

Iona and the Ross of Mull Parish Profile

The churches in this vacancy are all
inclusive, and we welcome any
applicant



Parishes of Iona and the Ross of Mull, and North Mull

The islands of Mull and Iona lie in Scotland's beautiful inner Hebrides. They are accessed by ferries from Oban and Lochaline, and from Fionnphort at Mull's southern tip across the Sound to Iona. Our many vibrant communities together seek a new minister for the two linked parishes which jointly cover the entirety of these islands. The parishes, which both have a parish profile, are: North Mull, which includes the churches of Kilmore, Tobermory, Salen and Torosay; and the Ross of Mull and Iona, with churches on Iona and at Bunessan. The nominating committee comprises representatives of these churches. We are working in unison to find a minister who will walk with, support and inspire us, nourishing the uniqueness and diversity of our communities whilst building an exciting, more integrated, shared future.



View of Iona village

This parish lies amidst the beautiful physical environment of the Inner Hebrides. The area has an extraordinary cultural heritage, including the historical legacy of the Isle of Iona which is globally famous as the birthplace of Christianity in Scotland and the burial place of more than 50 kings and queens. Both Iona and Mull continue to be places of pilgrimage, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors from all over the world each year.

The churches of the parish serve dynamic and vibrant local communities, which are small (177 permanent residents on Iona and 750 on the Ross of Mull), but in many respects growing and thriving. Iona, for instance, has had a rising population, increased year-round occupancy of homes, and major community projects including social housing and award-winning Village Hall, and is progressing an award-winning innovative low carbon heat project. In recent years, Iona's school roll had the largest percentage increase in Oban, Lorne and the Isles.

Life in the parishes is underpinned by strong, active community organisations. Local people work together energetically in these organisations and in an array of committees to develop the area socially and economically in ways that are sustainable and beneficial to the community. There is a broad ecumenical scene, including the presence of Iona Community, Roman Catholic, Episcopal and Quakers on the Ross of Mull and we work well with these groups. In this setting there is exciting potential for leadership that reaches out and increased the contribution of the church in the surrounding communities and brings new life and growth to the church.

Here, as in every parish across Scotland, what is needed most is for the grace and power of the resurrected Jesus to make an impact on the lives of people, young and old, residents and visitors alike. The Church of Scotland along with other Christian denominations and groups has the privilege and responsibility of witnessing to the resurrection in this beautiful place. The congregations of Iona linked with Kilfinichen, Kilvickeon and the Ross of Mull are now united as one congregation. There is a service on alternate Sundays in each location of Iona and the Ross of Mull.



**Iona Parish
Church**

The parish church and manse on Iona were built in 1828 to a design by Thomas Telford. One of the Parliamentary churches built across the highlands and islands at this time, so called because their construction was financed by a grant from Parliament—as an expression of gratitude to God for victory in the Napoleonic wars. This building was in use on Iona some 70 years before the Abbey Church was restored in 1905.

MISSION STATEMENT

**To become a welcoming place where the love of God
works**

Ministry Opportunities:

Rural ministry offers opportunities to become deeply involved with the lives of both church members and the community beyond the walls of the church. The Minister is often invited to participate in community events. For the right person this provides a delightful sphere of Christian service and mission among warm hearted people with potential to expand and renew the Church

Pastoral:

The life events of birth, marriage and death provide opportunities for pastoral ministry. The

funeral load is not heavy - 3 in the last year. We have weddings both of local people and of visitors. On Iona prior permission of Historic Scotland must be obtained to be married in the Abbey Church or ancillary buildings. This does not, of course, apply to weddings in the parish church on Iona. Elderly care provides an opportunity for pastoral ministry and a number of elderly people are cared for in the community by family and carers. There is a small cottage hospital in Craignure and a general hospital in Oban.



Bunessan Parish Church

Bunessan church was built in 1804 as the village became established and is said to include some of the stones from the medieval Kilvickeon building. Today Bunessan Church serves the congregation from the centre of the village.

Schools:

There are two Primary Schools, in Bunessan and Iona. The secondary school is in Oban with the pupils from the Ross of Mull and Iona living in the hostel there from Monday to Friday.

Outreach:

Work with primary aged children has been developed with visits to Bunessan School on a fortnightly basis.

Outreach to adults has largely been through special services tied to the festivals of Easter and Christmas, and through Lent and Advent groups. These groups have run weekly for 4 week periods and have attracted some not otherwise part of the church community.

One of the challenges of the parishes is how to effectively reach out to the wider community and the thousands of visitors who come in the summer—a challenge that remains.

Worship:

Two services are held each Sunday and form the backbone of the worship life of the congregations. There are other seasonal worship opportunities, Remembrance, School services, Holy Week, World Day of Prayer, Harvest, Christian Aid week, Christmas etc. The size of the Sunday congregations varies, but is generally around 8-10 people, both on Mull and on Iona. The services have followed a fairly traditional format. Music is led by musicians including violin, guitar and mandolin. We have joint services with Iona Parish Church and Buessan Parish Church.

The parish:

Kilfinichen and Kilvickeon places of worship are not in use today, but there are ruins of Kilvickeon situated about two miles SE of Buessan. This building is contemporary with the nunnery buildings on Iona and constructed in the same style, including the presence of the strange 'Sheela na gig' figure built into the wall of the church.



Easter Service at the Split Rock, Fionnphort Beach



Balfour's Bay, Erraid (location for Robert Louis Stevenson's Kidnapped)



Winter Sunset, Ross of Mull

Discovering our new identity:

- Reflect in all appropriate ways on what it means to be a church that is welcoming and inclusive.
- Explore ways of initiating contact with families, and building relationships with children and young people.
- Explore the possibilities for the mission of the congregations e.g. - new groups, school work, bible study and prayer. Encourage the involvement of both elders and members in the leadership of such groups. Provide support and training when needed.
- Explore ways each congregation can learn more of the other congregations, to hear both their joys and their challenges and to build ways of sharing good news and practice.
- For the Kirk Sessions to review service times and reflect on how these could change to encourage both new ways of worship, and new people to come to worship. Reflect on the impact of both present and any future service times for a minister and their family.

Planning for the future:

- As a priority, ensure that there are open modes of communication between elders within each congregation, and open modes of communication between congregations.
- Consider how any emerging new sense of energy and purpose can be communicated to the community at large.
- Ensure that there are clear systems of support in place for a minister and family.



Iona Christmas Eve candlelit carols

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