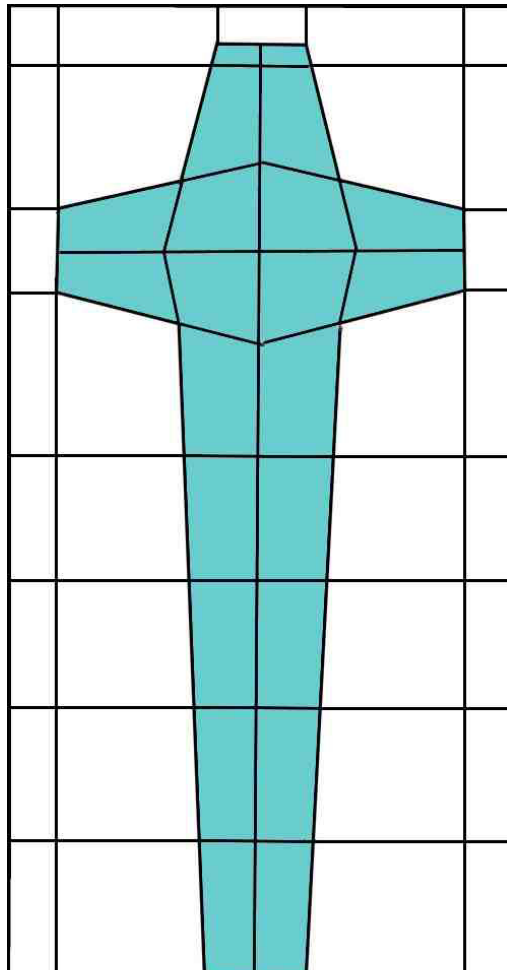




Herts And Essex Border Circuit (HAEBC)
Registered Charity No 1208841

St. Andrew's Methodist Church

Annual report 2026

Minister's Letter

Annual Church Meeting Agenda

Sunday attendance (graph)

Holy Communion

PopIn Prayer

Tuesday Bible Study

Finance

Envelopes and Gift Aid

GDPR

Website

Property

JMA report

Christian Aid

Friendship Group

Church Magazine

Harlow Food bank

Mission (general)

Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

"Be cheerful no matter what; pray all the time; thank God no matter what happens. This is the way God wants you who belong to Christ Jesus to live."

(1 Thessalonians 5: 16 – 18) (The Message)

The past connexional year has a lot to thank God for regarding church life at St. Andrew's Methodist.

First, the church foyer and hall had a makeover. The audio-visual equipment in the sanctuary was replaced as well. Not only that, but the audio system in the Sunshine Room has also been upgraded. Thanks to the financial support from the circuit and a church member. These upgrades have enriched our worship services.

Another point is that we have had a gradual surge in the number of volunteers in the welcoming (door stewarding) team and refreshments team. Also, with the support from the circuit, the church appointed a Mission Enabler. That has greatly improved the church's relationship in the community. For example, someone who hires the place stated that, "it is good to see and engage with church people in the building during the day".

More good news. The church finance is healthier than it was in the previous year. The report states that it is like the pre-COVID years. A pat on the back to everyone. Thanks for your commitment.

Another point is that the church letting procedure went online and it has greatly improved the administrative aspect of the lettings. However, the lettings officer has resigned a few days' ago, and the vacancy needs to be filled immediately. Thanks to Rev. John Buxton and Tobe for the great work they have done.

However, Sunday church attendance is mixed. It is my prayer that more people commit to attending not only Sunday services but other events such as bible study, prayer times, prayer walks, and other social events.

This church is now an eco-church. Hurray! Thanks to Alexis M. for all the efforts. We look forward to applying for a bronze medal in the next few months.

I may not remember all the great things that are buzzing in this church so do forgive me if I have not mentioned some of them. However, on the circuit front, a Circuit administrator and Safeguarding Officer were appointed. These roles helped greatly to reshape the new circuit. In fact, at synod last Spring, the circuit was specially mentioned as being a growing circuit. This is a result of God's goodness in the local churches, including St. Andrew's.

Oh, before I forget! JMA has a new leader. It's Amelia Castle. Thanks to Andrew and Kay who did a great job for many years. Also, Rev. Gill Hulme, the Minister for Bishop's Stortford Methodist Church and Stansted Free Church, is retiring this summer. We thank God for her ministry in the circuit and pray that God will continue to bless her as she moves on. The good news is that the circuit is expecting her replacement, Rev. Chris Wilson in the autumn.

Looking ahead. Rev. John Buxton has clocked 70 years of being a local preacher. That's a great feat! We thank God for his ministry. Kindly look out for a date where his local preacher's ministry will be celebrated in the circuit.

Finally, the circuit is in the process of setting up a Christians Against Poverty Debt Centre in Harlow. It behoves for St. Andrew's to open its doors and space to host the office of the Debt Centre Manager. God is good all the time.

Before I end. I want to take a moment to thank everyone who has contributed, in any form, in making St. Andrew's a place of welcome and a fantastic place to worship.

God bless you all.

Frank

Agenda

1. Welcome & Opening Devotions
 2. Present
 3. Apologies
 4. AOB not included

 5. Minutes of previous meeting on 18th May 2025
 6. Matters arising from Minutes
 - Rentals
 7. Matters from
 - Circuit
 - i. Synod
 - ii. Away Day
 - iii. Circuit Administrator and Archivist
 8. Business for the day
 - Annual Report
 - Mission
 - Health and Safety
 - Appointments to Church Roles (Appendix 1)
 - Future Events
 - Church BBQ
 - Harvest
 - Advent and Lent Courses
 - Christmas
 - i. Toy Service
 - ii. Carol Service
 - iii. Meal
- Date of next meeting - Sunday 16th May 2027 at 12.00 noon

APPENDIX 1 **Roles to be held by Volunteers 2026 - 27**

Role	Held by	Year Appointed
Minister	Rev Dr. Frank Okai-Sam	2024
Mission Enabler	Jordan Stringer	2025
Church Council Secretary	Efua Sey Koi-Larbi	2025
Church Safeguarding Officer	Joanne Castle	2021
Church Senior Steward	Alexis Mojzes	2024
Church Stewards	Margery Collier	2023
	Alberta Annobil	2021
	Mabel Wilson	2021
	Maame Duodu	2022
	Adelaide Osei	2022
	Vanessa Botchwey	2024
	Arthur Revels	2023
	Isabel Annobil	
Junior Stewards	Samantha Osei	
Church Treasurer	Joe-Ike Impraim	
Independent Examiner	Vacant	
Envelope Scheme Secretar	Andrew Wong	
Gift Aid Secretary	Andrew Wong	
Bible Study Leaders	Rev. Dr. Frank Okai-Sam	
	Fred Arthur	
	Arthur Revels	
	Maureen Buxton	
Music Director	Bob Taylor	
Welcome Stewards	Patience Asiedu-Offei	
	Juliet Arthur	
	Margaret Nunoo	
	Patience Okai-Sam	
	Cynthia Anderson	
	Jane Bus-Kwofie	
	Lloyd Annobil	
	Vaughn Mojzes	
IT Officers	Samuel Duodu	
	Margaret Mountsteven	
Church Flowers Organisers	Hazel Taylor	
	Margaret Nunoo	
Communion Stewards	Juliet Arthur	
	Susan McKenzie	
Mission Secretary	Amelia Castle	
JMA Secretary	Susan McKenzie	
Cradle Roll Secretary	Vacant	
Creche Leader	Vacant	
Creche Helpers	Vacant	

Youth Church Leader
Youth Church Teachers

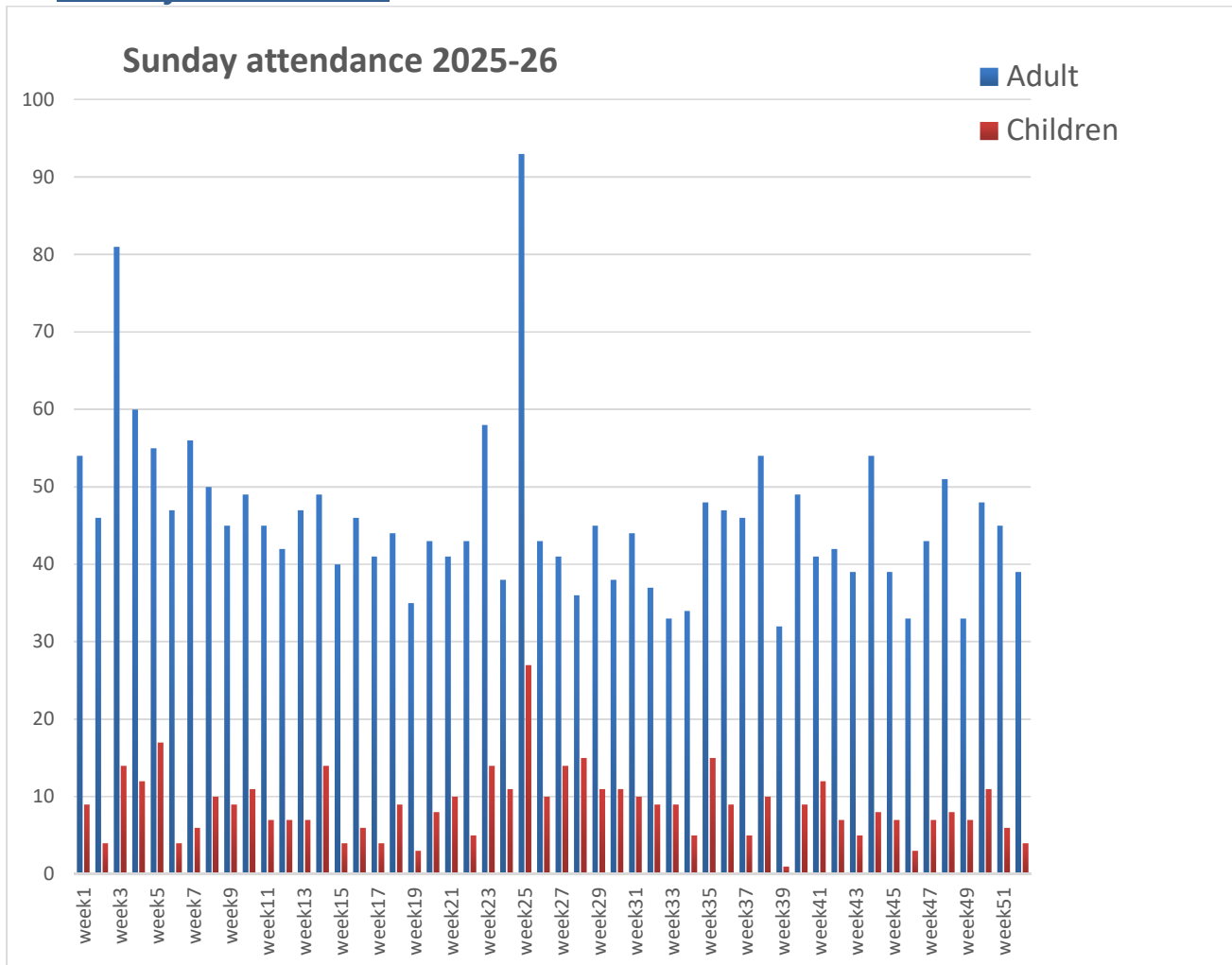
Pastoral Secretary
Pastoral Visitors

Lettings Officer
Caretaker
Property Stewards

Weekly Notices Editor
Magazine Editor
Website Editor
GDPR

Joanne Castle
Getrude Mhiribidi
Susan McKenzie
Adeyola Ayodokun
Amelia Castle
Vacant
Efua Sey Koi-Larbi
Maame Duodu
Peter Mountsteven
Margaret Torkildsen
Joe-Ike Impraim
Margery Collier
Maameyaa Adabie
Patience Okai-Sam
Vacant
Stella Yeboaa
Alexis Mojzes
Cecilia Mojzes
Eddie Collier
Kay Wong
Hazel Taylor
Bob Taylor
Vacant

Sunday Attendance



The above chart shows the weekly attendance of Sunday Services at St. Andrew's Methodist Church from 6th April 2025 (week 1) to 5th April 2026. The weekly average is 48 for adults and 8 for children.

The high figure of 81 adults on 20th April 2025 was Easter Holy Communion and new Membership Service; and the high figure of 93 adults on 20th September was due to infant baptism.

Kay Wong

Weekly Notices Editor

May 2026

Holy Communion

This year, the number of participants in Holy Communion has remained consistent, averaging between 30- 64.

On Maundy Thursday, we commemorated the Last Supper with Communion, where 17 members participated.

On Easter Sunday, we celebrated our Risen Lord at 10:30 am with 64 members receiving Communion, which saw a decrease in last year's participants.

Margaret Nunoo

Juliet Arthur

TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY report for AGM 2026

A small group meet each Tuesday at 7.30pm in the Chapel to study the Bible. We are near the end of Isaiah at present and will be starting Romans at the end of July. Fred Arthur leads our group, but everyone is encouraged to study the passage at home before the meeting, and bring insights and questions, and join in the discussion, although if you just want to listen – that's OK. [Note – the meeting lasts about an hour and a q we use the back door only, for security reasons]

POP IN PRAYER report for AGM 2026

We meet for half an hour on the third Saturday each month at 11am in the Chapel. This is before the Spud and Pud lunch. We would encourage more people to join us in the chapel to share in this time of prayer.

Hazel Taylor

Finance

Summary of receipts and payments for year ending August 31st 2025

Receipts		
Offerings and tax received	£44,699	
Bank and CFB interest	937	
Lettings	17,990	
Other receipts	32,048	
		95,673
Payments		
Circuit	24,000	
Donations	200	
Repairs and Maintenance	6,011	
Utilities insurance	2,358	
water	3,680	
gas	22,640	
electricity	3,058	
Other payments	21,774	
		83,903
Net receipts for year		11,770
Funds brought forward		38,339
Total Funds at end of year		£50,108

Envelopes and Gift Aid Secretary's Report

Based on figures supplied by the Treasurer, I have worked out the income from all offertory sources for the 2025-26 financial year, and from that the expected Gift Aid refund that we can claim. The results are as shown in the following table. Included are also figures from the previous year for comparison. The offertory income includes all regular donations from envelope holders, standing orders, direct payments to bank, 'loose' collections on Sundays and *ad hoc* contributions to the church via various channels.

Year	Description	Offertory Income	Offertory Change	Gift Aid Claim	Gift Aid Change
24-25	Previous year for comparison	£33997	Baseline	£8448	Baseline
25-26	Subject Year	£38221	+12%	£9937	+18%

Looking at this table, we can confidently say that our offertory income has indeed recovered from the hiatus caused by Covid. We would like to thank the generosity of all our regular subscribers and other donors for sustaining the church's finances during those difficult times.

Over the reporting period, we have 35 members on the envelope scheme and 16 members offering via Standing Orders or BACS, making a total of 51, three more than the year before.

For the past year, we have had to order more envelope packs to cope with demand. While this is welcomed, I would like to ask you to consider the use of Bank Standing Orders for your regular payments as an alternative to envelopes. Once set up, you no longer need to worry about chores such as remembering to bring in envelopes on Sundays or looking for the right amount of cash on Saturday evenings. If you change your mind, you can always cancel the order or alter the amount you pay at any time. In this way, we can reduce the number of envelopes to be ordered in future. This will save the church a little bit of money and help us to reduce paper wastage.

We particularly thank those who have opted to put their donations on Gift Aid. Our claim last year has gone up by an impressive 18%, while the number of active Gift Aiders on our books has gone up by one to 34. We shall continue our effort to recruit more donors to join the scheme.

Since the basic income tax threshold had not been uplifted in line with inflation for the past four years (and will not be for at least 3 more years), some people in employment or on state pension who were not liable to income tax in the past will start to pay income tax in future. If you are one of those in this category, and you want some of that tax money to be redirected to support work in this church and in the local community, the simple way is to become a Gift Aider and allow the church to reclaim that money on your behalf.

So, if you have not done so already, please consider putting your donations on Gift Aid. This gives the church the ability to increase the value of your contributions, at no additional cost to yourself, by up to 25%, which will be much appreciated and valued.

Thank you once again for your continued support.

Andrew Wong

Envelope Scheme and Gift Aid Secretary

May, 2026

GDPR

There have been no Subject Access Requests, and no Data Breaches, reported to me during the year, although I did unfortunately lose a memory stick on the way to doing some printing for the Audit. As it did not contain any personal information, when reported to TMCP, they decided that no further action should be taken.

While gathering information to complete the Audit, we ran right up to the closing date of May 31st.

We have 23 different lists subject to GDPR, and with some of these being held by several Data Holders, there are 42 of them held among 27 Data Holders. Thank you to all those who have contributed to the Audit.

I have been covering GDPR for 9 years, from it's inception, and shall be quitting after this year's Audit.

Bob Taylor (GDPR processor)

Website

The numbers of visitors continue to be high, with an average of 800 each month (much higher than the 150 per month I reported last year).

There have been no phishing or scam attempts to our email account holders, reported to me, but spam continues to blight our email accounts. Much has already been blocked, but scammers are always providing more. If you are receiving a lot of spam on your church email account, please let me know and I will see if it has a common factor which might allow me to block it.

Having been running the website for over 14 years, I am still looking to pass on its running to a new volunteer.

Bob Taylor (Website editor)

Property Report

1. Introduction

This Property Report provides a record of the current status of St. Andrews Methodist Church. It outlines the actions taken in response to matters identified in the previous Property Report and highlights progress made in addressing key maintenance, compliance, and safety concerns.

The report also presents a proposal for the formation of a new Property Team, which will be responsible for the oversight, management, maintenance, and development of the church's physical assets. The proposed team will be submitted for ratification at the next Church Council meeting.

In addition, this report establishes a framework for ongoing property management, future maintenance planning, and the implementation of improvements necessary to ensure that the church remains a safe, welcoming, sustainable, and functional environment for worship and community activities.

2. Property Team

A new Property Team is being proposed to oversee the maintenance, management, and improvement of church property. Subject to ratification by the Church Council at its next meeting, the team will comprise the following individuals:

- Mr. Alexis Mojzes
- Mr. Eddie Collier (in an advisory capacity)
- Mr. Joe-Ike Impraim (Co-opted Treasurer)
- Miss Jordan Stringer

The proposed team brings a mix of experience, commitment, and practical knowledge to the stewardship of the church's physical resources.

3. Progress Against the Previous Action Plan

Since the submission of the previous Property Report, a number of actions have been completed to improve the safety, maintenance, and operational effectiveness of the church premises.

Fire Alarm System

The fire alarm system has been serviced twice during the year by Morgan Fire. A new battery has been installed, and all alarm zones have been tested and confirmed as fully operational.

Fire Extinguishers

All fire extinguishers have been serviced by Marlowe Fire and Security. Two faulty extinguishers were replaced to ensure full compliance and coverage.

Fire Escape Routes and Gangways

Gangways and escape routes have generally been kept clear; however, occasional obstructions have occurred. Continued monitoring is required to ensure full compliance at all times.

Intruder Alarm System

The intruder alarm system was serviced by Scutum and found to be fully operational with no significant faults.

Heating and Boiler Systems

Sterling Gas serviced the boiler systems. A fault on the combi boiler in the main kitchen was identified and rectified. Radiators and heating systems are now fully operational.

4. Current Property Priorities

The following ongoing priorities remain under review:

Continued monitoring of fire safety compliance
Ensuring all escape routes remain clear at all times
Reviewing storage arrangements to reduce fire risk
Identifying maintenance requirements from inspections and users
Developing a planned maintenance programme
Improving environmental sustainability and energy efficiency

5. Maintenance and Quinquennial Progress Update

Plumbing and Drainage

Plumbing issues affecting toilets at the front and rear of the church were resolved by BMS Ltd. Drainage issues in the front kitchen were resolved by Premier Drainage following clearance of a blocked external manhole.

Quinquennial Works

- Drainage pipes causing water ingress on Howard Way and within the lighting cupboard have been replaced
- The foyer roof has been sealed to prevent rainwater penetration
- New wooden steps have been installed outside the Circuit Office fire door to improve roof access and safety

6. Pest Control and Environmental Health

Pest control measures were required following the discovery of rodent droppings in the sound cupboard and main kitchen. RSN Pest Control was engaged and installed traps to resolve the issue.

An ant infestation was also treated.

The main kitchen was temporarily closed until all treatments were completed. The hall storage cupboard used by regular hirers was also sanitised.

All affected areas have now been declared safe, with ongoing monitoring in place.

7. Financial Considerations

The Co-opted Treasurer will work closely with the Property Team and Finance Committee to ensure all expenditure is carefully managed within church budgets.

Where necessary, quotations will be obtained and submitted to Church Council for approval prior to works commencing.

8. Eco Church Commitment

The church remains committed to environmental responsibility and sustainable stewardship of its property.

A recycling system has been introduced across the site, including:

- Recycling bins in key internal areas
- Food waste caddies in kitchens
- External bins for general, recycling, and food waste

Some issues remain with the regular collection of recycling waste, which is being monitored.

The Property Team will continue to promote and develop sustainable practices across church life.

9. Next Steps

Ratification of Property Team by Church Council
Review of service contracts and maintenance schedules
Continued monitoring of fire safety compliance
Development of a 12-month maintenance plan
Prioritisation of future repair and improvement works
Progress of Eco Church initiatives
Establishment of regular reporting to Church Council

10. Conclusion

The proposed Property Team is committed to the responsible care and development of St. Andrews Methodist Church's property and facilities.

Building on the progress made, the team will work to ensure the church remains safe, welcoming, well-maintained, and environmentally responsible.

Continued support from the Church Council and congregation will be essential in achieving these objectives and ensuring long-term stewardship of the church's assets.

JMA Report

Over the period September 2024 to August 2025, we were able to make regular JMA collections. The JMA awards were kindly presented by Mrs. Gabrielle Brown on 7th September.

The details of the awards are as shown below:

JMA record 2024-2025	Year of service	Badge type
<i>Eslie Okyere</i>	Year 3	Annual 2025
<i>Dominic Annobil</i>	Year 4	Annual 2025
<i>Samantha Osei</i>	Year 4	Annual 2025
<i>Christopher Annobil</i>	Year 6	Annual 2025
<i>Isabel Annobil</i>	Year 7 Long Service	Annual 2025
<i>Zachary Castle</i>	Year 7 Long Service	Annual 2025
<i>Isabella Castle</i>	Year 9	Annual 2025
<i>Vaughn Mojzes</i>	Year 10	Annual 2025

Collections & Donations	£844.45
2023-24 Gift Aid rebate	£156.00
Grand Total	£1000.45

I am whole heartedly grateful to the children for their long service and their commitment to JMA. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the parents, the donors, the subscribers, the Church Treasurer and the Gift Aid Secretary for their generous contributions and support. In addition, a big **THANK YOU** for your faithful prayers for the Lord's blessing throughout the process.

After 37 years working on the role of JMA Secretary, Kay decided it is a good time for her to step down and allow fresh ideas and new approaches to take place. We welcome Amelia Castle to be the new JMA Secretary, and she is looking forward to the continued support of everyone.

In this new term, we have six children doing their collection. We in particular welcome the three very young new collectors. They are genuinely enthusiastic but require personal coaching due to their young age.

Amelia would like to extend her thanks for everyone being patient as she assumes this new role. After being a collector for a number of years, the transition to secretary has been easier than expected after watching Kay's hard work for several years. Amelia is thankful to Kay and Andrew for supporting her and to the children who have started or continued doing JMA this year.

JMA Secretaries

Kay Wong till September 2025. Amelia Castle from September 2025.

Christian Aid Week Report

Christian Aid Week 2025 took place on 11th - 17th May. St. Andrew's Church followed our tradition of supporting the event with the following activities:

- Envelope collection
- Donation online
- Christian Aid Lunch held on Sunday 12th May 2025
- Christian Aid information display on the Church foyer in May
- Church's supporting prayers

The event at St. Andrew's collected a total of **£840.48** this year, through online donations (£175.00) and through envelopes with cheques & cash donations (£465.48), and Christian Aid Lunch (£92.70). Of the total, £645.00 are gift-aided giving a tax rebate of £161.25.

We are extremely thankful for your kind donations and support. With your help, Aurelia and her family in the Alta Verapaz region in Guatemala can stand up to the industrial plantations and climate crisis. With the knowledge of Congcoop, they gained skills to cultivate native seeds that better suited to the changing climate and restoring their ability to provide food for their families.

Christian Aid Week 2026 was held on 10th to 16th May. Our work took place over the entire month of May. Details of the collection will be reported in the next annual report when it is available.

Kay Wong & Susan McKenzie

Christian Aid Week Organisers

May 2026.

FRIENDSHIP GROUP REPORT

We are a small group of St Andrews' ladies who meet in members' houses once a month. We eat lunch together and chat, then close with an epilogue and prayer time.

If there is a fifth Thursday in the month we meet for a restaurant lunch and we also have occasional outings. Although this is a small group, we enjoy fellowship together and support each other. If you worship at St Andrew's and would like to join us, please ask me for details. We would really like to include more ladies, but you do need to use a bus or car to get to the various houses.

Hazel Taylor

CHURCH MAGAZINE REPORT

Our Magazine is still distributed in print form to about 75 people plus a full colour copy to those who can receive it by email.

A colour version, with email addresses and phone numbers removed, goes on our Church Website.

I would still welcome more articles, information, and photos in jpg form from any members, although I sometimes need to alter or shorten submissions. My thanks to members who submit regularly. The deadline date for copy for the next magazine is always in the current one but submissions before the deadline are appreciated.

Hazel Taylor, 438905, magazine@standrewsharlow.org.uk

Hazel Taylor

Harlow Foodbank

As well as contributions of food brought to church for Harlow Foodbank, I have received and passed on to the Michael Roberts Charitable Trust cash donations amounting to £556 during 2025. Andrew Wong has kindly inspected my accounts on behalf of St Andrews. The amount of £556 is less than we have usually been able to collect in recent years but the main reason for this is that several generous donors have died or moved away. We are very much needing new, regular givers from our church congregation at St Andrews to support the very good work that Harlow Food Bank does to bring short-term relief to individuals and families who are in extreme food need.

Please consider whether you could possibly make a regular gift or maybe just an occasional donation. If you are a UK taxpayer, you could even consider gift-aiding your contributions. Because I am no longer able to get to church, Hazel Taylor has kindly said that she would be willing to receive cash donations and pass them on to me. I will send an acknowledgment for all donations received if your name and an email address is included with the donation. Many thanks for your support.

John Hutchings

St. Andrews Methodist Church,
The Stow, Harlow, Essex.

Report on Missions' (general),
Sept. 2024 - 2025.

Donations received via the 'box' system
have fallen over the year, as
have the 'self-denial' envelope
donations. Thank you to all who
continue to support the 'missions'
work in whichever way you do.

World Mission

Boxes	£33.64	
Tax gift reclaim	£45.00	(financial year 2024 - 2025)
'Self-denial' envelopes	£171.00	
Total	£249.64	

My thanks also to Mr. Impraim
for assisting with banking
cash - increasingly difficult with
HSBC restrictions on coinage
banking at local branches.

SUMENGIE 27/5/26