SAINT MARY'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

A warm welcome awaits you at St Mary's Pro-Cathedral in Aberdeen.

When you walk into our church, an immediate sense of holiness and the peace and presence of God washes over you.

You are so welcome

St Mary's, Carden Place

A warm welcome awaits you at St Mary's Pro-Cathedral in Aberdeen. Walking into our church, an immediate sense of holiness and the peace and presence of God washes over you.

As one of our members said:
"This is a beautiful church with a great sense of tranquillity and peace".

Another said:
"I walked in and I knew I was home".

A small, dedicated congregation has remained faithful and active, but this interregnum has been particularly hard, coming at the end of COVID.

How the congregation feels about St Mary's

Our Journey to St Mary's

I was born here, baptised here and have been here all my life.

When we moved to Aberdeen, I googled Episcopal Churches, and this was the closest.

First Impressions

A friendly church with a solid nucleus of committed worshippers.

A beautiful church which offered a great sense of tranquility and peace.

Emotional Connection

It's my family in Aberdeen. It's not perfect, but what family ever is?

I feel loved. It makes me feel connected to the family of God.

Hopes for Growth

I'd like to see more outreach, maybe a dementia café or a mending hub.

St Mary's is well placed to organise concerts and lectures.

We are small but with energy.

Things we love

I love the way that going to Sunday Service restores me for the week ahead.

The church is very welcoming; the few members are dedicated and faithful.

I love the familiarity but know that we must change.

Finding God

I encounter God in the community here, in the prayer we offer for each other and in the silence when everyone is still.

I am blessed by coming to Wednesday and Friday services.

Sharing with others

A physically cold but emotionally warm church.

Newcomers would find a warm welcome with an open table and a loving God with a sense of humour.

Our worship

Services at St Mary's

We use the SEC Liturgy for all our services and are a traditional 'middle' style church. Our sung Holy Communion is at 10am on Sunday (1982 rev 2022) with smaller, spoken services using the 1970 liturgy at 10am Wednesday and 8am Sunday. These are held in the choir stalls and are intimate and peaceful services with a faithful following. We use the David Thorne: Mass in D with organ and singers at 10am Sunday. A Friday Compline at 6pm from the 1929 prayer book makes a fitting end to the working week.

We have active lay participation in our worship, our members read the lessons, lead intercessions and may take Compline and Service of the Word. We use 'Hymns Old & New' New Anglican Edition' 1996 Publisher Kevin Mayhew. For children's worship, we are part of a three city church children's initiative called 'All Saints' which meets on the 3rd Sunday afternoon of every month at St James the Less which is five minutes' walk away. This involves worship, games and craft activities and is good fun for all who attend, helpers and children alike.

Thursday@7 is a relatively new Bible study group comprising a mix of people who attend our different services and even different Aberdeen City churches. This is a vibrant group that has good discussion and friendship.

In the past St Mary's has had an organist and large choir. Aberdeen has a strong musical tradition. We now have a much smaller, but enthusiastic, group of singers and a rota of organists who play on Sunday and who we very much appreciate. The church boasts two excellent organs, a large pipe organ and a historically important Samuel Green chamber organ. We are in the process of securing a dedicated organist. Music is an important part of worship at St Mary's, and we would like to see it strengthened to make a loud noise for the Glory of God.

The St Mary's community

Our community

We have an active vestry which works hard to look after the church and our congregation. We have recently purchased a well maintained rectory with lovely gardens within walking distance of St Mary's in an appealing neighbourhood, which we are looking to adapt to the needs of our new priest.

We have several small groups taking on specific areas to report back to vestry. Our net-zero group is looking at ways to remain warmer but reducing our carbon footprint. This is complicated when looking after an old church, but we have some useful ideas such as heat pads for congregation members and underfloor heating.

Our social committee is very active with a recent Ladies' and Gents' night out which was well attended. A varied social programme is planned throughout the year including a Cheese and Wine evening. We recently raised money for DaysforGirlsUK as part of the Bishop's Lent Appeal and we also supported local charities with collections of selection boxes, Easter eggs and a canned food pyramid at Christmas.

We would love to have more children at St Mary's and always have a children's table available with resources in our nave. Our building committee focuses on raising funds for church building and repairs and maintenance projects. We recently created a new Peace Garden in the West end of the church grounds with funding from the Province, Diocese and several external funding agencies and donations from the church congregation. This has proved a welcome resting place for passers-by as well as ourselves and looks lovely with our recent renovations to the Main Entrance West Door. Our latest major fundraising project is focused on re-landscaping the East Garden area with new paving, a labyrinth and new biodiverse planting in a large border area.

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

ST MARY'S
1864
2014
150
YEARS

History

A historic place of worship

St Mary's and its grounds are Grade A-listed, and the Victorian building requires ongoing maintenance which the congregation supports. The church interior is a traditional layout with a high altar sitting above choir stalls, a lectern and a raised pulpit. The congregation sits in pews and there is a stone font at the East entrance. There is also a Memorial Chapel and a crypt used for the rector's office and meetings. The crypt also hosts the Diocesan archive for which a small annual rent is paid to the church.

St Mary's opened in 1864 as Aberdeen's population expanded westward from the city centre. The founder, Frederick G Lee, left nearby St John's with a proportion of the congregation, and the building owes a great deal to his own design, though he bankrupted himself building it. Due to some early differences of opinion with the Bishop of that time over liturgy and practice, it was some years before the charge was finally received into the Diocese and the church consecrated.

The chancel and the crypt beneath were destroyed by a Luftwaffe bomb in 1943 – the blast also lifted the front door off its hinges, but left the hymn books undisturbed on the pews. Wartime restrictions led to the replacement chancel being much plainer than the rest of the building, with no stained glass. The organ had to be replaced, with the Samuel Green organ being donated by a local lady and the altarpiece and altar now in the War Memorial Chapel were gifted by the Bishop of the time.

The Peace Garden was begun on the 80th anniversary of the bombing.

Over the years the good acoustics have allowed the church to benefit from its use for choir and other recitals, BBC recordings and even a performance by a young Annie Lennox. The congregation recently celebrated its 160th anniversary.

The Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney

Scottish Episcopal Church

The Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney is one of seven within the Scottish Episcopal Church, and a member of the worldwide Anglican Communion. Geographically diverse, the diocese is the most northerly one in Scotland and encompasses the vibrant city of Aberdeen, the beautiful rural expanses of Aberdeenshire, a small piece of Moray and the historically rich Northern Isles of Orkney and Shetland.

Rooted in a tradition that blends ancient Celtic Christianity with the liturgical and sacramental heritage of the Anglican tradition, the diocese is committed to nurturing faithful worship, theological depth, and active engagement in the life of its communities. It supports a range of congregations - from historic city churches to small island missions - each seeking to share the love of Christ in their unique context.

With a strong emphasis on inclusivity, pastoral care, and mission, the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney plays a vital role in the spiritual and social life of the northeast of Scotland. It offers a welcoming space for people of all backgrounds to explore and deepen their faith.

Joining the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney means becoming part of a supportive and prayerful community that is committed to deepening faith, fostering unity, and proclaiming Christ's love across this beautiful and distinctive region.

Each charge in the Diocese is run by a Vestry which has its own Constitution and is an independent Charity which must file annual financial returns to OSCR (the Scottish equivalent of the Charity Commission in England). We are Charity No SC014062.

There are seven Scottish Episcopal churches in the City of Aberdeen. St Mary's Carden Place is the current acting pro-cathedral, and we often share resources and services with our nearest city churches St James the Less and St John's.

St Mary's has sister churches in Diss, Norfolk, and in our sister diocese of Mthatha (St Mary's Mqanduli) in South Africa. The Diocese is also strongly linked with the Diocese of Connecticut in the USA.

A history of the Scottish Episcopal Church can be found briefly in *A Church for Scotland – the Story of the Scottish Episcopal Church* by Gerald Stranraer-Mull.

Links

Our website:

stmaryscardenplace.org.uk

Our Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/stmaryscardenplace

The Diocesan website:

aoepiscopal.scot

The Provincial website:

www.scotland.anglican.org

Welcome to Aberdeen

Scotland's third largest city

Aberdeen is known as the Granite City. Much of its historic 18th and 19th century architecture is built of the igneous stone, mostly mined from Rubislaw Quarry near the city centre, one of the largest man-made holes in Europe and which is now a tranquil lake.

The city has often been called the oil and gas capital of Europe due to its proximity to the North Sea. Its harbour, the Port of Aberdeen, is one of the UK's oldest businesses having been established by royal charter in 1136. The city's economy is now shifting towards renewables, focused on the development of offshore wind, but the wider north-east region is also known for its agriculture and food production. Due to its historic reliance on oil and gas, the city's residents know the effects of boom and bust and local charity leaders have noted it as city with an extreme wealth gap. The city hosts two universities, Robert Gordon University and the University of Aberdeen, which is the third oldest in Scotland.

Aberdeen is Scotland's third largest city

Population (2022)

224,190

Households (2022)

109,720

Employment (2021)

121,400

Parish Location

The West End

St Mary's is in Aberdeen's West End, one of the city's more affluent areas, and lies within the Albyn Place/Rubislaw Conservation Area. Like St Mary's, a number of the buildings in the area are listed.

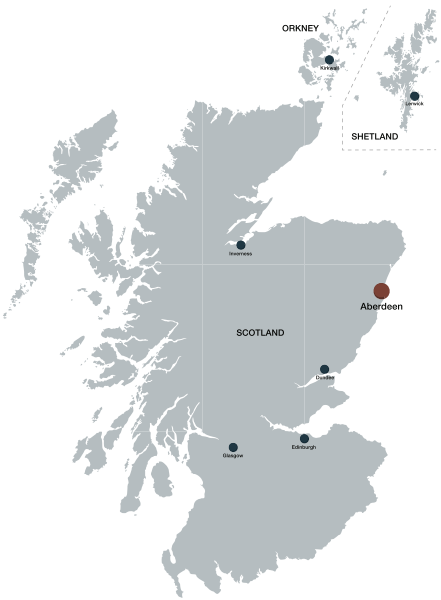
This part of the city was developed largely in the Victorian era and includes examples of planned streetscapes, formal gardens and residential developments. The area is characterised by wide tree-lined streets. It remains largely residential, although a number of former houses, particularly the Victorian villas on Queen's Road, to the west of Carden Place, have been converted into offices. The area also has several excellent hotels, bars, and restaurants, as well as several nurseries and primary and secondary schools, both state and private. The crime rate in the area is low.

There are several convenience stores in the vicinity, while the main shopping centres such as Union Square are only a 20 to 25 minutes' walk away and easily accessible by car. In terms of local medical facilities, there are several GP practices within easy reach, as is Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, the largest hospital in the north-east of Scotland, which can be reached by bus in 20 minutes.

Cultural and leisure facilities are also within easy reach. The Music Hall, the Art Gallery, and His Majesty's Theatre are within walking distance. The Maritime Museum and the Gordon Highlanders Museum are not much further. For those interested in wildlife, there is dolphin-watching close to the harbour, while there's also a large seal colony and RSPB reserve at Newburgh, around 20 minutes' drive north of the city. If sport is your thing, we have decent hockey and rugby clubs, a successful ice-hockey side, Aberdeen Lynx, and, of course, SPFL sides Aberdeen FC and Cove Rangers FC, not to mention the Olympic-

standard Sports Village. And for golfers, we have several courses, including the public MacKenzie Course at Hazlehead, designed by the chap who designed the course at Augusta, Georgia, where the US Masters is played.

Connectivity within and outwith the city is good. Several bus routes are a stone's throw from the church. The rail station is within a 25 minutes' walk, and from where there are direct trains to Edinburgh, Glasgow and London, amongst others. Aberdeen International Airport is only six miles to the north.



Our invitation to you

St Mary's, Carden Place

We hope you will have found our profile interesting and that it has piqued your interest. Are you being called here? We feel loved here, both by each other, and by God. We are looking for a priest to guide us, teach us and help us grow. We know that without growth this church will die. We know that in Aberdeen so many people feel they are not 'religious' and yet would admit to praying. They are anxious about the state of the world and often lonely, they would find St Mary's a blessing if only they would come. There is work to be done

We feel there is a connection to be made by sharing our liturgy and our space, but we need an inspired and inspiring person who can help discern what God wants us to do here. St Mary's has many positives: our position, our acoustics and our accessibility in a beautiful part of the world. We need an enthusiastic, knowledgeable and perhaps musical priest who can help us in Outreach.

To slightly misquote Matthew 9, the harvest could indeed be bountiful, but our workers are few.

St Mary's is an inclusive church which loves and welcomes every person with no discrimination.

Our ideal is a place of worship that does not discriminate against people on grounds of age, disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality.

We believe, after the first commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we should love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and that we should love our neighbour as ourselves.

We are looking for a priest who can help us grow, who can teach us and nurture us so we can nurture faith and share the Good News in the West End of Aberdeen.

Our Financial Summary

During the financial year to the end of September 2024, the Church achieved a surplus of £25,105. £8,231 of this relates to unrestricted general funds which are derived principally from donations and collections. The surplus of £16,874 on restricted funds relates to the receipt of fabric grants to be spent on forthcoming projects. At 30th September 2024 the balance on unrestricted reserves was £50,828 (2023 £39,968) and on restricted reserves was £18,745 (2023 £4,500).

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EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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