



**Don't be alone
on Christmas Day**
 Free Christmas Dinner
 Free Entertainment
 Free Return Transport
 12-2.30pm Christmas Day
 At St Stephens Church
 Gelli St, Port Tennant
 * Contact us at the vicarage on 01792 455671
 to arrange your free pick up
 (please leave a message!)



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Leadership Team

Vicar: Rev Steven Bunting

The Vicarage, Lewis Street, St Thomas, Swansea, SA1 8BP
01792 652891
Vicar@sts.church

Parish Office

Lewis Street, St Thomas, SA1 8BP
01792455671
office@sts.church
Office hours Mon- Fri 8-4pm

Parish Wardens: Rob Smith and Lynda Miners

Parish Website www.sts.church
Facebook Site www.facebook.com/stthomasswansea

Weekly Services

Sunday: St Stephens 10.00am (free breakfast at 9.30)
Tuesday: St Stephens 11.30am (followed by free lunch)

Introduction from the Vicarage

Hello All,

In many ways I can't believe that I have been your vicar now for over six years. In some ways it feels like I came yesterday and in other ways it seems like I have never been anywhere else. 2019 again has been a year of highs and lows as we have sought to follow the Holy Spirit in guiding us forward as a church community. We have seen significant growth in our Sunday congregations which on a good Sunday is now over double what it was last year. We have delighted in the signs of new life as we celebrate our annual baptisms in the sea.



Again in 2019 we have become aware of the fragility of human life with regular news of tragic and untimely deaths of people in our community. We are constantly aware of the needs of our community through our work with schools, the foodbank and Baby Basics. At the forefront of our mind needs to be the knowledge that we, as His Church, are the hands, feet, mouth and ears of Jesus. If he was physically present here today in our community what would he be doing? How would he be bringing His kingdom?

I would like to thank all those who have given not just financially but with both time and energy for the service of God in 2019. A particular thanks to Rob and Lynda for their hard work as wardens, to Barbara as she works diligently with our finances and all those who serve the church on Sundays and Tuesdays.

Yours in Christ with love and prayers

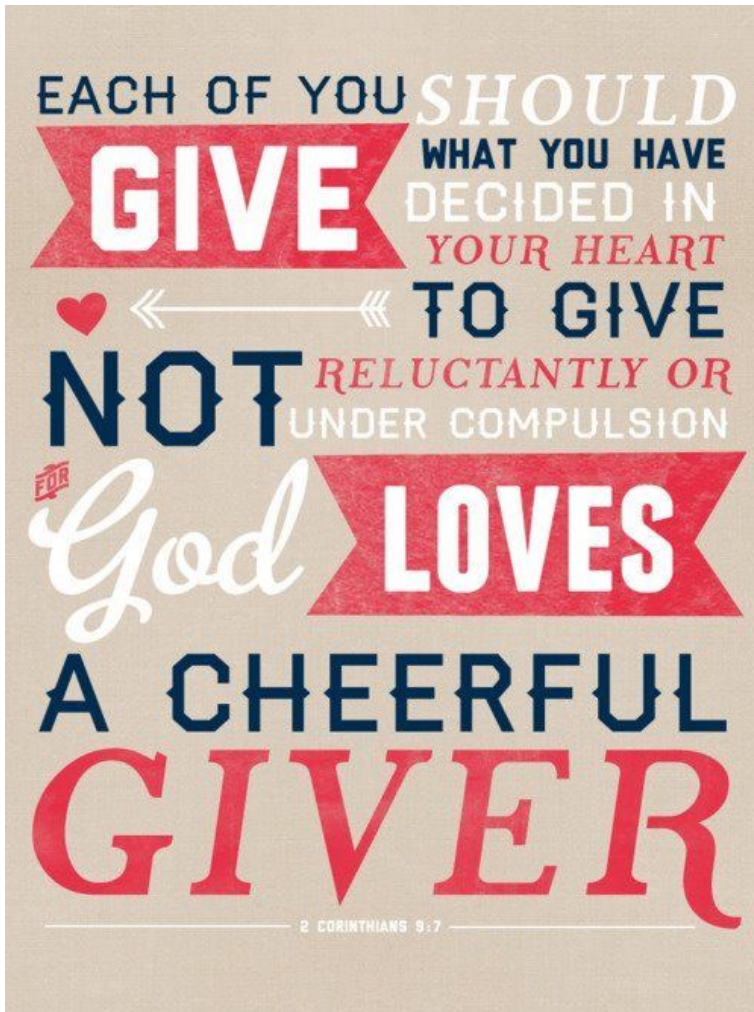
Steven, Rachel, Ryan, Katy-Grace & Sam

Parish of St Thomas and Kilvey ~ Income Expenditure and Assets

Parish of St Thomas and Kilvey - STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES 2019

Category	Sub-Category	General Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2019 Total £	2018 Total £	
INCOMING RESOURCES/INCOME						
Voluntary Income		Planned Giving	15,373	15,373	10,671	
		Loose Collections	2,370	2,370	4,244	
		Donations	3,487	3,487	4,279	
		For Special Mission	4,026	4,026	2,730	
		Legacies	-	-	1,000	
Note 2		GA Tax Refunds	7,663	7,663	2,627	
		GASDS Tax Refunds	561	561	1,061	
		Grants	3,839	209,583	3,749	
Generated Income		Money Raising	10,996	10,996	12,904	
		Fees	3,502	3,502	5,452	
Investment Income		Investment Income (for Salary)	5,000	5,000	5,000	
Other Income resources		Other Income	1,028	1,028	4,793	
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES/INCOME		48,819	218,609	267,428	58,508	
RESOURCES EXPENDED/EXPENDITURE						
Support for Ministry		Parsih Share [Note 3]	17,917	17,917	5,972	
		Clerics Expenses	1,591	1,591	1,360	
		Money Raising	17	17	-	
Parish Activities		Maintenance of Services	2,774	2,774	2,620	
		General Parish Expenses	1,609	2,055	2,238	
Church Property		Maintenance of Churches	12,105	208,300	10,976	
		Maintenance of other Property	5,838	5,838	6,071	
		Exceptional Expenditure [Admin Support][Note 4]	3,881	5,000	13,415	
Grants and Other		Mission in the Parish	4,705	4,705	6,916	
Financial Support		Mission Outside/World	1,474	1,474	200	
Other Resources Expended		Includes Fees Reimbursed	220	220	502	
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED/EXPENDITURE		50,658	216,829	267,486	50,270	
NET MOVEMENT IN CASH FUNDS						
SURPLUS/DEFICIT INCOME over EXPENDITURE [1]				- 58.64	8,238	
PARISH TOTAL ASSETS Represented by:		Total Funds Brought Forward				
		2019			2018	
	St Thomas and Kilvey Current Account	15,757.51		15,758	15,816	
Opened 12 March 2019	Grant Account		23,000	23,000		
	Mission Fund		13,750	13,750	11,209	
	House Fund		5,301	5,301	5,493	
Sub-TOTALS		[Note 5 - See Balance Sheet]	15,758	42,051	57,808	32,517
INCREASE/DECREASE IN TOTAL PARISH ASSETS				33,387	8,096	
Note 1		Without Grant - Actual Position: Income £57,844.95. Expenditure £59,186.46 I/E Deficit £1,342.51. With Grant: Income £267,427.82. Expenditure £267,486.46 I/E Deficit £58.64.				
Note 2		GA £8,224 (Envelopes, Donations and GASDS) Assumes has caught up, includes 2018 and 2019.				
Note 3		2019 Parish Share outstanding £24,864.60 (£17,917.02 arrears b/f from 2018 paid in 2019).				
Note 4		Q1 and Q4 Lay Salary are unpaid in 2019 - Arrears = £3,431.28.				
Note 5		Total Parish Assets (excluding Grant Balance £ 34,808.33 Less Arrears £ 6,512.45				

Financial Update



2019 has been another challenging year financially. We continue to focus our expenditure on mission and evangelism in our parish, to reach people and to serve those most in need. Rental income from the house on Miers street has continued to support the employment of Sarah who works for us, the Swansea Foodbank and St Marys in Swansea. We continue to try and maximise our income and reduce our standard expenditure so we can focus on distributing our resources to those who need it most. There is simply no point in us existing as a church if we do not do mission!

Our parish accounts don't

accurately reflect the situation with our parish share which is now completely up to date. Payments made just after the end of our reporting year due are not falling into the correct year artificially and this is something that we are addressing. It is absolutely essential that we contribute to the mission and ministry of the Diocese and this should not be seen as a burden but as a natural part of our church life. Our Sunday collections have increased this year by over 50% but we are still around £8000 a year short when we include gift aid and other collections.

We continue to see people gradually switching to direct giving and not only does this allow the church to plan better, it also reduces the burden of gift aid and administration from the parish treasurer. We need to remember that giving should be done as an act of worship not compulsion!

There is a temptation when money is tight to batten down the hatches and fundraise to "keep the church open"! That is not a path we are going to go down. We are going to be faithful, continue serving God and trust him that he

has provided within our church family, all the resources we need to continue mission and ministry here.

Church Wives



The wives group continue to meet despite the fact that the membership is only just in double figures. Since the inception of the “Young Wives” 54 years ago, the young has been dropped but perhaps a more appropriate title should be the “senior” church ladies. We no longer have a programme of visiting speakers but we meet in fellowship and friendship. We chat about current news covering many aspects both in the local community and the wider world. To keep the little grey cells active we will have a quiz or play beetle or bingo. During lent we participated in the Bible study, taking the Lords Prayer as the theme. Each line of the prayer was studied and discussed which proved interesting and thought provoking. No longer are we involved in the many activities we have undertaken over the years but we reminisce quite a lot about our friends who can no longer attend our meetings and about the happy times we shared on many days out, with fun and laughter. We pray that God will bless us with good health, we give Him thanks for our fellowship and all the good things he provides for us.

The Brittle Bone Society

Postage stamps, postcards (new and used), British decimal coins, foreign coins and notes; Lapel pins/badges are sold and the money raised is donated to the society. The society depends solely on donations and voluntary support. Just to go on doing what it does now, the society needs each



year some £200,000.

- 1: for basic research and the support of our travelling occupational therapist
- 2: for the purchasing and maintenance of specialised equipment, not available from any other source.
- 3: for welfare needs such as travel to hospital
- 4: for the support of staff who support and advise families.

Humanitarian Aid

Donations of money are sent regularly to Dr Alla in St Petersburg for her work with children and teenagers who are homeless, following surgery. They are housed, educated, cared for and prepared for independent living in the outside world. Donations are sent to the Dr who runs the children's dept of haematology and oncology at the centre of oncology, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

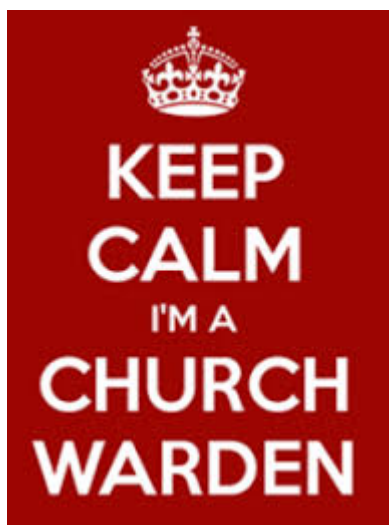
Donations are sent to Auntie Tanya who cares for abandoned babies and street children in Ukraine. Donations are sent to Andrei who runs a weekly youth club for street children, and those from poor families and organises Christian summer camps for them. Since the fighting in the Eastern Ukraine, he and his church accommodate refugees and displaced people. Money is sent to Svetlana, a widow with diabetes, to help pay for her medication as there is no NHS in Ukraine, all medicine has to be paid for. Occasional gifts of money are also sent to families who once received parcels. The total amount sent in 2018 was £1394.20.

Bible Study Group

A small number met each Monday afternoon in St Stephens which was started by Emma. We read from a version of the Bible called "The Story" which reads the



Bible as a seamless story from beginning to end. We started with creation and worked through 17 weeks to “The Kingdom Fall” under King Manasseh. After each reading there were discussions and questions at the back of the book. We were encouraged to read the text at home before each session, so as to be well versed by the time we had read it the second time all together and were prepared to answer the questions. We all found it a very profitable time. In the latter weeks we were joined by Mona, a Coptic Christian from Egypt and we learnt a great deal from her.



Peoples Warden

It has been a privilege to be people’s warden working with Steve and Robert, so much goes on behind the scenes which in general church members do not see, myself included until this last year or so. As vicar Steven has taken on so much over and above his role as Parish Priest. The amount of time and effort put in to applying for grants to secure the future of our buildings is

immense and not really in Steve’s remit, so huge thanks

to him for that alone, not to mention so many other amazing things which have happened because of Steve and his commitment to God’s work in this community over the last 5 years. Boys Brigade has 80 members, families in dire circumstances have been helped, food and entertainment made available to families during school holidays and Christmas Day was incredible. To see people so happy and grateful to be made to feel part of a family at such a special time of the year is so humbling. Help has come in from all directions, many people with no links to the community have offered all sorts of support, both practical and financial. Families have joined our church family through many different ways, baptisms, schools, Boys Brigade and just awareness and interest in what is happening with the church. With the temporary closure of St. Thomas Church due to building work, services are being held at St. Stephen’s, how amazing to see the church full on Sundays and the Tuesday congregation growing. For those

who remember Peggy Mead how happy she would be to see her beloved church full and with the front row taken up by men singing praises to God. We have seen and continue to see Jesus working in people's lives, many people being baptised in the freezing cold sea, people with little knowledge of the Bible or of Jesus himself becoming desperate to learn more, it is such a privilege to be among these people. We are growing as a family, from new babies to those well over 90 years of age, whether we have been to church all our lives or for just a short time, we are a family who love Jesus and are able to support and help one another just as the early Christians did in the book of Acts, long may we continue to grow in love, friendship and faith. We have seen what can only be described as miracles, on a personal level my daughter has been cured of cervical cancer the first thing she did after diagnosis was to go to a local church where she lives and pray and then phone Steve. I look forward to another year where I feel confident that we will see more and more of God's will being done in this community.

Lynda Miners

MINISTRY UPDATE

Occasional Offices

In 2019 we have had several church funerals, including the loss of some of our dear members. As vicar I officiated at sixty one funeral services and several other funeral related services. On a happier note we celebrated several baptisms and of course a nice group of weddings. Some of these baptisms and weddings have come as a direct result of the missional activities we undertake as a church.

Schools and Families Work



In 2019 we have continued to develop our work with the local schools, through weekly assemblies and other occasional services and events. We offer our Open the Book assembly to St Thomas School and Danygraig School every Wednesday. At Easter we also welcomed St Thomas School to the church for the week as we took every class around a selection of stations to experience the Easter Story. At Christmas we had a packed church for

both our annual concert with the Gwalia Singers and our memorial service in conjunction with Rees Davies and Sons Funeral Directors. We also had an amazing Christmas through the Keyhole experience in St Thomas Church this year which saw us temporarily housing 2 donkeys as over 500 children from 3 schools came through the church to witness the Christmas story told through the people who were there! This had outstanding feedback from the schools and we look to repeat that in the future.

Our mother and toddler group in St Stephens goes from strength to strength and is currently bursting at the seams! And we now have our second group in St Thomas Church. A huge thanks go to Jeanette and her team for the tremendous amount of hard work that goes into running our St Stephens group and to Sarah and Rachel for St Thomas.

Parochial Church Council

Our church council has met on several occasions in 2019 and discussed amongst other things, the following

- Food Bank
- Parish Finances
- Internal reordering of St Thomas
- Building of trust and personal testimonies
- Purchasing of items
- Mission

Boys Brigade



Our Boys Brigade and Girl Association continues to be one of the great success stories of our church. We now have 80 children every Tuesday and Wednesday between the three groups and we have a waiting list

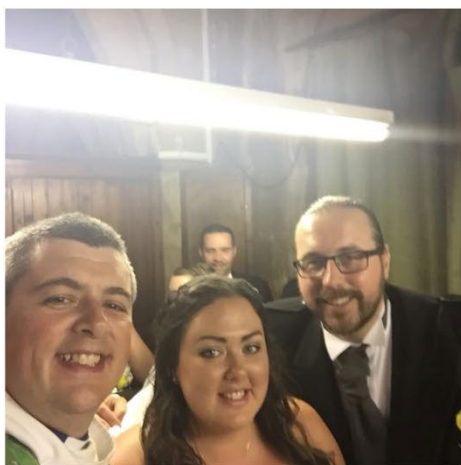
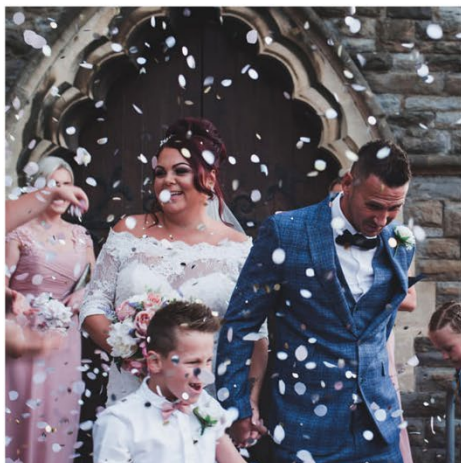
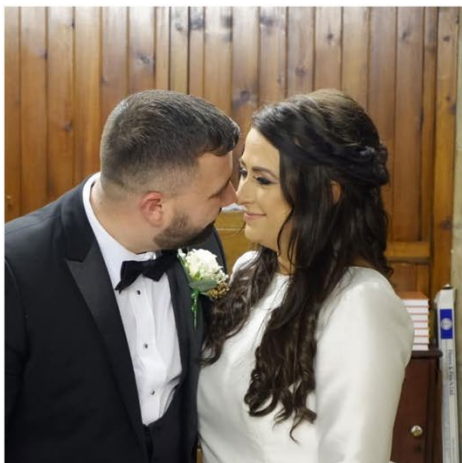
for others to join. Our older children enjoyed a trip to London for the X-Factor auditions this year and many of them were awarded with badges at the end of year awards. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Rachel, Sarah, Alison, Geoff, Jeanette, Wes, Bobbie, Matt and Lynda for all they do at our Boys Brigade.



Redevelopment of St Thomas Church

Over 2019 we have continued to plan, pray and prepare for the redevelopment of St Thomas Church. It is absolutely critical for the future of the ministry in St Thomas that we can repair, renovate and transform St Thomas Church into a hub for the community. We have a significant amount of community support and we already offer many different ministries detailed in the report that will all be based in our new community hub. At present our church building is deteriorating at a remarkable pace and we need to act before it becomes impossible to turn around. God has blessed us with this building in the middle of the community and we need to be using it every day of the week. We continue to seek grant funding from many different organisations. We have been blessed with grant funding for the external repairs and these have now been completed and we are now seeking funding for the internal work. Do please continue to pray for our redevelopment plans and that we can release this building to serve God in better ways for the future.





Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. (1 Corinthians 13)



“Or imagine a woman who has ten coins and loses one. Won’t she light a lamp and scour the house, looking in every nook and cranny until she finds it? And when she finds it you can be sure she’ll call her friends and neighbours: ‘Celebrate with me! I found my lost coin!’ Count on it—that’s the kind of party God’s angels throw every time one lost soul turns to God.” (Luke 15:10)



The transformation of our community is at the forefront of the mission and ministry of our church. We are eager to see the kingdom of God come in a real and tangible way as we work to serve people and see them claim the abundant life that Jesus offers us. We do this through many different ministries and some of these are detailed below.

Christmas

At Christmas we supported a number of families in our community who were struggling financially. This included helping those fleeing domestic violence, those who had been homeless and those who were left destitute because of benefit changes. We supported families with food, essential equipment, bedding and household items and with ongoing practical support. On Christmas Day we provided food for over 40 people with a cooked Christmas dinner, people who may have been alone on that special day. On Christmas eve we delivered sacks of presents to houses across the parish and wider city of Swansea to bless children who would not have received any other gifts. We were only able to do this with the partnership of our local schools and with the generous support of Churches in South West Gower.

Cwtch Fund



Due to the ongoing social challenges related to changes in benefits and issues of poverty in the parish we decided in partnership with St Thomas

School and Danygraig school to create a fund to support families who are struggling financially with treats and other activities to try and bring about childhood happiness. This could be a cinema voucher, a contribution towards a school trip, a new mattress for a bedroom...the list is endless. We have been able to help many families in 2019 and we will continue to develop this important partnership during 2020.



Our food bank continues to serve the parish area as part of the wider Trussell Trust foodbanks in Swansea. We operate on a Tuesday afternoon but have also provided several parcels on demand to local schools and other organisations when urgent cases have occurred. We are very grateful to the volunteers who run

the foodbank, specifically Nick Holly as he leads the teams.



St Stephens was again open for the Night Shelter this winter from January and we saw an increased demand for accommodation for those who were homeless. Many thanks go to Sonia from the Parish of Oystermouth who coordinated for us alongside Kathryn from St Thomas and to Geoff and Lynda, Amy and Caroline who volunteered. Support for the homeless is an integral part of the redevelopment of St Thomas with the provision of heating, laundry and showering facilities.

“Baby— basics”

Our Baby Basics charity continues to be led by Rachel as part of her role as Bishops Officer for Family Ministry. This is a project that originally started in Sheffield in response to the growing need for practical help to enable new mothers to provide the basic essentials needed for their new-borns. Every item that is given away through Baby Basics is donated by someone in the local community and is either new or in a like-new condition. Clothes are washed and ironed, and toys and Moses baskets are cleaned. Each Moses basket is given a new mattress and is packed to look as neat, tidy and appealing as possible. We value each mother and child by packaging every gift with a high level of care and love. The baskets contain all the essentials a mother needs for the first few weeks of her child's life—baby clothes, blankets, towels, as well as nappies, baby wash, and baby wipes, and essential items for mum—sanitary products, breast pads, hygiene items. As a church, we believe that God loves every one of the families who are referred to us, regardless of their background or circumstances. The baskets are our way of showing God's love by meeting a practical need. However, what we always keep in mind is that the baskets are not a hand out, but a gift. Each family who is referred to us is



also supported in prayer, whilst upholding careful confidentiality. God is at the heart of Baby Basics as we are inspired and motivated by his care for everyone. Every day we continue, and every item we send out is thanks to his kindness, grace and provision. In Matthew 25 Jesus says, “whatever you do for the least of one of my brothers or sisters, you do for me.” This faith is what underpins Baby Basics.

The whole system is based on referral- much like the foodbank system. Families are referred to us by midwives, health visitors, social workers, and other charities who work with vulnerable families. For the majority of cases, we aim to have a basket packed and ready a month before mum’s due date, so that she can see what she has in plenty of time. Our basic package is contained in the Moses basket, but referrers can also request to have the items without the basket if that’s more appropriate; or to have just nappies, or a clothing bundle, whatever is needed. Sometimes we have other items that we’re given, which we make sure are available to whoever may need them.

We launched back in October 2017, and in the time that we’ve been running we’ve received over 200 referrals, primarily from low income families and teenage parents without the support of family around them.

We are very grateful to Rachel for this ministry and to all those who donate, wash, iron and prepare clothes for distribution through this ministry.



During 2019 we increased our partnerships with TLG to include our school holiday meal and activity provision and the beginning of our early intervention programme with St Thomas School. During school holidays we provide free food and activities for families who may struggle financially due to the absence of free school meals. Since this programme began we have served several hundred meals to children and adults in our communities. Our mentoring programme partners a member of the congregation with a child in the school who they meet on a weekly basis to follow an agreed scheme. This is a partnership with St Thomas Community Primary School and will begin later in 2019.

Worship Thanks

Over the last few years we have sought ways to enhance the worship that we have in church by using different music instruments, different voices and different types of worship songs. We have been so grateful for the talents of Andrew and Stephen and this year we have been delighted to have Phil Davies join the team. Phil not only brings a huge wealth of worship leading experience but also a sense of being part of a bigger church family as he joins us when he can from Dunvant Christian Fellowship. In 2020 we are looking to increase the amount of people who contribute our service as we seek to hear God speaking through as many people as possible.

General Thanks

I would like to thank all those who serve the church family in whatever way. From wardens to cleaners, from council members to gardeners, from administrators to collection collectors! I am so very grateful for all that you do to serve God in this place. We are nervous but excited about all that God has planned for us! Let it all be for His Glory!



Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

(Ephesians 2:19-22)

