



St Thomas' Church Blackpool



Parish Profile



Building the Kingdom

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Our mission is to build the Kingdom by being a visible church where people's spiritual and physical needs can be met to lead them in a relationship with Christ.

"The Lord brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land that he promised"...Deuteronomy 6:23

From the churchwardens

Thank you for showing an interest in St Thomas' Church, Blackpool. We welcome whoever God has called to this new post; being a new chapter for both us and you. We look forward to journeying together, for you to work with, guide us and to continue to build God's Kingdom in this place.

We have a varied mission field, ripe for harvest. We have keen and enthusiastic labourers within our church and need the right person to guide and develop them.



Pauline Matthews
Churchwarden

We are looking forward to appointing a Bible-based, Spirit-filled person with a passion for team building ...to make St Thomas Church the beacon of light it is meant to be, not only within our community but throughout Blackpool and the Diocese.



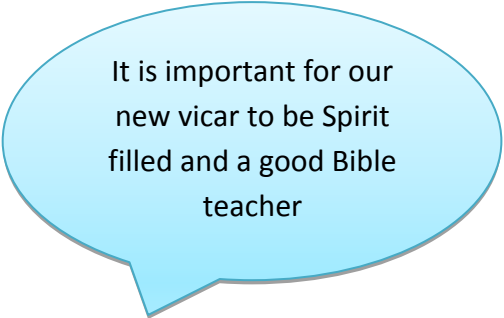
Denise Moorby
Churchwarden

Our New Vicar

We are looking for someone who is practical and down to earth in their approach to Building God's Kingdom in our local community and church family. The person needs to have a clear calling to serve, through Christ's love, EVERY person, being concerned with their emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

Our expectations are that you will:

- Preach and live the gospel: adapting preaching and teaching to ensure all people are challenged to learn, grow and develop in their walk with Jesus
- Reach out to the parish, getting involved in local issues and encouraging the church to be at the heart of spiritual and social interactions
- Build on and continue to support and develop activities currently taking place to teach, develop and serve
- Have a vision that will challenge the body of the church to bring people into the Kingdom
- Mentor individuals and encourage church members to use their talents in God's service
- Develop a model for mission partnering with other local groups
- Encourage the church congregation to give generously in time, money and talents



It is important for our new vicar to be Spirit filled and a good Bible teacher

To do this you should be:

- Spirit led, spending time in prayer and studying the Word
- Visible: approachable and interested in *everyone*; having good interpersonal and communication skills
- Active in prayer: sharing the burden, direction and joy with others and our God
- Innovative: creating a culture of change and revival to stimulate personal and corporate growth
- Be able to enthuse and inspire the church body to move and grow the church:
 - ❖ in the spiritual development of individuals
 - ❖ in exploring individual's talents and gifts
 - ❖ in encouraging individuals to develop and use their strengths in service

How we will support you in Building the Kingdom

As our new vicar, we expect you to lead by example. This means being active as well as managing the life of our parish church. We do not expect you to be everything to everyone.

We have:

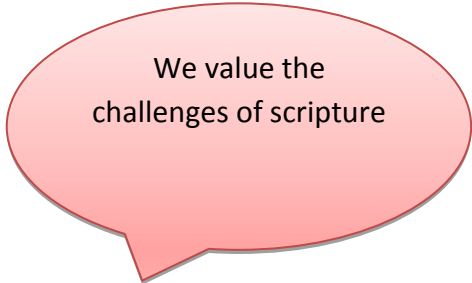
- a strong and capable leadership team with established team working relationships.
- a pastoral aide to support the vicar confidentially to share thoughts and concerns.
- proactive church members capable of taking ideas through from conception to realisation with minimal supervision.

We will:

- learn by being open to fresh ideas and approaches, bringing our ideas and initiatives to further the Kingdom
- support you pastorally in prayer and relationships
- use our skills to maintain our current service and in the development of new skills
- work alongside you to make disciples, be witnesses and grow leadership
- accept challenges positively

Our strengths

- 😊 We are an evangelical church at the heart of the local community. We believe that the church should play a positive part in all aspects of the community.
 - 86% of the community respondents to a recent survey said that they saw St Thomas' as being an important part of the community with 70% having attended a service or other event.
- 😊 Our congregation see us as 'warm and friendly with a welcoming attitude to everyone who comes'. (93%)
- 😊 We offer different types of worship/services to meet the spiritual needs of all e.g café church, morning worship, new wine, kidz church (93% said they have grown spiritually since attending)
- 😊 We have a spirit led talented worship band, enabling us to draw into a closer relationship with God
- 😊 All are encouraged to offer up their talents for service – 91% of the congregation said they felt that they can contribute to the life and service of St Thomas.
- 😊 We are organic – we adapt to needs and God provides us with those to lead
- 😊 We have a flourishing Children's and Youth work, drawing in children and their parents from the locality
- 😊 We are caring, which means there is always someone you can turn to
- 😊 We value each other regardless of ability
- 😊 We have various groups/teams to cater for different aspects of current church life



We value the challenges of scripture

Our areas for development

- 😞 Although at the heart of the community we need to be more proactive to understand, work with and draw people into God's Kingdom.
- 😞 We need to extend our activities to not only meet the physical needs of those in the locality, but to enable them to grow in faith and deepen their spiritual understanding of their journey with Christ
- 😞 We want to develop each person no matter what age or socio economic background in a way that is relevant to their lives
- 😞 We want to partner with other local organisations so the church can go out and be part of the community
- 😞 We want to develop a model for mission where all can be involved according to their talents
- 😞 We want people to be identified and encouraged to come forward to serve God through the various activities we offer – building up a bank of dedicated volunteers

About our town



Blackpool is a large seaside town in the North West. It is a unitary authority and, in geographic terms, a long and narrow urban area. It is one of the most densely populated authorities in the UK.

Residents are mostly of White ethnicity, those of Black and Minority Ethnicity being a significantly smaller percentage of the population than the national average.

Blackpool has a similar proportion of owner-occupiers compared to national (England) levels, but almost double the proportion of private rented accommodation. This is driven largely by changes in the seaside economies with many former guesthouses converting to flats, and fluctuations in seasonal work creating demand for temporary accommodation in resort areas. There is a large transient population in Blackpool with a significant proportion of Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) in central wards.

Blackpool has a low employment rate, compared to the national average. There is a high proportion of benefit claimants with out-of-work benefits, including Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) at almost twice the national (GB) level. For those in employment, the average weekly wage is £117 less than the national average.

From the latest figures, Blackpool is classed as one of the most deprived authority in England overall but we are highest in terms of the concentration of deprivation. There are strong relationships between deprivation and a range of social issues.

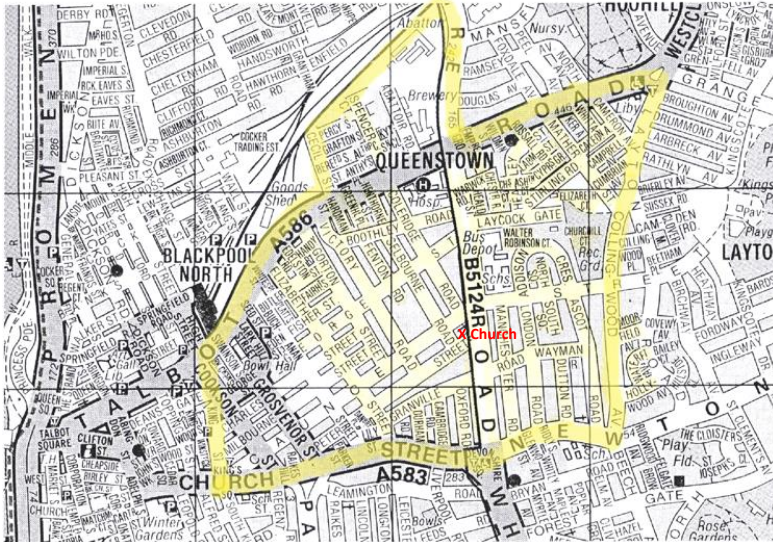
In terms of age, Blackpool has a larger proportion of residents over 60 compared to the national average. Blackpool has poor life expectancy, with life expectancy for males the poorest in England at 73.6 years compared to 78.5 years. Life expectancy for females is similarly poor. Substance and alcohol misuse is considered high, with alcohol-related death the highest in England. Blackpool has the highest drug prevalence rate across the region, and is within the top ten nationally.

Teenage Pregnancy rates in under-18s are the 6th highest in England & Wales.

Government statistics show that a third of children in Blackpool are estimated to be in poverty and that the majority of those children live in lone parent families. The rate of Looked after Children in Blackpool is the highest in England.

About our Parish

St Thomas' Parish Church - Blackpool
Boundary



Our Parish is in Central Blackpool inland of the coast, within walking distance of Blackpool Tower. St Thomas' Church is located at a busy crossroads at one of the main junctions leading into the town centre.

Devonshire Primary Academy, a large primary school is opposite and we have very strong links with the school. Three of our members are on the Board of Governors and our Children and Youth Pastor, a licensed Reader, Barbara, is the chair of the Board.

There are a range of challenges that face our children and young people both in educational attainment and life opportunities.

These challenges are driven by the high levels of poverty and social disadvantage.

The parents' difficulties create problems in the family and influence children's outcomes.

St Thomas' parish includes some of the central wards of Blackpool (Talbot and Brunswick principally), in terms of socio-economic factors, some of the most deprived areas in England.

Housing in the parish is mainly rented, mostly from private or social landlords but some from the local authority. The housing consists mainly of terraced housing. A new local authority development is being built consisting of 191 new homes, all within the parish boundary.



About our Church

History

In December 1905 land was purchased on the eastern fringe of Blackpool on which to build a school, with a parish room above. A year later the Parish Centre was completed with the schoolrooms downstairs and the new Mission Church of St Thomas upstairs, run by a curate from St John's, the Parish Church. The Church of St Thomas was established in 1913, initially with a Curate-in-Charge, being given a vicar in 1922. The Rev. Lang became the first vicar and served until 1954. St. Thomas has had just six vicars in 113 years.



The land adjacent to the Parish Centre was taken and plans drawn up in 1929 for a church and a vicarage to be built. The new church of St Thomas was dedicated in 1931 by Dr. P. M. Herbert, Bishop of the recently established Diocese of Blackburn.

Bible teaching, mission and outreach has always been a priority at St Thomas, whether it be beach missions, witness through the streets or house to house calls. For the millennium every house in the parish was given a video of the life of Jesus.

Children's work has also been at the forefront of life at St Thomas; Campaigners had a long and illustrious career, establishing a fife and drum band which was in great demand; scouts and guides are still represented by a troop of Explorer Scouts. Currently, times have changed but we have provision for all ages, from babies through to college-age, ably led by our Reader Barbara Houghton (or our Youth Pastor) and her supporters.

St Thomas has always been well served by its parishioners, there being a number of people who have attended and worked in various roles for most of their lives, some with their fathers before them. The names Fenton and Hesketh go back to the very beginning when the mission church was first built.

Congregation

There are currently 130 on the electoral roll. This is a reduction from last year due to deaths and a number of people moving from the area.



The 10.30am Sunday morning service in church has a congregation consisting largely of people travelling in from outside the parish or who live just outside. The age profile of this service is 50 years of age plus and average attendance is approximately 55.

10.30am Cafe Church, held in the parish centre has tables for adults, youth and children, with numbers averaging 10-15 adults and 5-10 children under 16.

We feel part of the church family
and belong to St Thomas'

91%

The 6pm New Wine service congregation includes people who travel from outside the area into church. A large proportion of the 30 to 40 people who attend are over 50 years of age. However, there is a transient nature about the congregation at this service. This includes people who are in need and/or who have accessed our outreach activities (including the drop-in on Thursday mornings and the Friday Night outreach events).

Leadership Team

This currently consists of:

2 readers – Barbara Houghton, Yvonne Blazey

2 people holding the Bishop's Licence for Occasional Preachers

2 wardens

PCC chaired by Joe Atkin

2 Pastoral Care Team co-ordinators and Prayer team co-ordinators

Worship Leader

St Thomas Pastoral Trust

The Trust was formed in 1997 to further the evangelical ministry of St Thomas Church through:

- the employment of parish youth workers to minister to young people in our Parish
- the delivery of grant funded programmes to support the parish community

The Trust is entirely funded through donations from individuals, successful grant applications and contributions from the Church PCC.

The Trust currently employs a part time Children and Young Peoples Worker and operates a weekly Work Club to assist long term unemployed people with IT skills, job searches and job applications.

The Trust has recently delivered a number of grant funded community programmes to tackle social isolation with both young people and older people in our community as well as providing diversionary activities for local teenagers.

The Buildings

The Church

The Parish Centre and the Vicarage are on the same site as the Church. The Church has been well maintained throughout the years, and has a new heating system installed. The Church stands in its own grounds, with areas to lawn, trees and flower beds all enclosed within railings. The entrance and lounge area at the back of the church has toilets including a disabled toilet and also kitchen facilities.

Video screens are used to enable people to follow the church services more easily. A new P.A. system with a loop facility also aids better participation in the church services.



The Parish Centre



The Parish Centre has two storeys plus a basement. The basement has been renovated to provide areas for youth club and youth worship, called “The Underground”. The building itself is in a good state of repair and the Church Office is situated in the Parish Centre. The Parish Centre also has full toilet facilities. The entrance to the Parish Centre is ramped, for easy access. It also has a large working kitchen.

The Parish Centre is used by both the church for various activities and is hired out to the public, so bringing in extra revenue.

St Thomas' is an important part of the community

The Vicarage



The vicarage is a good family home, a large detached property situated in the church grounds. The vicarage consists of five double bedrooms with two bathrooms. Downstairs there is a large kitchen with a utility room and three good size reception rooms and a downstairs toilet.

The Vicarage was built 80 years ago and electrical work is currently being upgraded by the Diocese. The building is in good repair and has gas central heating, and an alarm system is installed.



Our services

Sunday

10.30 Morning Service

A traditional feel with a variety of hymns, modern worship songs and insightful Biblical teaching.

10.30 Café Church

A relaxed service for those wanting to know about God but not used to traditional church, where all ages can come together to worship.

Twice a month at the end of worship these services join together for Holy Communion in church

6.00 New Wine

A celebration service, open to all, being led by the Holy Spirit and modern in worship style
Communion held twice a month

Monday

6.00 Compline

A service of evening prayer in the church lounge

Tuesday

9.00 Morning Prayer

Meet with the Holy Dusters to commit the week to God

Wednesday

11.00 Munch

Book of Common Prayer Communion followed by sharing a meal together

4.00 Kidz Church

Led by our Youth and Children's Pastor. Children come together in church to learn about and worship God in a relevant style.

A welcoming church

93%

Our church groups would like to thank you for your interest in St Thomas' Church.

Here is a sample of the various activities composed by the groups to illustrate their diverse ministries

Youth and Children's Ministry

Stay and Play



Coming to our baby group is often the first time people will have set foot into our church so we endeavour to make them feel at home. We have been able to build strong relationships with members of our community which has then allowed us to offer help and advice where needed and when we can. Sure Start partner with us and pay us regular visits.

Kidz Church

For the children to be able to have their very own church service is amazing. Children are able to worship in a slightly more informal style to that of a Sunday morning service with the aim of making them feel comfortable in full congregational worship. We share Holy Communion and have even brought our teddies and dollies along to church!



Rockstars

Rockstars can be very lively, messy and often very loud! This is often a child's first introduction to church so the session endeavours to be fun yet relevant to a child's life today here in Blackpool. We build on the teaching from the day before using crafts and games. Usually we find that it is our children who teach us adults!

Youth Bibly Study

We have a small but strong group of youth who faithfully meet each week for Bible Study. This year they have organised the House of Prayer event in church designing all the prayer stations themselves. They also help faithfully with all the children and youth groups though out the week.



The Underground



As long as the girls have somewhere to chat and the boys have football they are happy! But it's so much more than that! Our youth meet together at the end of a usually very busy week. This gives them time to relax and enjoy being together.

As well as the weekly happenings we have enjoyed lots of other events such as our Big Toddle in the park, our youth going to Soul Survivor and Ascent, regular film nights and the House of Prayer. We've also enjoyed annual events such as our summer holiday club, parties, our Christmas fair and Children's Pageant.

St Thomas's Praise and Worship Team

The Worship Ministry serves the adult congregations in church on Sundays and aims to release gifting through worship. Though primarily focussed on worship the team also serves the wider community through involvement in mission and outreach events. There are 10 members in the Worship Team with gifts in musicianship and singing. The mid-week 'munch' service relies on recorded music on CDs while the café church held on Sunday mornings in the Parish Centre uses lyrics and accompaniment via video clips.



Outreach and Discipleship



For these ministry groups we like to create a friendly and hospitable atmosphere where people are accepted and hear the Gospel message. The outreach has been running for two years; a mix of Christian and non-Christian attendees. It is testimony driven with between 30 and 60 people at each event.

The discipleship group is 7 to 14 people in size. It includes start courses like 'Alpha', 'Christianity Explored' and 'Who is Jesus' in addition to as general Bible study and discussion.

There is a warm, friendly attitude to anyone who comes in

Pastoral Care Group/Prayer Team

We are the first line of support to all church members; looking out for anyone missing services due to illness or other circumstances. Most of the Pastoral Care team have recently attended a training course provided by the Diocese. Some of us have been providing Pastoral care for many years and some of us have recently joined the group.

Prayer is available at every service. Members of the team will always be available in the prayer corner after the service. The team will always offer a confidential and listening ear to all prayer requests, however big or small, and are glad to pray with anyone concerning their needs and concerns.

The Prayer Tree

The Prayer Tree is one of the first ports of call for people to access wider prayer. It is for people who for various reasons need prayer for themselves or for someone they know. The members of the Prayer Tree receive these requests and faithfully bring the intercessions to God. Often the Prayer Tree is instrumental in informing the church when a member is ill, in hospital or passed away.

We believe that prayer is at the heart of our ministry and hope that you will build on and extend this service to our local community.

Munch



We welcome you to St Thomas' with our warmth, our friendship and our prayer for your future with us.

Following the 11am service of Holy Communion on a Wednesday we have lunch, known as Munch, in the Parish Centre, with a two course meal and lots of fellowship with friends meeting together sharing a lovely time with approximately 20-25 meeting at present.

We value the
community and
friendship

TLC Drop-in – Transforming Lives in the Community

We have been running almost 2 years with a small team of enthusiastic volunteers who wish to make a difference in the lives of the lonely and marginalised within St Thomas' community and wider area. We have a food pantry stocked by generous church members for emergency needs.

The People's Team from Talbot and Brunswick Hub on Gorton Street have recently joined us. They offer advice on benefits and housing issues. We offer hospitality, refreshments and a listening ear to those coming to see them alongside our own visitors, who take advantage of our company, playing games, reading, drawing etc.

We are open on Thursday mornings 9.30 to 12 noon and the Holy Spirit never fails to attend.



Families Anonymous

Families Anonymous is a world-wide fellowship of family members and friends affected by another's abuse of mind-altering substances, or related behavioural problems. St Thomas' opened a support group eighteen months ago, being the only group in the Northwest.

We have 12 regular members with new members joining weekly.

In the group members learn to come to terms with the problem that is disrupting their lives following a programme based on the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions first formulated by Alcoholics Anonymous. Attending meetings helps members adopt an honest and consistent approach towards the addict

We meet every Thursday at 7pm.



Monday Night Bible Study

A mix of people of all ages and abilities meeting in the church lounge weekly discussing the Bible in relation to issues we face today.

Geldof Drive Housegroup

We meet weekly to study God's word, pray and share fellowship with one another and occasionally have social events.



South Shore House group

Meeting twice a month in our homes, to study scripture, to pray for one another and care for one another



Bible Study/Housegroups

We have a number of study groups who meet to explore their relationship with God who are looking forward to welcoming and getting to know a new vicar who can lead the development of this ministry

Houghton's Housegroup

We have a brew every Wednesday, enjoying fellowship and sharing God's word together; supporting each other through the ups and downs that life can bring through prayer.



Hospitality

We provide hospitality for all services and events happening in the church and parish centre. The team is gifted and talented in both cooking and serving delicious food and over many years St Thomas's has been proud of its reputation to provide this practical service in many ways.



Holy Dusters



We seek to provide a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere where all can enjoy worship. We meet weekly to clean the church; vacuuming, polishing, cleaning brasses, toilets and windows. We keep the grounds and church neat by collecting the rubbish from the church grounds and tidying books in the chairs.

Gardening Team

The team meets every Thursday morning from March to November and we are very glad that Sue and Denise keep us going with brews. We would very much like to welcome new members to our team, no matter what skills or experience they have to keep our gardens clean and tidy. We are grateful to those who supply us with plants, helping to keep the gardens well stocked.

Floral Team

We would like to greet the new vicar with a blooming congregation.

We meet weekly to change the flowers and water them, providing a beautiful environment to focus on God.

Walking for Health

Physical health is important, so we provide walks that all can enjoy, locally and further afield. Walks aren't strenuous and we have very good fellowship and a laugh not to mention finding out all sorts of new things about the places we visit. We have been blessed many, many times as the rain has held off, although we may have been a little windblown sometimes! We look forward to getting to know you on one of our walks



St T's Work Club



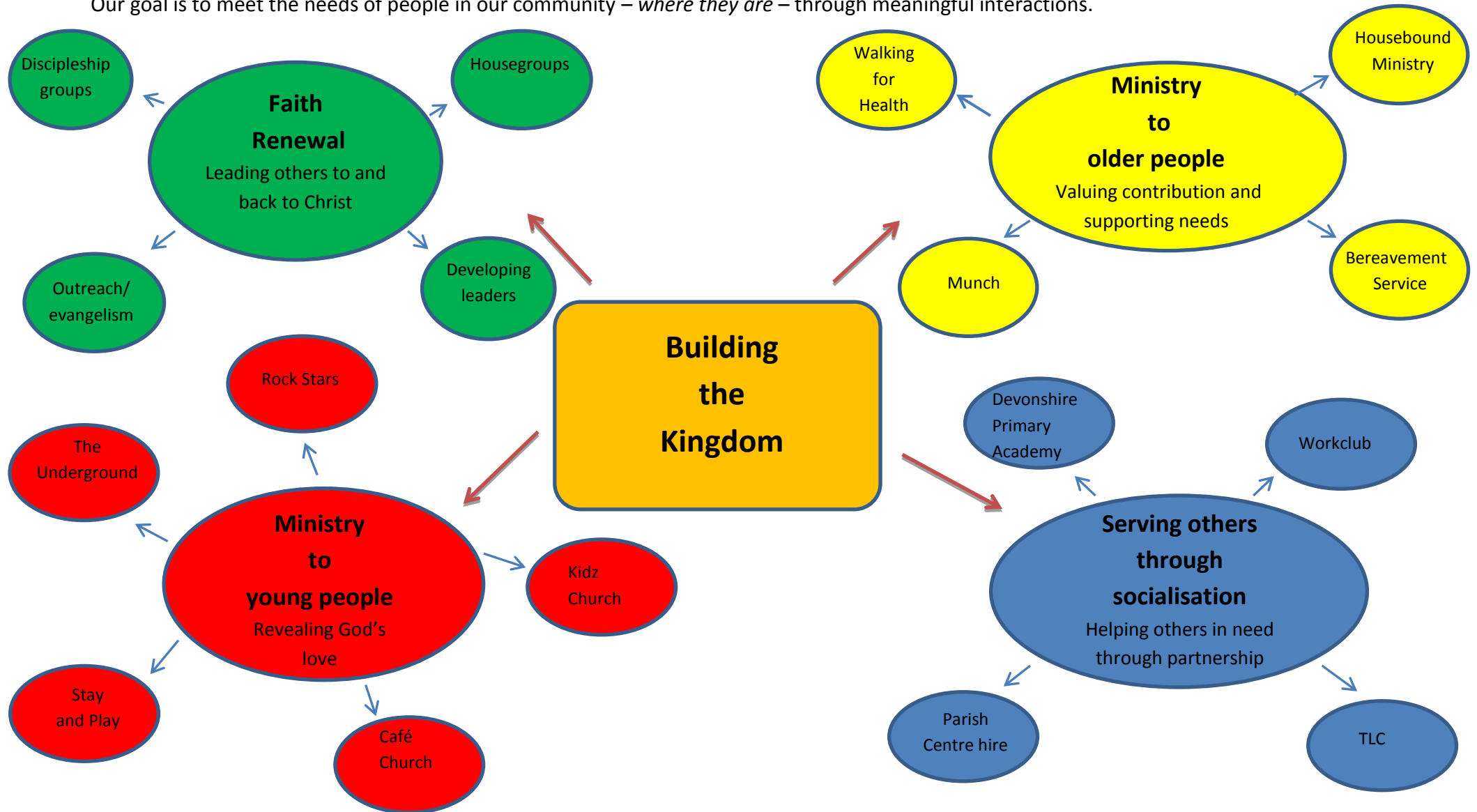
We would like to say hello and hope that you will be interested in our voluntary service to the community. The aim of the workclub is to enable people seeking work to apply for jobs. This is through helping and supporting those with limited IT skills to apply for jobs on line, create CVs and providing advice on going for interviews. The workclub has been operating for 5 years and has helped many people with their job searching skills. It is our desire to bring hope and purpose to help people live fulfilling lives.

In September, we will be bringing the workclub alongside our Transforming Lives in the Community service. This will enable our members to gain benefits advice and interact socially with other local people. We thank God for His provision and pray that this work will continue with your presence and support as it starts a new exciting phase in its development.

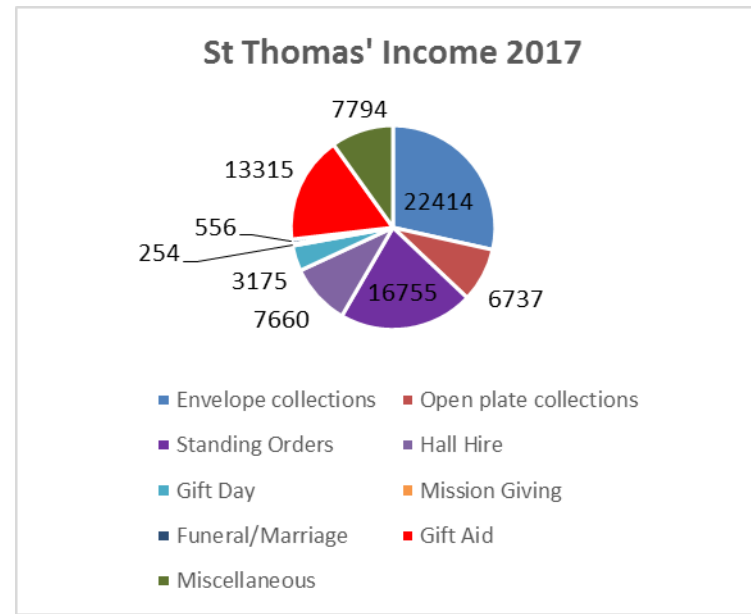
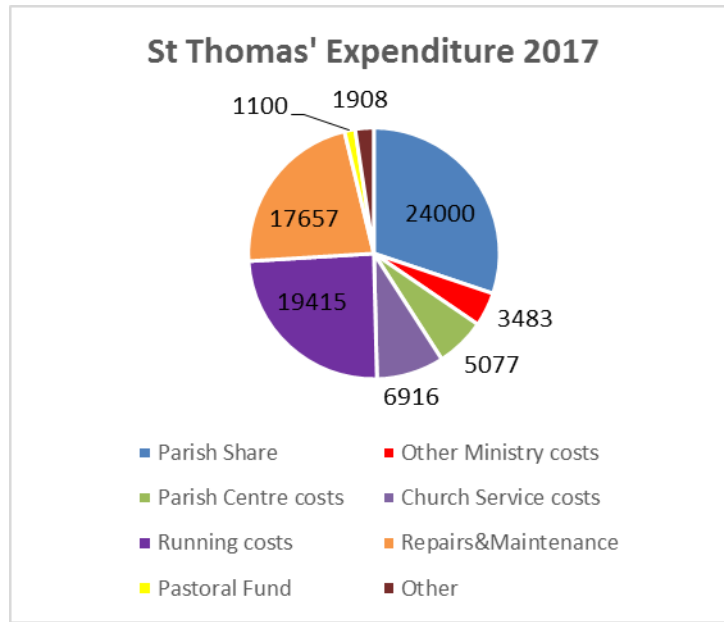
Mission Action Plan/ Building the Kingdom

The Lord brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land that he promised...Deuteronomy 6:23

Our goal is to meet the needs of people in our community – *where they are* – through meaningful interactions.



Finance



St Thomas' parish is located in a deprived area of Blackpool which causes issues when ensuring our finances are stable. We currently have a healthy CCLA account of £45K, however we need to use some of this to meet our parish share. The Parish Share for 2018 has been re-negotiated to £36,900. St Thomas' is confident that we can meet this target. A budget is in preparation and will be discussed and agreed by the PCC.

Our finances are not where we would like them to be, however we thank God for his blessings and we are assured that if we are faithful in service and building his kingdom, He will be faithful to us. With your help we can grow.

£'s	2017 estimated	2016	2015	2014 Restated
Incoming Resources	78660	75433	98,786	107,839
Resources Expended	79556	85831	102,441	109,344
Net Incoming/(outgoing)	-896	(10398)	(3,655)	(1,505)
Cash held	55178	56074	66,472	70,127
Parish Funds	55178	56074	66,472	70,127

Useful Links

Blackpool Council - <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Home.aspx>

Basic facts about Blackpool by Ward – we cover Talbot & Brunswick -
<http://reports.esd.org.uk/reports/14?pat=LA&pa=E06000009%3AAdministrativeWard>

Blackpool Profile Summary - <http://www.blackpooljsna.org.uk/Blackpool-Profile/Summary-Health-Profile.aspx>

Local Schools: <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Residents/Education-and-schools/Blackpool-schools/Blackpool-schools.aspx>



In Closing ...

With the help of God, as Francis of Assisi once said, we -

“Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”

We are looking for someone who shares this approach and hope we have given you just enough information to know if this could be the parish for you. If you think it might be, we'd love to meet you and find out more about you – and you us!

We hope we can partner with you in 'Building the Kingdom' together.

We'd love you to consider if God is calling you to come and be part of our family.

- *from all at St Thomas'*