

Scottish Episcopal Church



*Diocese of St Andrews,
Dunkeld and Dunblane*

PARISH PROFILE

St MARY'S BIRNAM

WELCOME

St Mary's, Birnam

The church of St Mary's Birnam is situated in a beautiful part of Scotland at the gateway to the Highlands. We know we are fortunate in our surroundings and we seek to build on this good fortune to express God's love in our rural community.

Our congregation is a resilient and flourishing Christian community and we wish for a part time priest-in-charge to lead us in a deepening of our faith and to encourage new growth at St Mary's for the future.

We believe St Mary's has a lot to offer and we want to encourage the right person to join with us to move onward in developing our Christian lives. We all look forward to working with a new priest to reach out and share the presence of God with all people living in our community.



ST MARY'S BIRNAM

History

St Mary's Church was built in 1858 in the centre of Birnam, which was growing rapidly after the arrival of the railway. Attracted by the beautiful surroundings, increasing numbers of visitors came to holiday in the area and the church grew in response, with the addition of the side aisle, tower and vestry. Stain glass windows in the side aisle designed by Burne Jones and constructed by Morris & Co are especially notable.

After a diocesan review, St Mary's linked charge of Strathtay was reassigned to Pitlochry and between 2014-2019 St Mary's was linked with the geographically closer congregation at St Columba's in Stanley. We now look forward to a part time ministry recognising the potential of St Marys in the community.

Worship and Outreach

There are weekly services at Birnam at 9.30 using the 1982 liturgy, with an average attendance of over 20. Music is an important part of worship at St Mary's which has recently adopted the 2013 edition of Hymns Ancient and Modern. Although there is no choir, the liturgy is sung and the organ is also used for concerts and recitals.

The church congregation has remained enthusiastic and resilient throughout the interregnum and has appreciated the varied voices of visiting Sunday clergy. In addition to the routine assistance with reading and intercessions, members of the congregation have willingly taken on extra responsibilities, such as writing for the monthly community newsletter "the Bridge."



St Mary's holds an informal Communion service on Thursday mornings followed by coffee and discussion which has proved popular. On occasions such as Good Friday and Advent, the congregation joins with the local Church of Scotland, both in the form of traditional services or more informal events with discussion and music. The Christmas Eve carol service has become an established community event, bringing many local people and visitors to fill the church.



St Mary's has always contributed to and been involved with the local community. There are close links with both the Church of Scotland at Dunkeld Cathedral as well as the Catholic Church in Birnam. This includes members of the congregation acting as volunteers in the jointly run charity shop in Dunkeld and at the community lunch club. The congregation are also involved in the 'meeting place', a weekly gathering for coffee and conversation, which moves from Dunkeld to St Mary's during the summer months.

Church & Rectory

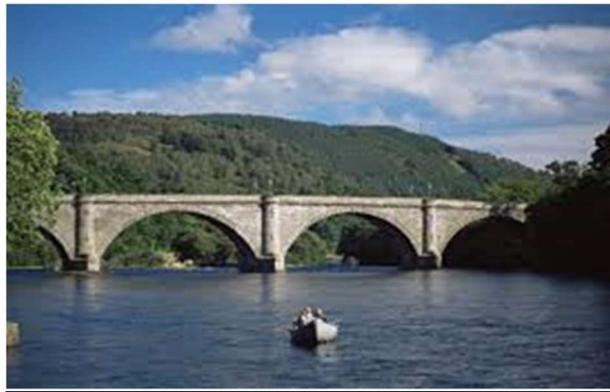
St Mary's has been well maintained over the years and, within its financial resources, pays particular attention to its quinquennial reviews in respect of prioritising infrastructure projects. For example, the church's tower was reroofed in 2002. The latest quinquennial survey was carried out in 2016 and the vestry addressed the high priority items in 2017-18 using "restricted" funds, donated for this purpose. This has included, more recently, a substantive project to remove asbestos from the boiler and in 2019 obtaining planning for improved disabled access.

We expect routine maintenance to continue on an annual basis for the other aspects of the work. This will ensure the fabric of the church is protected for the future. The 1874 Forster and Andrews organ, restored by Sandy Edmonstone of Perth in 1993, has certification from the British Institute of Organ Studies (2013).

St Mary's Rectory was built in the 1980s at the rear of the church and is in the heart of the Birnam community.



The accommodation comprises two double bedrooms, a single bedroom, study, large living room and a kitchen/dining room. It has gas central heating and double glazing. It is surrounded with a small, easily kept garden.



The Community

Dunkeld and Birnam is a thriving community in Highland Perthshire. The two parts are separated by the River Tay which is bridged by a magnificent Telford bridge, and together they provide a wide range of services for locals and tourists.

There is a local primary school of approximately 150 pupils which also has a nursery class. It is set in a beautiful grass playground with an outdoor classroom and garden areas. There is nursery and childcare provision in the village. For secondary education children attend Perth High School, some 12 miles away or Breadalbane Academy in the more rural setting of Aberfeldy, both schools have very good reputations.

For the communities more senior friends, there is excellent Servite sheltered housing and also a local care home. There is a doctor's surgery with a practice nurse, which provides a range of medical support to the community. There are 2 dental practices. There is also a small supermarket and a range of independent shops which provide for most day to day shopping needs. The major regional centre of Perth is 12 miles along the A9. A wide range of pubs, cafes and restaurants are available locally.

Within this vibrant and sociable community there are opportunities to follow a wide range of leisure pursuits. The area offers excellent walking and biking opportunities, golf and many other sporting activities. For the less active there is Birnam's fantastic arts centre which hosts a range of productions of music and drama, as well as being the venue for many classes.

From Dunkeld and Birnam there are good transport links with the A9 and main rail line to Inverness. To help you keep up to date, there is the free local newspaper – The Bridge- which makes sure you can always find local trades, and never miss a social event.



ASPIRATIONS FOR THE FUTURE in BIRNAM

We seek a priest who can share the love of God in our community.

In addition to Sunday services, the congregation seek inspiration to reach out to those who search for a spiritual dimension to their lives but who are not drawn to existing forms of Church. More creative use of the church itself, which is already used and valued by members of the community as a sacred space, could be explored, for example with times of reflection, discussion and music.

The lay pastoral care group, established in Birnam for the vacancy, would hope to grow in wisdom and numbers and would appreciate guidance to serve members of the congregation and others experiencing challenging times.

The existing, well established links with both the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church provide a receptive audience for further joint initiatives in the community. The congregation is committed to Christian communities working together to demonstrate their values of justice and compassion.

To help us realise our aims, whilst recognising the part time nature of the post, we hope a priest would:

- Provide spiritual leadership, inspiration and vision.
- Guide and support the provision of pastoral care.
- Explore appropriate ways the church can reach out to those with no faith background and respond to the spiritual needs in the area.
- Encourage ecumenical working with other local churches.
- Be a visible, welcoming presence communicating with all sections of our community.

