

Larbert West Parish Church of Scotland

Parish Profile



Larbert West Parish Church
Main Street, Larbert, FK5 3JF
www.larbertwestparishchurch.org
Registered Charity SC012251

Introduction



This period of vacancy is a significant event in the life of the congregation of Larbert West. Having had a spell of uncertainty with a potential union rejected by the other party following the result of arbitration, the congregation has had time to reflect on its purpose and calling and is now ready, with God's grace, to move forward, open to change and new ideas.

Our Mission

The current mission statement, *To bring people to know God by proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ through meaningful worship, loving fellowship and active outreach into the community,* outlines a congregation which is

engaged in evangelism, worship and fellowship, and is thus enabled to meet the needs of the community.

History

Larbert West started life in 1898 as a congregation of the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland becoming a parish church within the Church of Scotland in 1929. Since then the congregation has experienced a varied range of ministries which has helped to develop the open and outreaching congregation it is today.

Our Parish

The parish of Larbert West lies within the Presbytery of Falkirk and has a population of approximately 5,000. The area is mainly residential with a varied age range but predominantly young and mature adults. It forms part of the much wider community of Larbert and Stenhousemuir which has excellent schools, transport links to Stirling, Glasgow and Edinburgh, local shopping and community activities.

More detailed information on the make up of the parish can be found on the Statistics for Mission page of the Church of Scotland

http://cos.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/statistics_for_mission/parish_profiles/21367.pdf

The Congregation

Larbert West has a current roll of 358 with a worshipping community of around 70 most of whom are elderly. While a significant number of members live within the parish, Larbert West is a gathered congregation with members attending from other airts and pairts.

The congregation believes very strongly that being church is about meeting needs **and challenging itself to serve other's needs because that** is its understanding of being God's people. Larbert West is an inclusive family, welcoming all of God's children.



Under the current plan for the Presbytery of Falkirk, Larbert West has been given leave to call a minister on a five year reviewable tenure which is giving us the impetus to review what we do and how we do it so that the charge will (perhaps) be fully sustained as unrestricted in 5 years time

Congregational Life

One service of public worship is offered each Sunday morning at 10.30am with evening services four times a year on Communion Sundays. A feature of worship is the leading of intercessory prayers by members of the congregation. There is also a team of volunteers who read the scripture lessons, and an openness to involvement in sharing worship. An afternoon tea and Communion service is held three times a year for the elderly. Members of the congregation also participate in the car run, after service tea rota and flower deliveries. The Kirk Session has on its action list the intention to explore new ways of worshipping which might attract other groups to be part of the worshipping community. One initiative which has been undertaken has been to offer Messy Church to the community. This venture, which ran for six years and was put on hold pending the now rejected Union, proved very successful in encouraging those who might otherwise only be in church for weddings and funerals and it is the intention of the Kirk Session to re-establish this 'alternative' church. The digitisation of archive material has been recently undertaken



The Choir

Music is an important dimension of the worship at Larbert West and the Choir and organist work together to lead the congregation in praise and usually open worship with an introit as well as contributing anthems and other works as required.

Sunday Club

Sunday Club, our church for young people from 3 years of age to Primary seven, meets during morning worship. The young people sit with family or leaders for the first part of the service during which they will have their own time with the minister then leave to be in the hall where, through songs, craft, activities and games they learn more of the Bible and the life of Jesus.

Quest

Quest is a group for those of secondary school age and also meets during morning worship. This group aims to explore God's word as well as having fun together. The group supports Fairtrade and occasionally runs a Fairtrade stall after morning worship.

Prayer Group

This small but faithful group meets on a Wednesday and brings to the Lord people's joys and concerns, national local and personal. It also organises the production of a monthly Prayer Focus which is distributed to members with ideas for inclusion in their own prayer time.

The Guild

Larbert West has an active and enthusiastic Guild which meets fortnightly on a Tuesday evening. The Guild in Larbert West is part of the larger movement within the Church of Scotland and supports prayerfully and financially the varied national Guild projects as well as providing an opportunity for all to express their faith through worship, prayer and action.

LMCA

The four Church of Scotland congregations in the Larbert and Stenhousemuir Area have come together to form a Men's Association sharing each other's Christian views and experiences, meeting and socialising in Christian Fellowship and encouraging and supporting others to share the good news of Jesus love.

The Saturday Group

This group offers an informal time of fellowship to those who find the weekend a difficult time. Much fun and laughter and a few tears are shed over coffee or lunch once a month in different eating places around the village.

The Boys' Brigade

Part of an international movement 1st Larbert Company, The Boy's Brigade caters for boys from primary 2 until the age of 18. It provides a fun, balanced and challenging programme to help boys grow and develop skills for life. The Scottish National headquarters and Training centre of The Boys' Brigade is in our parish

The Girls' Brigade

The Girls' Brigade company, also part of a larger parent organisation provides a safe environment for girls from 5 years of age to explore and grow in faith, mind and body. A programme of fun activities, which challenge and develop, encourage girls to seek, serve and follow Christ.

Badminton

A small but enthusiastic group, The Badminton club meets on a Thursday morning when little skill but a lot of chat and laughter is in evidence.

Toddlers and Twos

This group is a friendly, fun filled, social activity for parents and carers of children under 3 years of age and meets three times a week. It provides a perfect opportunity for play and interaction with other children and carers in the local area.

Church Management

The congregation operates under the Model Constitution with a Kirk Session of 34 elders serving 24 districts and a Congregational Board consisting of 12 of these elders and a further 12 congregational members

Kirk Session



The Kirk Session is made up of 34 active elders and operates a system of teams comprising of elders and congregational members. The function of the teams is to implement and to contribute to the plans made by the Kirk Session. Session is currently reviewing its practices in committee structures to find a more effective way of ministering throughout the parish using the resources and talents

presently available to us.

Over the last few years of uncertainty over the future of the congregation the Kirk Session has engaged in a period of self-evaluation considering the life and work of the congregation in preparation for Union. Despite fears that this work would be lost when the Union was rejected, the Kirk Session feels that it can be used to produce a new vision for LW. This includes a greater sense of serving the community and being more available to meet local needs. Following a successful conference in the spring the Kirk Session has produced an action plan for the next few years including setting **up an audit of local services, and seeking to “fill gaps” which fit with our sense of mission.** Together the Minister and Elders form a team which provides for the spiritual needs of the congregation and parish by providing services of worship, visiting congregational members, organising opportunities for training and Christian Education and spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ into the parish.



Congregational Board

The Congregational Board, known affectionately as The Board, comprises 24 members, 12 of whom are non-elders. It is responsible for overseeing the financial and property needs of the congregation and has set up a number of committees to help with that work. It is currently chaired by an elected member of the Board.

Finances

The membership donates by Free Will offering envelopes, by Gift Aid and Standing Order and by cash donation. The Board carries out regular campaigns to encourage members to review their givings which result in regular and planned givings for income to meet outgoings without the need for special fundraising events. These 'Give As You Earn' visitations have proven successful for more than 40 years.

This year there was a Surplus of £12,796 although the weekly/monthly givings were down £2,100 on last year, and income from the let of the Manse was down £1,500 year on year because of a period of vacancy. The final accounts for the year to December 2016 are available on the OSCR website www.oscr.org.uk , Charity number SC012251

In the Parish

Although there are 3 primary schools and one of the largest high schools in the country in the Larbert and Stenhousemuir community, there are no schools in the parish. In the past, however, the minister has been invited to be joint chaplain in two of the primary schools and part of the chaplaincy team in the high school.

There are also no residential care homes for the elderly in the parish although there is an invitation issued, which has been accepted, to be part of the rota to provide regular Sunday afternoon services in a care home in a neighbouring parish. There is a sheltered housing complex within the parish and a home for adults with learning difficulties. Contact with the residents of the sheltered housing complex has been sporadic of late and the Pastoral Care team on behalf of the Kirk Session is attempting to re-establish the active relationship which once existed. No relationship has existed with the care home although it is hoped that as a result of the audit of the area that might be addressed in the near future.

Outreach

Coffee mornings are organised throughout the year by groups within the church and these are always well supported by members and others from the community. Christmas and Easter cards are delivered to every home in the parish by members along with invitations to join us delivered in September, our Stewardship Month. Welcome packs with information about the church and community are delivered to new homes in the area and the Kirk Session and Board have organised regular **stewardship visits to members' homes in particular to those who do not attend** and to the parish as a whole. The congregation recognises Souper Sunday with special mention during the service of the charity being supported and a soup lunch afterwards. This year the funds raised were sent to Scottish Churches Housing Action. The congregation works with other churches in the area to support Christian Aid week.

Church And Community Activities

We have a high hall usage by church groups and community groups as illustrated below. The Board is currently seeking advice on alterations that can be made to halls and sanctuary to further meet the needs of the local community.

| | AM | PM | Evening | Evening | Evening |
|------------------|--|--------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Monday | Toddlers and Twos charity no SC033777 | | The Girls' Brigade | | |
| Tuesday | Toddlers and Twos | | Guild | | |
| Wednesday | Toddlers and Twos | EnjoyaBall | Kirk Session / Congregational Board | Tai Chi | |
| Thursday | Badminton | | Italian Classes | Larbert Men's Christian Association | Aerobics class |
| Friday | Tai Chi | | The Boys' Brigade | | |
| Saturday | Various | 'party' lets | over Sats. | and Suns. | |
| Sunday | AM | AM | AM | AM | |
| | Morning Worship | Sunday Club | Quest | Crèche | |

Our Buildings

Larbert West is sited in the heart of the community with easy access to public transport with bus stops just outside the building and the train station less than five minutes walk away. There is car parking at the rear of the building for 15 cars and there is also ample on street parking. The sanctuary has seating for 500, it is equipped with an audio visual system and services are produced in Powerpoint. The praise is led by the organist with the help of the choir and a Norman & Beard pipe organ and, when appropriate, a keyboard. The open and bright nature of the well-lit building contributes to providing an atmosphere which is non-threatening to those not accustomed to church buildings. The traditional Scottish Presbyterian box design of the Sanctuary supports a variety of preaching styles and innovative contributions to worship services and allows the flexibility of using the Sanctuary for community based events like concerts, film nights, choir festivals etc.

There are two halls, a large hall and smaller hall both equipped with audio visual system and Wi-Fi. Because of the Board's regular programme of maintenance all of the buildings are in good repair with no capital expenditure anticipated in the near future. Rear access from a drop off point is available for wheelchairs allowing a flat ingress to the building, however, with the completion of the planned ramp replacing the present steps, ease of access for all from the front of the building will be achieved. An Accessible Toilet and Baby Changing facility exist alongside the traditional toilet suites

The Manse

We have just completed the purchase a new-build house, a **'Houston' by Charles Church**. 27 Drysdale Avenue, a two storey villa with small garden and detached double garage. It is convenient for schools and amenities in a new community in the town. The area is popular as it is close to many facilities such as the shopping precinct (with Asda, varied shops, library, bank gym), medical centres, good primary and secondary schools.



Larbert has good bus routes for travel to Falkirk and Forth Valley Royal Hospital and also a mainline station (Glasgow/Edinburgh/Stirling/ and with free parking). Stenhousemuir Sports centre is also within easy reach, and there is access to the motorway/main road system for Glasgow, Fife, Stirling, Edinburgh and the South. Also in the area are 3 golf courses, football and cricket grounds, bowling clubs and plenty of good walking.

The Future



The Challenge

It will be crucial to continue looking outwards and seeking ways to touch people beyond the traditional Sunday morning attendance and so we seek to:

- Develop a congregational life which takes seriously the Mission Statement: *To bring people to know God by proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ through meaningful worship, loving fellowship and active outreach into the community.*
- Develop, with the support of the congregation, new ways of working, both to meet needs in the community and refresh and enliven our own life together as the people of God.
- Develop a real sense of vision through which the congregation embraces a welcoming and inclusive stance to all, and offers acceptance, love and care to the whole community, which will help people, who do not currently believe the **"church is for the likes of them"**, **engage.**
- Develop flexible opening times to suit needs and groups as identified by the community audit and property feasibility study.
- Explore new ways of worshipping which might attract other groups.

Our New Minister

We are prayerfully seeking a minister who:

- is ready to join us on our faith adventure.
- will work with the congregation,
- is an excellent communicator,
- is open to using technology and experimenting with alternative worship styles, as well as leading traditional Sunday worship.

Opportunities

Larbert is a young community with plenty going on! Larbert West is keen to get involved and make new friends for Jesus, and ourselves. We offer an enthusiastic Session and congregation, open to trying new things. Whilst our profile is currently ageing, there is a desire to serve God in the community and an openness to develop both our physical resources and our life with others. We are embarking on a development of our building resources and we need someone who will work with us in making our fellowship a place of welcome for all.

Contacts

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