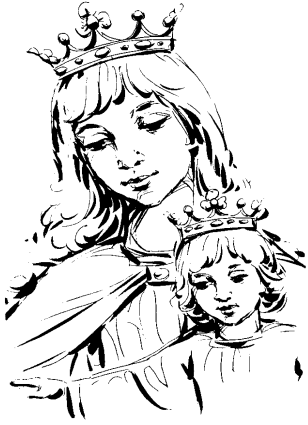




Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church

Financial Report *2025*

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Our Lady Help of Christians Parish is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham
Registered Charity Number: 234216

Dear Parishioner of Our Lady Help of Christians,

Why do we have a collection during Mass? Well, 'twas ever thus. In a book from the second Century, St. Justin explains what Christians do, and what happens when they meet for Mass. Among other things he says that there was a collection when "Those who are well provided for, if they wish to do so, contribute what each thinks fit; this is collected and left with the president." And in those days they didn't have to pay for the upkeep of church buildings! The collection was then and remains an offering for the upkeep of the Church, to help with the work of spreading the Gospel. It is a symbol of our lives that we offer to God in the Mass.

So what did we do with it last year? 2025 was a Jubilee Year and the theme was a Year of Hope. Hope, of course, is more than a vague feeling that things can only get better; it is something that shapes our lives and gives meaning to all our words and actions.

In Our Lady Help of Christians we can look back on so many reasons for hope and so many blessings that were given to us to encourage us:

The number of people coming to Mass continues to increase each year since the low point of COVID and it is great to welcome new members to our community. There were two parish pilgrimages. A pilgrimage reminds us that our life is a journey in company with others, so in our first pilgrimage, a group of us walked to Littlemore to go through the Holy Door at Blessed Dominic Barberi Church. In our second pilgrimage a group went to Rome and passed through four more Holy Doors (among other things).

We also had a barn dance, a Christmas Market and Concert, even a Disco with Santa. Lively indeed!

Spiritually, forty-three children and two adults were baptised here and received the life of the Risen Christ. Thirty-seven candidates received Holy Communion for the first time. Thirty-one candidates were confirmed. Eight couples were married here, and three other couples were prepared here and married overseas. Seventeen funerals were celebrated.

Materially, in this report last year I wrote, "For this coming year we have prioritised the church roof. This is a "must" (those who sit by the Confessionals will know that there are problems). We also want to improve the lighting in the car park." I am happy to say that both these were done. In addition, the front door of the church was sanded and re-varnished, the porch, piety shop and "silent" room were painted, and new handrails were put on the altar to assist increasingly frail clergy.

I should like to thank you all very much for your generosity. We have a beautiful, large church thanks to those who made sacrifices in the past and to you who support it today. At the same time, you can see the figures in the columns on the next page that show how your offerings were spent. They also show that we need more money to maintain everything that goes on here. This is a common cry throughout the whole Diocese. Archbishop Bernard has asked everyone in the Diocese to consider increasing their donations in the weekly collections, if possible, please. If each person who is working could give at least one hour's salary per week to the collection we should see a big difference. A target for us to aim at is, between now and Christmas, to reduce or even eliminate our overdraft at the bank.

With sincere thanks for all your support and generosity,

Fr. Harry and the Finance Committee – Brendan Lyons (Chair), Nora Allan, John Cropper, Mario Herrera, Aline Nshamaje, Maureen Roberts, Geraldine Griffin (Minutes).

Receipts/Payments 2025

		2025	2024	2026
				(Forecast)
Receipts to 31st December				
	Offertories - Gift Aid	£22,623.77	£21,095.65	£21,500.00
	Offertories - Non Gift Aid GASDS eligible	£21,794.01	£22,161.55	£20,000.00
	Offertories - Non Gift Aid NOT eligible for GASDS	£7,289.00	£6,721.00	£6,800.00
	Legacy	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
	Donations - Gift Aid	£1,385.00	£818.51	£1,500.00
	Donations - Non Gift Aid	£12,558.72	£10,499.85	£11,800.00
	Parish Retreats/Days Out	£50.00	£430.00	£400.00
	Donations - on line via Archdiocesan/Parish Websites	£220.00	£891.01	£100.00
	Donations - Gift Aid Car Park Lighting Fund	£1,470.00	£0.00	£0.00
	Donations - Car Park Lighting Fund	£755.00	£0.00	£0.00
	Donations - Church Floor Renovation Fund	£0.00	£1,920.00	£0.00
	Fund Raising	£2,669.56	£1,274.65	£2,000.00
	Gift Aid/GASDS Tax Claims	£7,759.63	£6,805.53	£7,400.00
	Votive Candles	£1,338.63	£2,246.74	£2,000.00
	Repository - Piety Shop	£2,943.73	£1,895.36	£2,000.00
	Repository - My Day by Day Booklets	£300.00	£300.00	£300.00
	Don Bosco Centre	£4,635.00	£8,487.50	£3,000.00
	Car Park Income	£2,202.00	£2,028.00	£2,000.00
	Total Receipts	£89,994.05	£87,575.35	£80,800.00
Payments to 31st December				
	Church/Don Bosco Centre	£30,328.27	£26,383.89	£30,000.00
	Church Floor Renovation Cost	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
	House	£14,914.78	£12,737.70	£20,000.00
	Clergy Expenses/Supply	£3,262.00	£3,282.00	£3,500.00
	Office Expenses and Personnel/Wages	£19,007.65	£17,064.36	£19,000.00
	Parish Levies	£17,743.20	£17,299.80	£18,900.00
	Parish Retreats/Days Out	£142.90	£730.00	£1,000.00
	Fund Raising Expenses	£0.00	£0.00	£100.00
	Parish Donations	£410.00	£590.00	£1,000.00
	Votive Candles	£989.50	£656.00	£1,000.00
	Repository - Piety Shop	£2,714.62	£2,171.71	£1,500.00
	Repository - My Day by Day Booklets	£404.75	£607.25	£450.00
	Interest Paid/Bank Charges	£1,811.93	£704.81	£1,200.00
	Total Payments	£91,729.60	£82,227.52	£97,650.00
	Surplus/Deficit on normal activity	-£1,735.55	£5,347.83	-£16,850.00
	Bank Statement Balance at 31st December	-£9,623.98	-£8,310.46	

Here's a riddle: how can you give more money to our parish without it costing you any more?

giftaid it - Learn how you can give more to the Church through a tax rebate.

Dear Parishioners

I know that we all appreciate our beautiful church and all that goes on around it. I thank you all for your generosity especially over the last year when things still remain very difficult for many. But it takes a lot of money to run a parish and so I must ask you to think about the financial support that you give to Our Lady Help of Christians and if possible to increase it.

There is a way to give more money without it coming out of your pocket. As a charity we can claim money back from the government at no cost to yourselves under the Gift Aid scheme.

The Parish benefits as it can claim tax relief from the government i.e. for every £10.00 you give, the Parish will receive a further £2.50 from the government (please make sure that you have paid at least as much tax as we are claiming back because HMRC will hold you responsible to pay any excess). I am extremely grateful to the many parishioners in the Parish who already support this scheme, and I would like to ask if you don't already Gift Aid your offerings if you would consider doing so, please.

Your contribution would be completely flexible week by week depending on your financial circumstances. You can give in the weekly collections by using the Gift Aid envelopes or you can set up a standing order. You can leave the scheme at any time should you so wish.

What you need to know about Gift Aid:

- *It's a real help to the Parish.*
- *It is a confidential scheme.*
- *You do not have to promise to give a certain amount of money.*
- *There are no details of earnings needed.*

If you feel you can support the scheme please fill in a Gift Aid Declaration Form, available at the back of the church or from Geraldine Griffin, Parish Secretary, Email: olhoc.oxford@rcaob.org.uk, Tel: 01865 770 910, or you can download a copy from the parish website [Donations and Gift Aid / Our Lady Help of Christians - Cowley - Oxford \(olhoccowley.co.uk\)](http://Donations%20and%20Gift%20Aid%20-%20Our%20Lady%20Help%20of%20Christians%20-%20Cowley%20-%20Oxford%20(olhoccowley.co.uk).).

Thank you and please support our parish community as much as you can.

Fr. Harry Curtis