

Caldwell Parish Church
Proposed Reordering of Sanctuary

Questions and Answers
(Combined FAQ1 & FAQ2 documents)

Proposed layout

What is the proposed layout of the chairs? – will there be no, one or two aisles?

The main benefit of having chairs is that of flexibility. We don't need to decide on a particular layout - instead we can have the chairs arranged differently depending on the service, or other event taking place in the sanctuary. Sometimes we might have the chairs in a similar layout to the pews. At other times, we might group the chairs so that we include time for discussion in a morning service. A bride may prefer to walk down a central aisle when she gets married. Messy Church in the sanctuary would see chairs grouped in different areas, and moved around during the event.

Who is going to lay out the chairs when they have been moved for various activities?

This would depend on the activity and how many chairs needed to be moved. It may be that we look for a small group of volunteers who'd be willing and able to be called upon for this task for larger services or events, eg, funerals, or community meetings when all the chairs are being used.

However, I expect that most of the time the people involved in the activities will themselves move the chairs. So, the Messy Church team would arrange the chairs to suit whatever they are doing, then move them back to where they found them or arrange them to suit the next use of the sanctuary.

Another benefit of having chairs is that we need only have out as many as are needed at any given time, with the rest out of sight, but at hand in the choir room. So, for Sunday worship, we would have as many as we needed for our usual congregation plus a few extra.

The chairs are easy to move, being very light.

Chairs

Will they be able to hold bibles etc?

The quote includes 'bible boxes' which hang between the chairs when positioned next to each other in rows and can hold bibles and / or books. If the chairs are to be used without the boxes in place, bibles will be available on the shelving at the front doors for those who wish to collect on entry. Bible readings would also be included in the slides for the screens.

How comfortable are they and could we see samples?

We did receive sample chairs from Alpha, one with arms and one without. Unfortunately, Covid restrictions meant that we couldn't make them available for people to try out. Alistair, Bobby, Ross, Alison and Loraine did have a chance to try them when in the church building for permitted purposes and all agreed that they are comfortable to sit in, and stable to hold onto to assist in getting up. The samples have been returned to Alpha on their request.

The chairs look flimsy. Would good wooden chairs be more appropriate?

The proposed chairs perhaps look flimsy, but they are strong and robust, with a 10 year guarantee. Wooden chairs, such as those in Dunlop Kirk, have several disadvantages, i.e. they are heavy so difficult to move, they stack only two high, and certainly the Dunlop chairs, although moved relatively infrequently, are already loosening at the joints due in part to be moved around which really isn't what they are designed for, unlike the chairs proposed for Caldwell.

Is there any building nearby where they are installed?

I don't have that information. In any event, visits wouldn't be permitted just now. St Matthew's in Perth does have them, and they were shown in some of the photos shown at our previous meeting.

Is 100 with arms and 100 without arms the correct mix?

This is in line with the Church of Scotland's Committee on Church Art and Architecture recommendation that 50% of chairs should have arms.

Are the elders' pews to be taken away?

No, the elders' pews will remain in place. These proposals do not affect the chancel area.

Floor Covering

Marmoleum – does it have the texture of a carpet tile or linoleum?

Marmoleum is a brand of linoleum. It is environmentally-sound, very durable and easy to clean. It is used in a range of high-use settings including hospitals and clinics, museums and galleries, schools and shops as well as churches.

How easily is it marked and is it easy to remove stains?

It is naturally bacteriostatic, so repels rather than absorbs materials which might cause stains, and prevents bacterial growth on any spills.

Heaters

Do they require guards?

On receiving quotes, we were advised that the heaters did not require guards, as the actual heating elements are bedded deep in clay. The risk of burns / scalds is low.

The website shows domestic locations – are they widely used in industrial locations and in particular buildings with high ceilings?

The same system has been used and recommended by Dunphy Ecclesiastical who are experienced in working with church buildings.

Any examples where used in churches?

Similar systems have been installed in the following church buildings:

Old Meldrum, St Matthew & St George; Fenwick; Huntly, Christ Church; Dunblane, St Mary's.

Will the heating costs be greater than the present system?

The new system will be more efficient at heating the space – a 'smart thermostat' will activate the heating at the right time to have the room to the set temperature by the set time. The cost for the new system will be roughly £4.80 per hour. The heating tubes in the windows will be wired to a separate circuit and kept on low at all times to help reduce the condensation problem.

Can the present off peak tariffs still be used?

We don't expect any tariffs to need to be changed.

Are the two heaters necessary in the vestibule?

The markings on the plan are slightly misplaced – we have allowed for 2 heaters on the partition wall of the vestibule (but in the sanctuary). We were advised to do this for even heat coverage.

Why is there a charge for removing pew cushions – can we do this ourselves?

The costs provided in the report are based on the higher end - as if we were not able to undertake this task ourselves. There may be scope to have a skip to assist with a building-wide clear up / clear out. Ultimately, if the resources are available (i.e. a van) the pew cushions could be taken to the recycling centres ourselves (although there may be costs involved in booking a van to the dump).

Do we need some tables for informal communions, events etc?

Yes and this would seem to be the ideal time also to replace the tables in in the church hall. Gopak folding tables would be ideal and I'll send out information about them separately before our meeting.

With the church closed and our income reduced, is this the right time to spend half our savings on this project?

This question raises a number of issues, and I think it would be helpful to consider not only what we are proposing to do and how we propose to do it, but also the very important question of WHY we are proposing to make this significant change to our church building.

Our primary purpose and objective is to glorify God and to work for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom, and this must shape all that we do as a church and as a congregation. This includes ensuring that our buildings are fit for purpose, and that we use our financial resources to engage meaningfully and creatively in worship and mission. This project is intended to ensure that our sanctuary is a welcoming and accessible space in which people can gather for different forms of worship, including Messy Church, maybe starting Cafe Church, and for a range of other activities throughout the week. Before lockdown, we had a group of teenagers meeting regularly in the upstairs rooms in the Church Hall and they would also benefit from new sanctuary space. There are many different ways in which we could use an open, flexible space for worship and to engage missionally with our local community.

In terms of finances, it is our policy, as Trustees, to ensure that there are sufficient funds to cover 6 months expenditure with additional reserves being held as a contingency for fabric repairs. At end 2020 we held £119,950 in our Reserve Fund. 6 months expenditure, based on 2019 figures, amounts to £36,000. This means that we currently have £83,950 over the minimum required to be held. We have a separate Fabric Fund for repairs and maintenance, which currently stands at £9,574.

It is also worth remembering that should some major financial catastrophe befall us, we have the Manse which could be sold, with the proceeds being available to us for fabric projects.

The building having been closed since March 2020, both our income and our expenditure have fallen, the former by around £5,500 and the latter by around £10,700. This has resulted in a deficit for 2020 of £42. This compares to the previous year's deficit of £5,243.

In short, we are financially in a very comfortable position - with funds well in excess of the minimum we require to hold. I am aware of some congregations who have barely enough funds to pay their electricity bill.

The Church of Scotland as a whole is going through a process of change which for many congregations will mean union, linkage or even dissolution. At last year's General Assembly, the General Trustees produced a plan entitled "Well-Equipped Spaces in the Right Places" which sets out a number of key principles in terms of the Church of Scotland's buildings and land. I draw to your attention two of those principles which are particularly pertinent in response to this question.

Buildings and land are simply means by which the mission of the Church can be achieved.

While the Church values the land and buildings that it has inherited, these have to be suitable to achieve the Church's primary purpose of worship and mission. The Church's charitable purpose is not the conservation of buildings.

Our church building is very much in the right place, being in a prominent location at the heart of the village. This project would result in it also being a well-equipped space!

Previous Question about tables

Most of you will have encountered Gopak tables in other church or community halls, usually the long rectangular folding tables. They also make round folding tables, which might be very suitable for the sanctuary, although we'd need to make sure we could get them out the door and round the corner to the choir room for storage when not in use.

We have recently received two legacies, of £3,000 and £5,000 and we might like to consider using one of those to fund new tables for church hall and sanctuary.

We'd need to work out how many tables - size and shape - we need for our different activities based on how many people we need to seat and how much space they would take up.

Gopak tables

<https://www.alpha-furnishing.com/product-category/church-furniture/church-tables/gopak-tables/>

FAQ1 prepared by Rev Alison McBrier
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FAQ2 Prepared by Rev Alison McBrier
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