

# Drumoak-Durriss Parish Church

## Our Churches

Drumoak-Durriss Church is a congregation of the Church of Scotland and part of the Presbytery of Kincardine and Deeside. The parish straddles the River Dee about 15 miles west of Aberdeen

Not long ago, Drumoak and Durriss were joined into one congregation with two places of worship. For many, the merging of two distinct congregations was a huge leap of faith, but it has proven to us that God is with us in our community and that we are willing to learn and are ready for new growth and renewal.



There are many opinions about the multiple roles of the Church but for us in Drumoak-Durriss, to be a truly missionary Church, we feel our members need to be nurtured, encouraged and given opportunities to grow through sharing and using their skills, talents and gifts. As a church family we want to reach out, as described below, to the wider community. We recognise cultural changes within this community and offer a range of opportunities for all ages, to meet up and share the Gospel.

Both churches are easy to find: Drumoak church lies on the north eastern edge of Drumoak while Durriss Church is north of the tiny



“village” of Kirkton of Durriss. We have a large church hall next to Drumoak Church – this is used by the congregation, the primary school which is next door and many community groups. There is a smaller “log cabin” next to Durriss Church

## Our Worship

Sunday services are held at 10.00am and alternate between Durriss (1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays) and Drumoak (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays). Monthly evening services are held from September to June in each church. CH4 and contemporary worship songs are accompanied by organ, piano or CD with a music group on occasions.

Services are introduced by our group of singers. As well as using a contemporary style of worship we also use audio-visual facilities and on occasion enjoy the talent of individual singers. Our



minister leads us into worship and is assisted during the service by one or more church members who read the Bible or lead prayers. We look for bible centred teaching which each person can relate to today's realities. We put a précis of the sermon on our website.

Every week there is a children's address encouraging participation in a varied array of question & answer sessions, drama, prayer, Bible reading and song. After this, the Sunday Club meets for activities in the hall or log cabin, coming back to the church during the last hymn. There is a crèche for younger children. The children stay in for the whole of our Family All Age services which involve everyone.

Everyone is made to feel valued and visitors comment on the warm welcome they receive. After every service tea, coffee and biscuits are served, providing an opportunity to get to know people.

We have formal Communion services twice a year in each church, morning and evening, as well as "informal" communion services.

Praying together is powerful and brings us closer to friends and family who live in complex and difficult circumstances. We provide an opportunity to pray together informally at both churches each month in the log cabin at Durriss and the welcome area in Drumoak.

## Our Congregation and Community

Our church roll includes 436 members and, in 2010, 9 new members joined through profession of faith. In our activities we reflect our close links with the community and take the opportunity to strengthen these links and accompany our neighbours on their journey to faith.

Over the past 18 months we have held a Holiday Bible Club; a weekend with Doug Horley and his team; a Christmas Tree Family service where the local community groups sponsored and decorated their own trees; a church and community family ceilidh; a golf outing; and a Food, Fashion and Future evening organised by our Eco-group and supported by our local schools. We also hosted a breakfast meeting for the Men of All Ages Christian Men's Fellowship, attended by 40 men from 6 different fellowship groups in Aberdeenshire.



**Focus on the young:** We try to work within the changing culture and context of our time. Not all families come to church on a Sunday so we go to them with services or acts of worship within school. For many this may be the first experience of hearing the gospel.

**SPLAT playgroup:** Meeting every Wednesday, this is the liveliest group in Drumoak! Children under five, including babies and toddlers, start with singing, including lively Christian action tunes, dancing, playing instruments and making lots of noise using drums, rhythm sticks, bells and whistles. After a snack, children and toddlers do a weekly craft activity or play with various toys while mums, dads and carers have a cup of tea and relax.



**YSunday Teenage Group:**

This group for young people of secondary school age meets fortnightly on Sunday evenings. Our part time Youth Worker and adult helpers encourage youngsters to explore the Christian faith and

its relevance for youth. In addition to the regular meetings, the group arranges evening trips, a skiing weekend and a sponsored sleep-out in aid of the Cyrenians homeless charity each year. They also organise and lead some evening services each year. Further afield, many of the young leaders of Y Sunday have participated in Christian projects abroad:



In Malawi in 2005, a group of six including three students from Y Sunday, spent up to a month at Likhubula where they taught creative arts in the local primary school to more than 900 pupils, helped run school clubs and refurbished some of the accommodation rooms.

In 2009, a group of 12, including 9 former junior leaders of our YSunday Group spent 3 weeks in Romania, volunteering as helpers in “Children for Christ” summer camps in Varfurile near Arad.



### **Ladies Guild and Focus**

**(Fellowship of Christian Women United in Service):** these groups enable members to express their faith in today's world. Both groups meet monthly, with speakers, visits, videos, meals out together and much more - opportunities for friendship, fun and service to others in Jesus' name.



### **Coffee Shop and Friendship Club:**

Both meet monthly in Drumoak Church Hall except in January and the summer holidays: lots of members enjoy an interesting variety of activities throughout the year - the most important thing being convivial company.

**Holiday Bible Club:** These have been run each morning in the last week of the summer holidays using Scripture Union material around a theme. Last year it was The Rock (based on Peter). These have been attended by up to 70 children from the area. The week ends with an informal service in the church hall attended by the children and their families where the week's activities are summarised. This is an informal introduction to church and Sunday Club for many families.



Many of the children who attended the club also came to see Doug Horley and his team when he came to Drumoak-Durris for a weekend in Nov 2009. After leading a training seminar for those who work with children and young people within the Church (attended by 36 people from Drumoak-Durris and further afield) he gave a performance on Saturday evening and led the service on Sunday morning.

**Eco-Congregation:** Our congregation has taken significant steps toward showing our thankfulness and concern for God's creation. Our interest in environmental issues is supported through having a focus group checking priorities and ensuring environmental stewardship of property, heating systems, energy saving ideas, promoting the use of natural materials and waste minimisation.



**Alpha Courses:** We run regular courses which are well attended. Alpha is an introduction to the Christian faith and could be just what people in our local community are looking for.

**Newsletter and Community update:** Members of our church collate and deliver a quarterly newsletter, with church and community news, to every home in the parish.

## Our Location

Drumoak and Durriss lie in Royal Deeside between Aberdeen and Banchory; Drumoak is on the north side of the River Dee and Durriss on the south. They are rural parishes with differences: Drumoak covers 16 square miles around the village of Drumoak while Durriss is around 40 square miles of farms, a few scattered houses and small concentrations of houses, but no core village.



Newcomers to rural areas often say that it takes a generation or two to become accepted but if there is one sure and certain core to rural life it is the church. Our recently retired minister has re-established the church at the centre of this community with an active congregation.

Both Parishes have a long history. Durriss was a royal deer forest in the days of Alexander III who, it's believed, spent time in the long since vanished Durriss Castle while some historians believe that the capital of the Texali, one of the Caledonian tribes, was located in what is now Drumoak parish. The predecessor to Drumoak Church was Dalmaik



Church from about the 11<sup>th</sup> century until it was closed when Drumoak Church opened in 1836. There has been a church in Durriss for many centuries and inside the existing church the list of ministers goes back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

## Our Area

The Dee valley, between Aberdeen and Braemar, is one of the best places to live in the whole of the UK. The area has enjoyed prosperity and low unemployment for decades, thanks mainly to the oil industry and its numerous offshoots. Today the composition of the congregation reflects both this new industry and the traditional rural roots.

Our nearest town is Banchory which is well provided with shops, supermarkets,



medical facilities, dentists, a library and a thriving and very well regarded Academy (7<sup>th</sup> in the league table of Scottish schools in 2009) whose swimming pool and sports hall are open to community groups. Pupils from the primary schools in Drumoak and Durriss go on to Banchory Academy – using school buses.



Deeside is well provided with activities for all ages – especially outdoor: hill walking, mountaineering, cycling, skiing, fishing, shooting, orienteering and all the common team sports such as rugby, football and to the surprise of some, cricket.

Youngsters have clubs including swimming, squash, cricket, badminton, football and golf and there are active Scouts, Guides, Brownies, Cubs and Cadet Force groups. Adults participate in various interest groups such as Scottish Country Dancing Club, singing groups etc while Woodend Barn puts on a variety of different cultural acts and events.

Aberdeen provides all the facilities of a major city including shopping centres, several cinemas, theatre and Music Hall as well as an international airport, major hospital, and two universities. A regular bus service between Aberdeen and upper Deeside passes through Drumoak.

## **Our future**

Worship is a prime focus of Christian life within our Church family and from this the Church life and mission flows. We want to encourage a minister who is concerned with exploring and sharing an informed rational and accessible account of Christian belief, drawing on biblical studies, Church tradition and ethics and can relate this to the context and culture in which our Church lives.

While we are grateful to our former minister for the work he has started here, we know we cannot sit back and wait for growth to continue. We must actively nourish the roots laid down and be responsible for our own destiny. We will work with our new minister, when we find him or her, and continue to grow this church. We will; with God's help, it's our promise.

### **For information and enquiries**

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