

# DAVIDSON'S MAINS PARISH CHURCH

## PARISH PROFILE

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[www.dmpc.org.uk](http://www.dmpc.org.uk)

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## INTRODUCTION

This is a significant time in the life of the congregation at Davidson's Mains Parish Church (DMPC). As we enter a time of 'vacancy', we are thankful to God for 27 years of faithful ministry, yet recognise that we have a rare opportunity to reflect on our congregational church life. We believe that God's call is to build on the past while at the same time to

look positively to the future, embrace the opportunities that change can bring and be ready to see all the many new things that God can and will do among us.

We are persuaded therefore that the life and ministry of the DMPC congregation 'post vacancy' will be significantly different in many areas. Equally, there are a number of fundamental matters where we see the importance of continuity.

### **What kind of ministry do we now envisage being exercised at DMPC?**

At this point in our congregational life we are seeking under God a minister who shares our broad priorities, and who would be excited to bring his or her own particular skills, gifts and leadership to share in, further develop, and help us implement the vision we have outlined below. We envisage:

- a preaching and pastoral ministry that is rooted in Scripture, wholly Christ centred and Holy Spirit empowered.
  - *This is enshrined in our mission, vision and priority statements.*

- a ministry that is committed to shared leadership and team ministry, allowing us to embrace new models of leadership both ordained and lay.
  - *All members need to be equipped and encouraged to share in the congregation's ministry.*
  - *We envisage the possibility of having a larger 'staff team' on the basis of our understanding that no one individual carries all the gifts to deliver the vision across the board.*
- a shift towards a more missional emphasis in our congregational life, although not at the expense of a committed pastoral ministry that is vital to our congregation.
  - *We envisage the congregation being more ready to share the gospel by 'going out' to where people are as well as 'reaching out' to bring people in.*
  - *There is a need for a contemporary cutting edge that speaks meaningfully to our generation.*
  - *We envisage the links with our community being strong, dynamic and fruitful in gospel terms.*
- *The many and varied pastoral needs across the congregation must not only be met, but our pastoral care structures need to be improved and strengthened, not least in relation to the older and less mobile members of our congregation.*
- a new approach to ongoing discipleship being developed.
  - *Disciples should make disciples; programmes designed to see people grow in their faith so that they might be equipped to live for Jesus Christ in their workplace, home and church are therefore seen as a priority.*
- a ministry that is committed to the next generation.
  - *There is a huge potential among our children and young people.*
  - *We need to respond to the challenge to make Christ known to the young people in our community.*
  - *We envisage significant additional resources being directed to this ministry.*

## OUR PURPOSE, VISION AND PRIORITIES

The Kirk Session has sought to discern God's will for us as a congregation over recent years and this has been articulated in our purpose, vision and priorities.

### *Our Purpose – we exist to:*

- proclaim Jesus
- foster wholeness
- serve others

**We are** a family of ordinary people, united, for all our diversity, by knowing Jesus as Lord in our lives.

**We see** that God is glad to be involved with us in our daily living, and eager for us to be involved with him in all that he is doing. He therefore invites us all to enjoy such a relationship with him.

**We believe** that God is at work among us here. Just as Jesus could “only do what he sees his Father doing”, our priorities are to be determined by what we see God doing.

### *We aim to be:*

- centred on Jesus
- building community
- sharing good news
- shaped by the Bible
- people-friendly
- demonstrating servant leadership

Further details can be found on the DMPC website:

<http://www.dmpc.org.uk/the-people/our-vision-and-priorities>

## CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

We see our Congregational Life falling under the broad brushstrokes of our purpose of proclaiming Jesus, fostering wholeness and serving others (although in reality many of our activities will fall into more than one of these categories). Our work with children and young people is described in a later section.

### Proclaiming Jesus

#### *Worship:*

**Sunday 10:30am** – This is our busiest service with between 200 and 300 folk regularly attending. All ages



share together during the first part of the service before those up to S3 leave for their own groups. We see the fellowship

afterwards over coffee as being very much an extension of that worship. The music style is a blend of traditional and contemporary. During school term time we usually have a small orchestral band occasionally supported by a younger 'wee band'. Our organist plays voluntaries before and after the service and for the more traditional praise items and also organises a singing group who lead us in our worship at a number of services throughout the year.

**Sunday 6:30pm** – Recently moved into the north hall this is a smaller service attended by around 50–60 most weeks. Seating is arranged around tables to encourage a more relational style of worship.

**Wednesday 12:30pm** – This is a short (30 minute) service in the church building much appreciated by the older generation, some of whom would struggle to make it to the longer Sunday services. Through term time we rent the services of a community bus to collect up to 15 elderly parishioners to help



them attend. Most will stay for lunch at the Sycamore Tree café afterwards for a hearty meal and fellowship. In recent years, this has been kept going through the summer and has been hailed as a lifeline for those who would be otherwise isolated.

We recognise that developing our missional emphasis will have implications for our welcome and worship, and we want to ensure that an open, friendly and welcoming heart permeates every aspect of our life.

**Communion:** We celebrate the Lord's Supper regularly throughout the year. Our current pattern is six times a year at the morning service, four times a year at additional Sunday afternoon services, every six weeks or so at the evening service and also on occasion at the Wednesday lunchtime service.

**Prayer:** On the third Wednesday of every month, the congregation is invited to get together for prayer, often with a set theme, and on the first Saturday of each month there is a congregational prayer breakfast.

**Alpha Course:** For several years now, DMPC has joined in the Alpha season by offering the course starting in late September, with mixed levels of uptake but no lack of enthusiasm!

**Parish Publications:** Each year we deliver an Easter "minimag" and Christmas card to every home in the Parish (about 3000). These



contain a mixture of evangelistic content, information about services and the ongoing activities at the church. We also have a congregation magazine, The Big Picture, delivered to all congregation members (about 300 copies).

**Easter Celebrations:** The pattern in recent years has been to join together with the local Episcopal and Roman Catholic churches within the parish for three worship services during holy week. We also hold a sunrise worship service in the church garden on Easter Sunday, followed by breakfast together.

**Holiday At Home:** Typically in early August, we run a three day holiday club for the over 55s offering a variety of crafts, activities and entertainment. Each day contains a Christian message and our members are encouraged to bring a friend!

**Harvest Thanksgiving Weekend:** This is a most invigorating time of year where we work hard together during the Saturday, fixing, tidying, painting and cleaning our premises then go



home for a short rest before rejoining for a wonderful time of fellowship over the harvest thanksgiving supper in our largest hall. On the Sunday we bring our gifts to be passed to the Basics bank for distribution to the needy.

## Fostering Wholeness

### Spiritual Health

**Small Groups:** We encourage all to join one of our eleven small groups. These groups meet in a variety of settings, some on the premises, some in homes, and they meet weekly, fortnightly or monthly. We see these as being key pastoral and relational units within the congregation.

**Guild:** Our Guild meets fortnightly on a Monday evening with guest speakers throughout the year. The members also engage in supporting the various Guild projects as well as providing mutual support and fellowship.



**Celebration of the Arts:** As we are made in the image of our wonderful creator God, each year we have a day in March where we encourage the congregation to roll up their sleeves and nurture their creative gifts! We offer workshops in art, crafts, sewing, guitar, singing, creative writing to name a few. We end the day with music, songs and worship.

### Emotional Health

**Counselling:** In the last two years, four of our members have become qualified Counsellors, and they each have a clear sense of the Lord's leading them in this direction. They currently see clients each week, one at CrossReach Counselling Lothian, one at St Paul's and St George's counselling centre and two at Central Church counselling centre. The Kirk Session is researching the feasibility of offering a counselling service locally from our premises.

### Physical Health

The many activities on our premises are organised such that a wealth of choice is on offer to encourage the community in a shared purpose. We recognise the importance of physical wellbeing, and prioritise hall bookings to ensure there are classes available in various levels of keep fit, Pilates, slimming classes, country dancing, children's dance.

## Serving Others



**Sycamore Tree Café:** This is a major on-premises ministry staffed at the moment completely by volunteers. The aim is to



provide a bridge between our church and the community, demonstrating God's love to all. We serve teas, coffees, baking and soup over lunchtime. It is open during term-time on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and

Thursdays from 10am to 1:30pm, and most Wednesdays through the school holidays. This is a ministry we are keen to develop in three ways: expanding the opening times, making more space available and enhancing the Christian experience.

**Care Van:** We provide a team for one night a month to the Bethany Care Van rota, delivering food and encouragement to those in need.

**Night Shelter:** Once or twice a year, we support the Bethany Night Shelter. We also have a catering team who support the shelter at other venues.

**Fresh Start and Basics Bank:** We support these external initiatives, which help people who have been homeless get established in their new home and gather provisions for those who need help to eat well when money is tight.

**Financial Support:** Every year, the Kirk Session allocates a part of our budget to be given away – and a stewardship team determines which charitable causes we should support as part of our desire to see the work of the Gospel advanced around the world.

**A Space for the Community:** Our halls are offered to the community at a reduced rate for many activities such as Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Parent and toddler groups, ante-natal classes, community housing groups/residents' associations, away days for nearby school teachers, and so on.

**Parenting Courses:** Aware of the challenges faced by parents, we are in the early stages of offering Parenting Children courses in parallel with the Alpha course and plan to run a Parenting Teenagers course in the near future. We use resources from Relationship Central as the basis of these courses. Our aim is both to support local parents and to build relationships out with our congregation.

## OUR WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Davidson's Mains is a congregation with a diverse age range; however, the entire church strives to recognise the vital role of children and young people in church life. As with the rest of the congregation, the focus of our children and young people's worship occurs on a Sunday in age specific categories.

### Sunday Groups

**Crèche:** During the morning service, there is a crèche for the under threes.



**Age 3 to Primary 6 – Explorers:** Children learn about God through the popular format of Bible stories, craft, games and music (20 in this age group). Older children explore faith and are encouraged to begin

a personal relationship with Jesus. Even at this young age we aim to engage our children in a regular, fun and fulfilling church habit. In recent years, Explorers have participated on

occasions in the Sunday morning service. We would be keen to see this developing in the future as it is popular with parents, children and the wider congregation alike.

**Primary 7 to Secondary 3 – Baseline:** Baseline's underlying philosophy matches that of Explorers but deals with the needs of a growing-up child, discussing issues of the day as well as encouraging a developing faith (20 in this age group). "Free For All" is a twice-termly social event meeting on a Saturday night, and often attracts in excess of 30 young people. This is a joint venture with the local Episcopal and Baptist churches. Baseline youngsters can and do bring their friends to these social events.

**Secondary 4 to 6 – YF:** The YF (Youth Fellowship) meets after the evening service for teenagers (6 in this age group). In a relaxed environment, they aim to get to know the Bible better and how it underpins their Christian lives, behaviours and attitudes as they prepare to be adults in a secular world.

**Students & Young Adults:** Davidson's Mains is definitely a sending-out church, with many of our young people leaving the parish to attend further education. Their spiritual and social needs are not ignored, and the church has a specific link to stay in touch with the students, not just when they are

back during the holidays but also when they are away during term time.

### Other Youth Highlights

**'Wee Band':** Children in the congregation who are learning to play a musical instrument are encouraged to join the wee



band when they are able. This diverse band of musicians participate in leading the worship for some part of a church service (usually a family service) once or twice a term. The ethos of the group

is very clearly directed to worship, with practices punctuated with bible study and prayer.

**TGiF:** on the last Friday of every month the church café, the Sycamore Tree is transformed to be welcoming to primary school children (and their parent, carers, older and younger siblings etc – 40 to 50 in total). Edinburgh state schools finish at 12.30 on a Friday and TGiF provides a lunchtime outlet for these energetic children with bacon rolls, crafts, games and informal worship. Many of the attendees are church children but many are not! The church aims to provide an informal, welcoming and fun introduction to God and the church. TGiF

is well supported by a broad spectrum of helpers from within the congregation.

**Youth Weekend:** The YF and Baseline join forces for an adventure-packed weekend exploring recreational activities alongside the Christian faith. It is popular with the young people and, going forward, we aim to make it a joint venture with Holy Cross and City Gates.

**Holiday Club:** This has been one of the Church's biggest successes in reaching out to local primary school children with about 120 attending every year. The holiday club runs for five days during one of the Easter



holiday weeks and is planned by an enthusiastic and able team on a rolling yearly basis. We would love to find ways to see the relationships built during holiday club week continue throughout the rest of the year, encouraging these children towards developing a faith of their own.

**Boys' Brigade:** The 56<sup>th</sup> Edinburgh Company is attached to our congregation. It meets on Monday nights and currently has about 15 boys from P2 to S6 taking part in its programme of activities.

**Scripture Union:** Both Davidson's Mains Primary and The Royal High School have recently restarted Scripture Union Groups. These are parent-led at the Primary School and run by the Development Ministries Leader and other volunteers at the High School and are well supported by the local SU worker.

**School chaplaincy:** We have a long-standing relationship with the local schools and hope to explore how we can be involved in our schools going forward as they develop new team chaplaincy models.

## THE WAY WE'RE ORGANISED

We have sought to develop our leadership structures over the past ten years with the aim of releasing our members to exercise their gifts in ministry and making our governance simpler and more efficient.

### Kirk Session

We have adopted the unitary constitution and taken advantage of the recent innovations encouraged by the Church of Scotland to move to fixed term Kirk Session membership.

The Kirk Session currently comprises 18 members:

- the minister,
- nine “elected” members who are ordained as elders of the Church of Scotland and admitted to the Kirk Session for six year terms (three members appointed every second year) following nominations from the congregation
- the Presbytery Elder,
- the Development Ministries Leader, and
- 6 ministry area leaders (covering between them Nurture, Evangelism, Worship, Discipleship, Administration (including Finance) and Youth).

The Kirk Session has issued several statements to explain why we are opposed to the decision of the General Assembly (subject to final approval following the Barrier Act procedures) to allow the appointment to church leadership of anyone who is in a relationship outside of marriage between one man and one woman. Our view is that this issue is primarily to do with the role of Scripture and how it guides the decisions that are made by the Church of Scotland.

During the summer of 2014, each individual member of the Kirk Session gave prayerful consideration to how they should respond personally to the General Assembly’s decisions. The overwhelming conclusion of individual members of the Kirk Session was that this is not an issue that would lead us to leave this congregation of God’s people.

### Pastoral Care

Every member of the congregation belongs to one of 18 Pastoral Care Groups, with two pastoral leaders having responsibility for each group. Our network of small groups – which are a key part of our pastoral care and discipleship strategy – fit into this structure.



## Assessment of recent changes

The changes made in recent years have been extremely beneficial for the working of the Kirk Session and congregational life more generally. The report of our most recent Presbytery Review in 2010 indicated that the visiting team were impressed by how we had restructured and encouraged us to share our approach with other congregations who could learn from the way in which we have organised ourselves.

Inevitably, however, when changes are made there are always areas that don't work exactly as expected, and we are aware that we need to give further thought to the following areas:

- ensuring that all members, including those elders who are not members of the Kirk Session, feel that they are fully part of all that is happening in the congregation and are aware of how they can serve Christ through the exercise of their gifts.
- ensuring that all members understand where they fit into our revised pastoral care structure, and are kept well informed about the life of the congregation.
- further defining the remit of ministry areas and the roles of different members of kirk session while also sharing leadership beyond the kirk session.

## Staff – We employ:

- Development Ministries Leader – a full time role created four years ago with responsibility for:
  - **development:** translating the priorities highlighted in our DMPC vision into the increased use of our premises in the service of the gospel
  - **management:** overseeing the day-to-day running of our premises to ensure efficiency and excellence
  - **co-ordination:** promoting, equipping and co-ordinating the volunteer base to the above ends
  - the responsibilities of this post have developed over the past four years and a review of the role is required.
- Organist
- Cleaner

We also have a part-time Church Secretary who works on a voluntary basis as well as many other members who give their time to exercise ministry in the congregation.

The Kirk Session has recently agreed in principle to look at employing a manager for our church café (The Sycamore Tree) and also someone to head up our family, children and youth work.

## OUR PREMISES

We are blessed with extensive premises, which have been faithfully developed over a number of years to reflect the evolving ministries and needs of the congregation. We desire to use them carefully in support of our threefold purpose.



There is a modern detached manse in Hillpark Terrace, a quiet cul-de-sac approximately half a mile from the church. Built in 1989, it has gas central heating, a free standing brick built garage and block paved

car parking area. Downstairs it has an entrance hall, toilet, lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, and study/further public room. Upstairs there are four bedrooms, one with en suite and a bathroom with over bath shower. There is a well-established garden to the front and rear.



# THE PARISH AND CONGREGATION

## A brief history of the church and parish

Davidson's Mains is one of Edinburgh's villages now fully absorbed into the city. Formerly known as Muttonhole, it can trace its history back at least to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. The village used to be part of Cramond Parish, but the current congregation can trace its history back to the Disruption of May 1843 when it came into being as the Free Church of Cramond. It has since mirrored successive unions, being at one point the United Free Church of Cramond before changing its name to Davidson's Mains United Free Church and then Davidson's Mains Parish Church after 1929.



Originally focussing around Quality Street and Main Street of present day Davidson's Mains, the parish has been developed almost continuously from the 1920s to the present

day. The inter-war years saw the development of the four-in-a-block flats at Corbiehill and the bungalows in House O'Hill. North of the old railway line, Silverknowes was developed by Mactaggart and Mickel from 1930 through to the mid-1960s, while Hillpark, south of Hillhouse Road was built by the same builder from the mid-1950s through to the present day. Barnton Park, west of The Royal High School was developed by Miller Homes from the 1950s. The vast majority of this housing was detached and semi-detached villas. Housing in the parish is therefore mainly modern, owner-occupied and low-rise and low density.

## The parish today

The parish population (based on Scotland's Census 2011) figures is 6,773. There are no major commercial centres or sources of employment in the parish although there is a good

mix of shops and services mainly centred on Main Street and Quality Street. There are two schools in the parish: Davidson's Mains Primary School and The Royal High School, although some children in the parish are in the catchment for Blackhall Primary School and a significant proportion of children attend independent schools. There are three other Christian congregations in the village: St Margaret's Roman Catholic Church, Holy Cross Scottish Episcopal Church and a Brethren congregation.

Some parish highlights from Scotland's Census 2011 include:

- Age breakdown:
  - 29% are student age and younger (1,925)
  - 49% are between 25 and 64 years old (3,322)
  - 22% are over 65 years old (1,526)
- Religious Affiliation
  - Church of Scotland – 37% (2,483)
  - Other Christian – 17% (1,145)
  - Other religion – 3% (207)
  - No religion or not stated – 43% (2,938)

More details can be found at this link:

[http://cos.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/statistics\\_for\\_mission/parish\\_profiles/010029.pdf](http://cos.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/statistics_for_mission/parish_profiles/010029.pdf)

### **The Congregation**

The roll of members currently stands at 496. This is less than 8% of the parish population, which stands starkly against the fact that 37% of the parish identify themselves as “being Church of Scotland”. There are members of the congregation who live outside the parish and many in the parish who worship in other Christian congregations throughout the city. But the challenge provided to us from this statistic is a key driver of our sense of purpose to Proclaim Jesus and our desired shift towards a more missional emphasis.

### **The Future**

The Kirk Session believes that God's call to us as a local church to proclaim Jesus, to foster wholeness and to serve others is as important now as it has ever been and we are excited at the prospect of working with our new minister under God's guiding and the Spirit's enabling to bring that vision to fruition in the coming months and years.