

# Parish Profile

For

**St James'      St Thomas'**  
**Newchapel      Mow Cop**



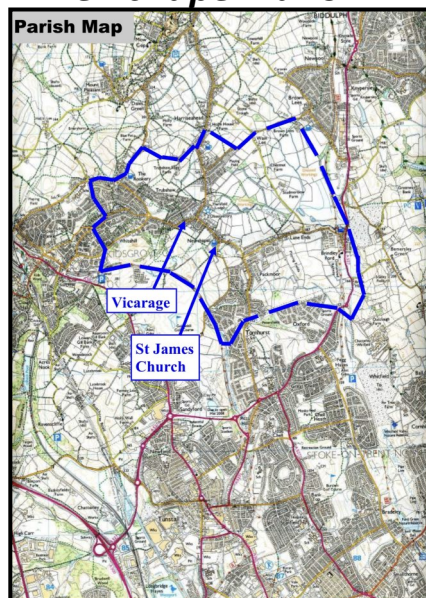
The Parishes of Mow Cop and Newchapel are adjacent to each other.

Our churches, while still maintaining separate identities, are joining together to share a Priest in Charge who will become our vicar once pastoral reorganization has taken place. .

Both our churches are looking for a person who is being led by the Holy Spirit and called by God to this area.

We hope that these profiles will give you a picture of this lovely part of the country and a sense of what each of our parishes are like.

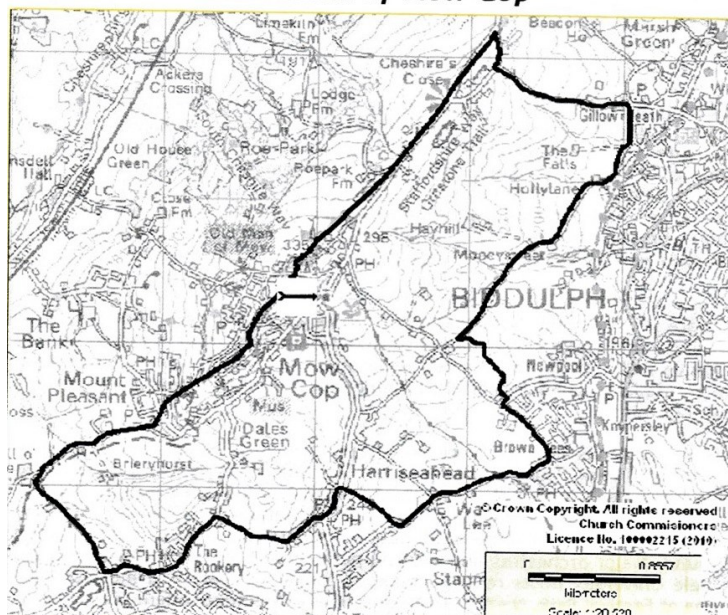
### ***Newchapel Parish***



**St James Church**

**Station Road, Newchapel, Stoke-on-Trent, ST7 4QT**

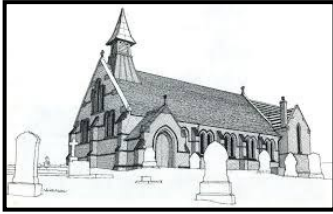
### ***The Parish of Mow Cop***



**St Thomas Church**

**5 Congleton Rd, Mow Cop, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 3PJ**





# St James and St Thomas



Although this partnership of our two churches is in its infancy we are already enjoying working together through the lent course, visiting each others services and working on this profile.

## The person we are looking for

We are seeking a faithful and caring Priest to share their Christian ministry in this place.

If you are led by God to be our vicar, teacher and guide we would like you to:

- ◆ Lead our parishes into a greater relationship with each other
- ◆ Increase an effective evangelistic life in both churches
- ◆ Encourage joint events/activities
- ◆ Develop connections with children and families (via local schools) to introduce them to a living faith in Jesus
- ◆ Share the vision of the congregation for the future of the church and lead us into that future in the Holy Spirit, with confidence
- ◆ Encourage church members to have a closer walk with God, evolving and growing small group learning
- ◆ Lead encourage and enable members to share the love of Jesus within the fellowship and in the community

We are seeking a vicar who:

- ◆ Is Spirit filled, joyful, and has a personal faith that shows in their daily life
- ◆ Is a good preacher and teacher of the Bible
- ◆ Is at ease with a mix of worship styles
- ◆ Has good communication skills
- ◆ Is approachable and flexible
- ◆ Enjoys community engagement and outreach
- ◆ Is organised and plans ahead effectively
- ◆ Can creatively lead us in fresh expressions of both Church and outreach whilst ensuring we still serve the needs of our older members

# St James Newchapel







## Location

St James' parish is situated at the northern end of Staffordshire close to the Cheshire border.

This gives easy access to the Staffordshire Moorlands and its picturesque villages and scenery as well as Cheshire's rural villages of half timber and local red sandstone buildings.

The church itself sits on a hill in the semi-rural village of Newchapel, close to the towns of Kidsgrove and Tunstall and approx. 6 miles from the city centre of Stoke on Trent.

Stoke-on-Trent is not a single town, but is an amalgamation of 6 towns that came about in 1910. From northwest to southeast the towns are Tunstall, Burslem, Hanley, Stoke, Fenton and Longton. The A500 (just a short drive away) takes you to all of these places. There are train services direct to London, Birmingham and Manchester from Stoke and Kidsgrove stations.

The church is situated next door to the local pub on a road just off the main road and there has been a church building on this site since 1558.

We think Newchapel is a great, friendly place to live, especially for families as there are sports fields, a recently constructed Pump Track for bike riders and several countryside walks all on the doorstep.



We would love our church to have stronger links with the community so that families would come to see our church as their church, not just a building that they drive past.

***"It's welcoming"***

***"It's friendly"***

## **What we offer as a place to live**

The parish is a mix of fields and residential buildings with a few small businesses dotted around. There are approx. 4,000 homes in the parish. The population is mixed in terms of age, but not ethnicity, with incomes ranging from low to average. There are several housing estates.



Part of the Parish is in the borough of Newcastle under Lyme and the rest is within Stoke on Trent City Council. There are two primary schools within the parish, Packmoor and Thursfield, which were both rated as good at their last OFSTED inspections. Both schools make visits to the church and there is potential for stronger links to be made with each of them.

Within the parish boundary there are two Methodist Churches and one Catholic Church. There are also two doctors surgeries with pharmacies, a small CO-OP store and a small care home.

Just outside our parish are two secondary schools and a school for children with special educational needs. There is a Church of England high school in the nearby town of Kidsgrove.

There are cafes, pubs, retail parks, theatres, cinemas, a water park, bowling alley and a ski slope all within a short drive.

The Royal Stoke Hospital is approx. seven and half miles away.

***"I feel comfortable here."***



***"It's brilliant!"***



# What we offer as a church family

A warm and welcoming church family, mostly mature, but with a couple of younger members.

A few members of the church who are well used to leading, speaking, reading and praying at the services to support the vicar.

Church members who are hungry for a closer connection with God and a closer connection with the community.

A worship group who lead worship songs at the Sunday morning service.

A beautiful part of the country well located for town and countryside.

The commitment to reimbursing expenses in full.

To protect your day and time off and valuing holidays and retreats.

Opportunities for community engagement with our established Community Hub.



*"People generally  
look out for one  
another."*

*"I love St James its part of  
my life."*

***"I feel the worship is sincere"***

## Worship

There is a 10:30 am service every Sunday morning.

On the first Sunday of every month we hold a café style church service in our community Hub. This is known as the 'H-all together' service and is generally more relaxed with a simpler, shorter talk. On the second and fourth Sundays of the month we have a communion service.

When there is a fifth Sunday in the month we celebrate an Anointing with Oil Service. This service is particularly important to our church congregation, as there seems to be a greater awareness of the Holy Spirit and many of our members feel empowered, and blessed during this service.

There is a small worship group consisting of singers, a keyboard player and drummers. The team meet weekly to practise.

There is usually coffee, tea and biscuits or cakes in the coffee bar for fellowship at the end of each service.

In the past our church has been charismatic within the Anglican tradition.

We are an evangelical church and the preaching at Saint James is based upon the bible together with the prompting of Holy Spirit. This is undertaken by the

Vicar, and a small number of trusted, experienced members of the church, as determined by the Vicar. (Following diocesan guidelines). Likewise a few of the church members are gifted and experienced in leading services.

Most of the services follow the usual pattern of sung worship, notices, Bible readings, prayer, offering and a talk. The songs are mostly contemporary worship songs. Worship is free with a desire to see God glorified. We sometimes have times of quiet within our worship, waiting for the leading of the Holy Spirit. At certain times of the year, we may have a drama sketch. Other times members share their testimonies. The weekly congregation is between 35-55 with 72 on the electoral roll.



***"I particularly love the congregation's genuine engagement in the Holy Spirit led worship"***



# Serving the community

We believe that it is important to introduce others to Jesus Christ and look for the opportunities to do this in the various activities we do.

## Hopes And Dreams drama group

Our drama group provides a few drama sketches throughout the year. These are primarily for our church services that take place at Easter and Christmas.

## Knit and Natter

This is a weekly activity group at the Hub for adults to share various craft skills as well as having a good time chatting. Regularly attended by 15 to 18 people.



## Toddlers

A weekly activity group at the Hub for parents/carers and toddlers for a time of playing, singing and toast!

## Men's breakfast

A monthly breakfast at a local café open to any man who wants to come. We have a breakfast and discuss a pre-circulated topic from a Christian perspective.

## Ladies breakfast

This has taken place several times a year in the Hub and in local eateries for all ladies who wish to attend. This gives church and community members the chance to get together for general and faith based conversations.

## Craft Fayre/- Indoor car boot/table top sale.

We have been using the Hub for some-time to operate a craft Fayre every few months, inviting local individuals to sell their crafts. We also hold table top sales open to anyone who has items to sell. An all day breakfast and other refreshments are available at these events for a reasonable price.

## Quiz nights

Twice a year we have a quiz night with pie and peas organised by both church and community.

*"The fellowship is wonderful here"*

*"I like the fellowship"*

*"It's like a family to me"*

***"I like the people here.  
They are full of the  
Holy Spirit."***

## **Prayer life and discipleship**

We have a weekly prayer evening, where we pray as the Holy Spirit leads us for those we know who need God's intervention and for the things that God puts on our heart. This is open to anyone who wants to come along for prayer.

We also operate a Prayer Chain of 16 people to pray as needs arise.

A Prayer post equipped with cards and a post box stands in the churchyard for visitors to the churchyard to use. Any Prayer request cards posted are included in the prayer life of the church.

Prayer is available to anyone at the end of each service from a small team of trained prayer ministry members.

There is usually a short period of pre-service prayer before each 10:30 service.

We have a weekly midweek morning Pilgrim Group that encourages discipleship.

We also occasionally run a Start course where people new to the church and baptism and marriage couples can be invited to find out more about the Christian faith.

The last Start course now continues as a regular house group with around 9 core members.

***"I go to other churches and I find this church more spiritual and praising. I find the Lord in this place more than any others."***

## **Our Involvement with the Deanery**

St. James' has 2 reps for the Deanery Synod. There are usually 3 meetings every year and both representatives attended all 3 meetings held in 2024. These meetings were encouraging churches to share their faith with those around us and details of tools, resources and organizations that might help were provided.



*"This is my spiritual home"*

## Buildings and Churchyard

There are two buildings on our site.

It is thought that there has been a chapel on this site since 1288. The current building was erected in 1880 with the chancel being added in 1914.

There have been several alterations over the years but the wooden pews still remain! Three rooms (including a kitchen) were added upstairs at the back of the building with a coffee bar, small office, store room and toilets underneath.

Unfortunately the roof, bell tower and west wall are in need of repair. Some repairs have been done to the roof but the water ingress has made the upstairs rooms Unusable at the moment.

There are several beautiful stained glass windows, the main one being the depiction of Jesus' ascension which is in the chancel.



The church hall (called the Hub) was completed in 2016 and stands adjacent to the main church building. It has a large hall, meeting room, fitted kitchen, toilets and storeroom. The Hub was managed independently from the church but has last year been handed over to Saint James PCC in terms of full management.

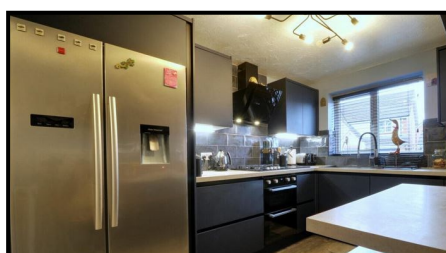
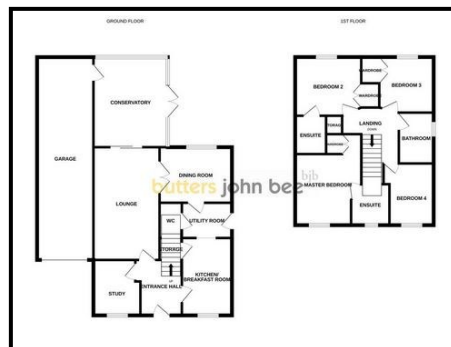
Our church yard is closed to burials other than an interment in an existing grave that has capacity. There is an ashes only plot with limited space. We have an archivist who has a digitized record of the graves.

We now have a community service team who come in two days a week to help maintain the churchyard. Part of the churchyard is closed and under the responsibility of the local authority. The PCC is seeking to close the rest of the churchyard and hand it over to the local authority.



# The Vicarage

The diocese is in the process of purchasing a more modern vicarage (18 Woodpecker Drive Packmoor) on one of the housing estates not far from the church. It has four bedrooms, two with en-suites, a bathroom, study, lounge, dining room, conservatory, kitchen, utility room and a garage.



## Newchapel Community Hub



In 2016 our church hall was officially opened. In the past we have held Pantos, lunch clubs and Messy Church. It has been used by the community for Covid Vaccinations, voting, Pilates ,slimming world, conferences, training, networking/information sharing events and various other activities.

It is currently used regularly by two community groups and by one off users. This is a fantastic resource with great potential.



***“Warm and friendly”***

## **Pastoral offices**

***“Its always been a friendly church –welcoming.”***

### **Baptisms**

Our website provides information to parents who want their child baptised. An application form is provided for download. Baptism preparation is usually carried out by members from the fellowship alongside the vicar.

Parents are usually asked to attend church for several weeks before the baptism takes place.

An application form is provided for download. Couples are requested to attend the services when their banns are read. Marriage preparation has been carried out by married couples from the fellowship in the past, this has more recently been conducted by the Vicar. There has been one wedding since Jan 2022

### **Funerals**

Baptisms usually take place on the third Sunday in the month within the 10:30 am service. There have been four baptisms since Jan 2022

There were 8 funerals in 2022 and 11 in 2023. A memorial service is held at 6.30 on Remembrance Sunday where bereaved families from the previous 12 months are invited to come and light a candle in memory of their loved one.

### **Weddings**

There is information about residency and banns on the website for couples wanting to get married.

## **Overseas Links**

We have links with The Church of the Holy Spirit in Ipoh Malaysia. We have visited them and hosted two visits from some of their members. Our last visit to them was cancelled due to Covid.



***“There is a sense of family and being”***

**“It’s part of the family of God and we all pull together.”**

## **Financial Position**

The financial position of St James church is somewhat stable and the congregation are committed to regular giving either by loose plate, envelope, or bank transfer. Gift aid is claimed as appropriate.

We are currently paying 0.6 of our Common Fund request and all major items of expenditure eg insurance, utilities etc. are paid by Direct Debit and there are no arrears. However the Hub is still paying off arrears for an energy bill.

We will need to increase our Common Fund contribution to 0.8 over the next 3-4 years.

At the end of December 2024 the income and expenditure was as follows

- Church General Fund: Income: £ 4,250pm
- Church General Fund: Expenditure: £ 4,350pm ( included 3% inflation )
- Hub Fund: Income: £ 1,170pm
- Hub Fund: Expenditure: £ 1,030pm ( included 3% inflation )

There is now a card reader in situ in the main body of the church and one that is available for use in the Hub. This will hopefully enable more people to give to the church when visiting for baptisms and weddings etc.

We hold occasional gift days throughout the year for specific needs.

Our church endeavours to tithe by giving money to various charities but has had to cut back on our financial giving over the last few years.

**“I feel the presence of God here in this place and I love my brothers and sisters in Christ who support me in prayer through my sickness.”**



**“There is a real sense of community spirit”**



## Our Challenges

Because our congregation has reduced in number and is aging we are finding it difficult ...

- \* To engage with the community, share the good news of God's love with them and help them to see this church as their church.
- \* To address the lack of under 50s and families in our congregation. We only have one family with 1 child in regular attendance.
- \* To complete the repairs of the building.

## Our Vision

### Our congregation's hopes for the future

We would like ...

- \* Our church to be a spirit filled place of healing and inspiration to all, where everyone is encouraged to grow in faith.
- \* To build stronger relationships with our community, attracting families so that we can build a congregation of new believers who will be the ones to carry the Christian message of "Good News" into the future.
- \* A full, Spirit filled, vibrant church that is a beacon of light.
- \* The reinstatement of All Age Worship
- \* To see the church grow spiritually as well as numerically.
- \* To meet with like minded Christians on courses and worship seminars.

When members were asked what they would change about St James many said

**"Nothing!"**

A few said **"The roof!"**

Some said **"More provision for children."**

Some said **"More people."**

One or two said **"Sing less songs."**

Someone said **"Less chatting, more reverence before the service."**

Someone else said **"Strong leadership."**

# MOW COP



## PARISH PROFILE 2025



The Parish of Mow Cop went into vacancy in March 2025 having been a house for duty post for two and a half years. The Vicar worked one to two days a week plus Sunday.



Mow Cop is on a prominent hill at the southern tip of the Pennine chain and close to the Peak District. The village has spectacular views over Staffordshire, Cheshire and Derbyshire. The boundary between Cheshire and Staffordshire runs across the Gritstone ridge as does the Diocesan boundary between Chester and Lichfield as well as between the Archbishoprics of Canterbury and York. St Thomas' Parish falls mostly on the Staffordshire side of the hill and its environs.

The parish is situated partly on the north east edge of Kids Grove, within the Newcastle Borough Council and partly on the edge of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council under the care of Biddulph Town Council. It serves the communities of Mow Cop (Staffordshire side) and sections of Harriseahead, Dales Green, Rookery, Brown Lees and Gillow Heath.

Mow Cop is formed from one of the oldest rocks in England. On top of the rock stands the iconic 18<sup>th</sup> Century folly or Castle, built as a summerhouse but now a ruin preserved by the National Trust. The National Trust also manage other local places of interest such as Biddulph Grange Gardens and the Tudor house of Little Morton Hall. From the top of the rock on clear days we can see the start of the Welsh hills, Liverpool Cathedral, Manchester Airport and Jodrell Bank Astronomical Radio Telescope dish.



Stoke-on-Trent has both a city centre shopping centre in Hanley and the out of town Festival Retail Park. The City Museum and Art Gallery has a world-class collection of ceramics. Hanley's Regent Theatre boasts facilities unequalled outside London and is the venue for ballet and opera (including Glyndebourne). The New Vic Theatre in nearby Newcastle-under-Lyme has a national reputation as an innovator in theatre-in-the-round. Major orchestras and soloists perform at Hanley's Victoria Hall and nearby Keele University hosts regular chamber concerts. There is a multi-screen Odeon Cinema at Festival Park, the Vue in Newcastle and an independent Film Theatre on the Stoke Campus of Staffordshire University.





Mow Cop was the birthplace of Primitive Methodism. Ecumenism within the UK simply isn't what it was a couple of decades ago. However the presence of Matthew, the pastor, at the Community Church has been an encouragement, also the arrival of the Methodist Minister, Yan Yan Case has proven a real blessing in the village. We have planned a number of shared services with these churches and we hope that good relations will continue in the future.

Our Church dates from the same period of church building as several chapels in the area, being built between 1841-42 from local buff Gritstone at a total cost of some £1,665. It is a simple Commissioners Church with a lovely open and plain feel about the

building.



The local community of Mow Cop just over 2000 inhabitants and consists of scattered cottages with an infill of moderately expensive private housing. It comprises mostly ribbon development although we are seeing the national trend of larger gardens being sold off to fit in more new build housing. The inhabitants are moderately well off with lower-than-average poverty either for families or pensioners. Being on the edge of the rural surrounding area we also serve local farms, small holdings, small firms and livery stables.

There is a balance between the elderly retired population and the young families living in the parish. There are two groups of public housing, one just adjacent to the church and one in the Rookery area near to Kidsgrove.

We have a local Primary School within the parish. We have good links with the school. Which uses our hall as safe space. Our previous Vicar endeavoured to be evangelistic and engaging through his work with Castle Primary School where he took assemblies every fortnight and with special services three times a year within church. A fortnightly 'Open the Book' team is welcomed within the school on the alternate weeks. The parishioners doing this use puppets, since the number of parishioners involved has been reduced. Good relationships have built up between both the staff and pupils and members of our congregation.



## Church Buildings

There are two buildings that comprise the properties of St Thomas Church. The Church Hall which is known as the Mow Cop Community Hall and the Church itself.

**Mow Cop Community Hall** was built in 1843, out of the same local gritstone as the church. It was the Church School but later served as the Parish Hall. It has its own small car park and toilets that the congregation use as the church does not have this facility. In 2010 a Residents Association took over the running of the then dilapidated hall. It was sustainably renovated and brought back into use for the Community. Children from the primary schools placed a time capsule, containing items that they thought would be of interest in the



future, under the new floor. After the demise of the Association the building was handed back to the Parish but was kept as a Community Asset where it runs very successfully hosting a range of groups, Yoga, Gongs, Mow Cop Runners, Good Companions, parties and church events.

**St Thomas' Church** is a small commissioner's church, comprising a three-bay nave and a short chancel. The inside of the church has been described as a plain box like space that used to have a gallery. Its interior is like the non-conformist chapels in the area with which at first it had to compete. It is built of coursed gritstone with ashlar dressings, buttresses and lancet windows. The interior has a pointed chancel arch and timber trusses with vertical struts. The chancel that had choir stalls has had new flooring and the choir pews removed to make a versatile space for both worship and for musical events. The sides of the chancel have been screened off on one side for a small pipe organ and the other to form the vestry. Again, the chancel seems to flow into the nave to create the one space and the warm atmosphere that we have come to love so much. The east window installed in 1876 depicts Christ the Good Shepherd.

Recently new lighting has been installed and the Chancel and the porch have been repainted.

We have removed some pews to install a tea-bar for after service refreshments. However, some work needs doing to weatherproof the west end and tower as the increasingly violent storms come straight over the Cheshire plain and hit our west end.



## **The Congregation**

The congregation is mostly of older folk but with a fair range of working age people mixed in. As with most churches there is a small but enthusiastic crowd who take on multiple roles. Bible Studies have taken place on a monthly basis with a small committed number. We have a monthly Coffee Morning in the Hall (Good Companions). We have had several people attend who are not church members. We have an annual trip.

The thing that strikes people the first time they walk into our church is just how warm and friendly everyone is and how inclusive we are.

## **Sunday Worship**

We have had a fairly stable congregation of between 18 and 26. We are not afraid to welcome God's children in whatever form they take whether they are reforming alcoholics or those questioning their place within society.

The congregation love to sing, they like both modern worship songs as well as old favourites; most of which are contained in latest Mission Praise. We use the ESV as our Pew Bibles and use Common Worship as the basis of our service sheets.

## **Special Services and Occasional Offices**

Connect at 4 has been running for the last two years at 4pm on a Sunday afternoon for parents or grandparents with their children. It runs for 45 minutes and includes a quiz and activity. This has brought many Baptisms to the church and families continue to come to Connect at 4.

Some Baptisms are so large they must be separate and are often linked to a Community Hall booking for a party.

**The Electoral Roll** at the AGM in February 2025 was 34.

## **Committees**

There are three main committees involved in the work at St Thomas'. There is a **Standing Committee** consisting of Clergy, Churchwardens, Treasurer and Deanery Synod Reps. This committee can take executive decisions between PCC meetings and has the power to agree a limited expenditure. There is the **Mow Cop Community Hall Committee** which involves our Hall Chairman/Manager and several others, both church and non-church members, who look after the day to day running of the hall and manage the fundraising aspects of the hall life. There is the **PCC** which consists of two Churchwardens, a Treasurer, a Secretary and one other member who organises weddings and funerals.



There is a closed mature graveyard some of which is set aside as a conservation area. There are a number of interesting graves including that of one young girl who was so big she was buried in a piano box and a British & Commonwealth War grave. The mature trees, mostly beech and sycamore house a colony of noisy Rooks. It is a peaceful area within which to collect one self. Around it is the native holly that grows so much on the hill...and of course ivy. Only family graves are occasionally used but there is a busy memorial garden for the interment of ashes. Newcastle Borough Council maintains it although we do have monthly maintenance days when volunteers clean the church and work in the graveyard to help keep it tidy. The church members are pleased that they are joined by members of the community who enjoy the fellowship, roast potatoes and other refreshments.



### **Charity Giving**

We view Charity giving as an important part of our work as a church. Our charity giving was £1108 in 2024 was divided between UCB, Ripple Effect, Tearfund and MNDA. This is 10% of our collections.

For such a small church we are so grateful to be able to pay our Common Fund request to the Diocese when so many churches have been unable to meet this contribution.

### **To the Person Reading this Profile**

You will no doubt have read many Parish Profiles and wondered where God is leading you. We want only what God Himself wants. The person who is led by the Holy Spirit will know and recognise that calling and as you care for us we will aim to care for you as well. You will be warmly welcomed to our happy and caring church. God bless.

