



St Laurence's  
Church

# Annual Review 2025

Parish of Foleshill St Laurence  
Diocese of Coventry



# Annual Review 2025

for the **Annual Parochial Church Meeting** of St Laurence's Foleshill  
held on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2026

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# Vicar's Report

## Revd. Gareth Irvine

### Vicar St Laurence's Foleshill



*'This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace.'* (Colossians 1:6)

In Paul's letter to the Colossians, he writes to encourage the young church of the power of the gospel that is alive and at work within them – changing their lives, and through them, impacting the people and world around them. He commends them on their love for others that they have received as a gift of the Holy Spirit.

It is this same love – this extraordinary, God given, deeply compassionate and urgent desire for all people, made in God's image, to live lives 'worthy of the good news' that sustains and overflows through all of the activities, groups and acts of sacrificial service that are reflected in this year's annual report; which I commend you to read, celebrate and hold in prayer.

As a church, we meet every Sunday morning at 10.30 for worship with Sunday Club for our primary aged Children, and spent part of 2024 focusing on and learning from the teaching from Colossians. On the last Sunday of the month we meet All-Together for Family worship in the Church Hall. Our Tuesday community Connect, led by Rea and Kate continues to every Tuesday during term-time. Encounter continues to evolve and has met several times a term in 2024, welcoming members from other churches across the deanery and mission hub. In September, we hosted the first Regional City Praise & Prayer for the North & East region, supported by Coventry Vineyard and St Marks' Coventry.

Changing patterns in regular Sunday worship attendance from our worshipping community have presented us challenges in resourcing worship, children's work and hospitality; especially as under 18's represent almost half of our worshipping community – demonstrating our commitment to welcoming, developing and growing faith amongst children in our church, schools and homes. Our pastoral lead Chris continues to stay in contact with members who are not presently able to worship with us in person, maintaining those vital links.

On the staff team, we welcomed Revd. Kate Pellereau as Mission Hub Associate at her licensing in February 2024, and it has been wonderful to have her as part of the team and her family as part of the church. Revd. Becca Henney was ordained Priest in July and continues to serve as a Curate in the parish. Rea Verdon began training for ordination in September, and although she has stepped back from the Family Link Worker Role and from PCC, she continues to serve in lots of ways as part of her context-based training.

The PCC has met bi-monthly and considered amongst other things finance, safeguarding, staff pay and conditions, fabric repairs and safety work in the church, and in 2024 the quinquennial inspection was completed – a big thank you to our wardens Chris & Ben for all their ongoing work helping us look after our building.

Our relationship with St Laurence's Primary School continues to grow, with Kate P, Thea and myself serving as Foundation Academy Governor members and assisting with leading and supporting Collective Worship and the Spiritual life of the school. In the autumn of 2024, the school received very positive SIAMS and Ofsted judgements, a testimony and reflection of the strong culture and community which exists between everyone in the school community. Following the award of low-income communities funding for St Laurence's & St Paul's from the Diocese, we are hoping to build on the work of the Family Link Worker by appointing a Growing Faith Leader across both parishes in 2025. One highlight for me has been to see the growing partnership and fruitfulness between the school, the church and iSingPop, who helped us put on a fantastic Christmas concert in the church.

Thank you to everyone who is part of our church, who contribute every week to beautiful, often messy and sometimes painful ministry that is Christ's body incarnate:

*'We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy, always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light'. (Colossians 1:11-12)*

With love,

# Growing Faith: Children, Families & Schools

## Dagmer Dias – Growing Faith Worker

I began my role as Growing Faith Leader in September 2025. Since then, I have been actively involved in supporting and developing faith-based activities across churches and schools within the parish.

At St Laurence's Church, I helped run Connect on Tuesdays and planned a Light Party, which was very well attended and enjoyed by all who came. Alongside this, I helped run Youth Group every Thursday. I restarted Little Stars at St Laurence's School, which now runs every Wednesday and Friday, and I have build strong relationships with pupils through this and other activities within the school. I also run an After School Bible Club for Year 2 pupils, supporting them in growing their faith and developing their knowledge of the Bible.

During Advent, I ran an Advent Prayer Space at the school, which the children loved engaging with. The space was so well received that pupils have continued to ask for it to remain in place.

I ran a Stay and Play group called SPACE at St Paul's Church every Wednesday. Since September, this group has grown significantly through advertising and word of mouth. Each session included a Bible story, and we finish with the Lord's Prayer using actions to encourage faith development among both children and families.

At Christmas, I ran a Christmas session at St Paul's Church, inviting pupils from local schools including Broad Heath and Edgwick Primary, as well as a WW2-themed session for Chetwynd Primary School. Overall, 420 children came through the doors of St Paul's Church over the Christmas period, where they learned about Jesus' birth and the true meaning of the Christmas story.



## Ecochurch

## Rea Verdon – Eco Lead to PCC

We still have the Silver Award we received in 2024.

# Youth & Young People

## Rea Verdon – Ordinand

We have continued to host a youth group on Thursday evenings in the church hall. These sessions are framed around a shared meal and are aimed at building relationships and community with young people from the local area.

For the first part of the year the group consisted of the same youth that had been part of the JJs group that had been meeting for a couple of years. As we moved into the summer months we had a few new children join from Year 6 at St Laurence's Primary that had links either through Connect or from the previous Family Link Worker relationships.

During the Year 6 leavers service, all of the children were given a golden ticket to a youth event to be held in the following September. This event was run by Thrive, a Christian youth charity and they drove their Double Decker bus to the church carpark. We had about 30 children come to the event where they had pizzas and played games on the bus or in the church hall. At the end of the event the children were invited to come to our weekly sessions.

Since September numbers have sat at around 16 each week with a core group and a more flexible edges group. Dagmer joined the group as a leader in September and James has become a popular guest appearance as he is able.

As leaders we have tried various ways to make sure that the group offers both a safe and engaging place for young people to gather and to ensure that we were distinctly Christian. We have finally found a good balance by splitting the session into two parts, the first part is a more social group with food, games and prayer and the second part of the group is now a dedicated Bible study session. Not all of the youth stay for the second part but all are invited and we have a committed group who are becoming more confident in their Bible knowledge and prayer lives.

In January James and I took 5 of the youth to Basecamp, a weekend run by Thrive where the children get to do various activities alongside worship, prayer and Bible

study. We were also able to take the youth to Youth City Praise and Prayer, a city-wide worship event that they all loved.

Our prayer for last year was to have more young people join us but particularly boys as it was a girl heavy group. That prayer has been answered as the group has more than doubled in size since 2024 and we regularly have more boys than girls!

Thanks to James, Becca, Ben and Dagmar for all your hard work and dedication to these great kids.

## Prayer in Riley Square

### Revd. Rebecca Henney - Curate

2025 was a year of Highs and Lows for Riley Square. One of the biggest high points, was Pentecost Sunday, where many people from St Laurence's went on a mini mission trip to the square. We worshipped in the square, handed out chocolates and hot drinks alongside fliers with blessings on. There were activities for kids to join in, and we had so many good conversations. Some of the team from Together for Change came along to see us in action. Special thanks to the Riley Square prayer team: Piers and Thea, Kate and Thanh and Fiona for all their hard work and faithful prayers in seeing this happen!

Shortly after this, Together for Change appointed Chloe as their project manager, to oversee the Riley Square project (as well as another project in Camp Hill). Chloe hit the ground running and immediately got involved with conversations with the Council and other organisations.

In July, a team of students from the St Marks Academy did a few hours of outreach in the square, talking to local residents and telling everyone they encountered that Jesus loved them, handing out chocolate and fliers with blessings on. It was wonderful, and the students gave feedback on how they sense God's love for Riley Square and its occupants.

In September, myself, Kate P and Chloe (along with kids) went to hand out Chocolates and talk to residents about what they would like to see in the square if we could secure

a space. This was shortly after the formal announcement that the Library would soon close. Many residents talked about wanting a community space where locals could be warm and welcome. Chloe redoubled her efforts to negotiate with the Council and others to secure a lease, armed with the feedback from the local community – the lack of progress was certainly not due to lack of trying!

In December, the Diocesan Secretary, Jacqueline Ladds, contacted St Laurence's to say that the funding for the Riley Square project was being paused. As Gareth and Together for Change attempted to gain some clarity around what this meant, it became apparent that the funding was stopped, and that Together for Change would not be able to provide the structural support for bringing the project to life. I know myself, and many others, felt a great deal of disappointment and grief at this news.

Whilst this is obviously not the news we were hoping for, I still believe there is a great deal to give thanks for. As a Church community, we have blessed numerous individuals in the square, and we have no idea what God will do with the seeds that we have planted there. I also do not believe that pursuing the project was the wrong thing, or that we heard God wrongly in this. We know that God still loves and has good plans for Riley Square and all who live and work there. I do not know what the future holds at this point, but I know that God is faithful and he can make beautiful things out of ashes. At present, my prayer for Riley Square in many ways remains the same – 'God I pray that all those in Riley Square would know that you are a God that loves them and wants to bless them with hope and a future.' But I have now added, 'God, I say Yes and Amen to your purposes in the square, and Father God tell us what our part is in them.'

## Hope Hub

### Laura Edmunds – Hope Hub Manager

In April 2026, St Laurence's Hope Hub will have just celebrated its 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday. We initially opened the foodbank due to the worldwide pandemic and now we are all living through the cost-of-living crisis.

St Laurence's Hope Hub is still reaching out to families and single Adults within the community and beyond, supporting them with Emergency Food, Support, Fuel Vouchers Referrals, Safe Space, Clothing Rail Signposting and creating a Warm Space for people to come and have somewhere warm to stay, eat and drink. St Laurence's Hope Hub is incredibly lucky to CAP who joins us each week to help our service users with Debt Support, Deb from Coventry Clothing, Iris who comes along twice per month from Coventry City Council Job Shop and new to our Foodbank is Louise from CAB, unfortunately in Jan 2026 both Iris and Louise no longer attend due to funding their end, however we can still refer people to the organisations. St Laurence's is based within the Northeast of Coventry and is reported to be one of the top Wards who suffer with poverty.

We have been working closely with the Food Bank to provide food, cleaning, laundry, and hygiene packs as well as safely recruiting volunteers for our existing team. From previous secured grants we purchase have a delivery from Fareshare which consists of assorted items including, cooked and uncooked meats, ready to make meals, fresh fruit and vegetables, bread, biscuits, crisps, cheese, and yogurts to name just a few. As a team we believe that everyone should have healthy additional produce to their parcels. St Laurence's Hope Hub was open every Tuesday from 1pm to 2.30pm.

The process has again changed with regards to how many vouchers service users can have and there is an internal database within the Foodbank of people who are entitled to additional Foodbank Parcels, this is so we are still able to support the most vulnerable people within the city. It is with a heavy heart that we are still very much in the think of a cost-of-living crisis, we are seeing people come through our doors who are working, but cannot afford to make ends meet, the struggle is very real. There were some difficult conversations had with service users if they had gone over the limit of vouchers issues in a period of 6 months, however we were lucky enough to be able to offer food from our Fareshare at times. We have seen an increase in service users within the past few months and needing to order more food parcels on average between 15 to 40 per week.

In December 2025 St Laurence's Hope Hub arranged and funded a Christmas Dinner for 45-50 people, along with a hamper raffle (all free of charge) and gave out around 70 Christmas Hampers, particularly targeted at families within the community and service

users. We were lucky enough to retain a grant from Coventry General Charities and Love Christmas Match Funding, and a local organisation donated Chocolate Selection Boxes, Colouring Books & Pencils and Christmas Crackers, as well as doing a Gifting Tree, this was for various items, gift sets, hygiene gifts, toys, games etc which was a big success. With the money donated we were able to buy more games, toys, adult gifts, Mince Pies, Squash, Savory Snacks, Christmas sweet treats without these generous acts of kindness we would not have been possible to reach out to families who were worried about the basics over Christmas.

St Laurence's Hope Hub have provided support to a number of people ranging from single person households up to larger households, some of which could have up to 7 children and 2 adults occupying I am genuinely proud to say that with our continued efforts and "can do" attitude we have fed approx. 1362 people from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to date.

St Laurence's Hope Hub has continued to grow from strength to strength, and we are looking forward to the future and what else St Laurence's Hope Hub can offer as provision. This would have not been possible without our wonderful, dedicated team which consists of 10 people. We have Sue, Vivek, Ian and Rachel in the back putting away deliveries and getting parcels ready for service users, Millicent & June in the Kitchen and bagging up Fruit & Vegetables, Dawn and Charlotte on Vouchers and Chris on welcome. I get involved with everything, talking to the service users, making calls on their behalf, being around in any area which needs help. Big massive shout out and thank you.

## Safeguarding

### Chris McKirdy – Parish Safeguarding Officer

Chris McKirdy and Laura Edmunds have continued to work on Safeguarding as part of their roles within St Laurence's. Chris McKirdy is the Safeguarding Officer and Laura Edmunds manages the Safeguarding Administration.

We use the Safeguarding Dashboard which is updated on a regular basis. We have only a few tasks outstanding, one of which is something that we are awaiting an update on and the additional are for clergy vacancy for church activities. Overall, the Dashboard monitoring safeguarding actions is mainly on the Green for Good and on a 96% Progress rate. In addition to the Dashboard there was a Safeguarding Hub introduced in the later part of 2024, this is to improve all safeguarding training and DBS notifications i.e. when staff team, PCC and Volunteers need to update. The new DBS organisation is now Thirty One Eight.

We have had no safeguarding reports throughout 2025.

## Electoral roll

### Laura Edmunds - Electoral roll Officer

There are XX people in the Church Electoral Roll.

Of this:

- XX people reside within the parish
- XX reside outside of the parish.

# Fabric & buildings

## Ben Verdon – Churchwarden

### Gayer Street

The Gayer Street rental property has an ongoing tenancy agreement and is being well looked after.

We get inspection reports from the letting agent and they all come back with positive comments that the tenant is keeping the house clean, tidy and cared for. This year's statutory gas and electrical safety checks have



been carried out satisfactorily with no findings. The letting agent did advise that although the property is being well kept internally, the fence in the back garden has started to fall and encroach into the neighboring property. We have sought costs for the repair of this and have now instructed the works to be carried out.

### Hall

The hall is generally in good condition. We have carried out a couple of small jobs and repairs throughout the year. The urinal in the boys' toilets was blocked; Chris' husband Tom spent a day of his weekend sorting this for us.

The high-level light fittings in the main hall all now have low energy lamps fitted, and we have replaced a number of light switches, sockets and 1 toilet seat!

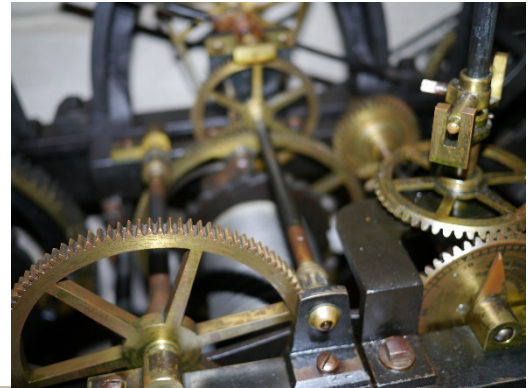
### Church

The church is still standing!

A couple of lights have been changed for low energy versions to help save costs but other than that not a lot has changed over the year.



The gas boilers are still barely hanging on, and we are trying to get the faculty for the replacement infrared heating system agreed. The proposal has been discussed by the Diocesan Advisory Committee and we are now going back and forth to bottom out the details until we get to a position where they are willing to agree to our plans.



## Mission Hub

Rev Kate Pellereau – Associate Minister



### Growing Faith Worker

We successfully recruited Dagmer Dias who started working with us in September. This has been such a highlight of the year. Dagmer has got really stuck into her work across St Laurence's Church, St Paul's Foleshill and St Laurence's School. She runs 3 Stay and Play groups, supports work with local schools and helps run Connect. She was successful in applying to complete the Growing Faith Strategic Leaders Programme which she started in 2026. She has a big vision for reaching children and their families for Jesus.

### Prayer

Gareth has been part of leading the North Coventry Leaders prayer meetings which happen regularly with leaders of other denominations, he has also been involved with North Coventry City Prayer and Praise which has happened in different churches across the year.

Inspired by the Bishop's Learning Together Day, Kate and Dagmer piloted a Prayer space at St Laurence's School during Advent. This happened across all breaktimes in the penultimate week of the term and saw children of different ages engaging with prayer activities. We hope to grow this in 2026.

### Supporting Leaders

We continued with our monthly meetings of local missional leaders. This is a regular meeting of about 10-12. Most who attend are also in the North Coventry Deanery. We have a simple meal, and spend time in prayer for one another and some kind of missionally focused discussion.

Gareth and Dave Poultney from Bedworth ran a course for Church Planters. This happened across the autumn 2025 and included a retreat. There were 5 participants.

### Local Parishes

In the autumn the diocese shared their decision that they were placing All Saints Riley Square on permanent pause. There has also been a pause to the discussions which were happening about the future of St Thomas' Longford, although Margaret Locke-Wheaton continues to support their finances. From September Gareth began his Leadership Placement with Bishop Sophie, and Kate took on most of the work for the Mission Hub.

### Greenhouse

Unfortunately the Greenhouse group which we began last year became unviable with the leaders unable to commit to attending. We paused the group in the autumn.

## Deanery Synod

### Ann Weitzel – Coventry North Deanery Lay Chair

This year the Deanery has met twice. It is a real privilege to be on synod and get to know the other churches.

In September 2025 Rev Gareth Irvine came to the end of his 5 years as Area Dean and chose not to continue. Father Simon Oakes (vicar at St Luke's Holbrooks) who was

assistant Area Dean has been appointed to take over. He has Rev Charlotte Jackson and Rev Sarah Ashelby to help as assistants. Also at the end of 2025 Les Harlock had to give up being deanery secretary due to ill health. He has done the job for 5 years, in a quiet unassuming way. A member of St Pauls is taking this on until the new synod is elected in 2026.

Every meeting has had updates on:

- Finances – where David Fletcher keeps us up to date with Parish Share requirements- there was no need for Annual Treasurers & Incumbents meeting this year as there was no increase in requirements for parish share contributions as the diocese were prepared to subsidise this. Despite this we decided to reduce our support needed by a further 1% so we in 2026 will pay 82% of the ‘total cost of a minister’
- Eco Church- Where Rev Charlotte Jackson continues to encourage us to take action towards the net zero 2030 target.

A brief summary of the meetings in 2025 is as follows:

**June (St Thomas, Keresley):** we were joined by Church Wardens as the main speaker was from Ecclesiastical Insurance. They gave a good insight into the support that they give over building matters. There are useful resources on their website.

**October (St George’s Coundon):** This meeting started with worship and an extended time of prayer for the parishes, who all brought their joys, sorrows and needs to share. We then had a discussion led by Father Simon on the impact of the flags on our streets.

2026 will see new laity elections to Deanery Synod, our current representative is Rea Verdon.

## Finance

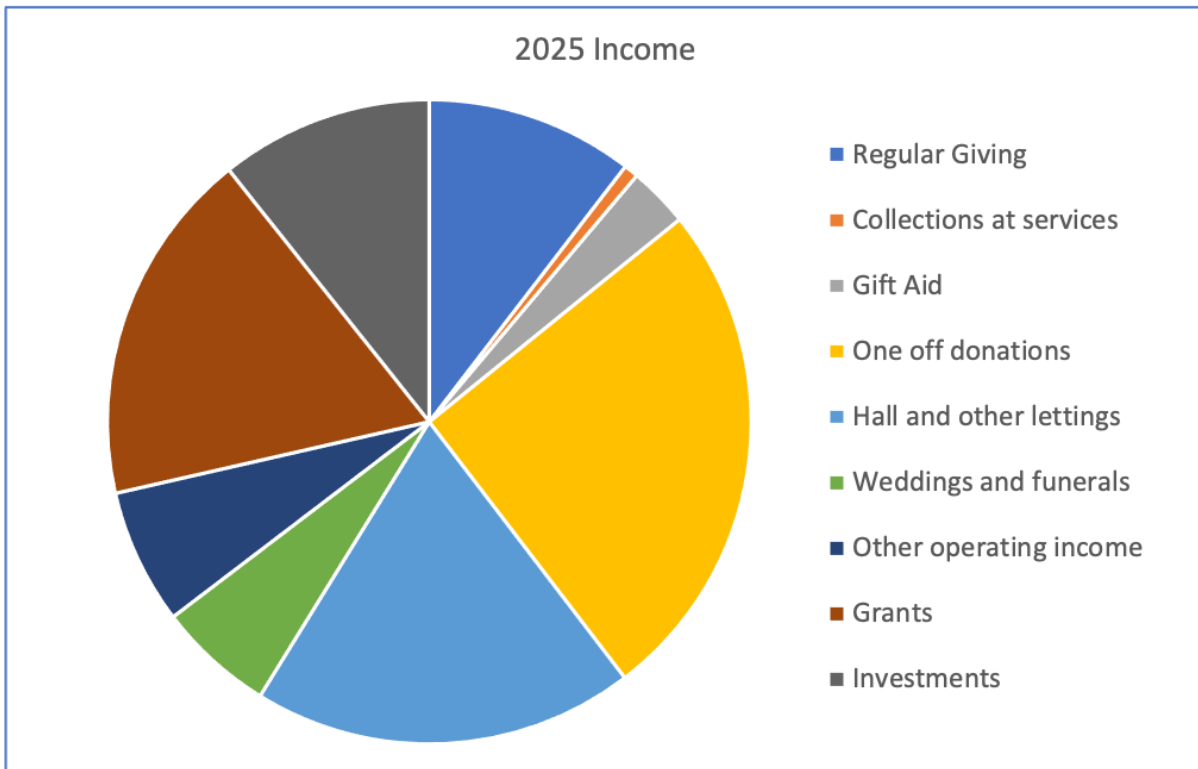
### Margaret Locke-Wheaton – Treasurer

#### Finance

Our accounts for 2025 show an overall profit of £28,523, which is good news. This is mainly due a large one-off donation from the closing of St Aidan’s bank account, which has made a big improvement to this year’s figures and also to our overall financial position. Additionally, we received grant money towards the end of 2025 that will be

used for paying salaries in 2026 and that too contributed to the profit shown. However, our general expenditure continues to exceed our income by around £7,500, and we had to rely on our reserves once again.

### Income



Our total income in 2025 was £134,998.

Around 14% of this came from regular giving, collections at services and the gift aid we were able to claim on these gifts. We currently have 14 people who give regularly, plus a number of others who use the card machine or contribute to the loose cash collections. Thank you for all your gifts, whether large or small. If you haven't reviewed your giving recently, please consider doing that as it all helps us to pay for the many good things you have read about in this report.

This year's one-off donations came to 25% of our income. However as just under 22% of these donations came from the large one-off donation mentioned above we don't expect this to be repeated in 2026. A donation we receive annually from the William Proffitt charity is included in the other 3%.

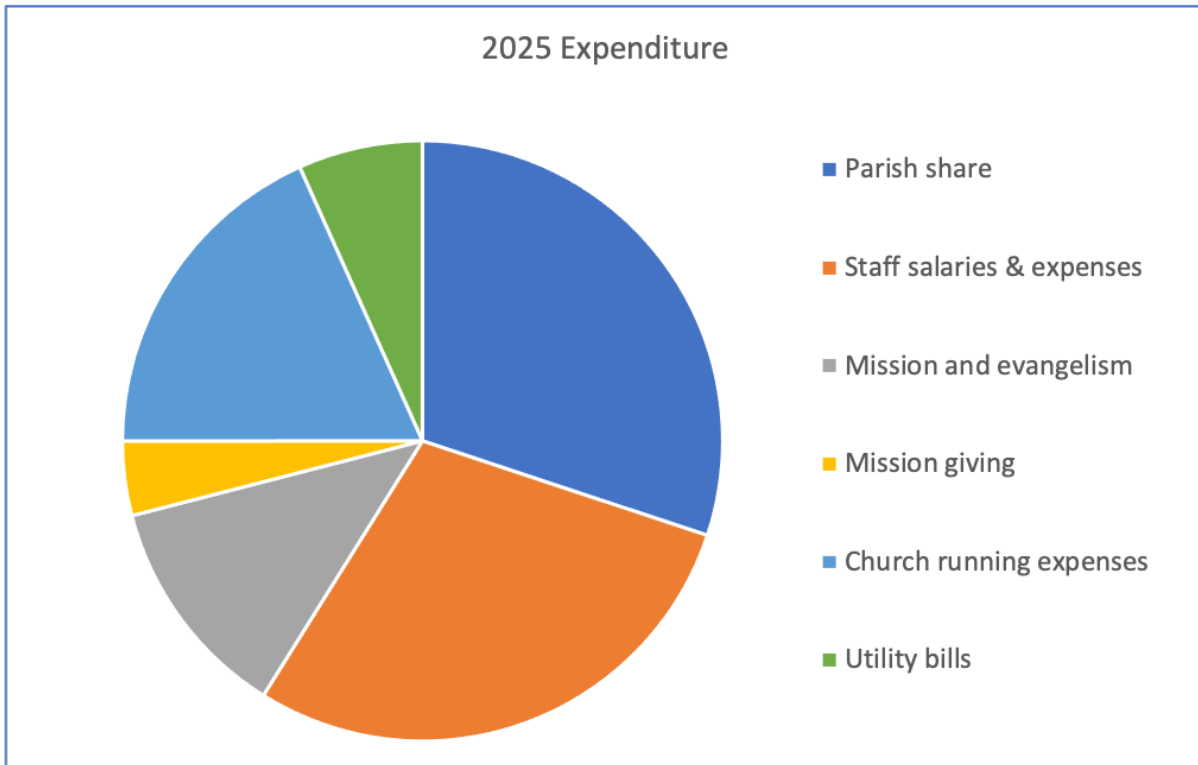
A significant amount of our income (around 18%) came from grants. These provide funds for specific aspects of our mission, such as the Hope Hub, the Mission Hub and the employment of the Growing Faith Leader. We rely on these grants to make these projects happen. Thank you to the diocese, the school, the National Lottery Community Fund, Love Christmas, the Coventry General Charity and all those who have given us grants or contributed in any way. We will need to apply for further grant support during 2026.

19% of our income comes from letting out the hall when we are not using it ourselves. We have a few regular users, including Ladybird Pre-School, and also take one-off bookings for family parties and other events.

11% of our income came from investments. We let out a residential property that we own, we receive dividends from a legacy invested by the diocese and we get a little interest on our reserves.

The remaining 13% was made up of fees received from weddings and funerals, an employment allowance refund and other operating income.

### *Expenditure*



Our total expenditure in 2025 was £106,475.

Around 30% of our expenditure was our Parish Share. This contributes to the cost of the clergy that are provided by the diocese. Another 29% of our expenditure was for other staffing costs – the salaries of the Growing Faith Leader, the Administrator and the Cleaner, plus clergy costs (like travel, phone and broadband) that the parish is responsible for paying.

Another significant part of our expenditure (25%) is for the upkeep of the buildings and general running costs. Utility bills, insurance costs, maintenance and repair to the buildings and replacing consumables are examples of things in this category. We haven't had any large property expenses in 2025, but hope to replace the church heating in 2026.

In 2025 we were able to focus 12% of our expenditure specifically on supporting mission and evangelism activities (like worship services, the Hope Hub, Mission Hub, Connect and youth and children's work), and we also gave away just under £4,258 to support other charities who help us carry out our aims.

The 2025 annual accounts have been presented to the independent examiner, who has completed the financial report giving more details of our income and expenditure

together with our end of year cash and investment assets balances. These were approved by the PCC on 16 March 2026 and a copy is available on our website and at the APCM. Our budget for 2026 indicates that we are likely to need to draw on our reserves again this year.