

St. Margaret's Parish Church Knightswood

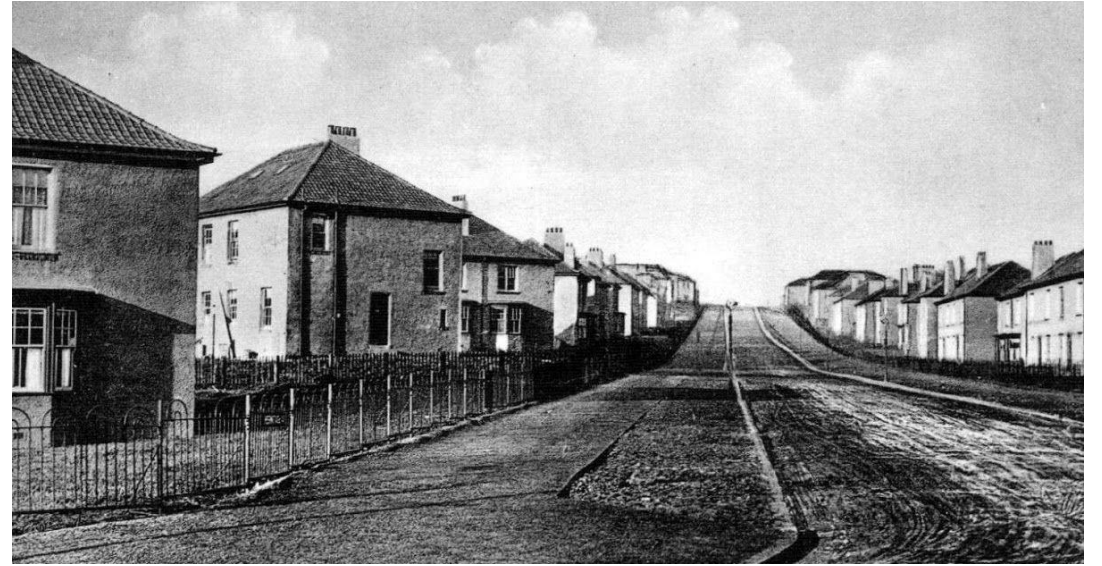
Hello and a really warm
welcome to St.
Margaret's Parish Church
in Knightswood. We are
so sorry that we can't
meet you in person but
hopefully next year.....



The area of Knightswood was bought in 1920 by Glasgow Corporation for the purpose of establishing Knightswood as a housing scheme and so some of the houses in the area around St. Margaret's Church are now almost 100 years old.



Imagine if you can the Knightswood of 1920: rolling farmland and a coal mine, before sturdy corporation family houses were built. What you may not be aware of is that Knightswood has a fabled connection to medieval times and that's the reason the streets were given romantic names such as Ivanhoe Road, Talisman Road, Crusader Avenue, and Templar Avenue to name but a few. Finally on 1st October 1925 the Knightswood Housing Scheme was formally opened by no less a celebrity of that time, Stanley Baldwin (pictured), the Prime Minister of Great Britain.



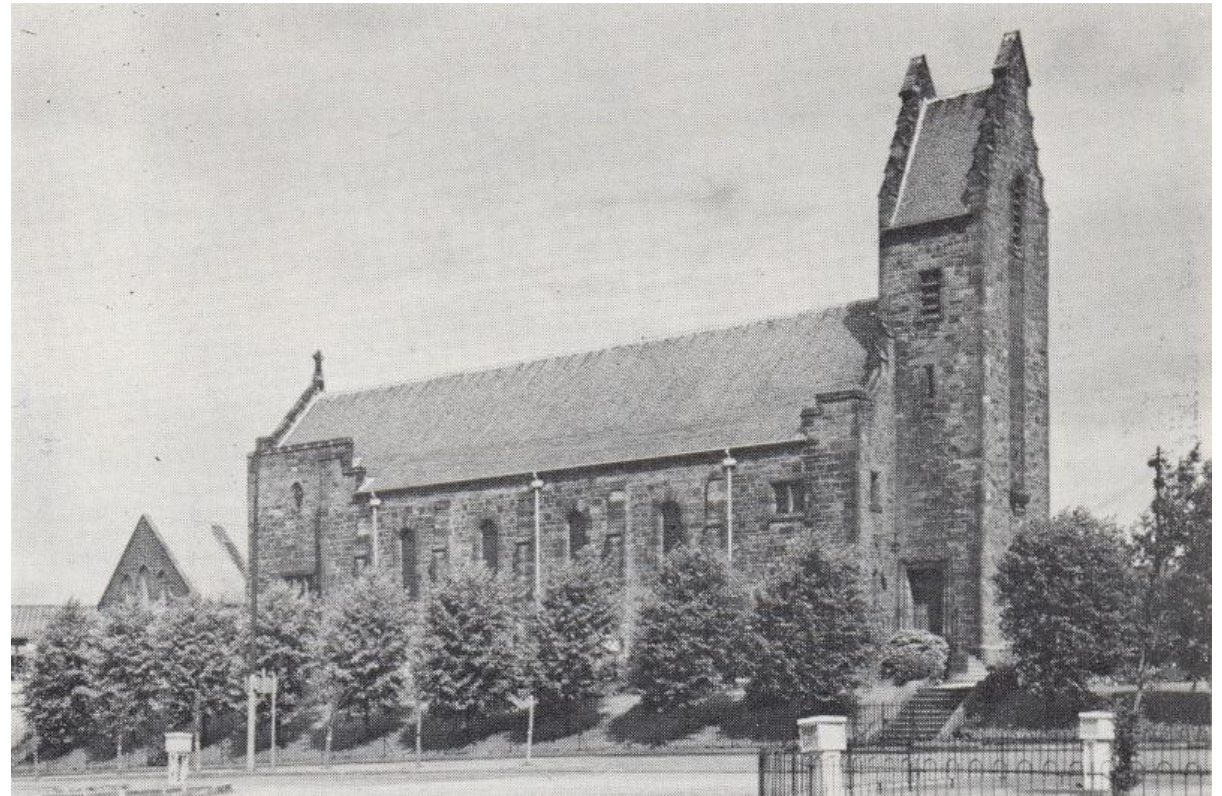
Before this however, in 1923 The Presbytery of Dumbarton took steps towards the provision of a church in this new housing scheme at a cost of £3000 and on 3rd December 1925, what is now called the small hall was dedicated by the Rt Rev Dr John White, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.



This hall, where church services came to be held, helped build a true sense of community throughout the area, being a centre for many activities. It seemed particularly to attract the young, for by the end of 1927 the Sunday School had nearly 450 scholars



Early in 1928 because of the numbers attending church services and Sunday School the first steps were taken to build this Church which now dominates Knightswood Cross.



The first minister of St. Margaret's was Rev George Hamilton who had a deeply cultivated artistic and devotional sense and so he wanted to build a church which would be worthy of the best and most beautiful in Scottish Church architecture.



The Church Committee therefore decided to appoint Sir Robert Lorimer (pictured), the most eminent architect in Scotland at that time, to design the church for Knightswood. Unfortunately he did not live to see his work in Knightswood completed as he died in September 1929 and so this Church remains as one of the last examples of his very distinguished work.



The people of Knightswood worked hard to raise funds to pay for their new church and garden fetes were held with 4,000 people attending the first in June 1930.

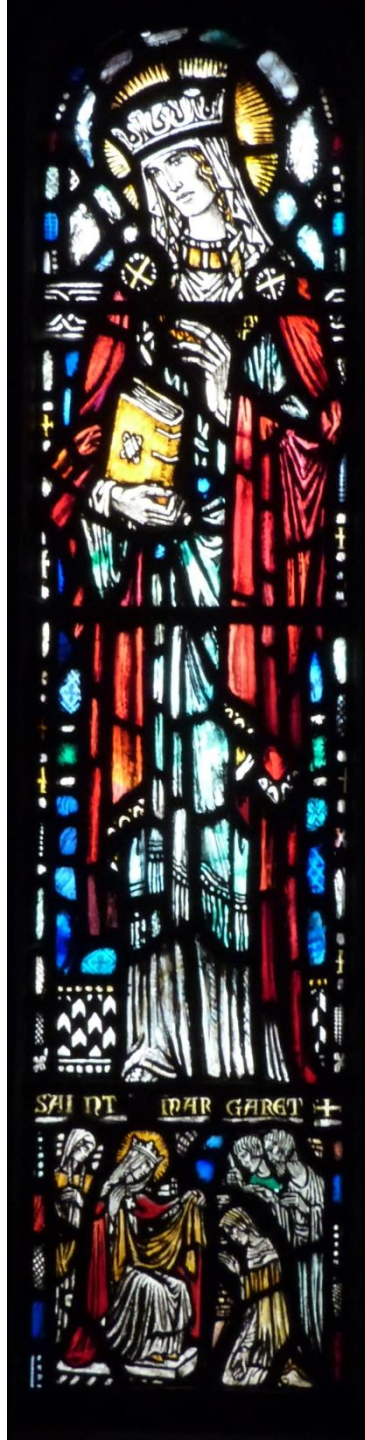
Another fundraising event was Bricklaying Day on 5th May 1931 and many years later the older members of the congregation still fondly remembered this event when the children of the congregation (for a small sum of money!) were allowed to lay a brick and so in this way had their place in the building of the Church. 200 bricks were laid that day!



By 1931 the congregation numbered around 1,000 and the Sunday School had 752 scholars and so previously on 15th October 1930 Mr Hamilton cut the first sod and on Saturday 14th February 1931 the foundation stone was laid by the Right Honourable James Brown MP who had been Lord High Commissioner of the General Assembly in 1930. A casket of newspapers and money of the time was also placed in a prepared cavity.



The organisations of the congregation, as well as individual donors, were responsible for providing different items of Church furniture and here again the young people played their part: the stained glass window representing St. Margaret was presented by the Girl Guides, while the Iona marble baptismal font was gifted by the children of the Sunday School.



The lectern was presented by the Brownies, the Devotional Desk and Minister's chair behind it by the Bible Class and the Church Bell by the Boys' Brigade and Life Boys.



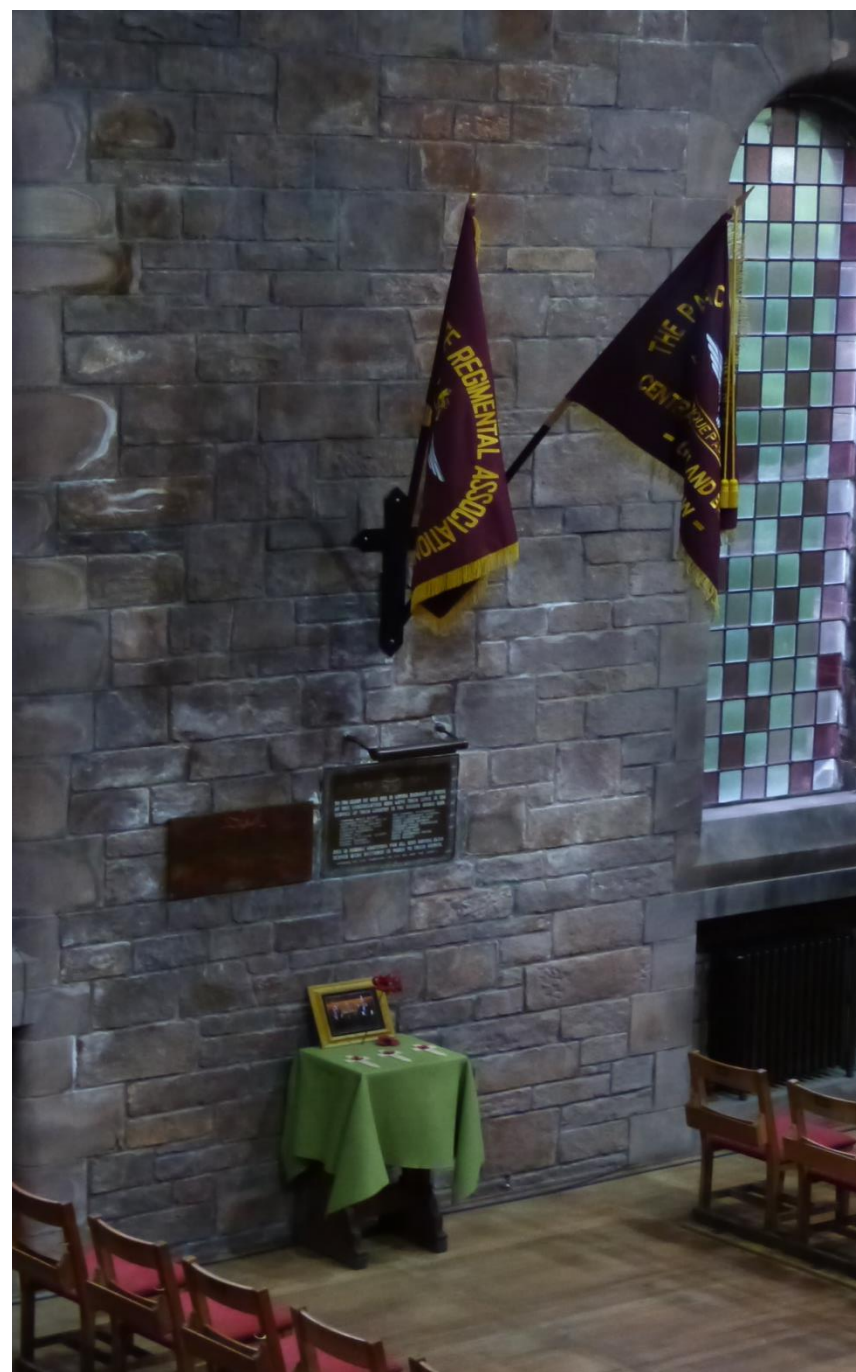
The total cost of the Church and furnishings was £13,835 and on 2nd April 1932, the Saturday after Easter, the Church, free from debt, was opened by the Very Rev Dr John White who had dedicated the hall in 1925. By 1935 the Church had 1227 members and the Sunday School 826 scholars.

This picture shows members of Dumbarton Presbytery processing from the original church to the new building for the service of dedication.



Throughout the Second World War the Church remained open and gave sanctuary for six weeks to refugees from Alderney in the Channel Islands, when their island was invaded by the Germans in June 1940.

On the night of the Clydebank Blitz the Church and the hall were largely unscathed although windows in the aisle of the Church were destroyed. Despite this, Church services continued throughout the war without interruption.



As testimony of Thanksgiving for deliverance in World War 2, the building of the large hall was undertaken and the Andrew Watt pipe organ (costing £1,700) was dedicated on 19th June 1949.



Throughout the second half of the 20th Century St. Margaret's Church continued to serve the people of Knightswood and tried to adapt to their needs and so in May 1982 when David Lacy, later to be a Moderator of the Church of Scotland was minister, Netherton St. Matthew's Church united with St. Margaret's.



Let us now jump to the 21st century, when, in celebration of the 75th Anniversary of St. Margaret's Church and after much fund raising, the very special Father Willis organ was installed in the gallery by the organ builder, James MacKenzie having originally been in Blochairn/Townhead Church, Glasgow.



On 6th October 2002 the organ was dedicated to the memory of Clive Gunning, a previous organist, who had done much to bring this organ to St. Margaret's but who was sadly killed in a car crash. Then on 10th October a celebrity recital by Dr John Kitchen of Edinburgh University, to mark the installation of the organ in St. Margaret's, was enjoyed by all present, despite the thunder and lightning outside adding percussion effects to the organ music.



When the recently retired Rev Sandy Fraser was minister some of the furnishings in the Sanctuary were renewed, blending the old and the new to give the Church a warm, welcoming appearance.

For almost 100 years now St. Margaret's Church has served the people of Knightswood and continues to do so, inspired by the Holy Spirit and by those who have gone before.



We do hope you have enjoyed this short digital tour of our Church and that in better times you will come and visit us in person. We really look forward to that. In the meantime stay safe and God bless.

