

Baptisms

It would be possible to hold baptisms in the Parish Centre, if we built a portable baptismal font. Baptisms generally take place on Sundays (early afternoon) and the hall is not used very often at that time (or indeed, any time of Sunday) by anyone other than the Parish.

First Holy Communion and Confirmation

There are usually two or three First Communion services in a year, on Saturday mornings at the 10am Mass. The church is normally very full for these services, with families and friends attending. The most practical solution could be to use the High School. The Parish Together committee can consider options.

Confirmation normally takes place on a weekday evening with a relatively large turnout. The Parish Together committee can consider options.

Weddings and Funerals

It is likely to be best that the Parish use other churches in the Deanery for these services. The Parish Together committee should consider options.

Other church groups

There are a number of groups within the parish, e.g. SVDP, Legion of Mary, RCIA group, Divine Mercy Group, Third World Group, Children's Liturgy, the Bereavement Group, etc. The Parish Together committee should consider whether there is any impact on these groups arising from the closure of the church.

Closing and reopening the church

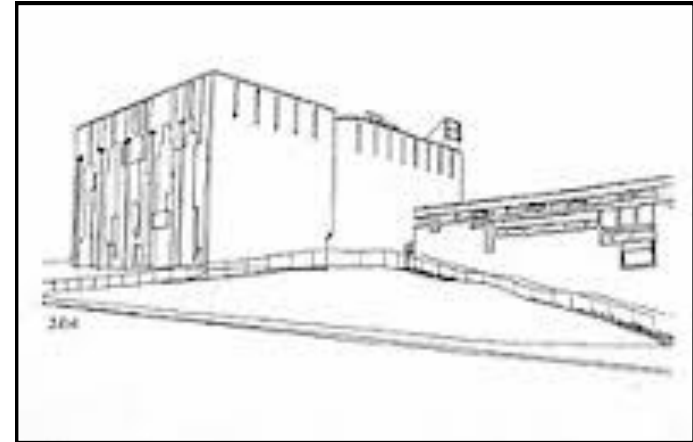
The Parish Together committee should consider whether there should be any special services to mark the closing of the church and, particularly, to mark the re-opening. We may need to approach the Diocese to check whether there would be a formal "decommissioning" of the church, before the site is closed to allow repairs, and whether there would be a formal re-consecration service to mark the re-opening.

Please support your parish at this important time!

Your views and opinions

We are always keen to hear from parishioners with questions and views on all aspects of the renovation, fundraising and church closure. If you have any questions about the project, you can speak to John Hastings or Deacon John.

ST BRIDE'S CHURCH EAST KILBRIDE



Impact of Church Closure

May 2015

When will the church be closed?

The best current estimate is that the church will close at the the October school holiday. The site will be closed with secure access (for reasons of Health and Safety. Because of the proximity to the school, it would be preferable to close the site when school traffic (cars and students) are absent.

How long will the church be closed?

The church will be closed for at least 12 months. However, projects normally take longer than estimated, so assume 15-18 months.

Where will Sabbath services be held?

We have sought opinion on this matter. There is a strong preference for making use of the facilities in St Andrew's and St Bride's High School. There are good practical reasons:

- It is close by the church; parishioners will make their normal journey;
- We want to continue to run children's liturgy and we can continue to use the hall and parish library, which are close to the High School
- There are good parking facilities available.

Will that be costly?

We have still to firm up on costs. The cost will depend on the length of time we require to use the school over the weekend. That means we need to assess whether all of the Sabbath services will be held in the school. This will also depend on whether there will continue to be four Sabbath services (and that may depend on the views of any priest appointed to the parish). Costs are still under discussion.

Recall that, when the church is closed, there will be a saving in the costs of heating and lighting, which is an offset to the costs of renting the school. We also obtain considerable income (and goodwill) from people and organisations that use the Parish Centre and we want that facility to remain available; otherwise, we could lose custom permanently.

Is the High School suitable?

The seating will be set up for us and then stored after use. That is built into the cost of the rent and is also a requirement of the agreement. However, it will still look like a school hall. It would be appropriate if the parish were able to "furnish" the hall, so that it resembles a church. That means that the hall needs to be set up each weekend, and then put back to its original state, ready for school the next day. We need additional "sacristan duties" each weekend, before the first service and after the last service of the weekend.

The School would be a "different venue" so we would all need to get used to it. It would be helpful to build a team of "welcomers", particularly at the start of the period when we would be using the School. Many churches across the world operate with "welcomers" at all Sabbath services each week, in any case. It is good practice. All of this means we need additional people to help.

How will we assess which Sabbath services to hold?

There are 4 separate communities for Sabbath services (Saturday Vigil and 3 Sunday masses) and there is greater attendance at all of these services than could be accommodated in the Parish Centre. Health and Safety requirements limit numbers in the Parish Centre to 120. Further, when the Parish Centre is full, it would be liturgically difficult to offer communion (particularly under both species). So, it is hard to argue for an alternative to using the High School for all of the Sabbath services. Nevertheless, it would be helpful to undertake a survey of mass attendances as soon as practicable, bearing in mind that measurement is likely to be under-reported over the summer holidays.

Easter, Christmas and Holydays of Obligation

The Parish Together Committee can consider whether the High School is the most appropriate venue. Christmas Day 2015 falls on a Friday.

Could we use other churches in the Deanery for Sabbath services?

The experience of other parishes where there has been temporary church closure is that, once parishioners are lost, they tend to be lost permanently.

What about mid-week services?

The daily 10am mass (or service) is a parish fixture. It should be practicable to use the Parish Centre for these services, although there may need to be an adjustment to the time of the daily service (e.g. earlier at 9:30am) to accommodate the community functions for which the Parish Centre is used and which make a significant financial contribution to the Parish.

If the proposal to use the Parish Centre is taken forward, the congregation will need to make arrangements to open and prepare the main hall in the Centre for services and to clear the hall afterwards before the community users arrive.

The hall is used very extensively in the evening during the week, so that might present a challenge for evening services, e.g. for Holy Hour or Lenten Stations of the Cross.

The Parish Together Committee can consider these issues.