

Markinch and Thornton Parish Church of Scotland

Parish Profile



Markinch and Thornton Parish Church of Scotland

The Call

This is an unrestricted call. We are a newly formed Union (June 2014) between Markinch Parish Church and Thornton Parish Church.

Thornton Parish Church was linked with Viewforth Church, Kirkcaldy, in 1994. Dissolved in 2012, the church went under the guardianship of Kirkcaldy Presbytery. The Union with Markinch was put in place following the retirement of the Markinch minister after twelve years' service.

It is appropriate that these two adjoining parishes have now united, as the church in Thornton was originally built in 1834-5 as a chapel of ease for Markinch Parish Church.

Our Minister

We are looking for an approachable and energetic minister who will:

- Lead, inspire and encourage all, both in faith and in everyday life. He or she should be actively engaged in the expanding local community.
- Add to and strengthen the bond already evident in the new united church
- Relate to all ages through effective communication.
- Give pastoral care with warmth, empathy and spiritual understanding.

Our minister should be flexible, creative, dynamic and forward looking.

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Markinch and Thornton Parish

Both Markinch and Thornton are thriving, bustling small towns. They enjoy a number of hotels, coffee shops and amenities such as post offices, convenience stores, fast food outlets, bakers, hairdressers and small businesses. The parish also includes Coaltown of Balgonie, a smaller village. The towns both benefit from doctors surgeries and community health services.

Both of the towns have grown recently and have future housing developments planned in the next few years. The population of the parish stood at 6886 at the 2011 Census.

The parish is situated in the centre of Fife with good road links to the major towns and cities in Central Scotland and beyond.

Markinch Railway Station is a modern transport hub situated on the East Coast Main Line, which links the national rail service to local bus routes.

Thornton has a railway station on the local Fife Circle Line providing direct trains to Edinburgh.

There are two busy, growing Primary Schools and a smaller school at Coaltown of Balgonie, all of which feed into the same High School in the nearby post-war new town of Glenrothes. There are both council-run and private nurseries in the area for pre-school children.

Employment in the area is primarily in light industry/manufacturing and retail sectors.

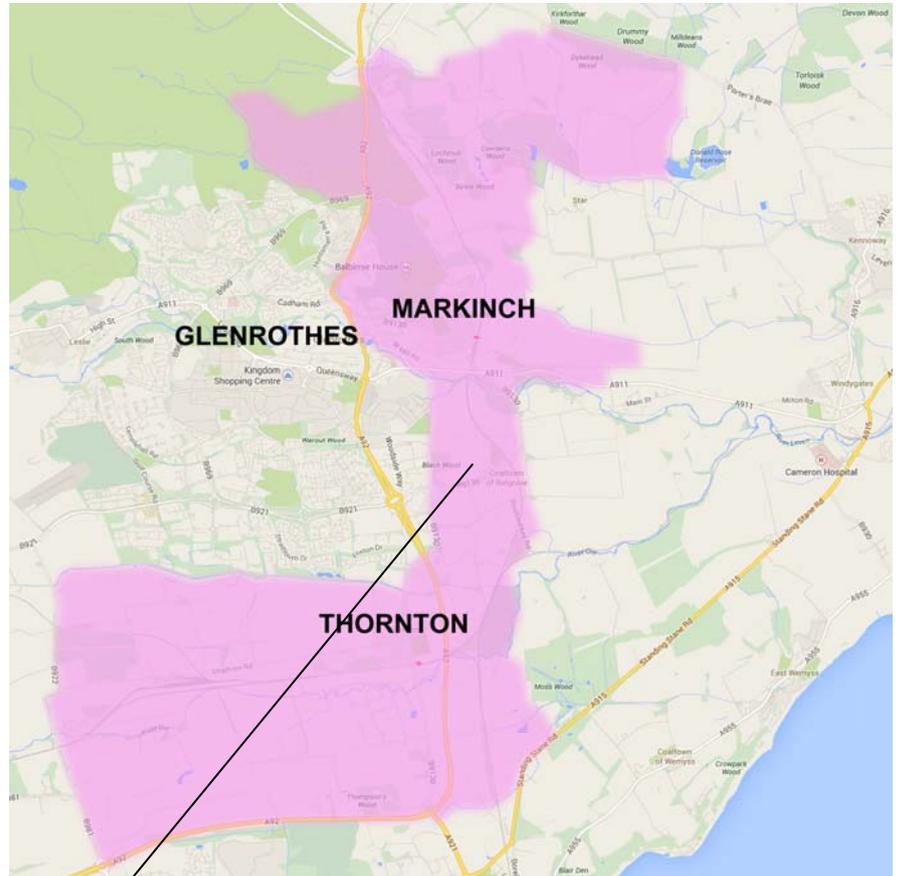
Markinch and Thornton are within easy reach of the larger town centre, supermarkets and extensive facilities and services that are available in Glenrothes, either by car, public transport or a 30 minute walk. An out-of-town retail park with a selection of larger shops is available in Kirkcaldy.

There are members' golf clubs in Thornton and also in the picturesque Balbirnie Park, in Markinch. There are many other private and municipal golf courses in the area. Glenrothes has a new swimming pool and sports centre where a wide range of leisure and sporting facilities are available.

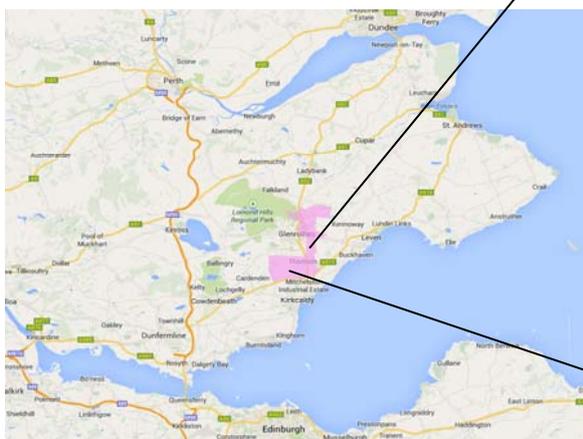
Both towns have a wide range of clubs and organisations for all interests and ages.

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Location Map



Markinch and Thornton Parish boundary



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The Church Properties

Markinch Church

The category A listed building in Markinch occupies a prominent hilltop position within the older part of the town. The bell tower, built in 1180, is one of only five surviving Norman towers in Scotland. The church itself dates from the late 18th century. Both are in a very good state of repair.



The church and its surrounding graveyard are the subject of on-going architectural and archaeological investigations in conjunction with Markinch Heritage Group, with a view to possible restoration work.

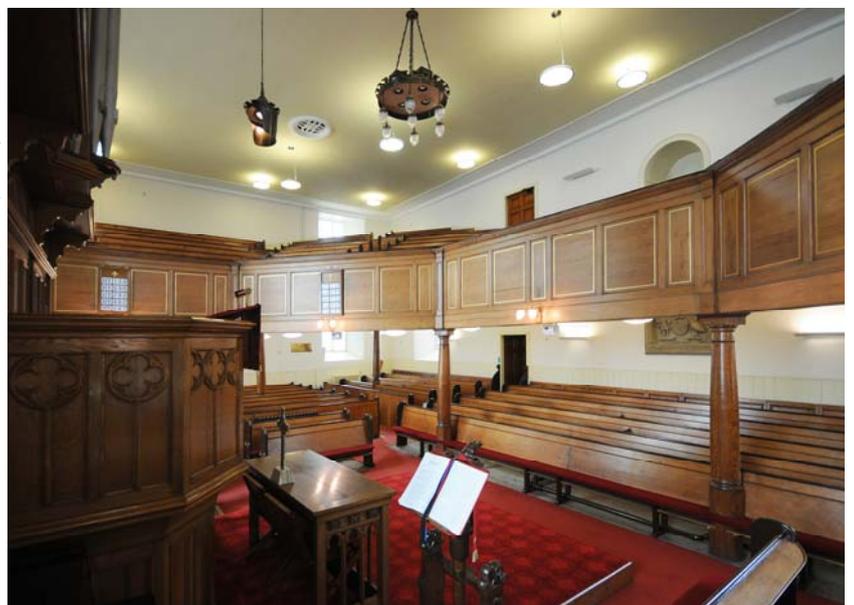
The sanctuary, with traditional pews, is entered from two doors leading from the vestibule. The pulpit, which faces the entrance and balcony, is situated

on the longer wall. Seating capacity is 250 in the balcony and 450 downstairs. The 1914 Abbott and Smith two-manual pipe organ is played regularly. There is a wireless audio system and an induction loop for speech reinforcement. Heating is by a gas-fired boiler.

Access to the church and church grounds is via external stairs.

Wheelchair users are at present assisted, however, a longer term solution to access for all is being sought with Historic Scotland.

The church itself is accessible throughout all of the downstairs areas.



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Session House (Markinch)



The B listed Session House, designed by Sir R. Rowland Anderson in 1875 and built in 1879, incorporates a study for the minister, a small meeting room, and toilet facilities. It also has a computer and a full-colour A3 photocopier. Heating is electric.

Church Hall (Markinch)

The 1930s, C listed, Hall stands opposite the Church. Refurbished in recent years, it comprises a large hall with a stage, back-stage area and balcony; a modern kitchen and accessible toilet facilities. It is heated by a gas-fired boiler. It also has an induction loop and audio system.

There is an external area (partly sloping) to the rear of the hall, used for outdoor activities.

Thornton Church

The traditional stone building is situated in the main street of Thornton. It dates back to 1835. The sanctuary is in the shape of a cross with two aisles leading from the front door. There is a balcony which seats around 75, and the main worship area seats 250. Seating is in the form of traditional pews. It is in a good state of repair, and the outer glass of all the church windows have been replaced in the last four years.



The church has a Technics organ and has an audio system and an induction loop. Heating is by gas-fired boiler.

Both back and front doors are accessible to all, as are the toilets. There is a small car park to the rear of the church with a connecting pathway.

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Church Hall (Thornton)

The hall, with stage and kitchen, is used for all activities. It is interconnected to the church. It, too, has gas central heating.

Quiet Room (Thornton)

The quiet room lies to the rear of the worship area and can hold 40-50 people. It also lends itself to smaller, more intimate services.

Manse (Markinch)

The Manse, built in 1966, is approximately a 10 minute walk from the Church and only a 5 minute walk from the mainline railway station, primary school and other local amenities.

The detached bungalow is set in its own low maintenance garden (grass and gravel) with a separate fenced area and a single garage.



The house includes living/dining room, reception room, 4 bedrooms, kitchen, utility, bathroom and an additional toilet. It has gas central heating, a gas range cooker and is double-glazed.

Before a new minister is appointed the building will be redecorated and new flooring fitted. Routine maintenance is done in consultation with the minister.

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Worship

Sunday services take place in both Markinch and Thornton churches, with the Thornton service at 10am and Markinch at 11.30am at present. Both churches use CH4 hymn books and Markinch has copies of The New International Version of the bible readily available in the pews.

Markinch holds Sunday communion 4 times per year and Thornton 3 times per year.

At Markinch there is a small, but enthusiastic, choir which is being developed by our organist and choir mistress.

There is a welcome team present at the doors of both churches each Sunday. They distribute orders of service and hymn books and ensure that visitors to our churches are made to feel welcome.

Both churches hold their own Remembrance Day services at their respective town War Memorials.

Baptisms take place during a Sunday Service at either church.

Classes for new communicants are organised when required.



Worship outwith Sunday Services

Between the churches we have special services throughout the year:

- Maundy Thursday
- Harvest Thanksgiving
- Christingle
- Christmas Eve Family Service
- Christmas Day Service
- Watch Night Service

At present there are links to both Markinch and Thornton Primary schools and there may be an opportunity to expand these in consultation with the education authorities.

Sunday School

There is a small Sunday School which joins the weekly service at Markinch during term time, then leave to continue their learning in the Church hall with the three Sunday School teachers.

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Groups and Organisations

A well established senior Boys Brigade group meets in Thornton Church Hall on a weekly basis.

There is an active Youth Club which meets in Markinch Church hall during school terms, catering for both primary and secondary school youngsters. The group, run by two volunteer workers and two paid workers, is also supported by Youth 1st.

The SWRI meets in Thornton Church hall monthly.

A Prayer Group meets regularly at Thornton, and both congregations distribute the Presbytery 'Prayer Call' newsletter.

Both Churches have weekly coffee mornings, organised by Church members.

Markinch Church Hall currently has regular hall bookings for a Zumba Class and the Markinch District Community Choir.

Both church halls are available for hire to outside organisations.

Wider Church and Mission

A small committee encourages community involvement in planned events during Christian Aid week. Sales from a well stocked book stall in Markinch church hall enhance our Christian Aid giving.

We have special collections when required for overseas disaster funding.

The Sunday School organises sponsorship of a child in Ethiopia through Compassion UK.

Members support Foodbank and donations are made on a weekly basis.

The church acts as a local collection point for the annual Rotary Shoebox Appeal. This is supported both at Easter and Christmas, with boxes being sent to those less fortunate than us in Eastern European countries.

Donations are sent to local Women's Aid groups throughout the year.

Regular donations of knitted items are sent to Christian Hope International.

We are members of the local ecumenical group Churches Together which aims to strengthen links between the local churches and the community.

We are also involved with 'GROW', which is a charitable trust set up by local churches to employ a full-time Christian youth worker in the area.

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Management

In 2013, the Markinch Kirk Session agreed to adopt a Unitary Constitution, with all elders and members of the original congregational board acting as trustees. At the first session/trustee meeting after the union of Markinch and Thornton churches it was agreed that the new united church would continue with this model.

There are currently 45 trustees, of whom 23 are male and 22 are female. We schedule four meetings a year and call additional meetings should the need arise.

A number of committees were formed to facilitate the smooth running of the church with a chairperson calling meetings and issuing reports to the trustees as required.

A Safeguarding Panel ensures that PVG checks and training meet the Church of Scotland guidelines.

Membership

At present the roll stands at 635.

Finance

Prior to the union both churches met their Ministries and Mission Contributions in full and the united church is in a satisfactory financial position. A significant proportion of our income is derived from the WFO envelopes and open plate but we are actively encouraging members to give regularly by standing order. We are also trying to maximise the income from Gift Aid.

We have an annual Gift Day which currently coincides with the February communion service at Markinch and with Harvest Thanksgiving at Thornton. The members are generous with their donations at these times.

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Social and Fundraising

Teas are served in the hall in Markinch after the Sunday service and this allows our members to meet and socialise with their church friends.

The first Sunday of each month is a 'Souper Sunday' at Markinch when members can also enjoy home made soup.

There is a Coffee Morning held at Thornton every Monday and at Markinch every Thursday and these are very popular with members and visitors.

The social and fundraising committee regularly holds events such as spring fayres, concerts by visiting choirs or concert bands and wine tasting evenings.

At certain times of the year members and friends are invited to Fellowship Meals at local restaurants. There is normally a summer lunch and a Christmas dinner and these are both well attended. We also hold Easter and Harvest Thanksgiving lunches in the church hall at Markinch.



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Other Information

We publish a combined order of service and intimation sheet every Sunday. This is handed out at the church door by the welcome teams. It can also be downloaded from the church website each week.

The quarterly newsletter 'News From The Pews' is distributed to every member household in the parish. There is also a postal and an electronic mailing list and each issue can be downloaded from the website.

The church website is updated regularly with the latest church news. It also provides information for visitors interested in family history.

We are also building a presence on social media with a number of our members contributing information and new items.

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Church website

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