



St. Patrick's Parish

Our Parish Future

Sadly, we are now facing the situation that the future of our church and parish is not good. There are a variety of reasons for this:

- When we compare ourselves with the other parishes in our pastoral area we are the quietest by attendance at Mass and by numbers of other sacraments.
- When we look around the church during Mass we can see how few people are here, we can see our average age, and we can see the poor condition of the building.
- Our attendance at weekday and seasonal services is very poor. We couldn't fill one day for 40 hours, we had six people at our Advent penitential service, our daily Masses and devotions can sometime be attended by only 5 or 6 people.
- The shortage of priests means that the Archdiocese needs to send priests where places are busier – there are some parishes with more people at weekday Mass than we get over the whole weekend, some parishes with more funerals, baptisms, etc., a month than we have in a year.
- We are currently doing okay financially, but this year we expect gas bills to double, and electricity, insurance, and diocesan payments to all increase markedly. We can cope in the short-term, but finances could soon become unmanageable.
- At present we have some great volunteers who are able to ensure that we can celebrate liturgy well. Unfortunately, we don't though have any back-up – if anything happens to any of them we don't have people ready to step-in. If we no longer had an organist, if we couldn't do children's liturgy or pre-sacramental catechesis, if we didn't have Sunday teas...
- We are facing a medium-term repair bill of almost £2 million. We don't have £2 million, and there is no realistic way of raising it, and even if we could get it, would this be the best way to spend it?

The Church

We can expect the church to close, although no final decision has yet been made. The Archdiocesan estates department will now be looking at options for the future of the building, including looking for planning permission for possible future uses (such as conversion to flats, a hotel, etc.). The money that is made by selling the property will be divided between the neighbouring parishes.

If/when the church closes all the statues, etc., will be removed, and reused or stored.

The Archdiocese does not want to close the church until arrangements for the future are in place, otherwise there is the risk of vandalism and neglect.

The Parish

At some point, maybe when the church closes, maybe before that, the parish will be made part of one or more of our neighbouring parishes (St Peter's, the Cathedral, St Aloysius) and the boundaries redrawn. You will be advised which parish you live in, and that parish will provide you with pastoral care, visiting housebound, etc. The parish records (Baptisms, marriages, etc.) will be transferred to one of the parishes and so will remain available when you need certificates.

The School

The school will be allocated to one of the neighbouring parishes and that parish will look after it, provide Mass, organize the school sacraments, etc. If there is Mass in the school on Holydays of Obligation, First Fridays, etc., there may be the possibility that the wider community could attend, but that is a matter that will need to be discussed with the new parish priest and the headteacher at the time, and will depend on the rules that the City Council have to keep children safe in school.

It is unlikely to be possible to have Sunday Masses in the school due to the costs involved in school lets and the other Masses that the neighbouring parishes already have to celebrate on a Sunday.

The Housebound

The new parishes will ensure that anyone who is housebound and cannot get to Mass get Holy Communion just like we do now. This is likely to require volunteers to be extraordinary ministers, and we will discuss that in due time.

When will anything happen?

We don't know any dates, but nothing is going to happen immediately. Any process towards closure is likely to take at least a couple of years – this may be longer e.g. if the process of looking at new uses for the church is extended; it may be shorter e.g. if there is a sudden need for expensive repairs. As things develop, we will keep you informed.

Right now, nothing is going to change – we will keep on doing all that we are doing as best we can. As long as the church is open, we will still have Mass, funerals, baptisms, weddings, social events, etc.

At the same time, we will also be looking at ways to keep developing links with our neighbouring parishes so that when the time comes, we are prepared for change rather than it being a sudden shock.

There are no plans to move Canon Gargaro so he will be here for the near future too, but in time the Archbishop may need him elsewhere and if that happens one of the neighbouring priests is likely to be asked to look after St Patrick's until closure. In this case there is unlikely to be provision for weekday Mass but funerals will be provided.

What do we need to do now?

Parish Council

We need to formalise a Parish Council who can represent the parish at any discussions regarding the future of the parish and any meetings with neighbouring parishes.

Some of the things they will discuss and plan for are:

- Travel to the neighbouring parishes
- Practical aspects to closing a parish
- Commemorating the life and work of people in the parish
- Ensuring pastoral care in the transition to neighbouring parishes
- Discussing the future use of the building

Urgent Work

We have urgent repair work of roughly £40,000. We need to get quotes for this and do anything necessary for Health and Safety. We have the money in the bank to pay for this.



St. Patrick's is a Parish of the Archdiocese of Glasgow,
a Designated Religious Charity, Number SC01814