

# THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN-AT-HAMPSTEAD

## WHAT IS CHRISTIAN GIVING?

*'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also'*  
Matthew 6:21

*Our church is a centre of worship, social action and historic beauty in the heart of our community. It costs about £1,000 a day to run.*

*Our income has fallen over recent years and we need to replace it. If enough people gave the cost of just one coffee a day, we would have what we need to continue our shared story.*

*Please play your part as stewards for present and future generations.*

## Introduction by the Vicar, Revd Carol Barrett Ford

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ

In January 2024 I became the Vicar of Hampstead, and it is my pleasure to write to you at this exciting time of growth and development in our life as a parish community.

Churches are called to be places of mission and service, acknowledging our key role at the heart of the nation. St John-at-Hampstead is a beacon of hope in this community. We are open every day to provide a quiet and beautiful space in a busy city. Our parish rooms host community groups daily. And our common life is enriched through the worship, music and drama offered in the church.

This autumn we are renewing our vision as we prepare a new Mission Action Plan. Alongside our sister churches across the Diocese of London, we wish to see how best we can respond to the call to love God and our neighbour through worship and through practical acts of love and service.

Our vision offers an opportunity for those who give regularly to the church to review their commitment, and for those who currently do not give to reflect prayerfully on what their contribution might be.

We are all made in the image of God and precious in his sight. When we give generously, we acknowledge that God is the source of all life and that everything we have comes from God (cf. James 1:17). As Christians we are stewards of what has been entrusted to us and use it to serve the world where we are.

Your contribution is a vital part of supporting the mission and ministry of this parish church, enabling us to grow and flourish and helping us to spread the Good News of Christ to everyone we encounter.

Please read this booklet; this is an important moment in the life of our church. We invite you to be a part of the next chapter of our story here in Hampstead and to help us move forward in faith and joy.

**Thank you,**

*Mthr Carol*





## What visitors say about us

*“St John’s is the most beautiful church interior in London. It soothes, it inspires, it gives you a sense of well-being, it makes you feel more whole.”*

**A regular visitor**

*“For someone without a home, St John’s was at first a shelter on a cold wet winter’s day. It became to mean much more - a place of stillness to leave the world at the door; where I am not judged; a place that calms my mind; where I can be alone with my thoughts or find a shoulder to lean on. It is a beautiful building, but its heart is the dedication of its people.”*

**A daily visitor**

## Our Story

For over 1,000 years people have worshipped God on this site. We have benefitted from those people of faith who, 280 years ago, contributed funds to build our present church. And in every generation it is our hope to nourish and support Christians in their faith journey and to be a beacon of love and hope to those around us.

As stewards in the 21st century we seek to maintain this tradition of worship and service, and hand it on to future generations to enjoy.

**Will you help in this work?**

## Our aims

We are blessed with a beautiful building, music and worship; thriving children’s activities; a lively cultural and community life; and a desire to serve our neighbours.

Based on the priorities you identified in the last Parish Survey our intention over the next 5 years is to:

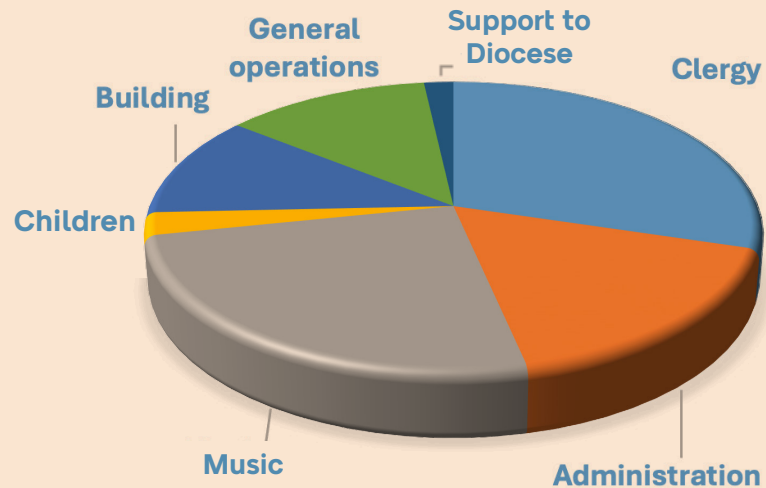
- **Enhance our church as an accessible centre for worship and service at the heart of the village**
- **Welcome and encourage a wider range of people of all ages and backgrounds in faith**
- **Keep our green spaces and building open and warm as places of peace and contemplation for all who need us**
- **Employ a youth worker and enhance our links with local schools**
- **Improve our spaces to better support local charities and community groups, the arts and music**

**With your support we can achieve this together.**

## How we spend our money

In addition to the time given by numerous volunteers in 2024, **it will cost over £346,000 a year to run our church.** That is almost £1,000 a day to cover the costs of:

### BUDGETED EXPENDITURE



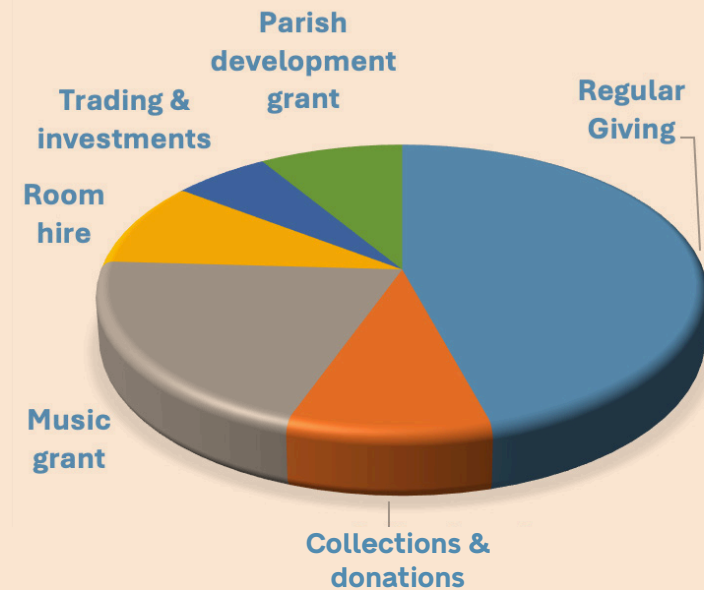
For many years the majority of our income has been needed to **cover our running costs**, and little has been left to build savings for capital improvements. Special appeals have helped us meet a succession of emergencies (e.g. during the pandemic), and legacies have funded major building projects (e.g. upgrading our lighting, installing solar panels, replacing the vestry roof).

**Careful budgeting and cost cutting has kept our running costs down, despite high inflation, but this is not sustainable long-term.**

## Where our money comes from

We do not receive financial support from the State or the national church. **Our church relies on our congregation and other friends supporting us through:**

### BUDGETED INCOME



**Total 2024 = £297,000**

**But our income is falling** - older, generous givers have died or moved away, donations from those who worship with us do not keep pace with inflation, and our room hire is still impacted post Covid. Although we have raised our hire charges and will market the space more intensively, **this year we are forecasting a deficit of almost £50,000.**

**In reality we need to increase our income through commitments to regular giving and legacies.**

## What our church community says

*“Coming to church allows me to leave daily life behind. It is like a reset button each week. A chance to consider what I could do better. An opportunity to commune with God. The church is a stimulating community, full of creative people.”*

### **A regular worshipper**

*“As a young professional who has recently moved to London, I’m so grateful to have found such a warm and inclusive church in Hampstead. I have felt welcomed into a prayerful community of people from different walks of life who are rooted in faith, generous in friendship and full of fun.”*

### **A new worshipper**



## Is there any other way to fund the deficit?

Our Operating Fund has insufficient savings to plug this gap, hence our urgent focus on fund-raising. **Without an increase in giving income, we would have to curtail the range of our activities.**

Our Building Fund has some savings and legacies – largely ring-fenced to cover the cost of restoring and improving our historic building. We would like to redecorate the church, continue the vestry refurbishment, and upgrade our facilities for lettings and the homeless night shelter. But these projects will require additional capital fund-raising.

Our Parish Development Fund comprises the freehold of a house and a rented flat. This legacy is intended to generate income to fund new initiatives – especially children’s activities – but currently helps contain the deficit. It also owns a leasehold flat - originally funded by gifts and loans from members of the congregation - which provides accommodation for our curate.

**The church has no other assets or reserves.**

## How could we achieve our target?

Our £50,000 deficit would be closed if 33 new Gift Aid givers were able to give £100 each month (equivalent to one coffee a day), or if 67 new Gift Aid givers gave £50 each month (one coffee every second day), or if some smaller givers were able to increase their pledge.

**Regular commitments give us the confidence and the resources to continue our work, become more efficient and build up our savings for capital projects.**

## What our young people say

*“The church community has been very welcoming for as long as I can remember, from my baptism all the way through to my confirmation. It welcomed me with friendship and love. The church is an amazing experience that I will have forever.”*

**A member of Junior Church**

*“I give Junior Church a 5-star review. You get to do well rounded activities, like foraging in the churchyard and taking part in plays, as well as learning a lot about Christianity. You are also part of a very friendly community.”*

**A second member of Junior Church**

*“I feel like Junior Church has grown up with me. I started off as a baby in the Creche, and 12 years later I am now a volunteer for the younger groups. I’ve learned a lot along the way.”*

**A Junior Church volunteer**

*“The youth group has been a really great opportunity to get to know different members of the church who are going through similar things to me in terms of school or my journey in faith. It has helped me feel welcome in a church where I didn’t know many people, to ask questions without judgement, and to explore my beliefs without any pressure or expectations.”*

**A youth group member**

*“Being in the choir is really fun, it is an excellent way to make new friends, to improve your singing and to praise God. You also have the chance to go on fun trips.”*

**A Junior choir member**

*“Junior choir gives my daughter another group of friends that she meets twice a week. I enjoy the times I volunteer as the “appropriate adult” – they are a lovely bunch of young people, and they are so dedicated.”*

**A choir parent**



## Why do we give?

- ✓ God gives to us abundantly in creation, redemption and sustaining life, and we are called to honour God with everything in our lives
- ✓ Stewardship is about living generously – giving time, skills, money, hospitality - to what we care about out of what we have received
- ✓ It is good to regularly consider where we give our time and resources, and our priorities
- ✓ Giving to the church is one way of supporting its work, now and in the future
- ✓ Our giving shares in the flow of God's generosity in the world. What is God asking of each of us?

## Can you help us?

Although our congregation is growing, fewer than 200 current worshippers (those who give and their partners) regularly contribute to HPC out of a total of over 400 who attend our services. **We ask all those who are in employment to consider making a regular financial commitment.**

## How much could you give?

All of us struggle to find the right balance between what we need for ourselves and our families and what we can afford to give to other things. But giving to the church is part of our commitment to sharing in God's work; it is a hallmark of our faith, reflecting God's generosity to us.

The Diocese of London has suggested that **giving to the church should be between 3% and 5% of disposable annual household income** (ie. after tax and other family commitments). Some of us have very low or uncertain incomes and cannot make a regular commitment; others are limited by the high cost of mortgages or schooling and child-care costs; others give more.

We understand that these are difficult times. **But, if it is possible, please consider increasing your regular giving, or making a regular commitment if you do not already.**

This is a decision that should have real meaning in your and your family's life. Please decide on what is right for you as an act of worship, after praying about it and considering what you give to other good causes.

## What is important to you?

The table below illustrates what your giving to the church might be at different levels of net household income. Compare these amounts with what you spend each month, for example, on streaming subscriptions, music lessons or gym membership. Is the balance right?

Net household income (p.a.)	Giving at 3% (p.m.)	Value to HPC with Gift Aid (p.m.)
£20,000	£50	£62.50
£40,000	£100	£125.00
£60,000	£150	£187.50
£80,000	£200	£250.00
£100,000	£250	£312.50

## What the Bible says about giving

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself. **Luke 10:17***

*All shall give as they are able, according to the blessing that the Lord your God has given you. **Deuteronomy 16:17***

*Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. **Hebrews 13:16***

*Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion. **2 Corinthians 9:7***

## Prayers

*Almighty God, by your grace plant within us a reverence for all that you give us, and make us wise and generous stewards of the good things we enjoy, through Jesus Christ our Lord, **Amen***

*God of glory, help us to lay aside all that prevents us from seeking your kingdom,  
And to give all that we have to gain the pearl beyond price, your son, our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
**Amen***

## Next steps

Making a regular donation helps us to budget and plan for the future.

You could:

- ✓ **Make a single or monthly donation using the QR code in our service sheets, and add your details; your card will be recognised next time you give**
- ✓ **Use the contactless machines at the back of church and add your details to be recognised each time**
- ✓ **Complete a Standing Order and Gift Aid form:  
<https://hampsteadparishchurch.org.uk/stewardshipforms/>**
- ✓ **Use the blue envelopes for donations by cash and cheque and complete your details on the front.**

If you are eligible to claim it, your donation is worth more to us if you give by Gift Aid, which costs you nothing extra and enables us to thank you for your support.

Whatever you decide to give is kept in confidence between the Stewardship Recorder and the church Treasurer. Any size or frequency of donation will be very gratefully received.

If you have further questions or would like to discuss stewardship, please email: [mailing@hampsteadparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:mailing@hampsteadparishchurch.org.uk) with your name and contact details and we will get back to you, or speak to one of the Churchwardens – Sheena Ginnings and Angela Gardner.

**Thank you.**





PLEASED TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH  
THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN-AT-HAMPSTEAD

# UNIVERSAL STONE

Est. 1939

CELEBRATING 85 YEARS OF CARING FOR HERITAGE BUILDINGS

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