

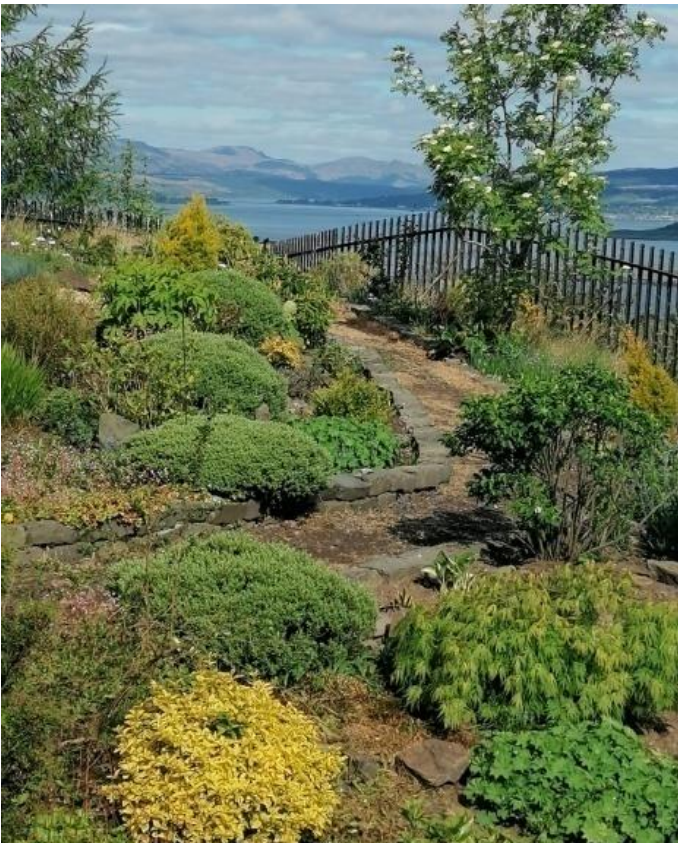


St Mary's Scottish Episcopal Church
Bardrainney Avenue,
Port Glasgow

CHURCH PROFILE

INTRODUCTION

Are you sensing God is calling you to a challenge in your ministry? Do you have a passion to grow a Church spiritually and numerically? Are you are looking for a church that reaches out in pioneering mission to its wider community?



If you are a leader who inspires, supports and motivates others, then we want to hear from you at this mission-minded church in the historic town of Port Glasgow. We believe we are ready as a congregation to welcome new clergy who come to us with energy and vision. Priests who will roll up their sleeves with us to serve the community and help us invite others to join us as we follow Christ.

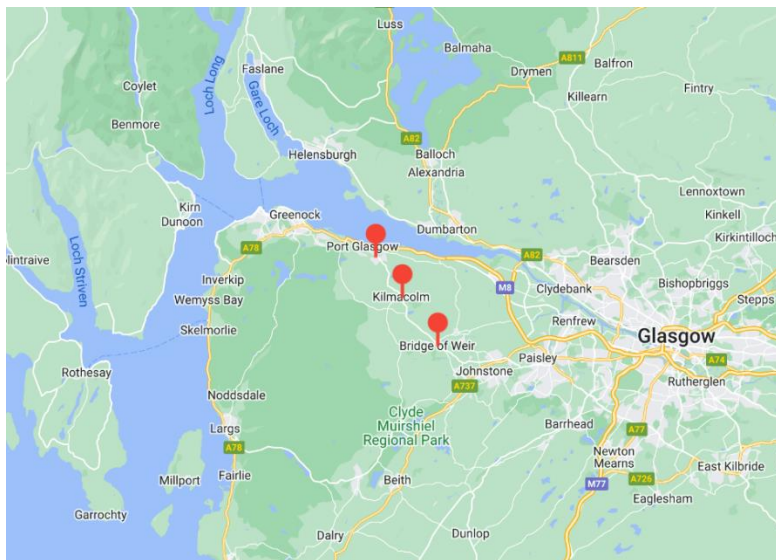
St Mary's is in the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway and is an attractive, welcoming church, known for its welcome, warmth, and creative ministry to the town. We are a mature, hardworking, and committed congregation.

We are ready to move more fully into this post-pandemic phase of church life taking what we have learned and using it to minister more fully

in our community. We believe this will be achieved under the energetic leadership of a clergy team who communicate well, both with one another and with the congregation, are down to earth preachers and teachers, and who know how to lead from within. We want to do more for our community, grow in our faith, and encourage more neighbours to join us.

Where we are:

Port Glasgow is situated on the banks of the beautiful Clyde estuary, just 30 minutes from the City of Glasgow. It is only 3 miles from our sister congregation in Kilmacolm and 6 miles from St. Mary's in Bridge of Weir. The Port is very well served by local bus and train services with several trains hourly to Glasgow in one direction and to picturesque Gourock and Wemyss Bay in the other, from where the ferry takes you to the Isle of Bute.



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Port Glasgow is well served by local shops, a modern and busy retail park and civic amenities such as public library and community centres. It also offers nearby a wide variety of leisure, sporting activities and ample opportunity for walking (including a marvelous riverside path), running, bowls, cycling and golf and swimming.

The town has four primary schools. There are two secondary schools on a large new

campus which is also shared by a special needs school. All Inverclyde schools are either new builds or have been refurbished.

Port Glasgow has an ageing population of around 15,000 people. New housing developments - both private and social - are being built. Most of the population are Portonians and there is an extensive open and friendly community feel across the town.

The town, though, is marked as being one of the most deprived areas of Scotland with unemployment, alcoholism and drug abuse being issues the local authority and the voluntary sector are very active in addressing.

However there are great opportunities:

- Port Glasgow is being renewed with new housing schemes on our doorstep, commercial development and creative networks with other churches.

- There is a strong, ecumenical clergy group which is increasingly active in ecumenical witness to the town. Recently the Port Glasgow Churches Together group hosted a weekly Lenten study. There were also shared Holy Week services and a community Remembrance Day service.
- Port Glasgow is in Inverclyde – a local authority which is supportive of all we do.
- We had great links with the local primary and high school and care homes pre-pandemic. It is our hope these can be reestablished with the support of our new priest.

All this offers significant further opportunities for witness and mission.

Worship at St Mary's

Worship Services

St Mary's has a membership roll of 120 people with a total of 71 communicant members and a pre-pandemic average weekly attendance of approximately 50. Like many churches, we have struggled to return to our pre-pandemic numbers. We currently average about 30 people at our Sunday worship services. We hope that having a new permanent priest(s) will reassure some who have yet to return.



Our current pattern of worship is:



Sunday 11.00 am: Community Eucharist using 1982 Scottish Episcopal liturgy.

Wednesday: 10.00 am *Coffee and Communion*. Taking place in our Epiphany chapel, this midweek service frequently attracts 10-15 individuals for a quiet opportunity to worship God, hear a short homily, and share a cuppa after the service.

St Mary's has its own remunerated organist.

Sunday School

We are blessed to have a small but engaged Sunday School that meets every Sunday during the Liturgy



of the Word. Our incredible Sunday School leader is a qualified nursery teacher and ensures the children participate in a fun, developmentally appropriate Christian Formation programme. We currently have four children who attend with some regularity. We believe that restarting the L-Club (mentioned in the Mission section) would help grow the Sunday School as well.

Online Engagement

The Covid-19 Pandemic revealed to us that few of our members used the internet or online resources. As such, our previous rector chose to invest time in a weekly paper newsletter rather than Zoom or other online resources. The newsletter was distributed to all on our rolls and others in the community. Our dedicated Pastoral Care Team was busy every week phoning all those in real need and distributing food. This will certainly be an area for growth, education, and improvement.

Broadband Internet is available in Port Glasgow, and we recognize the need to consider a strategy for digital engagement including social media, website, and streaming (where appropriate) as an integral part of our outreach, mission, and witness.

Ministry Leadership

Our ministry team consists of the Clergy, Licensed Lay Minister (Lay Reader), Pastoral Care Team, Worship Leader, Sacristan, Servers, and Eucharistic Assistants.

Members of the congregation serve as readers, intercessors, stewards and flower arrangers. We have a hard-working vestry which is supported by the congregation and take seriously the task of stewardship of our resources, with respect not only to finance but also contribute to the wellbeing of the church.

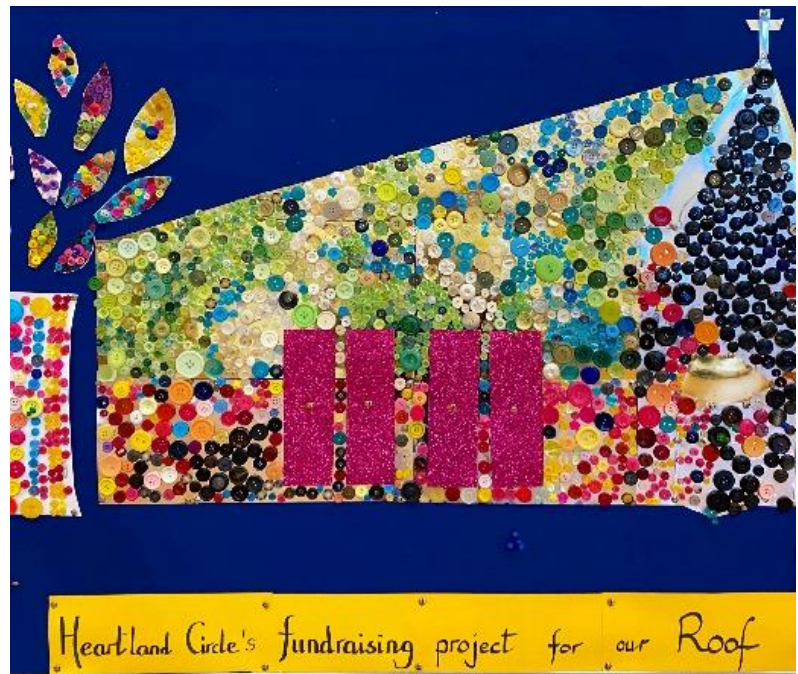
Although ageing, our members are committed to the church and all the ways our outreach shares the Good News throughout the community.

Congregational Life

Active involvement in everything from fellowship to mission and, of course, worship plays a large part in the life of the church. We recently had Scottish pop entertainer Christian! (aka Chris McClure) at the church for a concert in the hall for the second time. Initially ticket sales were slow and we were concerned his appearance would become another casualty of the pandemic, but sales picked up and we also offered tickets to some social service agencies for those unable to pay. In the end the hall was packed and we had an amazing time together as a congregation and with those from the wider community. St. Mary's is well known in the local community as a place that is involved in the lives of those in Port Glasgow as a place of refuge and of fun!

Our Lent events in the past, have been joint events with the other members of the Heartland Group in Kilmacolm and Bridge of Weir: Thinking outside the box and creativity were important to attract interest from others who might not usually attend church events. While we have not had Lenten Studies in the Group over the years of the pandemic, our Renfrewshire curate offered a Lenten programme via zoon in 2021 and this enabled those who were so inclined to connect with God in community even while physically distancing.

We are finding that events we used to participate in may or may not suit our post pandemic reality. For example, we recently tried to restart our post-service coffee hour and fellowship but we have found that most members have established a pattern of lunch and visits after the service so they have not returned to our coffee fellowship. We have, therefore, made the choice to stop holding our Sunday morning coffee hour for now. It will be important for us to work together with our fellow Heartland members and our new clergy to see what will work for who we are now.



We have just completed an almost half million pound roof replacement. The Diocese was the major benefactor but we locally raised what we could (and surprised ourselves) and our previous Rector applied successfully for large sums of money as well.

Over the last six years we have completed:

- A complete redecoration of the interior of the church community areas
- Installed a new kitchen
- Created a warm and inviting social area called the Clyde Room
- Installed a new heating system
- Created Port Glasgow's only and very attractive Memorial Garden
- Installed energy efficient lighting in the church and community areas
- Landscaped the rear of the church grounds.
- Placed a large sign adjacent to the main road telling all who pass by we are here!
- Collected and re-ordered the 150 years of Church Archives.



Mission in Port Glasgow



St Mary's has received local and UK national attention for its mission to the Port. Despite a congregation drawn from such a challenging area and many congregants having lost jobs from shipyards and allied industries closures, the church is widely recognised as being very active in the community. We have aimed to address immediate local community needs as social activists and Christians in five principal areas.

Heartland Circle



This is a weekly group meeting the needs of older people living with or affected by dementia, run by a former registered nurse from St Mary's and our other Heartland Churches, including another retired nurse & social worker. Working with Alzheimer Scotland, the group offers one-on-one support to 25+ people (pre-pandemic; current number are 10+ per week). Weekly there is a

choice of activities to stimulate cognitive and tactile function, keep fit classes, music to stimulate memory and recall, as well as always concluding with an afternoon tea of home bakery on vintage china which is particularly appreciated by the older folk. There is also a diary of social events including excursion, a tea dance, and concerts.



Clydemen Lunch Club

To visit the Lower Clyde today is to be stunned by the absence of any indication that this was once the major shipbuilding area of the world. Very recently though, a new sculpture was erected at Coronation Park commemorating our shipyard heritage. The Clydemen Club, which is held monthly from 11:30 to 1:30pm is the only club of its kind on the Lower and Upper Clyde. It aims to reinstate this proud history and identity, to restore a sense of pride and to combat loneliness and depression for some. It currently has almost 100 men on its register and monthly attendances averaged 60-70 (pre pandemic) and now averages 40 members. This club starts



with coffee, followed by an illustrated talk by an invited guest speaker (the topics are often but not always on ships, engineering, or shipyards), and concludes with a soup lunch prepared by volunteers from the congregation. The Club fulfils a number of functions, including adult education, social contact and health. We have in the past taken part in a Blood Pressure Screening Programme. A buffet lunch is served on a donation basis and discreet “supper bags” are made up for men who are widowed or living alone.

Following restarting the programme in November 2021 and carrying on until May 2022, we took a summer hiatus to allow our Transitional Priest time to assemble a calendar of speakers for the months ahead. Despite tireless effort, she was unable to get any confirmed speakers due to the demands on organisations who must fulfill previous commitments cancelled due to the pandemic. As such, the vestry has taken the decision to suspend the group indefinitely until such a time that a leadership group comes forward or a new priest arrives. This would be a growth opportunity for the new rector: to develop a leadership team to help recruit and schedule speakers for the club. The previous rector preferred to schedule speakers on his own which then fell to our transitional minister. We recognize this is not a sustainable model for ministry – having any single task that is entirely dependent on one individual; working with our new clergy we know this tendency must be improved. There had been a leadership team made up of members of the group until they were made redundant by the work of the previous rector. The time is right to build that up again. *(Pictures courtesy of The Greenock Telegraph)*

L-Club



L-Club is a much needed after school club that was run each week (prior to the pandemic) for all children who wanted to participate. Originally started as a Lent group, the L-club became so popular that the name stuck. We’ve toyed with other meanings for the “L” such as “Learner” but in the end, it is a nice reminder of the roots of this important group. All children between ages 6-12 are accepted - regardless of their developmental

level or any physical differences which may exist. There had been a good gender balance in the group and families appreciated the opportunity this afforded their children. L-Club is led by a trained nursery teacher – a church member who also leads our Sunday School – and assisted by volunteers.



We also have a link with the local Port Glasgow High School for young people completing the D.O.E award; they complete a termly placement at the club. The children have a time of free-play, organised games and/or a quiet corner, story time and crafts for everyone. Healthy snacks are provided for the children. Outings are included as part of the program and include an annual pantomime trip. L-Club is not running now due to a lack of volunteers and that is something which needs to be addressed. The L-Club leader is currently seeking assistance but has had no luck so far. The Church needs, with the assistance of a new rector, to introduce the use of social media. This would help in recruiting volunteers.

The Charity Shop

The charity shop is a pop-up venture that started about 13 years ago. It run twice annually for three weeks each time. We collect, sort and store donated clothes, household goods and toys. All are sold for less than £5 to respect the economic circumstances of those who avail themselves of this community action. Those who volunteer at the shop meet many members of the wider community, many of whom come to the shop not only



to purchase items but also for friendly conversation and pastoral care. In the past, we have met several community members who are battling substance addiction, poverty, and refugees arriving in Scotland from Afghanistan and beyond. In addition to being a mission opportunity, the Charity Shop is also a major source of fundraising for the congregation. Pre-pandemic it was not unusual for it to raise upwards of £6,000. The Shop raised over £2,600 at its most recent iteration in March 2022.

St Mary's Food Collection

Most members of St Mary's bring a food item each week to donate to our local Women's Refuge in co-operation with Inverclyde Womens' Aid. We hold special appeals for clothes and gifts for the women and their children who have suffered abuse and are at the refuge each Christmas.

Possible Expansion

Prior to the pandemic, the local hospice approached St Mary's to explore the church facilities as a neighbourhood hub for those living with cancer. The church was enthusiastic about the possibility, but the link would need to be reestablished as it has now been over two years since the original exploration occurred.

The previous rector was chaplain to the Sea Cadets at *TS TideSurge* which included occasional services at the Church. There is an opportunity here for a minister who wishes to continue with this chaplaincy.

Mission Beyond Port Glasgow

We are a mission minded church and see that as part of our faith. We support as a congregation (1) the Leprosy Mission Scotland, (2) Erskine, (3) Farm Africa, (4) Send a Cow, (5) Royal British Legion (6) The Bishop of Glasgow & Galloway's Annual Lent Appeal, (7) Ardgowan Hospice, and (8) The Seafarers Mission.

St Mary's in the Diocese and Region

Our church is part of the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway and is situated in the Renfrewshire Region. The Renfrewshire Region has been one of innovation in recent years. We currently have a regional curate who travels to each of the congregations for several months at a time so she can be trained for ministry in a variety of different settings. During Lent 2021, we had a regional Lenten programme on Zoom which allowed our clergy and laypeople to walk together while we were still apart.

In the Diocese we are known as a major mission outpost in our area. The Diocese was compelled to support our recent roofing project, in large part because of our vital mission to the community.

Heartland Group

We have enjoyed eight years of working with Kilmacolm and Bridge of Weir and the natural path forward was to continue this spiritual journey with our friends. The Heartland is a place where we can support and nurture each other using the individual skills that each congregation possesses. We appreciate the support we receive as members of the group volunteer with our outreach programmes, worship with us on occasion, and the invitations to share our gifts with them as well.

Finance at St Mary's

St Mary's has always paid its quota (Parish Share) in full and never defaulted on this. Careful stewardship and proactive fundraising has ensured this. Weekly offerings do not provide enough income for the upkeep of the church and remuneration its clergy but fundraising each year has generally ensured that annually all expenses are fully met. This is a situation of which we are proud.

Our current financial picture....

Priest's Accommodation is in the spacious, centrally heated 4-bedroom rectory which adjoins the church. It comprises a study, kitchen, dining room, and two lounges, a modern bathroom with bath and shower, cloakroom and garage. A challenge of the rectory is that the heat is historical tied to the church which has required negotiation when it comes to assessing heating/electricity costs for the rector and the church. With the help of the Diocesan Architect, we are exploring alternative, independent heating options which will offer autonomy to the rector and their family. It is our intension to have a new



heating system for the rectory installed prior to a new priest moving in. A renovation of the kitchen has just been completed and we have scheduled for a carpet and flooring contractor to come and update the kitchen flooring and two of the bedroom carpets.

The Rectory has commanding views over the Clyde looking towards the Trossachs National Park and Ben Lomond beyond. A walled terrace at the front of the rectory affords space for relaxation.

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Conclusion

As you will have surmised in reading our profile, there is scope for much expansion and growth not only within our own congregation and community, but across the whole Heartland group as well. We do recognise that expecting a solo clergyperson to fulfill all of the roles required to build us back up following the pandemic is unrealistic. There are so many needs in this hurting world right now, and emerging back into the world post-pandemic will require discernment, patience, boldness, and grace.

We are a congregation who display our faith through acts of service. We have continued to roll up our sleeves and to serve in every way possible. But we are tired. We need clergy who see the pastoral needs in our lives and can help us to accept the Love God has for us and the rest God calls us to, while we continue seeking to serve Christ in the community.

For these reasons, we feel an ideal scenario with our rector search would be to find two priests whose skill sets complement one another and who can both build us back us and push us out into the world to share our faith and love. That may mean hiring two priests now or it may mean hiring one priest and then further discerning with that person where God is calling us, together. Either way, we are ready – Send us.