

St MARGARET'S SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ROSYTH  
in LOCAL ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP with ROSYTH METHODIST CHURCH  
CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE

## ROSYTH

Rosyth, three miles south of Dunfermline, owes its existence to its role as a Naval Base for warships in the early 20th century. Historically, the foreshore has been known as St Margaret's Hope, the place where Queen Margaret landed in 1069. As Rosyth was being planned from scratch as a new town, it was laid out as a 'garden city' to house the workers at the Royal Naval Dockyard. HMS Cochrane was commissioned in 1968 as a shore base, in support of the dockyard, though it closed in 1996.

The only military facility remaining is HMS Caledonia which provides support for naval personnel from ships undergoing refit in the former Royal Naval Dockyard. HMS Caledonia is also Royal Navy Headquarters Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Dockyard, run by a commercial company since 1987, was bought by Babcock International in 1996, but now has a much-reduced labour force. It does, however, have substantial Royal Navy work including the build of five Type 31 Inspiration Class Frigates.

Rosyth Europarc, formed because of regeneration of some of the former Naval Base area, has developed into a business park providing warehousing and office accommodation for hi-tech manufacturing and major commercial concerns. The Port of Rosyth, established in 1997 by Forth Ports plc, has developed considerably and provides an operating base for commercial work and a berth for cruise liners. This, and the potential future opportunity of the Forth Green Freeport initiative, heralds an exciting time for Rosyth and the wider Forth area. Just to the north of Rosyth, a wide variety of companies have premises on Carnegie Campus and adjacent Pitreavie Business Park.

Rosyth is now a thriving community with a population of over 13,000 of whom over 60% are of employable age. Good transport access to Edinburgh for daily commuters – particularly the Queensferry Crossing, opened in 2017 - has resulted in recent extensive house-building programmes in the area. To the north of Rosyth, the Dunfermline Eastern Expansion continues to develop, with many residential homes in the southern areas of Duloch and Masterton. There are four primary schools in Rosyth. A new secondary school is planned to open in Rosyth in 2026, to replace Inverkeithing High School, which is being taken out of service.

## BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

Episcopalians have worshipped in Rosyth since 1917, initially in temporary accommodation. Later the church of SS Andrew and George was built in Kings Place and dedicated in February 1926. The church closed in 1986, the building was demolished and is now a housing area. Anglicans, associated with the Royal Navy and the Dockyard, have also been in Rosyth since the early 20th century. In 1969 a newly-built church was consecrated St Margaret's Anglican Church and – worshipping as a Church of England congregation – was served by Royal Navy chaplains.

Less than 30 years after opening it closed when the Royal Navy withdrew from Rosyth.

St Margaret's Rosyth was formed in January 1996 from the congregation of St Margaret's Anglican Church. It continues to worship as a congregation, using – by invitation – the buildings of Rosyth Methodist Church. The church, which seats about 120, lies on Queensferry Road, the main road between Rosyth and Dunfermline, and is a modern building built in 1970, extended 10 years later to include a comprehensive suite of halls and other rooms. The sanctuary has a striking 30ft-high mural of Christ over Rosyth, painted in Byzantine style by Derek Seymour (a local artist sadly deceased).



The distinctive location of Rosyth Methodist Church

Following a period of uncertainty as to our future, St Margaret's was formally accepted into the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) in 1998, as a dependent congregation, with the Rector of Holy Trinity Dunfermline becoming our priest-in-charge, or rector. However, in 2021 we began a new chapter in the life of St Margaret's as an independent congregation, with the appointment of our own stipendiary, part-time priest, working 1.5 days a week on a flexible basis, but including Sunday worship.

It became clear, early in our new life in the SEC that our future lay in association with the Methodists. In 2000 we entered with them into a Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP), which had the formal approval of the SEC and Methodist Church in Scotland, and oversight by the National Sponsoring Body for LEPs. A constitution was agreed, and a covenant signed. This LEP with Rosyth Methodist Church (RMC) and the sharing of premises is very significant in providing opportunities for joint outreach and worship and reducing the financial burden on two small congregations. After 23 years, the partnership has been subject to a recent LEP Review, requested by the Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane, and the Chair of the Scottish District of the Methodist Church, and which is still being assessed. Our expectation is that we need some fresh ideas from clergy and laity to take us forward ecumenically through the next five years.

## CONGREGATION AND SERVICES

The congregation numbers 20 members, many of mature years, most of whom attend regularly and are actively involved in all aspects of the life of the church. We have now seen seven priests and interregnums over the last 27 years and so much change has tested the resilience of the

congregation and provided a challenge in terms of leadership and continuity. However, we are a faithful, committed, and welcoming congregation and remain positive about ourselves. Nevertheless, we would welcome a priest to lead us forward in sustainability and growth.



The 30ft-high mural of Christ over Rosyth

When we joined the Scottish Episcopal Church, it was argued that the potential growth of Dunfermline and Rosyth was one of the strongest reasons for keeping the congregation together. Unfortunately, we have not seen that expansion reflected at all in church numbers, despite ongoing efforts to promote the church in the community, in various ways. We have, regrettably, seen a reduction in numbers, despite new members having joined us as natural attrition has taken place. Attracting and retaining families and younger members has been particularly difficult. A church-based playgroup, successfully established by the Methodists many years ago, had to be wound up in 2015 due to lack of uptake. Additionally, a toddlers group, which used the church building three mornings a week until lockdown in March 2020, recently resumed its activities, but has also now wound up. We would love to see children and young people among us, especially more regularly on a Sunday.

So that we can share the use of the Methodist building, the Eucharist is celebrated at 9.30am on Sundays using the 1982 Scottish Liturgy or for specific seasons of the year, the SEC appropriately approved liturgical service, and a variety of hymn books. The Methodists worship at 11.00am.

Until the LEP Review was initiated in 2022, both congregations worshipped together each month on the fourth Sunday for a joint communion service at 10.30am, led alternatively by the

Methodist or Episcopalian minister. A specially devised liturgy for the joint service followed the structure of the Eucharist of both traditions and offered the chalice with wine or a small individual glass with non-alcoholic wine.

We also celebrate Ash Wednesday, Ascension Day and Maundy Thursday with a morning or evening Eucharist, and we provide other additional services during Holy Week which are open to and supported by our Methodist friends and other local churches.

A Messy Church is held on one Sunday of each month, in term time, starting at 10.30am, organised and run by the Methodists and also supported by dedicated members of our congregation. As neither congregation has many children it is gratifying to see a number of children from Rosyth, together with at least one parent/grandparent each, attending Messy Church. This is a very effective form of outreach for children and adults alike.

A former Sunday@Six (6.00 pm) initiative provided an opportunity for more informal worship, mostly lay-led, focusing on topical religious themes, music, and the wider ministry of the overall church. These services were held most months on the first Sunday of the month and were also attended by people from other local churches and further afield. Sadly, with a reluctance of older folk to come out at night these services are less frequent nowadays. Perhaps a change of time to the afternoon could see this service revert to its thriving place as an important and developing part of our mission and outreach.

Music is a particularly strong catalyst for enhancing worship and providing opportunities to involve others. Musical accompaniment at St Margaret's is provided by a good-quality electronic organ. We have a dedicated SATB choir now sadly reduced to about five, who frequently perform anthems and other church music. Other musical events are held as occasion demands, usually augmented by members of other churches or choirs. A performance of The Crucifixion by Stainer, with an augmented choir from other churches in the area, was postponed from 2020 by the Covid pandemic, and took place in 2022. An earlier performance took place in 2012. We also hosted concerts in the church by The Voskresenije Choir from St Petersburg as part of their annual UK tour.

#### CLERGY AND LAY TEAM

Until September 2021, the clergy team was the shared Rector from Holy Trinity Dunfermline, and from early 2017, we enjoyed additional support from a locum priest within the Diocese, who lived in Burntisland, and conducted our services regularly during the last two interregnums. In November 2021 we appointed him a part-time priest-in-charge, on becoming an independent congregation. Unfortunately, he resigned in June 2022. We welcomed an interim priest in July 2022 (for a year) who retired on 1 October 2023, and we are currently relying on weekly cover or locally led services until the vacancy is filled.

A Methodist Minister serves the Methodist church in Rosyth and other churches in the area (Armada, Wallacestone and Stirling) as well as fulfilling the role of Superintendent of the Forth Valley Circuit. We look forward to an ongoing fruitful ecumenical relationship between the two ministers.

One member of the congregation is licensed as a Methodist Lay Preacher and four of our members are licensed by the Bishop to administer the chalice, with two of them licensed as Eucharistic ministers. There is also a Franciscan Tertiary in the congregation.

St Margaret's introduced a pastoral care system in 2018, whereby in the absence of a priest-in-charge, we all look after each other's well-being. The two Lay Eucharistic ministers administer the reserved sacrament to those unable to attend church, either housebound, in hospital or in care home. Lay members from St Margaret's and Rosyth Methodist Church organised and led

our monthly Sunday@Six worship, with help occasionally from the clergy of either congregation, though (as mentioned above) the frequency of such services is now much reduced.

## ADMINISTRATION

The responsibility of running the church resides jointly with the priest-in-charge and the Vestry, who work closely together. The Vestry members are the Trustees of the church. The Vestry consists of the priest-in-charge, the elected Lay Representative (ex officio), the Treasurer, the Secretary, currently four other members and, until 2022, a representative from the Methodist Church Council, and meets about five times a year. There is a co-ordinator for the Protection of Vulnerable Groups, who is also a Vestry member. In addition, joint Vestry and Methodist Church Council meetings are held occasionally, with the priest-in-charge or Methodist minister chairing meetings. A small COVID 19 team (with representation from both churches) met monthly during the pandemic.

We publish a weekly notice sheet, and previously shared a bi-monthly magazine with the Methodists, the editorship rotating between the churches every two years. This joint magazine fell by the wayside during and after the Covid pandemic and no attempts have been made to restart it. A Vestry member represents St Margaret's on the Methodist Property Committee and is currently the secretary, although overall responsibility for the upkeep and repair of the building rests with the Methodist Church (but see under Finance, which explains St Margaret's contribution towards property costs). St Margaret's provides valuable input and assistance to property management and contributes to the regular work parties around the building.

We run and maintain a St Margaret's website ([www.stmargaretsrosyth.org.uk](http://www.stmargaretsrosyth.org.uk)) in parallel with one for Rosyth Methodist Church ([www.rosythmethodist.org.uk](http://www.rosythmethodist.org.uk)).

There is an LEP Facebook.

## FINANCES

Despite being a small and declining congregation, our finances are currently healthy, this has been achieved by long term careful management. We have been aided in this by not having a church building of our own to maintain. We do, however pay our share towards the upkeep and maintenance costs of the building of Rosyth Methodist Church. This financial contribution was historically calculated on a pro-rata basis by use of a set criterion. In more recent years however, the contribution was simply uprated by an inflationary amount. Since 2020/21 the annual level of contribution has been at the level of £4,800 per annum. In the past we also have contributed voluntarily to major property projects undertaken by RMC as and when required. Consideration therefore should be given to discussing with RMC as to the level of an appropriate future contribution.

After having previously been in a partnership with Holy Trinity, we moved in 2021/22 to being an independent congregation with our own part-time stipendiary priest. Unfortunately, our part-time priest left in late June of 2022. Since this time, we have continued to operate as an independent congregation with the benefit of a retired priest. Since the end of September of this year we are now though in a period of interregnum. This is necessitating that we consider our future. Our intention is to now advertise for a part-time stipendiary priest based on 1.5 days per week and for it to be offered for an initial fixed term period of 2 years.

We normally have two or three regular retiring collections each year. It is normal practice for our annual Carol Service to have a collection for the Children's Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS). We also each year support the Bishop's Lent Appeal. Occasionally we have other retiring collections, invariably governed by the needs of particular charities. Occasionally we

may give immediately from our Giving to Others Fund in response to particular requests. This may happen in response to a particular situation such as an international emergency appeal.

We are very fortunate to have generous members of the congregation who donate either openly or anonymously to items which may be needed, particularly to enhance our vestments or our own church property. The option to donate through the Open Plate is also available.

The role of Recorder and Gift Aid Secretary is absorbed into the duties of the Treasurer, to ensure that income from individuals is recorded and gift aid applied, in preparation for the annual submission of a tax refund claim to HMRC. A refund of tax on small donations is also claimed, under the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme.

From an initial investment of £2,000 in the SEC Unit Trust Pool (UTP) in 2008, further amounts of £3,000, £5,000, £3,000 and this year a further £5,000 have been invested, bringing our total nominal holding to £18,000. The latest market value of this nominal holding as at 30 September 2023 of the £18,000 is £27,769. This holding also provides an annual investment income and in 2022/23 this amounted to £766. Vestry had previously decided that increasing our reserves was prudent, in order to create a “fighting fund” should that be necessary. The likelihood is that given our current situation that this is a time when this strategy of utilising reserves to secure a future for St. Margaret's will be required.

Our budget for the year is approved by Vestry and presented at the AGM. The Annual Report and Accounts is submitted to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). A copy is also passed to the Diocesan Office, where it is used to substantiate the annual self-calculation of Quota, our contribution to the annual running costs of the diocese. A copy of our accounts can be had on request.

As outlined above it is likely that if we are to secure the long-term future of St Margaret's that we will now have to draw on our reserves for a period to enable this to come to fruition. Fortunately, because of our previous prudent long term financial management this strategy is realistic. Our intention is to move forward in the hope that we can appoint a part-time stipendiary priest on a fixed-term basis. Whilst then this is of concern our aim is to return St Margaret's to a position of being on a secure financial footing that can be sustained for the longer term.

## ECUMENICAL ACTIVITIES

Our LEP with Rosyth Methodist Church has been important to us by finding expression in the following ways:

Worship through forms of shared worship, details of which are recorded above, though currently on hold while the LEP is reviewed.

Faith developments such as helping with Messy Church and sharing Bible studies (see below).

Services to the community through the weekly Triangles café, particularly for isolated people in our community (sadly on hold since Covid, particularly because of lack of resources), the ongoing local Foodbank, and by making the church buildings available to appropriate outside organisations, such as the Parahandies.

Administration, by numerous ways and specifically by contributing to the maintenance of the Methodist building and sharing membership of some joint committees to further our working together and consider future initiatives.

Over the years we worked hard together on several initiatives. The more straightforward ones have been successful, including some of those mentioned above. Others, more ambitious have not been taken forward mainly through lack of resources or change of clergy from both churches particularly during interregnums while waiting for a new minister of either congregation.

In an effort to look positively to the future, in 2019, a small group of volunteers from both churches came together to form 'Exploring Church Together'. The intention was to build on the success of our joint ventures and gain more visibility especially with the youth organisations and the wider community. Sadly, Exploring Church Together initiative is no longer active, due to loss of members.

## ORGANISATIONS

Other than the choir, which practises weekly, there are no other specific St Margaret's church groups. However, through the LEP, all our church organisations were jointly run and afforded opportunities of outreach within the Rosyth community. The outbreak of the COVID pandemic had a devastating effect on these activities and two of these are currently in abeyance and unlikely to restart in the foreseeable future.

- Wednesday Fellowship, an ecumenical activity, designed for the older generation of Rosyth, met weekly most months of the year. It had a membership of approximately 30. It was supported by the clergy, who took part on occasions especially at the start of a new autumn session and during Holy Week.
- Triangle Café, run on Friday mornings was particularly successful since its inception seven years ago, attracting visitors, raising funds for charity and for the upkeep of the church.



The Meeting Room where the Wednesday Fellowship gathered

Prior to the pandemic and since the use of Zoom meetings was started during lockdown, the Methodist minister led several very successful series of Bible Studies, on a Thursday morning each of about six sessions on specific themes. These were open to members of both churches (and the wider Methodist Circuit) and attended by members of St Margaret's.

There was also a monthly Craft Group, run by members of both congregations, and supported by others from outside our churches which continued on Zoom for a while but is currently not active.

Members from St Margaret's are part of a very successful Ecumenical Study Group which is ongoing and has met for the past 24 years, normally at the Parish Church weekly throughout the year, but has been meeting via Zoom since lockdown. This is open to all denominations in Rosyth.

We participated in jointly-organised social functions with the Methodist congregation, such as an annual Harvest meal, though these have not restarted since Covid. In the past we have also had social events whereby a guest speaker has visited to talk about a specific charity or concern and to whom we contributed considerable sums of money to their cause. These have not restarted yet.

We are a certified Fair-Trade church and committed to using fairly-traded drinks after our services, and have made gifts to Transform Trade (successor to the now defunct Traidcraft). Whilst limited private sales continue, our previous practice of selling fairly-traded goods after each joint service is currently suspended.

The Methodist church building has hosted a wide range of community activities throughout the week – for the very young, 'uniformed' youth groups, and community groups of all ages including Parahandies (for physically disabled). These activities, especially involving the uniformed young folk, have reopened again since Covid.

A Foodbank, opened at Rosyth Parish Church in Autumn 2013, is generously supported by both congregations.

#### MISSION AT ST MARGARET'S

St Margaret's focus is on the universal nature of God's love, offered to all humanity, and we seek to give an environment where everyone can nurture their personal faith and is invited to discover and offer their gifts in the service of God and of the world. We are an inclusive church whose membership encompasses people of differing cultures, race, gender, ability, and sexual orientation.

Early in our partnership with Rosyth Methodist Church we jointly completed the initial phase of Mission 21 and, in 2006, a follow-up Continuing Congregational Development programme. Although not formally participating in the last Diocesan initiative, Casting the Net (CTN) – because of the work we did with our Methodist friends – St Margaret's participated at events organised by the then CTN team. We continue to be very well represented at Gatherings, the St Andrew's West Area Council meetings and other appropriate Diocesan events.

Together with the Methodists, we explored and introduced closer working together (as detailed above) and became more engaged with the community. However, this still requires further impetus particularly through commitment and leadership from the respective clergy of both churches and awaits the outcome of the LEP Review.

As well as the Methodist Church, the town has a Parish (Church of Scotland), Baptist, and Roman Catholic Church. There is a successful weekly ecumenical study group, based at the Parish church but still meeting by zoom since Covid started, and our shared activities at the Methodist Church are mentioned above.

Members from all congregations and the local primary schools have joined together in the Christmas Nativity event in the Parish Church (which is conceived by the church, but seen as a community event, supported by local businesses and personalities), during Christian Aid week, and the annual World Day of Prayer. We hope these will continue in future. We believe there is scope for further ecumenism and would love this to happen. There is also a Chinese Christian Church which worships in the Baptist Church.

#### MAIN ATTRIBUTES THAT GIVE ST MARGARET'S ITS IDENTITY

We are outward looking and welcoming. All who are members have found a spiritual home at St Margaret's. We are resilient, and have remained faithful and committed, especially throughout the last 27 years, often relying on our own resources.

We are gifted in offering a musical contribution.

Our LEP with Rosyth Methodist Church is important to us and is something we wish to redevelop as it makes us distinctive and acceptable to both churches and gives us a community identity.

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#### ASPIRATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Our priorities are always under review to reflect circumstances and in particular the challenges and opportunities ahead of us. Our current priorities, as agreed by Vestry, are:

Welcome: We aim to continue to be seen to be a welcoming and inviting church offering the love of God to all. The welcome visitors to our church receive provides their first impression. Therefore, any feedback we receive is important to us in achieving this aim.

Worship: Our uplifting, innovative Sunday worship is appreciated, with the quality and enjoyment of our musical tradition of particular note. Over the years, St Margaret's has shown itself willing to explore new SEC-approved liturgical services for different seasons, as well as providing the more traditional forms of worship that help to renew and inspire the congregation. That our worship fits within the governance and liturgy of the Scottish Episcopal Church is acknowledged. Included within this framework is the need to ensure that any future joint worship is sensitive to the beliefs and traditions of both ourselves and our Methodist friends and this will require further refinement by the clergy. We are also very willing to try out different forms of worship where there is evidence this may help us to engage with a younger community. A challenge is to attract new worshippers of all ages from the steady influx of people to the area, with which we have had limited success thus far.



Some of the elements which identify us as an Episcopal congregation

We would hope that our priest will build on the ministry of our church by leading and valuing our Sunday worship and additional services as required, for example Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, Ascension, and encouraging the musical contribution from the choir, as well as performing baptisms and weddings and being available to give support through funerals and bereavement.

Leadership: We are a very resilient and self-supporting congregation. It is important that we feel valued by our priest through involvement in our worship, and in offering guidance, support, and encouragement. We look forward to this happening as it is important we are very positive about ourselves, and confident as to who we are, something we have lacked since our previous

priest-in-charge left. With our reducing and ageing congregation, we need to examine ourselves to determine where our future best lies. We particularly welcome our priest-in-charge to lead, direct and encourage us in the present challenging time in our congregation, and with whom we can develop ideas together.

Pastoral care: St Margaret's has substantial arrangements in place for pastoral care. There is already a culture of helping each other but, with the age of our current congregation, demands are likely to increase. Consequently, sensitive and effective communication and advice is a priority both within our congregations and under the guidance of our priest-in-charge to ensure that needs are identified and addressed in the most appropriate and timely way.

Working together: As already acknowledged, our LEP with Rosyth Methodist Church has been important to us in the past and is something we wish to develop as it makes us distinctive and acceptable to both churches and gives us an identity. So, although we are and always will be Episcopalians in Rosyth, whilst still valuing and preserving our distinctive practices, we wish to continue encouraging greater unity of purpose and mission especially within Rosyth community, resources permitting. We would aim to keep the ecumenical partnership under continuous review as we strive to find new ways to develop our relationship to engage more effectively with families and younger people. In particular, we look forward to a positive outcome of the LEP Review between both churches.

As our LEP has been where St Margaret's ministry was inextricably bound up ecumenically with our Methodist church partners, we would wish our priest to be committed to the LEP and to help develop it and work with the Methodist minister to this end. Another priority is to tackle together the issue of climate change including Eco-congregation/care for the planet and reduce the carbon footprint of the church. We would also hope to respond to the wider mission and outreach in the local community.

To help develop our aims, we feel the following to be key attributes for our priest-in-charge:

- Spiritual leadership and aspiration
- Strong pastoral care – a “people person”
- Good communications skills
- Positive ecumenical engagement and commitment to the LEP
- Commitment to mission and outreach

We are looking for a priest who will:

- Build on the ministry of our church by leading and valuing our worship.
- Offer leadership, in whatever way that provides support, encouragement and motivation to the congregation, to help us grow in confidence both spiritually and pastorally.
- Take us forward confidently as we continue as an independent church within the Diocese.
- Help shape the future of our church with fresh inspiration.
- Together with Rosyth Methodist minister, help to develop and promote our Local Ecumenical Partnership with Rosyth Methodist Church.
- Respond to the wider mission and outreach in the local community.

## WHAT WE OFFER

As a congregation St Margaret's is vibrant, enthusiastic, and forward looking. Specifically:

- We are a welcoming, outward looking and resilient congregation. There is a bond between us that helps us support each other and care for others' needs.

- Our worship is innovative, within the approved SEC liturgical services, and inspiring, enhanced by a musical tradition and weekly choir contribution.
- We are engaged in many different forms of lay ministry with most members actively involved in Sunday services and in other tasks that ensure the efficient running of St Margaret's.
- Our Vestry is active and approachable by the congregation. We are friendly and sympathetic of others' views, and decisions are reached collectively.

We work well as a congregation and with our Methodist partners. Our LEP was one of our greatest assets which identified and made us distinctive and acceptable to both churches, and we look forward to it being redeveloped as it comes out of its current review. We engage with the wider local community and look for opportunities to extend this.

We are excited at having our own priest again and we are committed to ensure that we give maximum support and co-operation. We can offer initially a two-year appointment, with a stipend, of 1.5 days (flexible days but including Sunday worship).

#### SUMMARY

We are a caring and welcoming church and are keen to look after each other and our priest. After being without one for some eighteen months, a priest called to St Margaret's will be assured of a warm welcome, with the congregation excited about the next part of their journey of faith.

Sandra Young (secretary)  
on behalf of St Margaret's Vestry  
2 November 2023