

St Andrews Methodist Church Annual Report 2023



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Minister's Letter

*The Church is wherever God's people are praising,
knowing they're wanted and loved by their Lord.
The Church is wherever Christ's followers are trying
to live and to share out the good news of God.*

It seems a lifetime ago, and indeed it was, that I sang the words to the hymn above with my childhood family in our Western Canadian United Church of Canada. Written by Carol Rose Ikeler, a fourth generation American Presbyterian minister, in 1959, this hymn was apparently inspired by a missionary's talk about his work in Africa. When I was a boy, I think that I liked the tune but over the years I have grown to like the words even more. I like the "wherever" bit, and the "praising" bit, and the "trying to live and share out the good news of God" bit. I like the thought that the church is wherever people praise God, knowing that they are wanted and loved by that same God. I like the thought that whether you are in Africa, America, Canada, or England, the church is made up of Christ's followers who are praising and trying, even with their worst faults and shortcomings, to live out and share the good news of God.

Well, the pages that follow document something of the praising, trying, living, and sharing that has gone on at St Andrew's Methodist Church in the past year. They don't begin to say it all. They don't detail the costly giving, the private conversations, the personal prayers and the individual praises that are at the heart of every church, but they give us a sense of all those things. These pages do not say it all but in one way and another they speak of our praising, trying, living, and sharing in ways that point to our love for Jesus Christ, our love for one another, and our love for the people of Harlow. Thanks be to God for all that has been, and thanks be to God for all that is yet to come.

In and with the love of Jesus,

Rev Blair

STEWARDS' REPORT AGM 2023

Firstly I would like to give thanks to Fred Arthur for the work he did in the early part of this year before he stopped being a steward in favour of his preaching and Bible study leadership. My personal thanks go to the existing stewards for covering my duties while I was unable to do them down to illness during the early part of this year.

The team has been strengthened with Alexis returning to steward duties and Adelaide Osei being appointed fairly recently. These stewards replace the vacancies caused by Jean's illness and Susan's departure for pastures new. We are also looking forward to welcoming Arthur Revels as a steward after this meeting. This will bring our number to 7 people which I feel is necessary to cover future holidays being taken or illness disrupting the rota. We also have to consider Arthur's preaching commitments. I appreciate the offer from previous stewards to stand in as and when any difficulties should arise in covering our duties. We welcome the support of 2 Youth Church members Isabel Annobil and Samantha Osei who will be doing duties twice a month each to assist the regular stewards, learning the various duties which the stewards cover. We hope that we, as stewards, will make them feel comfortable as they work with us.

As a relatively new member of St Andrew's I am very grateful for the support, advice and encouragement given by longer serving members at the church.

Eddie Collier

WORSHIP

HOLY COMMUNION

This year, we have observed a slight decrease in numbers receiving Holy Communion on Sundays, averaging between 30-60 members.

On Maundy Thursday of Holy week, we had dinner which was followed by Holy Communion with 34 members in attendance, but Easter Sunday morning (10.30 am) was well attended with 70 members receiving Holy Communion.

Margaret Nunoo

Juliet Arthur

MONDAY BIBLE STUDY

Members meet every Monday at 12 o'clock with an attendance between 7 and 10.

We are studying Acts at the moment and read a few chapters each week.

We bring a packed lunch (snack) with us and we eat this first with a cup of tea/coffee.. Then we each take a turn at reading a section of the chapter we are studying, and we all discuss it. It is very interesting as people see different aspects and we learn as we go. We also have some laughs as people tell us things that have happened to them related to the reading . So we have learning and fun.

Maureen Eтчells

TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY

Our group meets in the Chapel from 7.30 – 8.45pm each Tuesday. We are five regulars with two ladies from other churches who sometimes join us. Fred Arthur leads our group.

We started our study in Romans at the end of June 2022. Before that we had gone through the short letters, Timothy and Titus. We stopped Romans to do an Advent course and then resumed in January 2023 and finished on the 31st January.

Since then we have been going through Genesis using a 53 week course.

We would welcome anyone to join us either regularly or occasionally. We are very informal, reading through the passage together at the beginning of the session then anyone can share their thoughts, questions or insights. Fred often poses questions for us all to think about and discuss. If anyone wanted to come but just listen, we would be happy to welcome you.

Hazel Taylor

THURSDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY REPORT

The group meets on Zoom from 7:30-8:30pm each Thursday.

We concluded studies on 1Corinthians 3 weeks ago, and have since started studies on 2Corinthians.

We focus on the practical life applications of scripture.

We are blessed for this opportunity and are very thankful to the Lord and the Church.

Fred Arthur

YOUTH CHURCH

Youth Church has been going well and people are aware of the name change from Sunday Club to Youth Church. The older children have been focusing on reading chapters in the bible and having discussions which have then formed the basis of activities they do in youth church so children can develop their faith and understanding.

The leaders of younger children continue to use the roots on the web/ magazine to plan with and the sessions are usually more practical. When we had recent baptisms there were lots more children that joined the youth church which meant that another adult was needed to help support with Youth Church on these days. This is something that might need to be looked at when planning the rota to ensure that there is an extra leader available for Baptisms.

Attendance can fluctuate between four and eleven children and there is generally more children in the older group. We still only have a limited amount of leaders; it would be good if people could volunteer to lead in Youth Church.

If new children start Youth Church please can leaders ensure that parents are given a contact information form to fill in. This will be kept in a safe in the Youth Church room.

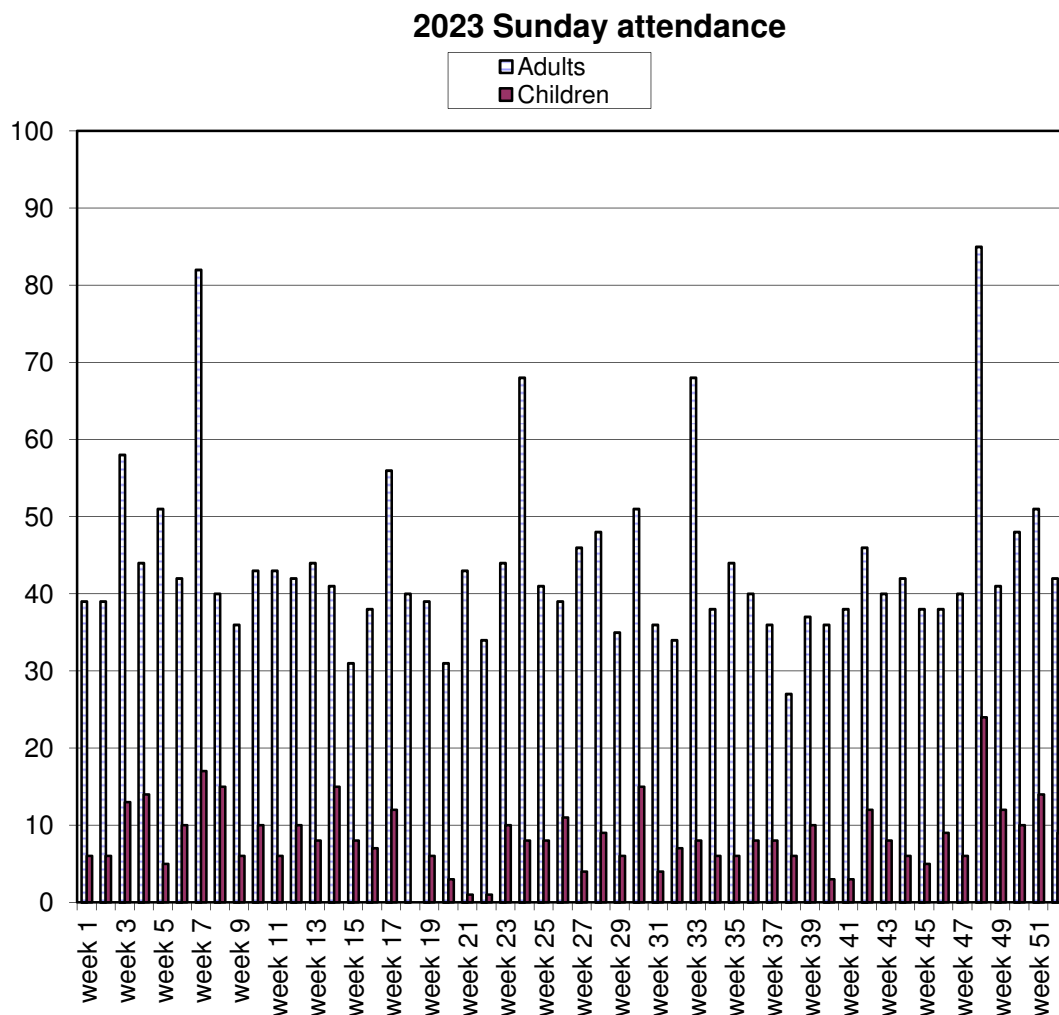
Joanne Castle

POP IN PRAYER report for AGM 2023

Just a few of us meet every third Saturday at 11am in the chapel for half an hour. We would welcome more members and friends to share in this time of prayer.

Hazel Taylor

Sunday Attendance



The above chart shows the weekly attendance during Sunday Services at St. Andrew’s Methodist Church from 3rd April 2022 to 26th March 2022. Physical attendance of adults are shown in Blue Squared pattern columns, children in solid Purple columns.

The high attendance on 15th May 2022, 26th Feb 2023 and 30th April 2023 were due to baptisms, 13th November 2022 was Remembrance Sunday,

*Kay Wong
 Weekly Notices Editor
 April 2023.*

ADMINISTRATION

Property Report June 2023

We have achieved quite a bit in the past twelve months. Last October, the wooden floor of the Church and area behind the blue curtains was sanded to remove surface imperfections and finished with 2 coats of oil. Thanks are due to those who helped clear the area for the work to be done, and replace all the furniture once the work was completed.

In April this year the ladies' and the gents' toilets near the Sunshine Room were modernised with the high level cisterns removed and replaced with coupled cisterns and wc pans. Wooden doors to cubicles removed and replaced by easy to clean hygienic ones. LED lighting fitted and ceilings, walls and floors freshly painted. Also a new water heater was fitted in the gents' toilets at the front of the building.

In May we had a major sewage problem which was cleared after lifting 2 outside manhole inspection covers, and rodding through. Also subsequent to this, the blocked disabled toilet was cleared.

Further work which I think needs to be undertaken includes:

1. Checking at the back of the stage to see what is stored there and what is needed from that, and what can be found a new home for or disposed of. This also includes several cupboards and other storage areas.
2. Redecorating room number 3 (the upstairs classroom).
3. Providing a step outside the fire exit from the first floor level.
4. A new water heater in the main kitchen to replace the non-working one.
5. There are several small jobs (touch-up painting, etc) which we may be able to cope with in-house.

Eddie Collier

ACCOUNTS 2021-22

Summary of Receipt and Expenditure from Sept 2021 to 31/08/22

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Offering via SO | (15,824.85) | |
| Envelopes | (14,319.04) | |
| | | (30,143.89) |
| Sub total Envelopes | |) |
| Loose Offertories | (2,098.76) | |
| | | (2,098.76) |
| | | (32,242.65) |
| Total Offertory | |) |
| | | (17,672.50) |
| Lettings | |) |
| Other Receipt | | |
| Sundries | (7,736.58) | |
| | | (7,736.58) |
| Donations Received by St Andrew's | | (2,140.00) |
| Collections for third parties | | |
| Food donation | (190.00) | |
| Collection for third parties | (944.50) | (1,134.50) |
| | | (60,926.23) |
| Total Receipt | |) |
| St Andrew's Contribution to HAEBEA | | 27,000.00 |
| Donations given by St Andrew's | | |
| Property Fund | 200.00 | |
| Presbyters & Deacon | 100.00 | |
| | | 300.00 |
| Repairs & Maintenance | | |
| Building Repairs | 4,344.43 | |
| | | 4,344.43 |
| Utilities | | |
| Water | 251.08 | |

| | | |
|---|-----------|-------------------|
| Gas & Electric | 10,374.07 | |
| Insurance | 2,150.19 | |
| | | 12,775.34 |
| Other Payments | | |
| Cleaning | 3,045.65 | |
| Purchase | 1,430.94 | |
| Sundries | 5,193.19 | |
| | | 9,669.78 |
| Collections for third parties settlement | | |
| Action4Children/World Mission Fund JMA | 1,609.89 | |
| | | 1,609.89 |
| Total Payments | 55,699.44 | |
| <i>(Surplus)/Deficit</i> | | <i>(5,226.79)</i> |

Lettings derived from AA Groups, Harlow Band, Action for Family Carers, Harlow Men's, Parties, ABRSM, Independent Women God's Central Church, Dolls House, Toddlers Group

Lettings

The list above shows the variety of users of our building – some are each week , some monthly , others for a sequence of sessions. This year we have had additional bookings for one-off events from other churches, as with our own usage we cannot offer them regular spaces. We have also had bookings from the NHS for diabetes course, and separately for pre-diabetes courses from another provider.

John Buxton

ACCOUNTS 2022-Feb 2023

Summary of Receipt and Expenditure from 1 September 2022 to 1 Feb 2023

| | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | Offertory | | |
| Offering via SO | | (7,455.80) | |
| Envelopes | | (5,692.31) | |
| Sub total Envelopes | | <u> </u> | (13,148.11) |
| Loose Offertories | | (2,381.89) | |
| | | <u> </u> | (2,381.89) |
| | Total Offertory | | (15,530.00) |
| Lettings | | | (5,765.00) |
| | Other Receipt | | |
| Sundries | | (4,031.23) | |
| £3,833.31 Includes transfer from Enhancement fund £2,994.00 | | <u> </u> | (4,031.23) |
| | Collections for third parties | | |
| | | (631.30) | |
| | | <u> </u> | (631.30) |
| | | <u> </u> | <u> </u> |
| | Total Receipt | | (25,957.53) |
| St Andrew's Contribution to HAEBEA | | | 13,000.00 |
| Donations given by St Andrew's Property Fund Presbyters & Deacon | | <u> </u> | 0.00 |
| | Repairs & Maintenance | | |
| Building Repairs | | 9,085.16 | |
| | | <u> </u> | 9,085.16 |
| | Utilities | | |
| Water | | 0.00 | |
| Gas & Electric | | 1,576.71 | |
| Insurance | | 2,451.89 | |
| | | <u> </u> | 4,028.60 |
| | Other Payments | | |
| Cleaning | | 864.00 | |
| Purchase | | 239.00 | |
| Sundries | | 721.63 | |
| | | <u> </u> | 1,824.63 |
| Collections for third parties settlement | | | |
| Action4Children/World Mission Fund JMA | | 750.46 | |
| | | 886.50 | 1,636.96 |
| | Total Payments | | 29,575.35 |
| <i>(Surplus)/Deficit</i> | | | 3,617.82 |

Envelopes and Gift Aid Secretary's Report

Currently, we have 27 members on the envelope scheme and 17 members offering via Standing Orders or BACS, making a total of 44. In comparison, for the last full year just before Covid (2018-19), the corresponding figure was 54. We have lost over a dozen regular donors in the past few years. The difference has only been partially offset by new members joining or transferred in.

Despite this, we can see signs that the church's finances are recovering from the effect of Covid.

Based on figures supplied by the Treasurer, I have worked out the income from all offertory sources for the 2022-23 financial year, and from that the expected Gift Aid refund that we can claim. The results are as shown in the bottom row of the following table, together with figures from the past four years for comparison. The offertory income includes all regular donations from envelope holders, standing orders, direct payments to bank, 'loose' collections on Sundays and *ad hoc* contributions via various channels.

| Year | Description | Offertory Income | Offertory Change | Gift Aid Refund | Gift Aid Change |
|--------------|--|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 18-19 | Last full year before Covid, the 'Baseline' for comparison | £32273 | Baseline | £8586 | Baseline |
| 19-20 | First (partial) Covid year | £29058 | 10% DOWN | £7184 | 17% DOWN |
| 20-21 | Second Covid year | £28526 | 12% DOWN | £6023 | 30% DOWN |
| 21-22 | Third (partial) Covid year | £30036 | 7% DOWN | £6184 | 28% DOWN |
| 22-23 | Exit from Covid | £32949 | 2% UP | £8076 | 6% DOWN |

From the table we can see that our offertory income has indeed returned to pre-Covid level, be it from a considerably narrower donor base, and before taking inflation into consideration. We would like to thank the generosity of all our regular subscribers and other donors for sustaining the church's finances during those difficult three years.

One can also see from the table that our Gift Aid claims have not fared so well. We have lost several Gift Aid members in the last few years, and again, these have not been fully offset by new members joining or transferred in. Currently we have 26 active members on our Gift Aid list. In comparison, for the last full year just before Covid (2018-19), the figure was 29. A few more Gift Aiders would have been very helpful.

So, if you have not done so already, please consider putting your donations on Gift Aid.

This gives the church the ability to increase the value of your contribution, at no additional cost to yourselves, by up to 25%, which will be much appreciated and valued.

Thank you once again for your continued support.

Andrew Wong
Envelope Scheme and Gift Aid Secretary

ST . ANDREW's GDPR

Again, there has been no public activity connected with St Andrew's GDPR, and we remain ready to legally comply with any Subject Access Requests, within 30 days, with new suggestions to help speed up the process should Requests arise.

Each year, the GDPR Managing Trustees have to sign off an audit, that our data handling is to the requirements of the GDPR Regulations. To that end, it is essential that those holding personal information, should continue to follow the protocols issued on receiving the information, some of which are included below. The Data Processor can provide full copies on request.

In order to retain that capability, it is essential that subjects whose new personal information we gather to add to existing lists, should be recorded on our Data Change Notification Form, by the data holder, for collation by the Data Processor. Should any new church activity require the accumulation of personal information, all such subjects should be recorded on a Data Mapping Form instead. Only the names of the people are required on these forms, and not their personal information, and the forms are available on the 'GDPR Documents' page of our website, or from the Data Processor.

In the meantime, we must remember to keep any personal information we hold, private, and use it only for the purposes for which it was collected.

In accordance with the former, please use 'Bcc' (that is blind copies) when sending any email to a number of recipients, as this will withhold their email addresses from other recipients.

Bob Taylor (dataprocessor@standrewsharlow.org.uk)

April 2023

St. Andrew's Website - standrewsharlow.org.uk

Website Visits

We are currently receiving far fewer visitors each month at just over 100, and very few stay for more than 30 seconds.

Scam Attacks and Spam

It has been a quiet year for attacks, with the steps I have taken having stopped any new ones so far, but spam continues to blight our email accounts. If you are receiving a lot of spam from your church email account, please let me know and I will see if it has a common factor which might allow me to block it.

A Second Website Editor

There is a need for continuity should I be unable to maintain the website for any reason, so the church needs someone ready to take over the operation of the website in my absence. The position requires someone with some computer and/or programming skills, but I can provide tuition for the post. If you would like to put yourself forward, please apply to Revd Blair Kirkby.

Showing the latest Diary

Sometimes when trying to view the latest Diary update, or other updated pages on our website, your browser may take the lazy option and still show a previous version, held in memory. To stop this happening, press F5 a number of times, to attempt to make it replace this older version in its memory with the updated one. Even this sometimes will not work, and it helps to have a second browser on your computer to display any new pages on this first before accessing them on your regular browser. (Of course, there is no way of telling whether you are, or aren't, seeing the latest version, anyway!)

Bob Taylor (siteeditor@standrewsharlow.org.uk)

April 2023

Safeguarding

Please see any notices on the safeguarding board in the main corridor.

Recently we attended some training on Safeguarding. It was highlighted by Michael BF that people who need to complete a DBS form need to fill in a Safeguarding Declaration form first, once this has been checked Michael will then proceed with completing a DBS check.

When a DBS certificate is issued it needs to be checked by the safeguarding officer (Joanne Castle) and it is the responsibility of the certificate holder to register so that they are sent a reminder of when they will need to renew their DBS, it is much easier to renew a DBS than start from scratch.

It was also highlighted that new members to the church who take on extra responsibilities need to be given a specific job title which highlights their roles and responsibilities within the church and whether they need to have a DBS or the Foundation or Advanced Module Training.

Michael is looking at holding Foundation and Advanced safeguarding modules if you think that you need to complete one please let Joanne Castle know or contact Michael Baccato-Fischer.

There has been a new leaflet from The Methodist Church Working towards a fully inclusive Methodist Church, everyone is invited to read it.

District Safeguarding Day Tuesday 5th September 9.45-3p.m

**If there are safeguarding concerns please contact Mrs Joanne Castle
Revd Blair Kirkby
Michael Baccato- Fischer**

Joanne Castle

MISSION AND SERVICE

JMA Report

During the period September 2021 to April 2022, we were unable to make any person to person weekly collections due to limited Sunday Club activities under the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. However, we re-started collection on 1st May 2022. The JMA awards were kindly presented by Mrs. Margery Collier on 25th September.

The details of the awards are as shown below:

| JMA year 2021-22 | Year of Service | Badge Type |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Dominic Annobil | Year 1 | New Member 2022 |
| Samantha Osei | Year 1 | New Member 2022 |
| Christopher Annobil | Year 3 | Annual 2022 |
| Isabel Annobil | Year 4 | Annual 2022 |
| Zachary Castle | Year 4 | Annual 2022 |
| Isabella Castle | Year 6 | Annual 2022 |
| Vaughn Mojzes | Year 7 Long Service | Annual 2022 |

| | |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Collections & Donations | £533.00 |
| 2021-22 Gift Aid rebate | £126.00 |
| Grand Total | £659.00 |

In the new term, we are delighted that all seven members remain on their collection duties. In October, we welcomed a new member to the team, making a lively gang of eight. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the parents who have been supporting and encouraging the children and enabling them to stay in church after service to do their JMA, and also maintaining a communication link between the adults and the Youth Church.

In addition, thank you very much to everyone for your continuous prayers, generous subscriptions, kind support, and donations to the Junior Mission Work around the world and at home.

Kay Wong
JMA Secretary
June 2023.

FRIENDSHIP GROUP report for AGM 2023

We are a small group of St Andrews' ladies who meet in members' houses once a month. We eat lunch together and chat, then close with an epilogue and prayer time.

If there is a fifth Thursday in the month we meet for a restaurant lunch and we also have occasional outings. Although this is a small group, we enjoy fellowship together and support each other. If you worship at St Andrew's and would like to join us, please ask me for details.

Hazel Taylor

Christian Aid Week Report

Christian Aid Week 2022 was on 15th-21st May. The event at St. Andrew's collected a total of **£740.00** this year, through online donations (£160.00) and through envelopes with cheques & cash donations (£580.00). Of the total, £720 are gift aided, giving a tax rebate of £180. We wish to say a heart-felt **THANK YOU** to all YOUR kind contributions which help ensure families to have better infrastructure to access every last drop of water to survive draught.

We are very grateful for your extra effort under COVID:

- You made extra donation this year
- Took extra miles to inform us of your online donations
- Made donations through envelopes
- Your prayers in support of the event

Christian Aid Week 2023 was on 14th-20th May. St. Andrew's Church followed our tradition of supporting the event with the following activities:

- Envelope collection
- Donation online
- Christian Aid Lunch was held on Sunday 21st May
- Christian Aid information display on the Church foyer in May
- Church's supporting prayers

The event at St. Andrew's collected a total of **£842.55** this year, through online donations (£160.00) and through envelopes with cheques & cash donations (£610.55), and Christian Aid lunch (£72). Of the total, £695.00 are gift aided, giving a tax rebate of £173.75.

We are extremely thankful for your kind donations and support. With your help, more mums and grandmothers in Zimbabwe can provide food and hope for their families.

Kay Wong & Susan McKenzie
Christian Aid Week Organisers
June 2023.

CHURCH MAGAZINE report for AGM 2023

With church numbers nearer normal again, more members are able to collect their Magazine each month. It also goes by email to all members who are able to receive it online. This version has colour on most pages as does our Church Website copy and the HAEBEA Website copy.

I would welcome more articles, information, and photos in jpg form from any members, although I sometimes need to alter or shorten submissions. The deadline date for copy for the next magazine is always in the current one but submissions before the deadline are appreciated.

Hazel Taylor, 438905, magazine@standrewsharlow.org.uk

MISSIONS (GENERAL)

Donations received via the 'box' system have remained fairly constant over the last two years, and it may well be that some people are donating directly to the finance department at Methodist Church House. If so, please let Andrew Wong know.

Thank you to those who continue to donate via the 'box' system – great for your small change!

World Mission

| | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Boxes | £91,21 |
| Tax (gift aid reclaim) | 34.00 |
| self-denial envelopes | 100.00 |
| Total | £225.21 |

Susan McKenzie

Foodbank

During 2022 I have received £1,110.23 in donations from members of the St Andrew's congregation for the work of Harlow Foodbank. I have passed on all these donations and received very warm thanks from the treasurer. May I thank all those who have contributed on a regular or occasional basis. Since 2014 we have collected nerarly £7,000 and this has helped provide emergency supplies of food to so many families and individuals who have found themselves in desperate food poverty.

Thank you to all those who bring items of food to church for Foodbank and put them in tyhebox in the entrance hall. The amounts are not so great as they were, so please keep the box filled! Thank you too, Alison and Kevin, for transporting the food items to the Foodbank from time to time.

May I invite all who can to consider making money donations so that we can continue helping with this important work. You can do this in various ways, but if you wish it to be counted as part of the St Andrew's contribution, may I suggest that you put cash or a cheque in an envelope with your name and "For Foodbank" and then hand the envelope to Hazel Taylor. Cheques must be written to "Michael Roberts Charitable Trust" . Or but only if it a cheque. You can send it to me at my home address ,73 Mark Hall Moors , Harlow, CM20 2NG. Please do not send cash in the post. I will send an acknowledgement for all contributions.

John Hutchings

Y