

Buchlyvie and Gartmore Church of Scotland



Our Vision

Our congregation strives to follow the example of Christ by being loving, caring, welcoming and inclusive.

We work to provide various forms of worship and care and that is the essence of who we are and what we do.

Through the grace that the Lord has shown to us, we work to spread His love, not only amongst our own communities, but beyond Stirlingshire and the UK.

Perth Presbytery has given us permission to call a minister on the basis of 0.5 FTE (or 50% post) under a seven year Reviewable basis.

We seek a minister to join us in the activities that we currently take part in and lead us forward as we continue our worship and outreach.

We are searching for someone who has a calling to a rural parish and the advantages and challenges that brings. As with many churches, our numbers are lower than we would like and we will eagerly work with a minister who wants to engage in village activities reaching out to all, church members or not.

In line with the Presbytery Plan, we seek a minister who works to build relationships with other ministers and congregations within the local area with a view to establishing ongoing partnerships with our neighbouring churches. (See appendix).

We seek a minister who helps us to deepen and understand our faith through different forms of worship, study and daily living.

By living and working in our parish, our minister would need to have a willingness to embrace technology, a great sense of humour, and a liking for excellent home baking!

ARE YOU THE MINISTER FOR BUCHLYVIE AND GARTMORE?

Structure

In 2019 both Buchlyvie and Gartmore Churches adopted the Unitary Constitution and formed Working Groups across both Churches to oversee the day-to-day activities and report back to the Kirk Sessions:

Property and Finance

Mission

Pastoral Care

Worship

Eco-Congregation

The Working Groups have remits, based on the 5 marks of mission, as guidance, and prove an effective way of coordinating the work of the Church and reporting to the Kirk Session.

In 2024, building on the strong bonds and relationships, the linked Churches both agreed to form a union, which came into being as of 27 June 2024. In addition, the Mission and Pastoral Care Working Groups amalgamated into one group due to common aims.

Worship

Worship is at the heart of our being and is expressed in a range of forms of worship. There is always Sunday morning worship, which usually follows a traditional format. Although usually in Church, we have had occasional open-air Services.



Open air Easter Sunday Service

We held a monthly Sunday Evening Service for a couple of years, offering a more contemplative style of worship.

In 2015 we started Messy Church primarily for families, meeting in various villages, either in Church or halls. This was complemented by Sunday Clubs for children attending on a Sunday morning.

This transformed into Café Church to match the age of the children involved. The numbers of children involved have dropped from pre-pandemic levels, and although we are still equipped to run Café Church, this has been put on hold during the vacancy. For a number of summers we have run a Kid's Club for primary school age children, usually outdoors, but in the Church building during adverse weather.

In 2019 we installed screens in both Churches to aid worship. In 2020, following the restrictions of the pandemic, we installed equipment to live stream Services from Buchlyvie Church. We recently installed similar equipment in Gartmore Church to record and upload Services from there. The online Services have proved popular for those who find it difficult to get to Church on a Sunday morning and is viewed by people outside the physical community, but with connections with the villages.

Overall, we have recognised the need to adapt to circumstances and recognise that further evolution will be necessary if numbers continue to decline.

Worship Group

4 members of the Church have formed a Worship Group and have been trained to the level to be certified to lead worship in our Churches.

The people who serve on the worship group have all gained experience at leading the congregation and have found it has deepened their understanding of the importance of displaying God's word in a loving and respectful manner.

The group have worked together to produce complete Sunday Services, and are regularly involved, while in vacancy, for Sunday mornings, but also additional Services, such as during Holy Week.

Over the years, the worship group has also led the Sunday Club and have been instrumental in Messy Church and Café Church.

Bible Study Group

This group has been running for many years now. Our studies have looked at the Old and New Testaments, as well as books and specific studies such as Embrace and Christian Aid. We are curious, inquisitive and also proud that we have continued our studies during the vacancy. We enjoy listening to each other and openly sharing our thoughts and ideas.

We look forward to welcoming a new minister who can lead us onwards on our faith journey through our study group.

Community

As village churches, being part of the community (both local and wider) is seen as key. This is present in many forms, many of which overlap with worship, such as Messy and Café Church.

Some notable additional ways in which we are part of the community and support the community are pastoral care, food banks, charities, use of fair-trade products as well as our Lenten / carse walks, again a multi-parish event.

The Church adopted a more community based approach during the pandemic. Initially people helped in support for those in need. Growing from this, the Church provided soup lunches on a monthly basis during cold weather and participated in warm space initiatives. People from the Church have worked with other groups, evolving into a monthly Buchlyvie Blether and a weekly Buchlyvie Community Hub.

The Fellowship Group met for years in Buchlyvie Session Room with a thought for the day, coffee and blether. During 2024, it was decided to move to the village coffee shop to be more part of the community.



Church members involved in Macmillan Coffee Morning and Planet Friendly Buchlyvie event

Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care is an essential part of the Church. As a rural community both elders and members of the congregation identify needs such as those who are housebound or ill and ensure that the minister and other members are informed and that needs are addressed.

Traditionally coverage was ensured based on elders' districts, but we have been evolving to a more flexible arrangement following adoption of the Unitary Constitution, led by the Mission / Pastoral Care Worship Group.

Food Banks

We have actively supported the Alloa Gate food bank for a number of years, followed by supporting Start Up Stirling. As well as regular donations of food, we also participate in special drives such as the reverse advent calendar and the Lenten challenge.

Charities / Fundraising

We support over a dozen charities, both individually and collectively, varying from local charities to global ones. A number of members of the congregations have organised and participated in a variety of fundraising events and door to door collections, as well as contributing to retiring collections for a range of good causes.

Lenten / Carse Walks

Our Lenten Walks have become an annual tradition. In company with other neighbouring churches we enjoy a series of country walks in the weeks preceding Easter. Each parish takes responsibility for organising a local walk. Congregation members, and sometimes other local people, meet on a Saturday morning and walk together. Following the walk we share refreshments in the local hotel or church hall. Every walk begins with a prayer or reading. The walks provide an enjoyable opportunity for fellowship and reflection, fostering friendships and good relations among the churches.

These walks have now been extended to "Carse walks" and occur periodically through the year.

ECO-Congregation

Both churches are registered members of Eco-Congregation Scotland and received Bronze Awards in April 2022. Both churches applied for Silver Awards in December 2023 and both were awarded silver in June 2024.

The Eco group raises congregational awareness of climate change and global justice and encourages support for international charities which combat environmental damage and campaign for a more sustainable future.

During the past year we have successfully reached out to work with like-minded individuals and local organisations instigating and helping to run environmental events, such as Planet Friendly Buchlyvie in 2023, a half day Eco-Fest with multiple activities in the village Hall and elsewhere, Greening Buchlyvie, a Forth Environment Link and Net Zero Scotland funded event to improve the plants, especially pollen-rich ones, in both villages.



Eco Congregation members receiving their silver award from local MP Chris Kane

Fair Trade

Both churches are Fair-trade registered churches, that encourage the use of fair-trade products within the church and throughout the community. We have participated in a number of Kilombero rice challenges, some with the local school.

Buchlyvie Church

The church is a red sandstone building with bell tower, dating from 1836 and is located on the main road in Buchlyvie at the Stirling end of the village. The Session Room is a later addition and is attached to the main building. There is a kitchen and vestry and toilet suitable for use by disabled people. In addition there is a disabled access ramp giving entry via the back door. Audio visual equipment is installed with screens and supporting live streaming of Services.



In 2020 the pews at the back of the church were removed, creating an open space which is used for meetings, small Services, Kirk Session meetings and as an overflow from the adjacent Session Room.

Average weekly attendance at worship is around 20, predominately people of a more mature age.

In 2023 the quinquennial architectural review highlighted extensive work needed to bring the walls, roof and heating up to date. At the moment, the future of the building is still under discussion. It should be noted that the village hall could provide facilities for services and most events currently held in the Church building. We believe the buildings we have must serve our mission and not restrict it and are open to seek a different location for worship.

Gartmore Church

Built in 1794, this is a stone building with a central bell tower. It has beautiful stained glass windows to the side and rear. The entrance is at the center of the building. The church is sited on the main street of the village alongside the primary school. A Session Room has been added to the back of the church. This has recently been remodeled internally to create a larger space with a modern kitchen making the building better suited to our needs



Average weekly attendance at worship is around 20, predominately people of a more mature age.

Stewardship and Finance

The local finances were in surplus until end of 2020, but have since moved to a deficit, some due to additional work on the manse. The deficit has easily been covered from

reserves of over £150,000. If the deficit continues, then there may need to be a review of finances.

The basic figures for the last 3 years are as follows:

Buchlyvie	2023	2022	2021
Income	£22,040	£24,428	£24,226
Expenditure	£24,895	£27,962	£35,592
Surplus	(£2,855)	(£3,534)	(£11,366)

Gartmore	2023	2022	2021
Income	£16,670	£17,407	£22,428
Expenditure	£15,451	£18,763	£23,941
Surplus	£1,219	(£1,356)	(£1,513)

Manse

The manse was built in 1979 and is in a quiet cul-de-sac off the main road, but is within easy walking distance of the church and the shops, etc.

The property is a detached bungalow with a double garage located beneath one end of the building. The garage houses a workshop.

Entry is through a side-facing porch into the entrance hall from which access is gained to other parts of the building.



A large lounge (19'6" x 17'6") has excellent views to hills to the east (notably Ben Ledi) through a large window to the front of the property.

The dining room, which is twelve foot square, is adjacent to a fitted kitchen with an electric cooker. Off the kitchen is a utility room with the back door.

There are three bedrooms, two of which are double and contain fitted wardrobes. The other is a single bedroom.

There is a separate study.

The bungalow is carpeted and has double glazing units.

Heating is by oil fired central heating.

The Energy Performance rating for the manse is D, with items identified to improve the rating.

The front garden is reasonably large and is open plan and split by the driveway. There are rear and side gardens, also quite large. The rear garden borders fields.

There is a general store with cash machine and coffee shop nearby and a post office van comes 3 times a week.

There is a modern medical centre in the village with pharmacy for registered patients.

The village is on the bus route from Stirling to Balfron, with ongoing bus links to Glasgow.

The village hall hosts a number of activities.

There is a thriving primary school in the village and a nursery in nearby Arnprior. There is also a good secondary school in nearby Balfron.

Vacancy

The vacancy has arisen due to the demission of Rev. Scott Brown in September 2023.

During the vacancy, the interim moderator is Rev. Rev. Barry Hughes (took over from Rev. Sharp in September 2025).

The vacancy is for a 7-year reviewable basis.

The Charge

The charge consists of two church buildings - Buchlyvie and Gartmore. The two villages are in rural Stirlingshire, about 5 miles apart.

There are 13 elders on the Kirk Session.

There are currently 180 on the Communion roll.

There is

a website, www.BuchlyvieGartmoreChurch.org.uk ,
a YouTube channel @BuchlyvieGartmoreChurch and
a dedicated email
BuchlyvieGartmoreChurch@gmail.com.

Contacts

If you require any more information, or would like to discuss anything in relation to the Churches and their vacancy, please contact either:

Nomination Committee Convener: John Poulter - john_poulter@yahoo.com . (01877 382886)

Interim Moderator: Reverend Barry Hughes - bhughes@churchofscotland.org . (07597 386762)

We are an outward looking enthusiastic congregation seeking to put the church into the heart of our communities, to reconnect, re-engage and share the Gospel. If you have a heart for mission, of working with others to develop their talents and gifts we would welcome a conversation with you.

Appendix – Presbytery Plan extract

The following is an extract from the Presbytery Plan as approved in September 2022. Please contact the Interim Moderator to discuss the details and current status.

Rural area Carse / Callander – allocation 3 FTE

Congregations in this area;
Aberfoyle linked with Port of Menteith
Balquhiddy linked with Killin and Ardeonaig
Callander (including the Trossachs Church)
Buchlyvie linked with Gartmore
Gargunnoch (linkage with Kincardine in Menteith and Kilmadock)
Kippen linked with Norrieston

All charges and congregations in this area shall be part of a formal 'Parish Grouping', as provided for in the Presbytery Mission Plan Act 2021. In doing so, each will be expected to identify their own response to the five marks of mission. However, the formal agreement that they will be required to enter into will set out where they will work together to pursue the issues and opportunities relating to mission which are common in this area. These may include seeking to alleviate rural poverty and isolation; supporting families and young people; activities relating to the protection and enjoyment of the outdoor environment, much of which is in a national park and/or national scenic area; and engaging with visitors and tourists, including opportunities to foster and participate in pilgrimage.

The grouping has common missional opportunities centring around supporting the farming community and tourist industry. Although large in geographical area there are main transport routes and, for a large part of the grouping the commonality of a secondary school. The Missional Objectives of the grouping should be reviewed annually to ensure suitability and to encourage mutual support and co-operation.

It is hoped that entering into a formal Parish Grouping at the start of this process would engender the building of relationships, closer cooperation and the identification of common Missional areas including the possibility of Fresh Expressions of Church amongst the many tourists visiting the area throughout the year.

It is recognised that both Callander and Balquhiddy have key roles to play in Mission not only to the local community but also the many visitors to the area and therefore it is anticipated that uniting these congregations will allow this to develop in a cohesive way.

The linkage between Aberfoyle and Port of Menteith will be severed, with Aberfoyle uniting with Callander and Balquhiddy to consolidate common Missional objectives. In Aberfoyle the emerging partnership with St Mary's Episcopal Church is encouraged.

The 1 FTE for this area can be augmented with an OLM, should one become available, or a locally funded post, and the union is encouraged to look for further funding for pioneer ministry in tourism.

The linkage of Killin and Ardeonig with Balquhidder will be severed. The congregation of Killin and Ardeonaig to be initially linked with Callander pending a review of Presbytery boundaries.

The congregation on Balquidder to join in union with Callander.

The proximity of both Port of Menteith and Gargunnock to the charge of Kippen linked with Norrieston allows for the formation of a thriving rural group where Mission to the farming community is one of the key Missional objectives as well as mission to visitors. The historic sites of Gargunnock and Port of Menteith linking with others across the Carse and beyond in the development of Pilgrimage and associated mission. The allocation of a 0.5 FTE MDS post to this area is a first step to a longer-term view that within 3 years a team ministry be formed of 2 FTE.

The close and effective cooperation that has been built between Buchlyvie and Gartmore is recognised and provides a basis of confidence for moving into union, with a 0.5 FTE allocated to this charge on the understanding that, within 3 years a team Ministry be developed as described above.

The Presbytery recognises and values the work of Ordained Local Ministries in sustaining and supporting the mission of the church across the Presbytery and all congregations are encouraged to promote this as a form of service in their area and support those exploring this. Where possible and as opportunity arises, the Presbytery would like to see OLMs ministering in every area of the Presbytery.

Summary

1. The congregations in this group to be a formal Parish Grouping
2. Callander to be united with Balquhidder. 1 FTE
3. The linkage between Aberfoyle and Port of Menteith to be severed with Aberfoyle also joining in union with Callander.
4. Killin and Ardeonaig to form a new linkage with Callander as an interim measure to be reviewed annually.
5. Buchlyvie and Gartmore: Congregations to unite with allocation of 0.5 FTE
6. Gargunnock, Kippen, Norrieston, Port of Menteith: new united charge served by 1 FTE
7. The Ministry of 5 and 6 to be supported by a shared 0.5 FTE MDS post, line managed by the minister of the Gargunnock/Kippen/Norrieston/Port of Menteith charge 5 and 6 to become a Team Ministry of 2 FTE within 3 years.
8. Aberfoyle to explore closer working relationship with the local Episcopal congregation.
9. The area grouping is invited to review their parish boundaries in collaboration and present any agreed adjustments to Presbytery.

The potential for a single Team Ministry for the whole of the Carse/Callander Parish Grouping should be considered in the longer term.

Stirling Zone.

Stirling Zone has been subdivided in 6 sectors.

Rural area Carse/Callander – allocation 3FTE

Congregations in this sector:

Aberfoyle

Balquhidder linked with Callander, linked with Killin & Ardeonaig

Buchlyvie and Gartmore

Gargunnoch Linked with Kippen and Norrieston, linked with Port of Menteith

Important update and clarification.

At the time when the legacy Presbytery of Stirling Mission Plan was being developed and approved, use was made of the concept of Team Ministry as a form of adjustment (see p21 above). At that time this was not seen as imposing a further level of adjustment. Subsequent guidance issued from the national church has indicated that Team Ministry is only suitable where the congregations involved move to union. This was not what was envisaged within the legacy Plan and consequently reference to such has been removed from this consolidation and initial review of the combined Perth Presbytery Mission Plan. Presbytery will enter into conversations with congregations in sectors through 2025 to refine proposals in light of current guidance and to present these at the next review of the Plan.

All charges and congregations in this area shall be part of a formal 'Parish Grouping', as provided for in the Presbytery Mission Plan Act 2021. In doing so, each will be expected to identify their own response to the five marks of mission. However, the formal agreement that they will be required to enter will set out where they will work together to pursue the issues and opportunities relating to mission which are common in this area.

Buchlyvie and Gartmore

The congregation was united on June 27th, 2024. The congregation is now vacant, with a **0.5FTE** allocation. This fulfils part of the Plan for this congregation.

Gargunnoch I/w Kippen and Norrieston, I/w Port of Menteith.

The union of Kippen and Norrieston, and that union's linkage with Gargunnoch and Port of Menteith, came into effect on 2nd May 2024. On the same date, Port of Menteith's linkage with Aberfoyle, and Gargunnoch's linkage with both Kilmadock and Kincardine-in-Menteith, were both severed. This fulfils the Plan.

There should be an interim appointment of an **0.5 MDS** post, line managed by the minister of the linkage to support ministry in the grouping. The longer-term plan is to ultimately move to a team of **2 MWS** staff covering this charge and Buchlyvie and Gartmore, however how this is to be achieved will be subject to further conversations.

Aberfoyle

Aberfoyle (previous linkage with Port of Menteith now severed) is now in temporary Guardianship and both of its buildings are in Category B. In Aberfoyle the emerging partnership with St Mary's Episcopal Church is encouraged.

Aberfoyle's Guardianship should be reviewed in two years.

Balquhiddler linked with Callander linked with Killin & Ardeonaig.

After consultation, the adjustment that has been approved is a triple linkage between Balquhiddler and Callander and Killin & Ardeonaig to consolidate common Missional objectives.

Reduction from 5.33 FTE to 3 FTE.

Buildings Categorisation in this sector.

Aberfoyle Church – B.

Aberfoyle Hall – B, approved for disposal.

Balquhiddler – A.

Killin – A.

Callander Church – A.

Callander Church Halls – A.

Trossachs Church – B (now closed disposal has been approved).

Buchlyvie Church – A.

Gartmore Church – A.

Gargunnock Parish Church – A.

Gargunnock Ross Anderson Rooms - A

Kippen – A.

Norrieston Church – A.

Norrieston Hall - A

Port of Menteith – A.

Summary

1. The congregations in this group to be a formal Parish Grouping.
2. Balquhiddler and Callander and Killin & Ardeonaig have been linked, **1 FTE**.
3. The linkage between Aberfoyle and Port of Menteith has been severed.
4. Buchlyvie and Gartmore congregations have united with an allocation of **0.5 FTE**.
5. Kippen and Norrieston united on May 2nd and was linked with Gargunnock and Port of Menteith, served by **1 FTE**.
6. The Ministry of 4 and 5 above to be supported by a shared **0.5 FTE** MDS post, line managed by the minister of the Gargunnock/Kippen/Norrieston/Port of Menteith.
7. The charges 4 and 5 to move to a shared form of **2 FTE** within 3 years, with local conversations being undertaken to determine the shape and form of such ministry.
8. Aberfoyle to explore closer working relationship with the local Episcopal congregation.
9. *The area grouping is invited to review their parish boundaries in collaboration and present any agreed adjustments to Presbytery.*

Adjustment steps to be completed.

1. Appointment of 0.5 FTE MDS posts to support the Kippen and Norrieston, Gargunnoch and Post of Menteith churches for 3 years.
2. The development of the 0.5 FTE Minister of Word and Sacrament and the 0.5 FTE MDS post into a 1 FTEe Minister of Word and Sacrament post with Buchlyvie and Gartmore and the Kippen and Norrieston, Gargunnoch and Post of Menteith congregations. The exact nature of the deployment will be subject to local conversations and agreement.
3. Review of Aberfoyle Guardianship to take place in November 2025, according to the Basis of Guardianship, at which time Presbytery will review adjustment options and the buildings categorisation.