

PARISH PROFILE

May 2009

LONDON: ST COLUMBA'S WITH NEWCASTLE: ST ANDREW'S

THE VACANCY

1. The linked charge of London: St Columba's with Newcastle: St Andrew's has been granted permission to call a Minister on an unrestricted basis. The vacancy arises following the translation of The Reverend Barry W Dunsmore after some eight years in this charge to the charge of Christ Church, Bermuda where he was inducted on 13 February 2009.
2. An information pack containing further details on both churches, together with an Application Form, may be obtained from the Clerk to the Nominating Committee Rona Black, 3 Ferrings, Dulwich, London SE21 7LU, telephone 020 8693 9097, e-mail: r.m.mackie@clinmed.gla.ac.uk. Completed Application Forms, together with a cv, should be submitted to the Clerk by Friday 14th August. Informal enquiries may be made to the Interim Moderator, Rev Dr D G Coulter, 8 Ashdown Terrace, Tidworth, Wiltshire, SP9 7SQ, telephone: 01980 842175, e-mail: padredgcoulter@yahoo.co.uk. Intending applicants may be assured that all enquiries and applications will be treated in strict confidence. Ministers not ordained by the Church of Scotland should note that, before Call, they would be required to obtain from the Church of Scotland the necessary Certificate of Eligibility.

THE LINKING

3. The linking of St Columba's with St Andrew's within the Presbytery of England was established in 1983 as a means of providing Ministerial superintendence for the congregation in Newcastle which is largely self-supporting in terms of preaching and pastoral care.

THE MINISTER

4. The Minister should continue the tradition of strong and inspirational preaching, interpreting the Word with contemporary relevance and intellectual rigour. The weekly sermon, perhaps more than anything else, encourages the St Columba's congregation to make a journey (for many of an hour or more) to Church each Sunday.
5. The Minister should give leadership and direction to the ministerial and pastoral teams. The Minister will help the congregations to define their future roles. The Minister should be a good motivator so that the skills and energies of the congregations may be further harnessed and strengths developed. Weaknesses need to be identified, faced and overcome.
6. The Minister should understand and work well with all ages.

7. The Minister should understand the challenges (in particular facing the pastoral Mission in London and beyond) and should appreciate the difference between a Ministry in London and Newcastle and a Ministry in Scotland.
8. The Minister should be prepared (in conjunction with the Minister of Crown Court) to represent the Church of Scotland in London from time to time. This is a role both social and pastoral in relation to the variety of Scottish institutions in London, the London Scottish Territorial Regiment (now part of the London Regiment) and leading London Churches.

PARISH PROFILE: NEWCASTLE: ST ANDREW'S

9. The religious bonds between England and Scotland and particularly between London and Newcastle go back to the early medieval church and the Reformation. John Knox himself preached (circa 1551) to the broad family of Scots then inhabiting Newcastle and there are well documented accounts of the connections between Newcastle, the London Court of King Charles 1, and the Scots Church Leader, Alexander Henderson, the principal architect of the National Covenant (1638); the Solemn League and Covenant (1643); and the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647). In more modern times, the north – south religious links between London and Newcastle found happy expression in the continuation of this linked charge.

10. Mission Statement

To be a vibrant, growing Christian community providing spiritual care and love for all.

11. Background

There has been a Church of Scotland in Newcastle upon Tyne for nearly three hundred years (the founding date is 1712). The present building was completed in 1907. The Centenary was celebrated two years ago with an Ecumenical Service. The Very Rev Dr John Cairns preached.

12. Location

St Andrew's is located in Sandyford, an inner city area of Newcastle within easy reach of the main City Centre and the suburb of Jesmond. It is convenient for both the 'bus and metro routes and the Universities of Newcastle and Northumbria are close by. Sandyford is a compact, mainly residential area with a high proportion of young professionals and students housed in a mix of Tyneside flats and comfortable terraced houses.

13. Church Details

Local ministry is provided by The Rev Dorothy Lunn (an Auxiliary Minister for seven years) who has ministered to the church for many years firstly as an Elder, then Reader and then Enhanced Reader. Ministers of other denominations, mainly the URC, fill the pulpit on occasions.

There are currently 100 people on the Church Roll with around 30 – 40 regular attendees. There are three card Communion services held on the second Sundays in February, June and October. Additional Communion services are held on Maundy Thursday and Easter Day. The children of the congregation are served by Sunday School and there are crèche facilities. Family Services are held four or five times a year.

Services are held on Sundays at 10.45 am. Tea and coffee are served after Morning Worship and a congregational lunch is served monthly.

There are 21 Elders, 19 of whom are active. Two have retired. There is a Congregational Board, a Safeguarding Panel, a Finance Committee, a Fabric Committee, a Social and Fundraising Committee and a Newsletter Committee which produces three issues a year which are delivered to members' homes with their communion cards.

St Andrew's holds a series of social and/or fundraising events throughout the year including a Burns' Supper, a St Andrew's Day celebration, a Christmas Carol evening and a variety of other events such as "Call my Bluff".

St Andrew's is a long-standing member of Churches Together in Newcastle and has recently become involved in an inter-faith group who meet to pray for peace. Both the inter-faith group and the ecumenical partners work well together and communication between both individuals and groups is good.

14. Congregational Profile

The majority of the congregation is Scottish or at least has Scots ancestry. The age range spans many generations from the 90's to babies. The last few years have seen a strengthening in the number of younger families with children attending the Church which has managed to retain the experience of its older members. Members are scattered widely throughout the North East of England, from Co Durham to Northumberland and Tynedale. Most of the regular attendees live within the Greater Tyneside conurbation.

15. Recent Developments

Some ten years ago it was recognised that the building needed much modernisation especially to improve access for people with mobility difficulties. A great deal of money was raised from within the congregation and from grant-making bodies. Improvements include a lift to all three floors, portable ramp for the front steps, fully accessible disabled lavatory, refurbished ladies' and gents' lavatories, new kitchen, new central heating boilers and a re-landscaped garden. While some professionals of necessity had to be engaged, office bearers, members and relatives of members all helped to deliver these considerable improvements. St Andrew's has a high level of congregational participation in the running of the Church and it is the wish that this would continue as the Church aspires to its Mission Statement to "provide spiritual care and love for all".

PARISH PROFILE: LONDON: ST COLUMBA'S

See website at: www.stcolumbas.org.uk

16. Background

The original St Columba's Church was dedicated in March 1884. The congregation moved from Crown Court to St Columba's in that year but some of the congregation remained and Worship continued at Crown Court (which is today the only other Church of Scotland charge in London). The original St Columba's Church was destroyed in May 1941. The fine "new" St Columba's Church (designed by Sir Edward Maufe) was dedicated in December 1955.

17. **Mission Statement**

In the name of Jesus Christ, we, as a congregation of the Church of Scotland, aim to

*Witness to the power of God the Father, of Jesus Christ His Son
and of the Holy Spirit in our lives;*

Maintain strong public worship in the Presbyterian style;

Learn more of God and grow in faith and love;

Serve God and His Church, each other and those in need both near and far;

Provide a friendly and hospitable welcome to all;

*Offer Christian fellowship both at St Columba's and by going out
as a community of caring people.*

We invite you to join us in this mission.

18. **The Congregation**

Set in the heart of London, St Columba's continues to worship in the Scottish Presbyterian tradition. The congregation is drawn from Greater London and beyond. Many of the congregation are of Scottish origin but others come from England, Ireland, other parts of Europe, the United States, Canada and countries of Asia and Africa. Some have a Reformed Presbyterian background while others, through marriage, friends or from choice, have found their spiritual home in St Columba's. The congregation aims to be inclusive and welcoming while emphasising its Presbyterian and Reformed origins. It believes that it is important that all ages should feel at home within its fellowship. The congregation is enriched by the many visitors who associate themselves with it for short or long periods and by a number of adherents. The congregation is constantly changing as members and adherents come to London or leave it, because of education, work commitments or family changes including retirement. There is a dedicated core of members who have a long, often life long, involvement with the Church. Many members of the congregation, though attending regularly, are not able to attend every Sunday but there is a lively Sunday morning congregation of some 200 to 300 with many young parents and children. The Sunday School is strong and there is an active Young Adults Group. Several House Groups meet in the Greater London area. The communicant membership at the end of 2008 was 1,064 but this may overstate the true membership.

19. **Church Services**

Services are held each Sunday in the main Sanctuary at 11 am. There is an Evening Service at 5 pm on Sunday from time to time with some special Evening Services, such as a Christmas Carol Service and a Service for those bereaved during the year. There is an all-age Service at 9.30 am each Sunday in July and August. A Prayer Service is led by an Elder in the London Scottish Chapel each Sunday after the 11 am Morning Service when those in need are remembered by name. A mid-week Service lasting some 20 minutes

(often led by an Elder) is also held in this Chapel at 1 pm on Wednesdays. The main Services of Holy Communion take place at Morning Worship on Easter Sunday, the Sunday nearest St Columba's Day and on the last Sundays of January, September and November. On Saturdays preceding Communion there is a Service of Praise and Prayer conducted by Elders. Communion is also celebrated on Christmas Day and Maundy Thursday. A Service is held on Good Friday.

20. **Bible Study**

There is a regular series of Bible Studies (at present usually led by an Elder). The Women's Fellowship Group meets every Wednesday for Bible Study. There is a monthly prayer meeting before the Morning Service.

21. **Praise**

Music is a very important aspect of Worship in St Columba's and has developed significantly in recent years. The Director of Music, the Assistant Organist, the professional choir at Morning Services and the congregational choir at Evening Services contribute greatly to Worship. A children's choir has recently been started.

22. **Crèche**

A flourishing Crèche is held concurrently with Morning Services every Sunday. It is supervised by a rota of volunteers who have undertaken child protection training and have enhanced CRB checks. Many parents speak of the value of the crèche in enabling them to worship without distraction and in affording them the opportunity to meet and form friendships with other parents.

23. **Sunday School**

There are 70 children enrolled in the Sunday School and 12 teachers. Children attend the beginning of Morning Worship and leave for their own classes after a hymn, a prayer, a children's talk and a further hymn. The Gospel Light curriculum is followed apart from the senior class which follows the Roots curriculum.

24. **Hospitality**

The practice of hospitality has always been an important and attractive feature of the congregational life. Congregational lunches are held after each Sunday Morning Service and on Christmas Day. Coffee and tea are served after Morning and Evening Services.

Parties and outings are organised for the elderly and for the Sunday School. The various organisations of the Church organise occasional dances and socials and a traditional Burns Supper is held in January. Weekly sessions of Scottish Country Dancing are held in the Church hall and attract many non-Church members.

25. **The Kirk Session**

The Kirk Session of St Columba's numbers 42 of which 39 Elders are active and meets six times a year for regular business and on other occasions as required. There are two Committees (Finance and Fabric) and five Ministries (Fellowship, Nurture, Welcome and Hospitality, Worship and Communication, and Outreach). The Committees and Ministries include as their members a number of non-Elders. The Committees and

Ministries undertake much of the day to day work. Issues requiring decision are referred to the Kirk Session.

26. **Outreach**

Each year the Kirk Session agrees a Lenten Project either at home or abroad for financial support by the congregation. A sum usually in excess of £6,000 is raised each year for a variety of causes. The congregation supports the West London Churches Homeless Concern and provides volunteers for the Homeless Laundry and the winter Night Shelter. The Kirk Session appoints trustees to Borderline and the West London Action for Children. A Service Unit is well established.

27. **Communication**

The maintenance of effective communication within a congregation as scattered as St Columba's is a constant challenge. The website plays an important part. The Church Magazine published nine times a year provides a vital link for the congregation and the Annual Report is a valued record of activities and Church finances. Most of the Services are recorded and there is a distribution of CDs to those not able to get to Church.

28. **Finances**

The balance sheet of the Church is relatively strong. However most of the assets are either fixed assets (two manses) or held in restricted funds. The investment portfolio at the end of 2008 in respect of unrestricted funds was some £500,000. The reserves fell by 22% in the course of 2008 with the markets in "free fall". There has been a further fall of 15% in the value of the investment portfolio in the first three months of 2009. In 2008 there was a deficit of £43,210 between ordinary income and ordinary expenditure before taking account of legacy income. For the last eight years there has been a deficit between ordinary income and ordinary expenditure. This cannot continue. The Kirk Session has instituted a Stewardship Campaign to run until April 2010. A Convener and Committee have been appointed. To balance the budget an increase in giving of some 25% would be required. The Finance Committee feels strongly that the budget should represent an expression of the agreed Mission of the Church. The Mission should determine the budget rather than the budget controlling the Mission. Accordingly all Elders have been asked to consider what they regard as the priorities of our Mission and to indicate how these should best be carried out. They have also been asked for ideas how to raise new funds or to save expense.

29. **Fabric**

The fabric of the Church building is well maintained. The Church retains a professional surveyor and follows a five year rolling programme of maintenance and renewal. A 50th Anniversary Appeal was set up in 2005 to provide a special fund for major refurbishment.

30. **Church Buildings**

The Church buildings in Pont Street provide a valuable facility much in use by Church organisations and many others. There is a resident caretaker. The nearby Hill House School uses the hall and other rooms and each Wednesday holds an Assembly (alternating between the hall and the Sanctuary). One of the Ministers of St Columba's conducts the Service in the Sanctuary. In the evenings the halls and meeting rooms are available for Church and non-Church organisations. The use of its facilities by non-Church groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous is viewed as an important part of the

Church's Mission and the revenue from lettings contributes significantly to the substantial cost of maintaining the premises. The Minister has an office in the Church and availability of meeting rooms means that there is no requirement for the manse to be used other than as a home for the Minister.

31. Ministerial Team and Support Staff

The Ministerial Team at St Columba's at present consists of the Minister (vacant), and the Associate Minister (The Rev Camille L Cook). In accordance with the Presbytery Plan the Ministries Council pays the stipend of both (although the Associate Minister's stipend has only recently been met by the Ministries Council). There is a full-time Church administrator to whom the full time resident caretaker is responsible. There is a part-time caretaker who takes over when the caretaker is off duty. There are four part-time volunteer beadles.

32. Stipend

The stipend will be paid by the Ministries Council in accordance with the National Stipend Scale. Travel expenses by public transport or by use of own car (at rates as agreed by the Ministries Council) will be paid. Council tax in respect of the manse is met by the Church which also bears the cost of maintenance of the manse.

33. The Manse

The manse is situated in Hollywood Road, just over one mile from the Church. It is a terraced house with a large "through" reception room, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, five bedrooms (of which one could be used as a study), two bathrooms, a cloakroom and a utility room. There is a small garden. There is no garage but there is residents' parking (paid by the Church).

THE FUTURE

34. Both congregations welcome the opportunities of maintaining in two major English cities Reformed Worship in the Presbyterian tradition and are alive to the tremendous scope both for individual Church members and for the congregations in their corporate Christian Witness, to influence for good the inner-city communities in which they are placed.

35. A Minister is sought with strength and clarity of purpose who will build upon and develop this Ministry.