



## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS**

**Sunday 17 May 2026**  
**following the 10.30am service**

### **AGENDAS**

#### **ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING**

1. Minutes of 2025 Annual Vestry Meeting (see page 2)
2. Election of Church Wardens

#### **ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

1. Minutes of 2025 Annual Parochial Meeting (see page 2-3)
2. Matters Arising
3. Deanery Synod Report (see page 8) and Election of Representatives:  
We are allowed 3 representatives.
4. Electoral Roll Report (see page 8)
5. Financial Report and Statement of Accounts (see pages 4 to 7)
6. Appointment of Auditor: Denis Wardleworth
7. Church Fabric and Terrier Report (see page 8)
8. Election of Members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC)  
4 Vacancies for 3 years  
The Election of Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary are held at the first meeting of the PCC.
9. Vicar's Report (page 9-10)
10. Reports from the Church Wardens, PCC, Safeguarding Officer (pages 10 to 12).
11. Other church activities have brief reports from each organisation (pages 13-16) with Scouts' information on a separate leaflet.

# The Parish of St Matthew with Holy Trinity, Habergham Eaves, Burnley

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS Sunday 18 May 2025 following the 10.30am service

### MINUTES

#### ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING

Present: The Vicar Fr. Alex Frost, Associate Priest Revd. Kat Gregory-Witham, Retired Priest Mtr. Enid Briggs & 27 parishioners.

Apologies: Linda Smith, Fr. Rod Clark

1. Fr. Alex began the meeting with prayer.
2. Minutes of 2024 Annual Vestry Meeting were circulated and approved.
3. Election of Church Wardens:  
Audrey Palmer, Walter Jackson, Stuart Smith and Harry Rowe were duly elected. Fr. Alex thanked the churchwardens for their faithful service over the past year.

#### ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1. **Minutes of 2024 Annual Parochial Meeting** were circulated and approved.
2. **Matters Arising:** None. The minutes were signed and dated by Fr. Alex.
3. **Election of Members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC)**  
4 Vacancies for 3 years: Mike Seymour, Malcolm Wills, Lynda Wills, Adefunke Popoola.  
All four persons were duly elected.  
The Election of Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary are held at the first meeting of the PCC.
4. **Election of Sidespersons:** (This is now done at the first PCC Meeting)
5. **Electoral Roll Report:** This stood at 107 after the 6-year full-scale Revision which was completed before the APCM.
6. **Financial Report and Statement of Accounts** were presented and approved. Howard Mitchell (Treasurer) explained that the accounts are being kept as simple as possible. All Gift Aid claimed in error has now been repaid. The special projects fund has enabled us to complete work on the boiler and on the Lady Chapel.
7. **Appointment of Auditor:** Denis Wardleworth was re-appointed with the full approval of all attendees.
8. **Church Fabric and Terrier Report** was duly presented and approved. Wardens were thanked again.
9. **Deanery Synod Report and Election of Representatives:** (Election was not necessary as representatives still have 1 year to serve. We are allowed 3 representatives). Report received and Fr. Alex commented that we have a responsibility to work with others in the deanery so that the churches in the town are a force for good in Burnley.

10. **Vicar's Report** was presented with additional comments. Fr. Alex is especially pleased that this is a happy church without cliques which can sometimes arise to the detriment of other church families. He and Revd. Kat have been meeting to discuss the future, especially a potential curate and Mental Health needs. As the vicar has the cure of souls for the whole parish, not just for the church members, he therefore continues to support issues of social justice for our area. St. Matthew's voice is heard when we speak about issues of poverty, injustice etc. because we are coming from a place of authenticity. We are thankful to God for all that He provides, especially all our people who serve in varied ways – hopefully out of a devotion to Jesus.

11. **Reports in Writing from the Church Wardens, Safeguarding Officer and the Uniformed Organisations** were duly accepted. Fr. Alex underlined safeguarding issues as particularly important, not just for us locally, but for the national church. Nigel Baldwin (Safeguarding Officer) reminded us that though processes are essential, safeguarding is, at its heart, about us all looking out for each other and taking care of the most vulnerable.

# REPORTS 2025

## FINANCIAL REPORT & STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2025

### The Financial Statement for the General Fund

#### INCOME:

Voluntary Giving is down slightly from £41,194 to £40,621.49; Gift Day is down from £1,988 to £998 but Gift Aid Tax Re-claimed is up from £7,063 to £7,929.

Fund raising was very successful last year totalling £8,469 but, as expected, it is down to £4,096 as we did not have a sponsored walk and we only had one Christmas Market. It is, however, still a substantial amount and we are very grateful to Esther and her team for everything that they have done.

Bank & Investment Income are up from £1,810 to £2,130. The Interest in our RBS Deposit Account is down but our new Deposit Account with the Diocese has produced £1,337!

Church Activities: Wedding and Funeral Fees are up from £5,399 to £7,565. Magazine Advertising is up from £701 to £840 and Church Hall income is up from £740 to £1,355. We have a new regular hirer for a Fitness Class which started in December.

#### Other Income for Designated and Restricted Funds:

Designated Ministry Fund: Income from Sum up/Just Giving £2,497 Expenditure £132 Balance £2,365 which will be transferred to top up the Reserve Policy Fund in 2026.

Designated Reserve Policy Fund: As previously agreed by the PCC, we need keep an amount of £30,000 "in reserve" to deal with any unexpected emergencies or shortfalls. Following the transfer of £11,148 in February 2025 and the pending transfer of the residue of £2,365 we will start 2026 with a Reserve of £26,140.

Special Projects Fund: Income from the Scout Group, a donation, the Diocesan Grant for the church hall roof, transfer of the Sick & Poor Fund, the Disability Access Fund, the Decorations Fund, a Diocesan Grant for Youth Work and a Grant for Fun Church totalled £17,271. Expenditure amounted to £18,224.80 leaving a balance of £20,998.50.

Community Outreach Fund: Income £18,224.50 including a Lunch Club Grant of £4,503, £1,735 from Holy Trinity Prestwood, £2,700 plus a further £800 from Oaklands for the Ketamine Project and £1,000 from Oaklands for Christmas Hampers. Expenses £16,421 Balance £1,802.66 for this year plus £50,653.47 brought forward from last year giving a Grand Total of £52,456.13. As well as contributions to Gas and Electricity, this has funded an Electric Keyboard, Ashar Counselling Sessions, Toddler Group equipment, Bishop's Youth Holiday, Oasis Mental Health, visits to Blackpool Pleasure Beach, Mini-bus hire, Lunch Club and Hot Cross Buns!

Grand Total of all Income: £100,706.04 compared to £120,418.95.

**Expenditure**: The largest item of expenditure is the payment of Parish Share to the Diocese of £31,500.00 compared to £30,000 in 2024, both of which include a Lower Income Communities Grant from the Diocese. We have always taken great pride in "paying our way" so 2025 was no exception.

Insurance and utilities are down from £12,334.24 to £10,218.88 The cost of gas and electricity is down from last year but this is due to a refund of around £5,000 for an overcharge on VAT.

Grand Total of all Expenditure is £98,655.37 compared to £112,626.81 last year giving an excess of income over expenditure of £2,050.67.

The analysis reveals that our operating costs show a loss of -544.93, our Ministry Fund has a surplus of £2,365.18 and Special Projects also has a deficit of -£1,572.24.

Howard Mitchell, Treasurer 13 January 2026.



**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF BURNLEY ST MATTHEW THE APOSTLE, HABERGHAM EAVES WITH HOLY TRINITY**

**DESIGNATED FUNDS**

**2024 2025**

**ORGAN FUND (Bell Trust) 2096** Market value of shares held by Diocese £2,698.04 in 2023, £2,847.53 in 2025

*Split between Diocese Investments and our General Fund RBS*

<b>Receipts:</b>		
Interest CBF Dep A/c to Gen Fund		
<b>Payments:</b>		
<b>Fund Balance on 1 Jan in Gen Fund</b>	£6,924.98	£6,924.98
<b>Fund Balance on 31 Dec in Gen Fund</b>	£6,924.98	£6,924.98

**DISABILITY ACCESS FUND**

**2024 2025**

Held in General Fund

**CLOSED**

<b>Receipts:</b>		
<b>Payments: Transfer to Special Projects</b>		-£619.00
<b>Fund Balance on 1 January</b>	£619.00	£619.00
<b>Fund Balance on 31 December</b>	£619.00	£0.00

**CHURCH REDECORATION FUND**

**2024 2025**

(Holy Trinity Church Investment A/c) held by NS&I

<b>Receipts: Corrected 27/10/2025</b>		<b>CLOSED</b>
Interest		£3.22
<b>Payments:</b>		
Transfer to Special Projects Fund		-£2,003.22
<b>Fund Balance on 1 January</b>	£2,000.00	£2,000.00
<b>Fund Balance on 31 December</b>	£2,000.00	£0.00

**CHURCH MINISTRY FUND 2020**

**2024 2025**

Held in General Fund

<b>Receipts:</b>	£2,760.74	£2,497.18
<b>Payments:</b>	-£174.50	-£132.00
		-£11,148.89
Sub-total	£2,586.24	-£8,783.71
<b>Fund Balance on 1 January</b>	£8,562.65	£11,148.89
<b>Fund Balance on 31 December</b>	£11,148.89	£2,365.18

**RESERVE POLICY FUND**

**2024 2025**

Held in General Fund

<b>Receipts: From Ministry Fund</b>		£11,148.89
<b>Payments:</b>		
Sub-total		£11,148.89
<b>Fund Balance on 1 January</b>	£12,626.01	£12,626.01
<b>Fund Balance on 31 December</b>	£12,626.01	£23,774.90

**GRAND TOTAL OF DESIGNATED FUNDS**

£33,318.88 £33,065.06

**GRAND TOTAL HELD IN GENERAL FUND**

£31,318.88 £33,065.06

**RESTRICTED FUNDS**

**2024 2025**

**CHOIR & SERVERS FUND 2693** Market value of shares held by Diocese £5,096.59 in 2023. Interest paid to Gen Fund RBS Diocese £5,004.83 in 2025. Interest paid to Gen Fund RBS

<b>Receipts:</b>		
Interest CBF paid to General Fund	£261.55	£71.70
<b>Payments:</b>		
Alb & Cassock (Aug)		-£47.02
<b>Fund Balance on 1 January</b>	£2,206.88	£2,468.43
<b>Fund Balance on 31 December</b>	£2,468.43	£2,493.11

**CHURCH FABRIC FUND (Artindale Bequest) 2059**

Market value of share in 2025 £32,081.70

<b>Receipts:</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
Dividend retained by Diocese	1673.34	
Interest Retained by Diocese		
<b>Payments:</b>		
Withdrawal for new Boiler	-£8,700.00	
<b>Fund Balance on 1 January</b>	£17,459.85	£10,433.19
<b>Fund Balance on 31 December</b>	£10,433.19	£10,433.09

**SICK & POOR FUND 1902**

**2024 2025**

Held by Diocese. Total amount includes capital sum of £134.17

<b>Receipts:</b>		<b>CLOSED</b>
Interest	£16.58	£11.35
<b>Payments: Transfer to Special Projects</b>		-£340.36
<b>Fund Balance on 1 January</b>	£312.43	£329.01
<b>Fund Balance on 31 December</b>	£329.01	£0.00

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH FUND**

**2024 2025**

Held in General Fund

<b>Receipts:</b>	£10,285.20	£18,224.50
<b>Payments:</b>	-£19,773.14	-£16,421.84
Sub-total	-£9,487.94	£1,802.66
<b>Fund Balance on 1 January</b>	£60,141.41	£50,653.47
<b>Fund Balance on 31 December</b>	£50,653.47	£52,456.13

**SPECIAL CHURCH PROJECTS**

**2024 2025**

Held in General Fund

<b>Receipts:</b>	£43,136.03	£14,308.98
Transfer from the other funds		£2,962.58
<b>Payments:</b>	-£34,536.00	-£18,224.80
Sub-total	£8,600.03	-£953.24
<b>Fund Balance on 1 January</b>	£13,351.71	£21,951.74
<b>Fund Balance on 31 December</b>	£21,951.74	£20,998.50

**GRAND TOTAL OF RESTRICTED FUNDS**

£84,691.07 £85,252.74

**GRAND TOTAL HELD IN GENERAL FUND**

£75,073.64 £75,947.74

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF BURNLEY ST MATTHEW THE APOSTLE, HABERGHAM EAVES WITH HOLY TRINITY

STATEMENT OF ASSETS & LIABILITIES AT 31 DECEMBER

General Fund includes other Funds as listed below

ASSETS	2024	2025
Gen Fund inc Organ & Choir Fund Int		
Less Organ Fund Interest		
Less Choir & Servers Fund Int		
General Fund exc Interest (in RBS)		
Organ Fund inc Interest (in RBS)	£6,924.98	£6,924.98
Choir & Servers inc Interest (RBS)	£2,468.43	£2,493.11
Disability Access (RBS)	£619.00	£0.00
St Matthew's Ministry (Designated)	£11,148.89	£2,365.18
St Matthew's Reserve (Designated)	£12,626.01	£23,774.90
Community Outreach (Restricted)	£50,653.47	£52,456.13
Special Project Dons (Restricted)	£21,951.74	£21,617.50
Reserve (in RBS)	£0.00	
Sub Total of other Funds	£106,392.52	£109,631.80
Remainder of General Fund	£3,745.50	£2,556.89
<b>Sub Total of Assets in RBS</b>	<b>£110,138.02</b>	<b>£112,188.69</b>

Fabric Fund CBF Dep (DBoF)	£10,433.19	£10,433.19
Organ Fund - Bell Trust (DBoF)	£6,924.98	£6,924.98
Sick & Poor Fund (DBoF)	£329.01	£312.43
<b>Sub Total of Assets held by DBoF</b>	<b>£17,687.18</b>	<b>£17,670.60</b>

Redecoration Fund (NS&I) <b>CLOSED</b>	£2,395.51	
<b>Grand Total of all Assets</b>	<b>£130,220.71</b>	<b>£129,859.29</b>

Assets are held as follows:

General Fund in RBS	£110,138.02	£112,188.69
Diocesan Board of Finance	£17,687.18	£17,670.60
National Savings & Investments	£2,393.28	£0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£130,220.71</b>	<b>£129,859.29</b>

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LIABILITIES

	2024	2025
None	£0.00	£0.00

Signed: Howard Mitchell

Signed by Howard Mitchell CMILT, Treasurer on behalf of the Parochial Church Council as Trustees

**Independent Examiner's Report** to the members/trustees of St Matthew with Holy Trinity, Burnley PCC.

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 the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters.

The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below. Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

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

Signed: D Wardleworth

Name: Denis Wardleworth ACMA ACIS

Date: 5 March 2026

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS IN ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND

Bank Balances on 31 December

2024

2025

RBS Deposit A/c	£108,610.08	£50,673.17
RBS Current A/c	£1,527.94	£1,515.52
Diocese Deposit Account		£60,000.00
<b>RBS Total</b>	<b>£110,138.02</b>	<b>£112,188.69</b>

The amounts are made up as follows:

General Fund exc Organ & Choir Int		
Organ Fund including Interest	£6,924.98	£6,924.98
Choir & Servers Fund inc Interest	£2,206.88	£2,493.11
Disability Access	£619.00	£0.00
St Matthew's Ministry (Designated)	£11,148.89	£2,365.18
St Matthew's Reserve (Designated)	£12,626.01	£23,774.90
Community Outreach (Restricted)	£50,653.47	£52,456.13
Special Project Dons (Restricted)	£21,951.74	£20,998.50
Sub Total		£109,012.80
Remainder of General Fund	£4,007.05	£3,175.89
<b>Total</b>	<b>£110,138.02</b>	<b>£112,188.69</b>

Balance brought forward on 1 January 2025

£110,138.02

Closing Balance on 31 December 2025

£112,188.69

Operating surplus for the year

£2,050.67

RESTRICTED ASSETS

2024

2025

These are the valuation of shares on 31 December each year

so the values of shares may increase or decrease

Artindale Bequest (Fabric Fund)	£30,397.50	£30,397.50
Collinge Bequest (General Fund)	£1,620.62	£1,669.55
Choir & Servers Fund	£5,096.59	£5,096.59
NS&I Income Bonds	£2,000.00	<b>CLOSED</b>

## **ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT**

The total number of people currently held on the Electoral Roll for St Matthew's Church is – 112

## **CHURCH FABRIC REPORT**

JAN – Cage fitted around boilers in the organ passage

FEB – Erected lockable cupboard in the Church Hall

MAR – Fogarty's investigated dry rot in the wall above the choir vestry. Turned out to be wet rot.

Leaking guttering causing problems. Repaired.

Wall boiler in the Vicar's Vestry leaking. Disconnected from water supply and made safe.

CCTV serviced.

JULY – Boiler in hall kitchen faulty. Tap assembly replaced by AI company.

Hall roof coping stones replaced, deteriorated bricks replaced, flashing replaced, joint between roof panels re-sealed.

AUG – P.A.T. testing carried out

New disabled aid fitted to hall toilet by Millercare, old one removed.

Quotations to convert Church and Hall lighting received. Awaiting Faculty

DEC – Security alarm quotations received.

## **TERRIER REPORT**

The wardens carried out St Matthew's annual check on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 2026. There were a couple of queries, one relating to a box previously located in the choir vestry and a large brass jug. The jug has been located and the search for the box is ongoing. All other items were accounted for.

## **BURNLEY DEANERY SYNOD REPORT**

In late 2024, at Diocesan Synod, we were challenged to think how we could better get people involved in Church decision making around Lancashire. This led to the idea to try and do Deanery Synod differently, or perhaps better!

In Spring 2025 (as an ex-officio member) I led a Deanery Synod session which thought through how we, as Burnley-based folk, could better support each other and work together across the Deanery.

Some of the changes suggested were made immediately:

- A Facebook page and newsletter were set up so we could stay in touch and support each other's events etc.
- Information was collated about what meals are offered and when, and church activities across the town.
- Eating food together before Synod and holding a social have helped Christians in the town to get to know each other.
- Safeguarding training has been advertised for churches to fill available spaces together.

This year has also been a year of considering what mission looks like across Burnley and I've been honoured to be involved in conversations with the Bishops and Diocesan Staff who are overseeing this.

It's been great to see people across the town talking more and getting involved, but it has been frustrating for St Matthew's reps with diary conflicts and Deanery communication issues!

Please do keep an eye out for things that are happening Deanery-wide over the coming year - such as the Churches Together Pentecost celebration on 24th May! - and consider whether you'd like to know more by being at the 3 Deanery Synod meetings each year. The next one has a wonderful speaker booked and is all about youth and investment in our younger generations!

Esther Gregory-Witham, Diocesan Synod Rep for Burnley Deanery

## VICAR'S REPORT 2025

The last 12 months have been a tremendous time in the life of St. Matthew's Church with lots of activities and events and in this report, I aim to set out some of my thoughts on just some of the many aspects of life in the Parish.

### Worship

Worship doesn't just happen on Sundays — through the support of laity and clergy worship happens throughout the week, giving many different opportunities to worship the Lord. The recent introduction of our healing ministry is encouraging and sincere thanks to Fr. Rod and Mtr. Enid for leading us into a new area of prayer and discipleship.

Our congregation numbers continue to hold up well, and the breadth and diversity of our church is a huge strength for us as we welcome new families and people to our inclusive church. A multi-cultural and international feel to a church is a huge blessing for us all. I think it is fair to say against the backdrop of challenges for churches, St Matthew's should be considered a flourishing and growing church.

### Confirmations, Baptisms, and Weddings.

Our confirmation service earlier in the year, was an utter joy and it was fantastic to see so many people take the next step in their journey of faith.

Baptisms continue to be a vibrant and important part of ministry and the year ahead is already looking rather busy. Weddings are less so, so please do tell people about our beautiful church if you know anyone considering getting married.

A special word of appreciation to our incredible organist, Peter Harrison. He leads our choir with such kindness, and his playing is a joy to hear. If you get the chance to hear one of his recitals, do take it!

### Ministers

We are truly blessed at St Matthew's with exceptional clergy and laity all working very hard. I personally wish to record my thanks to everyone who plays a part in bringing Jesus into people's lives. Revd Kat, Mtr. Enid, Fr Rod and Revd Jenny are inspiring leaders who all care deeply about the parish and its people. I am very grateful to be part of this team. I'm also grateful to our lay leaders, to those who run our many groups and events. To our vast group of volunteers and ALM graduates, a huge thank you for such dedication and love for ministry at St Matthew's.

I'd also like to note my appreciation to our Church Wardens, Secretary and members of the PCC who diligently take care of all aspects of church leadership. This Spring will see the arrival of our new Community Missioner, Kelly, who will bring many new gifts and ideas to our Parish. This is a brand new and exciting adventure for our Church, what a long way we have come!

### Fun Church

Fun church is now a vital and important part of church worship and ministry that has been headed up over the last number of years by Revd Kat, Revd Jenny and Audrey alongside a sterling group of volunteers. With Kelly coming on board, it demonstrates my commitment to youth ministry and the development of younger people. It has been wonderful to see older faces and newer faces get to know each other and develop friendships. It has been great to see some of the families engage with other aspects of church life such as Youth Choir, Sunday Worship or Lunch Club. Kelly will bring a new insight into the leadership and I'm excited to see how things progress.

### Lunch Club

Lunch Club has been an incredibly successful ministry, with tables full most Wednesdays. The team of volunteers have gone beyond the call of duty by providing exceptional food and hygiene standards week after week after week. It is a brilliant way to make connections and enjoy fellowship with a wide group of people and personalities. My sincere appreciation is given to all those who contribute and made it what it has become. Long may it continue.

### Toddler Group

I don't see much of the toddler group as it is on the same day as my day off, and whilst numbers can be a little hit and miss, I'm delighted to know that those who do come enjoy it and, as with Lunch Club, friendship and fellowship is enjoyed. A big thanks to the team who keep this ticking along with such love and care.

### SMYLE and Youth Choir

Our older group of children are just brilliant, even if a little challenging from time to time. They bring humour, joy and insight to our church and I love having them around. We have enjoyed lots of events and activities over the last year. I'm

sure many of them will say Blackpool Pleasure Beach, or making pancakes were among their favourite activities. The youth choir is brilliantly headed up by Mrs Davies, the head of music at St Christopher's, and I am delighted at how far we have come in the last 12 months. The children sing with greater confidence and understanding and are ably assisted by Katie and Karen. I think I can safely say that Youth Choir is an utter joy!

#### JAFFA Club

A massive thank-you to those who help and participate in JAFFA club; what a wonderful team of people striving really hard to nurture young children in the way of faith. I always look forward to seeing what has been going on and I just love to see the creativity and ideas these guys come up with on a weekly basis.

#### Wednesday Morning Group and Discipleship groups

Revd Kat has created a fabulous group for people to learn and discuss matters on a Wednesday morning, which has included trips to Bury market, or retreat centres and I know this a really lovely group to be part of. If you haven't tried it, why not give it a go? I know without asking that you would be most welcome.

Meanwhile Mtr. Enid's house study groups now take their place in St Matthew's folklore as being informative and lively gatherings. A special note of appreciation to Mtr. Enid that, despite health challenges, she has a living ministry that forms an essential part of our work at St Matthew's.

#### Flowers, Refreshments and cleaning

The church doesn't clean itself or make itself look pretty so I am deeply grateful for those of you who keep the church looking so well, and tidy. Flower ladies you have an exceptional gift. I absolutely love seeing fresh flowers in church and sincere thanks for all your hard work, particular during the major festivals. Also, thanks to those of you who serve brews, or bake cakes, or wash up after others have left, you know who you are, and I do too, so a big thank you for all you do.

#### Finance and Fundraising

A massive thank you to Howard for looking after the pennies and the pounds: your diligence is an outstanding witness and one we can all learn something from. Thanks, also, to Esther and the team of fundraisers for being creative superstars and fund-raising warriors. If they can't do it, nobody can! Thanks go to those who have attended the events: they are always fun—filled with friendship and food!

#### Safeguarding

As always, Safeguarding is a 100% non-negotiable aspect of ministry and volunteering. It is everybody's responsibility to keep us safe. I am deeply grateful for everybody's understanding and commitment. It is always required; therefore it is absolutely necessary we do not take our eye off the ball regarding this key aspect of ministry.

#### And a bit of everything else

It really is a joy to be the Vicar at St Matthew's particularly as the work is so full on. The Parish remains one of the most deprived in the country and we see the challenges of that on a daily and weekly basis. I find myself being asked to do a lot of things outside the Parish and, because we do good stuff, people want to hear what we do or how we do it. That said, I am trying to say 'no' more than I say 'yes', but I do think that if our ministry helps others to flourish, then sometimes we should say 'yes'.

July will see me stepping back from my responsibilities with General Synod, but after recently taking on the additional role of Priest in Charge at St John's Cliviger, the diary remains pretty busy most days.

The next months will certainly come with more challenges, but the last 12 months have been just fabulous. If I have missed anyone or anything it's not been done intentionally but thank you for your contribution to Christ's mission in South-West Burnley.

Long may that continue, and may we always do it in Christ's glorious name.

Fr. Alex

## **CHURCH WARDENS' REPORT 2025**

St Matthew's Church has continued to grow in the last twelve months. Our groups have all continued to develop, with the addition of the Youth Group (SMYLE). We are able to do all of this because of the fabulous teams of dedicated volunteers we have. A massive 'thank you' to you all, you are a very important part of what our Church is about.

Our Social Team has been busy over the last twelve months and they have organised a lot of great events. It's a great deal of hard work and we want you to know that we really appreciate all that you do. These events help to raise funds that are so necessary to help keep St Matthew's functioning as a thriving church.

We would like to also express our appreciation to the Sidespersons we have at St Matthew's, who support the Churchwardens to ensure that the services run smoothly each week and also when there are special services throughout the year.

We would also thank those people who clean the Church and the Church Hall, you do a great job of keeping St Matthew's looking 'spick and span' which we know is sometimes difficult, with all the activities that go on.

We have a wonderful clergy team at St Matthew's, for which we are truly grateful, so thank you very much for all that you do for St Matthew's - Father Alex, Revd Kat, Mother Enid and Father Rod. We are truly blessed to have you all.

Audrey, Harry, Stuart and Walter will be standing again to be Churchwardens and if elected, will continue to do our very best to help progress even further the work of our Lord.

Audrey, Harry, Stuart and Walter

## **CHURCH WORSHIP**

### **Occasional Offices**

Three weddings took place at St Matthew's in 2025 and we conducted two services of Thanksgiving for Marriage including renewal of wedding vows.

36 people were baptised at St Matthew's in 2025. Six of these were adults and the others were all under the age of 18.

The clergy of St Matthew's conducted 14 Funerals in 2025, five of these took place at St Matthew's. The other services took place either at Burnley Crematorium or at Burnley Cemetery Chapel. The annual Memorial Service in November was well attended.

Six adults and three young people were Confirmed at St Matthew's during 2025.

### **Festivals and Significant Services**

St Matthew's Church was full for the key celebrations of Mothering Sunday, Easter Sunday and Harvest Festival as well as for the Remembrance Sunday service. As usual the Christmas Services were also well attended.

The Maundy Thursday liturgy was changed, leading to increased attendance at this service and we saw increased attendance at services throughout Holy Week following the distribution of an informative invitational booklet.

Bishop Joe Kennedy, the Bishop of Burnley, presided and preached at the Patronal Festival and Bishop Philip North, the Bishop of Blackburn, presided and preached on Advent Sunday.

Revd. Kat Gregory-Witham

### **Choir and Music**

Everyone in the Choir really enjoys the opportunity to sing in a beautiful building with such wonderful acoustics. It is an honour to lead worship most Sundays, and there is a special pleasure in the quiet atmosphere of Evensong. We are a small ageing group with a busy Organist/Choirmaster and this is the main reason we have started meeting just fortnightly recently, and in missing out a few winter Evensongs.

It has been great to welcome Greg as an occasional bass singer. We would very much welcome more younger singers too. The ability to read music is not necessary, nor is a requirement to attend every single Sunday. If you would be interested, just have a word with Peter (or any other choir member). You could maybe just join us for special occasions to learn the beautiful music of the annual performances of 'Darkness to Light' at Advent or 'The Cross of Christ' on Palm Sunday.

Last October, Peter was again invited to give a Lunchtime Recital at Blackburn Cathedral. Congratulations to him on another fantastic performance.

Barbara Baldwin, Choir Member

## **PCC REPORT**

The PCC met 5 times during 2025 to discuss issues that affect our church. Here is a brief snapshot of what we looked at:

- Election of Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and sides persons – this is done every year at our first meeting.
- The church's financial situation, (including the parish share which is paid annually to the diocese), which Howard, our Treasurer, keeps track of and regularly updates us on.
- Church building maintenance (see the churchwarden's fabric report for the outcomes of those discussions), including setting priorities for repairs and improvements, and in 2025 discussions about installing new LED lights using a grant from the diocese to finance this work.
- The PCC receives regular reports on the many and varied activities of the clergy throughout the year, as well as updates on the wider church of England and on our own diocese.
- Safeguarding (this is an obligatory item and is discussed at every meeting) – the PCC receives and discusses updates on all procedures and training, as well as on any issues arising (which are shared anonymously and only in general to preserve confidentiality).
- A small group of PCC members met to begin to look at the church's communications and how we might improve them. This will be picked up again soon.
- An Extraordinary PCC Meeting was held in August to decide whether the church should apply for funding from the diocese to employ someone to further the church's mission. This funding opportunity had been looked at during several PCC meeting throughout the year, with a working group meeting to scope out the financial and HR implications. The decision was carried by a majority vote. Later in the year more work was then done to prepare for the possible employment of a Community Missioner and we heard in October that our bid was successful.

Linda Clark PCC Secretary

## **SAFEGUARDING REPORT**

Over the last year, major changes have been made at both national and diocesan levels. The net result for us is that the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor has become the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer with extra control over parishes. The parish safeguarding handbook, with all its useful documents has, been discontinued and has yet to be replaced, making the formulation of parish policies that bit more difficult.

As a parish we use the parish safeguarding dashboard which provides a useful check on our policies, information sharing and procedures, and have started using the safeguarding hub which holds information on DBS check dates and dates of safeguarding courses completed for individuals. The main advantage of this is that it will automatically inform us when refresher courses are needed or when an updated DBS check is needed. Both these data bases are fully compliant with data protection laws. As a parish we are good at keeping up to date with DBS checks, less so with course completion. The courses remain a work in process, but people are gradually becoming more accepting of the need for them.

There have been some incidents over the last year leading to consultation with the diocesan safeguarding team and with outside agencies. Secure records have been kept of the incidents. We do operate in an area where many people have chaotic lifestyles, so some incidents are inevitable. It is also inevitable that the very welcome increases in church membership will lead to an increased workload for the safeguarding team. There have been no complaints raised against either clergy or church officials.

Both Fr. Alex and Revd Kat are fully involved in safekeeping within our church but one of the two Parish Safeguarding Officers we have is relinquishing the role in 2026 and hopefully will be replaced in the near future.

Nigel Baldwin  
Safeguarding Officer

## A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF CHURCH ACTIVITIES

### **Fun Church**

Fun Church had another busy year in 2025. Each half term we have a different focus for our gatherings. In 2025 we looked at the stories of Moses and Mary Magdalene, we spent a half term looking at some of the parables that Jesus told and another thinking about being the Body of Christ. We also followed the church year during Kingdom Season and Advent and by looking at Jesus' resurrection appearances after Easter. The young people at Fun Church love acting out Bible stories. A particularly memorable one was when Moses was asking Pharaoh (on behalf of God) to 'Let my people go' and the answer became increasingly loud and defiant from Pharaoh, 'NO'!

As well as drama, we enjoy songs, prayers, crafts, quizzes and games. We also enjoy sharing food together and in 2025 started having a Jacob's Join regularly which quickly became popular. Approximately once every half term we also share Holy Communion together. In the Spring members of Fun Church joined with others in getting confirmed. In November we celebrated as three people got baptised at Fun Church.

Other highlights during 2025 were: the summer BBQ at Bishop Philip's house, boat trips with Canal Ministries, the Donkey Trail on Palm Sunday and the first ever 'Fun Church's Got Talent'!

### **Toddler Group**

We have a small but very dedicated team of volunteers, who spend a great deal of time planning, shopping and preparing resources for our sessions. We meet on Thursday mornings during term time between 9.30 am and 11.00am, and usually have between 4 and 8 children and their carers attending.

The children and their carers are offered a range of different activities each week to promote the development of vocabulary, sensory experiences, creative skills, and messy play as well as having lots of fun! We sometimes invite professionals from other organisations along to chat to the parents and offer advice; recently these have included paediatric first aid and dental hygiene, which have proved popular and informative for the parents.

During each session, a snack is provided for the children along with the opportunity for the toddlers to sit together, socialise and enjoy their snacks. It is also a chance for the carers to have a cup of coffee and enjoy a biscuit.

We usually end each session with joining together to sing songs or nursery rhymes and with a short prayer.

Our numbers have dropped somewhat recently despite our efforts to promote the group; it seems that due to an increase in free child care from the government that many parents are taking up this offer and therefore fewer children are attending Toddler groups. We still hope to grow our numbers as the group is warm and friendly and a brilliant opportunity for pre-school children and their parents to get together.

### **St Matthew's Youth Choir**

This year, the St Matthew's Youth Choir grew in numbers and impact. Rehearsals, taking place during term-time on Tuesdays at 5:30pm in the Church Hall, averaged between 6 and 12 singers attending, plus a team of adults. Adults supporting the choir are church members, and the choir is directed by Helen Davies, music director at St Christopher's C.E. High School in Accrington.

St Matthew's Youth Choir sang in services throughout the year, including Mothering Sunday service in March, youth takeover Sunday in July and the Christmas carol service in December.

The choir's repertoire grew this year, including a range of religious songs, from traditional hymn book favourites to Christian pop to even a few in other languages. They practice secular pieces too, from a Scottish folk song to the Beatles. There is a lot of enthusiasm in choir rehearsal and sometimes the group also learns hand signs and dance moves for songs.

As we read in Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God". St Matthew's Youth Choir is the embodiment of letting Christ shine in their lives and singing their thanksgiving to God. Each member brings joy and faith to their commitment to youth choir, a true testament to Christ working in beautiful ways.

## **JAFFA Club**

The JAFFA Club has seen impressive growth with both children and leaders, in number and in spirit. It has not been uncommon to welcome a new member every week in recent months. The name list of the register needs a new page for new names, which is encouraging but not as encouraging as the comments of the children: activities – games, sharing, reflections, craft... are enjoyable and fun.

Reading the gospel story is the meat of each session but it is READ in different ways with each different leader: story-telling, role plays, mini drama without dialogues, and a full-dress rehearsal, to name but a few. Different leaders have different gifts and talents, which gives each session of JAFFA a different style & children different exposure and experiences. Terri, Craig, Kat and Alan are new leaders who have joined JAFFA in recent months, giving both leaders and children new inspirations and encouragement. We grow and learn together, with a deeper bond in love and Christ.

## **7<sup>th</sup> Burnley St Matthews with Holy Trinity Rainbows**

We had planned to have a Christmas Show and Tell for the first meeting but unfortunately, we had to cancel because of the weather. We started and completed work on new badges from the Rainbow programme and throughout the year we presented 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year anniversary badges, several Rainbows made their Rainbow promise and we said goodbye to some of our older Rainbows as they moved up to Brownies and welcomed new girls. We celebrated Thinking Day in February and other occasions during the year with crafts and activities and had a lovely walk around Scott Park on a warm sunny evening in July. We finished the year with a Christmas party and the Rainbows all received a Christmas present. After a dip in the numbers of Rainbows on the waiting list last year, we had a recruitment drive and we are now running at full capacity with a few girls on the waiting list.

Our financial situation is very healthy at the moment and will still be even after paying the Annual Guiding subscriptions in February.

## **7<sup>th</sup> Burnley St. Matthew with Holy Trinity Guide Company**

In January, we welcomed new guides who have flown up from Brownies. Rainbow, Brownies and Guides went to the Pantomime at the Mechanics which tends to be a tradition.

In February we had our own celebration of Thinking Day at our meeting where Guides took part in Thinking Day activities and lit candles remembering a country they had chosen.

Outdoor activities throughout the year have include various walks, tracking, Burning Ball, which is a Swedish/Norwegian version of rounders. Indoor activities have included Ready Steady cook challenge, Mothers Day keyrings, upcycling, Pumpkin carving, making life size Guys and completing the 5 challenges of the 'Feel Good' skill builder badge and recycling badge along with other badges. Guides also enjoyed visiting Choc Stop Cafe, Picture Me Rolling, Jumpworks and a County day trip to Alton Towers.

We were sorry to say Goodbye to Jessica Hines, one of our leaders as she left Guiding as her baby girl was due in May. We were all pleased to meet Poppy soon after she was born. Well done to Georgia Ellis on completing her Young leaders' qualification and we are delighted that she now is undertaking her adults' leaders training; also to Vicky Stanworth on receiving her 10 years' service award. I was delighted to receive my 40 years' service award. We were proud to present throughout the year a Silver Bronze award to Willow and Bronze awards to Bella, Erin and Lilyanna.

Once again, a big thank you to Kathleen Slater for keeping our finances in good order and at the end of the year we are in a healthy situation financially. A big thank you also to all our leaders for the time and dedication given to Guiding.

We are at present full and have quite a few girls on the waiting list.

## **Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School**

Here are a few highlights from the school activities during 2025:

- At NSPCC Number Day on Friday 7th March children were invited to dress up as a number—themed clothing adding an extra layer of fun for the day.
- We were privileged to welcome the Life Education team to our school. Their visit focused on crucial PHSE topics, enriching our pupils' understanding of personal, social, and health education. This aligns perfectly with our holistic approach to education, ensuring that our pupils are well-equipped for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.
- World Book Day: children arrived at school in their pyjamas as the theme is 'Bedtime Stories.'

- Our Comic Relief day was a resounding success, with pupils embracing the spirit in their red outfits! The 'Guess the name of the dragon' activity proved particularly popular, contributing to our fundraising efforts.
- WOW worship Easter celebrations took place on 1<sup>st</sup> April 25 culminating in a final celebration at St. Matthew's church.
- The Children in Year 2 led worship and talked about two significant women in History; Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole. They had super big confident voices and we learnt a little bit about Black History.
- A Tree Planting session took place along with Henry from Burnley Council. We are trying to improve the appearance and sustainability of our school grounds and Burnley Council have generously donated some trees for planting.

### **Lunch Club**

The Lunch Club is very well established as part of the Community Offering from St. Matthew with Holy Trinity. This year has been a very successful one as Volunteers, including lunch club, were recognised in the Burnley Above and Beyond awards in June.

We ran our Picnic Lunch Club through the Summer Holidays with over 100 lunches being provided every week. It was lovely to hear people coming collecting their picnic and setting off to spend the day together.

We have also received two grants, over £4,000 from the Integrated Care Board which will allow some additional shelves to be put up in the kitchen as well as providing a new oven, freezer and financial security this year. It has meant that we have also been able to provide a weekly hot meal through the colder months. Our soup recipes will be shared in the community cookery book.

We also received a grant of £500 from Burnley Community Roots which will buy us a new microwave and some more food containers for sandwiches.

Our quieter weeks have 30-35 guests, and this regularly increases to 40-50.

We have repeated the very successful parish Christmas Lunch which was great and a sellout, as well as the Hot Cross Bun Café on Good Friday.

We have a core of dedicated volunteers and are looking forward to working with the Community Missioner on how the Lunch Club can develop over its next phase. It is a challenging role to plan, shop, prepare and serve lunch on a weekly basis and it is naturally one which people can't always maintain.

We also need to continue to look for funding to provide the service or to decide whether a small charge would be needed. Without funding we would probably need to look at a monthly rather than a weekly offering as the weekly costs would be too high.

We would also like to encourage more people from the parish who may be lonely and isolated to come to Lunch Club for the fellowship and an opportunity to chat.

### **Wednesday Morning Group**

13/1/25 – Continued to go through 'Saints Alive' course.

26/3/25 – Revd. Kev, vicar in over Darwen, visited the group. He shared a bit about his story, then there was a chance to ask him questions.

2/4/25 - The group went to visit Manchester Cathedral, then had lunch at a local Church café.

30/4/25 – The group watched clips from the film, The Greatest Showman, and then discussed the theme of faith, hope and love.

5/7/25 – Members of the group did a walk from the 'Singing Ringing Tree' to Towneley Park, then had lunch.

22/10/25 – The group went to visit a church in Blackpool

4/11/25 – The group came together and did an afternoon tea event, which was a really good success.

19/11/25 - The group watched the film 'Narnia' in two parts, on the 12th and 19th November.

26/11/25 – Members of the group went to St Bartholemew's Church in Colne, to look at the Narnia displays on show there.

### **Bible Study**

The 22 people who had begun 'The Big Picture' completed the course in January, and there were occasional Bible (etc) Studies in spring and summer, led by Mtr. Enid and Fr. Rod.

### **Serving The Altar**

Fr. Alex has authorised ALM Nigel to act as Deacon on an occasional basis, and Nigel, Pope and Matthew now regularly act as sub-deacon – all enabling us to have the traditional St. Matthew's 'Holy Three' more regularly at the main Sunday Eucharist.

We had thirteen Altar Servers during the year - extremely faithful and conscientious, and doing a wonderful job! It sounds enough, but every Sunday Eucharist needs a Crucifer (to carry the Processional Cross) and two other Servers; Festivals also need a 'thurifer', to deal with the incense ('smoke'!) and this is skilled work; and some of our Servers prefer, due to other commitments, to serve only once a month. We have a good age-balance, but a dreadful gender balance!!! Experienced Servers train new recruits before, during and after the services, but during 2025, we also held two Servers' Training Evenings, which are very popular.

'Hidden' services to the altar include the care and management of vestments undertaken by Sacristans Mike and Jason, and the care of the altar linen: Jackie washes and irons the huge white altar cloths, and Pat, with Nancy and Howard's help, weekly undertake the care of the dozen or so smaller items which, having come into contact with consecrated wine and wafers, need special washing and ironing. We very much need more help here, to cover illness and holidays! Most of those serving our altar are members of the Company of Servers: our local Chapter covers the Liverpool and Blackburn Diocese – and St. Matthew's members far exceed the rest, such is our Servers' commitment. Our own Howard Mitchell is the current Chair.

### **Parish Prayers for Growth and Renewal**

During 2025 the weekly prayer meeting has continued, focusing specially on the mission and ministry of St. Matthew's and the needs of the wider parish. Between three and eight have taken part each week and we have continued to use the special prayer liturgy which was produced to help guide the prayers, both in the weekly Thursday evening gathering as well as for personal use.

### **Creation Care**

In Summer 2025 Barbara Baldwin completed the Diocese of Blackburn's ALM course in Creation Care. As well as the theological basis of creation care, the practical part of the course was to investigate how and if St Matthew's could achieve its Eco Church Bronze Award. After looking through the Eco Church website, she answered some questions and pledged to take certain actions as our 'Eco Church Champion', and discovered it wasn't as impossible as expected. The pledges include celebrating more events in the natural world as part of the Church's year, (such as the Creation Season in September, which we did last year for the first time) always using Fair Trade tea, coffee and sugar at events, changing to environmentally friendly cleaning products, using recycled and unbleached toilet paper, paper towels, and napkins whenever available. These have mainly been achieved. By buying in bulk, it is possible to at least reduce the extra costs involved.

Other pledges such as ensuring that as much of our waste as possible is recycled, organising regular litter picks and developing nature-friendly garden areas have taken longer to start, but are now up & running. But there are other matters that are harder to get to grips with, such as investigating Green Electricity tariffs, and the whole matter of improving the Church's carbon footprint for the future.