



St Mary's Church
Chapel Street
Penzance

10th March 2024

Financial Appeal and Fundraising for heating at St. Mary's Church, Penzance

Some background...

For hundreds of years, St. Mary's Church has stood on this site, serving the people of Penzance faithfully. It is also an iconic landmark, overlooking St. Michael's Mount. In recent years, both through the Covid period and into the present day, it is a place of refuge and support for the vulnerable. The church is open daily and staffed by volunteers and pastoral assistants. Hot drinks and often simple meals are freely provided. A place of acceptance and welcome to all is a hallmark of St. Mary's.

Many of you will know that very recently the gas heating at St. Mary's failed and is beyond repair, despite the current boiler being only 11 years old. Unfortunately, the whole system has been corroded by salt air. We are at present using portable electric heaters so that we can continue to worship daily (in the side chapel at the moment), offer a ministry of welcome and support, host many groups and keep our doors open for night church. This is not a long term solution, however, as it will be hard to conduct weddings, funerals and baptisms in the colder months of the year, which are of course all vital parts of our ministry and service; neither will we be able to hold large events: concerts, school groups and the like. So there is an issue about using such a large icon building effectively and creatively.

We do not hold fundraising events because we believe this would detract from our core calling as a church, which is to serve our community in faithfulness and prayer and to help others become more aware of the love of God. Our hospitality is freely given.

We need your help.

Appeal

Following a specialist survey of our building, we know that we need to find around £60,000 for a new heating system to be installed. This is a huge sum of money, especially as we are a very poor church and we usually spend our funds on serving our community. But there is good news: if we can raise at least half of this, we will be eligible to get funding for being a Church of England Demonstrator Church.

What is a Demonstrator Church?

Our church has been chosen to be one of the buildings in England which is an example to others about how to embrace new technologies to heat churches effectively and to serve the community in which we live. We are just one of two churches in Cornwall which will live out this vision of becoming carbon net zero by 2030. Here at St. Mary's, we are committed to serving those in need and those who are on the edge.

We are committed to the Green agenda and doing our bit to save this God-given planet. (Indeed, we already use '100% Green' electricity for this reason.) And we are committed to daily worship as a way of responding to God's love for all people and this world. Being a Demonstrator Church will help others on their journey to becoming carbon neutral.

So we need a heating system that is both economically efficient and environmentally friendly.

Reducing carbon footprint

After much research, the Diocese of Truro and the Diocese of Bristol have found a solution to the core needs of financial and environmental sustainability: a heating system which is cheaper to run and environmentally efficient. This innovative system of infrared heaters — designed specifically for church heating and aptly named Halos — will allow areas of the church to be used independently, meaning we will not have to heat the whole church for an event. These heaters have been successfully trialled in a Bristol church (with similarities to our building) and the people there speak enthusiastically about the effectiveness of the heating and the significant reduction in its cost. Church authorities across England are embracing the new technology.

The money...

This is an exciting opportunity to move forward in our commitment to serving our community as fully as we can, whilst also making significant steps to protect God's world. The system could be installed within a week once we have raised the money we need. Once again, if we can raise at least half of the £60,000 needed, we will be able to apply for grants for the rest.

Once the new heating system is installed it will also be possible for music groups and concerts to use the church building at a reduced hire charge as it will be much quicker and cheaper to heat the building.

The Church Council thanks you for reading this letter and asks for your prayers and support. Even a very small financial gift will make a huge difference to this project: thank you for your generosity.

With our love and prayers,

The Church Councils of St Mary's and St John's churches Penzance

We are attaching a response form in the hope that you might like to donate or pledge some money to the Green heating project.

