

**FOLLOWING JESUS IN
LOVING COMMUNITY**

**— RESOURCING THE —
JOURNEY AHEAD**



St Lawrence
with St Paul
Longridge

Now that we're six years since the launch of our overall Parish Vision, 'Following Jesus in Loving Community', this short booklet is a celebration of the many things we have achieved and invites each one of us to contribute towards the exciting journey ahead.

Dear friends, it is an absolute privilege to be the Vicar of St Lawrence with St Paul's Church here in Longridge and since my arrival in May 2017, if you consider things like Covid-19, together we have been through some momentous times.

In all this, by God's grace, your faithfulness in worship and prayer, a good deal of hard work and lots of fun, we have continued to flourish - for this I am extremely grateful. We are 'Following Jesus in Loving Community' but as you'll appreciate, we cannot rest on our laurels; we need to consider the journey ahead.

If I were to take you to the top of Jeffrey Hill and give you a big picture overview of where I think we are as a church, then I might frame our present position in terms of the book of Nehemiah. This roughly splits into two halves, described as 'Rebuilding the Walls' and 'Rebuilding the People'. Right now, I believe we're at the transition point between parts one and two.

It might surprise you to know that since 2017 we have spent £337,865 on necessary repairs and maintenance to our two church buildings and much of this has been achieved through grants, legacies, your generous giving and fundraising.

Such expenses will continue but in 2024 the successful completion of our Audio-Vision project in St Paul's Church marked an important shift in focus in ensuring our two churches buildings are well looked after, to also prioritising investment in new mission and outreach opportunities.

In summary as we consider the journey ahead, my hope is our 'Walls' will continue to get stronger and I believe now is also the time to prioritise further investment in people. This booklet explains how we can make that possible.

Yours in Christ,

Rev Mike Barton

How are we doing?

Let's consider some of the wonderful things that we have achieved:

- ▶ Extensive repairs to the leaking side roofs at St. Paul's - no more umbrellas in church!
- ▶ A new sound system at St Lawrence - we can now cater for a range of music tastes at weddings and funerals
- ▶ LED fittings and bulbs at St. Lawrence making it more eco efficient
- ▶ Repaired the tower at St Paul's Church - the flagpole is well fixed on the roof despite all the recent wind
- ▶ New AV System at St Paul's - the content of our service now draws on a range of media and it's easier to lift our voices to sing.
- ▶ Paid our Parish Share in full every year, a proportion of which enables ministry in the poorer regions of Lancashire to continue
- ▶ Work to improve the efficiency of the heating systems at both St. Lawrence and St. Paul
- ▶ Repaired the Tower roof at St Lawrence.

Our financial position at the end of 2024

The figures in this booklet provide a fair picture of our finances in recent years. They show that we have been running a deficit budget - our outgoings exceed our income. Previously, generous legacies (money left to the church in wills) helped offset this shortfall, but sadly in recent years, no new legacy donations have been received. As a result, these funds are no longer available, meaning that unless we increase general giving, we will soon face a significant financial challenge.

INCOME
£209K

EXPENDITURE
£225K

GRANTS
£16.5K

The figures for 2024 help to explain why:

In 2024 we received £209,000 in overall income. Of this £164,000 was for general purposes, with £45,000 raised towards the AV and Lychgate repair projects.

When we consider our general income and expenditure, we had a shortfall in income of £15,817, thereby further reducing the amount of our reserves. We can not continue in this way and continue to be financially viable in the medium term.

Therefore, as we move forward, the PCC is aiming to return to a position of a balanced budget, where the income received meets the expenditure required in 2025.

Where does the money go?

Church Running Expenses | 47% | £106,217

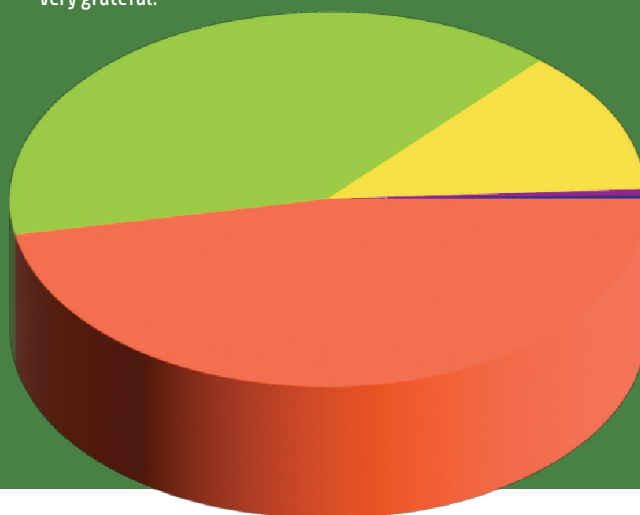
Items here include most costs relating to both Church and the churchyard. In 2025 over half of the church running expenses were spent on repairs & maintenance (£60,000). This included the AV project (£34,000), the new CCTV (£3,000), work to improve the heating at St Lawrence and St Paul's (£12,000) along with other minor works and maintenance work to both the roof alarms, organ and church clock. There have also been tree works undertaken at St Paul's (£2,000) along with repairs/maintenance of the mowers etc. (£2,000).

Another area of expenditure, £5,923, that falls within this section is printing. This is the cost of all in house printing, such as pew sheets and The Log (which also partially funds itself through the cover price and advertising). The costs of services, such as candles, bread, wine etc. are also all included here.

Energy costs continue to increase, £11,486, or 10% of overall running costs. By having improvement works carried out on the heating systems at both churches, including improved timers and controls, we

have more efficient systems and manage our usage to minimise this cost as much as possible.

Like all our church expenditure our running costs are managed prudently, and we are aware some people gift supplies to the church without claiming money back on expenses. For this kindness we are very grateful.



Parish Share | 39.5% | £89,217

Each parish pays a share of the total Blackburn Diocesan budget. From this the Diocese then pays clergy stipends, pensions, supports the wider church, including ordination and laity training, and provides a range of central support services to Parishes.

Clergy & Staffing Costs | 12% | £28,311

Revd. Mike and Revd. Simon are paid by the Diocese, but associated costs are included here such as Council Tax. This also includes amounts paid to the Music Director, Junior Choir Leader, Parish Administrator. It also includes monies paid for the cleaning of St Paul's Centenary Room and some cleaning at St Lawrence, along with those paid to the grounds keeper for both churches and the churchyard. Where retired clergy officiate at weddings and funerals, their fees are also incorporated here.

Costs of generating funds | 0.6% | £1,355

This is where we record the amounts paid out towards fund raising events, such as the Spring and Christmas Tree Fairs.

Mission Giving and donations | £224

This includes collections held in church.



Parish Giving Scheme

Scan this QR code to be directed to our Parish Giving Scheme web page. Here you can set up an account or increase your giving. Alternatively you can call the scheme administrators on 0333 002 1260

How is this funded?

Together we share in the responsibility for keeping the churches running. Just under 34% of our income comes from planned giving and collections at services (£70,000) there is then a further 9% (£19,000) from gift aid claimed.

In 2024 (so including donations to AV & Lychgate projects) additional voluntary gifts from our church family represented a further 29% (£61,000). 10% (£20,000) comes from parish fees, such as funeral fees and the remaining income comes from fund raising events such as the Spring and Christmas Fairs, etc. (£11,000), income from investments (£16,000), The Log (£4,000), renting out the church rooms (£4,500), printing (£2,000), recovery of VAT (£4,000) – this is only available on certain repairs carried out at St Paul's, as it is a listed building, St. Lawrence is not listed.

We regularly look and apply for grants from external organisations. In 2024, we also received a grant from the Diocese for £16,400 towards the cost of the AV project. As you can see, it is therefore vitally important we all play our part in giving in accordance with our individual circumstances.

How do I give?

It is really easy! The simplest and most cost-effective way is via the Parish Giving Scheme (see QR code on left). This has the advantage that because we're a registered charity, if you sign to say you're a UK taxpayer then 25% gift aid is automatically added to your giving. In addition, if you want you can tick to say that every April you'd like your giving to increase with the level of inflation. This can of course be changed at any time.

Alternatively, some people may prefer to create a Standing Order. This can be done using online banking using the details below, or by filling Standing Order Mandate.

Lloyd's Bank Plc, account name 'St Lawrence with St Paul, Longridge PCC', Sort Code 30-96-85, Acc. No. 5714 5960

For your convenience A Gift Aid declaration form is also contained within the flyer. Please complete this and return it to Graham, the Treasurer.

Enduring Generosity - Legacies

The Parish welcomes all gifts in wills, however large or small, and we promise to use your gift to make a difference to our Parish. We use gifts to help fund significant development projects, whether buildings, equipment or staff, so you can be confident that your gift will make a real difference to our mission and ministry.

If you would like to discuss leaving a legacy in your will, please contact, in confidence, Graham our Treasurer – graham@oaktreehouse.net

Why should I give?

Jesus understood the power of money and how it can be used for good or for ill, that's why the Bible says, *'where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'* (Matthew 6.21). Learning to give is a therefore an essential part of what it means to be a follower of Jesus, not just with your head, but also with your heart.

The practice of giving your first fruits as a tithe to God is a long-established biblical pattern and through it God teaches his people to trust Him for our provision rather than rely on ourselves. Because of this giving can feel like a scary idea because it involves letting go of an element of control – but that's what makes it exciting too.

By learning to give sacrificially we join in with the pattern of Jesus who gave his life for ours. In this light our giving is also a way of saying thank you for all God has done. We are generous because of the generosity we have already received.

For some of us the idea of giving to the ministry of the church will be a well-established principal and through your investment you'll know the joy that comes from seeing your money used to build the Kingdom of God.

For others, reading this booklet might have opened your eyes to a new challenge you've not considered before. We hope that by starting out on a journey of giving you'll find it a hugely rewarding process.

What might the next step on your journey of giving look like for you? The bible offers us this encouragement, *'Test me in this and see if I don't open up heaven itself to you and pour out blessings beyond your wildest dreams.'* Malachi 3.10.

Why should I give to St Lawrence with St Paul?

When you give you enable our ministry here in Longridge and in the wider Blackburn Diocese. As we continue to 'Follow Jesus in Loving Community' we want to be able to sustain the things we already do; like, church services, supporting Berry Lane School, parish visiting, discipleship courses, baptisms, weddings and funerals, being a community meeting place through activities like Brew Time, the Welcome Café, the Neuro-Diversity Group, and hosting the local Foodbank.

But in the future we'd also like to offer increased Children's and Youth Ministry provision to those moving from their primary to secondary school years. You will know as children grow into teenagers and then young adults it's a critical time. Too often it's too easy for them to stop engaging with church and let go of their Christian faith.

If we can get our giving on a sustainable footing this would place us in a strong position to partner with Blackburn Diocese and recruit a Children's and Youth Leader here in Longridge. That's why we're prayerfully asking you to consider your response.

What if I can't increase my giving?

Our giving only makes sense in the light of what God has given us in Jesus Christ. Our giving is to be both generous and sacrificial. We understand that for some people, it may not be possible to increase your giving for whatever reason.

There are of course other ways to give, and you may wish to consider what talents or time you could donate to the work of the Parish. Some ideas of how you can serve in this way are shown on the next page. We welcome any support you can provide.

Following Jesus in Loving Community with our Time and Talents

St Lawrence with St Paul is a church blessed with people who serve in many different ways, but since the end of the pandemic in 2022, it's evident across all charitable sectors that people's volunteering habits have changed.

For us this means when people step down from certain areas of ministry, we are having to work harder to replace them and sometimes this also means we incur additional costs.

Jesus' announcement, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few' remains true (Matthew 9.37), and just as Jesus empowered his first disciples with the Holy Spirit in order for them to become the answer to their own prayers, our hope is that God might do the same among us today.

Below is a list of some of the areas where we would appreciate some help.

- ▶ **Children's Church | Youth Group | Audio-Visual Desk | Cleaning | Fundraising | Coffee rotas | Welcome team | Sidesperson | Bible reading | Prayers | PCC | Fund raising expertise | Maintenance work, carpentry, plumbing repairs, etc. | Visiting of parishioners | Choir | Supervising audio equipment during services | Flower arranging**

If you might be able to help in any of these areas, or others that may not be listed, then please do speak to Revd. Mike Barton or one of our Churchwardens Dot Little and Dorothy Laver.



Are there ways we can save on the money we spend today?

All decisions that involve spending are discussed, reviewed and approved by the PCC. With this mandate the PCC reviews our finances at every meeting to ensure that money is being spent wisely.

Following these regular and annual reviews, the PCC has judged that it would be difficult to cut expenses without causing a detrimental impact on the upkeep of the churches and churchyard, or on our ministry in Longridge.

What will happen if we do not meet our budgeted income? What will be the impact?

The PCC will continue to review income and expenditure levels. We produce monthly accounts, which will allow us to consider any concerns, and help us to take appropriate actions. If our income does not meet our budget then we will need to assess the options later in the year.

Who can I talk to about giving toward the work of the church?

Graham Kelsall, treasurer, will be able to help you with most enquiries, or you can talk to Revd. Mike Barton.

We are all part of God's mission in many ways, and one important way is through our giving.

In 2025 we are looking to spend £224,000, of which £81,775 will need to come from us by way of regular giving/collections in church. This is an increase of £11k over what we gave in 2024, and so here is how we can make it happen:

When we are thinking about our own giving, there are three important tips:

- 1) Think first about how generous God has been to us in Jesus Christ. It all starts with His grace to us.
- 2) Reflect on Jesus' example of generous and sacrificial grace as a pattern for our giving.
- 3) Use the biblical guide of a tithe (10%) as a benchmark for our own giving.

Will you make a bold step to increase your giving in the light of the grace offered to us in Jesus Christ?

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