

St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow open, inclusive, welcoming

Visitor Information - Welcome to St Mary's Cathedral

You are in the cathedral church of the diocese of Glasgow and Galloway in the Scottish Episcopal Church. The church was built for people to meet with God in different ways. Sometimes it is a place where individuals can find a quiet, sacred space. Sometimes it is packed with people celebrating festivals and significant moments in life. It is a venue for concerts, exhibitions, conferences, celebrations and for the local community. It is also the home of a congregation that has roots in the Celtic traditions of Scotland, in the practises and worship of the undivided catholic faith which once united Christians together in this land, and in the experience of reformation and renewal that began with the Scottish Reformation in 1560.

This building is just the latest home for a people with a long tradition of trying to worship God in ways that make sense in their own age. Designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott, it was opened in 1871. Since then various periods of restoration and renewal have made it into the building that you see today.

Beauty

It is no coincidence that this is a beautiful space. The community here has worked for generations to make this a space in which there are intimate corners and yet also awe inspiring grandeur. This is a place where beauty matters. The worship that takes place here happens within one of the most beautiful interior spaces in Scotland. Beautiful music is also a strong feature here. Beauty can take people closer to God.

The murals are the work of the American artist Gwyneth Leech. Look out for the rocket in the canopy of stars – showing that this is a place where tradition and modernity mingle. You'll see the ascended Christ in glory as soon as you enter the church. In the murals you'll also see Noah's ark and creatures from land and sea – each one an endangered species. Nearby, Adam and Eve are being expelled from the Garden of Eden by a modern environmental disaster. Above the High Altar, the Blessed Virgin Mary, to whom the building is dedicated receives the news of Jesus's birth from the Angel Gabriel, depicted in a room with a window which looks out at the cathedral spire.

Information

Free booklets with further are available at the back of the cathedral: A Brief History, a Self-Guided Tour, The Murals, The Stained Glass Windows, The Organ, and Welcome. Colour brochures of the murals and CDs of the choir's music are for sale. Volunteer Stewards are also present to help.

The people of St Mary's

The congregation here has a task – to proclaim the unconditional love of God to the people of Glasgow and the world beyond. Here in this place people have gathered for over a century to witness in varied ways to their experience of knowing and being loved by God. They aspire to being a community which is open, inclusive and welcoming.

Open

The people here gather from a wide area, each person attracted by different things. Some are attracted by the excellence of the music, some by the practical spirituality that is taught, some by the diverse opportunities for volunteering, and some by the open community of folk who meet week by week. A distinctive feature of their life is an openness to new ideas and they enjoy being challenged spiritually in fresh ways.

Inclusive

The congregation are young, they are old. They are from different cultures and countries. They are straight, they are gay. Some are single, some are married, some are partnered, some are single again. They are men and they are women. Some live alone, some live with others. They are black and they are white. They have different abilities. They are students, workers, retired and unemployed. They have different understandings of the truth. They have all kinds of different reasons for choosing to make this their spiritual home.

Welcoming

It is a vibrant and diverse group of people who have found a welcome in this place. All the rich resources of the Christian tradition are shared here by modern people who enjoy being together. Whether it is being caught up in the richness of worshipping with hundreds of others or meeting God in a quiet corner of a peaceful church, you are welcome here.

Contact

You can find much more about this cathedral on its website – www.thecathedral.org.uk. You'll also find that St Mary's is on Facebook – www.facebook.com/openinclusivewelcoming and twitter @thecathedral.

Sunday worship takes place at 8.30 am, 10.30 am and 6.30 pm. Everyone is welcome to participate fully in the worship here. The morning services are communion services at which communion is offered to all. The evening service is usually the incomparable beauty of Choral Evensong – a service where the music leads us nearer and nearer to God.

Before you leave this place, please sign the visitor's book. Please also take time to give thanks for those who built this place and those who continue to build a congregation that reaches out to the world.

A Prayer for Visitors

Loving God this cathedral was built as a home for you. Not because you need it, you don't. Not because it is big enough to hold you, it isn't. Not because you can't be found elsewhere. You can. It was built as a meeting place where people can worship and wonder, sing and study, pray and ponder. Be with those who come here, and go with them when they leave. Let this place be lovely in their memories, and let your love be miraculous in their lives. Amen.

(Based on a prayer used in Wells Cathedral, broadcast on the BBC TV series "Cathedrals" January 2014.)