

# Parish Profile 2010

## Introduction

The purpose of this profile is to give you an insight into the vacancy and information on the area our parish covers. The charge has become vacant following the retirement of our previous minister. We had a very successful ministry and the Church is in good health with a vibrant congregation, office bearers and worship team.

## Our Parish

Cockenzie and Port Seton is a traditional fishing village in East Lothian, approximately ten miles from Edinburgh. Haddington and North Berwick are approximately ten miles eastward.

The village has a population of approximately five and a half thousand. The main industries are fishing, tourism and the production of electricity at the nearby Cockenzie Power Station. Seton Sands Holiday Village provides employment during the holiday season. (Indicated on map – see page 10)

Historically, the Church membership came from the fishing community, many of whom have contributed to building the Church and hall either by financial commitment or by voluntary effort.

Today the membership is broader based and as the number of new houses in the village increases it is common for members to commute daily to Edinburgh and beyond.



A full range of amenities are available in the village including a modern health centre, Library and Community Centre which serve the surrounding district. Primary Education is available at Cockenzie Primary School while secondary education is available at Preston Lodge High School, in Prestonpans. The previous minister was the Chaplain at the Primary School, and also held services at the John Bellany Day Care Centre.

The parish boundary follows a line north / south from a point west of the Church backward to a west / east line beyond South Seton Park. The eastern boundary is to the east of the holiday village, a distance of approximately 1.5 miles. (See map on page 10)

## **Our History**

The congregation was formed in 1838 as Cockenzie Parish Church and until the disruption in 1843, worshipped in the building currently occupied by Cockenzie Old Parish Church.

Following the disruption the congregation worshipped in various premises as Cockenzie Free Church until the union with the United Presbyterian Church when the Church became the United Free Church.

Subsequent to the union with the Church of Scotland in 1929, the name was changed to Chalmers Memorial Church in memory of the Rev. Dr Thomas Chalmers.

## **Our Vision**

Our vision is to bring the witness of our Lord Jesus to the people of Port Seton and beyond by providing bible centred worship and outreach opportunities.

We aim to build a caring community that reaches out to those who need to know and experience our Saviour's love.

## **Basis of Appointment**

The basis of the appointment is Reviewable Conformable Tenure. Details may be had from the Interim Moderator.

While Presbytery is in the process of drawing up a new Presbytery Plan they have asked for some flexibility in how ministers are deployed. All ministers in Lothian Presbytery will be called on '5-year Reviewable Conformable' tenure.

## **Our Invitation**

The congregation wish to call an enthusiastic Minister capable of meeting the following aims:

1. To proclaim the Word of God.
2. To lead worship and administer the Sacraments of Baptism and Communion.
3. To reach out to the local community and develop the Church's presence in the parish.
4. To develop a special relationship with young people in the parish.
5. To provide pastoral care for the sick, aged and infirm, especially those who cannot attend Church.
6. To sustain the life of the congregation, spiritually and socially.

The Kirk Session will do all they can to work with and support the Minister to achieve these aims.

## Our Worship

Our Church has a pro active worship group, and a membership which participates in our Sunday worship – worship which has a strong Biblical base.

Two services are held every Sunday, the All-Age Family Service in the hall runs from 10.15am to 10.45am, followed by a Traditional Service in the Church beginning at 11am. From September to the following May there are Evening Services held on the last Sunday of the month at 6.15pm.



**10.15am Service**



**11am Service**



The Sunday before Christmas the All-Age Family Service is held in the Church followed by a congregational Christmas lunch held in the Church hall. The Church is decorated for the period over Christmas, with Christmas trees and lights. On Christmas Eve a family Carol Service is held at 6pm and also a watchnight service beginning at 11.30pm taking those present into Christmas Day. A short service is held on Christmas Morning at which the children are encouraged to bring the toys they have received.

At Easter, during Holy Week there are combined services with our neighbouring churches, Cockenzie Old Parish Church, and the local Methodist Church, on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday evening. The Guild conducts a service on the Monday night of Holy Week. On Good Friday the Church is open during the afternoon for silent meditation. Easter Sunday Morning begins with a Family Breakfast served by the Sunday School Staff, approximately 80 - 90 people attend.



A Harvest Thanksgiving Service is held on the last Sunday of September in which the Sunday School children bring gifts of fruit and food for distribution to a deserving cause. The Church is appropriately decorated for this occasion.

### **Enjoying a cuppa after the 11am service**

On Remembrance Sunday a combined service is held with Cockenzie Old Parish Church at the war memorial, followed by a service in the Church.

Communion services are held on the last Sunday of January, April, June and October.

Worship is Bible-based, and has followed the Common Lectionary, although not necessarily so. The Bible used throughout the Church is the New International Version, this version also being used in readings from the lectern and the pulpit. Hymns are sung from the CH4 hymn book but on occasions the Church has used Mission Praise and BBC Songs of Praise hymn book. The hymn singing is led by our organist and a choir of approximately 10 members, increasing to about 15 at Easter and Christmas.

Both services are supported by multimedia presentations of intimations, hymns and images to complement the theme for that day.

A pro-active worship group consisting of Church Elders and others, regularly helps out in worship, leading services, and occasionally taking the whole service. Church members are also encouraged to take part in services, by reading from the lectern and giving the offering prayer of thanksgiving.

On the last Wednesday of the month, members gather for a "Prayer Time" in the hall from 10-11am and on the last Saturday of the month a Prayer Breakfast is held from 8am – 9.15am, Prayer plays an important part in the life of Chalmers Memorial Church.

Twice yearly we have held a six week series of Bible studies called 'Imagining the Bible'. Bible reading is complimented by meditation, discussion, music, singing and as much encouragement as possible to participate. This has always been well attended.

The Sunday School at Chalmers has approximately twenty five children on the roll, ranging from nursery age to those of nine or ten. A further six or seven children in the age group 10 – 12yrs form the Sunday Rock Group.

We have a group of Youth Leaders who organise a varied programme of activities to meet the needs of local young people. Currently we are using the YFC material for Rock Solid.

Chalmers Memorial Church is part of what is known as the 'Tranent Cluster of Churches', comprising Churches from Tranent, Port Seton, Prestonpans and Longniddry, and as a cluster have managed to secure a Youth Development Worker. The youth worker is also part of the worship group within Chalmers Memorial Church and contributes not only to any activities involving the Sunday School but to worship as a whole.

## Church Activities and Organisations



The Guild at Chalmers meet every Monday night from October to the following March with an average of thirty five members attending each night. The meetings always begin with opening devotions and most of the speakers are from Christian based organisations. Chalmers Guild is linked to the Guild of Carnock and Oakley in Fife and the two guilds meet up every year to share a meal and fellowship. The Guild also provides funeral teas when required.

The Boy's Brigade consists of two sections, the anchor boys and the junior section. There is no company section as this was disbanded due to falling numbers. Numbers attending in total are around 20.

Chalmers Ramblers: Every Tuesday the ramblers meet at the church. This group consists wholly of retired people eager to keep fit and who enjoy walking as well as the fellowship of doing something together. There are about 8 people in this group which is hoping to grow in the future.

Various activities are enjoyed by the members of the Church, some in order to raise funds for the church, others to share fellowship outside of the church.



Welcome Wednesday

Wednesday Coffee Morning: On the first Wednesday of the month the hall is open for tea and coffee. This was originally aimed at young mums to bring their children along, enjoy tea and coffee together while the children played together in a designated play area. Over time the children have gone on to nursery or to council based events but the opportunity is still there for new children and mums to come along. Meanwhile, the Church members, mainly the elderly, enjoy this get together along with day centre groups from Port Seton who now attend occasionally. This venture is also seen as a means of outreach as some non-members of the church attend and contribute to the catering. Half the funds raised from this coffee morning goes to the Church, and the other half going to TEAR fund for children in distress.

Wednesday Lunches: Every third Wednesday of the month "Chalmers Café" as it is known, is open for lunch in the hall. Soup, hot and cold filled rolls, and home baking are on the menu. This has proved not only popular with Church members but with the community at large, especially the day centre groups and Port Seton in Bloom members, approximately 80 -90 people attend. The lunches are now looked upon not only as a source of fund raising, but as a means of outreach to those not involved with Chalmers Church. Funds raised go directly into the Church's fabric fund.



**Badminton group:** This group of about 12 members meet every Wednesday night, and consists of members of all ages, and is looked on as a social event as well as a means of keeping fit.

**Theatre visits:** Due to one member's enthusiasm, visits to the theatre are arranged occasionally and have proved to be very popular.



**Christian Aid:** We support Christian Aid through the sponsored Forth Road Bridge walk and by house to house collections. This activity is led by a dedicated Christian Aid coordinator.

**Church flowers:** The Church is decorated with flowers every Sunday. This is done on a rota basis centred around special anniversaries, or in memory of loved ones who have passed away. After the morning service the flowers are distributed to those who are infirm, ill or have been bereaved.

## Other Church Users

A number of organisations use the facilities of the Church and hall.



The Brownies and Rainbows meet in the hall every Wednesday and Thursday. This is well attended with 18 rainbows of the 1<sup>st</sup> Port Seton meeting on Wednesday. On Thursday the 1<sup>st</sup> Cockenzie Rainbows meet with an average attendance of 18, after this the 2<sup>nd</sup> Port Seton Brownies meet with an attendance of 25. Unfortunately there are no Guide troops using the church or hall at the moment.



The Church is used twice a year for whole school services.

The hall is used occasionally by Wemyss House. This is a local house in Port Seton used by the Blue Triangle Housing Association who run projects for the homeless.

Alcoholics Anonymous uses the hall every Tuesday night throughout the year. Due to the sensitive nature of this hall let, the Church tries not to hold meetings on this night, but where this is unavoidable it is done discreetly to honour the anonymity of the AA clients.

The Rotary Club in the nearby village of Longniddry uses the hall on various occasions, mainly to give the local old people a lunch along with entertainment.

## Weekly Services, Meetings and Events

Sunday	10.15am	All Age Family Worship (in the hall)
	11.00am	Morning Worship (with crèche June – August) Sunday School (August – June)
	6.15pm	Evening Worship (Sept – May – normally last of month)
Monday	7.15pm	The Guild (October –March)
Tuesday	10.00am	Ramblers group
	7.30pm	Bible Study (as advertised)
	7.30pm	Alcoholics Anonymous
Wednesday	10.00am –12noon	Coffee Morning (1 <sup>st</sup> of month)
	12noon- 2.00pm	Chalmers Café (3 <sup>rd</sup> of Month)
	10.00am	Prayer Meeting (Last of month)
	5.15pm	Rainbows
	6.30pm	Boy's Brigade
	8.00pm	Badminton Club
Thursday	5.00pm	Rainbows
	6.30pm	Brownies
Saturday	8.00 - 9.15am	Prayer Breakfast (Last of the month)

## Congregation

The Congregational roll is 250. This includes 26 adherents who have registered for electoral roll purposes. There are a still a small number of adherents who have not taken the opportunity to register for the Electoral Register. Attendance at the All Age service can be up to 50 people, and up to 120 at the 11am service.

Our congregation comprises all age groups, however, as like many other congregations in the Church of Scotland, the majority of members could be classified as middle aged to elderly although we do have some new young families.

Although our Church has been successful in attracting new members from the new estates considerable scope still exists to try to increase membership from those areas within our parish.

We ran a Stewardship Campaign in 2006 followed up by a series of events held in 2009 as part of our Homecoming celebrations. We view this as an ongoing project and have a Stewardship Convener to oversee these activities.

We have a deserved reputation for being a friendly and welcoming congregation – visitors always receive a warm welcome and an invitation to share coffee after the service.

## **Kirk Session and Governance**

There are 37 Elders. The Kirk Session meets as required, normally six times a year.

We maintain a system of Elders' districts and all Elders are encouraged to visit on a regular basis, offering pastoral care and also invitations to Holy Communion. Each Church organisation has a designated Elder.

Our Church has moved to the Unitary Constitution.

## **Financial Review**

The congregation has always emphasised direct giving as the principal means of funding. Thus our principal source of income is derived from the giving of members whether through the Open Plate, the Weekly Freewill Offering Scheme or by regular Standing Order payments. We have always met our commitments to the wider work of the Church.

Members are encouraged to commit themselves financially and to use the Freewill Offering Scheme and where possible, to sign up for Gift Aid.

General Account Income for the past three years was:-

2007 £72,711  
2008 £82,713  
2009 £86,853

A Retiring collection is taken at our Christmas morning service currently given to Christian Aid or TEAR fund. A retiring collection will also be sanctioned when help is required to overcome a catastrophe somewhere in the world.

Another successful aspect of Chalmers Memorial is the Day of Commitment which takes place each year at our April communion. The Elders distribute relevant literature to their districts prior to the April communion. Each member is invited to make a one-off lump sum donation as well as reviewing their weekly offering or Standing Orders. This generally raises £3,000 each year which is used for the work of the Church.

## Buildings - Our Church

The Church was built in 1905 and was designed by Sydney Mitchell and still retains its original character. It is a category A listed building and its unique interior is highly decorative using painted stencil work and symbolism.

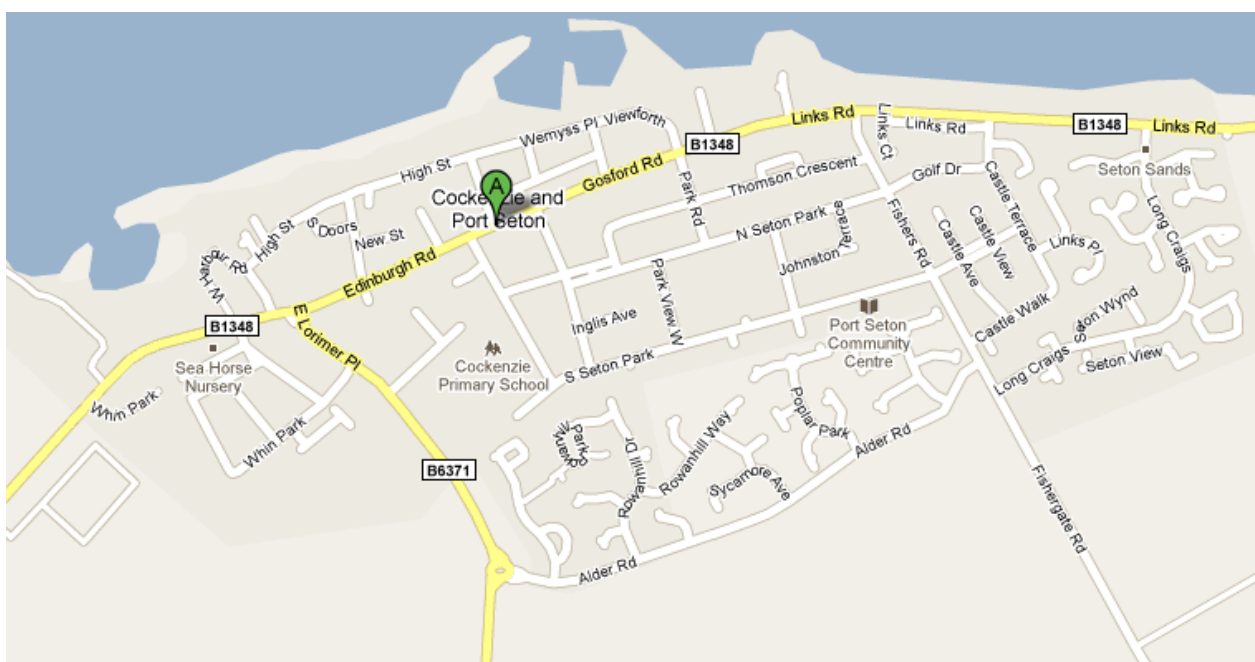
The main hall was added in 1955 and can accommodate over 150-200 people. The hall also has a raised stage area with changing rooms behind.

A basement area provides a coffee bar and is currently used for Sunday school and youth activities.



The Church and Hall are centrally located on the main road through Port Seton. Close by is the local Primary school.

Throughout the years all repairs and improvements have been financed by grants and congregational giving.



## The Manse

An attractive two storey stone built house, close to the Church, occupies a central site in the village and was purchased in 1957. It has been maintained in excellent order externally.

The ground floor has 2 public rooms, a study, kitchen, bathroom / wc and utility room. The first floor has 4 bedrooms, wc and shower room.

Internal redecoration is necessary, and we look forward to doing so in cooperation with the successful applicant.

Externally the front of the building has been paved to provide off street parking. A small garage is provided. To the rear is a large garden area.



## Contact Details

If you feel that God may be calling you to our congregation and parish you can contact our Interim Moderator for an informal chat. Applications with CV's should be addressed to the Clerk to the Nominating Committee.

### **Interim Moderator**

Rev. Christine M. Clark, BA BD MTh  
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### **Clerk to the Nominating Committee**

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More information on our Church can be found at [www.chalmerschurch.co.uk](http://www.chalmerschurch.co.uk)  
SC004630 Cockenzie and Port Seton: Chalmers Memorial Parish Church 'Scottish Charity'.