access St Mary's for help, advice, somewhere to connect with others, have a hot meal and engage in social activities. It is an important place for the lives of individuals and for the city as a place of welcome and belonging.
At the beginning of 2026 we have been able to open the Holy Toast Cafe at St Mary's – this is now providing an important space for hospitality in the heart of St Mary's.
As a PCC we have supported the CMA debt advice service financially and are looking to continue to support this work in the future.
The Community Centre remains without a current CEO this has meant a lot of the management and leadership responsibility has rested with Claire. There are finically challenges as grant funding has become more difficult to access and room hire is slower than it has been. The Trustees have refreshed the Vision and Mission for the Centre and hope to recruit a new CEO in the summer of 2026.

Children & Young People

As well as children and young people being integral to the life of St Mary's as a church, we are also strongly connected to Porter Croft School. This is both in terms of school governance and also in Christian input and resourcing.

We have continued to fund our children's and families worker Heather Buckly who helps to support this valuable work at Porter Croft holding amongst other things monthly Faith & Fun for Families. Heather (and her husband Dave – two for one!) also run the toddler group at St Mary's on a Wednesday morning.

Interfaith Work

The Women's Interfaith Forum resumed meeting in November 2025 at St Mary's. It is a valued space for conversation; friendship and the breaking down of barriers and stereotypes.

Future Plans

It is now 25 years since the major refurbishment at St Mary's. We are very grateful for all the wonderful life and stories which have been part of St Mary's over this time. We hope and plan for St Mary's to be with us going forward for many years to come.

We need to think about how we will be sustainable as a church building in particular. The building is a huge asset but also has a lot of liabilities which we need to keep on top of. We are trying to get St Mary's recognised as a Major Parish Church which will assist in helping to plan and resource the future of the church.

Thank You

Leading St Mary's Church is a huge privilege, but it is by no means a solo endeavour. I am particularly grateful for the support of Canon Karen Cribb and for our wardens Ann Brownhill and Mirriam Cavanagh. There have been many challenges but also a lot of laughter – which I am immensely grateful.

Revd Canon Claire Dawson
Vicar St Mary's Bramall Lane
Passiontide 2026

FINANCE REPORT

The financial position of St Marys (Bramall Lane) was very satisfactory at **31.12.2025**

Summary

The Receipts & Payments page which summaries the outturn for the year

General Reserve surplus for the year was £6,067 (2024; £6,177).

As a result, the **General Fund carried forward balance is £34,588** and represents c8.5 months of general fund costs (principal cost being the Common Fund contribution).

General Fund receipts total was £3k greater than 2024 due to increased giving/donations.

General Fund expenses are up by £2k due to routine building/equipment maintenance.

Designated Funds surplus was £9,764.

The Designated Funds surplus mainly arises from the License Fee from the Community Centre

The PCC agreed that the £60k Diocesan funding to cover Rev Claire Dawson's 2 years temporary Archdeacon role, held in Designated Funds at 31.12.2024, to be transferred to a Restricted Fund available to the Community Centre to draw upon, when required.

The breakdown of the **Restricted Fund**s carried forward is shown in the Funds Note.

I would like to thank everyone who has assisted me to keep the Church finances are up to date and provide a good basis for decision making as well as ensuring good governance. In particular I'd like to thank Alison Micallef.

I would also like to thank all those who give generously to St Mary's financially but also in other ways such as their time and commitment.

Andrew Cribb FCA
Treasurer
2.4.2026

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST. MARY'S (BRAMALL LANE)

SECTION A Receipts and Payments Accounts Year to 31 December 2025	Note	Unrestricted funds		Restricted Funds	Total this year	Total last year
		General	Designated			
		£	£	£	£	£
RECEIPTS						
Planned Giving		30,426		1,270	**31,696**	31,270
Collections at services		629			**629**	1625.49
All other giving and voluntary receipts	2(A)	6,492		23	**6,515**	6,208
Gift Aid recovered		6,819			**6,819**	7,231
		44,365		**1293**	**45,658**	**46,334**
Grants & Fundraising			2,476	9,826	**12,303**	7,552
Investment Income	2(B)	4,408			**4,408**	5,289
Building Insurance - Community Centre Contribution		6,293			**6,293**	5,641
Insurance Claim on Roof					**0**	10,612
Archdeacon Cover - DBF					**0**	60,000
Through Funds				7,760	**7,760**	5,748
License Fee from St Mary's Community Centre			10,000		**10,000**	16,442
Total Receipts		**55,066**	**12,476**	**18,879**	**86,422**	**157,618**
PAYMENTS						
Diocesan Common Fund		30,000			**30,000**	30,000
Clergy and Staffing Costs		1,635		16,323	**17,958**	4,503
Church running expenses (includng governance)	3(A)	12,542			**12,542**	
Church major repairs and capital	3(B)	2,546	2,712		**5,258**	1,047
Church expenses: Mission and evangelism		1,758		1,002	**2,759**	15,294
Costs following theft					**0**	55,352
Other					**0**	81
Through Funds				3,719	**3,719**	5,748
Diocesan Fees		519			**519**	246
Total Payments		**48,999**	**2,712**	**21,043**	**72,755**	**112,271**
Net of receipts/ (payments)		6,067	9,764	-2,164	**13,667**	**45,347**
Transfers between funds		457	- 60,959	60,502	-	
Movement in Funds		**6,523**	**-51,194**	**58,338**	**13,667**	**45,347**
Cash at bank and in hand 1 January		28,065	92,378	62,801	**183,245**	148,890
Cash at bank and in hand 31 December		**34,588**	**41,184**	**121,139**	**196,912**	**194,237**

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST.MARY'S (BRAMALL LANE)

SECTION B Statement of assets and Liabilities at 31 December 2025

	Note	Unrestricted Funds		Restricted Funds	Total this year		Total last year
		General	Designated				
Cash Funds							
Short term investments		0		73,533	73,533		70,350
Cash at bank and in hand		35,254	41,184	47,606	124,044		112,895
		35,254	41,184	121,139	197,577		183,243
Net Assets		35,254	41,184	121,139	197,577		183,243
Funds of the charity	4	34,588	41,184	121,139	196,911		183,245

Signed on behalf of all the trustees

		Date of Approval
	Reverand Claire Dawson	3/4/2026

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST.MARY'S (BRAMALL LANE)

SECTION C Notes to the Accounts (continued) at 31 December 2025

FUND DETAILS	2024 £	Receipts £	Payments £	Transfers £	2025 £
UNRESTRICTED					
General Fund	28,065	55,066	48,999	457	34,589
Designated Fund - Building	32,378	12,476	2,712	- 959	41,184
Designated Fund - St Mary's (Bramall Lane) Community Centre	60,000			- 60,000	0
	120,443	**67,542**	**51,711**	**- 60,502**	**75,773**
RESTRICTED					
Fielding bequest	57,334		7,447		49,888
Youth Work	3,243	1,270	501		4,012
Community Day	1,068				1,068
Church in School	32	23	199	144	-
Church Action on Poverty	500			- 500	0
LED Lighting	100			- 100	0
St Mary's (Bramall Lane) Community Centre-General				50,000	50,000
St Mary's (Bramall Lane) Community Centre- Debt Advise Services				10,000	10,000
DBF Net Zero		950			950
DBF- Temp Clergy Wages		8,876	8,876		- 0
Through Funds		7,760	3,719	959	5,000
	62,801	**18,879**	**20,741**	**60,502**	**120,918**
TOTAL FUNDS	**183,245**	**86,422**	**72,452**	**0**	**196,691**

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST.MARY'S (BRAMALL LANE)

SECTION C Notes to the Accounts at 31 December 2025

1 **ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

The PCC has adopted the accounting policies set out in Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the 'Receipts and Payments' basis.

There has been no change to the accounting policies since last year

			General Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	2025 Total Funds	2024 Total Funds
			£	£	£	£	£
2	**RECEIPTS**						
2(A)	**All other giving and voluntary receipts**						
		Youth				-	990
		Church in Schools			23	23	3
		Donations	6,492			6,492	3,005
			6,492		**23**	6,515	**3,998**
2(B)	**Dividends, Interest, Receipts from property, etc**						
		Bank and DBF Deposit Fund Interest	3,183				3,693
		Dividends on DBF Investment Funds	1,224				1,596
			4,408			**0**	**5,289**
3(A)	**Church running expenses (including governance)**						
		Expenses Church Running	3,293			3,293	3,352
		Church Building Insurance	8,606			8,606	8,357
		Independent Examiner	600			600	450
		Bank & Card Charges	42			42	75
			12,542				**12,234**
3(B)	**Major Church repairs and capital costs**						
		General Maintenance	2,546			2,546	
		Nave Wall Curtain		2,712		2712	1,047
			2,546	**2,712**		**5,258**	**1,047**

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO ST MARY'S CHURCH BRAMALL LANE

I report on the accounts of St Mary's church Bramall Lane for the year ended 31st December 2025

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and examiner
St Mary's church Bramall Lane is responsible for the preparation of the accounts. St Mary's church Bramall Lane considers that an audit is not required for this year (under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act)) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act);
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission; and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by St Mary's church Bramall Lane and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from St Mary's church Bramall Lane concerning any 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 connection with 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 130 of the 2011 Act; and
   - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act 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.

FaithStar LLP
Spaces Acero,
1 Concourse Way,
Sheffield
S1 2BJ

Signed Independent Examiner

FaithStar LLP

Fabric Report

Introduction

St. Mary's church will celebrate the 200th anniversary of its opening on 21t July 2030. The foundation stone was laid in 1826. There was a refurbishment in 2000 which now needs upgrading. There are many matters relating to the maintenance and upkeep of the building which need attention to enable the building to be kept open and functioning.

External constraints

The building is Grade II* listed which means that there are restrictions on what can be done to the building. Work on the building may require planning permission and English Heritage involvement as well as Diocesan approval. The Church of England has a target of net zero by 2030. There is pressure to achieve Silver award for Eco Church. As a closed churchyard, the Council has responsibility for maintaining it but has no money to do so.

Building Committee

The building committee meets regularly and comprises, Claire Dawson, Incumbent, Sharon Gill, Operations Manager and Ann Brownhill, Churchwarden. The purpose is to oversee and co-ordinate all the different strands of maintenance and new work required.

2025

Pinnacle continue to carry out maintenance for St. Mary's. The building had constant maintenance during the year, for example, the drains and gutters were cleared, the lift was maintained, guttering repaired, some painting done, kitchen ducts cleared as far as possible. There is an ongoing programme of upgrading the fire doors which due to cost has to be done on a phased basis. During maintenance, it has become obvious that spare parts are becoming more difficult to obtain particularly for the boilers, one of which is not functioning and for the lift which will need to be replaced. Replacing the boilers will be difficult due to the Church of England requirements for net zero and alternatives will have to be sought. An audit of the heating of the building was undertaken as at the moment the entire building is heated when only parts need to be heated at times, for example on Sundays. However zoning the heating is not affordable. Heat is also lost through the windows but double glazing is not an option due the listing of the building.

There were two incidents on Sundays of water boilers failing and needing to be replaced and the others also will need to be replaced.

There was a leak from the North West Tower roof over the back stairs. On initial inspection it appeared that a simple repair was required but on closer examination, a new roof is required and in the meantime, a temporary repair will give a few years of life to the roof.

Work continues on finding grants for the new front doors and motorisation of the inner doors.

The wild flower meadow was re seeded and was again much appreciated. We have taken advice from two different charities about the best way to develop the planting in the churchyard. The gardening group work regularly on Tuesdays and occasional Fridays. Keeping the churchyard safe and a good space remains a challenge.

Our thanks to Sharon, Lesley, Alison, Alka, George, Dan, Fiona and Clare for their work looking after the building.

DEANERY SYNOD

Unavailable at the present time.

CHURCHWARDENS REPORT

It has been another challenging year for St. Mary's especially for the community centre where lack of money and reduced staff have meant the inability to expand the services provided but we give thanks for everyone who has kept the work going.

The family days in the summer holidays went well and the family fun day was well attended with our youth doing a great job helping. The carol service in the churchyard was much appreciated with over 100 people coming and we learnt how to make mulled wine and the necessity of it being hot!

Ensuring the churchyard is a welcoming place which can be used by all remains a challenge. We sowed seeds for the wildflower meadow on Easter Sunday which was both a fun and moving experience. It again looked beautiful and was enjoyed by everyone.

Our young people are changing with some going off to university and we welcomed new members. Last year they enjoyed some time together at The Tree House Board Game and attended Breathe Deep a Diocesan Youth event at Sheffield Cathedral.

We are very grateful to everyone who welcomes - it has been very good to have some new people and we encourage others to offer to do this important role. Our thanks to those who make tea and coffee after services. Grateful thanks to Sharon, Alison, Lesley, Alka, George, Dan, Clare, Fiona and Mariam for all their work in the Centre.

Miriam – It has been a privilege and a blessing to serve as Church Warden, thank you for the opportunity, I have enjoyed journeying alongside you. I pray that by God's Grace you prayerfully think about putting yourself forward in becoming a Church Warden and Partner with Ann who does an amazing job, quietly working and does all the Church Warden Roles that I have been unable to do due work commitments. I also take this opportunity to thanks Ann for all she does and continues to do as Church Warden, PCC and Trustee for St Mary's Church and wider Community.

We would like to thank Claire and Karen for all they do, praying for their Ministry here at St Mary's and Wider Church across the Diocese.

ASSOCIATE VICAR REPORT FROM KAREN

September 2025 marked 40 years since I first arrived in Sheffield as a fresh faced 21yr old – expecting to spend a "gap year placement" at St Mary's !! What a privilege to have been a part of this place and its people for so long and in so many different ways, forging precious friendships and learning so much from so many.

This past year has been no exception as we have had to get used to working in new ways with a far smaller community staff team in the Centre. Consequently I have taken on responsibility for our Monday Lunch Club for older people and its associated activities, working with Fiona our cook and a great team of volunteers including Maureen Food, Maureen Bailey and Ann Brownhill. This has been incorporated into my more or less steady pattern of midweek responsibilities – joining in shared prayers in the chapel on a Monday and a Thursday, being a part of the Centre staff meetings each Monday, calling in to Toddler group on a Wednesday and the Thursday community meal. Being present in St Mary's during some of the week enables me to hold a "chaplaincy" and pastoral care role for some of the people who come through our doors day by day as well as for members of the congregation.

I have been able to attend a number of the gatherings hosted by Anesia our Diocese Racial Justice Officer where we have been able to learn from and share with other church leaders for whom growing and developing our diversity is a priority. This really helps as we continue to work to respond appropriately in our own church life

Preparing our Sunday services and sharing in the leading of those with Claire and a growing team of other people continues to bring me joy as does the flexibility to occasionally lead the children's group on a Sunday morning. I continue to support and work with the leaders of both the children's and youth groups as we seek to grow and develop this vital part of our work as a church, we try and meet together on a regular basis to pray for our groups, to make plans and to review how things are going. Thank you to those who make these groups possible by leading and helping – we are always looking for willing volunteers to help on some Sunday mornings with these groups – our leaders are committed and experienced and will gladly help you if you are able to volunteer. One new initiative this year was our LINK youth club – after school on a Monday for those in Yr6 and Yr7 to help with transition from primary to secondary school. This was a great initiative from Heather that we plan to repeat in the final half-term of this school year.

I continue to be the Chair of Governors at our church school Porter Croft Primary Academy and spend time there in that capacity as well as supporting Heather as she leads the monthly "Take a Look" Assemblies and Faith and Fun for Families gatherings. We have also continued in our regular contributions to the faith life of the school through Godly Play RE lessons, seasonal celebration services here at St Mary's and their associated additional

activities as part of the whole school calendar. Heathers report is full of photos and much more detail about all of this. It was a significant year for Porter Croft which continues to thrive under the leadership of Headteacher Cath Thomas and her excellent staff team. Their long awaited OFSTED inspection took place in June and all their persistent hard work was rewarded with very positive feedback for all areas of school life.

We also worked together with a team of volunteers to host 3 family activity days over the summer holidays making the most of our grounds and this culminated in another hugely successful Community Fun Day. In total, these days were attended by over 300 people from at least 18 different cultural groups.

Earlier in the summer the Lunch Club members enjoyed a hot and sunny day trip to Scarborough complete with fish and chips and ice cream. And at the end of the year we worked hard to hold Christmas meals/parties for our various community groups with another as a thank you for all our volunteers.

Quite rightly safeguarding continues to be a high priority for the church nationally, in the Diocese and here at St Mary's. As Parish Safeguarding Officer I continue to spend time ensuring all our policies, procedures, training, required checks and paperwork is up to date and tracked via our Parish Safeguarding Dashboard. This ensures that everyone who needs to, has done an appropriate level of training, that we are aware and take good notice of our responsibilities in making St Mary's a safe place for all concerned, and that we communicate this well with everyone, in church in the centre and in our communities more widely.

This year I have continued in my wider responsibilities with the Diocese, as Bishops Advisor for Self-supporting ordained ministers (SSOMs) in the support of SSOM Curates and as part of the College of Canons of the Cathedral. Over the summer I was a guest on the Words of Grace podcast hosted by the Diocese reflecting on my journey of faith and I was inspired and refreshed by a study day in York reflecting on the Psalms. Its resources continue to be a source of spiritual food and encouragement for me. I was fortunate to be able to take some extended time away at the beginning of the year going to New Zealand with Andy to visit our son Josh and then on to Japan. It's also a delight to be able to occasionally combine my "Nanna duties" with those at St Mary's bringing my grandsons to both Toddler group and Lunch Club.

I am very grateful for all the prayers, care, encouragement and support I receive from the whole church family, and from Claire, Ann and Miriam as we have worked together in leadership over this last year, and most of all to God who has abundantly provided.

Revd Canon Karen Cribb (Associate Vicar)

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES- HEATHER BUCKLEY

What a privilege it has been to continue to serve with St Mary's this year in the local area and at Porter Croft school! Here are some highlights.

St Mary's baby & toddler group:
A real sense of community and mutual support has built over the last year with parents and carers coming out of their shells and growing in social confidence. We have a lot of fun every week. Users and visitors from services (dental nurse, mencap community worker, council families workers, other toddler group leaders etc) comment on what a homely feel the group has compared with others. They value the relaxed atmosphere that focuses on adults building friendships and f inding a place of belonging. It's so exciting to have the cafe now open on the same day where these connections can continue to be forged!

Little Lights:



This group was re-introduced about a year ago and has been well received. It is a simple half hour tag-on to toddlers, with a Bible story, Christian songs, and playdough prayers. We gather around the table for pastries. The carers and children alike enjoy participating in the story, for which we use the Act Along Bible which includes actions. Beginning around the table sets a lovely tone for toddlers as people arrive for that and join us, and conversation often rolls over as people ask what the story was about. This has led to a number of conversations around faith, and one lady taking a gospel home as she was interested to learn more about the life of Jesus.

Link Club:
This Y6-Y7 after school pilot proved to be very popular. We trialled it in the final half term of last academic year. I bring a "walking bus" from Porter Croft. It is a chance for the Y6 children to link into the youth work here as they transition from primary to secondary. George Rees and Karen Cribb came along. It is an hour and a quarter of social time where they enjoy making their own toast, and for many it is the first time they've made hot chocolate themselves which they really enjoy, especially the squirty cream and sprinkles! Some make squirty cream and sprinkles toast! We have ping pong, giant jenga, magnetic darts and table top games/craft. We had an overwhelming majority of boys. My son Isaiah and husband Dave also helped out so that there were always male role models as these can be in short supply in the boys' lives. We finish each session with a brief "thumbs up/thumbs down" sharing time of highs and lows on the sofas, with a closing prayer offering these to God. We experimented with continuing Link into the autumn term but children found it too hard to remember or to travel on their own, or it clashed with new routines, so this year

we're focusing all the relationship-building energy into that half term before summer, and arranging some weekend trips before the summer too (last year we waited until the autumn term for this which didn't work), where the St Mary's youth and Porter Croft soon-to-be youth can mix. We will also involve them with the summer activity days. The hope is that the current Y6's will then feel "linked" into youth work at St Mary's going forward.

Holiday activity days:
We again had three of these in the summer holidays and one on Good Friday as well as a couple of others in the year. The days are really popular, drawing in a wide variety of people. We advertise them at toddlers and in school as well as on social media and via posters etc. They're a great chance to get to know people and show God's love. We have the bouncy castle, and at the Easter one will again have the Easter bunny mascot giving out eggs as prizes for an Easter hunt trail which tells the Easter story.

Porter Croft church services:
Karen has taken the lead in these and it has been a joy to help out. This has included dressing up as a giant inflatable Christingle among other things! The children and carers really engage with these interactive services which are an hour of fun and prayerful reflection involving teachers in games and children in performances.

Porter Croft Take a Look assemblies:



We do these assemblies once a month with the whole school. Karen Cribb often joins in, and one of the dads at school who is a children's worker at another church. My 19 year old son has also helped out (who went to Porter Croft himself). We've done a whole variety of stories from the old and new testaments.

Faith & Fun:
This is a fresh expression (similar to Messy Church) that continues to be very popular. We have a community food festival and ice cream party planned for this half term among other things. The session reflects the cultural and religious mix of the school really well which the head teacher loves (as do I!). The vision is to build community and explore the Christian faith. We have termly team meets where we reflect on how well we are doing at this and problem solve around any issues. One outcome of these is that we have started inviting people to bring snacks to share (as well as providing some ourselves) as we wanted to better facilitate a joint sense of community.



Bible Babble:
I re-introduced this in Wetherspoons but had little uptake. However, school thought it was a brilliant!)

Another conversation included talking about the last supper and how it links to the exodus. One mum listen to the Quran's version of the exodus story every day at home so she was interested to hear the Christian perspective on it.

The most recent conversation included looking at mark 15 and 16 - the death and resurrection of Jesus. I was going to do less but the kids were settled, and one mum was absolutely fascinated by the difference between the biblical and Quran versions of events. We also chatted about the difference between translating the text and changing what it says to mean something different which she tells me is what the Quran/Hadith says about the bible. idea so I asked if we could use the meeting room in school instead since they were so happy that it was happening, and I now run it in school instead which is working much better. It is a monthly Bible conversation group using the Discovery Bible Study approach which assumes no prior Bible knowledge. At every Faith & Fun we invite all the carers, and it **runs the** following morning every time. We have toys for young children. We look at whatever story we did at Faith & Fun the day before. Sometimes this has also been done at Little Lights and there is some crossover with one mum who comes to all! So I'm getting to know her really well. Attendees have included atheists, Hindus and Muslims. The head teacher loves this and wants to come along to one as she loves anything that brings people of different faiths into dialogue.

One conversation included looking at Jesus light of the world which the Hindu parents really resonated with, so we discovered a lot of symbolic overlap between our religions which was a good conversational catalyst.
In December I asked whether anything about the Christmas story was familiar. The mum's said Jesus isn't one of the Hindu gods but that there is a god who is similar, so we were able to have a really good conversation about the similarities and differences between that god and Jesus. The god they told me about became a human. They showed me a photograph of him! He lived a life of self-sacrifice, love and compassion, and treated everyone as of equal value and worth regardless of caste, social status, wealth and righteousness yet he was scorned and shunned by society. He wasn't tortured though, but similarly to (post resurrected) Jesus he didn't die (he said it was his time to leave and got in a coffin - they believe he's still alive in it now! The main Hindu temple is built where it is). He said his spirit would be with them. And people believe he will come back again! They don't believe that he will conquer all evil though, so that's a big difference that we talked about. I explained how when Jesus comes back he will ultimately make everything how it was originally intended to be - with nothing bad or sad and no one sick. They liked that! It all came out of talking about God coming as a person to live with us, full of love. (Nb, We did talk about the fact that Jesus did die before he came back to life and then didn't die again [they pointed that out actually] -We talked about Good Friday, Easter Sunday and ascension

Pop-up Hot Chocolate Bar:
This is a space where the Faith & Fun, and the wider school, community can forge deeper connections than are possible in the all hands-on-deck Faith & Fun sessions. We set up a

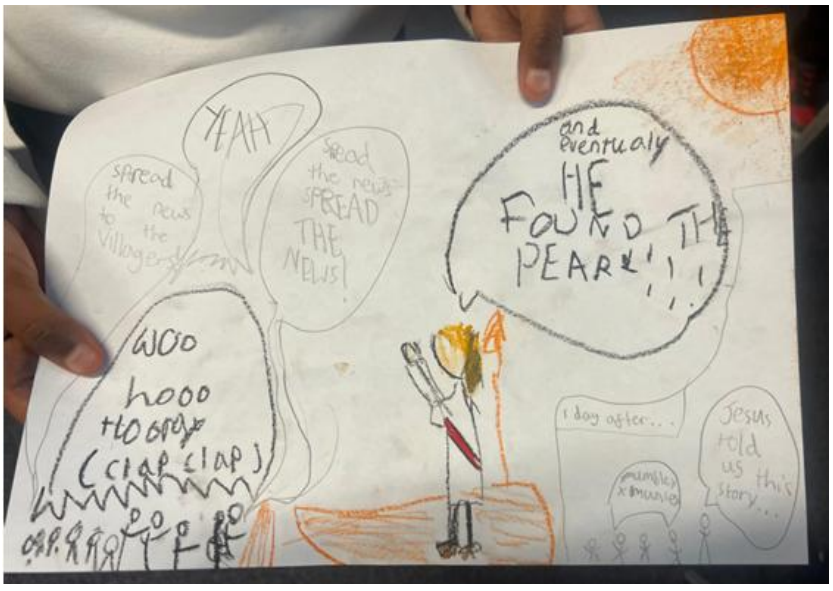
gazebo with thermos flasks full of different flavours of hot chocolate, plus a choice of sprinkles and squirty cream. This is just half an hour at the Montague Street climbing rock which many of the families walk past on their way to and from school. Being outdoors with basic resources has been very conducive to a relaxed atmosphere where we can all get to know each other better. It can be very busy so extra pairs of hands to serve would help me be more available for the invaluable chatting. We do them at least once a term. The popup ice-pops bar went well in the summer too!



Easter Experience:
This is an interactive storytelling trail for each class. We walk to the stone spiral in the General Cemetery where there is also a set of relatively grand steps conducive to the trial scene. We share bread sticks and red grapes as I tell the story of Maundy Thursday and reenact the remaining key moments of Holy Week. Karen comes along to join in. Next year we plan to alter logistics to be able to include Palm Sunday again, at the grand gated entrance."

Christmas Experience:
Similar to the Easter Experience this is an interactive storytelling trail where we go round popup story scenes only onsite around the grounds. We alternate this yearly with the Christingles to keep both fresh. We finish in a makeshift stable with a live baby Jesus every time, which helps truly bring the story to life so the children can really imagine the reality of it.

Godly Play:



I try and offer Godly play RE lessons whenever they fit in with the curriculum for each class.
The children really love it and it's a great way to help them feel that they know us a bit better than if we only do bigger events. One story from Year 1, when I was telling the creation story, goes as follows. I asked the children, "I wonder where your special place might be," since our theme was special places and we had been talking about the day of rest and where people go to rest. One girl answered, "the Holy Spirit."

We were then making our special places out of playdough. I was fascinated to see how she would make something so abstract. So I asked about what she was making. She said she was making her church. I asked what church she goes to. She said "Your church!". I couldn't remember seeing her at the church I go to on a Sunday. Then she said "the one where you dressed up as an orange!". So I asked if she goes to St Mary's on a Sunday as I didn't realise she did. She said she's only been with school but she sees it as her church and she's liked her visits so much that she's asked her parents to take her to church. They don't go but her grandma is going to take her to a church. She then visited St Mary's on a school trip a few days later and asked Karen if catholics can come, presumably hoping her grandma would bring her on a Sunday. So when I then had Y1 for another godly play I asked if she'd managed to go to church with her grandma and she said not yet as her grandma said she just needs to do the sign of the cross whenever she sees a church, but she is going to ask her again as she "just want[s] to be with Jesus." Isn't it lovely that her experiences of St Mary's have helped her feel like that!

Y6 transition-themed creative prayer afternoon:
This went well again in the summer term last year. Karen and I facilitated a carousel of active prayer stations including a walk-around labyrinth that Karen chalked onto the playground. The children finish by each writing themselves a postcard to remind themselves of what they want to remember from the afternoon (eg God is with me), and Karen posts these to them toward the end of the summer holidays just before they're starting their new schools.

I had a brilliant time at the school's Iftar during Ramadan. It was a fascinating opportunity to experience and learn from the Muslim community and how they come together around this. I have since been invited to a community Iftar in one of the mosques, and to a dinner lady's house for Eid next year!

Working in the Sharrow area is such a blessing. Thank you for having me on board! Prayers are so appreciated for all the families I have the privilege of being with.

READER MINISTRY

Who, a year ago, could have predicted the state of the world today? It's increasingly challenging, with levels of geopolitical instability no one would have imagined, but are affecting us all. It's having an effect on how people's faith is expressed, as division and lack of compassion seem to underpin so much of the national life. My own experience this year has been that uncertainty and cost of living issues have become an increasing burden for many. I've been providing more pastoral support at work and elsewhere as people just try to cope with their work, alongside coping with life which just keeps getting more challenging.

The role of the Reader is that of Lay theologian, bringing God into the everyday, finding hope and confidence in the promises of the Bible for now and the future. This isn't limited just to church activities, but the whole of life, though some days it feels hard. I try to hold in

tension people's fears and anxieties against the hope we have in God. Though the issues of the world are serious, we have an eternal hope.

In practical terms I have continued with my role as one of the three Assistant Wardens of Readers and meeting regularly with the Reader Executive. We held a preaching day in the Autumn which went well and a Quiet Day in May for Readers to take time out and reflect on their ministry.

My own year has been affected by arthritis in my knee, which I'm trying to address, and my father, who has been in hospital quite a bit, so I've been going over to Hull regularly, which has taken up quite a lot of time and energy. I've been grateful for space to support my family, which is why I've not preached quite so often of late, though we do have an excellent selection of preachers at St. Mary's, each bringing their own perspectives.

I was particularly inspired by Matthew's 'unprepared' sermon. I've always resisted the temptation to do something like that, for fear of going on too long! Perhaps in the interests of authenticity the occasional rant might be appropriate? It's not as though there's no biblical precedent! We shall have to see.

I've occasionally attended the Open Communion service at St. Mark's, Broomhill, as I try and make sense of the Church's approach to Living in Love and Faith. There seems to be a dichotomy between national church structures/processes and how 'ordinary' Christians are working out their faith practically 'in real life', like we see at St. Mary's. It sometimes feels as though elements of politics are getting in the way of faith. The consequences of this can be seen clearly elsewhere in the world. How we stand alongside Christians of different traditions and experiences, within the 'broad church' of Anglicanism, remains difficult, but important. Given the divisions of society being presented to us, being of one heart and mind through faith in Christ is more important than ever.

This year saw Ben leaving for Liverpool University, which was a big change for us all, but he's really enjoying it. Toby spent a weekend with him earlier this year and I think is looking forward to starting University in September. Rachel has been playing in the worship group regularly and I've joined in with the occasional Taizé harmonies. There're too many opportunities and not enough time!

Giles Morrison.

RACIAL JUSTICE REPORT by Miriam Cavanagh

We as a Church and Society have yet again, finds ourselves wrestling with the raise of Racism, what seem like a display of national pride as flying the Union Jack for some has been highjacked by the Far Right in our communities should I dare say that some are our own brothers and sisters in Christ who are part of this discourse. Unfortunately, this has also given way to Racialised local and National Politics and somewhat normalised Racial Discrimination.

On a Diocesan level, our Racial Justice Team, Rev Anesia Cook and her Assistant Rachel has been doing some amazing work sometime in very difficulty situations across the Diocese in rising awareness and providing information and resources about racial equity in our Churches as well as in our communities and wider world. Training is available, ie Unconscious Bias Training of which lead by Anesia and other Diocesan Colleagues. Anesia and Rachel are also working with Intercultural Churches in the Diocese and wider church community, of which St Mary's Church is one of the Churches, to further this important work, to highlight the work needs to be done, share good working practices and to also create resources of which some have been widely shared with Parishes.

The Diocesan Recourse Team at Church House Rotherham, have developed a good collection of books about Racial Justice, ie a book; An Amazing Journey: The Church of England's Response to Institutional Racism by Glynne Gordon-Carter, the team are working with Anesia and Rachel in this needed work for the Diocese. Across the Diocese, some parishes are doing great work in creating places of worship where all are welcomed and valued regardless of racial identity of our UK/ME and UK/GMH brothers and sisters in Christ in God's Church. Some of the things are about the language and images used in church services to start reflecting members of the congregation and communities we serve, representation matters, ie; are UK/ME or Uk/GMH represented in PCC or Leadership roles, like Children and Youth Workers?

A few weeks ago, I was invited by Bishop Leah to attend a gathering at her Residence in Doncaster of UK/ME, UK/GHM and Ally in the Diocese in an informal conversation about Racial Justice in our Diocese, Anesia and Rachel were both in attendance. It very a very fruitful evening listening to diverse voices wrestling and prayerfully seeking ways for have a Diocese that welcomes all regardless of Racial Identity. Bishop Leah has experience in Racial Justice in last role as a Vicar in Lancaster as well as throughout her work within the Church, she is looking to develop a group that will promote and champion Racial Justice in our Diocese. Please do hold Bishop Leah, Anesia and Rachel in your prayers.

As a people of God, how can we make a difference, I hope and surely would like to believe that the Church (CofE) is called to be a Church for all Peoples, for I also believe it's time to really start working towards a Church that is Anti-Racists. It's just not good enough to jump on the hashtags or whenever a news stories that appear on TV or in our social media posts, action is needed and requires a whole Culture change that needs to be Authentic and not just a Ticking Box Exercise!

For information, please visit the Diocesan Website or Contact Anesia & Rachel, they would be happy to help and assist you, otherwise contact me and I will be able to share, or sign post you to the right direction. Karen & Claire can also be contacted as they attend the Intercultural Meetings if you would like to be part of this Kingdom work and make a difference.

As the world wrestles with the level of Wars and Injustice across our world, we pray and remember our brothers, sisters in Iran, Sudan, Nigeria and places that are known to us but are not in the main news.

Prayer that written in the wake of the War in Iran by:

The Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani, Bishop of Chelmsford

Ever-loving God,
who hears us in our anguish and distress,
and longs for us to be free.
We pray for the people of Iran and the wider Middle East,
at this time of fear and uncertainty.
Be near to those who are anxious;
bring comfort to all who are suffering.
Guide those with the power to make decisions,
and lead them in the ways of wisdom, compassion and moderation:
that people of goodwill would seek harmony and reconciliation.
Join us with our Christian brothers and sisters in all places,
in praying for peace with justice,
through him who is the prince of peace,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

YOUTH REPORT- MAY 2025-MAY 2026

Youth activities since the last annual report, in addition to our twice-monthly bible discussion group (with quiz and prizes!), have included:

- **August 2025 - Continuing to meet** on Sundays through the holidays, at the request of the youth
- **October 2025 - Big gathering** for boardgames and lunch at Tree House Café
- **November 2025 - Participation in "Young Leaders"**, the Diocesan Community
- **January 2026 - "Breathe Deep"** youth day at the Cathedral, joining others from across the Diocese
- **March 2026 - Interviewing the new Bishop** of Doncaster, Leah, and reading the Bible passage during her Sunday morning visit to St. Marys
- **April 2026 - Boxing,** at the invitation of couple of the lads some of the adults attend their first-ever live boxing competition

During the year a few more of the youth group, including Ami Kemoh and Ben Morrison, moved on to university. This swells the number of recent youth group participants who are now taking university degrees. The majority of them are thereby breaking new ground; an encouragement to their families and to us.

The youth group has, partly as a result, been smaller. However, we feel no less delighted with the young people who are with us; what a privilege to enjoy their contribution and vitality! Unexpectedly and wonderfully we have been joined by some of the lads from the Sheffield boxing scene. They take the initiative of inviting other boxing friends to join.

Extraordinarily, soon after their arrival we were joined one Sunday by several of the German national boxing squad.

The presence of the youth is first-and-foremost a joy! It's also a bulwark against losing touch with contemporary life and thereby becoming foolish; "*Better a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king…*" (Ecclesiastes 4:13).

Yours, George

MUSICAL WORSHIP @ ST MARY'S



If Music be the food of love – play on! Your encouragement & feedback about the live Music in Sunday Worship means a lot to the musical volunteers: thankyou!

Thank you, too, for praying that our music will continue to develop & reflect who we are as a church family & play a part in our unity as an organisation. We love learning Christian songs in all languages & after our Churchwarden Miriam (Zambian) with Aji (Nigerian), Luna (Persian), Yo & Steve (English) attended the national 'Taste of Heaven' Intercultural Event at Coventry Cathedral, we were really encouraged that St Mary's is developing well interculturally. We were particularly pleased to bring back our first Persian song-words from this event (in 'Waymaker').

It has been wonderful to have a guitarist in our music group again! After wishing for this last year, Caroline fell conveniently in love with Andy, who had joined our church with his guitar (& his amazing outfits!) Any instrumentalist or lead/harmony singer is welcome to join us: please talk to one of us in the music group or leading the service. We practice 9.15am on Sundays before the 10.30 start.

We are blessed to have a small group of musical volunteers rotated to play most Sundays: Steve piano, Rachel clarinet/sax, Andy Guitar, Hugo violin/piano, Oscar trombone/violin, Aji Djembe, plus Dawn, Anna, Bolagi, Margaret, Giles, Jayne, Matthew & sometimes Nic & Nick supporting us singing Taize in harmony. Younger singers (Rougi, Blessing) join whenever possible. We have missed Ben now putting his beautiful voice to good use at Uni!

Luna faithfully helps with the sound i-pad on Sundays. We would love more people to learn to do this? It's a useful skill & Steve can show you what to do (then he can play piano without manage ing the sound too) – please let him know if you are interested?

The vicars, Claire & Karen, choose our music each week – please share your ideas with them. YouTube is still occasionally used in services by Youth or when musicians are not available & we have learned & included some of these songs into our live repertoire. Even more occasionally we enjoy the organ being played by Madge Woollard.

Yo is currently attending the Diocesan Foundations Course on some Sundays which means miss ing St Mary's service & is less able to support other singers. Steve, faithfully supported by the wonderful,

reliable, prayerful and helpful Aji (always waiting at the church door), has stepped up in setting up, bringing the other musicians together or playing piano alone & managing sound almost every Sunday and – thankyou Steve, thankyou Aji.

Thanks for your prayers, especially this big one: that we can find a way to have a paid part-time Musical Director (as many churches do) in the future who can release Yo & Steve into their old age (!) & also build the powerful blessing of music in our church & community. What would life be like without it?

May God use music to grow the life & loving connections we share in and around St Mary's.

Yo Tozer-Loft (Musical Worship Leader) April 2026