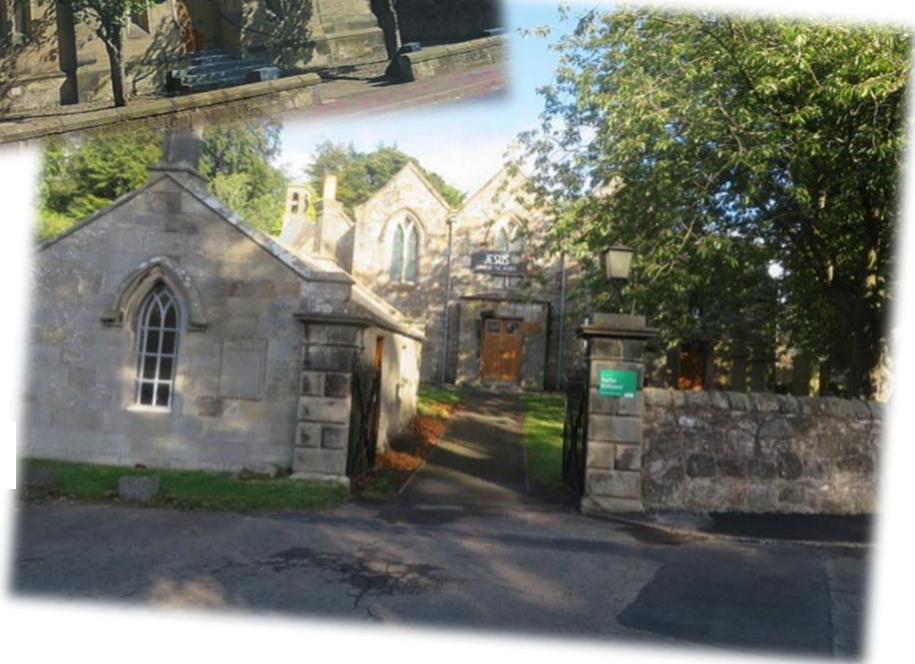


East Calder, Kirknewton and Ratho Church of Scotland Parish Profile



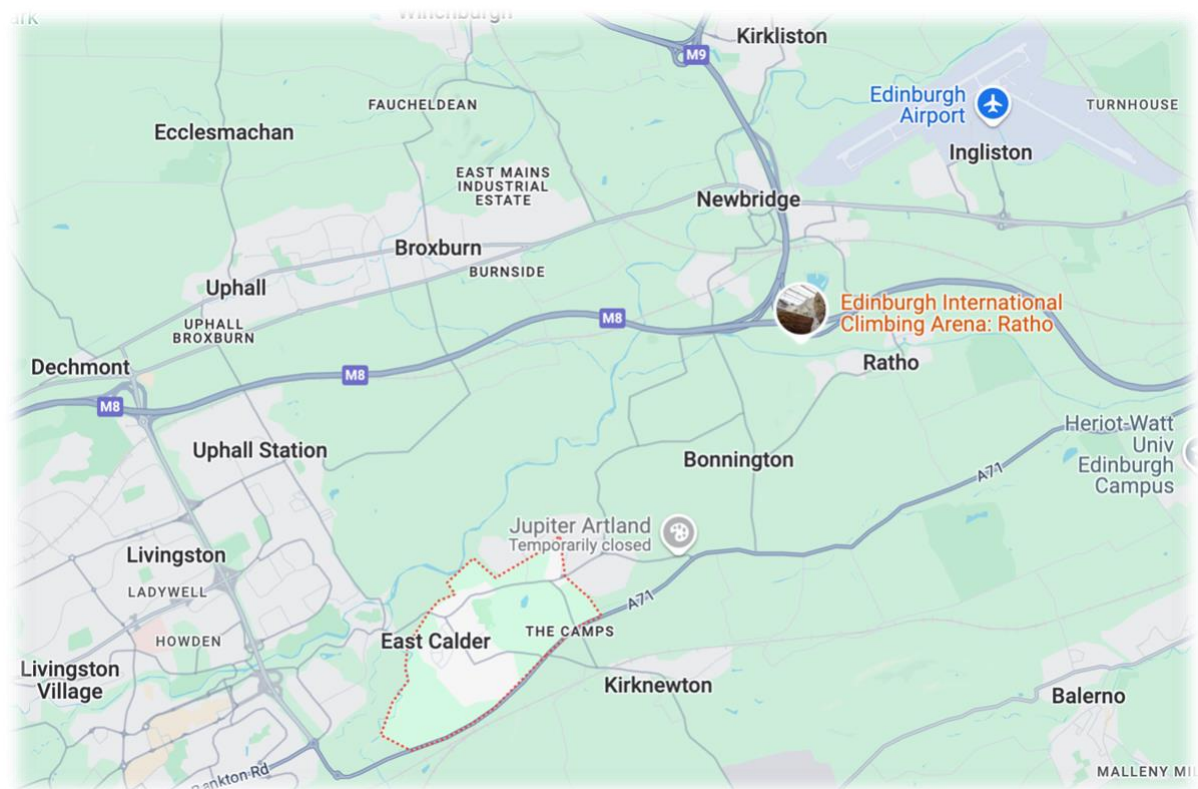
East Calder Church



Ratho Church

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East Calder, Kirknewton and Ratho



1 Introduction to our Parish

Thank you for taking time to peruse the Parish Profile for East Calder, Kirknewton and Ratho Church of Scotland.

On 1st November 2024, and as part of the Edinburgh and West Lothian Presbytery's Mission Plan, Kirknewton and East Calder Parish Church and Ratho Parish Church united to form East Calder, Kirknewton and Ratho Church of Scotland.

Prior to the union, both charges were vacant due to the ministers, Rev Ian Wells retiring from his charge of Ratho on 3rd June 2023 and Rev Alistair Cowper retiring from his charge of Kirknewton and East Calder on 30 September 2023.

East Calder, Kirknewton and Ratho Church is a 5 Year Reviewable Charge and the Kirk Session, having considered the Ministers and Deacons in Civil Partnerships and same Sex Marriages Act (Act 1 2015), agreed not to depart from the Church of Scotland's traditional stance.

As part of the Presbytery Mission Plan, we are in a Parish Grouping with West Kirk of Calder linked with Polbeth Harwood Church. The partnership is still at a very early stage of development, and we are keen to progress the connections at the earliest opportunity.

The villages of East Calder and Kirknewton are in West Lothian with Kirknewton situated to the south of the A71 and East Calder to the north. Both villages are some 12 miles from the centre of Edinburgh and 3 miles east of Livingston. Ratho is in the rural west part of the City of Edinburgh council area. The Union canal passes through the village and Edinburgh Airport is situated 4 miles away.

The Church buildings are in East Calder and Ratho and are 5 miles apart.

For the purposes of the Presbytery's Mission Plan, the population of East Calder and Kirknewton was considered to be around 8,000 and Ratho 4,000. However, significant new housing is being built, drawing in new and younger generations. Alongside such concentrations of population and new developments sit other more rural areas, in which geographical size of the parish is an important mission issue. The population is expected to increase to around 17,000 by 2030.

Our vision is to ensure that God's mission is to all people within the congregation and the Parish. In January 2025, the Kirk Session agreed our Mission Statement to reflect this aspiration as 'Be Church in the Community by proclaiming the Good News of Christ and displaying love and faith in action'.

2 Our Roots, History and Structure

Kirknewton and East Calder

The current church building in Kirknewton, to the west of the village, was the original parish Church built in 1750 to serve the two villages of Kirknewton and East Calder. Until that time East Calder and Kirknewton enjoyed the status of separate parishes. The union remained until 1776 when a group at East Calder seceded and opened a separate place of worship.

In 1886 the present Church in East Calder was erected to serve as a United Presbyterian Church and, later still, the United Free Church. In 1929 the United Free Church became part of the Church of Scotland. Kirknewton and East Calder were re-united in 1943.

In 2024 the church building in Kirknewton was sold although we are grateful that it is still used for worship by an evangelical congregation.

Ratho

Ratho Church is a picturesque, listed building situated in the Conservation area of Ratho Village. The Church is surrounded by the Kirk Yard which is steeped in history. Evidence has been found there of an Anglian settlement dating approximately between 8th and 10th centuries.

The Ratho Parish covers a wide area including Gogarbank, Long Dalmahoy, Wilkieston, Clifton, Ratho Station with Ratho situated in the centre. Over the years changes have been made to the interior of the Church to accommodate current needs and meet accessibility for all requirements.

East Calder, Kirknewton and Ratho Church of Scotland

On 1st November 2024, Kirknewton and East Calder Parish Church and Ratho Parish Church united to form East Calder, Kirknewton and Ratho Church of Scotland.

Structure

Prior to the union both congregations were administered in accordance with the terms of the Model Deed of Constitution and the Unitary Constitution was adopted at the date of the union. The Kirk Session has 26 elders consisting of 15 ladies and 11 men.

There are six working groups made up of elders and congregational members who report, when necessary, at Kirk Session meetings. The working groups are Finance, Worship & Discipleship, Pastoral Care, Mission (In-reach and Outreach), Management, Administration and Communications, and Property.

3 Profile of the Congregation

The membership is 278. The average attendance at the Sunday services is around 100. Although we have an ageing congregation we have been encouraged recently by the attendance of younger families which has reflected in EnerJ (Sunday School) numbers increasing. There are 18 children registered with EnerJ and currently 4 young people with the Youth Church.

There is significant new housing in the parish, such as the Calderwood development and there are plans for further development in the Ratho and East Calder areas.

Challenges

We acknowledge that there are always challenges to be faced and two main ones we have had over the years and are still prevalent:

1. Encouraging new people into the family of the Church (especially young families).
2. Resourcing our current and potential groups.

The desire here is to achieve a good balance between in-reach, making sure our members are provided for and looking outwards to the wider community.

We see resourcing as an opportunity to identify gifts and abilities in ourselves as well as in others around us. Making sure the right people are in the right jobs and encouraging those with the ability but lacking in confidence to step out of their comfort zone in faith and with the knowledge that those around them will encourage and support them.

Our Minister

We pray that our new Minister will have the qualities to help us to develop the opportunities that are present in this parish and the attributes of the Minister that we seek to lead us forward are:

- Faithful prayer and preaching of the Word of God
- Enthusiastic team leadership with vision
- Pastoral Care
- Recognition, development and use of the gifts of the people
- Community outreach and involvement
- Able to reach out to and communicate with people of all ages

Strengths

We are a motivated congregation committed to prayer and worship. A core of members can co-ordinate and lead in worship, children's addresses and prayer. We have competent and able finance and property management, and the church buildings are well maintained. We are a Christ centred Church, Prayer focused, and Mission orientated.

Groups

We have various groups meeting throughout the week. Everything we do is underpinned in prayer.

EnerJ - our name for Sunday School. It is for children aged 3 to primary 7 and meets during Church time. The Children gather in the Church for the first part of the service and the all age talk before moving to the Church Hall for their own teaching, worship and fellowship.

Youth Church - is for young people S1 upwards and like EnerJ, meets for the first part of the service before moving onto their own activities. This group is small in number but rising.

Prayer Group - meets weekly in the Prayer Room at East Calder Church lifting up local, national and international concerns in prayer.

House Groups - there are 4 groups that meet for Bible Study, prayer and fellowship throughout our villages on various days and times in people's homes.

The Guild - meets in East Calder Church Hall on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month to enjoy a time of worship, a number of guest speakers throughout the year and fellowship. The average attendance is 25+ at each meeting.

Further groups are included under Outreach Activities and additional information is on the website.



The Guild



Enerj



Youth Church

4 Worship Life

There are three Sunday Worship Services:

East Calder 10.00am Traditional

Ratho 11.30am Traditional

East Calder 6.30pm 'In Focus' – Informal

The Basis of Union included a paragraph regarding places of worship:

“Both the East Calder and Ratho churches, at present used and occupied by the congregations, shall be the places of worship of the united charge. Services shall be conducted in East Calder and in Ratho each Sunday at times to be decided by the Minister and Kirk Session, subject to the approval of Presbytery.”

In Focus is led by members of the congregation and it is an informal time of worship and fellowship with internal and external speakers on various topics.

Prior to the union two joint services were held one in Ratho and one in East Calder. Two further joint services are planned during 2025. Additional services are held during Holy Week and at Christmas. We have two annual Bereavement Services, one in each location, when all who have been bereaved are invited to come along to the services and to join us for refreshments afterwards.

Communion services are held on the 1st Sundays of February, May, August and November. Home communions are provided as and when required.

Currently we use the New International Version of the Bible and the words for the hymns, sermon slides, music videos when required and intimations are projected. Primarily hymns are from CH4 or Mission Praise.

Singing is accompanied by a digital piano at East Calder and an organ at Ratho.

Scripture lessons and prayers are often led by members of the congregation.

The services at East Calder are streamed live.



Ratho Church

World Day of Prayer

World Day of Prayer is an Ecumenical Prayer Movement bringing together millions of people from over 100 countries to pray, worship and learn. A yearly service is held on the first Friday in March and material is prepared by the World Day of Prayer Committee from a different country each year.

Our Grouping includes West Kirk of Calder linked with Polbeth Harwood, Kirk of Calder, East Calder, Kirknewton and Ratho all Church of Scotland, St Mary's Episcopalian Church Dalmahoy and St Theresa's Roman Catholic Church, East Calder. A different congregation hosts the service each year with members from all congregations taking part in the service. A time of fellowship, enjoying light refreshments follows the service.

5 Pastoral Care

The Church offers pastoral care and social support in many ways with much of the work being undertaken discreetly.

The Kirk Session, when considering working groups in line with the Unitary Constitution, agreed to form a Pastoral Care Group to oversee the arrangements for care within the congregation and the wider community.

While in the early stages of the union and prior to the ordination/induction of a Minister the Group is developing an approach to ensure that needs are identified, and that appropriate care and attention are provided by people with the relevant skills.

We are mindful that pastoral care is available to all, not only in the congregation but also the wider community. This includes support for the Minister and family.

Pastoral care is prevalent in all our work for example in the Prayer Group, House Groups, the Listening Project, Foodbank etc.

Prayer is at the centre of all we do and is a large part of pastoral care in our Church Family.

6 Outreach Activities

There are many ways in which we, as the Congregation of East Calder, Kirknewton and Ratho reach out to others in our community.

The following activities are some of the ways we have identified to interact with our neighbours in the community.

Drop-in Coffee Mornings - held regularly in Ratho Church Hall from 10.30am to 12.00 noon. Dates are advertised.

Foodbank - for a number of years, Ratho Church has run a Foodbank, known as



The Storehouse. It is able to support those in need in the community solely through the generosity not only of Church members, but also of village residents, local organisations (e.g. Ratho Primary School and the Ratho Football Club), and a number of local businesses. We gratefully receive from them donations of cash and food supplies, without which we would not be able to operate.

The Foodbank is there to help any residents of Ratho or Ratho Station

who find themselves in need of emergency assistance to feed themselves and their family. In addition, on occasions we are contacted by Social Services to assist with people made homeless who are housed temporarily by Social Services in the Travel Lodge at Ratho Station. This is particularly challenging as these people have no cooking facilities.

Forget-me-not Café (Dementia Café) – this is run by Alzheimer's Scotland and supported by Church members. The Café meets once a month in East Calder Church Hall providing a service to around 10 people who suffer from dementia.

The Boys' Brigade - also reaches out to the community by organising events and issuing open invitations to families, friends and members of the parish to come along and join with them. There are currently 40 Boys in the three sections of the Company.

The Listening Project - was set up by the Church for the community. It provides opportunities for people to come to a warm space to find company and friendship. Strangers are not that for long! A Hub is run twice a week and soup, and a cup of tea are provided. Although this is Church run, we have 20 volunteers – 50% from the Church and 50% from the community.

Through the work of the Project, we learned that some recently bereaved people suffered from loneliness and isolation. On Wednesday evenings a small group of people get together for a meal and this ensures that they have company at least one night a week. It also helps to provide support on the difficult journey following bereavement.

We run a monthly Craft and Chat Club, informal listening sessions (where our listeners have been trained by Listen Well Scotland) and occasional community events.

East Calder, Calderwood and Kirknewton Primary Schools have very strong links with the Project, and we look forward to contacting the Ratho Schools in the near future.

The Project shares the principles of serving and carrying out Christ's work within our community, for His glory and guided by His spirit. Church outreach through the Project has brought people to our Sunday morning and evening worship services, the Guild and the Boys' Brigade which is very encouraging.

Other opportunities - as a Church, the Remembrance Services and the traditional Easter and Christmas Services provide us with opportunities for direct outreach to the community.



The Hub



The Boys' Brigade



7 Mission Activities

As a Congregation we also have other links that are beyond the boundaries of our community. Some are links as a Church while others are work undertaken by individual members. Support is given by prayer and financial giving. We have supported:

- Bethany Christian Trust
- Blythswood Care Shoebox Appeals
- CHAS
- Christian Aid
- Fresh Start
- The Vine Trust
- Tearfund
- West Lothian Foodbank

Supporting others in the community

Sight Scotland Veterans - The Linburn Centre, Wilkieston

The Linburn Centre is an activity hub for ex-servicemen and women with sight loss that is significantly affecting their independence. With a variety of activities and outings and set in beautiful grounds, the centre offers the means and support to adapt to life with sight loss and try new things. Many veterans who attend the centre say the things they do there and the connections they've made have transformed their lives.

The Centre had their own Chaplain up to 2018 and since that time Ratho's previous Minister and latterly the Locum conducted the Remembrance Day Services and provided support when required.

Christmas Hampers

Through congregational support and financial giving, we provide Christmas hampers (including basic food essentials) for families who are struggling. Importantly, the families are identified by the primary schools of Kirknewton, East Calder and Calderwood as needing a little extra help and care. The bags are then distributed by the schools protecting confidentiality. It is our intention to liaise with Ratho Primary School to discuss the inclusion of families in Ratho.

Non-Church Groups

The Church halls in both villages are made available to and used by local groups as we reach out to the community and to assist with meeting the needs of parish residents. Our support is wide, ranging from Baby and Toddlers, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Rainbows, Brownies to dance groups.

Reuse and Thrive Charity Shop

Early 2020, Rev Alistair Cowper worked with Community members, looking at ways to help support the local community to reduce waste and encourage recycling. The aims were to establish a registered charity and open a shop which uses its resources effectively to prevent and relieve poverty by providing good quality second hand goods at affordable prices. A percentage of the proceeds from the shop go towards supporting local community groups and charities. Volunteer support from Church members continues.

8 Stewardship and Finance

Following the union the accounts have been amalgamated with the ceasing charity number's (Ratho) balances being transferred to the continuing charity number (Kirknewton & East Calder). This resulted in a balance of £186,108 in the General Fund as at 31st December 2024. Both congregations 2023 Report and Accounts and the united East Calder, Kirknewton and Ratho's 2024 Report and Accounts are on the Church's website.

The principal sources of income are from bank standing orders, offering envelopes, cash in the open plate and Gift Aid which amounted to £109,165 in 2024. Other income comes from fundraising, hall lets, investments and bank interest.

During 2024, the sale of Kirknewton Church and Hall was concluded and in 2025 the manse in Ratho was sold with the net sale proceeds from both transactions being credited to the Consolidated Fabric Fund.

Our Giving to Grow allocation for 2025 is £58,830 and this is the net figure following the application of income from the Consolidated Stipend Fund amounting to £21,455.

We supported various charities throughout the year and in 2024 our Congregation donated a total of £3,162 to the following charities:

- West Lothian Foodbank: £1,941
- KNEC Christmas Bags: £1,221

Our objective with Stewardship is to integrate this into the life of the congregation and to maximise the giving of the congregation in terms of time, talents and money. Our aim is to promote and proclaim the biblical message of gifts and talents, to allow people to discover their own gifts and talents and to use these to the glory of God.

9 Staffing

The Church employs 3 staff:

The Listening Project coordinator (20 hours per week)

Pianist (East Calder)

Cleaner (East Calder Church Hall)

All the activities are the result of a great deal of time and effort on the part of those who plan and organise, and the success depends on the willingness of many to support and participate. We are deeply indebted to all office bearers and members for their continued support of, and interest in, the continuing local, national and international work of the Church.

10 Church, Manse, Halls and Location

Prior to the union 8 buildings were vested in the General Trustees.

Ratho Church and Hall

Ratho Manse

East Calder Church and Hall

East Calder Manse

Kirknewton Church and Hall

Kirknewton Church and Hall were sold in September 2024 as part of the Presbytery's Mission Plan and the sale was not related to the union.

Manse

Following the union, the Trustees agreed that both existing manses should be sold, and a new Cala Homes 'Lewis' property has been purchased in Mansefield Lea, East Calder.



On the ground floor there is a large open plan kitchen and family area which is connected to a rear patio and garden via bi-folding doors, while a separate lounge also connects to the outdoors via French doors. There is a further reception room to the front of the home and a downstairs WC. A utility area has access to the double garage.

On the first floor, the main bedroom has two built in wardrobes and an en suite. There are another four bedrooms (one also with an en suite shower room) and a family bathroom. One of the bedrooms may be used as a study.

Amenities in the villages:

- 6 Primary Schools
- 2 Health Centres
- Dentist
- 2 Libraries
- Shops and Post Office
- Restaurants
- Pharmacies
- Nursery facilities

The parish offers a pleasant environment, opportunities for walking in Almondell Country Park



or walks along the side of the Union Canal.

There is also the Edinburgh Climbing Centre, Ratho and the recently opened Lost Shore Surf Resort as well as a Sports Centre in East Calder.

There are regular transport links to Edinburgh from Ratho, East Calder and Kirknewton and to Livingston from East Calder and Kirknewton.

11 Links and further Information

Our website contains information regarding our history, services, groups, finances etc and the website address is: eckrchurch.org.uk



East Calder, Kirknewton & Ratho Church

12 Contact Details

Informal enquiries can be made to the Interim Moderator:

Rev Julia Wiley

Telephone: 01501 730358

Email: JWiley@churchofscotland.org.uk

A curriculum vitae and covering letter should be submitted to the Clerk to the Nominating Committee. Please also supply full contact details of two referees who will only be contacted by the Nominating Committee if your application is processed further.

Clerk to the Nominating Committee:

Mrs Elizabeth Pennykid

Telephone: 07502 107477

Email: sessionclerk.eckr@gmail.com