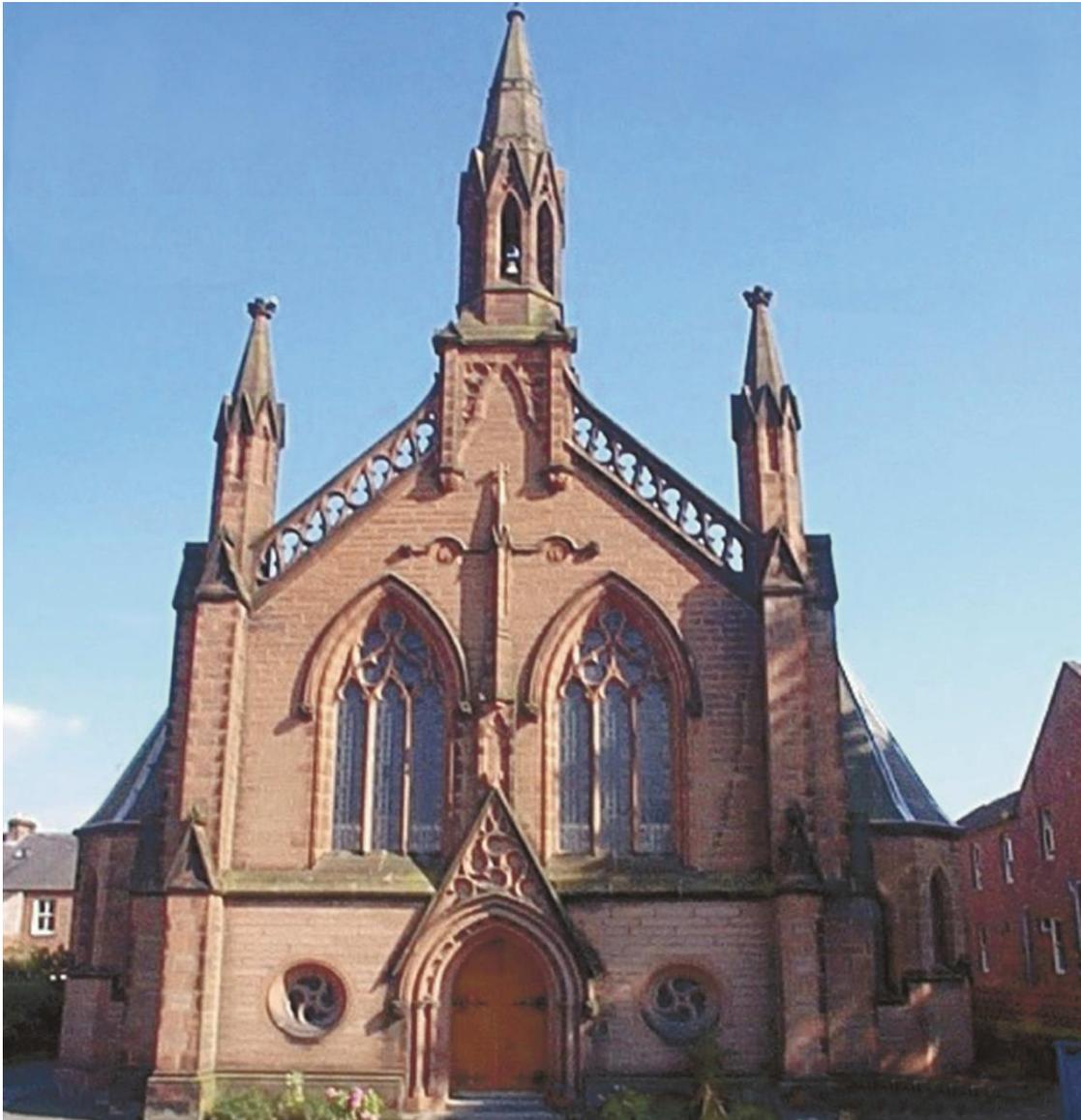


Maxwelltown West Church



Our Mission Statement

Maxwelltown West Church seeks to be a place of welcome to all in our parish – a centre of Christian worship and fellowship. We seek to provide a framework for family life and a place where young people may be nurtured in Christian values.

Scottish Charity Number: SC015925

Website:- www.maxwelltownwest.org.uk

Where to find us:

Maxwelltown West Church is situated near the centre of the historic and bustling town of Dumfries which sits on the picturesque banks of the River Nith. It is the principal town in Dumfries & Galloway with a population of around 32,000. Well known for its fine buildings and proud association with the poet Robert Burns, its deserved local nickname is 'The Queen of the South'. Recreational and sports facilities include museums, cinemas, theatres, leisure complexes, bike trails and golf courses. Particularly worth a visit is the Dumfries Museum with Camera Obscura which is a working image projector dating from 1836 which gives a unique view over the surrounding area.

The town is well served educationally for primary, secondary and further education students. The nearest primary school is across the road at Laurieknowe and the nearest secondary school, Dumfries Academy, is a five minute walk away. There is a university campus fairly close by at the Crichton site where the University of the West of Scotland, University of Glasgow and Dumfries & Galloway College have sites.

Dumfries is well served medically with a wide range of doctor and dental surgeries, the latter providing both private and NHS care. There is a good hospital which, though built in the 1970s, has been modernised and is also due to be replaced in the near future.

Dumfries is situated on the A75 "Euro-Route" between Stranraer and Gretna, on the A76 to Kilmarnock and only 30mins from the M74 with connections to Glasgow and the North and the M6 and the South. There is a railway station in Dumfries with connections to Kilmarnock and Glasgow to the North and Carlisle to the South. Lockerbie is 13 miles away and there are rail connections to Glasgow and Edinburgh in the North and Carlisle, Manchester and London in the South. Dumfries is only 2 hours away from 4 major airports, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Newcastle and Glasgow Prestwick.

Things to know about Maxwelltown West Parish Church:

- We extend a warm welcome to visitors and endeavour to be a welcoming open congregation.
- We have 623 members and 4 adherents with an average attendance of around 120 at Sunday services.
- We are a self supporting congregation.
- Our services are usually fairly traditional though our worship is gently evolving through time.
- We are a friendly, caring church community, with a real sense of belonging, fellowship and openness to others.

- We are a congregation that embraces diversity and actively seeks to engage with issues of peace and justice, locally and globally.
- We are a forwarding-thinking congregation whose people enjoy reflecting together on our present thinking and practices to shape their future mission, in and beyond our Parish.
- We seek to nurture and involve our children in all aspects of Church life.
- We are privileged to enjoy the resources provided by our beautiful buildings and mindful of our responsibilities to maintain them as part of our local and national heritage.
- We have a dedicated group of visitors which supports the elderly.
- We send flowers and greetings cards to mark the birthdays of the 85s and over.

Challenges:

- To move confidently into the future.
- To continue to work closely with neighbouring churches of all denominations.
- To continue to be open to new forms and styles of worship.
- To encourage an active involvement in the life of the Church.
- To involve the local community more closely.

Outreach:

Maxwelltown West Church is active in the community and engages with fellow Christians through Dumfries Christian Network. The church is also active locally through Alive Radio and supports Christian Aid through its Door to Door collections, annual Coffee Morning and the annual Lenten Lunches. Further afield the church is linked with Bethany Christian Trust and Blythwood Care Trust.

We also support charities by giving donations from the summer teas, Christmas Candlelight Service and the Christmas Day Service. There is an annual Gift Service in December for a nominated charity, often a local one. Christmas cards giving details of all Christmas Services are distributed to the congregation and within the Parish.

World Mission:

We set great store by our commitment to our African connections and aim to support these in prayer and with practical help. We raise funds in various ways and this aspect of our work is largely the responsibility of the World Church Team



In 2007 we began work on a humanitarian aid project with a community in Bondo in Western Kenya. This continues to develop and we have assisted in the construction of earth toilets, two deep wells for fresh water and a small church which also serves as a classroom. The introduction of a Credit Scheme with funding from us has enabled numerous small businesses to develop. Sponsors from Maxwelltown West give money, mainly by standing order, which

enables monthly donations to be sent to help in the feeding of 500 orphans. The lady who oversees all projects in Bondo is in constant touch with the World Church Team and thanks our congregation for sowing the seeds of hope in their community and allowing the local people to see a way forward to a better life through self sufficiency.



Two of our own congregation have twice visited the area and have brought back reports of progress. In 2008 two elders and the then minister of Mathia, a congregation of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, visited our congregation. This began our inter-church friendship. In the summer of 2009 a reciprocal visit was made by members of our congregation.

We are continuing our friendship with the intention that this will develop into a formal twinning of the two congregations as part of the Church of Scotland's Faith Share partnership scheme. We have since had a further visit from members of Mathia Church. This scheme offers mutual friendship, Christian fellowship, a sharing of faith and worship and an opportunity to learn from one another. We have set up an Educational Bursary Scheme which has enabled over thirty young people to continue into senior education and university. Members of the World Church Team and Mathia are in regular contact with each other.

Our World Church Team plans interesting programmes of events which are always well supported and allow members to help raise funds for both areas.

For our Congregation:

A church magazine is produced quarterly for delivery to every member along with their Communion cards. The magazine contains reports from the organisations associated with the church, a letter from the minister, a children's corner and a diary of events.

In the past 3 years a Parish Visitors Group to visit the elderly and housebound has been successfully established. Birthday cards are sent to all those aged 85 and over.

There is a weekly flower rota to decorate the Church. After the service, volunteers distribute these flowers to the sick, elderly and housebound. A team arranges to decorate the Church on special occasions such as Harvest and Christmas. Young people help to decorate the Christmas tree.

A recently formed Social Group plan and run various events throughout the year. These have included an Easter Brunch, a Christmas Lunch and a Scottish Themed Beetle Drive - a Haggis Drive. The aim of the group is to encourage fellowship and fun throughout all age groups and all events have proved a huge success.

Church Life:

Worship

Morning worship is held every Sunday at 11.00 am, where all ages are welcome. On Remembrance Sunday the service begins at 10.45 am.

Family Services are held monthly except for July and August. Special services can involve a Praise Group and members of K-Max, J-Max and Y-Max. Following Services in the summer, volunteers serve tea and coffee. This has recently been extended to serving the tea and coffee fortnightly after the service.

We use CH4 which is available from those on welcome duty at the doors each Sunday. Hymns and readings are projected onto a screen at the front of the church. The Bible readings are read by volunteer members of the congregation and can be followed in the Revised Standard Version bibles on each pew. In addition large print copies of hymns are also available.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated five times a year. Card Communion services are held on the first Sunday of March, June, September and December at 11.00am and 3.00pm. The 3.00pm services are held in the hall and are particularly suited to wheelchair users and disabled. An informal Communion Service is held on the last Sunday of the year.

Our Children

Children of all ages are always welcome. The Sunday School (K-Max for 4 years old to P3, J-Max for P4-P7) meets at 11.00am during term time, comes into the Church for the children's spot at the beginning of the service and then leaves for its work and worship in the halls.



There are crèche facilities every Sunday where babies and toddlers may be looked after for part or all of the service. Y-Max (young people in S1 and above) has met on Sunday evenings during term time and has taken a leading role in monthly Family Services, doing drama sketches, readings and musical pieces.

In 2005 it was decided that it would be beneficial to have a Youth Policy Group. The CHYPS (Children and Young People) Group was formed to look at the future direction of the Sunday School and give an overview of what we offer to our young people. The group meets four or five times a year to review ongoing progress, address any requests from the youth organisations and help in the planning of family events. On various occasions we have sent youth delegates to the General Assembly and to the Youth Assembly.

Pastoral Care:

Through the leadership and support of our recent locum minister a dedicated group of visitors has been established. It offers our minister support with Pastoral Care. The group comprises church members who regularly visit the elderly, the housebound and other members who are in need of pastoral support.

Our Organisations:



Maxwelltown West has an active Guild branch which holds monthly Tuesday meetings with interesting speakers. The Guild supports national projects at home and abroad.

Another women's group meeting monthly on Thursdays is the After Eights. The Good Companions meeting fortnightly on Wednesdays, is a group for the young at heart offering companionship, speakers and entertainment.



There are two Badminton Clubs: a mixed club meeting on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and a ladies' club meeting on a Wednesday afternoon.

We also have a strong tradition of Scouting and Guiding with Scouts, Cubs, Beavers, Guides and Brownies who meet in our halls. Uniformed parades are a feature of Thinking Day and Remembrance Sunday Services and are fully supported by all the uniformed organisations.



Church Governance:

Kirk Session - The Kirk Session consists of the minister and elders and is responsible for the spiritual oversight of the congregation and its organisations.

Deacons' Court - The Deacons' Court comprises the minister, the elders, and the elected Deacons. It is the Financial Board of our congregation and is responsible for the raising of funds, the payment of all congregational expenses, and the maintenance of the fabric of Church, Halls and Manse. Elected Deacons share with the elders in welcoming worshippers to church and in Offering duties. Deacons are appointed for a three-year term and may be re-elected.

Committees:

To support these two courts we have committees covering Fabric and Finance chaired by members.

Fabric

This group meets regularly, supports the Fabric Convenor and is answerable to the Deacons' Court

Finance

This group meets a fortnight before the Deacons' Court and is answerable to the Court. It supports the Church Treasurer.

Buildings & Facilities:



The Church is an attractive Victorian Free Church built in 1866 and designed by James Barbour with a central pulpit and a gallery on three sides. It is sited almost in the centre of its parish.

Music is provided by a new custom built digital organ installed in mid 2012 by Makin's, the cost of which has now been fully recouped from fundraising activities. The organ is occasionally supplemented by other musicians.



There is a War Memorial panel to be found in the entrance vestibule.

There is a Vestry as well as two well-equipped halls one of which has a badminton court and is used by our uniformed organisations. It is also used for hosting the Social Group events and Coffee Mornings, for example. The other is a smaller hall which can hold around sixty at a meeting and is used by the Sunday Schools as well as meetings of our Beaver Group, the Guild and the After Eights.

There is also a committee room, a recently refurbished kitchen which meets current legislation and health and safety guidelines, and toilets. The halls are also used by a number of outside organisations. The Church and smaller hall both have hearing loop systems. Disabled access is available from Rosemount Street and there is a separate disabled toilet. On-street parking is available mainly at the rear of the church on Rosemount Street and Hill Street.

The detached manse at 11 Laurieknowe which dates from the early 1900s and was purchased by the church in 1922, is one of several similar houses nearby. The manse is an easy stroll to the town centre and its shops. The generous family accommodation is on two floors and at the front is well elevated above the road. There is easy access from the rear via Rosemount Street.



On the ground floor is a hall, reception room, dining-room, study, large kitchen and utility room. On the first floor there are four generous sized bedrooms, one of which is en suite, a study/bedroom and a bathroom. The attic which is floored is accessed by a Ramsay ladder. The private walled garden to the rear houses the new double garage. There is also an ample parking area for additional cars. The building was re-roofed in 2011. The kitchen has been refitted and a new central heating system installed. Over the years the building inside and out has been well maintained.

Almost directly opposite is Laurieknowe Primary School and the nearest secondary school, Dumfries Academy is approximately a five minute walk away across the River Nith, near the town centre.

Map of Parish:



Our Community:

Our predominantly residential parish with its mixed private and social housing is in the Maxwelltown area of Dumfries. Although the congregation is gathered from all over the burgh the majority is from within the parish. Statistics show the parish as having a population of 5691 within 2496 households. Housing is largely low density with mixed private and social homes. Our Church has close connections with the local Laurieknowe Primary School to which our Minister is Chaplain. The school holds its end of term services in the church. We also have connections with a nearby nursing home mainly through our Good Companions group which often leads services there. These are much appreciated by the residents who are also invited to join with the group at its regular meetings.

Church History:

Our congregation began in 1843 as Maxwelltown Free Church, with the first service being held in the open air at a barnyard in Nithside. Within 6 months a church had been built at North Laurieknowe, with a manse being built in 1847.

In July 1865 the foundation stone of the current church was laid and in November 1866 the church was opened. In 1900 the union of the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church brought a change of name to Maxwelltown United Free Church. During the 1920s the current manse, at 11 Laurieknowe was purchased.

In 1929 after a further re-union of the United Free Church and the Church of Scotland we became Maxwelltown West Church of Scotland, and today we are the 4th largest of the 40 congregations in the Presbytery of Dumfries & Kirkcudbright.

Today we have a thriving church family of 623 members, who actively and generously support the church and its work. We are a self sufficient church with an annual budget of £100,000 covering maintenance, salaries and the contribution to the Church of Scotland Ministries & Missions Fund.

Induction:

On Thursday 16th October 2014 the Reverend Dave Sutherland was inducted to the charge of Maxwelltown West Church as the new minister. He is pictured below, together with his wife Maureen:

