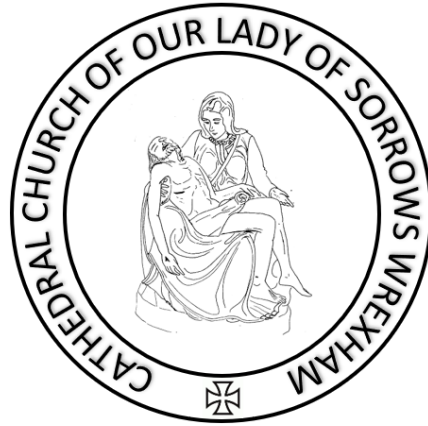


ANNUAL REPORT and
FINANCIAL STATEMENT
of
PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL
2024-2025



ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL
WREXHAM

Regent St, Wrexham, LL11 1RB

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Parish Mission Statement

To promote active involvement of everyone in the cathedral parish, enabling growth and enrichment in our faith through spiritual formation, the sacraments, prayer, group activities for all ages and pastoral care, ensuring no-one is excluded.

Parish Pastoral Council

Rev Fr Nicholas Enzama AJ Cathedral Dean

Deacons: Michael Schoonjans and Steve Davies

Susan Ikin (Chair)

Kay Ryan (Deputy Chair)

Arlene Elano

Bindu Jose

Carol Bayliss

Elizabeth Roberts

Helen Schoonjans

Linda Jones

Sr Maria Crowley

Noel John

Sarah Cox

Vincent Ryan

Wanjiku Mbugua-Ngotho

Declan Graney

Annette Cochrane

Resignation: Susan Ikin

The Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) was re-established in 2022 following the COVID –19 Pandemic.

Our role is to promote and support our mission statement which is to ensure that everyone in our parish community is integrated and included in the life of the parish and

the Body of Christ. We want all parishioners to have a sense of belonging and the opportunity to live their faith fully.

Report from the Chair

2024-2025 has been another busy year full of celebrations and growth. It was a Jubilee Year of Hope as designated by Pope Francis. Pope Francis died in April, and we welcomed our new Pope Leo XIV.

The year has not come without its challenges and frustrations as the building project has still not started. This is due to lack of funding which is explained further in this report. We have set up a separate Management Committee to oversee the project, make contingency plans for the cathedral closure, ensure adequate communication with parishioners and stakeholders and promote the cathedral in the wider community.

Fr Jaspher moved on to be Parish Priest in Ruabon, Chirk and Llangollen. We miss him but still see him at Diocesan celebrations. Fr Nicholas celebrated the Silver Jubilee of his Ordination to the Priesthood in June and what a celebration it was. This was followed by a trip home to celebrate with his family, friends and Order.

Apart from regular Sunday and weekday Masses there were Masses celebrated for First Communions, Confirmations, Baptisms, Marriages, Funerals, the sick, married couples, the legal profession, the medical, nursing and caring professions, St David's Day, National Eisteddfod, David Tarbrook's ordination to the diaconate, Pope Francis, Santo Nino and of course our wonderful Makhel Mass, celebrating our cultural diversity within the congregation but gathering all together and sharing great food and entertainment.

Our liturgical celebrations are regularly accompanied by beautiful singing by our choir or music from the musicians who play the organ and trumpets or violin and guitar with the Folk Group.

We enjoyed being involved with the National Eisteddfod which was held in the Wrexham area this year. Mass was celebrated in Welsh at the cathedral by Bishop Edwin and Bishop Peter, followed by refreshments. Parishioners helped serve tea and coffee in the CYTUN tent at the Maes for a day.

We are members of TCC (Together Creating Communities) and are represented at their meetings by PPC members. TCC are also working on projects with our Youth Group.

We are working on upgrading our website to make it more informative and engaging. We will be able to keep parishioners up to date with news and events.

Please bear with us as we continue to work hard to sustain what is good and achieve all we need for improvement and greater development.

The responsibilities of the PPC are met through the work of our committees and groups, supported by the contributions and help of many parishioners. We particularly need

expertise in finance, fundraising and maintenance as well as IT skills and communications. We hope that parishioners who have any of these skills will speak to Fr Nicholas or any PPC member to tell us how you can help.

Committee Reports

Spiritual Formation Committee – supports and encourages children, youth and adults to fulfil and deepen their faith.

Our Deacons, oversee preparation and celebration of Baptisms, Marriages and Funerals as well as sacramental preparation for Mass, First Holy Communion and Confirmation and adult initiation into the faith and training altar servers. They support Bishop Peter and Fr. Nicholas and are an invaluable asset to the cathedral.

The Committee supports and promotes the various prayer groups in the parish, including those who meet to say the Rosary, the Charismatic Prayer Group, Ignatian Spirituality and evening prayer. We celebrate the Way of the Cross in both the Cathedral and Coedpoeth during the season of Lent and parishioners have been to walk the Way of the Cross in Pant Asaph. This committee organised other activities including a Reflection Group, who met to explore various aspects of our faith, retreats and the annual Makhel Mass. Special Masses celebrated this year have included Father Nicholas' 25th Jubilee, Rev David Tarbrook's Ordination to the Diaconate and the National Eisteddfod Mass. Ideas for future events include a parish retreat and Taize Style Prayer. We are delighted that a Cathedral Choir has now been established and musical contributions from the Folk Group, organists and cantors continue to enhance our celebration of Mass. We have also celebrated a Mass for the Sick, the Marriage Mass and the Legal Mass, which are all annual events.

Pastoral Care Group – alongside our priests and deacons, the Extraordinary Ministers of communion are able to distribute communion at Mass, as well as taking the Eucharist to those who are housebound, in nursing and residential homes and hospitals, when needed. This can be arranged on a temporary or permanent basis. Helping people to attend Mass by arranging lifts helps to prevent isolation. Mass for the Sick was held at the Cathedral. The SVP group, although low in members, continues to support the isolated and vulnerable in the parish and urgently needs more members. Parishioners generously donated Christmas gifts distribute to children by the SVP

Youth and schools are particularly important to parish life and the future of the church.

The cathedral supports two schools: St Mary's Primary School and St Joseph's Catholic and Anglican High School. Notices about the application process and the timings are advertised in the newsletter and on the school websites. The timing of applications is crucial and there are no guarantees of admission due to limited spaces.

We have a Parish **Youth Group**, for young people between the ages of 7-18 years old. It meets monthly in the cathedral hall and is supported by Fr Nicholas and committed leaders (all with up-to-date DBS checks). We aim to help young people to develop a deeper relationship with the Lord through fellowship. They have developed an Action

Plan with TCC (Together Creating Communities) - to work with CAFOD and other organisations on Peace, Racism and reducing the carbon footprint of the cathedral. The group has also signed up to work alongside the Environmental Group, EGIN, which supports groups to tackle climate change. We aim to access some funds through grant applications.

This is all done in an atmosphere of fun and creativity. Light refreshments provided.

As part of the Jubilee Year of Hope, the youth group attended the Annual Pilgrimage to St Winifred's Well.

Plans are in place to run a group for 18-35 year old parishioners to explore the understanding of their faith, foster spiritual growth and what it means to participate in the mission and work of the church.

A few Youth Group members and leaders members recently attended a meeting promoted by the Wrexham City Board and AVOW and talked about racism issues as well as participating and voting on planned facilities for young people in Wrexham.

Community Engagement is something we aspire to. Several PPC members have links with community groups and liaise with them on our behalf. We have good relations with Wrexham County Council, other churches and the Mosque. Representatives from these organisations have gathered with us at our annual Makhel Mass. We have supported the work of BAWSO through donations of toiletries and clothing.

This year we participated in the National Eisteddfod through CYTUN, and 15 parishioners served tea and coffee for a day at the event. We also enjoyed the Eisteddfod Mass celebrated in the cathedral, attended by other church members and celebrated in the hall afterwards.

We have engaged with the Wrexham City Board and AVOW as stated above and met with the North East Wales Community Cohesion group to talk about how we can be more involved in the wider community as well as safety and racism issues.

We had a performance by a young musician, Jack Campbell, from Canada who asked to use the cathedral as part of his UK tour and hopes to return in September 2026.

The following letter was sent to Wrexham County Borough Council, Elected Representatives in the Senedd and UK Parliament:

This letter is written on behalf of the Parish Council of the Catholic parish of St, Mary's Wrexham, the city's Cathedral. It is sent in the context of the Prime Minister's speech of 12th May 2025 when he spoke of what he considered to be the "incalculable damage" that immigration has caused to society, contributing to what he sees as "an island of strangers", (words he has later regretted saying, but they were said, published and widely reported). At a recent meeting, our Parish Council agreed that I write to you in the following terms:

Our Church community is multi-cultural and each of its members are the others' friends; there are no "strangers". Jesus said we must love our neighbours as we love ourselves; that is what we do.

We value the contribution that all our members make to us and to society at large wherever they (or their parents and grandparents) were born – we are one community, and part of the wider community of Wrexham and the country of Wales.

We received responses from Senedd Members, Lesley Griffiths and Sam Rowlands. Two members of the PPC met with Sam Rowlands to inform him of the cathedral community and issues with funding for the building project.

Fund Raising Committee - this committee continues to look at ways of raising money for the parish. Efforts have been focused on raising funds for the much-needed repair work to the Cathedral floor and consequential works. Successful events have included Christmas Fair, Christmas Hamper Raffle, a Garden Party at Bishop's House, Cake Sales, Flower Arranging demonstrations. The beauty of these events is that they brought parishioners together and many contributed to their success as well as getting to know each other better. Other monies have been raised through recycling, Easy Fundraising and individual donations. Many parishioners donate by standing orders and sign up to Gift Aid, which is an easy way to boost funds even further, at no extra cost to the donor.

Building and Maintenance Committee- this group is responsible for monitoring and organising maintenance and repairs of the Cathedral, Hall, Presbytery, car park and Coedpoeth Church. They have ensured that the recommendations of the Health & Safety and Fire Safety Inspections have been followed. They are not responsible for carrying out all the maintenance work, although those who are able, do what they can. They are reliant on the generosity of many parishioners who share their time and skills. The donation of time and skills is an invaluable saving to the running costs of the cathedral and the PPC are very grateful. We have cleaning groups in both the Cathedral and Coedpoeth. It would be helpful to have Fire Safety Officers/ Wardens and a Health & Safety Representative.

The Cathedral site remains in a poor state and to address many issues, including the hole in the floor and asbestos removal, we have appointed professional help from architects, structural engineers, mechanical and heating engineers, and the Historical Churches Committee. Reports and plans have been drawn up to help support our grant applications.

There is much work to do on the Cathedral Hall, which is one of our biggest assets in terms of building on our parish life, community engagement and raising funds. Our aim is to run the Hall as a separate entity, run by a Management Team, supported by the PPC. Any profit made would be directed to support the Cathedral.

Finance Committee – aims to oversee the running costs of the cathedral parish while endeavoring to find ways to increase the income and reduce expenditure. A great deal

of effort has gone into reducing the costs of the utility bills and as already stated, we are indebted to the parishioners who donate their time in practical help as well as monetary support.

In addition to the normal running costs of the parish we have been working hard to raise funds towards the building project for repair to the cathedral floor, replacing the heating and lighting system and removal of asbestos. The current cost for these repairs is almost £1.5 million. The fundraising events of the last 3 years and generous donations from parishioners and visitors to the church amount to £90K. As we have explained at Masses, the majority of the money raised has been used to pay professional fees. The cathedral is a Grade 2 Listed building of historic significance, and we are therefore duty bound by the Historic Churches Commission to obtain reports and carry out works using specialist architects, surveyors and engineers. The reports and plans that have been drawn up future proof all repairs and developments needed, including renovation of the hall once the cathedral works have finished. To date we have received two generous offers from Grant Fund Makers, totaling £300K and need a further £1 million. Having spent the money on professional fees, we are unable to match fund any amount of money we seek from grants, and this is why our larger applications have failed. We have been advised to break the required repairs down into smaller projects and apply for smaller grants. Although this is a time consuming and cumbersome task, it is what we plan to do

Expenditure

Summary of professional fees paid over the last 18 months:

- 15.03.24 - £5,940 – designs/plans of the cathedral site
- 27.11.24 - £10,500 – designs/plans/survey for Cathedral/Presbytery heating system.
- 28.10.24 - £31,335.12 – Architect fees
- 30.11.24 - £2,388.00 – Structural Engineer fees
- 31.01.25 - £15,512.40 – Quantity Surveyors
- 31.05.25 - £864.00 – Asbestos survey

To date we have paid £85,591.92 in professional fees, of which £12,717.54 was claimed back via the Listed Places of Worship Grant scheme for VAT paid.

Income:

Gift Aid – Promotion for Parishioners to use Gift Aid if they are a UK Taxpayer. This increases each monetary donation by 25%

Standing Orders – Parishioners are encouraged to donate by standing order to ensure a regular income.

We hope parishioners will review their donations in line with inflationary rises.

Easyfundraising App – Parishioners are encouraged to use the Easyfundraising App. If shopping on line. Retailers donate a percentage of what is spent towards a charity of their choice. The App hosts many retailers and travel companies. Donations vary from pence to pounds, booking travel on line seems to pay well. We have received over £400 since registering..

MuchLoved Charitable Trust (registered charity number 1118590) – St Mary's Cathedral is registered with the Muchloved CharitableTrust allowing those attending a funeral or just wishing to donate to provide in-memory donations. There is an online tribute page for families, through which people can contribute to their chosen charity.

Legacy – Further work is needed to consider St Mary's Cathedral as a beneficiary in a person's Will.

Financial Statement attached

Summary

We hope this report gives a clear picture of the activity and running of the cathedral parish, including Holy Family Church, Coedpoeth.

The parish thrives thanks to Fr Nicholas and parishioners who give their time, skills, support and money. We invite everyone to contribute and help care for our church community. We are One Body, the Church, made up of many parts and we pray for each part to work effectively and harmoniously for the greater good.

The PPC thanks everyone for their time, help, and ongoing support.