

THANKSGIVING SUNDAY, 11th OCTOBER 2026

John Wesley, one of the founders of Methodism once said:-

Do all the good you can,
by all the means you can,
in all the ways you can,
in all the places you can,
at all the times you can,
to all the people you can,
as long as you can.

I guess this is a good description of what Christians should be like and how the Church should be. As you pray about your giving to our Parish for the coming year, I hope you will take into account Wesley's advice and the following thoughts:-

- 1) "The Church exists primarily for the sake of those outside it"
so said Archbishop Temple. We take this sentiment seriously at St. Thomas' and St. Mary Magdalene's. Our thoughts and prayers are always for our local community and our world, not for our self-preservation : the Good News of Jesus is bigger than that! I hope through our "outreach" we show God's generosity whether it's raising money for Macmillan, giving away one-tenth of our income to charity, providing safe and warm buildings for community activities and Open Church, providing Christmas food bags for local families, not to mention the Major Works Project at St. Thomas' to make our Church an open community in the village and St. Mary Magdalene's being a generous community at the centre of the Cobbs Estate.
- 2) "Together in Christ, Sharing Hope"
Our Churches provide spiritual pastoral care not just to our congregations but to all who come for help. Opening St. Thomas' everyday for prayer and fellowship is a massive expression of what we stand for. Every day folk come and light candles, stay for a cuppa and chat and enjoy the warm fellowship. In a country where cuts are taking place across the board in local amenities we want to do more to share the love of Christ with all. Every year through Fun Lunches and Home Communion Lunches we feed hundreds from the youngest to the oldest.
- 3) We want to save the world
Have you seen the community garden, lovingly looked after by the Walton Lea Project? Through working towards our Eco aim of being net zero, partnering with Walton Lea Project and Wild About Stockton Heath we want to steward and look after "God's Acre" in the centre of our village and in a small way protect our planet and save it from global warming.
- 4) Young people are important too
We have a special relationship with St. Thomas' school of course but all schools in our area partner in some way with our Churches. Harvest Services take place at St. Thomas' and St. Mary Magdalene's and Stockton Heath Primary's Christingle Service is not to be missed. Plans are ongoing to have an Ethos Group at St. Thomas' very soon.

So there is much we are doing and much still to be done. None of the above is without a price, not least in paying bills but also man and woman hours volunteering, which is where you come in.

Please do the following:-

- Pray about what you give and would like to give for the work of the Church – monetary donations and volunteering.
- Fill in the Time and Talents form and return it in the envelope provided.
- Become a regular giver to the Parish through the Bank – return the Giving Form and the Gift Aid Declaration as soon as possible. Most people give via the Bank and we like this to be the norm so we can budget ahead.
- Make a commitment and get involved. Every contribution helps in a small way to build up the Kingdom.

Yours, Michael

A message from the Treasurer.

Thank you to **all** who give generously and sacrificially towards the work of the church.

We have 123 regular givers committed to supporting our church through the Planned Giving Scheme, via the bank or with regular envelopes, contributing over £64,000 to 31/8/2026, this is amazing! **Thank you.**

If you are a regular member of our church, please join the Planned Giving (PG) scheme.

Did you know?

- Income was static in 2025 however, to 31/8/26 income is **reduced** by £15,500
- Despite increased annual pledges (Thanksgiving 2025) totalling £4332 there has only been an increase in PG of £479 to 31/8/26. The increased pledges only just compensate for loss of generous benefactors who have died, moved away or have a change of circumstance.
- Every other major income stream is reduced apart from fundraising:

Category	1/1/26 -31/8/26	1/1/25- 31/8/25	Difference
Plate Collections	£9,756	£11,404	£1,648
Donations	£13,282	£15,928	£2,646
Hall hire	£13,656	£15,572	£1,916
PCC Fees	£3436	£3557	£94
Fundraising	£8,424	£4,446	£3,798

- we are not immune to cost of living rises, yet with static income we are reliant on reducing expenditure to maintain our financial resilience, this is not sustainable.
- Parish Share to fund our clergy's stipends and pension contributions, the cost of training future curates across the diocese, Vicarage, Diocesan support staff etc costs £79,932 annually and rises annually.
- to 31/8 we have paid £22,322 Church running costs, £3,957 Church maintenance and repairs, £8,984 Church Hall running costs, £3,500 Church Hall maintenance, repairs and equipment purchase (new boiler £2,899) £6,109 worship costs and £8,379 support costs.
- apart from Michael's work, every other task in the organisation and running of our church is by volunteers.
- St Thomas' Church is 'at risk' - leaking roof, deteriorating masonry, obsolete boiler, draughty unwelcoming entrance. We must exercise good stewardship of our heritage to survive, even with successful grant applications there will be a significant cost to the Parish.
- we are a faithful church, we give away 10% of our disposable income annually in line with Biblical teaching, this year we will distribute £12,744 to: USPG, CMS, Visranthi Trust, St Rocco's Hospice, St Joseph's, Street Pastors, Prison Fellowship, Broomfield's Youth project, Warrington Youth for Christ, St Thomas' School. Our recent Macmillan Coffee morning has raised almost £1,000, Christingle 2025 raised £1,174 for the Children's Society, we have supported the British Red Cross Jamaica Appeal and DEC Ebola Appeal.

How can you help?

- please pray about the work of the church and your personal giving
- please join the regular Planned Giving scheme if you are a regular, committed member of our church, the work of God requires funding 365 days per year
- please review your giving: increase if you can, by what you can afford, or of course reduce if you need to. In 2025, twenty-seven people increased their giving and two people joined the scheme
- Gift Aid where eligible, in 2025 we received £29,176 in Gift Aid – complete the Gift Aid declarations - speak to me or Joanne Ridley if you are unsure
- get involved! Volunteer your God-given time and talents in the service of His church, complete the Time and Talents form
- support fundraising events, these supplement the income of the church, over £14,894 in 2025
- **please return your pledge forms to help me budget**

Daily we receive God's grace, forgiveness, love. 'All things come from You, and of Your own do we give You'