



Parish Profile

East & Old Parish Church Forfar



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East High Street, Forfar DD8 2EL

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1. INTRODUCTION

Following the demission of our minister after 29 years service, our Church has been granted permission to call without restriction.

We seek a minister to help our members spread the gospel in today's challenging society.

2. THE TOWN OF FORFAR

Forfar is a lively market town with a growing population of around 15,000, and lies in the heart of Angus within the lovely Valley of Strathmore and with easy access to the Angus Glens and coastal area. The nearest city of Dundee is 14 miles away on the A90 and the larger cities of Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow are within two hours drive away.



Within the town are three new replacement primary schools and Forfar Academy as well as numerous nursery schools and playgroups including one which meets in our Hall. The nearby city of Dundee is home to a College and the Universities of Abertay and Dundee. There is a branch of Angus College as



well as Dundee University Outreach in the town. Evening classes are also available locally. Arts and culture are well served with extra curriculum learning e.g. arts guild, musical theatre, historical and choral societies and country dancing.



There are major textile and manufacturing plants operating in the town. Forfar is renowned for its Strathmore Mineral Water and The Forfar Bridie - a local delicacy. The fertile land surrounding Forfar means that agriculture has a major impact on local industry and employment. Farmers meet in the town on a weekly basis for the Cattle Mart and monthly at a local Farmers' Market.

The Lochside Country Park is very popular with townspeople and the ease of access to the Glens of Angus makes hill walking a very popular activity. Forfar also has great walking, cycling and outdoor areas.

Forfar has many civic amenities and sporting activities:- Public Library, Museum, Golf Course, Golf Range, Rugby & Cricket Clubs, Bowling Clubs both indoor and outdoor, Football Clubs, a Swimming Pool, Ice Rink with curling, a Sports Centre and sailing on Forfar Loch. Rotary, Round Table and Probus meet regularly in the town.



There are three general practitioner surgeries in the town and Forfar has the innovative Whitehills Health and Community Care Centre. This multi-million pound development is a joint venture between NHS Tayside, Angus Council and Lippen Care. Whitehills encompasses all aspects of care, NHS services and a residential facility. Lippen Care is our local Hospice. There are two nursing homes and several residential and sheltered homes within the town.

3. THE CONGREGATION AND CHURCH SERVICES

At present there are 1173 on the roll. Formal communions are held twice a year and are well attended.

Services are held on Sunday morning when the children normally attend church for the first part of the service to share and enjoy the encouraging words of the minister during the children's address before they leave to attend the Good News Crew in the Hall. Plans for the future include developing our style of worship to be more lively and more attractive to younger people and families: the wider use of musical instruments in worship; and the timing of worship services to provide opportunities for those who cannot attend at traditional times. There is also scope for developing the opportunities for fellowship before as well as after Sunday worship.

Music plays an important part in our services and is led by our dedicated choir and organist.

This is a church where there is a lot happening. Many new initiatives have started in the last few years.

Special family services are held regularly and The Good News Crew and our Boys' Brigade Company take part in many of those. During the summer, joint services are held with another congregation. On other occasions joint services are held in the town involving all denominations. Members of the Session take services at residential and nursing homes regularly. Traditionally we hold a very well attended Christingle Service. In the past our minister has been the chaplain for one of the local primary schools and a team is being formed to serve Forfar Academy.

Special arrangements are in place to provide transport to church for the elderly members of the congregation through use of a free bus provided by a local charity.

Our congregation is part of the Forfar Parish Grouping formed four years ago which includes the 3 Forfar Burgh churches (East & Old, St. Margaret's, Lowson Memorial) and two united rural charges (Glamis, Inverarity & Kinnettles) and (Letham, Dunnichen & Kirkden).

4. OFFICE BEARERS.

There is a strong group of committed and experienced serving Elders, 45 in number (24 men and 21 women) and 12 Congregational Board members who along with the congregation are open to new ideas, willing to adapt and supportive of our vision statement.

The Kirk Session and Congregational Board meet to conduct business in alternate months, except for July and August. In addition there is a committee structure in place for developing specific aspects of congregational life.

5. ORGANISATIONS

The **Good News Crew** is for children from age three to Primary 7. The Crew meets every Sunday during school terms in the Hall for a time of fun, crafts and Bible teaching. They join the Congregation for a short period of worship before returning to the Hall. Activities are well supported by the Session. The children have the opportunity of meeting their peers from other churches at all age events such as Pizza Praise and the end-of-term picnic.

There is a fifty-strong **Boys' Brigade** Company comprising three sections - the Anchor Boys, Junior and Company Sections. They meet on three evenings each week and enjoy various classes and activities. There is a Bible Class for the boys each Sunday. The boys and leaders rededicate themselves at a service held in the

church at the beginning of the B.B. year. The Company has been successful in many local and national competitions.

A well established **Prayer and Study Group** has regular attenders of many years standing and enjoys lively discussion and fellowship with time for open prayer. They meet in the Church monthly and participate in the Angus Prayer Promoters' creative prayer journeys.

House Groups - members of our congregation participate in the Forfar Parish Grouping initiative when members of the churches gather together to discuss Christian approaches to topical issues. Periodically all of the groups gather together - at present to study science and faith issues.

The **Guild** is strong in number and spirit with men and women coming together for worship, fellowship and service. The group enthusiastically supports the national projects. They are also strong supporters of the World Day of Prayer services and Forfar Churches' Lent lunches and involve themselves in the local community by helping support local charities and the disabled club. The Guild meets weekly in the Church hall from October to April.



A new group, **Friends of East & Old**, now in its second year, has been developed to harness community support, fund-raise and provide a stepping-stone to membership. Events held or planned include an illustrated Talk on History of Forfar Churches and Musical Evening, both in Church, Coffee Mornings, a Glen Doll hill walk and a Stovie Supper Ceilidh.

The **Steeple Times** is the church newsletter, which is distributed quarterly to over 800 households in the congregation, and is now on the website. It provides members with information about the life and work of the church.

A Sunday news-sheet is also published each week and distributed at the church door to inform members of activities and publicise forthcoming events.

We are actively involved in mission projects at home and overseas such as Christian Aid, Angus Toy Appeal and Mary's Meals backpacks for Malawi. There is an ecumenical association 'Forfar Action of Churches Together' embracing the three Church of Scotland charges in the town plus the Episcopal, Catholic and Baptist churches, and Salvation Army.

6. CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT

This includes improving Christian education, prayer initiatives and fellowship amongst all groups within the congregation, harnessing unused talents of our members and building upon existing forms of communication.

New seating and more flexible use of the church buildings are in process.

7. SUMMING UP OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

- Providing a variety of worshipping styles for all ages.
- Using a team of paid and voluntary workers to ensure effective organisation.
- Showing God's love to the community and the wider world.
- Creating a warm fellowship to welcome all.
- Enabling all our members to grow in their faith.

8. THE CHURCH BUILDINGS

The church is situated in the very heart of Forfar and its 150-foot high spire dominates the town. Christian worship has taken place on the site since 1241. The present building was erected in 1790, is B listed, and has many features of historic interest including a grand Foster & Andrews Pipe Organ. There is a very strong sense of tradition and support in the community for "The Big Kirk".



The building is well maintained and there are exciting plans for improving facilities in our buildings. The church stands on the main street and there is a detached hall in the grounds. We also have another set of halls which are used by our Boys' Brigade Company.

9. THE MANSE.

The current manse is a large traditional family home with gas central heating and double glazing and is situated in a quiet residential area. We recognise that this may not necessarily be the choice of an incumbent minister in the present day and the Board are open to discussion.



10. FINANCE

We are well endowed financially. Forfar East & Old meets in full its allocations to central funds. There is a dedicated group who run Gift Aid and WFO constructively.

11. FURTHER INFORMATION

We hope this gives some indication of the life and work of Forfar East & Old Parish Church. If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact:

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