



PARISH PROFILE

Balfron & Fintry Church of Scotland
linked with Drymen & East Loch Lomond

FLOWING TOGETHER LIKE THE ENDRICK WATER
UNITING COMMUNITIES IN FAITH, PURPOSE, AND PLACE

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INTRODUCTION

Like the Endrick Water that winds its way through hills, glens, and villages, the newly united Balfon and Fintry Church of Scotland, is now formally linked with Drymen and East Loch Lomond (as of 1 December 2024). Each of the linked churches draws its strength from the love of Christ and concern for the communities with which each connects.

This recent linkage of Balfon and Fintry with Drymen and East Loch Lomond has opened up new avenues of joint worship, shared mission and fresh ideas. We can learn a lot from each other. Both churches within the linkage have a unitary constitution with hard-working committees and teams, are well resourced and share a passion for taking the love of Christ out into our communities in service and care. This is our mission, our vision and our challenge.

Balfon and Fintry church is a vibrant, hopeful congregation with a Communion Roll of 159, and a commitment to joint worship, shared mission, and life-giving ministry. Now, this flowing spiritual current continues, with its linkage with Drymen and East Loch Lomond, offering rich possibilities for a new minister who is excited by both tradition and transformation

Drymen and East Loch Lomond church is also united in their love of Christ and care for their local communities. Drymen and Buchanan parishes were linked for many years before uniting officially into the new church of Drymen and East Loch Lomond in August last year. Their marriage has been a success, bringing increased energy, joy and fellowship to their worship, and deepening the pastoral bonds between and within the communities. It has a communion roll of 225.

**A LINKAGE SHAPED
BY SPIRIT AND
LANDSCAPE**



BALFRON — A VILLAGE WITH A VIEW AND A VISION



VIEW

Balfon is a flourishing village nestled on a hillside in the heart of the Endrick Valley with a population of almost two thousand four hundred. Its panoramic views of the Campsie Fells, with Ben Lomond rising in the distance, inspire awe and offer moments of quiet reflection. From the southern approach over the Endrick Bridge, through the vibrant heart of Buchanan Street, to the northern edge past the War Memorial, Church and Golf Course, the village blends beauty, heritage, and modern convenience. Balfon is also the main service centre for the Strathendrick area, with a wide array of facilities. This is a community that feels like both a village and a small town – compact, well-resourced, and ever-growing.



VISION

At the heart of Balfon lies the church, a place of spiritual and historical significance, it stands on the site of worship dating back to the 12th century, with its current building from the 1830s and features such as a 16th century entrance and historic stained-glass windows. A 21st century extension added a modern hall, kitchen, and accessible toilets, allowing the building to thrive as a mission and community hub.

Weekly and community use includes: Joint Sunday Worship, Balfon Lunch Club (recently awarded a £2,500 Presbytery Mission Grant) Music for Under 5s, Community Choirs, Armchair Yoga, Tea and Tunes, Baby Café (Forth Valley Health Board), Weight Watchers, Strathendrick Singers, Kirk Session meetings, and other local initiatives.

The Church is fully accessible: two disabled parking bays, ramped access, compliant facilities, wheelchair space, and baby changing. A modern sound system, projector and screen, loop system, and digital hymn technology ensure worship is inclusive and adaptable. Balfon Church is used seven days a week—not just as a place of worship, but as a living expression of mission and community.

DRYMEN – A GATEWAY TO EAST LOCH LOMOND



Drymen is a lively, historical village, a magnet for tourists and visitors as the gateway to Loch Lomond, with a population of around eight hundred and thirty. The road to Loch Lomond links Drymen to Buchanan Smiddy and Milton of Buchanan in a linear journey that incorporates the east side of the loch towards the outlying communities, who fall within our parish boundary, all the way up to Inversnaid. There is a long and rich tradition of Christian worship in these communities, stemming from Saint Kentigern in the 8th Century, who entered the convent on the Island of Inchcailloch: a flame we wish to see fanned and fed by the energy and passion of a committed minister, in the new linkage of Drymen and East Loch Lomond with Balfron and Fintry.

The church in Drymen raised funds firstly to build an impressive annexe, opened in 2011, which now hosts community and church events, and secondly to revamp the sanctuary, equipping it with all the modern conveniences of sound, projection and underfloor heating. Our services are enhanced by the two classes for younger attenders: Kids for Christ (or K4C) which engages children with Scripture as well as craft and activities, and The Upstairs Group for those in Primary 6 up to school leaving age: a Bible teaching class with faith application and fellowship.

Weekly community use includes Joint worship, Bridge, yoga, Guides and Brownies, local community coffee mornings and monthly community lunches, hosted by the church as well as Kirk Session Meetings and church socials and fundraisers.

The historic and beautiful Buchanan church is used for worship once a month, and we fully support the community in its bid to purchase it for the village.

A CLOSER LOOK AT OUR CHURCHES



We are resilient and welcoming churches with good community links, strong musical teams for worship, excellent provision for the teaching and encouragement of the young, from creche to teenagers, and a willingness to work for God's glory.

There are those within the linkage who have been without consistent ministry for long periods. Like many rural churches we have aging congregations and sessions, where the younger age groups are under-represented.

There are opportunities here to build on. Many active local groups use our church buildings, we have existing links with some of the schools, and an SU group in the local high school, which serves both churches in the linkage, all parts of the charge falling within its catchment area. This is a very beautiful area in which to live, work and serve God.

There are also challenges. The newly united and linked congregations are still finding their feet. In a rural area it is harder to attract people and families of a working age, and there is competition from secular life on a Sunday. The parishes are geographically large but there is a willingness to help lead worship and a strong pastoral team to help with care in the communities.

MISSIONAL PRIORITIES

We want to grow in numbers, support youth work through increased engagement with our local schools; be outward looking and connect with our communities by supporting local people and local events. We seek to strengthen our linkage and build relationships with other Christian communities throughout the area. Together we want to support charity partners at home and overseas.

VISION STATEMENT

To be a Christ-centred, Biblically-based charge, grounded in prayer and serving our communities in love – a place which welcomes all, and attracts the young, with a balance of traditional and evangelical worship.

A NEW MINISTER'S OPPORTUNITY FOR THE LINKED CHURCHES OF BALFRON AND FINTRY, AND DRYMEN AND EAST LOCH LOMOND



With the manse located just a short walk from Balfron Church at 7 Station Road, well maintained and energy efficient, the minister appointed to this charge will enjoy a comfortable eight-apartment home with stunning views across the Endrick Valley to the Campsie Hills. A peaceful base for personal and professional life.

This is an exciting opportunity for a minister who feels called to a rural ministry—a chance to lead a charge already active in worship and outreach, with strong lay leadership and pastoral care teams in place – a chance to progress and fulfil the mission, vision and challenge referred to in the Introduction above.

All worship is now joint, and services are currently held at 10 am in Drymen and 11.30am in Balfron. Once a month, an 11.30am service is held in Fintry, and a 10am service in Buchanan, both currently in the church buildings.

Ministry expenses and manse costs are shared 50/50 between the two congregations.

FINTRY AND BUCHANAN SPIRIT AND RESILIENCE



Fintry and Buchanan are small but united communities. The Endrick Water, flowing from the Campsies, cuts through the heart of the Fintry community—both physically and symbolically—binding it in shared story and support, just as Loch Lomond links the communities of Buchanan and Balmaha north of Drymen.

Though the Fintry Kirk building, a Category B listed structure dating from 1823, is scheduled for sale from 1 October 2025 (under agreement from the Kirk Session, Presbytery of Perth, and General Trustees), the congregation and community spirit remain strong.

Sunday services will continue in Fintry on the third Sunday of each month and on the final Sunday in Buchanan. With Presbytery support each community is exploring retaining its Kirk buildings for worship and community use.

THE FUTURE OF FAITH IN FINTRY AND BUCHANAN

The linked charges of Balfron and Fintry and Drymen and East Loch Lomond are committed to combining the spiritual life of their respective communities. Trusts have been formed to take forward community ownership of their Kirk buildings, preserving them for cultural, spiritual, and social use.

FINAL THOUGHTS: A CHARGE UNITED IN SPIRIT AND MISSION



This is a new chapter for both churches involved—a charge shaped by centuries of faith, modern mission energy, and deep community roots.

Our vision is a community where:

- Worship is shared
- Community and Church Walk hand in hand
- And the flow of faith runs strong—just like the Endrick Water.

We invite a minister to come and journey with us—to guide, to inspire, to serve, and to grow. The stream is moving. Might the Holy Spirit be calling you to join us?



CONTACT US

Applications should be
made to the clerk of the
Nominating Committee,
Sarah Black

email: baf.dellclerk@yahoo.com