

Our Town

Kilbirnie is a small town with a population of around 7,500 people situated in the Garnock Valley in North Ayrshire on the West Coast. Historically the town built up around the flax and weaving industries such as Knox's thread and net mills before iron and steel making took over the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The local steelworks closed in 1979 dealing a major blow to the towns economy. The town has struggled to recover from this decline in industrial fortunes due to little inward investment to replace lost employment. It has also suffered a degree of social exclusion and unemployment with a range of social problems as there are a few local employers and people generally have to commute out of the town for work.

Fortunately rail connections to and from the local Glengarnock station are very good, providing three trains per hour to Glasgow and Ayr. There is also a regular bus service to Glasgow. By road Kilbirnie is less than 10 miles from Largs, 25 miles from Ayr and 25 miles from Glasgow providing ample opportunity for shopping, for example Braehead and Silverburn, as well as leisure and cultural activities within easy reach.

There are three primary schools serving the town and one new secondary school covering the Garnock valley – Garnock campus which also has a range of sports facilities and a swimming pool. The town has facilities such as the Kilbirnie Place Golf Course, public park, library, bowling clubs and football club and Radio City, which has a café, fitness suite and a wide variety of classes and the town also has a large Tesco supermarket.

Kilbirnie has links to Robert Burns who is reported to have purchased a horse at the St Brennan's Day Horse Fair which was not his liking. He characterised this in his poem the Inventory as "...A Highland Donald Hastie,... A rough, red-wud Kilbirnie blastie". The name stuck and over the years those born in the town were proud to term themselves "Kilbirnie Blasties".

Our Parish

The Parish of the Auld Kirk covers an area of approximately 2.6 square miles. Areas within the Parish are Urban Priority Areas with a high percentage of single parents. The Parish comprises a wide variety of housing, from traditional tenement flats and privately owned homes as well as local authority family homes.

There is one primary school – which is now part of the Garnock Campus with the prospect of a chaplaincy.

There is a sheltered housing complex (Connell Court) where services have been held from the tenants. There is also a local authority Day Service for older people (Gownlea) which also has links with the Church via services as well as a financial donation to their social fund.

Local shops consist of the CO-OP supermarket, newsagents, post office, health centre and chemist which are all very convenient to the Manse.

Our Church



Kilbirnie Auld Kirk was formed by a union of Kilbirnie Barony and Glengarnock Parish Churches which took effect from 1 June 1978.

There is some debate in relation to the origin of the name of the town. It has been noted that it possibly came from the "Cell" or Church of St Brendan (Sanctus Birinus) the Navigator who was a 6th century saint associated with the Auld Kirk, who was reputed to be the uncle of St Columba of Iona.

The sanctuary is steeped in history with the first definite reference to a building on this site being 1127 with a list of incumbents dating back to 1361. Parts of the existing building date back to the 15th century and there have been additions up until 1903, the most architecturally notable being the Crawford aisle and love of 1642, erected by the Crawford family and renowned for its wood carving by Italian craftsman. Over the years the Church building has been Roman Catholic, Episcopalian and finally Church of Scotland. In 1986 a full scale restoration was undertaken and completed in 1995, at a total cost of £200,000.

The Church has been noted by Professor Hume as one of his list of the top ten Churches in Scotland.

The congregation are very proud of their long past history and the historical importance of the Church which has stood as a steady witness over the centuries.

Our Manse



The manse is a detached bungalow built in 1926/27 which is in good order and is situated at the Holmhead area of Kilbirnie, fronting onto the main road and within 200 yards of the Church.

The front garden, which is small, is separated from the main road by a wall. The back garden, which is of medium size, is bordered by an adjacent wall and hedges.

The house consist of 2 large public rooms, 4 bedrooms, a spacious hall and connecting corridor, shower room, bathroom, large kitchen, utility room, outhouse and single garage.

The house has full gas central heating radiators augmented by gas fires in the public rooms and a new boiler has just been installed and the heating fully re-furbished.

Our Hall



The Church Hall is known as Kirk House and is situated across the road from the Kirk. The building was the former Health Clinic and was purchased in 1997 to replace the former Church Hall situated several hundred yards from the Church. Its purchase marked the realisation of a long held vision to have a hall next to the Church and culmination of many years hard work and fundraising.

The accommodation consist of a large hall, smaller meeting rooms, kitchen, toilets (including disabled access) and storage space downstairs. Upstairs we have a meeting room, toilet, a small office / photocopy room and third room houses the archives. Kirk House is very well maintained and well used almost every date of the week. It is also let for parties and other activities.

Our Congregation

We have a congregational membership roll of approximately 286, the majority of whom live within the Parish. The majority of the members are older adults, but they are active, supportive and welcoming and very keen to see the Church develop under the leadership of a new minister.

Our Worship



Morning worship is celebrated each Sunday at 11.00am. The Service generally has a traditional structure but has also included a variety of input and approaches aimed at being relevant to today's world. There is a rota of Welcome Teams who serve at each door and distribute the Order of Service as well as volunteers for Bible readings. The young people are present for the first part of the Service, leaving to continue with their own time of activities in Kirk House. Following the Service tea is served in the Glengarnock Aisle to allow for a further period of fellowship.

The young people participate in services throughout the year in terms of the Easter Service, Prize Giving Service and the Christmas Service. They also enjoy outings and parties throughout the year.

The Sacrament of Communion is celebrated on three occasions per year, and following the Service the young people organise a soup and sandwich lunch for the congregation with donations given to them to assist with their activities.

Prior to the Christmas Season a Christmas card from the Kirk Session and congregation of the Auld Kirk is distributed to all houses in the Parish. The card also details all Church Services over Christmas.

A quiet Christmas Service is held annually and all those who have been bereaved over the year are invited to attend to especially remember their loved ones. This service is well attended and very well received.

At Christmas there is a Christmas Eve Watchnight Service which commences at 11.00pm.

The Church hosts an annual Remembrance Service which is attended by all youth organisations and there then follows a parade to the War Memorial for the wreath laying service.

At Easter there have been services throughout Holy Week and an annual Harvest Thanksgiving Service with donations of goods and money given to good causes.

The Church takes part in the rota of services in the town for the World Day of Prayer which is well attended and refreshments are provided afterwards in Kirk House.

Our Organisations

Sunday School



The Sunday School has a small number of children but they are a lively group and they attend on a regular basis. There are a number of leaders, ie the Superintendent and one leader for the younger children and another for the older ones, as well as a few parents who assist. Both sections will come together for the annual Christmas Service and they will also participate in the Service of Lessons and Carols.

Boys Brigade

1st Kilbirnie Boys Brigade comprises Anchor Boys (P1 – P3), Junior Section (P4 – P6) and Company Section (P7 – S6) who all meet on a Wednesday evening within Kirk House. The Company has a good many regular attenders as well as 3 Officers and 3 helpers. The chaplaincy is joint between the Auld Kirk and St Columba's which is the other Church of Scotland in Kilbirnie.

The boys enjoy a variety of activities, such as weekends away and camping. They are working towards BB badges, the highest being the Queen's Badge. 1st Kilbirnie is part of the North Ayrshire Battalion and the boys regularly take part in competitions such as chess where they collected a silver medal as well as bronze medals for chess, mime, drama and swimming. The boys also take part in Church Services such as Remembrance, Christmas Youth Service and the annual Battalion Church Parade.

Girl Guiding



The Auld Kirk sponsor Girl Guiding sections, namely Rainbows, Brownies and Guides who all meet in Kirk House and all sections are well attended and supported. The girls are involved in a range of activities, events, outing and badge work as well as the usual parties. In terms of Church life they participate in the Remembrance Service and the Christmas Youth Service.

it was established for friendship and fellowship and has a dedicated number of regular attendees, it has raised a huge amount of money over the years for primarily the Church, but also for other charities, such as Christian Aid and McMillan Cancer, as well as refurbishment of the kitchen by replacing units, fridge and cooker. In addition, the ladies have also undertaken a number of funeral teas at the request of bereaved families which is another way of providing pastoral care.

Nearly New Shop

The Nearly New Shop is part of the property which belongs to Compton McGill and Garnock Valley Ford Garage and is rented to the Church. The shop has been opened over the last few years and is a very successful venture for the Church. Funds raised are donated to the Church but also to a range of Voluntary Organisations from the town to help support local ventures. Therefore we view this as a Town and Church partnership and to date around 26 organisations have benefited from donations, such as MAP Club, Sharks Swimming Club, Garnock Academy Music Department, Senior Citizens Club, Gowanlea Day Centre and Youth Organisations to name but a few.

Fund Raising / Social Committee

Fundraising has been an integral part of the Church for many years, not only as a means of raising funds, both for the Church and other charities, but also as outreach to the community and to develop fellowship, friendship and fun as many of the events are very popular and attract a range of participants who are not Church members.

The annual fundraising events, are a Quiz, Bingo, Burns Supper and Christmas Coffee Morning. Throughout the years other events have included a Treasure Hunt, Flower Festival, Talent / Silent Auction, Fashion Show and Whist Drive.

Flower Group



The flower group take it in turns to arrange flowers in the Church. The flowers are then delivered to people who are sick, bereaved or celebrating an occasion. The group also arrange special flowers for Christmas, Easter and Harvest Thanksgiving. In this way they support many members via the ministry of flowers.

General Activities

Over the years Kirk Session Committees have taken on a number of issues which they have highlighted to the Kirk Session such as undertaking a social-economic analysis of the Parish, Smaritan's Purse whereby the congregation filled a number of shoeboxes and Mary's Meals who received a donation.

Mission & Worship – Bible Study and Prayer Group

The Bible Study and Prayer Group meet within the home of one of the Kirk Session members. While small in number they are faithful attenders and meet on a regular weekly basis.

Kirk Session

The Kirk Session has approximately 26 Elders, some being more active than others due to various factors. However, they are able to express their views and actively participate in the life of the Church. The Kirk Session have been involved in conferences, in leading worship, the annual Christmas Fayer and the annual Elders Dinner as well as covering all the Districts of congregation members. The Kirk Session meet on a monthly basis where all the business pertaining to the Church is discussed.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care Visitors are currently a small group of five Church members, with a convenor, who have volunteered to visit those who are ill, housebound or residing in nursing homes. Such visits are always very welcome and it reassures the vulnerable elderly members that they are still thought off, although they are not able to join with the congregation on a Sunday.

Our Other Areas to Note

Finances

The Kirk Session an congregation have been involved in the Time-Talents and Money three year cycle of Stewardship Policy as advocated by the Church of Scotland. As such we have held three major stewardship campaigns. Two of these involved gatherings and the last venture was a congregational meal. All of these events have proved successful. Fund raising and the Nearly New Shop have also greatly assisted the congregation financially. (A copy of the accounts is available on request).

Hall Lets

Kirk House is an excellent resource and is busy throughout the week. It is used extensively by the Youth Organisations, as well as Line Dancing, funeral teas, voting during local and national elections, Community Food Workers have used the premises for cooking classes, Early Years Learning Group, birthday parties, concerts by music pupils and even a wedding reception.

Minister

To achieve our mission and aims we are seeking a Minister who will:

- Give pastoral care with warmth, empathy and understanding
- Have an excellent rapport with all age groups – be a 'people' person
- Lead worship effectively and be relevant to today's issues and involve others in participating and jointly leading worship
- Participate in joint services with other Churches in the town
- Encourage, inspire and support the Kirk Session and others to take the Church forward and embrace the challenges ahead

- Engage proactively with the community and ensure that the Church is relevant
- Be open to the needs of the local community and provide the sacraments of baptism and ordinances as required
- Last but by no means least – be a leader who will lead, with the congregation together – to be open to ideas and suggestions of others and be willing to delegate – we all want to work as part of a team supporting each other

Interested:- please contact:-

Interim Moderator

Nominating Committee