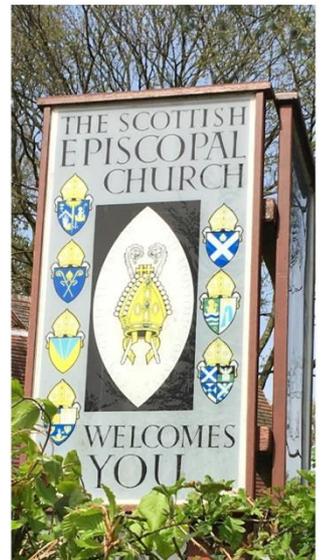


St. Margaret's Episcopal Church

New Galloway, DG7 3RP





United Diocese of Glasgow & Galloway

The Scottish Episcopal Church

Profile: the Church of St Margaret of Scotland, New Galloway

St Margaret's is a member of the Scottish Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway. For many years the congregation was ably served by a non-stipendiary minister with a house for duty, supported by an active and efficient Vestry, which was followed by a short-term incumbent in 2020. We are now looking to share a priest-in-charge with All Saints, Challoch.

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July 2021

INTRODUCTION

St Margaret's sits at the entrance to New Galloway, Scotland's smallest Royal Burgh, in a quiet rural area of Dumfries and Galloway in south-west Scotland. The area is known as the Glenkens and covers approximately 300 square miles with less than 2,000 inhabitants, a significant number of whom are retired. The local economy is essentially rural, with farming, forestry, renewable energy and tourism being the main industries. Many people who live in the Glenkens have employment in the neighbouring towns and there is a growing number of home-workers, particularly since the Covid-19 pandemic. As well as St Margaret's, the Glenkens includes two Church of Scotland parishes in the villages of Balmaclellan, Carsphairn, Dalry and New Galloway.



CHURCH LIFE

Worship:



The congregation has wide experience of Anglican practice around the world and stands in the liberal Eucharistic SEC tradition. Sunday Eucharists (10.30am) follow the 1982 Blue Book with seasonal Eucharistic prayers as recommended by the SEC. We welcome sensitive and thoughtful teaching and preaching as well as spiritual guidance.

We have an enthusiastic and committed organist and recordings can be made on the Wyvern Sonata electronic organ should she be absent. Funding is currently being sought for strengthening this by adding equipment for playing recorded hymns and music via CD, USB or Bluetooth. Members of the congregation help with bell ringing, welcoming people and reading during services. One member of the congregation is a retired parish priest who has been, and continues to be, happy to help out.



A programme for the whole of Holy Week is observed. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, we have been unable to offer the mid-weekly Said Eucharist but



looking ahead, the Vestry would welcome some new ideas for alternative worship, or time for prayerful reflection, during the week.

After the country-wide lockdown to prevent the spread of Covid-19, we undertook a full risk-assessment and followed all the government guidelines before initially opening for private prayer and later for public worship.

Vestry:

The Vestry normally meets every two months with the church's AGM held in November. During the interregnum the Vestry is managing all the church's affairs, including finding supply priests and liaising with the Diocese and the Priest-in-Charge.

St Margaret's is part of the Galloway Regional Council within the Diocese and the Lay Representative or Alternate Lay Representative attend all their meetings which helps to ensure good relations with other SEC churches in Galloway as well as the dissemination and sharing of ideas.



During the Covid-19 pandemic, Vestry meetings were held online, and later at church when allowed. We were able to undertake normal Vestry business via email, Zoom meetings and telephone calls.

The Congregation:



Members of the congregation number approximately 30 with the average number of communicants at the weekly Sunday Eucharist between 10-18. In normal times, Christmas and Easter communicant numbers rise to between 40 and 60, usually with more non-communicants in the congregation. Due

to the rural nature of the area, St Margaret's is a gathered congregation, with some members traveling a considerable distance to attend services.

Members have a warm and welcoming attitude towards newcomers and visitors and a strong duty of care towards each other. They are aware of the wider issues within the Church; for instance, opinions were divided over same-sex marriage but tolerance over differing views keeps our church community friendly and cohesive.



Although relatively small, the congregation is committed to outreach both in the local community and further afield. Charitable giving has always been generous – in the year prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, over £3,000 was raised for a variety of charities. Historically, the congregation chooses an international charity for our Christmas collections; most recently these have included Shelter Box, ZANE, the Vine Trust, Mercy Ships, Mary's Meals and the Hands Up for Syria Foundation.



The Vestry and congregation as a whole are aware of the need to encourage new members particularly as ours is an older congregation (an estimated 80% of members are over 60) but numbers are kept fairly constant by people retiring to the area, often from England.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Vestry kept in touch with members of the congregation by telephone, email and letter and the Newsletter continued to be published monthly. Some members of the congregation were actively involved with volunteer programmes run by local communities - helping with deliveries of groceries and medications, and phone calls to those living alone.

Committees:

The St Margaret's Ladies Guild directs most of our fundraising and social activities, including the popular Lent lunches. Every Friday during Lent a member of the congregation hosts a simple soup and cheese lunch for a local charity of their choice – in 2019 over £1,200 was raised in this way. These occasions have become an important part of the St Margaret's community, bringing together the congregation as well as others who are not habitual worshippers.



Through the Ladies Guild, St Margaret's has supported many groups within the local community including the local Primary Schools, the Medical Centre, the local cottage hospital and the Food Train and

Befriending Project. Regular fundraising events have included a Plant and Cake Sale in late April, a Tombola at New Galloway's Alternative Games in August and the Harvest Lunch.



Good relations with the local Church of Scotland Guilds have led to joining forces for a Christmas Coffee Morning.



Fresh flowers in church every week are provided by the Flower Arranging Committee and the church is kept clean and bright by a weekly cleaner. The Ladies Guild also provide refreshments after the Sunday services as well as at various church social occasions.

The Buildings:

St Margaret's Church was built in 1904 in the Arts and Crafts style – a small, neat building with a white roughcast exterior, red tiled roof and a simple and attractive interior. The Chancel was added in 1908. Part of the charming wooden lychgate has recently been replaced in memory of a long-standing and loyal member of the congregation.



The Church is maintained to a high standard with many improvements carried



out in the last decade including an up-to-date lighting system and an audio-loop for the hard-of-hearing. A recently built extension (including disabled access, toilet facilities and a mini-kitchen) allows refreshments to be offered after Services which has proved popular, as well as improving the attractiveness of the church for a wider range of functions.

The Rectory is a substantial and practical 4-bedroom family house, built in 1924, in good decorative order. Accessed by a short driveway, it is next door to the church and within easy walking distance of all the amenities New Galloway has to offer. Over the years it has been well maintained and improved, with the addition of an oil-fired heating



system (no mains gas), double-glazing and more recently the kitchen and





bathroom have been updated and a wood-burning stove installed in the living room. There is also an attractive and substantial south-facing garden with garage, greenhouse and outbuildings.

Downstairs:

- Entrance hall with walk-in cupboard;
- Study with built-in bookshelves;
- Living room with wood-burning stove;
- Dining Room;
- downstairs toilet with wash-hand basin;
- understairs cupboard;
- modern Kitchen-diner with new stove, space for fridge/freezer, dishwasher and washing machine, backdoor to garden.



Upstairs:

- 4 bedrooms (2 with fitted cupboards);
- modern bathroom with separate bath and shower, basin and WC;
- airing cupboard;
- access hatch and ladder to floored attic.



Outside:

- garage and coal-shed;
- greenhouse;
- outbuildings at end of garden.



Internet: high speed broadband is available in New Galloway and most mobile phone companies have coverage in the area, including Vodafone, O2 and EE.



Communications:

A Newsletter is published monthly for the congregation which lists services, other church meetings and events, the Readers, Flower rota and Prayer Focus. In addition, our website at www.stmargaretsnewgalloway.org has a range of information about the church including directions and access, contact details and a brief history as well as up-to-date notices about services and events, and links to related websites. A noticeboard outside the church gate gives



information on services and events.

In addition, during the Covid-19 pandemic, we used telephone and email to quickly update members on any changes to our services.

Our active outreach programme, which supports many local groups, ensures a regular presence in the local press and this has helped promote our Christian vision of 'loving our neighbour'.

A good relationship with the Church of Scotland Minister and associated Guilds has also helped break down any perceived barriers, particularly regarding the perception of St Margaret's as the 'English church'. This has created an opportunity to become partners in mission in promoting Christian values in the community, particularly regarding the local schools. Combined services are currently held on Remembrance Sunday and the World Day of Prayer in March.



Finance and challenges:

The Vestry is largely dependent on the generosity of our regular congregation, who give either through a weekly envelope scheme or by monthly Standing Order, on which we are able to claim Gift Aid. The Treasurer and freelance bookkeeper manage the finances throughout the year with two signatories



required on each cheque drawn. The accounts are audited by an independent auditor and presented at the Annual Meeting, which is usually held at the end of November. As St Margaret's is a registered charity (SCO12084) the audited accounts are subsequently lodged with OSCR (Scottish Charity Regulator) and a copy sent to the Diocesan Treasurer.

For many years we have managed to keep a healthy bank balance and have a holding of NS&I Savings. In 2019, through some targeted fund-raising and generous donations, we were able to modernise and refurbish the Rectory allowing us to offer a warm and comfortable home.

Throughout the year, through additional fund-raising organised by the Ladies Guild, we support a variety of local and international charities.



COMMUNITY LIFE

Living in the Glenkens



Despite its rurality, the level of recreational activity on offer in the Glenkens prevents the area from being remote. A recently published pamphlet on Clubs & Societies in the Glenkens listed over 80 organisations, mostly organised and run by volunteers. The Covid-19 pandemic may have adversely affected some of these but there is still something for everyone in the area.

New Galloway itself boasts the CatStrand, an arts and visitor centre offering a varied programme of events, classes, workshops, café and shop. The New Galloway Community Shop has a wide range of products, many locally sourced. Both New Galloway and Dalry have a Post Office.

A monthly Farmer's Market is held in Dalry, three miles away. Most of the Glenkens villages have popular pubs and cafés including two award-winners, the Smithy café in New Galloway and the Clachan Inn and restaurant in Dalry.



There is good pre-school and Nursery provision in the area and New Galloway and Dalry boast excellent Primary Schools. The Secondary School in Dalry takes pupils up to 4th year, after which they may attend Castle Douglas High School or Kirkcudbright Academy.

The Glenkens Medical Centre is based in New Galloway and has three doctors and a practice nurse. Nearby, Castle Douglas and Newton Stewart have Cottage Hospitals, and the recently opened Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary is 22 miles away.



The local lochs and rivers offer a variety of fishing, and the surrounding hills, including the Southern Upland Way, are popular with walkers. New Galloway's delightful 9-hole golf course is noted for its superb natural greens and views, and the Spalding Bowling Club in Dalry welcomes

people of all standards. The nearby Galloway Activity Centre on Loch Ken offers many other leisure and sporting activities. Public swimming pools are located in Newton Stewart, Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbright and Dalmellington.

The nearby towns of Castle Douglas and Newton Stewart boast a wealth of independent shops – and Kirkcudbright 'Artist's Town' and Wigtown 'Book Town' are popular with visitors and locals. And the Glasgow to Whithorn Pilgrim trail to St Ninian's Cave puts Galloway at the heart of Christianity in Scotland.



The following links give a flavour of life in the Glenkens and what is on offer.

<https://gallowayglens.org/>

<https://gcat.scot/>

<https://www.lochken.co.uk/>

<https://forestryandland.gov.scot/visit/forest-parks/galloway-forest-park>

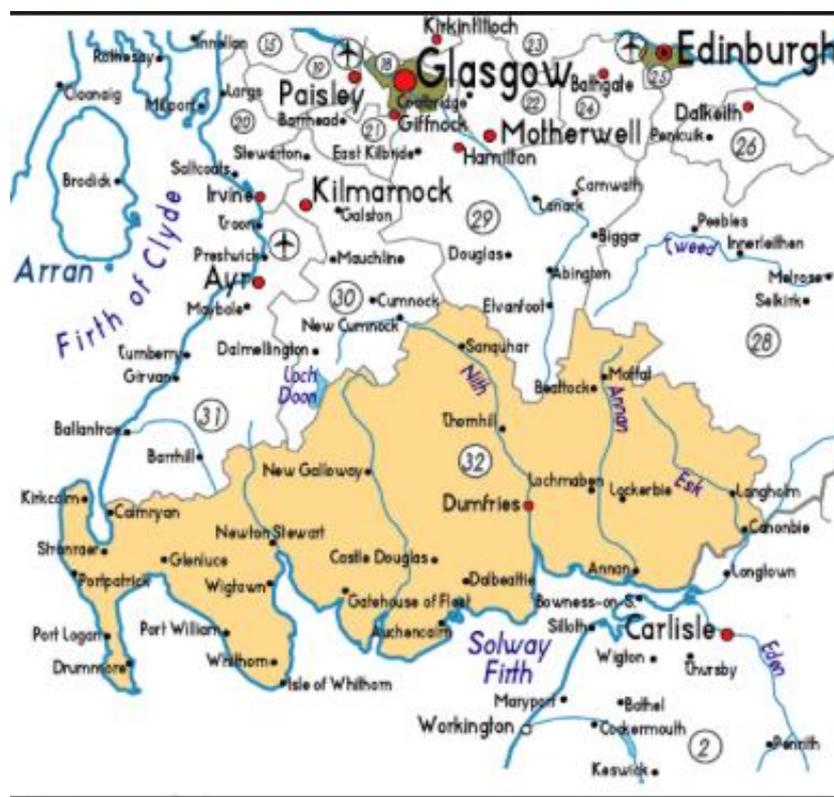
<https://www.theclachaninn.co.uk/>

<https://thesmithy-newgalloway.co.uk/>

<https://www.dgwgo.com>

Transport

New Galloway stands at the junction of several roads going north, south, east and west – the A713 is the main road north to Ayr and Glasgow and south to Castle Douglas (14 miles), the A762 travels south to Kirkcudbright, and the A712 runs west to Newton Stewart (18 miles) and Stranraer and east to Dumfries (25 miles). Local bus services run to Castle Douglas, Ayr and Dumfries and the Glenkens Transport Initiative provides a range of regular transport services throughout the area as well as excursions to places of interest.



Dumfries Station (24 miles) has regular trains to Carlisle, Glasgow and Newcastle, and Lockerbie (38 miles) is on the mainline north to Edinburgh and south to Manchester and London.

Nearest airports are Glasgow (75 miles), Prestwick (42 miles) and Edinburgh (85 miles) and regular trains from Lockerbie go direct to Manchester Airport. Regular ferries, for passengers and vehicles, run from Cairnryan (Stranraer) to Belfast or Larne.

THE FUTURE

Our prime objective is to keep an active Episcopalian presence in the Glenkens and to seek to expand our numbers. The congregation has been well served over the years but now we recognise that more can be achieved by combining forces with our sister church All Saints, Challoch, and we would welcome someone to direct and inspire us, not only in our worship but in carrying out God's work in the community.

We also want to ensure that the Church building continues to be cherished and to maintain the physical fabric of it and the neighbouring Rectory.

But we know we also need to look beyond this – the broad church is everywhere under threat. This can only be countered by demonstrating that our scope is not limited to self-centred congregations and communities, but is a wide faith, extending beyond boundaries and applicable to all.



For further information, please contact Christine Rankin, St Margaret's Vestry Secretary, on dalgowantraining@aol.com or 01644 420259.