

Haddington Parish at St Mary's Kirk

Parish Profile



Contents

Introduction	page 3
Our Mission Statement	page 4
History: Our Church and our congregation	page 5
Community Profile: Haddington	page 6
Worship	page 7- 9
Pastoral Care	page 9-10
Young Church/Home Group	page 10-11
Ecumenical Links	page 11
Our Wider World	page 12
Stewardship and Finance	page 13
Church Teams	page 14-15
Music	page 16-17
Our Manse	page 18
Web Links	page 18

Introduction

We are the recently united charge of Haddington Parish which is an unrestricted call.

We are seeking a full-time minister who is both a leader and a team-player who will support and encourage the many teams we have working in all aspects of church life.

We are seeking a minister who will develop leadership potential in others, has sensitive pastoral skills and is able to work with our senior members and our young families.

We are seeking a minister who is willing to embrace the tradition and history of our church and will also lead us into responding further to the needs of the people of the parish in creative and exciting ways.

Our Kirk Session has voted to depart from the traditional position of the Church of Scotland in relation to human sexuality and its application to ministers of the church.



Our Mission Statement

S — Serving God by Serving Others

We show God's love by meeting needs, offering support, and acting with love.

Whatever you did for one of the least of these... you did for me. Matthew 25:40

E — Embracing All with Welcome and Warmth

We are a community open to all, offering belonging, acceptance, and companionship.

Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you. Romans 15:7

R — Reaching Others Through Worship

We gather to praise God, learn more of Jesus' love, to be open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. We reach out to all meeting them where they are as we grow in faith together.

Worship God with gladness; come before God with joyful songs. Psalm 100:2

V — Valuing Everyone

We honour and support all ages—from babies and toddlers to older adults—celebrating each person's unique place in our church family.

One generation shall commend your works to another. Psalm 145:4

E — Engaging with Our Community

We carry the life and work of the church beyond our walls, shining God's love in practical ways into the community where we live

Let your light shine before others. Matthew 5:1

Our Mission Statement was crafted following a workshop which elders attended to talk about and plan for the way forward. We discussed five questions: Who are we here? What do we offer? Who are we in the community? What might we offer in the future? What is our vision?

History: Our Church and our Congregation

The newly formed charge of Haddington Parish was born of a union between the two established Church of Scotland congregations in the town- Haddington St Mary's and Haddington West.

Haddington West Church itself was formed by a union in 1932 between St John's Free Church and the West United Presbyterian Church. The building in which the congregation worshipped was built in 1890 and has recently been sold.

The new united congregation worships in the magnificent, medieval St Mary's Church, one of the three great pre-Reformation churches of the Lothians and the longest parish church in Scotland. Nearly destroyed during the Siege of Haddington in 1548 following the 'Rough Wooing' by Henry VIII, the church was not fully rebuilt until the early 1970s when the restored church was dedicated to the *"glory of God and the solace of a whole community"*. History and faith meet in this place and our congregation continues to play a vital part in the life of our community today.

We currently have 480 people on our Communion Roll and 8 adherents. 150 or so members regularly attend our Sunday services for worship on a week-by-week basis. We currently have 31 Elders on our Kirk Session, 10 male and 21 female.

Celebrating and marking all of life's stages is a great outreach with baptisms, thanksgiving services, funerals and weddings being a valuable part of our service to the parish.

We occasionally hold informal training sessions for elders on topics such as bereavement, visiting and safeguarding. Meetings usually take place on a Tuesday evening five times a year.

We have a Unitary Constitution with various teams such as Fabric, Finance and Visitor Season who report to the Kirk Session on a regular basis.

Both of our two paid positions (organist and cleaner) are part time. All our other positions - Director of Choirs, Treasurer & Property Convenor are carried out by volunteers. We have a volunteer Beadle Team of 4 who assist at church services, weddings, and funerals on a rota basis.

Community Profile: Haddington



The Royal Burgh of Haddington is situated under the Garleton Hills on the banks of a lazy s-bend of the River Tyne and lies about 20 miles east of Edinburgh, just off the A1. It is a historic market town set amongst agricultural country and is the main administrative, cultural, and geographical centre for East Lothian.

The town has a good mix of shops including Tesco, Aldi, several attractive independent retailers, cafés, restaurants, and pubs and an out-of-town retail park. A Farmers' Market takes place on the last Saturday of every month. A state-of-the-art library and museum, the John Gray Centre, is also located on the High Street and the modern East Lothian Community Hospital is situated to the north of the town.

Haddington offers schools at both primary and secondary level. There is also an independent primary school.

The town has a golf course, a recently extended Aubigny Sports Centre with swimming pool, gym and AstroTurf hockey and football pitches and tennis courts, a skateboard park, cricket pitch, football pitches and rugby ground at nearby Neilson Park.

There are frequent bus services to and from Edinburgh including an express X7 bus service and trains from nearby Drem and Longniddry rail stations.

Haddington has a population of around 10,000 (2022). Along with other towns in East Lothian, it has expanded rapidly in recent years with extensive new housing built at the west of the town. East Lothian is projected to have the second highest population increase in Scotland between 2018 & 2028. This presents both an opportunity and a challenge for us as a church trying to reach out and serve the whole community.

Worship

We currently hold two services on Sundays. The minister conducts both services with the praise band playing at the 9.30am service and the organ and choir at the 11am service. A printed service sheet is available each week for the 11am service.

9:30am All-Age Service



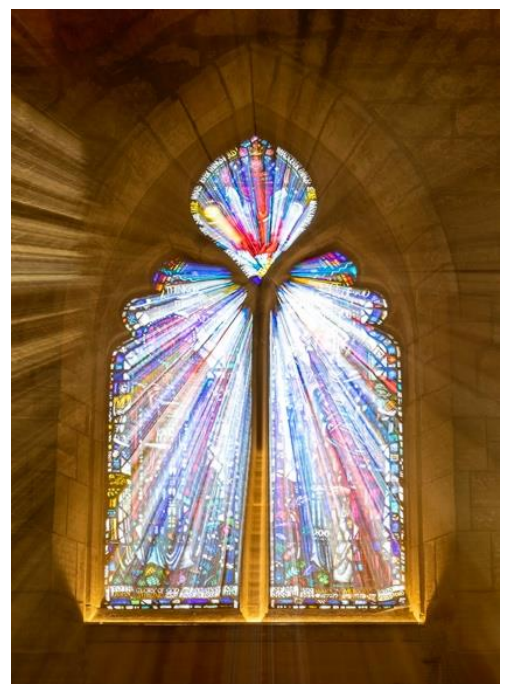
This is a half hour service, which tends to be informal in nature. It takes place at the East End of the church. We use PowerPoint projection for the words. A small team takes responsibility for the audio visuals. Songs, taken from a variety of sources including 'Worship Today' and 'CH4', are mainly of a contemporary style. There is a rug at the front for children under three to play on and a selection of toys is provided. The music is led by our Praise Band. We stay seated for most of the songs but stand for the final one. We conclude each All-Age Service by saying the Grace together.

In between the services

After the 9:30am service and before the 11am service, children and young people meet for Young Church in the South Transept and adults are invited to stay for a coffee and a blether. The choir often rehearses at the crossing from 10:20am onwards.

11am Morning Worship

This is a more traditional church service, with the minister leading the service. CH4 is commonly used and other hymns where appropriate. The choir is integral to the worship and contributes each week as well as leading the congregational hymns.



Other Worship

Communion Services are held four times a year with a more informal style at the early service and a traditional liturgy at the 11am service. Children and all people called to partake in the sacrament are welcome to attend these services.

At certain times of the year – Nativity, Candlemas, Easter & Harvest we hold only one service, at either 10am or 11am, to bring us together as a congregation and increase the opportunity for fellowship.

Our congregation is open to new ways of worshipping and, in the recent past, we have held Christingle Services, candlelit Advent Services and, alongside our neighbours from Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, have tried occasional ‘Wild Worship’ times on Sunday afternoons – informal, outdoor worship for all ages.

Worship Team

During the current vacancy we built, at speed, a volunteer team who have led worship at both the 9.30 & 11am services. This has been a positive experience and the team looks forward to further training, development and support going forward.

Choir

We have a salaried organist and a volunteer director of choirs. Our adult choir is well established with around 20 regular members. The choir’s library is extensive, stretching from Tallis to Rutter. The choir usually sings at the 11am Sunday services – with an introit and an anthem - and on other occasions.

Praise Band

Our Praise Band currently consists of piano, electric guitar, clarinet, descant recorder and African drum and plays at the earlier 9.30am service on Sunday mornings.

Third Wednesday

On the third Wednesday of each month from 7-7.30pm the church is open to anyone in our community, whatever their belief, to enjoy a quiet time in our sanctuary in candlelight. This is a safe space for prayer and quiet reflection with some music, some words but mostly silence. We also open the church in the afternoon on Christmas Eve.



Pastoral Care

Our Pastoral Care Team, the Circle of Friends, is a small group, not all elders, who offer help and caring to others in the Church or wider community by listening, supporting, encouraging, and befriending people in their pain, loss or anxiety. The team is active in supporting relatives when they visit loved ones in hospitals or care homes. We also have a rota of drivers who offer regular transport to and from church services and activities.

Posies provided by our Flower Team, are delivered to mark bereavements, anniversaries, and special birthdays or to remind those that are housebound that they are not forgotten. The team has recently begun a "Prayer Shawl Ministry" where those who are recently bereaved receive a handknitted shawl and a written accompanying prayer. We hope to re-instate an afternoon Communion Service for those who are not able to attend morning services.

The Circle of Friends started a regular monthly afternoon tea drop in on a Thursday which has proved very popular. These afternoon teas offer outreach and support to anyone in our community who is feeling lonely or isolated or who has recently moved to the town and looking to meet people.

Pause for Prayer Group

There is a prayer table in the church where prayer requests can be written and where people can take a moment for their own personal prayers. These prayer requests are then gathered, and the prayer group offers up these prayers once a week.



Young Church, Youth Group & Home Group

Young Church

Our Young Church, for children from 3 years to P7, meets at 10am immediately after the earlier 9.30am service and is led by a small group of volunteers. While parents and carers are enjoying a time of fellowship over a cup of tea or coffee, we explore a variety of topics from the bible and sometimes discuss in simpler form the topic of the 9.30am service. We finish off our time together with a craft activity. Throughout the year we enjoy celebrating in a variety of ways e.g. Christmas party, Easter egg hunt or bouncy castle.



Youth Group

This a new and exciting venture set up by our Young Church leaders in response to some teenage boys coming along to our Sunday services. The group meets on the second Thursday of each month from 6-7.30pm and is aimed at youngsters aged 11-16. We currently have 9 young people attending. We have various activities – badminton, table football, table tennis, crafts and games. We share food together with a pizza night, a burger night and more recently mac 'n' cheese.

Baby & Toddler Group

A relatively new group was set up by Haddington West and it is hoped that this will be re-started by the new united congregation.



Home Group

Our Home Group meets weekly on Tuesday mornings. After half an hour of chat over tea or coffee, we move on to discuss our chosen topic. We look for material that will challenge us to examine our faith in the light of today's culture. On occasions we will take a book written by a respected Christian author,

sometimes with video accompaniment, with relevant questions to explore. Other topics range from bible characters to the relevance of the church year for us today.

Ecumenical Links

We have strong ecumenical links with many of the other churches in Haddington and we often all come together for worship. Joint services are held each year at the beginning of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the World Day of Prayer, the beginning of Christian Aid Week and during Holy Week. As we are the largest church building in Haddington, we host Remembrance Sunday every year and other civic services. Other churches in the town include St Mary's RC Church, Holy Trinity Episcopal Church and Haddington Community Church (Free Church of Scotland).

Our Wider World

Alongside members from Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, we support the work of Christian Aid with various fundraising efforts – sponsored walks, quiz nights, afternoon teas and brunches.

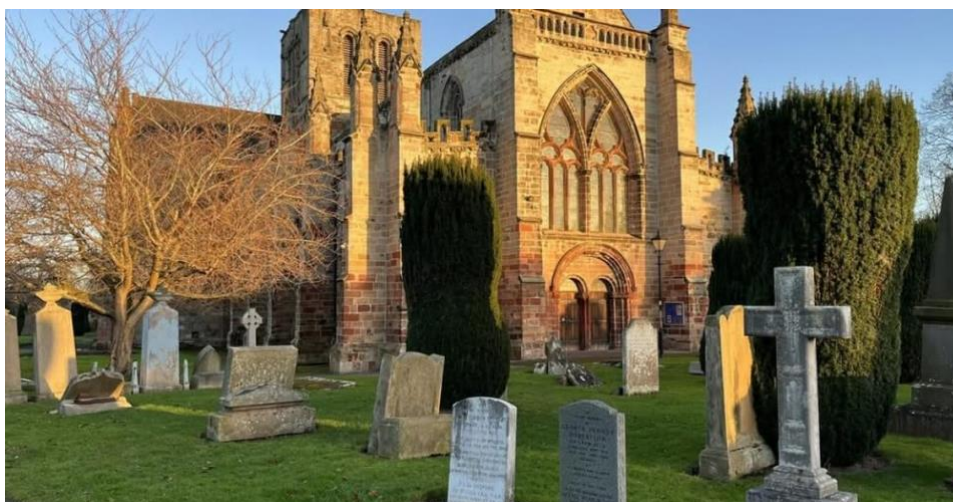
We collect used stamps for the World Mission Stamp Appeal and food for the East Lothian Food Bank.



We support local charities with donations made at the tea & coffee table on Sunday mornings. In recent years we have supported Our Community Kitchen, East Lothian Food Bank, Lammermuir Larder, Beyond Boundaries East Lothian, East Lothian Play Association, Home Start East Lothian, and Keep the Heid Mental Health Cafes.

We have strong links with local community groups such as Blooming Haddington & Friends of the River Tyne. The annual presentation to the Keep Scotland Beautiful judges, St Columba's Hospice Light Up a Life Event and Haddington Camera Club's annual exhibition were all held in St Mary's.

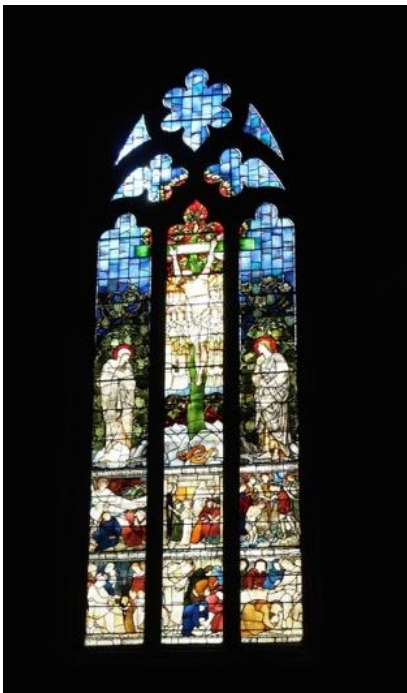
Haddington West had a twinning with churches in Siliguri, part of the Diocese of Eastern Himalya in North India. We hope this will be adopted by the new united congregation.



Stewardship and Finance

Fabric

A small group of volunteers ensures that the fabric of the church and the manse is maintained to a high standard. The cost of keeping our magnificent medieval church wind and weather-proof, warm, and fit for use in the 21st century is a constant challenge. We receive limited funding from the central church, local, Scottish or UK Government. Nevertheless, we have embarked on major upgrades - installing a glass lobby at the north door, completing



an ambitious lighting project in 2019 and a project to clean and repair the clear glass windows at the East end of the church in 2025. A project is currently underway to upgrade the heating to a more environmentally friendly and sustainable system including installing solar panels on the roof, upgrading radiators, improving roof insulation, and installing a new gas boiler system. Plans to upgrade the kitchen facilities, install a more modern audio-visual system and to create meeting spaces for church and community use are at different stages of development. We would welcome the help of the minister in setting priorities for fabric projects. St Mary's is part of

the Church of Scotland's Signature Churches group.

Finance

In 2023 we employed the services of Accounting for Good, a Community Interest Company and social enterprise to carry out much of our day-to-day bookkeeping. This is working well and has eased the pressure on our volunteer Treasurer and Finance Team. We also moved to Xero, an online accounting package. The two contactless payment devices in church are very effective and give both worshippers and visitors an opportunity to make one-off donations. We have encouraged members to switch to online giving or to give by standing order. The day to day running of the church can be a balancing act of income and expenditure. Fundraising ventures such as our popular Martinmas Fair in November each year have often been critical to keeping us in the black. The sale of the West Church buildings, church and manse, has significantly boosted our Consolidated Fabric fund.

Safeguarding

We have a volunteer safeguarding co-ordinator who seeks to ensure that our volunteers, paid staff and elders are safely recruited and trained.

Church Teams



Flowers

Our Flower Team volunteers their time and talents to provide fresh flowers to welcome all those who enter the church, whether it be for worship services or for summer visitors, for weddings, funerals, in memory of a loved one, for concerts, celebrations, flower festivals or the local Nungate gala or a little flower posy to those who may be housebound, bereaved, unwell or just to brighten some dark days.

Social Committee

Our Social Team organises fundraising events such as coffee mornings and afternoon teas. They also provide refreshments and volunteer their services at various church and community events.

Visitor Season

As well as being a focal point for worship and congregational life St Mary's is an important historic building. We are open daily from May to September when the church is staffed by our forty strong volunteer visitor season team, some, but not all, church members. We welcome around 2,500 visitors per year from all around the world and offer a historical trail via QR code, guided tours for groups and a short daily reading. We also take part in Doors Open Weekend.



Crafty Folk

We are a group of about 12 who meet weekly in the Church. We welcome anyone interested in any form of crafting, e.g., knitting, sewing, card making. The goods we produce are sold at our Craft Stall in the Church during the Visitor Season (May to September). We also have a stall at the annual Martinmas Fair. All proceeds go to Church funds. We begin every meeting with a cuppa and a chat as the social side is very important. Everyone is welcome whether a church member or not.

Walking Group

Our walking group meets on the second Saturday of each month to explore the countryside of East Lothian. We are pleased to welcome local folk who are not church members to take part.



Communications Team

We have a small team who edit and distribute a quarterly church magazine, manage, and post on the church website, send out group email communications to members and post on social media. Church magazines and other communications are sent to members by e-mail. Those without email get paper copies delivered by elders or posted to those members who live outside Haddington.

Music & Events

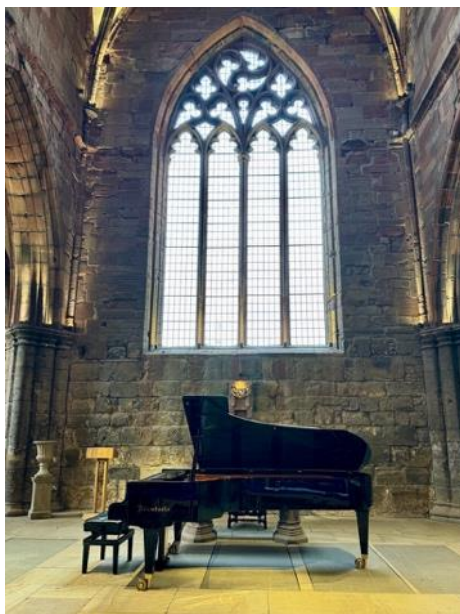


Music is an integral part of our worship, and we have a variety of music groups: bell ringers, a choir and a praise band.

St Mary's Kirk continues to attract both amateur and professional musicians of all ages to perform in our wonderful space and acoustic throughout the

year. The church is regularly hired out for concerts, recitals, recordings, and other events. We welcome local choirs, schools and instrumental ensembles including the East Lothian Schools Young Musician of the Year competition. The church is a major venue for the Lammermuir Festival, held in September each year.

Our building is a thriving hub for creative arts. We host historic talks and tours during East Lothian Archaeology & Heritage Fortnight; classical music recordings by Delphian Records; St Columba's Hospice Light Up a Life event; Blooming Haddington annual presentation to the Keep Scotland Beautiful judges; the Community Council's Haddington Heroes Award Ceremony and the annual



Haddington Camera Club exhibition of photography. In recent years we have run successful Art Exhibitions and welcomed the Lothian Speak Their Name Quilt. Our annual fundraiser, the Martinmas Fair, is held in the church in November and involves many of our members. It is a much loved and popular event for all our community in Haddington.

The church now houses the Haddington Concert Society Bösendorfer concert grand piano and hosts their winter concerts further showing that our building is open to our community while at the same time generating much needed income.

St Mary's at 4



St Mary's at 4 is our Sunday afternoon concert series. Admission is free with an opportunity to donate to church funds or a specific fabric project. Individual musicians and groups are invited to perform on a Sunday during the summer Visitor Season. Performers are unpaid but given the opportunity to make music in the beautiful acoustic of our church. We particularly encourage and support participation by local musicians. There is no entry charge but donations to a named church project are always welcome.

Bell Ringers

St Mary's Kirk is one of the few towers in Scotland with a complete set of bells. 2024 marked the 25th anniversary of their installation. There are currently 20 bellringers. The team have run a successful training programme open to anyone in our community and there is growing cohort of new ringers. Bells are rung every Sunday morning calling us to worship as well as on request for weddings, funerals and other community occasions. Anyone may request the bells to be rung on a Sunday morning in memory of a loved one or in celebration. This recent initiative is proving very popular. We are a part of the wider Scottish Association of Change ringers and have close links with other towers and ringers elsewhere in Scotland.





Our Manse

The manse is located at 1 Nungate Gardens, Haddington. It was built by Cala Homes in 2007. It has three reception rooms, downstairs cloakroom, four bedrooms, one with an ensuite bathroom, a separate family bathroom, a kitchen/diner with utility room and a garage. It has a large garden to front and rear. The

house has gas central heating. The house is in a lovely part of the town with open views to the West and near the church. It has been well maintained and is in excellent condition.

Web Links & Further Information

Church Website: www.haddingtonparish.org.uk

Town Website: www.haddington.org.uk

Church Facebook Page:

https://www.facebook.com/stmaryskirk/?ref=br_rs

www.eastlothian.gov.uk - See East Lothian by Numbers

www.visitscotland.com

Finance:

The latest accounts for Haddington: St Mary's and Haddington West can be viewed on the OSCR website or can be provided on request. There are, as yet, no annual accounts for the united congregation as the union only took place in October 2025.

Haddington Parish (Church of Scotland) Scottish Charity Number SC010614