

MISSION PARTNERS REPORT TO APCM 2024

*'And he said to them, 'Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation'
(Mark 16:15)*

St Peter's Shipley has long supported mission overseas, and in recent decades, mission closer to home. Prayer is a vital part of our mission support, as is communication with our mission links. The good news of the Kingdom of God is a message for all Creation. Although not all of us may be called now or in the future to work in a formal mission role, all of us can be involved in praying for, and encouraging those who are. Until relatively recently, St Peter's had a Mission Support group who met to pray, share news, and plan events in support of mission partners, or to co-ordinate visits for them. Due to changes in circumstances for many members, the group made a decision to close, with Revd John Rainer overseeing communication with link mission partners until his retirement.

Since September 2023, we are grateful to a number of church members who stepped forward to offer to keep in touch with our link mission partners on a temporary basis, and to keep our church updated with any news about them. Particular thanks go to Moira Gledhill, Anne and Eric Parker, and Gillian Towell, as well as to others who have used their existing links with mission partners to keep us up to date with their prayer needs. If you feel called to help coordinate keeping in touch with mission partners, please do speak to one of the staff team, or to Revd Natasha Thomas when she begins her time with us.

Visits from Mission Partners On 20 August 2023, Revd Chris Howitz preached at our morning service, and updated us about his work with St Johns' Church in Oman. Rachel McGirr, who was our last church youth leader until December 2022, now serving the Lord in Malaysia was also able to visit us for our Morning Services in September 2023 and to update us on her work. There has been no specific weekend focused on church mission partners in 2023, but exploring meeting up with mission links is a goal for the coming twelve months.

Mission Support in 2023 Several church activities have raised funds to support mission partners in 2023. In May 2023, church members enjoyed an evening in support of Christian Aid, and a quiz compiled by John Rhodes and John Rainer. Jason Agar and Frances Vose hosted a BBQ in aid of Sudan in August 2023 after it had to be postponed in July 2023 due to rain. Frances and Jason hope to host a BBQ for Sudan this year, and having consulted the weather, have pencilled in 13 July 2024 as a likely date. The annual Red Post Box Appeal where church members 'post' a financial gift to support the work of mission partners, meant we were able to support several mission partners locally and abroad.

Who are our current mission partners?

Revive House, Brazil – St Peter's used to financially support Andy Roberts as a mission link. He worked with Ian and Simea Meldrum in Brazil, and established a home for vulnerable girls in Olinda, Brazil. Andy, his wife Rose and their daughters now work in the UK, hence financial support for them has ceased. However, St Peter's continue to pay £30 a month towards sponsoring a place for one of the girls at Revive.

Chris Howitz – Revd Chris Howitz, is a former member of St Peter's and son of Kathy Tedd. He answered a call to serve God in the Anglican Church in Oman. Recently, Chris has experienced visa problems, and prayer is needed, as he and his wife, Nicole, continue to seek God's guidance for their long term future.

Garry Ion (Church Missionary Society, CMS East Africa). Garry visited us in February 2022. Our link with him originated with Revd Chris Edmondson, who knew Gary from his time as a

vicar in Cumbria where Gary is from. Gary returned to the UK to work with CMS in the Carlisle Diocese, whilst he cared for his elderly parents until their deaths. Gary has recently visited Uganda, and is currently looking to extend his work with CMS in the Carlisle Diocese, where he has set up Men in Sheds, community workshops where men can do activities and connect.

Rachel McGirr Known to many of us as our Children's and Young People's worker until the end of 2022, Rachel now works in Malaysia, and many of us continue to keep in touch with and pray for her. Rachel has recently established a newsletter to keep her supporters up to date, so we can better pray for her as she serves God in Malaysia.

Julian and Catherine Shelton St Peter's have had a long term link with Wycliffe Bible Translators, originally supporting Mick and Margaret Foster from 1968 to 2018. We now support Julian Shelton whose work for WBT involves travel from the UK to Central Asia.

ShIPLEY CAP Debt Centre St Peter's, along with other churches in Shipley, has funded the Shipley Debt Centre for several years, and members of our church have done CAP volunteer training, to help support others to manage their finances. In the early months of 2024, three more church members have completed volunteer training.

Alice Shirengo, Kenya Alice is a minister in Kenya, and supports her extended family and many vulnerable children, whom she fosters. Alice is not part of a mission organisation so we have supported her through prayer, and occasionally passed on financial gifts from church members. However, in 2023, the PCC felt called to make her one of the recipients of our 2023 Red Post Box Appeal. In January 2024, when Mike Moss, our Treasurer contacted her to let her know this, and arrange payment, it appeared our gift was very timely, due to urgent repair work being needed on part of her house, due to a fire.

Sri Lanka Mervyn Silva is involved in a Christian charity in Sri Lanka. Economic problems in Sri Lanka worsened in 2022, meaning the charity's resources were particularly important. In June 2023, the PCC agreed to support this charity financially, with the 2024 allocation going on helping employability of several people including disabled adults and carers for disabled children, and to support a home caring for cancer patients.

Sudan Sudan is a diocesan partner in the Leeds diocese. St Peter's links to Sudan are particularly close due to Archbishop Ezekiel Kondo being at one time a Langham Bursary scholar at St Peter's, and has kept in touch with us for many years. Since the current conflict in Sudan broke out in April 2023, contact with the Sudan Diocese and Archbishop Kondo has been difficult, although in April 2024, the Sudan Diocese was able to produce an update of its work and activity, through long-standing contacts in the Bradford Episcopal Area.

The Lighthouse Group (TLG) For a number of years members of our church have gone into local schools to work with children who require additional support. St Peter's do not directly finance this project, but previously enabled a small amount of Rachel McGirr's time to be used for this, and currently Jenni Reid commits some time to this through her Children and Youth administrator work.

Zephaniah Trust Julia Slaney, a member of our church, is employed by Zephaniah Trust. Established by a local member of Shipley Baptists, John Froud, thirty years ago, Zephaniah Trust brings light into dark corners, through its work in schools and with refugees

Review of Financial Support in 2023

For many years there has been a willingness on the part of the PCC to fund a variety of links. Not all our mission partners receive funding, often because they are not attached to a specific organisation to which payment can be made. At one time our financial giving was regarded as a 'tithe' of the church's income, although it has not always been, and is not currently, ten percent. Nevertheless, one of our values is generosity, and we want to support financially those whose gifting is to spread the good news of the gospel to others.

As Revd John Rainer explained last year's Mission Report for the APCM, the PCC was to review its financial commitment to mission partners. Due to some of the links coming to an end due to retirement, or a change in role of the mission partner whom we supported, some donations have ended. As our own church numbers have fallen, the overall amount paid to mission partners in 2023 reduced from the payment made in 2022. However, positively, due to retirement and changes in role in some mission partners, the PCC was able to agree to fund two new mission partners.

Financial support for St John and Ellie Perry, Ian and Simea Meldrum, and FEBA, ended with the retirements of St John Perry, Ian Meldrum and Sheila Leech. A final payment was made to these links in December 2023. The church had supported LAMB a hospital in Bangladesh, where Christine Edwards (who grew up in St Peter's) worked as a mission doctor for many years. Christine and her husband Colin returned to the UK, and financial payments here ended in 2022. The PCC agreed to St Peter's ending its funding for Mercy Ship and MAF with final payments to them also made in 2022. Payments to Gary Ion, Zephaniah Trust, Wycliffe Bible Translators, the Sudan Diocese, and Shipley Debt Centre have continued, with payments beginning in 2024 for the Sri Lankan Charity, which Mervyn Silva is involved with, and to Revd Chris Howitz in Oman. Funding for 2026 and beyond will be discussed at PCC within the next 12 months.

The table below shows mission payments from 2023 to 2025 table below. Mission payments are normally paid out in the preceding December to cover the following year.

Mission Partner	2023 (paid Dec 2022)	2024 (paid Dec 2023)	2025
St John & Ellie Perry (OMF)	1500	1000	0
Ian and Simea Meldrum (CMS)	2300	1000	0
Revive	2100	1000	0
Gary Ion	2300	2500	2800
LAMB	1000	0	0
FEBA	500	0	0
Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF)	500	0	0
Mercy Ships	500	0	0
Julia Slaney (Zephaniah Trust)	2300	2500	2800
Julian and Catherine Shelton (Wycliffe Bible Translators)	2300	2500	2800
Sudan	2300	2500	2800
Mervyn Silva	0	1000	1500
Chris Howitz (OMAN)	0	1000	1500
Shipley Debt Centre	3000	3000	3000

Total	20600	18000	17200
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Gemma Richards and Viv Brealey April 2024