

PARISH PROFILE - PORTREE PARISH CHURCH



Introduction

The present parish of Portree is situated in the North-East of the Isle of Skye. The town of Portree is the main population centre on the island with a population in excess of 2,300 and continues to expand. The parish stretches south to Sconser and includes the Island of Raasay.

The post of Minister of Sacrament and Word to the future parish of Portree, Kilmuir and Staffin Church of Scotland has arisen due to the presbytery decision that the previous parishes of Portree and Kilmuir & Stenscholl should form a Union (Deferred).

Kilmuir & Stenscholl became vacant in 2020 when the incumbent translated to St Ayle linked with Crail in Fife. Portree will become vacant in October 2027 on the retiral of the present incumbent.

The successful applicant for the united charge will then assume responsibility for the joint charge.

History of the Charge and Congregation

Following the union of the Established Church of Scotland and the United Free Church in 1929, Portree Church of Scotland was established, using both the Somerled Square building, known as the North Church, and the harbour building, known as the South Church. This continued until 1939 at which point the North Church was the sole place of worship for the Church of Scotland while the South Church was used as the Church Hall until it was sold.

Following extensive fund-raising, a new purpose-built hall was constructed behind the Somerled Square building and opened in 1996.

Community Profile of the Congregation

The parish is a mixture of urban and rural areas. Members of the congregation can travel several miles to attend services.

There are two Primary schools and one Secondary school situated in the town. One of the primaries is a Gaelic education establishment with the other is a traditional English-speaking school. Portree High School is the only secondary education school on the island and offers English or Gaelic medium education throughout all year groups.

Worship Life

The *Congregational Statistics* return completed at the end of 2022 indicated a Communion Roll of 77 and 75 Adherents. There were a further 16 members on the Supplementary Roll.

The majority of worshippers fall into the over 65 age range.

Services of worship are held in the church each Sunday at 11.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. with regular attendance at morning worship being in the region of 40-50 and an average of 20 attending evening worship. Communion is celebrated at both morning and evening services held on Easter Sunday, Pentecost Sunday, the first Sunday in August and the third Sunday in November. A Preparatory Service is held on an evening during the week prior to each Communion Service.

The Ladies' Bible Study group meets in the Church Hall on Tuesday mornings and a Bible Study / Prayer Fellowship Service is held in the church on Tuesday evenings.

Pastoral Care

The minister and members of Kirk Session make regular home visits to those members of the congregation who are ill or unable to attend church services.

The minister also conducts occasional short services of worship for the residents of Home Farm Nursing Home. The minister is assisted at these by members of the congregation. The minister also carries out pastoral visits to members of the congregation and to patients in Broadford and Raigmore Hospitals.

Christian Education

For younger persons, a Sunday School meets on Sundays at 11.00am. The group meets initially in the church before moving to the Church Hall.

For parents of those children attending Sunday School, a crèche facility is available during Sunday morning worship.

These groups are organised and staffed by members of the congregation who operate within the regulations laid down in accordance with the Church of Scotland Safeguarding policy.

All involved in the organisation of the Sunday School and Crèche have attended the appropriate Safeguarding Training courses.

Stewardship and Finance

Portree Church has always met its financial obligations to the National Church, the Presbytery and to all suppliers.

The *Giving to Grow* contribution for 2023 was set at £35,861.

Staffing

With the exception of the minister, Portree Church has no paid employees. The church has a full complement of office bearers who carry out, with diligence, all necessary tasks.

Members of the congregation readily volunteer to assist in various church activities.

Church, Manse, and Hall

The Portree Parish Church was built in 1850 – 1854 by John Hay of Liverpool. It comprises the main galleried church space, entrance porch and small rear vestry. A major renovation of the interior of the church was completed in 2000.

The Manse is a bungalow situated off the main road leading into Portree from the South. The church occupies a prominent location in Somerled Square at the heart of Portree with the Church Hall situated in York Drive, behind the Church

The Manse has a sitting room, an office/study, bathroom with bath and shower, a kitchen with small dining room, and four bedrooms, one with en-suite toilet and shower. Heating is provided through oil fired central heating. There is a medium to large garden which is easily managed. A garage is situated adjacent to the manse.

The Church Hall was purpose-built in 1996 and provides a large meeting / activity space, a large kitchen and toilet provision at ground level. Downstairs are two shower units, two smaller meeting / activity rooms, and two further rooms which are used by the Community Foodbank for the storage of food items and the preparation of food parcels for issue to those in need.

The Hall is used both by the church and the local community. Various community groups use the hall facilities throughout the year and the revenue raised through this is a welcome addition to church funds.

Church Website

The church has for several years operated its own website which can be accessed via <https://portree-parish-church.org.uk>.

The site is updated weekly with information on services and intimations and gives information about various other aspects of the church and church life.

Church magazines are produced three times per year (Easter, Summer, and Christmas) and, in addition to printed copies being issued to the congregation, these are posted on the website.