



# Annual Report

## 2025

## Contents

### Statutory Reports

About St Mary's, East Barnet	3
Rector's Report and Introduction	4
Deanery Synod Report	9
Electoral Roll Report	10
Fabric Report	10
Financial Report	12
Financial Statements	14
Methodist Minister's Report	18
Parochial Church Council Report	19
Parochial Church Council Mission Action Plan	19
Partnership Enabling Group Report	19
Safeguarding Report	20
Minutes of 2023 Annual Meeting of Parishioners	21
Minutes of 2023 Annual Parochial Church Meeting	22

### Non-Statutory Reports

1374 Squadron Air Training Corps	23
Assistant Churchwardens	23
Barnet Collective	24
Chipping Barnet Foodbank	25
Christian Aid	25
Coffee Mornings	26
Community Halls Use	26
Fundraising Events at St Mary's	27
Healing Ministry	27
Music at St Mary's	28
St Mary's Sewing Circle	29
St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided School	29

## About St Mary's, East Barnet

The charity's full name is The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of East Barnet.

It is governed according to the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure (1956) as amended. It operates according to the Church Representation Rules (2022).

At the time this report was issued, the Parochial Church Council consisted of:

The Revd Dr Alec Corio (Rector, PCC chair, ex officio member)  
Prof Alison Blunt (Secretary, representative of the laity)  
Mr Victor Chan (representative of the laity)  
Mrs Bettina von Cossel (Electoral Roll Officer, representative of the laity)  
Mrs Margaret Cranfield (representative of the laity)  
Mr Stephen Edwards (representative of the laity)  
Mrs Amy Jobson (representative of the laity)  
Rev Abe Konadu-Yiadam (Methodist minister, ex officio observer)  
Mr Roger Melling (PCC vice chair, deanery synod representative)  
Ms Gail Phillips (representative of the laity)  
Mr John Savage (deanery synod representative)

The charity exists to advance the gospel in the ecclesiastical parish of East Barnet, according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England, for the benefit of the public.

The charity cooperates with the Rector to provide and maintain a building used for religious purposes; provide and maintain a building as a local heritage asset; conduct public worship, including services marking life events; sponsor cultural and artistic events; support local community formation; support educational activities; further the ecumenical and interfaith engagement of the Church of England; and provide pastoral care to peoples of all faiths and none.

The parish church is located at:  
The Church of St Mary the Virgin  
Church Hill Road  
East Barnet  
Hertfordshire  
EN4 8XD

The parish office (for all correspondence) is located at:  
East Barnet Parish Office  
Brookside Methodist Church  
2 Cat Hill  
East Barnet  
Hertfordshire  
EN4 8JB

Website: [stmaryseastbarnet.org](http://stmaryseastbarnet.org)  
Social media: @stmaryeastbarnet  
Telephone: 02084414401  
Email: [administrator@stmaryseastbarnet.org](mailto:administrator@stmaryseastbarnet.org)  
The PCC's charity number is 1143134

The Independent Examiner of the PCC's financial reports was Ms Victoria Neil of 30 Cedar Avenue, East Barnet, EN4 8DX.

## Rector's Report and Introduction

During 2025 St Mary's has continued to develop in many positive ways, and it has been heartening to see a passionate desire growing within our church to engage in outreach activities, to serve social justice, and to connect with children and young families.

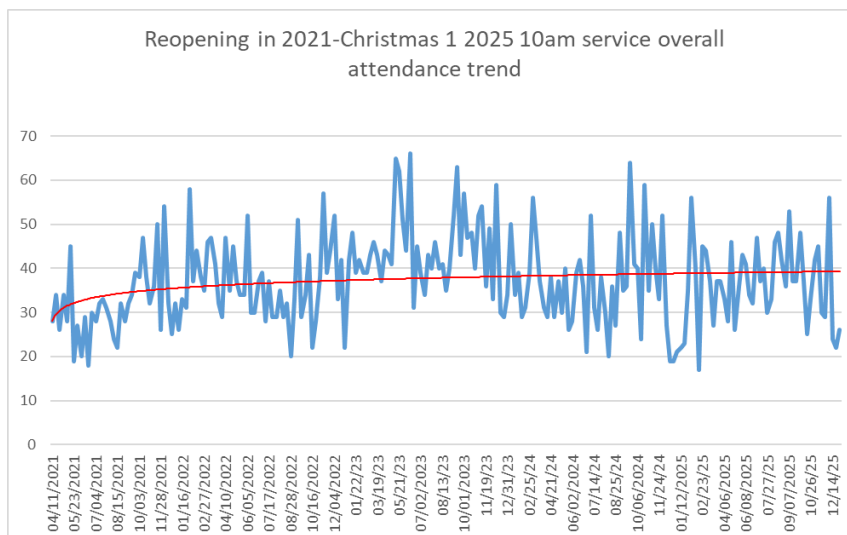
The Church Council has also focused on growth across 2025, especially looking at the resources and intention needed to increase the size of our total worshipping community and to improve regular attendance at services. At our meetings, we've paid much attention to what has been happening in the life of St Mary's, though acknowledging that only some of this can be illuminated using the facts and figures below.

The statistics for mission submitted to the national church each year show a net growth in the size of the total worshipping community; a very small growth in usual weekly attendance (that is measured from October 2024 to October 2025); and a small decline in average weekly attendance (that is measured during October 2025, so includes half term this year). Numbers of occasional offices also increased.

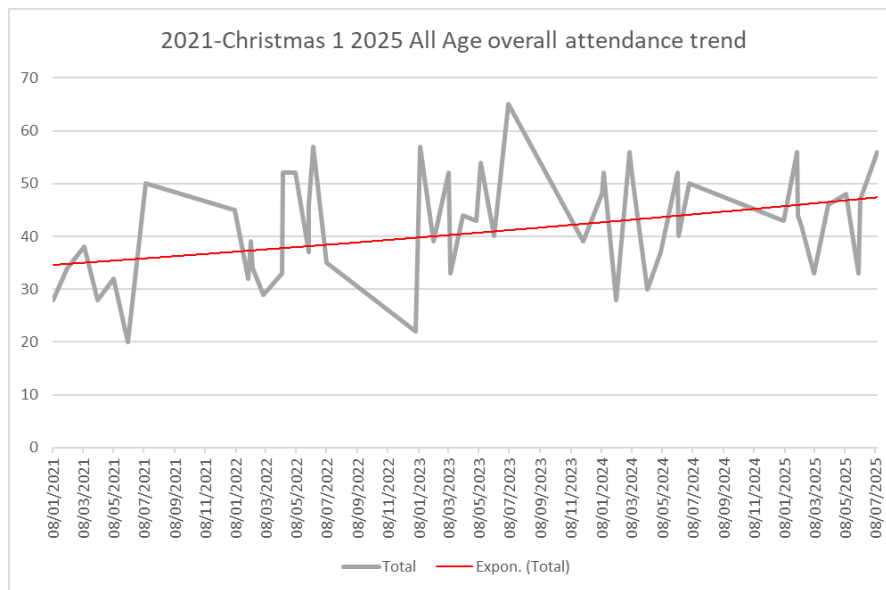
A more detailed look at the numbers confirm that there has been a growth in the size of our total worshipping community, but that there has been hardly any growth in the size of a 'mean average' main Sunday morning congregation at St Mary's across 2025.

Many newer worshippers – and an increasing number of the more established congregation – are attending services less frequently: people are finding new patterns of church attendance to fit their needs and lifestyles, on a monthly or six-weekly basis, rather than coming to church weekly or fortnightly.

There have been more Sundays in 2025 where the congregation has been larger than in previous years, when those varied patterns of attendance have happened to coincide, so the 'mode average' has increased.



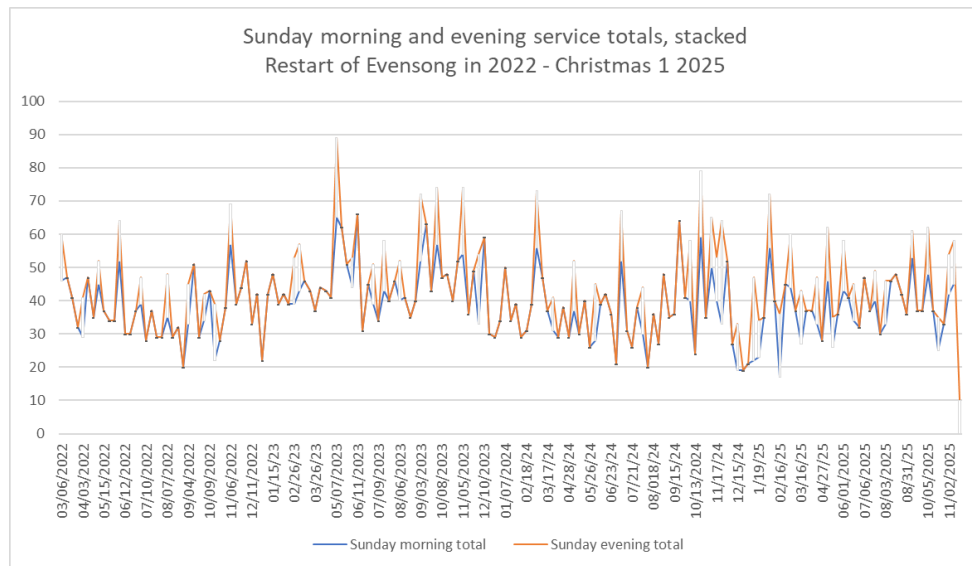
All Age Messy Eucharists continue to show an increased attendance within this trend, affirming that when there is dedicated provision for children and young families at St Mary's then they are much more likely to attend services.



Average attendance	Children	Adults	Total
All Age	<b>10.06</b>	<b>31.94</b>	<b>42</b>
Non all age	<b>3.470238</b>	<b>32.28571</b>	<b>35.75595</b>

This is one reason that the Church Council has applied to the New Barnet Parochial Schools Trust for a grant toward the salary of a Children’s Outreach Worker, and I’m very pleased that we were successful in our application. This post will be advertised in 2026, and the worker’s role will include building up a team to offer children’s ministry alongside all our main Sunday morning services.

We’ve also continued to value afternoon services – maintaining Evensong, and embedding the new Contemplative Eucharist within our pattern of worship. While attendance at these service has hovered in the ‘teens, they have obviously increased our attendance numbers on those Sundays when they occur. They are also an incredibly valuable pastoral addition to our worship, and as a church with a clear parish identity it’s very important that we build up the diversity of our liturgical ministry in this way. Our team of Assistant Wardens, our Sidesmen, sacristan, Director of Music, choirs, coffee makers, and servers led by Brian Gregory have all been working very hard to support this.



In addition to services in the church building, we have held a number of very well attended Sunday afternoon services in the hall at St Mary’s School: our autumn term Evensong there attracted about 100 people. If we can build on the momentum of our partnership with St Mary’s School into 2026 and beyond, and hold more services on the school premises, then this could be an important area of future development. The school’s openness to these new forms of partnership is heartening, and is really due to the remarkable leadership shown by Maria Constantinou.

School services within the week remain a great joy to lead, and the addition of a termly Eucharist into the school’s pattern of worship is working wonderfully well. Bishop Jane described the school Eucharist that she attended in the summer as “a remarkable, inclusive, age appropriate act of reverential worship in which the children were keen to engage”. Being present in the school – to lead worship, provide governance or to teach RE – is usually the highlight of my week.

We’ve also organized some enjoyable afternoon Messy Churches in partnership with Brookside Methodist Church. In 2025, we increased the frequency of these Messy Churches so that they are now happening roughly once a quarter, and we have started to hold them at both St Mary’s and Brookside Methodist Church. Thanks are due to Margaret Thompson, Louise Sutton, and our growing team of Messy Church volunteers. Working alongside other local churches, the Messy Church team enjoyed offering outreach activities for children at the East Barnet Festival too.

Our special seasonal services in 2025 have been wonderful – and they have also proved popular. Some seasonal services around school holiday times saw decreased attendance, but there was an overall positive trend for the largest of them. This suggests that there is an openness to attending such services and events at St Mary’s among many people in the local area who are not yet part of our regular congregation, which we can build upon in terms of our mission.

Though it’s impossible to count attendance at some of the seasonal services and events held outside the church building, it was clear that Community Christmas Carols in the British Legion and the Prince of Wales were enormously successful, and numbers seemed very high on Remembrance Sunday, with perhaps 1000 people present – and with moving contributions from many local faith leaders and a young person who attends JCOSS speaking about what remembrance means to them.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Christingle		55	76	89	56
Ash Wednesday		13	12	13	15
Mothering Sunday		32	37	47	37
Palm Sunday total all services		47	98	88	91
Holy Week midweek	32	50	35	53	57
Easter Day	36	99	104	113	112
Ascension	10	9		11	17
Education	49	51	63	48	53
Harvest	47	34	47	64	38
Memorial Service	59	88	90	53	30
Advent Carols	75	61	68	64	74
Christmas Carols total both services	127	185	282	411	377*
Other 'Christmas' special services - schools, crib etc	35	430	574	435	492
Christmas Midnight and Day total	69	133	122	128	111
Partnership celebration service					100

\* Our 2025 Christmas Carol service figures are probably undercounted because of the enormous number of people coming in at the last minute to enjoy the festive celebrations.

Of course, music is at the heart of many of these seasonal services. And our musicians and choirs make an invaluable contribution, led by Alan Danson as Director of Music. Alan will be retiring from this post after 12 years of service in 2026, and we will be seeking a successor in the summer. But it will be enormously difficult for someone to step into his organ shoes: his creativity and dedication have been so important to our community life as it is expressed in song.

One addition to our programme of seasonal services in 2025 was a Celebration of our Partnership with Brookside Methodist Church, and the Partnership Enabling Group hope that this will become an annual event. At our celebration service this year we were able to offer a formal welcome to Rev Abe Konadu-Yiadom into her ministry within the partnership. The partnership with Brookside Methodist Church was also expressed through our shared participation in the Wesley Day Pilgrimage, an excellent Covenant Service, a wonderful Lent course, and much shared and supportive staff collaboration.

Pastoral care and outreach has continued to grow in importance, and I am very grateful that I share in contact and visiting with the excellent Pastoral Group we have at St Mary's. The Sewing Circle and Coffee Morning also continue to offer a valuable form of social connection well beyond the congregation, and both have continued to grow in attendance across 2025. In order to offer an opportunity for fellowship in every week of the month, I have also started to organize a monthly Parish Lunch, that will launch early in 2026.

As I mentioned above, the Church Council has been focusing on growth across 2025. This led to a creative course on *Being Invitational*, and the completion and then the renewal of our Mission Action Plan. Our new Mission Action Plan focusses on a holding small number of outreach events, and on the hope that our lay leadership team will grow in size as these are being organized. The opportunity to encourage new people into leadership roles is very exciting, and there is also an urgent need to increase the number of volunteers undertaking key roles so that our governance and operations become more sustainable.



In 2026, Chris Mears will be stepping down as Parish Safeguarding Officer, Heather Melling will be retiring as Parish Giving Officer, and Bettina von Cossell will be moving away from the area so she will no longer be able to undertake her roles as Electoral Roll Officer and as a member of the Partnership Enabling Group. Their help in leading the church has been incredibly important, and the Church Council has thanked them for their service – but there are plenty of other opportunities for new leaders to volunteer for too!



As well as my parish ministry, Air Training Corps chaplaincy, and lecturing on liturgy for the Eastern Region Ministry Course, I also become the Diocesan Interfaith Advisor for the Diocese of St Albans

in 2025. Forming stronger partnerships with local leaders from other Christian denominations and other faiths could be an even more distinctive part of St Mary's mission in the future.

I would like to close the Rector's Report by expressing my thanks to everyone who is leading our community into a healthier future, and to all who help us to meet the challenges we face in our current lives, as we seek to follow Jesus Christ, together.

Alec Corio

## Deanery Synod Report

Barnet Deanery Synod met on three occasions in 2025.

In February, Synod met at St James New Barnet. The Archdeacon of Hertford, Janet Mackenzie spoke to Synod about 'the Spiritual Gifts in The Feeding of the Five Thousand'. Archdeacon Janet guided those in attendance through a series of prayer, readings and meditation on the Scriptural accounts of this well known story, inviting those present to consider the different accounts of the miracle, the different viewpoints of the characters involved and what it would have been like to be there and playing a part.

The Archdeacon then commissioned the Revd Stephan Chrysostomou, Vicar of St Mary's Potters Bar as the new Area Dean.

Synod met at St Marks, Barnet Vale, in May. Richard Jackson, the Diocesan Local Church Income Generation Support Officer spoke to the meeting about 'Parish Income Generation'. Richard, who works part time for the Diocese, explained that his post was created as a result of a post pandemic review of parish finances by the Church of England. He was available to support parishes in their work to increase income, recognising the need to avoid expenditure and place minimum demands on hard pressed volunteers. Richard then went on to talk about a number of possible income generation projects ranging from Hall Hire to TV and Film Locations. Following a meeting with Alec, Richard has produced material to support the letting of our hall.

In October Synod met at our church and Alec spoke about his role as Diocesan Interfaith Advisor and on the subject of 'Interfaith Collaborations'. Alec explained that his appointment was partly a reflection of his experience of being married to a practicing Jew but also on the work he does in the community. Alec then spoke to Synod on the following themes:

- Traditional Christian Interfaith Work and Incarnational Theology
- Power Imbalances and Histories of Persecution
- Authority in Interfaith Arenas
- Scope for Collaboration
- What Interfaith is and is Not

Alec then shared a number of interfaith projects that were under way in the Diocese:

- The Feast, Luton
- Watford Peace Garden
- Christchurch Radlett

If you would further information/details about any of subjects please ask me.

Roger Melling

## Electoral Roll Report

The Electoral Roll is our list of all those entitled to vote on electoral matters. Anyone over the age of sixteen, who resides within our parish or who regularly worships at St Mary's, may join the roll.

In accordance with the Church Representation rules, our electoral roll was deleted and a new roll started in 2025.

On the previous roll ending in 2024 we had a total of 118 names. Restarting the electoral roll showed that many of those parishioners had moved on in the meantime, had stopped going to church since the COVID-19 pandemic, or had passed away.

There were also quite a few names on the last roll who had long ceased to worship here, but who had wanted to keep their name on the roll, or whose relatives had wanted to keep their name on the roll, for reasons of affection. The roll is not necessary as a way to maintain that connection any longer.

We have now made a fresh start with 69 names on the electoral roll of 2025.

As our Electoral Roll Officer, Bettina von Cossel, is moving away, Jonathan Caws and Aura Urbano have kindly offered to become the new joint Electoral Roll Officers from 2026.

Bettina von Cossel

## Fabric Report

The church architect, Jeremy Bell, inspected St Mary's in 2025, as is required every five years, and has issued his report on the state of our buildings. Aside from a long list of minor works, many of their recommendations for action concern the church's roof, and its condition of decoration.

Throughout the rest of 2025, I have been continuing to work on confirming the specification for the roof works that are needed to make the historic building fully watertight, and Neil Graham has joined the team to help complete the quotations process. Only once these high level works on the church building are completed can any internal redecoration be carried out, or works to the sound system installation or on lighting design be developed, without risking a leak destroying our progress. This will continue to be a key project into 2026, and once further comparative quotations are obtained then a short grant funding campaign will be necessary to fund these works.

In the churchyard, the maintenance of some monuments and the future restoration of others remains a long running issue to be resolved with Barnet Council. Despite organizing a productive meeting concerning the future of the Sharpe monument, the council officers have not yet taken the agreed actions toward works, and so the monument continues to degrade, with an increasingly poor appearance.

In early summer, a bench was relocated to make the Garden of Remembrance more accessible. Applications for the burial of ashes in the area are increasing: this is a real sign of St Mary's service to the wider East Barnet community, especially given the cost of burial in other non-church locations.

My meetings with council officers also raised the possibility of having a sign on the green outside the churchyard to assist with church visibility. As a result of their advice, I submitted a planning application in the summer, but consideration of the proposal is still resting with the council's planning team.

The boiler control system in the halls failed in the summer, and required replacement in time for the winter season: fortunately a period of good weather held just long enough for Roy Mears to oversee the completion of this work without hall use and hires being adversely affected by the cold.



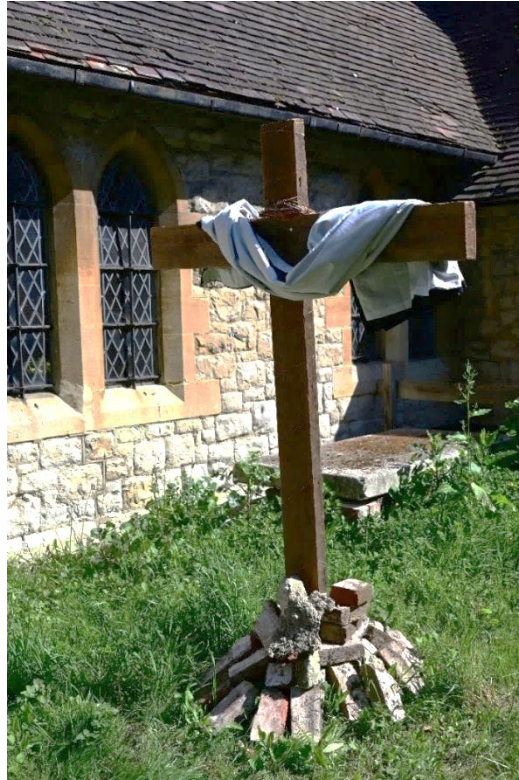
Management of 54 Church Hill Road has remained with Barnard Cook as our agents, with outstanding issues being handled by members of the Standing Committee. The house suffered minor internal water leaks in the winter, and the sources of those have all been assessed and fixed. Minor redecoration will follow in 2026.

Across 2025 minor defects and rectification works on the Rectory have been completed. These have proved quite difficult to conclude, but they were almost all signed off by the Diocesan surveyor and Ash the building contractor in late Autumn. The Rectory garden was also substantially cleared in the Autumn, removing vast quantities of Brambles and Russian Vine, and this work was generously paid for by the Church Council.

Regular maintenance schedules are still in place for the historic building and halls, with RVTV and Tom Hodgson overseeing the alarms; Roy Mears overseeing planned maintenance of the church, and also dealing with the occasional unplanned and urgent incident; John Savage doing some carpentry; and a Halls Committee of the Church Council overseeing use and maintenance of the halls fabric. This is now chaired by Victor Chan. Victor has also been working with a whole host of people to carry out tidying work in the churchyards – but special thanks are due to Andy Sabourin for his help, to Debbie Windeler and Steve Harris for their bulb planting; and special mention is also warranted of the quantity of mess that that Victor and I shoveled out the roof's valley gutter!

I am very grateful to everyone who assists to manage and improve our beautiful building which for nearly a millennium has proclaimed God's presence in the heart of East Barnet.

Alec Corio



## Finance Report

Our annual income has covered our annual expenditure BUT this is only possible because of the rental income we receive from the 'Curates' house and the mobile phone mast in the tower. The Church Council is very grateful for the donations made by the congregation and gift aid we receive as a consequence [£11,500 in 2025]. However you will note that our voluntary giving has reduced by some £10,000 in 2025. Giving will almost certainly drop further in 2026.

Our church is being hit by a double 'whammy'. Our voluntary giving is dropping and we are unable to attract volunteers to undertake key roles in the operation of the church. An Administrator would be able to relieve Alec and others of a number of tasks we are currently trying to cope with. It would also make our voluntary roles more attractive. Our income needs to increase by some £15,000 before we could afford to employ an Administrator. So we will be having a major Stewardship programme to try to increase our income and recruit volunteers. The church is going to be in some difficulty if we can't make progress on one or both of these issues.

I would draw your attention to the following points in the accounts:

### 1. PARISH SHARE

The difference between 2024 and 2025 is because in 2024 we paid the arrears accumulated during the building project.

### 2. SCHOOL HOUSE FUND

Responsibility for the school house is now with the Diocese. During 2025 the balance in the school house fund, £22,432, was transferred to the Diocese.

### 3. CHURCH RUNNING COSTS-RENT

We were not invoiced for church office rent for second half 2024 until 2025.

### 4. EXPENDITURE-DONATIONS

The 2025 figure includes a substantial donation to Christian Aid made by an individual member of the congregation through the church accounts. It also includes our collections for the Children's Society over two years.

On behalf of the Church Council I would like to thank Victoria Neal for again agreeing to undertake the Independent Examination of our accounts.

Roger Melling

## Financial Statements

THE PARISH OF EAST BARNET PCC							
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES							
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025							
			Unrestricted Funds		Restricted	Total	
			<i>General</i>	<i>Designated</i>	funds	2025	
			£	£	£	£	
<b>Income</b>							
Voluntary income			69,040			69,040	79,679
Income from church activities			24,940			24,940	21,904
Interest received			1,586			1,586	2,554
Income for building project						-	7,854
Rent received for School House			-			-	6,300
Rent received for Curate's House			28,140			28,140	27,396
<b>Total income</b>			123,705	-	-	123,705	145,687
<b>Expenditure</b>							
Church activities			-	118,914		- 118,914	- 149,219
Cost of building the new church hall						-	- 2,978
Administration of School House					22,432	- 22,432	- 32,332
Administration of Curate's House			-	733		-	- 767
<b>Total expenditure</b>			-	119,647	-	- 22,432	- 185,296
<b>Net movement in funds</b>			4,059	0	-22,432	-18,373	-39,609
Cash at bank							
at 1 January 2024			45,957	22,491	22,432	90,880	
Cash at bank							
at 31 December 2025			50,016	22,491	-	72,507	

THE PARISH OF EAST BARNET PCC									
Statement of assets and liabilities									
						2025		2024	
						£		£	
<b>Cash funds</b>									
Cash at bank						72,507		90,880	
<b>Hall deposits held</b>						730		340	
<b>Amounts owed at year end</b>									
Rent for parish office						0		610	
The balance on the restricted fund in relation to the school house fund of <b>£22,432 was repayable to the Diocese of St Albans as of 30 September 2024</b>						-			

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 23 March 2026 and signed on its behalf by:



The Revd Dr Alec Corio (Chair)

The attached notes form part of these accounts.

THE PARISH OF EAST BARNET PCC							
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS							
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024							
						Total	Total
						2025	2024
						£	£
<b>Analysis of Income</b>							
<b>Voluntary income</b>							
Planned giving						37,535	40,604
Regular donations						11,372	11,458
Other donations and grants						8,559	10,434
Bequests						-	5,000
Gift aid recovered						11,574	12,184
						<b>69,040</b>	<b>79,680</b>
<b>Income from church activities</b>							
Phone mast						12,750	12,750
Fundraising						4,408	4,358
Rental income from church hall						5,823	2,163
Fees for weddings and funerals (net)						1,959	2,634
						<b>24,940</b>	<b>21,905</b>
<b>Analysis of Expenditure</b>							
<b>Church activities</b>							
Parish share						- 69,153	- 115,215
Organist fees						- 9,700	- 9,840
Church running costs:							
Church services & sundry expenses						- 7,410	- 1,798
Light, heat and power						- 14,058	- 8,549
Insurance						- 2,747	- 2,589
Repairs and maintenance						- 7,802	- 5,936
Organ maintenance						- 995	- 964
Printing, postage and stationary						- 1,798	- 1,780
IT costs						- 668	- 619
Telephone and internet						- 301	- 499
Rent						- 1,830	- 610
Subscriptions						- 228	- 351
Donations						- 1,888	- 112
Bank charges						- 336	- 358
						<b>- 118,914</b>	<b>- 149,220</b>

THE PARISH OF EAST BARNET PCC							
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS							
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025							
<b>Designated funds</b>							
These funds have been designated by the PCC for the building project.							
The movement of funds in 2025 is as follows:							
			At 1.1.25	Income	Expenditure		At 31.12.25
				in year	in year		
			22,491	-	-		22,491
<b>Restricted funds</b>							
These funds can only be used for the administration of the school house							
The movement of funds in 2025 is as follows and represents the repayment of the residual balance of the fund to the Diocese of St Albans:							
			At 1.1.25	Income	Expenditure		At 31.12.25
				in year	in year		
	School house		22,432	-	22,432		-
			22,432	-	22,432		-

### Related party transactions

Members of the Church Council are considered the key management personnel of the church. No remuneration is paid directly to key management personnel, although the church contributes to the diocesan fund and the incumbent, who has overall responsibility for promoting the whole mission of the church, is remunerated directly by the diocese.

Income from planned giving includes £14,551 excluding gift aid of £2,853 received from PCC members.

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PARISH OF EAST BARNET  
PCC**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2025, which are set out on pages 1 to 5.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act;  
or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



VICTORIA NEIL

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT

**Methodist Minister's Report**

The year has been marked, I believe, by a deepening of our covenantal partnership with St Mary's through our distinctive traditions and has broadened our faith. For all of these, I give thanks to God.

Our joint services and shared gatherings over the year included a service of welcome attended by the Bishop of Hertford, the Rt Reverend Dr Jane Mainwaring and the Methodist Circuit Superintendent, Rev Canon Dr Martin Wellings, for my ministry within the Partnership on 22nd June. Our joint witness has included Messy Church events at both churches, hosting St Mary's primary pupils and staff at Brookside for Common Worship, collaborating on Craft Shows, and holding Covenant, Remembrance services, Lent courses, and other activities where clergy and congregations have come together.

I would like to end with immense gratitude, to God through our Lord Jesus Christ, for the gift of fellowship across our churches. As we look ahead, may we remain committed to strengthening the partnership further, trusting that God is at work in and through our partnership.

Abe Konadu-Yiadom

## Parochial Church Council Report

Across 2025 much the Church Council's attention has been on discerning signs of growth, and ways to grow into the future. We have therefore completed our previous 5 year Mission Action Plan, and produced a short Mission Action Plan for the next 'church year'. This includes a commitment to hold a small number of outreach events, and the hope that our lay leadership team will grow in size as these are being organized.

Victor Chan, Bettina von Cossel, Amy Flannery and Stephen Edwards have completed their 3 year term as representatives of the laity on the Church Council, and the Church Council thanks them for all their leadership of our community in that time.

Alec Corio

### Parochial Church Council Mission Action Plan 2026-2027

The Church Council has been attentive to ways that St Mary's has been growing, and can be more intentional in our commitment to growth across 2025. It has renewed a short Mission Action Plan in response to this focus on growing our church.

#### SMART goals for 2026-2027

The Church Council will have strategic oversight of objectives for the new Director of Music and Children's Worker

The Church Council will organize a pet blessing service at St Mary's in 2026

The Church Council will call for volunteers to lead a BBQ or Garden Party at St Mary's in summer 2026

The Church Council will offer a trip to the Tree Cathedral in 2026

These goals will be a standing item on every Church Council agenda, so that our progress can be monitored. Goals will be renewed in 2026.

### Partnership Enabling Group Report

The Partnership between St Mary's and Brookside Methodist Church has been strengthened across 2025 by our continuing commitment to a truly ecumenical ministry in East Barnet.

That has included regular activities, such as our learning groups which this year included a Lent Course, *Images of the Invisible God*; Methodist support for our local schools ministry; Anglican support for the midweek service of Holy Communion at Brookside Methodist Church; quarterly Messy Churches held at both churches; and a constant and important sharing in the ministries of pastoral care and mutual support for our communities.

It has also included a renewed focus on the celebration of special occasions. We have committed to making the annual Covenant Service a focus for our unity. We have shared in a welcome to Abe as

a minister within the partnership, at a wonderful service featuring Bishops and Circuit Superintendents sharing in their ministry of oversight. We have started a new annual Celebration service to celebrate the relationship between our churches.

And we joined the annual Wesley Day pilgrimage from Wesley's Chapel to St Paul's Cathedral. I was privileged to compose the prayers and reflections that were used along the pilgrimage, and to use our new banner to lead the way. Everyone joined in the singing of some great Wesley hymns with great enthusiasm. In the anniversary year of the Anglican-Methodist covenant this was a particularly moving experience.



Under the agreement between our churches, we are required to have a review of our partnership every 5 years, and have been seeking external reviewers to undertake this early in 2026. New members will also be needed to join the Partnership Enabling Group to lead our churches into a shared future. We offer thanks to all those who have previously served in this capacity, and especially Graham Wheeler who has stepped down as chair of the Partnership Enabling Group following his 2024-2025 term.

Alec Corio

### Safeguarding Report

Chris Mears has been our excellent Safeguarding Officer for some years now and continued in this role over 2025. She will now be stepping down, and we are very grateful to her for her service, but also to Helen Ball for volunteering to take over as the new Safeguarding Officer in 2026. Alec, our Rector, currently manages the technical side of safeguarding recruitment (making sure those who need to do criminal record checks and training do so in time) and Margaret Cranfield is the Safeguarding Lead on the Church Council.

Please remember, if you are concerned about a situation, talk to the safeguarding officer or the Rector only unless there is an immediate risk of harm, in which case you should contact the police on 999.

There have been no safeguarding incidents or concerns apparent in 2025. However, we know from safeguarding failures in the wider church and in the secular world that we need to continue to be vigilant to keep everyone safe. The church is a public space that anyone can access. We are known to welcome and include people, and act in many ways as if we trust them. This means that parents particularly need to be aware of where their child is and who they are talking to, at all times. This can be a challenge in our complex building.

Those in our church dealing with children, young people or vulnerable adults, or making policy decisions affecting these groups, (for example, Church Council members) must undergo criminal record checks and relevant awareness training and keep this up to date. We made sure this was done in 2025, because we know that greater awareness and accountability make it less likely that there will be an incident which would seriously damage the individuals concerned and the church community as a whole. Training and checks are fairly straightforward to do, and not too time consuming.

We have established Safeguarding Sunday (usually the third Sunday in November) as an essential parish resource. The scenarios we use, and brief explanations of our respective roles, have raised awareness and started helpful conversations. We will continue to do this in the future.

By doing these things the Parochial Church Council has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, fully recognising its duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

If you have any questions about safeguarding, please speak to Chris, Helen, Alec, or Margaret and we will do our best to help.

Margaret Cranfield  
Chris Mears

#### Minutes of 2024 Annual Meeting of Parishioners 18 May 2025

1. The meeting opened with prayers and welcome.
2. Election of clerk to the AMP and APCM

Katherine Duncan-Kerr was elected clerk to the meeting. Proposed by Roger Melling, seconded by Margaret Cranfield. Unanimously approved.

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Alison Blunt, Victor Chan, John Savage, Roy Mears, Brian Gregory, Graham Cranfield, Steve Harris.

4. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 19 May 2024 were unanimously approved as a true record.

#### 5. Election of Churchwardens

No nominations were received. Parishioners were encouraged to consider putting themselves forward for the role.

### Minutes of 2024 Annual Parochial Church Meeting 18 May 2025

#### 1. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 19 May 2024 were unanimously approved as a true record.

#### 2. Questions on the statutory sections of the 2024 Annual Report

Roger Melling provided an oral update to the finance report. Thanks were given to Anna Castiglione for preparing the financial statements. He explained that if the church did not have income from the mast and curate's house then we would be in deficit. We will need to come back to the issue of stewardship. We are now up to date with payment of the parish share – having paid our arrears and full share so far this year.

Questions on finances: Alan Danson asked are most people on the electoral roll financially contributing? Heather Melling answered that about two thirds of members of the roll contribute. Those who don't contribute often have a very good reason for doing so. Information on personal contributions remains confidential.

There were no further updates or questions.

#### 3. Questions on the statutory sections of the 2024 Annual Report

There were no questions.

#### 4. Addendums to the annual report

Alec echoed thanks to Anna Castiglione, and to Victoria Neil the independent examiner.

Alec explained that this is the first year in a long time that the church will not be in financial deficit. That is thanks to the financial contributions of parishioners and the volunteering efforts for fundraise. It is very important to give thanks for where we now are, but given the financial background it has been hard to invest in things which might grow the church. We will need to come back to considering a stewardship campaign.

Alec rejoiced that the partnership with St Mary's School, our community events and groups, are all real signs of growth and an encouragement, so offered thanks to everyone who has been involved in everything that's good and creative. He said that he was confident and optimistic about what the church can do in 2025.

Alec stated that the Church Council has been putting more time and thought into church growth, including by expanding the range of services and forms of community engagement. We have been

encouraged to look at the frequency of regular attendances to look at how that might grow across the whole of our worshipping community.

The next Mission Action Plan will therefore be focusing on growth, and it looks likely to place an increased emphasis on invitation and resourcing ministry among children.

5. Election of representatives of the laity on the Parochial Church Council

There are 2 full term vacancies for representatives of the laity – Margaret Cranfield and Gail Phillips were elected, unopposed.

Alec thanked Margaret and Gail for their previous 3 years of service on the Church Council, and immediately welcomed back to the next 3 years. Alec also thanked Katherine Duncan-Kerr for her term on the Church Council and her work as Secretary, which has now concluded.

Alec also thanked all Church Council members for their continued contribution.

6. Appointment of the Independent Examiner

Victoria Neil was appointed as Independent Examiner. Proposed by Roger Melling; seconded by Alan Danson. Unanimously approved.

7. The meeting ended at 11.55 with the loyal toast to His Majesty, King Charles III.

### **Non-statutory reports**

#### **1374 Squadron Air Training Corps**

1374 (East Barnet) Squadron of the Air Training Corps meets twice a week, and provides teenagers from 12 to 20 years with engaging activities relating to the Royal Air Force and aviation more generally. Night to night at the squadron headquarters, our activities can vary from classes about subjects related to aviation, to preparation for adventure training, to sports, to leadership activities which require the cadets to think of different strategies to complete tasks. Cadets also take part in a wider range of activities offsite and on other occasions. These range from shooting, to long distance walking (road marching), to camps, to completion of the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, to flying and gliding.

As the squadron chaplain Alec leads a whole evening's 'Padre's Hour' on a monthly basis, and provides pastoral care to the whole squadron community. In the last year, Padre's Hour has focussed on themes including character development and leadership, and war crimes.

Anthony Chan  
Alec Corio

#### **Assistant Churchwardens**

During 2025 our church was again without Churchwardens. However we were once again supported by three assistant wardens, Chris Mears, Roger Melling and John Savage.

Each took it in turn to be on duty at each Sunday and other services.

They each took on various other roles in the running of the church.

It is important to realise that this is not the same as having an elected Churchwarden and ideally two.

During 2025 we were glad to celebrate the ongoing partnership with Brookside Methodist Church. We were also pleased to welcome newcomers to our church whether as occasional visitors or those who wished to become regular members of our congregation. There have also been a good number of baptisms.

If you are interested in taking up the role of Church Warden please speak to any of us, or to the Rector.

The assistant wardens are grateful to the large number of those who volunteer to carry out a great multitude of tasks both regularly or from time to time. On a normal Sunday morning there are around 10 volunteers.

Chris Mears  
Roger Melling  
John Savage

#### Barnet Collective

We are now midway through our third year at St Mary's Church, and our food deliveries continue to run as smoothly as ever. We are pleased to note that to date we have not missed a single week since we started. Every Thursday food is delivered by The Felix Project for our volunteers to pack into individual crates for our volunteer drivers to distribute to their allotted households.

Turn around time from the receipt of the food to drivers taking it to recipients has become slick and fast, moving the food out as quickly as possible.

As ever, volunteers have been consistently reliable in being at the church in time to receive and pack the food, and drivers have been consistent and punctual with their particular round. Several recipients are also actively involved in the Collective project and provide the sustained assistance necessary to keep it running week after week.

We continue to offer free access to online courses, with some of our members having completed Level 2 and Level 3 Food Hygiene. Such training can develop confidence and add to what people can write on job applications. The number of people involved as Thursday packers and organisers has increased.

In terms of health and safety we have a dedicated person, Angela, who is trained and experienced. By restricting the opening of the fridge and freezer and with cleaning to prevent cross contamination as well as other procedures, the Collective is evolving practices to optimise safety. Manual handling training for volunteers, including how to lift crates safely, will take place at the end of this month.

Walking groups on Thursday mornings before start of packing have taken place this year during the warmer months. Longer walks and outings have taken place roughly once per month, weather permitting. Once a week there is a chance for those who do not have English as a first language to

attend a class which includes members of our Collective and is run by Barnet Collective member Shereen, a trained teacher.

At the end of last year we tried a new idea using kitchen equipment, stationery, toys and clothes that were donated items and set up a “POP up SHOP” at St James’ Church in New Barnet.

It was a fun time with a collection raised for the Collective and the church. People found very reasonably priced goods which were helpful for Christmas presents or just enjoyed finding a bargain. By chance, carols were being rehearsed in the church which added to the joyous atmosphere.

Mark is able to share information with us on the group chat of the Collective such as the recent “Prayers for Peace” at Brookside Methodist Church. We continue to feel a part of the St Mary’s Church community as familiar faces, smiles and greetings mean a lot to us, not least the quick wave from Alec when he rushes past during our Thursday packing sessions.

Karen Kiil  
Joe Tweg

#### Chipping Barnet Foodbank

Thank you once again to everyone at St Mary's who has faithfully and generously given to Chipping Barnet Foodbank over the past year. Whether it has been by donating food or toiletries, money or clothing, you are all helping to bring the vulnerable in society out of poverty.

This Foodbank has once again broadened its provision by providing an NHS Talking Therapist on a weekly basis, an invaluable service in these uncertain and challenging times.

For those of you who value facts and figures, in the past year approximately 7 800 people (5 300 adults, 2 500 children) have been supported with food parcels. But due to rising costs and reduced donations, the Foodbank now spends £1000 per week to meet these growing needs. From Citizens Advice at the Foodbank, they have had 247 new clients, 82 no longer need help, 48 households have made financial gains, and 67 separate issues have been sorted out.

This is truly a wonderful organisation that this church is supporting, and I feel privileged to be a part of.

Debbie Windeler

#### Christian Aid

In early March Vincent Perera and I attended the Christian Aid Week Conference at St. John’s Waterloo, which chose Guatemala as the theme country for the year, and at which the route of the annual sponsored Freedom Walk in London was announced.

On May 10, 13 members of the congregation from St Mary’s were sponsored for the Freedom Walk, and walked by a slightly circuitous route from St.Martin-in-the-Fields to St.Paul’s Cathedral, taking in the various highlighted points of interest *en route*.

Their sponsorship commitments and other donations made during Christian Aid week led to St Mary’s contributing £1495 to Christian Aid Week 2025.

Gail Phillips

### Coffee Mornings

Coffee Mornings are held on the first Thursday of every month in the large community hall from 10.30am to 12 noon. The sessions continue to be very successful with many people attending.

Everyone is welcome to come along for coffee or tea and cake and, of course, to socialise and chat. There is always a friendly buzz with people sharing in discussions, laughter, and having fun.

Thank you to all who join us and making them a big success. For those who would like to give it a try, come along on the first Thursday of the month and join in the fun. You will be most welcome and you will not be disappointed!

Chris Mears

### Community Halls

The community halls team comprises Roger, Gail and Victor and Alec.

Throughout the year, the halls have been used weekly for church events and hospitality after services. The space has also been used for birthday parties, meetings, Barnet Collective food packing, the Sewing Circle, study lessons, Table Top sales, baby ballet classes, indoor exercise groups, and social events.

The halls have also been rented occasionally for private and commercial hires. There are now 2-3 groups that hire regularly. In 2025 lettings generated £4835 income for St Mary's. This should increase as it includes several regular lettings that started mid-year in 2026.

To facilitate halls rentals and management, booking forms were updated, photos taken and floor plans done and uploaded to the church website, and the keyholders group regularly expanded. An online calendar has been developed to ensure everyone concerned has access to the hall bookings information. New banners were put up and leaflets are going to be designed and distributed. Advertising in local media was ruled out due to cost. The plan is to continue to expand both regular community and commercial hires.

To ensure the upkeep the church buildings, regular indoor maintenance was conducted including carpet cleaning, fire and electrical inspections. A spring clean has also been conducted. Externally, a number of church wide and small group care sessions were conducted. There are plans to regularise all these maintenance activities.

In 2026, it is also planned to streamline lettings access, perhaps by introducing an Airbnb style key box or code lock, expand the halls group membership, and look for a halls booking secretary.

Victor Chan

## Fundraising Events at St Mary's

We held our customary variety of events for the local community throughout the year, which happily seem to be gaining in general popularity.

Table Top Sales were held in March, June and September, raising £504.74, £485.87 and £431.30, respectively, to make a total of £1,394.90.

A special event was held on May 8 to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of VE Day. Following a short service, a street party style tea was served to the 76 attendees, included amongst whom were our local MP, Dan Tomlinson, and Martin Russell, the Representative Deputy Lieutenant for Barnet. The donations contributed at this party were sent to Christian Aid.

The annual Plant Sale was held in May at the churchyard entrance, and this raised £568.80 and was enthusiastically attended by keen amateur gardeners.

Early November saw St Mary's hosting a fun Quiz Night, competently organised by Tony Eade and Dave Griffin, which resulted in £430 being added to our coffers.

On the Friday before Advent, we held our traditional Christmas Fayre. Once again this was very well attended, with live seasonal music played by Kathy Gilbert, and Santa and his Elf adding to the festivities. This annual raised £1382.85.

The final event of the year was the Children's Christmas Party held on December 5, which resulted in £593.28 being contributed to church funds.

Total funds raised for St. Mary's by these various events amounted to £3776.55.

Heartfelt thanks are extended to the very small group of volunteers who worked hard to make these events possible, with special thanks going to Debbie Windler for designing unique event posters and to Steve Harris for ensuring their distribution.

Gail Phillips

## Healing Ministry

Services with prayers for the healing and wholeness continued as a ministry at St Mary's in 2025. As usual, with a few exceptions, the services were held on the second Sunday morning of alternate months, commencing in January.

Prayers were said after the morning Eucharist, after which the team would light candles for those who had asked for personal prayers or on behalf of loved ones. The team continue to believe that it is always a fulfilling personal experience as it is for those asking for prayers.

The healing ministry is for everyone. We all need healing in some way and through this, Jesus Christ meets us at our point of need.

Thanks to all who take part in this pastoral ministry: Joyce Bailey, Brian Gregory, Chris Mears and Deborah Windeler. Also to Alan Danson, who has kindly said prayers on occasions.

For where two or three are gathered together, there am I in the midst of them

*Matthew 18.20*

Anne Foley

### Music at St Mary's

Live music continues to be an important part of St Mary's church life.

The ancient building is blessed with a good 'natural acoustic' and throughout 2025 the walls resounded to praise and worship, together with the re-establishment of our concert series 'Spring into Summer'. The series presented concerts for solo cello, dance band, string trio and quartet, and the ambience at St Mary's was warm and welcoming.

It is always a joy when the services are well attended, and once again the number of people attending the Easter, Advent and Christmas Carol services has grown. My thanks to the musicians who have played for these services, as they enhance the occasion.

I am very grateful of the commitment of the children of Young Voices, and the members of the Church Choir for their part in keeping vocal music alive. Well done, and bless you!

I am frequently informed that there are good singers amongst the congregation: why not come forward to play your part and join the choirs? Remember to keep music alive at St Mary's.

Alan Danson



In 2026 our Director of Music, Alan Danson, will be retiring after 12 faithful and distinguished years of service. I am immensely grateful to Alan for his leadership in this role; and for his support of all the musicians whose gifts have enriched our worship in some wonderful services this year.

Alec Corio

## St Mary's Sewing Circle

Since its inception three years ago in early 2023, the Sewing Circle has proved to be a very popular group for knitters, crochet and lace makers as well as those who sew.

Meeting twice monthly, attendance varies between 11 and 18 participants, who often try their hand at learning new skills from the more talented members. Donations resulted in £1212.40 being raised throughout the year.

Gail Phillips

## St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided School

The past year has been another eventful one for the community at St Mary's School.

We started 2025 with 'Hope-anuary', which is an initiative that we have now run annually in school. This whole school event is designed to give hope to others. Outcomes included acts of hope that help us to grow our compassion and kindness, such as picking up litter, learning about rare animals and how they can be supported, teaching a friend a new song, and playing with children who look to be alone.

Every term, we take an opportunity to 'look beyond ourselves' which reinforces the importance of service to others, whether this is contributing to Chipping Barnet Foodbank and Homeless Action in Barnet, or writing Christmas cards to vulnerable adults through Barnet Age UK.



Mrs Constantinou initiated a curated conversation about our school culture which took place across the academic year. This was led by a consultant from St Albans Diocese who wrote the following in her report: "from arrival onwards you know that this is a church school. Warm and welcoming, it is a family – respecting and embracing all, and with the nurture of God's children at its heart."

Our partnership with St. Mary's Church has undoubtedly gone from strength to strength, and here are just a few examples of how we are working together:

- In March 2025, we were very excited to welcome the Rt Revd Dr Jane Mainwaring, Bishop of Hertford, to St. Mary's School. Bishop Jane led our Eucharist and helped to share communion too – it was a very special day in school. Many thanks to Alec who helped to make this visit possible
- We also had our very first public 'ashing' on Ash Wednesday! Alec kindly joined us at home time to share this spiritual experience with children, parents and staff
- Evensong was held at school using the RSCM's Hymnpact resources to bring the congregation and school community together through singing
- We had a wonderful school Christmas Carol service at church

Rooted in God's love, our ambition is for our nurturing ethos to enable all members of our school community to thrive and flourish. We tend to the academic, social, moral, physical and spiritual needs of our school family so that we grow into confident, respectful, aspirational and active citizens of our ever-changing modern world. We do all of this in God's trusted and loving hands.



Our Christian foundation is undoubtedly our strength. From this comes our aspiration to live life in all its fullness, to care for one another, all people everywhere, all God's creatures and this wonderful planet.

We continue to pray for each other, our school families, our community, and our church.

Maria Constantinou  
Stephen Edwards