

THE PARISH OF MID-STRATHEARN



Madderty Church



Monzie Church



Gask Church



Fowlis Wester Church

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Introduction.

1. The parish of Mid Strathearn lies in the heart of Perthshire, surrounded by beautiful rural countryside yet is within easy reach of the central belt and Scotland's major cities. It comprises the villages of Monzie (pronounced "Munee"), Gilmerton, Fowlis Wester, St David's and Findo Gask. The population of the parish is approximately 1200, with rural villages each of between 50 and 200 people. There are currently four church buildings, all being used regularly, serving the population between Crieff and Methven (map on page 12)
2. We are looking forward to welcoming a minister (70%FTE) who will work with us in our mission to reach out with an ever positive welcome to the community around us, leading and supporting us in meaningful Christian worship; they will be someone who is keen to gain an understanding of rural communities and who, with our support, is prepared to have a profile throughout the parish.
3. We have two services on a Sunday, alternating between pairs of adjacent venues; Fowlis Wester and Monzie, and Madderty and Gask. On months with five Sundays a united service is held, rotating the venue each time. This way of working tends to result in larger congregations and less pressure on the pulpit and organist rotas. Communion is held four times in the year on a fixed schedule so that each village location has it twice.
4. The church is well connected to the region; many of the congregation live outside the parish in neighbouring towns, and some travel from further afield. A significant number within the parish travel to Crieff and Auchterarder and the city of Perth for work, shopping, education, leisure or hospital visits. The main road network, the A85 and A9 respectively, makes it easy to travel to and from the parish. Gleneagles station, near Auchterarder, provides a conveniently close rail link to Stirling, Glasgow and Edinburgh as well as to Perth which is approximately 7 miles from the eastern boundary of the parish.
5. We have a good provision of schools in the area. Madderty School, located beside Madderty Church, is a highly regarded primary school with a roll of 60 pupils. In the neighbouring parish of Crieff there is Crieff Primary School in its new-build and Ardvreck preparatory school. Also in Crieff, Morrison's Academy takes pupils aged 3 - 18 and Crieff

High School is in the new community campus. Glenalmond College, 4 miles from Fowlis Wester, is a boarding and day school for pupils between the ages of 12 and 18.

History of the Congregation.

6. Mid Strathearn Parish was formed by the union of Fowlis Wester, Madderty & Monzie with Gask in 2018. (Prior to 2018 the parishes of Fowlis Wester, Madderty & Monzie were united into a single parish in 2007, linked with Gask.) The union is enthusiastically supported by the members of all the previous entities. Following a difficult parting with our previous Minister we had a very successful two-year Interim Moderation with support from Perth Presbytery up to 2018.



7. As a congregation, we invite all who would wish to lead us to consider our vacancy. We welcome applicants of any gender, age, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation.

Community profile of the congregation.

8. Perth & Kinross Council (PKC) statistics from 2017 highlight that Mid Strathearn is considered an area of affluence, with low unemployment and crime. When compared with Perth Presbytery and Scotland as a whole, a smaller number of people on average are on lower income and or are in receipt of benefits.

9. Employment across the parish is predominantly in agriculture and forestry with a number of people running their own businesses, while a significant number of others commute routinely to Crieff, Perth, Edinburgh, Glasgow and elsewhere. The villages and their surrounding areas are friendly communities with good community spirit. In these rural neighbourhoods it is the norm for people to know each other well and be ready to help out if needed.

10. Fowlis Wester, a village to the north of approximately 30 houses and 18 farms, has an active social life around its village hall, built in 2000, and the church - both located in the village centre. Gask, to the south, has its roots in the parish of Findo Gask. Its population

has swelled in recent years with an executive style housing estate at Clathymore and, more recently, a more modest housing estate at Balgowan. Madderty was the parish containing the village of St David's which has about 30 houses. Its village hall was built in 2010 and provides lots of facilities to the community. Monzie to the east of Crieff on the A85 - and Gilmerton, its focussed, main area of population, is also a predominantly rural based population. Many members of the congregation live outside the parish boundary.

11. The nearest towns to the parish are Crieff and Auchterarder. Crieff (population 7,600) is a former market town with a good selection of independent shops and eateries. It has a modern community campus, which includes sports facilities, a library and the local High School. There is a Health Centre with 2 GP practices. Crieff is a tourism hub with over 100,000 visitors each year. The main employer in the town is Crieff Hydro Hotel. Auchterarder, to the south, (population of 5,300) has a range of independent shops, eateries and banks. The world-renowned Gleneagles Hotel, next to Auchterarder, has a range of top-class leisure pursuits, not least golf and riding, and is the major employer in the area.

Worship Life.

12. **Style of Worship.** Our four recently trained Worship Leaders would like to be able to continue developing and leading worship even once our new Minister is appointed. Sunday morning services tend to be of a traditional format. However, we have embraced variations of worship, for instance Taizé, introduced by our Interim Minister in 2018. We have also had recent inclusive, positive experience of Café Church, Soul Space and, longer ago, of Blue Church.

13. **Communion.** We celebrate communion twice a year in each church in addition to the major festivals. The schedule for this was agreed in early 2019 and is working well.

14. **Prayer Meeting.** On the last Wednesday of each month we hold our prayer meeting at the Madderty Session House to which everyone is welcome.

15. **Festivals.** As far as practical we rotate Christmas, Easter and Harvest Festival services between the churches to allow each to attract locally living people who are not otherwise inclined to go to church.



Pastoral Care.

16. **Districts.** Elders play a prominent role in pastoral care, tending to have District lists of parishioners whom they are in touch with and visit, including those who are not regular attenders.

17. **Primary School.** There is a good relationship with Madderty Primary School, located 10 minutes' walk from Madderty church. The Minister and others have been regularly invited to participate in their active Christian worship.

18. **Social Committee.** The social committee organises events which expressly promote contact and friendship across the communities and individuals of our widespread parish. In 2019 a walk and BBQ were organised for this aim. It also raises funds through an annual daffodil tea & coffee morning which is strongly supported from across the parish with produce, prizes and plants.



19. **Before and after Services.** Lifts to church are not organised on a formal basis but are offered and used within the church community. After the 10am services people share fellowship over coffee and cakes.

20. **Mid Strathearn Church of Scotland Guild.** Our small, but enthusiastic Guild meets monthly from October to May. It donates externally in addition to supporting our own church-based events and attracts inspiring speakers to its projects.

21. **Communication.** Communication to our congregation, and more broadly to the local population, is through:

- a. **Magazine.** Our Parish magazine is published twice a year. It aims to inform parishioners of future events and to summarise recent local church events. We print and distribute, via the elders and the church services, 400 copies.
- b. **Website and Facebook.** Our website and Facebook page are used to keep people up-to-date with what is happening in Mid-Strathearn Church.
- c. **Local Media.** Forthcoming events are publicised in the local media.
- d. **Kirk Calendar.** The monthly calendar gives a focus for all events across our part of Strathearn whether social, church or otherwise. It is distributed in hard copy and by email.
- e. **Occasional cards.** The session delivers greeting-style cards across the parish at feasts to inform the population of dates and times.

Christian Education.

22. **Sunday School.** We offer Sunday School during the services held at Madderty or Gask each week. All ages are welcome and a creche can be run if required. In 2019 there are 5 children whose attendance can be sporadic. We use a variety of Bible based teaching methods aiming to help children learn how to live in a way Jesus would want in the society they are growing up in.

23. **DIY (Drop in Youth Group).** We have a Youth Group run by a team from our church for all young people of secondary school age in the parish. It is not a bible study group but does seek to encourage the exploration of issues and maintenance of Christian values such as kindness, respect for one another and the importance of charity in our own community and beyond. It meets fortnightly on a Monday evening in Madderty and on occasion visits local places of interest or activity.



24. **Messy Church.** We held our first Messy Church during our Spring Festival in 2018. We have continued to provide this regularly and it is clearly fulfilling a need, being very well attended by non-church going families in our parish. There is an average attendance of 25 children along with their parents. Volunteers who help come from our church and the surrounding community.



Ecumenical Context.

25. Annually, we hold services at Christmas and Easter and Remembrance Day, to which those of all faiths or none are welcome. Crieff has Roman Catholic, Baptist and Episcopalian churches and a Kingdom Hall. Perth has a broad spectrum of Christian worship and an Islamic centre and the small Jewish community in Tayside gravitate towards the synagogue in St Andrew's.

World Church.

26. Our Mission Partners, David and Mary Sinclair, currently live and work in Prague. Recently we have supported Farm Africa, Mary's Meals, Christian Aid and Blythswood shoe box appeal.

Stewardship and Finance.

27. The congregation is non-Aid receiving and can meet all of our commitments. In addition, we are in the fortunate position of being able to access a substantial Trust fund set up originally to benefit Madderty Church. It means in effect that we seldom have to find money for the upkeep of the buildings at Madderty as the Trust provides funds for this; this often indirectly benefits the wider parish.

28. Financial matters are dealt with by a Finance Group answerable to the Kirk Session. There are five members, a General Treasurer and four Assistant Treasurers, one for each of our four church buildings and, in addition, one of the Assistant Treasurers deals with Gift Aid. Assistant Treasurers record and bank weekly collections, donations, fees etc and are responsible for payment of some expenses such as organist fees etc. The General Treasurer is thus able to concentrate on bank admin, annual accounts etc. Much of the business is now online with secure access to shared folders for recording of collections etc.

29. We are moving away from using cheques in favour of Automated Credit Transfer. For security purposes each transaction requires two office bearers. To encourage regular giving we use the Weekly Freewill Offering Envelope scheme, but we are encouraging more members to pay by standing order. We are presently engaged in an exercise to refresh our Gift Aid giving, something which is done on a regular basis.

30. Our annual accounts are available from the General Treasurer and from OSCR. In addition to contingency investments with Church of Scotland Investment Funds we also have a significant restricted Mission and Outreach Fund which we use locally to support continually our aim to attract new people to the church. One example of this outreach is the now regular Messy Church which attracts a great attendance from local non-church member families.

Staffing.

31. Apart from the minister, there are no other paid staff, however volunteers in support of the minister and parish are:

Kirk Session. We have 25 members, 16 men and 9 women, of the Session at present, including property conveners, the Treasurer and assistant treasurers. We meet 4 times a year, and more frequently when required.

32. **Support to Services.** There is active support to our pulpit supply and reader. Four members have completed the Presbytery of Perth's level 1 training in 2018 as Worship Leaders, and they routinely lead services, assisting our pulpit supply and reader.

33. **Organists.** A number of motivated organists are engaged for our services. We bought a digital Hymnal for the rare occasions on which an organist is not available; hence no service need go without hymns being sung - from CH4.

34. **Readers' Rota.** Volunteers from the congregation take part in the services each week by delivering the Bible Readings.

Churches, Manse and Hall.

35. The four church buildings, in Fowlis Wester, Gask, Madderty and Monzie, are all in good physical condition. The Fowlis Wester kirk dates back to 7th Century and is dedicated to St Bean. It was substantially renovated in 1927 but retains a lepers' squint and houses a Pictish cross. Gask church was built in 1800 and completely re-roofed in 1972. The adjacent church hall was refurbished in 1996 and is very well used by the local community, also having facilities for the disabled. Madderty Church, built in 1668, stands peacefully among the fields. It, too, dates from the early days of the Celtic (Columban) church of 7th Century and was founded by St Ethernan. It has a small Session House in its grounds with a room for meetings, a kitchen area, disabled access & toilet facilities. Monzie church, built in 1830 and serving 175 homes in its local area, is listed by Perth Presbytery as category D, a future undecided. It is adjacent to Monzie hall which is being re-furbished to provide a hub for community events.

36. **Our Manse.** The manse is an attractive 4 bedroomed bungalow built in 1987. It is well-appointed throughout and with a large garden. It sits on the A85, the main bus route between Crieff and Perth with amenities available in both. It has a spacious lounge, kitchen/diner, utility room, bathroom, shower-room and 2 cloakrooms together with a good-sized study. Heating is mains gas central heating and there is an open fire in the lounge. The garden is enclosed and is largely grass. There is a garage with ample parking available and a tractor mower to help with maintaining the lawn.



37. We have a Church Hall at Gask, as mentioned, which is in good repair - adjacent to the church. Bookings are dealt with by a volunteer and we follow the Church of Scotland Safeguarding guidelines regarding 'Lets'.

38. Community Halls are at Fowlis Wester, Madderty & Monzie which we use regularly and, because our congregation is drawn from them, we have good relations with the diverse communities.

39. Web link for further information are available through our parish website

www.mid-strathearnchurch.btck.co.uk

40. **Map of the Parish.** On page 12 is a map of the parish boundary with Crieff to the West and Perth further to the East and Auchterarder to the South.

41. **Further detail.** If you would like further detail, please contact us via:

midstrathearn@gmail.com

