



Welcome to St Mark's

Useful Information

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St Mark is usually depicted by a winged lion (see for example in St Mark's Square, Venice)

Aim of our church

St Mark's Church aims to be a welcoming congregation where a diverse group of people can explore faith and deepen our journey together. We seek to become the Body of Christ, living our faith in the kingdom of God where God has placed us, on the East side of Edinburgh. Together we create community and learn more about God, and what it means to be God's children. We do this through worship, prayer, Bible Study and fellowship as we explore what it means to be part of the church.

Wider Church

St Marks is part of the Universal Church. Through the divisions of history, we are part of the Scottish Episcopal Church. The Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) is a product of the Scottish Reformation. During the Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, there was much dispute about how churches should be governed, about theology and how we talk about God. In Scotland the disputes led to church becoming split into the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church

The SEC is called Episcopal because it has maintained a structure which includes bishops, priests and deacons. More details of the history of the Scottish Episcopal Church is available on their website: www.scotland.anglican.org. The Scottish Episcopal Church holds a three day Synod every May in Edinburgh, where matters of our liturgy, practice and finances are discussed.

The Scottish Episcopal Church is one Province of the Anglican Communion and therefore we have close ties with other Anglican churches around the world. Each Province of the Anglican Communion has full autonomy. St Marks is part of the Diocese of Edinburgh, one of seven dioceses in Scotland. Through our diocese we also have partnership arrangements with other dioceses, to foster greater understanding and exploration of God's work and word. Currently this includes the Diocese of Espoo in Finland, the Diocese of Cape Coast in Ghana and the Diocese of Dunedin in New Zealand. Our partnerships offer the wider church much scope for enrichment and challenge of ideas and practice.

The Diocese of Edinburgh organises its life through two Synods each year, one meeting in October and the other in March. At these Synods, we discuss matters pertinent to the life of the diocese, issues of concern to the whole Anglican Communion and our budgets. At a more local level, we are part of the East Edinburgh Area Council along with our sister SEC churches of St Columba's by the Castle, St Barnabus Moreton, St Peter's Lutton Place, Old Saint Pauls, St Margaret's Easter Road.

Thankfully in the last couple of decades, the various denominations of the Christian church have forged close ties, and in Portobello we have good working friendships with all the local churches, through ad hoc partnerships as well as through the more formal Portobello Churches Together. We hold an annual Carol Service in aid of Christian Aid, and on Easter Day, meet together in the early morning on the beach to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ.

History of St Marks

St Mark's was one of the first Episcopal churches to be built in the Edinburgh Diocese after the repressions of the Penal Laws that followed the Jacobite risings in the 18th century.

The church is set within a tree lined burial ground, enclosed by a boundary wall. The Vestry was granted the right to open a burial ground in 1828 after a long period of litigation instigated by the owner of a neighbouring villa.

The building has a category B listing and is of a villa like Neo Classical design, fronted with an imposing semi-circular Doric arched porch with flat topped dome which conceals a cupola lantern that lights the inner vestibule and stair to the gallery.

The original so called chapel was erected by Colonel & Mrs Robert Haliburton and Mr & Mrs James Rutherford at their own expense and constructed with remarkable speed by builder Robert Gray. The ground having been feued from the Marquis of Abercorn in 1825. It was opened on 19 May 1826 and consecrated on 21 August 1828 by Bishop Sandford.

The church was square in plan and "designed for the performance of Divine Worship in the Episcopalian form". It comprised the present nave with balconies on three sides.

In 1892 the church was altered by Hay & Henderson. The two side galleries were removed, the ceiling reinforced and the chancel added to the south. The two windows to the north façade were also changed from sash and case windows to the Venetian style ones that can be seen today.

In 1919 a Lady Chapel was erected to the west of the chancel in memory of the 48 members of the congregation who fell in the Great War. It comprised an altar with a white marble slab on two black pillars. Over it was a tabernacle for the Reserved Sacrament, surmounted by a niche in which stood a crucifix. Behind it was a simple reredos of oak. The chapel was surrounded by an oak screen with eleven arches containing semi-circular panels carved by members of the congregation, one of which can be seen on the Crypt Chapel door.

The Lady Chapel was removed following a serious fire in 1967 which started in the boiler room and burned its way through the floor at the rear of the church, the heat reportedly melting the candles on the altar.

Other changes were also made at this time. In the chancel the altar was brought forward from the brown marble reredos (both 1872), the floor levelled and the altar rails relocated. The pulpit was also removed and replaced by two lecterns. In the basement a vestry and small stone-lined chapel were built, all largely the work of Alex & Ian Miller, members of the congregation.

In 1990 a meeting room, kitchen and accessible toilet were constructed under the gallery and a second meeting room formed in the basement. The architects being Campbell & Arnott.

Stained Glass

The two pictorial stained glass windows to the East and West of the nave (1882) are by Ballantine & Sons and have their characteristic Renaissance borders. They depict the Good Samaritan and “the soul of Jonathan knit with the soul of David”.

The stained glass over the altar was gifted in 1919 and depicts Christ crucified, flanked by Mary, the mother of Jesus and St John. It replaces an earlier stained glass window gifted in 1872 that was transferred to the back of the nave to make way for the new donation. It is believed that this earlier window was destroyed in the fire of 1967.

The Organ

The organ, built in 1828 by David Hamilton of Edinburgh was relocated from the rear gallery to the then new chancel in 1899 by Ingram of Edinburgh. The water-powered mechanism was replaced by an electric motor in 1972 by Ronald Smith. The organ was decommissioned in 2007, when a Wyvern Digital Organ was purchased.

Sacristy Lamp

The sacristy lamp was gifted to the church in memory of F/SGT Hamish Ian Sandison who was killed together with nine other members of his crew in an air accident in 1946. His war grave is located in the churchyard.

Churchyard Development

Soon after the church was opened, the Vestry sought the right to open a burying ground around the chapel but became embroiled in a dispute with the owner of a neighbouring villa who incited the Kirk Session of Duddingstone, who had also opened a burying ground, to engage in litigation with St. Marks. The case was eventually decided in favour of St. Marks and the burying ground was consecrated

on 11 November 1828 by Bishop Sandford. The first recorded burial service took place a month later.

Lairs were either purchased or leased for periods of fourteen years after which the Vestry was entitled to make further use of any lair upon which the lease had not been renewed “and to cause all Tombstones, Monuments or Tablets placed thereon to be removed”! Purchasers were bound to “enclose their respective Lots with Boundary & Division Walls...At least six feet in depth below the surface”. The 1859 Lair Plan shows evidence these walls were erected, however nothing can be seen above ground today.

Early management of the burial ground appears to have been chaotic. The first lair plan was lost and a new plan made in 1859, however problems soon arose when lairs in the area immediately behind the church, which were believed to be vacant were found to be occupied.



The problem proved so great that the Vestry prohibited all further internments in December 1862 except in Block C and the border on the east boundary wall. Unfortunately it “proved difficult to dispose of this ground, as no-one like(d) the position”

The consequent shortage of available lairs resulted in plans to remove the trees in the side borders in front of the church so as to use the ground for burials.

Further problems arose at the end of the nineteenth century when the chancel was added to the church. The unusual construction which can be seen today arose from the need to span the structure over occupied lairs beneath.

The burial ground continues to be used to this day. We are currently fundraising to enable us to repair the wall which has fallen into a very critical state of disrepair.

Records of past lives

The real interest of the burial ground is the record of past lives that it provides. In the early eighteenth century there was a large influx of military and naval officers into Portobello. Many of them were Episcopalians and St Mark’s soon became favoured by them. This is reflected in the high occurrence of early monuments dedicated to officers and their families. Of particular note is the memorial in front of the church entrance to Lieut. Col. Halyburton himself, late of the 7th Royal Fusiliers. More poignant is the recently renewed memorial to Joseph Huey MD, Assistant Surgeon, 14th Kings Light Dragoons, erected by his brother officers as a mark of their esteem and regard.

Eight of St Mark's rectors are buried in the grounds, including the first rector George Maurice Drummond who worked tirelessly for the poor of Portobello through the Portobello Destitute & Sick Society.

There are also records of great loss. That of Rev. Boyle who buried two wives in four years. The second "died to his inexpressible grief and her remains together with those of her only child" are buried at the rear of the church. Close by are the five children of Mr & Mrs Gow, three of whom died in the same year.

In the side border in front of the church is the war grave of Flight Sergeant H. I Sandison, Navigator (Bomber) twenty one, who died in a plane crash together with his fellow crew members in 1946. The church sacristy lamp is dedicated to their memory.

We would like to find out more about the people interned within the burial ground. If you have any information please contact the Rector.

Services:

Weekly

St Mark's is a Eucharistic community, gathering twice a week around the table for communion. All are welcome to receive communion. On Sundays, we have a sung eucharist, using the 1982 Scottish Liturgy (modern words), there are children's activities during term time for some of the service, and occasional creative worship when we have all the congregation together for the whole service. On Thursdays we celebrate communion with the 1970 Liturgy (more traditional language). During the winter months (October-April) we meet downstairs in the crypt chapel, entering through the side door to the right of the church. During the summer months (May-September) we meet upstairs in the church.

The Eucharist (also called Communion, the Lord's Supper) is central to our life together as the Body of Christ. Over the centuries there have been many disputes about the mystery of Communion, the ritual, how it is to be done, and its meaning. Communion echoes the Last Supper Jesus shared with his friends (disciples) before he was killed. Since the time of Jesus, bread and wine have been signs of Christ's real presence amongst us, food for our journey of faith together. Here at St Mark's, we all have different understandings of the mystery, but we meet together in faith that in the Bread and Wine we meet Jesus, sharing in his life and becoming one body together, not only with those here who receive, but with our brothers and sisters around the world and throughout all ages, who come with open hands to God. If you'd like to talk about Communion, please do chat with the rector.

All who wish to receive the bread and wine are welcome to do so. Alternatively, you can receive a simple blessing at this point in the service. If you struggle climbing the steps to the altar rail, please let a sidesperson know and we can bring communion to you in your seat. Gluten free wafers are always available, please make your need known.

Festivals

We celebrate the major church festivals with special services, which are advertised on our noticeboard and on our website.

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals

The church has special liturgies and rituals to mark the birth of a child, different steps in our faith journey, marriage, and the death of loved ones. Please feel free to contact the rector if you would like to discuss any of these, whether you are a regular church goer or not.

Pastoral Care

The care of each other as members of the Body of Christ is the responsibility of the congregation. To help this we have a small Pastoral Group who each have a number of people entrusted to them. They pray and care for those people, and are the embodiment of all our mission to love each other.

If you would like to be visited at home or in hospital, we can arrange for a member of the Pastoral Group to visit you, and can bring communion to you if you are unable to get to church through ill health. If you would like to speak to the rector about anything that is troubling you or that you wish to celebrate, please contact her.

People

Our current Rector is Rev Dr Sophia Marriage. Sophia joined the congregation in November 2011 having served as curate and Associate Rector at St Martin's in Dalry, Edinburgh. She is married with three children.

Other office bearers:

Church wardens: Jim Lewis and Sheena McDonald

Secretary: Ian Gardner

Treasurer: Eric McDonald

Lay Rep to Synod: Caroline Daye

Different groups

Young People and Children

Young people are a central part of our church, they are fully members of the Body of Christ, and are involved in the services and receive communion with everyone else. During term time we have a Junior Church, staffed by two people who have full PVG disclosure. This takes place during the first part of the service, and those who go downstairs do their own activities normally exploring the same readings and themes as those in the main service. The two parts of the congregation (children and adults) join together during the Peace and in time for the Eucharistic prayer.

For some services we use creative or experimental liturgies until the Peace. Our young people tend to more involved in the planning and in the leading of these services. At the Peace, we return to the normal structure of our liturgies.

During holidays, there are Kids Karts, boxes of bible stories available for children to play with in their seats or in an area with small tables and chairs specially for them. If your child does not want to go to Children's church, (s)he is more than welcome to stay as part of the main congregation.

There is a Youth Fellowship which meets once a month on the last Sunday evening of the month. This is for those who are P7-S6. This group is a mixture of Christian discussion, Bible study and prayer, and social fellowship.

Choir and music

Music is an important part of our worship and we have a rota of organists who offer their skills to the church. In addition we have a choir which meets for a few rehearsals before special occasions. People are welcome to join our choir, regardless of their choir experience or skill, as and when they would like. Commitment each time is for a specific event.

Other activities to which all are welcome

The church has an **outing** once a year, often with a choice of activities for the afternoon, followed by high tea. This is a good opportunity to meet each other in a social setting. We also hold other social evenings, including a Scottish night and a Pancake Night.

The **Tuesday Fellowship** meet on the first Tuesday of the month. We invite different speakers who spark discussion, on a range of topics, travel, mission,

local history, art, interests etc, and then have tea. Once a year we have an outing to a local place of interest.

The **Craft Group** meet once a month to share their skills, and make, knit, sew, draw, create cards etc for sale for church funds. They are a key part of our fundraising team.

We meet together for **Lent Groups** every year, and have series of study groups at other times of the year.

A number of groups hire our premises for their own activities. These include a **bridge group** which meets on a Monday morning, a **yoga group** which meets on a Thursday evening, and a **French class for children** which meets on a Saturday morning.

Governance of the church

The church is governed by a vestry, which functions in a similar way to a Board of Trustees. They have responsibility for the mission and ministry of the church, finances of the church, and maintenance of the building. The chair of the vestry is the rector.

Anyone over 16 can be a member of vestry, and the vestry is elected during the AGM which is held in the Autumn. Vestry members are elected on a four year basis, and 2 are replaced each year. In addition, church wardens are elected each year, one is elected by the congregation and the other chosen by the rector. The churchwardens and the rector form a team to ensure the smooth running of the church day to day, and for pastoral care of the congregation. At the AGM a representative of the congregation is elected to serve on diocesan synod and other local church committees to maintain communication and involvement of the congregation with the wider church. The vestry elects a secretary and treasurer each year.

The church is governed primarily by the Code of Canons of the Scottish Episcopal Church. On a day to day basis and in accordance with charity law we have a constitution which was updated in 2013. Please ask the Vestry Secretary for a copy if you would like one.

The vestry also draws up a Mission Plan on a 3-5 year basis. Again, if you would like a copy of the current Mission Plan please ask the Secretary. This helps us set our priorities for the next few years.

Subcommittees of vestry

The vestry has appointed four committees which facilitate the smooth-running of the church. These are made up of people from vestry as well as other members of the congregation (**you do not need to be a vestry member to play your part in one of these groups**).

Finance Group: to support the treasurer, set our budgets and plan for the future

Worship Group: to organise worship, plan special services, and run study groups.

Social and Fundraising: to organise day trips, social evenings and various fundraising activities.

Fabric Group: to oversee care of our church and rectory, to plan, and to help with the jobs around the church.

How can you be involved?

We live our Christian faith in our day to day life, our schools, workplaces, leisure activities and with our families and friends. The church is a place to come to be nurtured to live that life in God's presence.

However, churches don't run themselves and we all rely on each other to enable everyone to be nurtured and enriched in our congregation. We are a community and the "whole" is always greater than the "part". Church is a great place to learn new skills, try new things, and contribute to our life together.

There are many ways to become involved, some of these are included here, but there are other ways that you may be called to contribute, please do offer, talk to the rector or to others on rotas ... you are never too new, old, young, (etc) to contribute to our life together!

The church services

There are a number of ways to be involved in church services, welcoming people at the door and preparing people for worship (sidespeople), reading and praying in the service, serving at the altar, enabling our fellowship and service to continue in the preparation of tea and coffee, helping with the children's church, contributing musical skills.

Running groups

The four groups of vestry, mentioned above are always keen to have new members. Even if you don't want to be part of a 'formal' group, there are always

roles such as helping with the gardening, or painting (fabric) or helping organise social events. If you have bright ideas for a fundraising or social event, that would be very welcomed! There are opportunities to help edit and distribute the magazine, or help with the website and other forms of communication.

Praying and Inspiring

We are all part of the Body of Christ and as such, we are committed to pray for and inspire each other. At baptism services and at the service when we bless our Junior Church leaders, we as congregation promise to pray for and inspire our young people. But we are called to pray for and inspire each other throughout the year, to support each other through the joys and tears of life. This is fundamental to our life together.

As a congregation we have a vital role to support each other on our journeys with Christ, to share the challenges on the way and to offer encouragement and celebration for the road we travel.

Communication

The best way to communicate in a church is often by word of mouth, but we also have other ways to communicate what's going on and ideas.

The written word

Each week there is a **Pew Sheet** which contains notices on the back cover. This covers forthcoming events, and notes of interest from the area. If you have notices for this, please ensure they are with the rector by Wednesday.

Every two months we have a magazine **Mark my Words**. Contributions to this are always welcome, and the pdf version is by email if you prefer an electronic copy.

Noticeboard: we have a very visible noticeboard on Portobello High Street, which we try to keep up to date.

Electronic Media

St Marks has a website: stmarksportobello.org and is on facebook (St Marks Portobello). The website has details of many of our activities and facebook allows us to share news items and pictures quickly.

Addresses/ Contact Details

The Rector maintains an address list with contact details of the congregation. If you would like us to know your contact details, please fill in a slip of paper. This list is only for use by the church.

Finances

Scottish Episcopal Churches are self-supporting, and have to raise the finances to support their rector and the mission and ministry in their area. We also contribute a small percentage of our income to the needs of the diocese. We maintain the rectory in Durham Avenue.

We hold a number of fundraising events during the year, the largest of which is an Autumn Fair, but the bulk of our income is given by the members of the congregation. Many now give by standing order, but there are other tax efficient ways to give to the church, including a system of ‘envelopes’. If you pay tax, we can claim the tax back on your donation. There are details of our bank account and gift aid forms at the back of church, and the treasurer is always happy to answer questions about our financial position.

Over the years, we have been very grateful to those who have left St Marks some money as a legacy. There is information about this available in the vestibule, and the money has often enabled us to do something special.

Our church and hall downstairs are available for let, please discuss with the rector if you are interested.

St Mark’s Church, Portobello

Scottish Episcopal Church Diocese of Edinburgh

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