

St. John's-Renfield Church

'A Faith to Proclaim - A Fellowship to Share'

Parish Profile



Unrestricted Call

July 2025

www.sjrchurch.com



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Introduction

St John's-Renfield Church is offering an exciting opportunity for a Minister with vision to lead us into the future.

Our Church is located in Kelvindale in Glasgow's West End. We are a friendly congregation, welcoming anyone wishing to worship and nurture their Christian faith or wishing simply to learn more. Our members and friends are generous with their time, talents and giving. We show our love of God through our care for one another and our neighbours within the parish and beyond. We have a strong and vibrant church community, an effective Kirk Session, and enthusiastic volunteers.

The current vacancy arose in 2022 when our Minister answered the call to take up the post of Minister of St Andrew's Jerusalem and Tiberias. Despite a three-year vacancy, our key strengths remain the quality of worship, preaching, pastoral care, and raising funds for the church and for external causes.

We look forward to welcoming our new Minister to lead us towards our vision of sharing God's love and our love of God with the parish, and to help us grow our community of faith.

The Presbytery of Glasgow has granted us permission to call on an unrestricted basis.

The Kirk Session has voted to depart from the historic and current practice of the Church of Scotland in relation to same-sex marriage and civil partnerships. We welcome applications from all who hear a call to lead us.



What can we offer our new Minister?

- A warm welcome.
- Encouragement and wholehearted prayerful support.
- An able, active, happy Kirk Session and congregation.
- Excellent volunteer skillset and willingness to help.
- A committed Worship Team experienced in leading Sunday services.
- Willingness to adapt to “being church” in today’s world.
- A rich musical tradition.
- A beautiful Sanctuary.
- An attractive, comfortable manse.
- All the usual human failings and a good sense of humour.

What are we looking for in our new Minister?

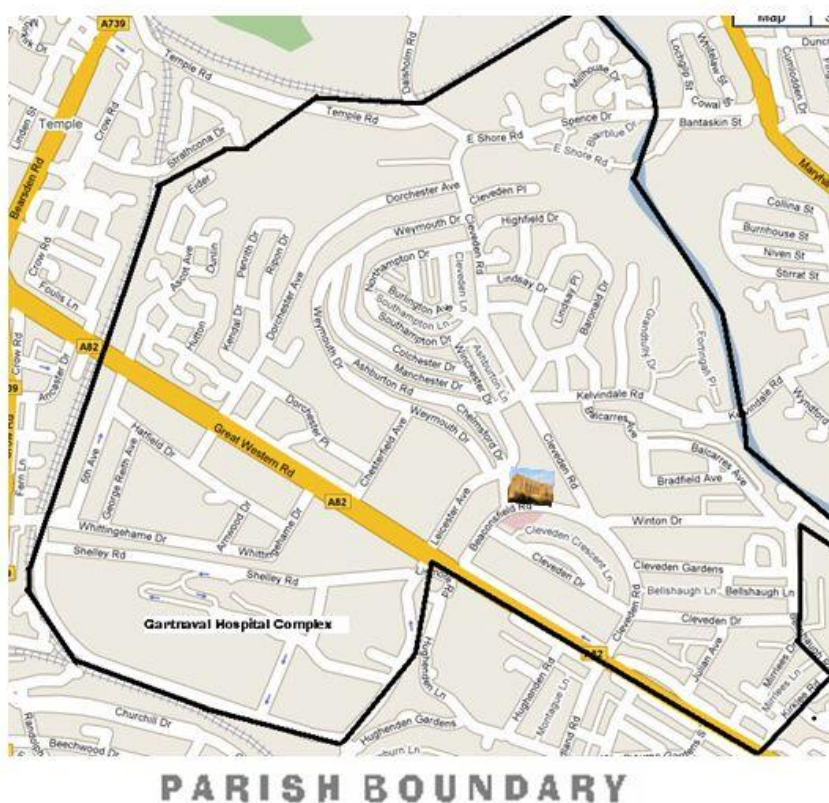
- A skilled leader who will help us discern and fulfil God’s mission for our church and its people in our community.
- An excellent communicator who will actively engage with the congregation, parish and the cluster.
- Commitment to prioritising and participating in the pastoral care needs of the whole congregation.
- Imaginative preaching that will challenge and encourage the broad spectrum of views in our forward-looking congregation.
- Willingness to help us explore alternative styles of worship and support us to nurture our spiritual growth.
- Able and willing to get beyond the church walls and into the parish and the local community, with a particular emphasis on engagement with younger people and families.
- Capacity to recognise individuals’ strengths and qualities, and to encourage and support members to share their skills and knowledge for the benefit of our church.
- An effective team player.

St John's-Renfield Church and Parish

St John's-Renfield Church is set within the residential districts of Kelvindale and Kelvinside in the West End of Glasgow and was dedicated in 1931. The parish, which extends either side of Great Western Road, includes the housing development of the interwar years in Kelvindale, the Victorian villas of Kelvinside and a number of modern apartment buildings. There have been recent additional housing developments along Skaethorn Road (Riverside) and apartment buildings off Dorchester Avenue. The parish includes Kelvindale Primary School, with which we have always enjoyed a good relationship, Cleveden Secondary School, Glasgow Clyde College (Annie'sland Campus), Gartnavel Hospital, the Beatson Institute and the private Nuffield Hospital.

We have established contact with the recently opened Kelvinside Manor Residential Care Home on Dorchester Avenue and a number of the residents and staff have attended our community Pop-in Café. We look forward to developing this link as the number of residents increases and the care home acquires a mini-bus. Cleveden Suites, a purpose-built luxury residential care home is scheduled to open on Cleveden Road in 2028.

The most recent available parish population figure is 9,115. Parish-specific data gathered in the 2022 census is not yet available. Previous census data is available [here](#) as well as the [vacancy section of our website](#).



The Congregation

The Kirk Roll stands at 229 comprising 211 members and 18 adherents. A further 23 people, whom we call 'friends' have an informal link with the congregation. Since 1 January 2021, 7 new members and 1 adherent have joined the congregation.

Three quarters of the congregation live within the parish and nearly all the remainder live in immediately surrounding areas such as Hyndland, Jordanhill, Anniesland and Bearsden. In the period 2020-2024 there were 37 funerals, with 24 of these in the two Covid years. During this period, 2 children were baptised.

The majority of members (but not all) are in the upper age bracket, but still active and committed. Although our uniformed organisations are flourishing and there are children around the church, it is a matter of regret that this does not currently translate into attendance at worship. Due to lack of numbers we made the difficult decision to close the Sunday Club and the Youth Group.



In spite of these challenges, we seek to be a welcoming and friendly faith community, where we may all seek the presence of God in Jesus Christ and witness to the Spirit at work among us.



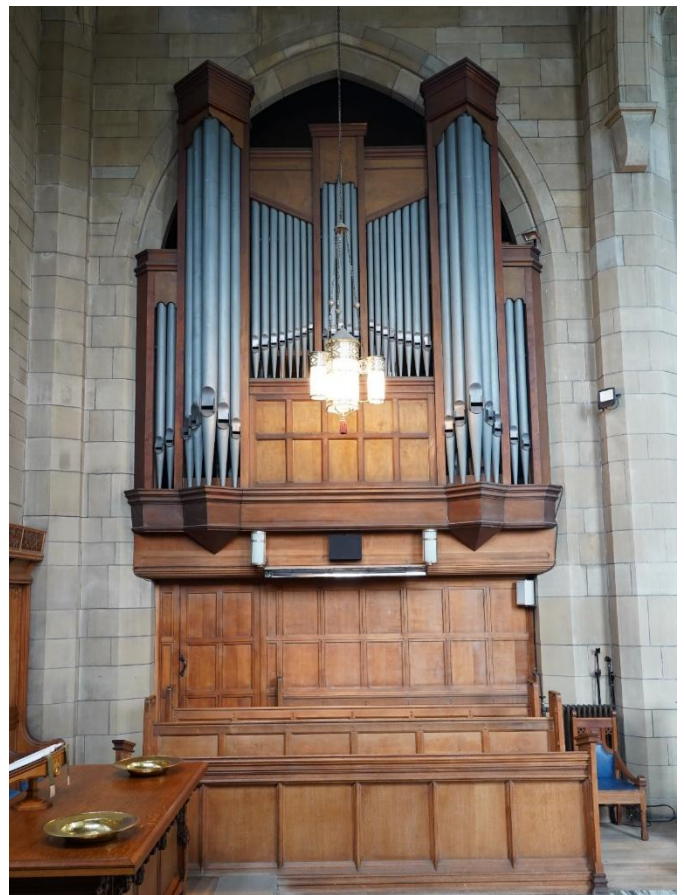
One Easter Sunday, our young people took the bare wooden cross that stood in the Sanctuary during Holy Week and transformed it with colourful ribbons and buttons to celebrate the Easter message. The cross is still displayed in the Sanctuary and inspired our logo.

Worship Life

Worship lies at the very heart of the life of St John's-Renfield Church. Our regular Sunday service at 11am (with an attendance of around 70) follows a traditional structure, but there is enthusiasm also for different worship formats. We use the New Revised Standard version of the Bible and CH4, and provide a printed order of service. The choir has used material from God Welcomes All in their introits. Fortunately, we have been able to offer worship each Sunday during the vacancy with the support of two of our members, who are retired ministers, and of the ministerial team at Kelvin West Church. Three of our services included short seasonal playlets performed to critical acclaim by members of the congregation. Our own Worship Team of seven members prepared and led worship on six occasions in 2024.

St John's-Renfield has a strong musical tradition and our choir and Organist and Choirmaster enrich worship Sunday by Sunday. The choir leads the annual Service of Nine Lessons and Carols. Worship is enhanced by the pipe organ which underwent a major upgrade in 2018 and the grand piano.

Although we are a lively and welcoming congregation, it is disappointing that Sunday attendances have never fully recovered after the pandemic and that children and young people are generally absent from worship. To reach out to children and young families, two meetings of Messy Church have been held since the pandemic and these were well received by those who attended, including our own Kelvindale Toddlers and their carers.



Services celebrating the key dates of the Church year often attract members of the community and visitors. Our Easter, Christingle, Nine Lessons and Carols, all-age Nativity, Watchnight and Christmas Day and Remembrance Day services are well-supported by the community. Our service for Christian Aid Week, led by our Christian Aid Coordinator and members of the Worship Team, is well-publicised and well-supported.

We celebrate Communion quarterly as part of morning worship, and would welcome the re-introduction of short, informal communion services on the first Sunday of the remaining months.

Last year the Worship Team led the delivery of Christian Aid's *Act on Poverty* discussion programme for Lent, and there is support for the return of regular Bible study and discussion groups.

Sunday services are live-streamed twice a month to allow members and others unable to gather in the Sanctuary to participate in worship or to listen again to the service. You can view our YouTube channel here: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=sjrchurch

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is a priority for our church family.

Our Pastoral Care Committee and district elders offer loving care to members, friends and parishioners. Committee members stay in touch with and support people who are housebound, bereaved, ill, or in distress. They also help mark and celebrate joyful life events.

Volunteers prepare floral arrangements for the Sanctuary every week. After Sunday worship, flowers are delivered to two or three households in the parish with our love and prayers.

Charitable Outreach and World Church

For many years we have informally partnered St Gregory's Roman Catholic Church, which sits just outside our parish boundary, providing funds and in-kind contributions every month to support their foodbank to meet increasing demand. We raise funds for and support the Lodging House Mission, Christian Aid, and a range of other local, national and international charities, including several with which we have longstanding relationships such as Glasgow the Caring City, Crossreach, The Valerie Taylor Trust in Bangladesh, and The Olive Tree (supporting people in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Gaza). In recent years we have supported the Red Cross and other groups working in Ukraine.

In 2024 we became Mission Partners with Rev Muriel Pearson of St Andrew's Tiberias, supporting her in prayer and by writing to elected representatives.



Stewardship and Finance

The Finance Committee carries out an Annual Review of Giving by asking each member to prayerfully review their giving to the work of the whole church.

The overall financial position over the last three years has been as follows:

	2024	2023	2022
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Income	291	189	164
Expenditure	239	165	179
Surplus/(Deficit)	52	24	(15)
Included above:			
Legacies	103	20	0
Fabric expenditure	98	30	29
Giving To Grow contributions	65	64	80

The latest accounts are available [here](#) as well as the [Vacancy page of our website](#).

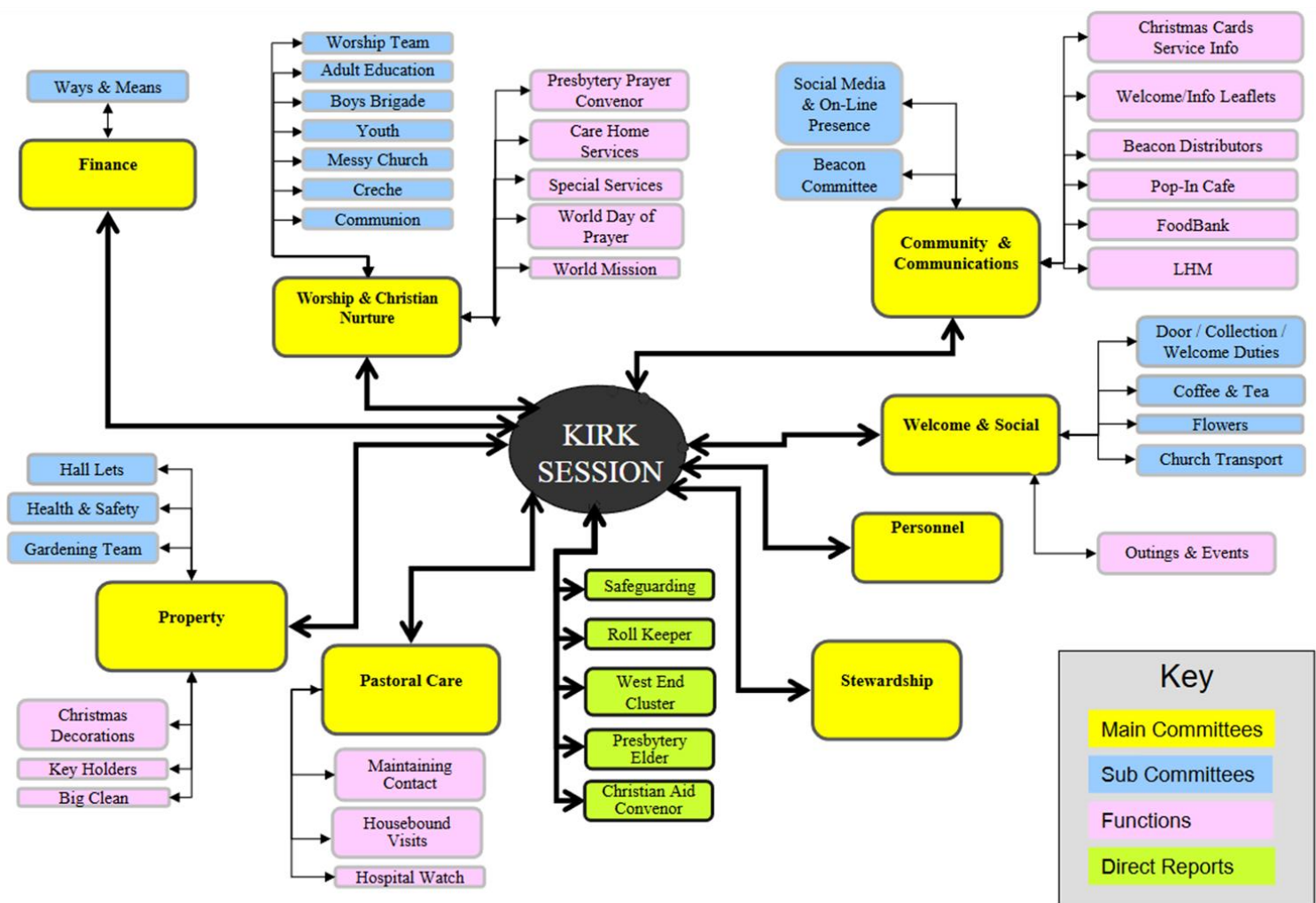
As well as a number of coffee mornings held each year to raise funds for our organisations, our principal fund-raising events for local church funds are the *Bonanza* in November (featuring books, discarded treasures, raffles and coffee morning) and the *Spring Fair* in May. These events are enthusiastically supported by the community.

Kirk Session and Committees

Our move to a unitary constitution in 2014 has been successful and the diagram of the current committee structure is shown below. Each of the principal committees has a schedule for reporting to the Kirk Session. The committee structure was reviewed in 2019, but the implementation of the proposed changes was interrupted by the pandemic and the vacancy. A further review will be required in the light of changing priorities and resources.

The Kirk Session comprises 35 elders (25 women and 10 men) ranging in age from 50 upwards. The most recent ordinations took place in 2020, when 4 elders joined the Kirk Session. We hope to invite more members to become elders early in the new ministry. Our Leadership Team of four (3 women and 1 man) is responsible for guiding the Kirk Session's

work and implementing its decisions. Members of the Kirk Session are active and willing to undertake the various tasks and responsibilities required.



Community

Our church family takes full advantage of opportunities for fellowship, with the majority of worshippers staying for tea, coffee and chat after the service. Members enjoy regular activities including the craft group; the gardening team; the walking group's monthly adventures, planned and unplanned; and the much-loved and highly competitive annual Boys' Brigade Quiz and Chippy Night.



St John's-Renfield Church provides a focus and stimulus for numerous activities. Our buildings, which are open to all, act as a community centre for the parish, providing facilities most weeks for around 375 people (excluding Sunday worship attendance of approx. 70).

Our very successful all-age community Pop-in Café meets on the first Wednesday of the month, often with a seasonal theme. The Café welcomes around 30 guests each month and sometimes the children and staff from the nearby Kelvinside Academy Nursery join in the fun. Our annual fund-raising events - the *Bonanza* and the *Spring Fair* provide opportunities for fellowship and welcoming our friends from the West End Cluster and the community.



We host the following organisations and activities:

- All sections of the Boys' Brigade
- Brownies and Guides
- Kelvindale Toddlers
- a sensory class for babies and carers
- dance classes
- two badminton clubs.

The excellent acoustic of the Sanctuary attracts an increasing number of professional choirs and musicians. Two major Glasgow choirs rehearse and perform in our premises and have entered into the life of the church community. We have a close link with Opera Bohemia, whose annual performances attract audiences of up to 500.

We enjoy longstanding relationships with local schools and during the year we welcome young learners, teachers and families to our Sanctuary for their Christmas, Easter, and end-of-term events.

West End Churches Cluster

We are members of Glasgow Presbytery's Cluster 1E, which comprises the West End Church of Scotland Churches: Kelvin West (formed from the union of Kelvinbridge and Wellington), Partick Trinity and Kelvinside Hillhead. Our Buildings Designation under the current Mission Plan is 'A'. The congregation intends to maintain the Church and Halls for the duration of the Plan and beyond.

St John's-Renfield has a recent shared history with the other Cluster congregations through the West End Parish Grouping of the former Mission Plan. Members of the ministerial team at Kelvin West have assisted with pulpit supply during the vacancy and we have shared worship at Easter and Christmas. We look forward to developing areas of shared interest and missional endeavour with our Cluster partners.

The Way Forward

In 2019, early in the previous ministry, we completed the Local Church Review process. The resulting action plan and revised committee structure were overtaken by events when COVID-19 struck. As the world began to emerge from the worst of the pandemic in 2022, we found ourselves in vacancy, without a locum, and facing the challenge of finding our place in a cluster. This process took two years. In June 2024 we received the welcome news that Presbytery had approved the proposal for St John's-Renfield to join Cluster 1E. We took with us 1FT MWS. This outcome was the result of hard work by our dedicated Mission Plan Group and marked the beginning of the end of a period in the wilderness.

In early September 2024, representatives of our Cluster churches met to begin to consider ways of working together in the context of the Presbytery Mission Plan and the available ministry allocation. In February 2025, Presbytery approved the updated Mission Plan for the area. St John's-Renfield's Mission Plan of January 2025 can be found [here](#) or on the [Vacancy page of our website](#).

Our congregation's priority was, and remains, to call a minister, but our Kirk Session decided that we could not delay before thinking about what kind of church we wanted to be and how we would work with the local community and our cluster partners. We grasped the opportunity to take positive action to assess our role as the church in Kelvindale, and in doing so to help prepare for a future ministry.

We agreed on the importance of strengthening links with the community and recognised that if we wanted to see ourselves as Kelvindale's parish church, we needed to consult with the congregation and people who use our buildings, and review our assumptions about the parish and its population.

In February 2025, a group of 9 church members undertook a 6-week Discovery Programme led by Faith in Community Scotland. The aims of the programme were to gather local information and generate ideas for projects and activities. Six weeks is not enough time to discern God's mission for our church but the programme generated energy and ideas. The Discovery Group mapped the community, identified contact points and routes in, and ran a congregational survey to identify what people like about the church, how it could be improved, and what they're looking for in our next Minister. In May 2025, the Kirk Session approved the group's proposals to raise awareness of our church in the community, to develop and implement a wider listening exercise, and to deliver an event for cluster friends. Work began immediately to assess the feasibility of delivering these proposals.

Staffing

We employ three part-time staff. Our Admin Assistant is available on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9.30am – 12.30pm to support the Minister, the Leadership Team and various Committees. She also acts as first point of contact for phone and email enquiries, as well as keeping our external communications, including social media, up to date. Our Janitor/Cleaner lives in accommodation attached to the building and is employed for 23 hours per week on setting-up and cleaning duties. All musical input is expertly led by our Organist and Choirmaster.

We have no Church Officer. Sunday beading duties are fulfilled by a volunteer team.

Sanctuary and Church Halls

Our church is an imposing stone-built, early 20th century building. Inside, the height of the building and the many large windows give a sense of spaciousness and light. There are stained glass windows by Douglas Strachan (1875-1950) and Gordon Webster (1908-87) an elder of the church. A major conservation project of the roofs, including the lead flèche, and stonework was undertaken in 2008-9. This was largely funded by Historic Scotland and the Heritage Lottery Fund, with the balance raised by the congregation.



The church and attached halls are 'B'-listed and accessible. The Sanctuary can seat up to 600 people, there is a Large and a Small Hall, a Vestry, Office, Session House, kitchen and toilets. The Janitor/Cleaner's flat and a storage area are located in the basement. A complete refurbishment of the church toilets was completed in 2024. An additional hall, constructed in 1961 adjacent to the main buildings, is heavily used but is not fully accessible. St John's-Renfield is the only readily available, multi-purpose building in the parish and is heavily used by the congregation, community and outside organizations.

Manse

The manse is a traditional bungalow built in 1931, with flexible accommodation. It is situated in Leicester Avenue, a few minutes' walk from the church and also public transport on Great Western Road and nearby Hyndland Station. It has an open outlook at the front over school playing fields. The accommodation is well-maintained. The hall, kitchen and family room have wood-style flooring, other areas are carpeted. Redecoration will be carried out to match the wishes of the incoming minister.



The ground floor comprises a hall, lounge, dining room, family room, bathroom and kitchen and two bedrooms, one of which has been used as a study. Two further bedrooms, one with an ensuite shower and toilet are on the upper floor. The house has gas central heating and double glazing. Work is underway to upgrade the insulation. There is a small garden to the front, a larger secluded garden to the rear, and a driveway and garage.



Communications

Nine editions of the church newsletter [*The Beacon*](#) are produced each year primarily in digital format, but available in print form for those who require it. Our social media following on Facebook and Instagram has grown and improvements have recently been made to our website. A review of our Church Welcome Pack is underway as part of an overall approach to improving our communications with the community.

Here are links to our website and social media.

Website: www.sjrchurch.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/sjrchurch

Instagram: www.instagram.com/sjrchurch/

X: @sjrchurch



Enquiries and Applications

Our Interim Moderator welcomes informal enquiries.

To apply, please email a letter with a CV and the names and contact details of two referees to the Clerk to the Nominating Committee.

Interim Moderator

Rev. Audrey Jamieson

Email: ajamieson@churchofscotland.org.uk

Mobile: 07717 756 983

Clerk to the Nominating Committee

Dr Carolyn Calder

Email: carolynsainsbury@hotmail.com

Mobile: 07714 032 592

Appendix – Five Marks of Mission – Where are we now?



Proclaim the Good News

- Trying to live our lives through Christian values.
- In-person and live-streamed worship.
- Opening our premises to the community.



Teach, baptise and nurture new believers

- Hosting the Boys' Brigade and Guiding movements.
- Discussion groups and Bible study.
- Messy Church.



Respond to human need by loving service

- Commitment to pastoral care for the congregation and parish.
- Offering opportunities for fellowship including our community café.
- Seeking to better understand how to serve our community.



Seek to transform unjust structures of society

- Raising awareness of issues within the congregation via worship, the church magazine, special services, social media.
- Raising funds for charities.
- Annual Christian Aid Sunday service.



Safeguard the integrity of creation

- Boilers, toilets, lighting and recycling facilities upgraded to reduce our church's environmental footprint.
- Manse upgrade underway to reduce energy consumption.
- Caring for our church grounds.