

Holy Trinity
Scottish Episcopal Church
Stirling



ACM Booklet
2023

Rector's Report

The Annual Congregational Meeting is a good time for us to be looking back over the past year to see what has been going on at Holy Trinity as well as for looking ahead and discerning what might be. But it is also a time for being mindful of how we are woven into the story of God and God's people in this place.



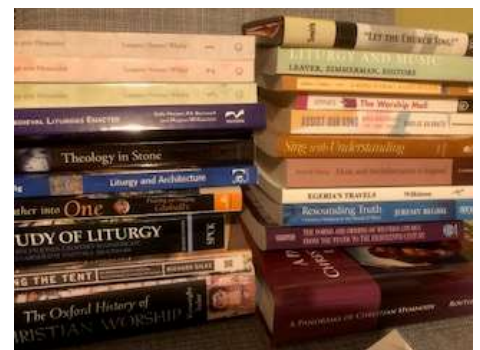
Plait produced at the Vestry Vision Day

At a Vestry Vision Day last June, vestry members were 'literally' invited to weave things together (using different strands of fabric) as we prayerfully considered different aspects of church life at HT and how they need to work together in order to form a coherent whole. This image of weaving will continue to be in our minds & hearts as we set about a new ACM Year and all the different strands making up HT Stirling.

A church community is so many things: different strands for us to consider are worship, community life & outreach, discipleship and spiritual growth; but also finance, fabric & grounds as we build our unique expression of God's story here in Stirling.

Some strands are woven into the HT plait year after year: we had a full round of services marking the Church Year (with Holy Week & Easter being at the centre of our worship and Christian witness), but we also had extra special moments, such as an ecumenical service of Eco-Congregations Scotland, a service of Confirmation and Ian Boa's Ordination to the Diaconate (and it has been great to welcome Ian to HT's ministry team in that role). We continued in study groups, but also managed social events to build community. HT Tots Café continues and a Young Adults Group was formed; we managed to host events such as a study day of the Church Service Society and welcomed the Scottish Federation of Organists for their annual conference. We continued to support StartUp Stirling and welcomed SSAFA for their Christmas Cracker event as well as collecting for Mission to Seafarers and Christian Aid.

My own strands of ministry, besides being Rector of HT, have kept me busy weaving: I continue to serve on General Synod (where also have been responsible for planning the worship for the past four years), I remain a member of the Liturgy Committee, I've led music workshops for the RSCM and SEI; and I am presently teaching a module on liturgy and music titled 'Words and Music in Worship' for a new SEI course in Liturgical Studies. Diocesan roles include membership on the Ministry Board, CMD Group and the Cathedral Chapter. I am indebted to those at HT who are there to support me when the strands seem to be coming apart!



A glimpse from the study

There are many things which will need to be woven into the HT fabric in the near future: building work is needed and there is ongoing concern for matters of fabric and the grounds. Community outreach will need to be a focus as well as our response to the Climate Crisis (and we are grateful for the work the HT Flourishing Future Group is leading us in); we will want to think about study & fellowship groups as well as focus on open church – and there probably will be other things, God is bringing to us to be woven into a fabric of love as we continue to be HT in this place. *The Rector*

Vestry Report



In the year September 2022 to September 2023, four vestry meetings and a Vestry Vision Day were organised by the Secretary Rachel Campbell (who is living proof that the busiest people always have time to do everything).

Hannah Gray joined the Vestry and reported regularly on provision for **young people**. Gen Pont stood down from the

Vestry at the last ACM but still provides her expertise concerning young people for HT.

Ian Boa continues in his role as Convenor for **Fabric** and has reported throughout the year for the Vestry on access, heating, lighting, building upgrade, alarms and general ongoing repair and maintenance.

Helen Kemp and Mary Kenyon continue as convenors for **Safeguarding** and **Health and Safety**. Considerable time is spent discussing **Finance**, the Treasurer Robert Nellist monitoring expenditure, income, fund-raising, rentals and grant-capture, apprising the vestry of these matters and seeking agreement from the vestry for strategic decisions.

An important new focus for the vestry this year has been the establishment of the **HT Flourishing Future Group** led by Andrew Tyler. Andrew and Cathy Johnston (Vice Convenor Provincial Environment Group) reported to vestry over the year on our commitment to the Eco-Congregations movement and also offered a holistic vision of HT as a place where every aspect of church life (fabric, green space, energy consumption, investment, outreach and spiritual growth) can be nourished by a care for the environment.

The cultivation of HT's green space and thoughtful development of buildings for pastoral care is one of the many ways which HT can further **outreach**, a topic addressed at all vestry meetings which also covered Open Doors, hall facilities and Young Adults' groups.

Outreach also serves to enrich the lives of **HT's own community** who also benefit from engagement with other groups and from the development of HT's media presence and website. None of these enhancements are possible without **Planning** including HT's 5-year plan which culminates on HT's 150th anniversary in September 2028. HT's ambitions as a church for the future have been discussed throughout the year, not only at vestry meetings but also at **Vestry Vision Day** in June where vestry members considered not only the practical problems of looking after HT but also the life-enhancement it brings to all of us.

Dr Anne Pittock

Lay Representative Report

The **Diocesan Synod** took place on 11th March 2023. Joyfully it was held at St Ninian's Cathedral in Perth, and it was good to be able to see people 'in real life'! The full report of the day is to be found on the Diocesan website at <https://standrews.anglican.org/diocesan-synod-2023/>

Bishop Ian's Charge to Synod can be found in full but this summary captures the essence of what he has asked us all to think about:

Part 1 (morning session)

'I am the vine,' says Jesus. 'You are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit.'

Part 2 (afternoon session)

'I am sometimes asked questions like, "Does the Church have a future?" The question disturbs me, but my main feeling about it is that it is the wrong question. The real question seems to me more like, "Does the future have a Church? And what will it be like?" For me, it's a better question because although I don't know the answer, I trust in a God who does.'

Each charge is being asked to review and think about their 5-year planning. We at Holy Trinity have been doing this through our strategic planning '**Towards 2028**', which we have been refining over the year.

The **Provincial Environment Group** also gave a presentation as part of the consultation on the **Net Zero Action Plan 2023-2030**. The finalised Action Plan was affirmed at the **General Synod** in June and progress is being made at both Provincial and Diocesan level to support charges in thinking about the



Diocesan Synod 2023

actions that must be taken to put the 5th Mark of Mission 'to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth' into all our plans.

I continue to serve on both the Provincial Environment Group and the Diocesan Environment Group. The focus for the year has been on developing the Net Zero Action Plan 2023-2030 and appointing a Net Zero Delivery Director to oversee the implementation of the Plan.

Please do let me know if you would like further information, or wish to discuss anything that you would wish me to take to Vestry as your Lay Rep. *Cathy Johnston*

Fabric



Holy Trinity Interior

A major element of work in the year was focused on the roof of the Sacristy following the theft of lead. The repairs have been carried out fully and a new roof alarm fitted. The latter enables us to now have full cost insurance cover for all lead on the building. A very useful product of the hard work we had to endure.

A lot of work is being carried out by our Treasurer raising the finances to enable proposed repairs to the pointing of the walls among other things. This essential work will help keep the building wind and watertight. It may be that we will need some fundraising activities to get us over the finish line.

The buildings are being regularly examined for any potential repairs. Unfortunately, it appears that our hall flooring may be coming close to the end of its lifespan. Advice is being sought on potential repairs.

Thanks goes to all who over the past year who have helped in the upkeep of the buildings and grounds. Special thanks have to go to the gardening group who have been digging back the grass growth up against the front wall as well as clearing the blocked downpipes. All of this back breaking work is needed to maintain our beautiful building. *Ian Boa*

Finance

At the beginning of the 2021-2022 finance year, Holy Trinity's prospects seemed daunting with income well below expenditure. Its recovery subsequently was better than expected, although not quite to the weekly level sought. Since then, with freedom from the limitations imposed because of Covid, midweek and early Sunday morning services have resumed, other activities recommenced and a new group for Young Adults has started. I am pleased to report that in the 2022-23 finance year, Holy Trinity's income has risen to a significantly higher level than in the previous year and exceeded expenditure by a surprising margin.



St Columba models care for the Church

Almost half of Holy Trinity's Income for day-to-day expenditure came through committed giving by Standing Orders and Planned Giving Envelopes, which were 5½% more than in 2021-2022. Occasional additional donations and Gift Aid tax recovered raised the overall proportion to 70% of income. The Gift Aid total increase of 19% was achieved in part by changing the

claim frequency from quarterly to monthly, but also reflecting increased giving. The Hall usage, after paying the Hall running and minor repair costs, provided a further 10½% of income and the car park revenue 15%.

However, day-to-day Expenditure also grew by 5% over the year. The major part of this (70%) was spent for Services, Work, Mission and Clergy support. These were covered through the Committed giving, additional donations and Gift Aid tax recovered. The remainder was spent on Church running costs, minor repairs and our contribution towards support for the Diocese and Province (Quota). The income from the hall and car park enabled these to be met.

During the year we were also faced with some exceptional expenditure for the repairs to Sacristy Roof after the thefts of lead and installing the roof alarm. The Sacristy roof reinstatement cost was primarily met by a claim to Ecclesiastical Insurance. The cost of the roof alarm was met with assistance from a Scottish Episcopal Church building grant, the proceeds from a Fund-Raising Lunch and one of the legacies given by a member of the congregation in their will.

The unrestricted current account income was £7,660 more than expenditure, with day-to-day income and expenditure illustrated in the accompanying chart.

Designated donations continue to be given each month, towards the cost of the major repairs necessary for the Church building - wall pointing, gutter and downspout repairs and painting. The Benefact Trust has also awarded a grant towards these.

Full details of the income and expenditure for 2022-2023 are contained in the church accounts which have been approved by the Vestry and are available for inspection.



Churches are asked to draw up budgets for the year ahead. Costs generally have risen steeply over recent months. Although this trend is expected to diminish, increases appear likely to continue in the months immediately ahead. Whilst not part of the accounts, the Vestry is aware of the following unavoidable pressures for 2023-24: -


- The value of Clergy Stipend, etc is to be restored in stages to the 2006 level, adjusted by the changes in the consumer price index (CPI). A further increase is expected from January 2024;
- Besides maintaining the Life and Ministry at Holy Trinity, providing support for Community Life and Outreach work, the repair work on the church building and projects agreed for

Holy Trinity's Flourishing Future and 150th Anniversary, there are regular maintenance, repairs and tests that need to be carried out including:

- ◆ work on the hall floor;
- ◆ measures that assist Holy Trinity in moving towards net-zero carbon footprint;
- ◆ electrical repairs, checks and tests in both the church and hall, and other regular safety checks;
- ◆ gutter clearance on the church and hall.

With regard to income, earnings, especially for the lower paid, have barely grown and have fallen in value. Few people are perhaps likely to be in a position to regularly give some more for support of Holy Trinity, but it is hoped anyone who can will consider doing so and that the overall Income from Standing Orders and Planned Giving will increase a little each year to help this church's life and work. The level of donations for use of hall is adjusted by the Vestry from time to time, but return depends on the extent of its use and the outlay on running and keeping up this resource. The car park rental remains fixed until review in 2027.

Fund raising is a beneficial way of giving support. Contributions, in whatever way given, are equally valuable to Holy Trinity. This Stewardship can include: -

- Giving practical help and assistance for everyday requirements at Holy Trinity;
- Organising a fund-raising endeavour - there are lots of possibilities including sponsored activities, social events, signing up for 'easyfundraising'  and on-line shopping with brands that donate to Holy Trinity whenever you buy from them;
- Supporting social and fund-raising events by being there and encouraging others to join in;
- Making Holy Trinity known throughout the community and helping to enable appreciation of its activities and building;

as well as by contributing financially. The reports in this booklet tell you more about what is going on in our congregational life and hopefully will spark ideas for Stewardship.

Thank You *Robert Nellist*

Health & Safety

The general policy of the Vestry is to provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from all church and church hall activities. The resulting risk assessments and the resulting actions taken have been included in HT's Health and Safety Management systems.

Regular risk assessments continue to be undertaken to ensure (as far as possible) the safety of everyone using both the church and the church hall. A good deal of time has been involved in making sure we approach this work to the benefit of all church and hall users and it is being constantly reviewed. Health and Safety is a standing agenda item at every Vestry meeting where any matter arising, which cannot be addressed immediately, is discussed and appropriate action taken for example access issues where corrective action is being managed in terms of short, medium and long term goals. Health and Safety is the responsibility of us all. If you see a risk then sort it/correct it and if you cannot do that report it to myself or the Rector.

Mary Kenyon

Safeguarding

There have been no changes or updates in Safeguarding at Holy Trinity Church since last year's report. Anyone involved in voluntary work with children and vulnerable adults must apply for PVG, which can be done online. There are no problems or concerns at Holy Trinity at this time. Anyone having concerns regarding safeguarding, please contact myself or the Rector.

Helen Kemp

Rotas

It has been a pleasure to welcome some new participants to our teams offering the set readings at the 10.30 Sunday service, and on occasional additional services. We have also heard some new voices helping us to offer our concerns for God's creation at home and further afield. The list of those willing to welcome us as we come together each week has not been so fortunate, alas, so there may be a few 'self-service' occasions or where a bit of patience will be required.

Ann Lees

Church Hall



Our church hall is one of our biggest assets. It is a place where we socialise and build relationships as a congregation; a place that hosts and supports numerous community groups, classes and events; and an important source of income in tough financial times.

There are currently 18 groups meeting regularly in the hall including HT Tots, youth fellowship, judo, yoga, pilates, keep fit, dance, ballet, tai chi, capoeira and art classes, a community choir, a tea dance and lunches for the elderly, university of the third age, and a musical theatre group. Don't even ask me what capoeira is! We have had about 40 one-off events, mostly children's parties, but also a range of charity events, including further cultural sessions hosted by our Ukrainian friends. It is quite staggering to think of the sheer number of folk who have passed through our doors over the past year. Not only does this represent a huge contribution to the well being of the community around us, but it also supports a number of small businesses - community wealth building at its best. The hall has probably never been busier, and we have interest in further regular lets.

On the financial side, income for the year is £19,104.03. Hall running costs have amounted to £9,862.34, giving a profit of £9,241.69, which is more than £2,000 up on last year. We increased our charges last year, and will have to consider a further increase this year to keep pace with inflation, but we know that the hall remains good value and we want to keep it as affordable as possible.

One of the downsides of the increased use of the hall is increased wear and tear on the fabric and fittings. In particular, the floor is taking a hammering and we are looking at options for remedial work. The proposal is to put aside a proportion of the hall profits to cover the cost of this and other upgrading work which may be required.

Finally, huge thanks to David and Sheila Brown, and Bob and Helen Piper for assisting with opening and closing up for events; June our cleaner; Rachel for keeping us stocked up with cleaning materials; Brian and Ian for help and advice with fabric issues; and Robert for keeping us right on the financials. *Alistair Shaw*

Children's and Youth Work



Recent research undertaken by the Diocesan Youth Committee, of which I am a member, has revealed the toll which the pandemic has taken on the already fragile level of involvement of children and young people in churches across the diocese.

At HT, post Covid, we too have seen decline and we can no longer sustain our primary age group, HTKidz, on anything other than an occasional basis. This is a source of sadness

and has definitely changed the atmosphere in the morning service. But we refuse to shut up shop, and are at pains to demonstrate that we are still available to offer children's ministry as and when the opportunity or need arises. During the year, Gen and Eliza led sessions with Harry Gray when he came to church, we were delighted to welcome back Tom and Inez for an Easter Garden making session in April, and our Crib Service was a magical experience as always. The key principle is availability, so that if families with children do turn up we are in a position to get things going again.

On a more positive note, the Youth Fellowship is still meeting every month or so during term time on Saturday nights. During the year we have explored prayer, labyrinths and, a Christian perspective on Hallowe'en, as well as our traditional Christmas pizza and film night, and end of year barbeque. *Alistair Shaw*

The Flourishing Future Group

Since its formation in May 2022, initially as the Green Action Group, we have continued to meet regularly to develop Holy Trinity's response to the net zero challenge. For our Net Zero Strategy to be realised, we recognised that a group with an "Action" name implied that it is the group's responsibility to implement the strategy. In reality, achieving and going beyond net zero can only be successfully achieved if we all embrace the challenge. The new name "Flourishing Future" also aligns with the Provincial net zero ambitions and language. The strategy is designed to sensitively implement change throughout the life and work of our Church, through which everyone will benefit.

Our strategy embraces Holy Trinity's values and builds on the concept of 'growing our spiritual footprint whilst reducing our carbon footprint'. The strategy engages with every aspect of the life of the Church, through its teaching, management, lifestyle, community outreach and overseas interests. A summary of the strategy can be found on HT's web site: <https://holytrinitystirling.org/flourishing-future-group/>.

Responding to the climate emergency can seem overwhelming. However, we develop three simple questions that we should address throughout our decision-making processes:

- 1) Does the approach conserve and enhance natural resources, including reductions in greenhouse gas emissions?
- 2) Will it enhance the spiritual life of the Church as well as deliver and enhance prosperity?
- 3) Whom may we inadvertently exclude that might otherwise benefit from the decision being made?

This simple approach can help to make substantive progress in a mission to deliver net zero, whilst enhancing our spiritual life.

More visibly, the geographical footprint of the Church presents an opportunity to develop best practice addressing both the biodiversity and climate crises. The retirement of Brian Shanks from maintaining the Church grounds has presented both a challenge and opportunity in how we sustainably manage the property into the future. We have been actively consulting with a number of external organisations, including Tree Link, On the Verge and RePollinate to garner ideas. We also want to consult with the congregation to explore these opportunities. It is critical that our decisions contribute to the sustainability and vision for our Church and its buildings.

We would also like to acknowledge Joan Lyon for convening a gardening group to tackle the weeding and tidying up of the Church grounds. We are always looking for more volunteers to assist with the gardening.

Membership: Cathy Johnston (Diocesan Climate Action Group, Provincial Environment Group), Nikki Jorgensen, Joan Lyon, Anne Murray, Eliza Pont, Andrew Tyler (Convener), Christoph Wutscher (Rector) and Graham Young.

Professor Andrew Tyler

HT Tots Café

Tots Cafe

HT Tots, our group for pre-schoolers and their unpaid carers continues to meet 10-11.30am on Mondays in the church hall. We have several committed volunteers who run it during term time- getting out and tidying away toys as well as providing refreshments- a huge thanks to them. It is an offering we make as a church to our local community and anyone who is interested in helping out please see *Genevieve Pont*.

Young Adults' Group

After a successful first few months of regular Tuesday evening meetings culminating with a summer BBQ with some guests, the Young Adults' Group has just restarted at the beginning of September 2023. We covered a variety of topics – Getting to know you, light touch art therapy, potluck supper from different countries, prayer pathways to God, games nights, silent walk round garden and labyrinth at Stirling University and a great trip to the V&A Museum in Dundee with its fantastic tartan exhibition. We ended the term with a very sociable BBQ with invited guests.

New members have come along for our first meeting this term and the leaders' team is James Gardner and Revds Joan Lyon, Rebekah Sims, and Rachael Wright. Plans for the future include a film night at Macrobert Centre, the Origins of fixed hour prayer, potluck supper, walk up Dumyat or other peak, What is the Liturgy in the Scottish Episcopal Church?, Anyone can sing evening (with Ulrike Wutscher), an Introduction to Chinese Philosophy, Spirituality and Music, an overview of the Provincial Net Zero initiative (with Cathy Johnston) and, of course, more games! I don't think we'll be bored.

We hope to link up with the Stirling University Episcopal Chaplain, Revd Jon Connell. Please pray for our young people – the future of our churches.

Revd Joan Lyon

Study Groups

Two groups met during Advent and Lent respectively for study & fellowship. During Advent we discussed *Mary and the Magnificat*: what the Bible has to say about Mary, singing, and her song as found in Luke's Gospel. In Lent, members of the HT ministry team took turns to lead a course in *Christian Basics* as we reflected on Images of God, the Bible, the Five Marks of Mission, Liturgy and the Creeds.

The Rector



Mary at the Annunciation: West Window at HT

HT Magazine



The magazine team consists of Libby Coats, Liza Green and Ann Lees, greatly assisted by Liza's husband Mike. Regular articles are the Rector's Letter and the Prayer Diary. We are indebted to Christoph for his letter and to Nick Morris for undertaking the prayer diary after Rev Graham Willey's death. Otherwise, we try to focus on local issues, on articles submitted

by members of HT. Highlights this year have included readers' favourite poems and favourite sounds, updates from the HT Flourishing Future Group and the popular feature 'Getting to Know,' an interview with someone at HT. Special thanks to Sheila Brown for transcribing several articles from the Holy Trinity archives. We subscribe to an online resource specifically for church magazines and this is the source of the front covers. *Libby Coats*

Flowers

As many of you know, Mary Kenyon has been the flower convener for many years (decades). Mary has now stepped down and I have taken on this role. I will be reintroducing the flower rota, where you can sign up to supply flowers for a particular Sunday. If you wish to arrange flowers that's great or you can make a donation and they can be arranged for you, just let me know. Remember, flowers look beautiful anyway, so a simple vase arrangement is just as lovely as a more formal arrangement! There will be a large container at the back of church for any donations for flowers during the year too. For festival dates, there will be the opportunity for you to come



along and help decorate the church, whatever your ability. The next festival is Harvest so we will meet on Saturday 30th September at 10.30am to do this. All are welcome and greenery is always welcome. Many thanks *Karen Ellis*

Pastoral Group

This group was set up in 2019. It continues to support those who are unable to attend church but who wish to keep in touch with HT. Contact is made in person or by telephone. It is one way of showing Holy Trinity's care and concern. The pastoral group meets occasionally and keeps in touch by email. This has enabled us to share concerns and to offer support to one another. We are exploring the idea of displaying our thoughts and prayers within the church building. Please contact Libby Coats or the Rector about any pastoral matters. *Libby Coats*

Music

Gathered song

The composer and pastoral musician Bernadette Farrell once told a congregation: ‘If you’re singing the same as others around you, you’re probably singing the tune; if you’re not, you’re singing in harmony!’

The insight that we are all the church’s primary music-makers has been taken to heart at HT, as visitors and newcomers often remark.

We are blessed too with instrumentalists and singers who provide different colours and textures to our song (Ian’s ordination to the Diaconate was a fine example of this) and we are grateful to those who lead music in this way. If you would like to contribute to the Choir or Music Group, then let us know.

The Organ and Organ Studentships

Our organ is just a bit older than the church, built by the outstanding William Hill for the church in Barnton Street in 1868 before being extended and moved here. It has had quite a number of alterations since that time and needs rebuilding due to some serious issues. You wouldn’t know this, Sunday by Sunday, as it’s partly covered up by a choice selection of sounds, avoiding those that would make the deficiencies obvious!



Our Director of Music at the HT organ

There are now three people having organ lessons at HT. Laura Buxel our Organ Student is growing in confidence all the time, playing with a real sense of flow and leadership. This is a vital initiative if we are to continue to have musicians able to lead the song in our churches. Do you know anyone (especially young people) who might like to have a go at playing the organ? If so, please talk to the Director of Music.

Concerts and other events

As well as music in worship, the church continues to host concerts: two by Stirling University Choir, the SSAFA Christmas Cracker and others.

In April we were host to the Scottish Federation of Organists’ Annual Conference. As well as a wide range of music (from *a capella* barbershop to music for guitar and organ), we had a fascinating account by Dr Peter Burman of HT’s architecture within the context of architecture throughout these islands.

We continue to live in exciting times as we develop our spiritual lives through music at Holy Trinity.

Alistair Warwick

Christian Aid



For over 75 years, the great truth that everyone is equal in the sight of God has inspired Christian Aid to stand in solidarity with our most marginalised global neighbours, of all faiths and none. In 2021-22, 1.4 million people in need were reached by its humanitarian programmes, 257 projects were implemented in 14 countries and £7 million was raised by its donors to support humanitarian emergencies. At Holy Trinity, for the third year running, we had an 'e-envelope', which raised the magnificent sum of £1,383.75 (£1,170+£213.75 Gift Aid). Thank you for your generous support, which will help to make an enormous difference to the lives of people living in poverty around the world. Our next effort will be to support the Christian Aid Coffee Morning on Saturday 21 October at the Park Church, Stirling.

David Brown

Start Up Stirling

Start Up Stirling provides practical support to local people who find themselves in financial difficulty, poverty or crisis. Losing paid employment, receiving an unexpected high bill, going through a family breakdown, being ill and losing pay or benefit delays can all cause people to experience financial difficulty, food poverty or homelessness. The project operates foodbanks, helps those starting new tenancies and provides advice. Hard on the heels of the covid situation the growing cost of living crisis means that Start Up's support is increasingly vital for a growing number of individuals and families. At Holy Trinity we collect items for the foodbanks and



helper packs. We provide collection baskets in the porch. Details of what is needed can also be found there. Alternatively, donations can also be made at many supermarkets and this is also a good way to support Start Up. Food donated at the annual harvest festival also goes to Start-Up. This is particularly crucial, as stocks are very low at present. Many thanks to everyone for your generous support for Start-Up over the last year.