

# St Andrew Cathedral Church, Aberdeen SC 001058

## AGM 2024 Reports

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### **The following were invited to submit a Report.**

Report of the organisations

Secretary to the Board of Trustees (John Walker)

Treasurer (Constance Lumsden)

Paying Officer & Catering (Kathy Priestly)

People's Warden, Stewards (Lorna Andersen)

Sacristan (George MacAllan)

Choir Warden (Richard Coleman)

Buildings Report (Robert Gray)

Sunday School (Julie Nwajiuba)

Events & Flowers (Maira Middleton)

Creche (Maira Middleton, Oge Ibenegbu & Christine Flett)

Mothers Union (Maira Middleton / Kathy Priestley)

Hospitality & Families (Oge Ibenegbu)

Liturgy of Peace (Adewale Oluwale)

Cathedral @ Noon (Sam Paul)

Summer Guided Tours (Rector)

Faith in the City – Talks (David Atkinson)

SACA Online (Adewale Oluwale)

Gift Aid Officer (Mark Edwards)

Social Fundraising & Promotions (Prof A Poobalan)

We are grateful to all who were able to submit. The outstanding Reports may be made available as they are submitted. We thank God for this wonder of being God's People.

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## 1. Board of Trustees Report for the year 2023-24

The Board of Trustees of St Andrew Cathedral Church Aberdeen consists of four elected members of the congregation, two Wardens, two Diocesan Trustees, the Lay Representative, the Bishop, the Provost, the Secretary, the Treasurer.

The Board met seven times in the year from the Feast of Christ the King (FoCtK) 2023 to FoCtK 2024. Highlights from the Trustees meeting shapes the Report for the AGM 2024.

### 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023 (1)

+ Dorsey kindly offered to work with Fr Isaac towards a congregational meeting on supporting the growth in the congregation, outreach in the community and shape the future of the Cathedral at his upcoming Visitation on January 14, 2024.

+ Dorsey reminded the meeting that we are spiritual elders as well as trustees of the charity. He would like to have a Saturday conference for the diocese touching on this and also one for Church Treasurers.

**Homologation of Sam Paul as Trustee** representing Choir and Music related business. This was agreed unanimously. (To be elected at the AGM for a 3 year term).

IP reported on initial conversations with Prof Maryn Percy, Robert Gray and the bishop on ways of partnering with churches in the US.

### 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024 (2)

Bishop Dorsey offered to assist with a teaching mission on Christian Giving to encourage congregation with increased giving as part of his next visit.

**Quota:** contributing is made difficult by the lack of mission and leadership from the diocese. The secretary was charged with requesting full copies of recent diocesan accounts, quota levied on us and information on how quota is currently calculated. It was agreed that we continue to contribute 10% of our FWO.

With regard to the development plan the Bishop and Martyn Percy have offered to help us move it forward. The project of extending and upgrading toilet facilities was identified as a priority.

It was agreed to commission three colourful banners for display to the North of the porch on King St welcoming visitors, giving notice of the Liturgy of Peace, Cathedral @ Noon Concerts and Choral Evensongs.

**Status of St Andrew's as the Cathedral of the diocese:** It was reported that several people in the Diocese and the City have queried about the lack of clarity re. the Cathedral of the Diocese.

### 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024 (3)

The roof needs repaired, we have two quotes. It was agreed that we accept the lower one. Robert has secured £18K in grants towards this. We will need to match these. We have made an Insurance Claim on Storm Babet (18-21 October 2023) and await outcome.

(£13k was awarded by our Insurers)

**Cathedral Floor Maintenance:** It was agreed to clean and protect the wooden floors in the Cathedral.

Fr Isaac commented that the Cathedral is thriving. Worshipping numbers are very good. He referenced Revd Adewole's observation that every Sunday we see new people. Children's ministry needs more attention.

#### 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024 (4)

Approval of Annual (OSCR) Accounts 2022-23, Balance and Finances: These were examined and adopted nem con proposed DA, seconded LA. Particular thanks were expressed to Paul Dixon and Mark Edwards.

Update on **works on Seabury (Mi kasa) House** and JSC All the electricals are now up to date, so we may safely use the entire building unrestricted.

**Civic initiative.** Silver City Space and Heritage Conversation. Possibility of a sum of around £1M depending on the success of the application by the Council to the Heritage Lottery Fund. A focus on 'well being' of a spiritual character in our premises would complement that of the nearby Health Village, an NHS facility.

**A just resolution for the Cathedral** – Thy Kingdom Come Campaign: The phrase 'just resolution' comes from the Independent Report by the Very Revd Prof Sir Iain Torrance on the Diocese of 2022 commissioned by our College of Bishops.

**Cathedral Sunday** – 23rd June 2024 (June 28, 1948) Although the Seabury Memorial was completed in 1938 it was not consecrated till June the 28th, 1948. There will be a festive service, congregational lunch and Choral Evensong to mark the day as 'Cathedral Sunday'.

Some fine photos of the Cathedral have been taken recently. We plan to hold an exhibition over the Summer this year as a way of **increasing the visibility for the Cathedral.**

#### 14<sup>th</sup> August 2024 (5)

IP updated that a handrail has been installed on the stairs to the upper room in the Seabury building. He had asked for a quote to install handrail to the landing.

He also reported that there is a meeting with the **Aberdeen City Heritage and Place Programme** tomorrow WRT the landscaping of Seabury Court and the restoration of Seabury House. Sam Paul and IP will meet with Sian Loftus, Senior Project Officer. The Programme is scheduled for 2025-2030. There are no immediate plans for the demolition of the JSC as it currently produces a revenue of £1K pcm.

It was noted with regard to the **lost revenue**, that FWO receipts doubled when an appeal was launched in March 2020. It declined immediately after the news of 'temporary closure' in June 2020.

It was also noted that the **misrepresentation of the status of St Andrew's as 'Closed' by the diocese** even after it was opened for worship since Advent 2021 added to further loss of revenue.

The Paying Officer observed that if a) the Grants formerly assigned to the Cathedral from the Dr John Anderson Trust Fund and retained by the Diocese is paid out, b) the annual Cathedral Grants from the All Churches Trust Grants retracted at the instruction of the Diocese is reinstated and reimbursed, c) engage in a review of the Quota in conversation with the BoT is agreed, d) misinformation about the 'closed' status of the Cathedral is ended, the net impact would make a substantial difference to the finances of St Andrews, future development and a collaborative vision for the city and the diocese.

We are in a season of prayer from the Transfiguration to Holy Cross Day. The season will end with the **Away Day**. Bishop's House in Old Aberdeen has been booked from 0900 to 1500. Consideration will be

given to + Dorsey's 'Way Forward' letter and Constance's response amongst other matters. (**The Revd Prof Martyn Percy had kindly agreed to lead us** and Bishop Hugh will be with us to pray us and bless us).

A number of our youth avoided church on Sunday through social media information that rioting in other parts of the UK might be reproduced in Aberdeen. Bp Ian suggested that have a **security policy and an action plan** for such incidents and plan for contingencies.

Bp Ian reassured the Board that he is here to listen and looking forward to being of service to us.

**9<sup>th</sup> October 2024 (6)**

Deficit Reduction Group: Measures are being put in place to control expenditure and improve revenue. A dedicated group is to be formed. The current monthly deficit is around £400, around 12% of budgeted expenditure. This is manageable.

#### **Communication:**

- The Trustees felt that we need to communicate the situation to the congregation.
- We should explore seeking sponsors / donors for particular items of expenditure.
- Special appeals on a monthly, even a weekly occurrence is norm in the churches in India and Nigeria.
- We need to identify someone who can talk about money to the congregation in a sharp, focused and effective way.
- Use of WhatsApp and other Social Media must be considered.
- We need a comprehensive stewardship campaign.
- We might appeal to other congregations for someone with the appropriate skill set to assist or advise us.
- We need someone with our diverse cultural awareness who can explain financial matters in a culturally relevant way.
- There's a place for small groups as part of this, an 'each one reach one' method of spreading the word.
- Prof David Atkinson offered to calculate the cost of offering one of our Sunday worship services.

**Temporary relocation of the Altar** has been very successful. Canon 35 will be applied for from the Diocesan Buildings Committee at the end of 9 months experimental period.

The windows to the Upper Room in Seabury House has been rectified by our Preferred Builder. Stairs to the upper level is secure now, kindly done by our Preferred Builder.

The Trustees noted the recent announcement on the Canon 54 process. They considered the risk to the Charity resulting from the announcement. They felt that it raises safeguarding issues arising from past experience. They acknowledged their duty to protect vulnerable people in the community including our staff. It was agreed to meet with the Safeguarding Officer and the Wardens to put measures in place to address the risks involved and put measures in place to mitigate those risks.

**Celebration of Andrew and Claire Morrison:** Andrew and Claire spent a weekend with us recently which included a Civic Reception by the Lord Provost of Aberdeen, a performance of Tallis's Spem in

Alium and two Festal Evensongs. We are greatly indebted to them for their continuing support of the music life of the Cathedral.

**13<sup>th</sup> November 2024 (7)**

Constance has stepped down as Treasurer as of the end of the financial year, Sept 30<sup>th</sup>. The Finance Team will continue to keep the books and process the migration Sage Accounting System. We are grateful to the assistance Mrs Marianne Douglas who has kindly offer to support us while we seek to appoint a Treasurer.

**Adewole Licensing:** Bishop Ian Paton Presented the Permission to Officiate to the Revd Adewale Oluwole in the Cathedral on Wednesday the 30<sup>th</sup> of October following the submission of all necessary documents and PVG clearance.

**Accounts update:** The Summary accounts to be submitted to the AGM were received and unanimously approved by the Trustees. A full set of accounts will be submitted in due course to the external examiner and then to OSCR to meet their deadline. We have received two legacies this year totalling £42K. £50K will be transferred to the interest bearing CAF account.

Work on the higher level of the roof above the nave is in train. It is highly desirable that we commission repair work on both levels. We will need to raise funds to complete the work on the lower level. This will require another £40K.

Aberdeen is one of six locations nationwide of the Royal Foundation Charity 'Homewards' Fr Isaac has been invited to chair the steering group.

The Revd Dr Isaac Poobalan (Chair)

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### **Sunday School**

Sunday School usually starts 10:45am same time as church service. There is a total of 20 children but number differs each Sunday of between 12 to 16 depending on attendance.

We usually start with prayer, greetings and reading the bible afterwards will be teaching from the bible reading. Recently we have been practicing some songs and Isaac was able to join us few weeks ago which was very pleasant.

We are currently organising Christmas party for all children including the Crèche children too. There will be games, Christmas songs & some finger foods - there will be present given to the children by Santa (which they are all looking towards too).

Julie Nwajiuba

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### **Stewards Report**

We have six stewards who welcome visitors and regular attenders to our services, take up the offerings, and direct the congregation to the altar. They are watchful during the services and are available to assist anyone who requires help. We also appreciate those who ensure that the Hymnals and orders of service are in place at the start of each service.

Four stewards have agreed to act as Emergency Marshals in the event of a need to evacuate the building. We are very grateful to these gentlemen for agreeing to take on this responsibility.

Volunteers have also assisted with essential marking of safety hazards. Some areas still require work and offers of help would be much appreciated.

Lorna Andersen, Peoples' Warden

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## **LITURGY OF PEACE**

Our weekly Liturgy of Peace services, held every Thursday from 7 pm to 8 pm, remain a rejuvenating time for connection with God and our community. As we collectively seek divine peace for the world, our consistent attendance and enriching fellowship experiences have been invaluable.

## **SACA Online**

The cathedral's online presence continues to thrive, with an average of 400 weekly views. Our dedication to sharing God's message remains steadfast as we offer services throughout the week, fostering a strong virtual community united in faith.

Revd Adewale Oluwole

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## **Buildings Report**

This year I have spent almost half my time away from Aberdeen which has made being effective quite challenging. BUT, there is eventually some scaffolding outside the church so there is progress. Getting the church to a wind and watertight stage should be achieved soon. This will allow everyone to pause, catch their breath, think about what the best way forward should be and work out how that can best be achieved.

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## **Faith in the City**

Our Cathedral is set unequivocally in the City of Aberdeen but it also provides encouragement and a degree of Focus for the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney. One of the ways in which it does this is by engaging with issues which impact the society in which we live. In the year gone by this included reflecting on the potential impact upon Society of Artificial Intelligence. With the help of speakers from The Robert Gordon University we considered its potential impact upon democracy, education, employment and how churches might in the future communicate with society. Although it is not long since our discussions many of the predictions seem to have come to pass; we now have the prospect of a digital Michael Parkinson interviewing new guests while algorithms become more and more pervasive. It matters that St Andrews continues to keep up with subjects which in the future may control the direction of lives and thus impact faith.

David Atkinson

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## **FLOWER REPORT 2024**

The flowers in the Cathedral are provided by volunteers who have formed into three teams of 2 overseeing the flowers for 2 weeks at a time. This means that nobody is alone in the Cathedral. This is working well. We have some artificial flower displays which we place around the Cathedral to add a bit of colour and save money. We hope you enjoyed the Harvest Flowers and I would like to thank the helpers for working hard to provide you with the lovely displays. I would also like to thank the members of the congregation who regularly give money towards the flowers and would ask that more people consider doing this especially as Christmas is coming up and flowers are more expensive at this time. Donations can be given to me or put in a gift aid envelope with FLOWERS written at the top and put in the collection plate during a service. If anyone would like to volunteer to help with the flowers, please let me know.

Moira Middleton , Flower Secretary

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## **CRECHE REPORT 2024**

The Creche continues as usual in the JSC at 10.45 on a Sunday morning. We had 13 children registered from a few months up to 4 years old. Numbers have varied weekly from 2 to 8. There are 3 regular Creche workers and we rely on help from some of the mums when we are busy. Sadly, we lost our dear friend Kathleen Kilgour in December last year who has been greatly missed by ourselves and the children. Two of our children moved to Sunday School in August this year after starting Primary School. As there are a few new babies in the congregation this year we hope they will join us when they are old enough and this will boost our numbers. Thanks to Lorna and Kathy for letting us know when to come over to the Service.

Moira Middleton, Christine Flett & Oge Ibenegbu

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## **Events 2024**

This year Christine Flett and myself organised the Cathedral Stall at the Gallowgate Gala in August. We had half the Stall with a Bottle and Gift Tombola and the other half with Cake and Candy and Crafts. This was an enjoyable day and we would like to thank the many people who came to help us set up, run and the tidy up afterwards. Everything we had left was taken back to the Cathedral where we organised a smaller stall a couple of weeks later. Overall, we raised about £500 and had good fun in the process. We will once again join Amu at the Advent Stall with crafts and a Raffle.

Christine Flett, Moira Middleton

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## **People's Warden Report**

Thank you to all who serve in so many ways in our Cathedral.

We are so very grateful to all who have given their time and energy to keep our premises open, provide refreshments, organise rotas, look after our little ones, teach our children, sing like angels in our choir stalls, clean the floors, order the supplies and smile at our visitors.

Just a special mention of stewards at this point. We particularly thank those who have served as stewards in the past, continue to serve in the present and are encouraging others to join them. They are so very helpful, and important, in the following areas:

### **Stewards**

- welcome visitors and regular attenders at the door, handing out service booklets and answering questions;
- take up the offerings or direct the congregation to the altar;
- are present at the altar rail to assist anyone who requires help with the stairs;
- all stewards are watchful during the services and are ready to assist anyone who requires help;
- \* ALL stewards are aware of the need for prompt action in the case of an emergency.

Some of the stewards have agreed to act as Emergency Marshals in the event of a need to evacuate the building. We are very grateful to those who have agreed to identify safe exit routes from the building on a regular basis.

Our **Volunteers** are always needed and they offer their services in many areas:

Assisting with the essential marking of safety hazards. This tends to be a never-ending task both inside and outside. Some areas still require work and offers of help would be much appreciated.

Work on the outside access to JSC is also a never-ending task. Bad weather, snow, weeds, and loose cobbles account for many hazards and, as winter takes a grip on the land, we will need helpers to ensure the safety of those walking to JSC following the services.

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### **Fundraising and Promotions Group – Report for the AGM 2024**

Fundraising and Promotions Group (FPG), set up in 2022, continues to organise small-scale social fundraising events; and strives to promote/increase the footfall in St Andrew's through hospitality.

These fundraising efforts raised £1554.00 in this calendar year. With the grace of God, we hope to increase our target to £5000.00. At our recent meeting, we acknowledged that most of our fundraising efforts are still focused internally. Going forward we aim to look at events that are attractive to the community external to St Andrew's Cathedral.

We would welcome any ideas for fundraising and please do come forward to help us with these efforts ([a.poobalan@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:a.poobalan@abdn.ac.uk))

### **Social fundraising events conducted in 2023-24**

We raised funds while having a lot of fun

- **On 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec 2023**, we had our Advent stall which brought people and conversations together over the Festive period.
- **On 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024**, we had our Burns Supper fundraising event, with music from Jim and Marrisa Addison and John Montgomery. It was done in the afternoon for the first time and was very well attended. We will do that model again on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025 (TBC).
- **On 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024**, we had our Shrove Tuesday fundraising event with a pancake-flipping competition.
- **On 27<sup>th</sup> May 2023**, we had the Strawberry Tea following the Cathedral@Noon recital by Con Anima Chamber Choir.

### **Hospitality Events to welcome the wider God's community into the sacred space**

FPG continues to provide hospitality for various events that bring people together connecting us with our history and heritage, developing friendships, and providing support to many during the hardest times in our life journeys. Some of the events are listed below:

- Working closely with Mr Sam Paul, we welcomed music events and church groups from beyond the borders to visit the Cathedral and will continue to do so in 2025
  - University of Aberdeen Chamber Choir sang a Concert of Rachmaninoff's All-night Vigil on **8<sup>th</sup> June 2024**.
  - Holy Innocents Episcopal Church, Georgia, USA visited on **11<sup>th</sup> June 2024** for a workshop with Prof Paul Mealar at the Cathedral.
  - Youth pilgrimage from Sioux Falls in South Dakota visited St Andrews on **12<sup>th</sup> June 2024** to connect with their church heritage. Four teenagers and 2 youth leaders (with a family of 2 young children) enjoyed the stay and hospitality of a Cathedral Trustee
  - All Saints Episcopal Church in Richmond, Virginia, USA will sing at our Sunday Eucharist on **June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025** with a light lunch afterwards.



- St. Bride's Anglican Church in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada will sing Choral Evensong on **9<sup>th</sup> July 2025** with refreshments afterwards.
- We host "You, Me and a Cup of Tea" – Outreach event together with Refugee Scotland and Faith Communities regularly
- We provide hospitality after the Cathedral@Noon recitals
- Liturgy of Peace every Thursday with Eucharist at 7pm continues with refreshments afterwards.
- FPG work closely with LaRCs team (Ladies for the Restoration of the Church) and continues to provide and enjoy hospitality after the important events of the liturgical year (Mothering Sunday, Pentecost, Harvest Thanksgiving etc)

Amu Poobalan on behalf of FPG (Kathy Priestly, Lorna Andersen, Lesley Milne and Elizabeth Poobalan)

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### **Catering**

Our catering team looks after us in many ways.

Sunday refreshments are provided by 5 teams of 2 or 3 people. Our men's team continue to excel and perhaps this coming year we can look forward to a second men's team. The teams provide the milk, many of you contribute biscuits, tea and coffee and often other goodies. Thank you all very much for your thoughtful and generous gestures. Volunteers wishing to join in will be joyfully received.

Refreshments after Cathedral special events You will see the team serving refreshments after the Advent Carol Service and Nine Lessons. We do this mainly through voluntary contributions so please be generous.

All help in either setting up or helping on the night appreciated. We also provide tea and a fine piece for the choir between rehearsal and event.

We can also cater for funerals on requests from the bereaved family.

Basically your catering team is ready and willing. It is fun - please join us Thank you team.

Kathy Priestley tel 07703462713.

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### **Paying Officer**

This role is to do the day to day practical administration of the accounts. I would examine the invoices and expenses as they come in and pay by bank transfer or cheque if the spend had been agreed. The payroll is also part of the job.

All figures are carefully recorded and sent to Mark to enter them into the online outgoing expenses journal.

Another part of the role is to record usage of utilities etc.

I would check the accounts for money coming in ie rents This is not a lone job - all our figures are checked meticulously by the team. Your money is in safe hands.

Please understand that although there is confidential information in the incoming accounts this is never shared with anyone.

Kathy Priestley

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## Music Report for AGM on 24 November 2024.

Choir activities continue at St Andrews Cathedral, summarised as follows.

**Trebles' Choir.** For most of the past year, the trebles have been trained and directed by Emma Bell, covering Elizabeth Poobalan's year away. Since her return, Elizabeth has now resumed this role and trebles continue to sing for the Eucharist service on Sunday mornings.

**Choral Evening Services.** Adult singers have sung for 20 evening services during the past year, coordinated by Richard Coleman. Typically, about 12-14 singers attend each service from a list of around 24 regularly invited. The liturgical year started with three carol services (Advent, Nine Lessons and Carols, Epiphany) after which there were services of choral evensong, with a break in July and August. There was a sung Eucharist on Maundy Thursday. Several volunteer organists and directors (ie conductors) have taken part on different occasions. There have been 2 evensongs involving singing students from the Aberdeen City Music School singing alongside our choir members.

**Aberdeen Cathedral Voices.** Members of the adult choir and former choir members met in Durham in June 2024 to sing three choral services at the Cathedral.

**Director of Music Emeritus.** St Andrews is most fortunate that Prof Andrew Morrisson continues to act as Director of Music Emeritus, visiting Aberdeen on several occasions during the past year. It is much appreciated that he has also been available to provide advice and support from a distance at other times.

**Celebration weekend.** Over the last weekend in September there was a weekend of music to celebrate the work of Andrew and Claire Morrisson at the Cathedral over many decades. This was, in effect, the farewell party that could not occur when they left, during the time of pandemic restrictions. It included a performance (for Cathedral at Noon) of Tallis' 40-part motet Spem in Alium.

RJC 211124

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## Report from the Lay Representative

The Synod of the United Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney was held on Saturday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 2024. The Synod Eucharist was held at the Kings College Chapel and the Synod met in the Bishop Elphinstone Hall, as it was the custom of this church in 1674 when Patric Scougal was the Bishop and his son Henry was the preacher.

Bishop Dorsey McConnell Presided over the Synod Eucharist and in his Charge stated that, 'Jesus is always about exactly what we should be about. In case of the Temple in Jerusalem, he is grieved by what he sees – the profiteering of the money changes, the exploitation of the poor, who had no choice but to buy officially approved animals for sacrifice, with officially minted temple coins (the exchange rate was not a bargain) so that by the time they got to the point where they might worship God and offer their sacrifice, they probably just wanted it all to end. Jesus realizes this can't be slightly changed or modified. The whole thing has to be taken apart just so that people can pray again. Hence, the whip of cords, the driving out, the overturning tables, in short, the righteous anger of the Lord.'

The Synod report included Report from the St Andrew Cathedral Church, stating our financial position and our commitment to support the work of the Diocese and the Province but contributing 10% of our Free Will Offertory in accordance with the Scriptural mandate instead of the Quota levied by the Diocese.

Highlight of the Synod besides the Charge by the Bishop included the Canon on Safeguarding and the commitment of the Scottish Episcopal Church towards Net Zero.

Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults received special attention due to Complaints received from members of the our Diocese and the subsequent Canon 54 process which remains unresolved to this day.

The Cathedral is committed to leading the way in the diocese by responsible use of our energy consumption. The Cathedral is the largest congregation with average weekly attendance of 120 people for worship and 100 people for events and visits.

Nonso Ibenegbu

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### **Sacristy and Servers**

Another interesting year for sacristy and serving team. G MacAllan.

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### **Ministry Team in the Sacristy**

On behalf of the Ministry Team which includes Henna Cundhill, Revd Adewale Oluwole, the Revd Prof Martyn Percy, the Revd Dr Emma Percy, Revd John Walker, Revd David Atkinson and I, the Rector, I would like to register a very special thank you to George MacAllan for transforming worship into to an offering of beauty, order and joy.

The one sentence report defines George's modesty. The proof is in the pudding. We have seen the Sacristy Team grow from None to about seven people on a good Sunday.

I did not plan to write a Report on behalf of the Ministry Team. But, George's one liner, prompted me to unpack that one line. First, I shall report on Sacristy activities and then on the blessing of the Ministry Team at the Cathedral.

### **Sacristy**

It is a relief for me, having been the sole operator of the Sacristy, to have George in position to keep Sacristy supplies ordered on time and kept full. All altar linen are kept in excellent condition and the weekly washing and ironing done by our People's Warden, Lorna is a blessing.

Vestments are organised and prepared to reflect the season, high days and holydays. Altar frontals, lectern and pulpit are prepared on time and in excellent order.

Five young people have been recruited, trained presented at the Eucharist.

The meaning of the words of the Psalmist, 'I am fearfully and wonderfully made' takes the most profound meaning in the Cathedral community. The Revd Prof Martyn Percy has done some research and says that St Andrew Cathedral Church is the most diverse Cathedral community in the British Isles. The hidden beauty in our most diverse community is the highest incident of neurodiversity. We were known for the wonderful way we managed this gift, until we were exiled, by coercion and force. However, it seems that it is the WILL OF GOD to see this beauty revived and renewed. This is our heritage and we shall flourish by the grace and the power of God.

George is one of our amazing people of God who have the gift and the grace to work with our diverse family, with patience and commitment. I love our Eucharist when our young people get twitchy and appear to be distracted. When you converse with them, listening carefully and without an attitude of challenge, they say most profound things.

On Sundays, almost each Sunday, we have those divine surprises. Managing those surprises is a gift. Our sacristy and servers team is the most versatile and I would like it in no other way because I believe it is God's special grace to us.

## Ministry Team

May we dare to join the Psalmist (4.1) and say, 'Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress' and praise God for the wonderful ways in which God enlarged us in our times of distress. We returned to worship in the Cathedral in Advent 2021 and we were small in number. It was God's will to enlarge us. Henna Cundhill and Family began worshipping at the Cathedral soon after. Fr John Walker and Fiona began to worship at the Cathedral, soon after their retirement from the group of Donside Churches. Fr Sam and his family joined us and made an impact on the Cathedral family. Revd Adewale and family joined us soon after, truly God's plan to enlarge us. These were sure sign of God's plan and purpose for us. We welcomed Emma and Martyn Percy at the Confirmation service Presided by Bishop John Armes at Candlemas 2023. Ever since, they have been an immense source of blessing to the Cathedral, in Presiding at the Eucharist and Preaching. Bishop Dorsey was a great encouragement to the Cathedral Ministry Team and Bishop Ian completed the formation by Presenting Ade with the Permission to Officiate.

The full potential of the team is yet to be explored. Uncertainties in our Diocese is a major setback in releasing the power of God and exercise our call to be the Flagship of the Spirit. We remain in prayer.

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## GIFT AID OFFICER REPORT TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024

### Overview

In Financial Year 2023-24, the Cathedral received a total Gift Aid rebate from HMRC of £10,000.05, from £40,000.20 of eligible donations. This represents a year-on-year decrease from the previous financial year of £1,109.00.

Donations are recorded weekly in the Cathedral's financial journals and an aggregated claim for rebate made to HMRC on a quarterly basis.

### Donations

#### Gift-aid eligible donations received to the General (Operating) account

Direct Bank Credit (by Declared donors): £27,640 (FY22-23 £32,922)

Gift Aid Envelopes: £6,034 (FY22-23 £5,115)

Gift-aid small donation scheme: £5,072 (split across two discrete tax years)

#### Gift-aid eligible donations received to the Development account

Direct Bank Credit (by Declared donors): £1,255

All donations made to the Development account were by Direct Bank Credit.

Active Donor count for regular Freewill offering at the start of the financial year was 38, down from 41 at the start of last year, but up from 33 at the end of last year. Throughout the year, an average of 28 donors gave on a fixed monthly or quarterly basis.

In closing, I would like to thank again, the members of our Counting and Banking team who consistently, and so generously, give of their time to provide me with the information that I need to discharge my role in a timely manner. To each of you 'Thank you'.

And to those who through the year have urged donors to consider completing Declarations, again I say, 'Thank you'.

Mark Edwards, November 2024, *Gift Aid Officer, St Andrew's Cathedral Church, for and on behalf of The Board of Trustees*