

Fort Augustus

linked with

Glengarry

Presbytery of Lochaber



Parish Profile

2nd April 2017

Contents

	page
1. Introduction	3
2. Account of the Congregation	3
Setting	3
History	4
Mission	5
Membership	6
Governance	6
Local Church Review	7
Organisations	8
Safeguarding	8
IT	8
3. Community Profiles	8
Place	8
People	8
Work	9
Local Facilities	9
4. Worship Life	9
Regular	9
Communion	10
Words	10
Music	11
Special Services	11
All-Age Services	11
5. Pastoral Care	12
6. Christian Education	12
7. Ecumenical Context	12
8. World Church	13
9. Stewardship and Finance	13
10. Staffing	14
11. Church, Manse and Halls	14
Manse	14
Fort Augustus church	15
Fort Augustus church hall	15
Glengarry church	15
Tomdoun Church	16
12. Web links	16

1. Introduction

We are a linked charge in the Presbytery of Lochaber.

We became vacant in 2011 when Adrian Varwell retired after being our minister for 10 years. We were given permission to call a minister without restriction but, foreseeing a long vacancy, gladly accepted when we were offered Tabea Baader from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bavaria as an exchange minister. We stayed technically vacant because she was not a Church of Scotland minister, but she acted as our minister in every respect. It was always understood, however, that she would return to her native Germany, and she did so at the end of August 2016 after 4½ years with us.

Presbytery has again granted us permission to call a minister without restriction, to which end we have prepared this Parish Profile.

2. Account of the Congregation

Setting

Fort Augustus parish is relatively compact – at least as parishes go in our part of the world! It's centred on the village of Fort Augustus at the southern end of Loch Ness, where the Caledonian Canal links Loch Ness with Loch Oich. Fort Augustus is the main community, but the parish includes some houses on the outskirts of Invermoriston.



The parish of Glengarry is anything but compact; it encompasses most of the watershed of the river Garry, and extends to Barrisdale on Loch Hourn, a distance of about 30 miles from the Great Glen. The main community is the village of Invergarry, seven miles south of Fort Augustus and close to the eastern edge of the parish.



We are located in one of the most stunning scenic areas of the Highlands, where the mountains, forests, glens, canals, rivers and lochs are right on the doorstep. In consequence individual houses can be found across both parishes wherever there is reasonable access by road.

[Caledonian Canal entering Loch Ness](#)

History

The church in Fort Augustus (in Gaelic, Cill Chuimein, or Kilchuimen) was originally dedicated to St Chuimen, the one-time abbot of Iona. This was part of the era of evangelisation by Celtic saints, whose names can be found locally, both as church names and place names. It was located in the Parish of Boleskine, and at one time, in 1580, the minister had responsibilities for Boleskine, Dunlichity, Daviot, Dores, Dalrossie and Moy. However, by 1724, the Presbytery of Abertarff was founded, which comprised the Parishes of Abertarff, Glenmoriston, Kilmallie, Kilmonivaig, Laggan and Urquhart. Its meetings were usually held in

“Kilechuiman”. In 1883, the mission at Abertarff disjoined from Boleskine and Dores, and was elevated to Parish status in its own right, being named as “Fort Augustus”, with its own resident minister. The Abertarff Presbytery continued until 1923, when, due to boundary changes, it was superseded by the Presbytery of Lochaber, which met for the first time in September 1923.



[Caledonian Canal and locks in Fort Augustus](#)

Glengarry Parish church was built in the village of Invergarry in 1864, and enlarged in 1869, under the patronage of the Ellice family. It was the first church building in Invergarry, and was one of a number of buildings built during this era which included a cottage hospital and the school (still in use today) and the small wayside mission church at Tomdoun. Glengarry became a parish in 1870.



Glengarry Parish Church, Invergarry

In the 1970s Glengarry was linked with Kilmallie (its neighbour to the south), and then with Kilmonivaig (its neighbour to the east). Each linkage proved unwieldy, and in 1987 Glengarry was linked with Fort Augustus. Each parish keeps its individuality while sharing a strong sense of community and purpose, coming together for shared worship and social gatherings. The strong tradition of Highland hospitality in both congregations is evident in their aim to be a church without walls.

The current Presbytery Plan proposes no change to the linkage, nor to the status of the charge.

Mission

Glengarry has no formal Mission Statement, but Fort Augustus has:

***Here in Fort Augustus,
we aim to be a forward-looking and lively church, worshipping God
and endeavouring to take his word out into our communities as best we can,
showing his love through our visible actions.***

We undertake outreach in Fort Augustus and Invergarry through our involvement with community members. As hospitality is a mainstay in the area, our outreach to the wider community and beyond is shown in many ways, as we see opportunities for various initiatives both in and out of the “tourist season”.

During the winter months the Craic, a church initiative, provides lunchtime food and fellowship in Invergarry Community Centre for anyone who wishes to come along.

In Fort Augustus church hall a long-established monthly lunch is on offer to the local community – a good place to chat and enjoy homemade soup etc. and a regular contributor to the fabric fund. Also held in the church hall, the Thursday Cafe, now

in its 11th year, continues to be a popular social event, an important means of outreach and a source of help in catering and other activities.

Indeed, even when the hall in Fort Augustus is not being used for some form of outreach, it remains a valuable point of contact with the community. An annual plant sale takes place there in conjunction with Abriachan Nurseries. We offer it to the community for Guides, Brownies and Rainbows, as well as keep-fit for the over 50s, Yoga, Whist Drives, and as a venue for fund-raising activities held by various groups, who find it a more attractive venue than Fort Augustus Community Hall. The Community Company acknowledged its value by donating a large part of the cost of resurfacing the car park outside the hall.

In Invergarry *Posada* has become a tradition in the community during each Advent, involving young and old alike.

A Youth Cafe was introduced during the last Ministry for secondary school pupils. At the time of writing it has been in abeyance. However, the co-ordinator is planning a relaunch in the immediate future.

The organist/worship leader in Fort Augustus leads Cill Chuimein Community Choir. This meets weekly, and attracts a wide and varied group of singers, many of whom would not pledge allegiance to any church, but enjoy the praise music – and other styles, also – that are on offer there.

We also undertake outreach in Fort Augustus and Invergarry through our Flower Festivals, Christmas and Summer fairs, and decorating the church for particular events.

Membership

	Year-end Membership					Average attendance	Average age
	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16		
Fort Augustus	72	72	70	68	70	33	60+
Glengarry	27	27	29	29	28	15	55+

Three families with 8 children between them have been attending Invergarry church irregularly.

Governance

Both congregations operate under the Model Constitution. All active elders in each congregation are also on the Board, and the minister or Interim Moderator has chaired. Members and adherents are often co-opted onto the Glengarry Board.

The Congregational Boards and Kirk Sessions have been meeting several times a year. The Boards have committees to deal with Finance and Property; the Sessions have appointed no committees. Office-bearer statistics are:

	Elders		Board		Estimated average age of officebearers	Elder last appointed in
	Women	Men	Women	Men		
Fort Augustus	8	2	4	2	70+	2015
Glengarry	3	2	4	2	65	2012

Local Church Review

The Local Church Review in 2016 generated healthy discussions between the two parishes and within them. The key points were:

	Fort Augustus	Invergarry
Strengths – helpful internal	Involvement and Commitment of membership. Two worship Leaders, Praise Choir	Faith, commitment and inclusiveness of the congregation. The mutual respect of the community. Strong safe-guarding policy.
Weaknesses – harmful internal	Lack of young people	Lack of young people, smaller congregation
Opportunities	Friendship agreement with Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bavaria (joint with Glengarry). Strong relationship with local Roman Catholic and Free Church of Scotland through Ceilidhs, Community Gala etc.	Friendship agreement with Bavaria Continued good ecumenical relationships.
Threats	The vacancy stretching the resources	The secular culture and being side-lined by the state.
Plans for the Future	To encourage the local community and congregation to utilise the church buildings in a variety of activities. Continue working to make worship and faith relevant to those with few church contacts.	To continue the good relationship and involvement with the local community. Encourage the church to be used for community events. Keep safe-guarding at the heart of our ministry.

Organisations

Fort Augustus has a small Guild, which at present is attracting others by hosting a monthly series of Bible Studies. The outreach activities listed above are also under its Kirk Session's oversight, but there are no other formal groups or organisations – the other groups which use the church hall are independent of the congregation.

Glengarry has a well-established Guild to which Fort Augustus members are invited.

Safeguarding

The accredited Safe-Guarding Co-ordinator for both Fort Augustus and Glengarry is also responsible for all the planning, training and events within Lochaber Presbytery. The combined parishes have a pool of 8 volunteers to serve on a safe-guarding panel as and when required. Fort Augustus has 7 volunteers with P.V.G. scheme record and Glengarry has 6 volunteers with P.V.G. scheme record.

IT

We have a web site, www.greatglenchurches.co.uk with a calendar which is updated monthly, and we hope to make more use of it in the future.

The Praise Choir (and also the Youth Café) maintain some of their lines of communication with FaceBook pages.

3. Community Profiles

Place

Both Fort Augustus and Invergarry, although officially villages, would consider themselves rural; and although the two parishes are not the most isolated in Scotland, they are well up the list. Access to the main shopping centres, NHS hospitals and dentist requires a journey along the A82, either north to Inverness or south to Fort William, both being approximately 34 miles from Fort Augustus.

People

The villages have seen many changes through the generations within their respective communities with the development of the Caledonian Canal in the early 1800's, the Hydro-Electric Scheme of Loch Garry and Loch Quoich in the 1950's and the more recent Glendoe Hydro Scheme. This has changed the landscape not only literally, but in the faces of the residents as the worker's families move in, with many settling for good. The hospitality trade has also had this impact, for in recent years many workers from Europe move in during the tourist season, and some choose to settle.

This notwithstanding, however, the "Statistics for Mission" figures available on the Church of Scotland website show that both parishes have a notably smaller proportion of younger people than Scotland as a whole – no doubt because many young people leave the area for work, or leave for higher education and do not return to the area to live, while incomers tend to be older.

Work

The main industry throughout the Great Glen is the hospitality/tourist trade, which fluctuates through the year. Forestry, fish farming and hatcheries along with the aforementioned hydro schemes are the economic mainstay of the area.

Local Facilities

Both villages are served by primary schools, with the pupils of Invergarry having to relocate to Fort Augustus or Fort William for secondary education. The minister has been welcomed into all schools.

In Fort Augustus there is a Police Station, a bank, a filling station, a family-run repair garage, family butcher and a small but comprehensive supermarket with a Post Office Counter and a pharmacy. There are many places to eat, drink and socialise, from hotels, to lock-side pubs, cafes and restaurants, for the enjoyment of the locals and the numerous visitors during the tourist season.

The local GP in Fort Augustus attends all the medical needs of the Great Glen. It would be appropriate to mention here, that after a fire during the early part of 2015, that saw the surgery burn down, the previous minister opened the doors of the manse as an emergency surgery. This was overwhelmingly appreciated by both communities and surgery staff. There is a local authority care home, the Telford Centre that provides exemplary residential, respite and day care to the local residents as needed. The residents and staff are very appreciative of clergy visits to the centre.

The church hall in Fort Augustus is regularly used by uniformed groups within the locality as well as various keep fit classes and dance exercise, run by individual local residents.

In Glengarry parish there is a small post office, filling station and a small shop situated at the “Well of the Seven Heads” on the A82 about a mile and a half south of Invergarry. There are two hotels, guest houses and a camp site. Invergarry also boasts an excellent community hall which opened in May 2006. It hosts numerous social and entertainment events throughout the year and is well utilised by the church for various functions.

4. Worship Life

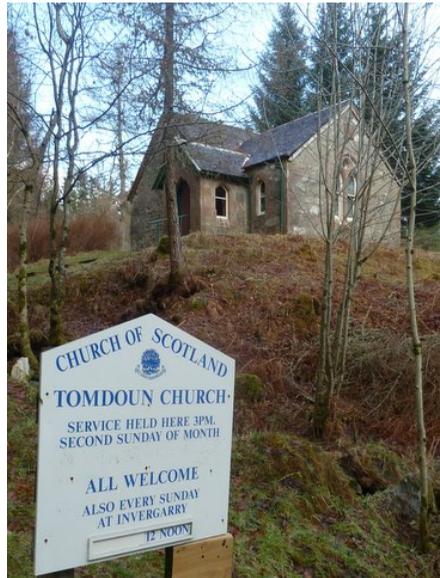
“Regular”

Weekly worship takes place in both Invergarry and Fort Augustus churches. The service times are 10am and 12 noon, which leaves enough time for the minister to have tea or coffee with the congregation after the first service, and to reach the other church in time for the second service. Congregations swap times every 4 months.

There is also a monthly 3.00 pm service in Tomdoun on the 2nd Sunday of each month.

Services are organised in both churches by the minister, elders and congregational worship leaders (see section 10. Staffing), and generally tend to be traditional and liturgical in style, although the congregations are very open to new forms of worship, and this has included modern music, poetry and drama. This has been particularly suitable for irregular worshippers and visitors. The priority is always to worship God in fellowship with each other, and to be spiritually enriched and uplifted.

The services in Fort Augustus and in Glengarry are usually the same on any given Sunday, although the congregations are at different points on the Catholic – Reformed spectrum. Fort Augustus is towards the middle of that spectrum, for it attracts church-going incomers who are neither Roman Catholic nor so Reformed as to feel comfortable in the local Free Kirk; and incomers from outwith Scotland – over 25% of the local population – tend to take a more liturgical approach for granted. Glengarry churchgoers who do not wish to travel a considerable distance must attend either St. Finnan’s Roman Catholic Church or the Church of Scotland, and the Glengarry congregation incorporates all on the Reformed half of the spectrum. This difference of ethos has not caused division between the congregations, who work well together.



Communion

In recent years Holy Communion has been celebrated formally every 3 months and informally every month. This latter, introduced some 10 years ago, is a short service of Holy Communion at the end of the normal service of worship for those who desire to take the sacraments more regularly. This has been much appreciated by those regular worshippers of other denominations who have settled in the area. All worshippers of any denomination are welcomed to partake of Holy Communion and any children present are invited to come up for a blessing.

Words

The congregations are provided with a printed order of service which is usually organised by the leader of the service. Most hymns are from CH4 or Combined Mission Praise, but others are sometimes printed on the order of service. Fort

Augustus has a drop-down screen, and recently approved the purchase of a new laptop.



Music

A pipe organ was installed in Fort Augustus in 1912 and was refurbished in 1982. It was superseded by a Wyvern electric model in 2010, but the original pipes are still in place, and are a prominent feature of the church furnishings, as can be seen in the adjacent picture.

Invergarry church has a 2-manual pipe organ originally built by Ingram of Hereford,

which was moved to its present position and rebuilt with the original pipes in 1985 by George Sixsmith of Ashton-under-Lyne.

Each congregation has a regular organist. Each is very much involved in choosing tunes and they are both ordained elders; one is also a congregational worship leader.

Special Services

The congregations hold special services to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and the World Day of Prayer (both involving our two congregations and those of the local Catholic and Free Church), Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday, Christmas Eve (both Christingle and Watch Night), and Christmas Day. With the exception of Palm Sunday and Easter, these are joint services held alternately in each church. “Light Up a Life” in support of the local Hospice takes place each Christmas in Fort Augustus. The three schools of the area enjoy end of term services in the churches. Remembrance Day Services are held simultaneously in each church and the ceremony at the Memorial in Fort Augustus is taken jointly with the Roman Catholic priest.

Fort Augustus have weekly meetings of prayer for healing, and, with our Catholic friends, Mothers’ Prayers

All-Age Services

Both congregations would like to think that all their services are suitable for all ages, and a children’s address is usually planned for Sunday morning worship, although it may not be delivered if no young people are present. The Christingle service (and, of course, the school services) are, however, the only services they hold at present which are designed to be accessible to even the youngest children throughout.

5. Pastoral Care

Fort Augustus and Glengarry are small communities, with populations (in 2011) of 944 and 388 respectively. In the past “word of mouth” has been fairly effective in making the minister aware of serious pastoral situations in the community in which a minister would be welcome.

Pastoral care is also extended to the minister and their family. In recent years extensive refurbishment of the manse has improved the comfort of their home. The Kirk Sessions endeavour to be aware of the minister’s workload, offering assistance where appropriate.

The congregations (members plus adherents) in Fort Augustus and Glengarry are smaller than the communities. Most pastoral care within them happens informally when members of the congregation meet socially or in other circumstances. Elders who become aware of acute and long-term situations do, however, take care to inform the minister. Below we give the number of funerals in which our ministers have been involved over the last few years, and the number of baptisms and marriages. As we’d expect when the figures are so small, they vary considerably from year to year.

		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Funerals	Fort Augustus	?	5	14	8	3
	Glengarry	3	3	2	3	2
Baptisms	Fort Augustus	?	4	5	1	0
	Glengarry	2	1	2	2	1
Marriages	Fort Augustus	?	5	1	0	0
	Glengarry	3	2	3	2	1

6. Christian Education

Neither Fort Augustus nor Glengarry has a Sunday School at present. Nor is there a regular Bible Study, or other regular opportunity for adult Christian education in either place. However, as mentioned above, Fort Augustus Guild is hosting a series of Bible Studies. These are being led by a Congregational Worship Leader on the subject of “What the Bible has to say about ...”. The minister has, of course, provided Communicants’ Classes as required.

7. Ecumenical Context

As implied above under “Special Services”, Fort Augustus has congregations of the Free and Roman Catholic churches, and relations with each are good; particularly there is a great deal of co-operation with the Catholic Church. This is mainly in the

social and fund-raising areas with several joint events annually and Catholic events being welcomed in our hall and occasionally in our church. Last year we were invited to a Lent reflection based on the Pope’s encyclical *Laudate Si*.

The nearest ministers’ fraternal of which we are aware is in Fort William over 30 miles away to the south-west, and we would expect there to be one in Inverness a similar distance to the north-east.

8. World Church

The congregations of both Fort Augustus and Glengarry are engaged with overseas Mission partners through Presbytery and through contacts with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bavaria established through Rev. Tabea Baader (mentioned earlier under “Local Church Review”).

We have had 4 exchanges (two in each direction) with our informally-twinning Lutheran churches of Behringersdorf and Schwaig. In 2016 we were hosts for a week to 20 young singers. It was a week of wonderful singing and hospitality, including a concert, a ceilidh, participation in three church services, as well as ad hoc bursts of singing and communal meals; a week of celebration. We hope to continue this contact.

We collect door-to-door for Christian Aid during Christian Aid Week, and support the Scottish Bible Society, and also Blythswood through its “Shoe Box Appeal”. Most recently we enthusiastically took up and supported the Re-Act Syrian appeal through Lochaber Presbytery.

Within both congregations there are official contacts with the Lochaber Food Bank based in Fort William.

9. Stewardship and Finance

At the time of writing the National Stewardship Campaign is being explored through the aspect of “Talent”. We have recently made a very successful appeal to the community to raise funds to replace windows in the Manse. Recent financial figures are:

		2015	2016
Fort Augustus	Surplus/Deficit	£4770 deficit	£11719 surplus
	Ministries & Mission	£14416	£11290
Glengarry	Surplus/Deficit	£11203 deficit	£646 surplus
	Ministries & Mission	£5981	£4852

The surplus/deficit figures are atypical because of large expenditure on the Manse.

10. Staffing

We have appointed a locum, who serves the usual 2 days / week.

Fort Augustus pays a weekly cleaner of the church and hall. All other work in both congregations, such as building and garden maintenance and office work is carried out by volunteers or by outside professionals as deemed necessary by the Boards.

As already mentioned, the organists are members of the congregations, and, indeed, of the Kirk Sessions.

One of our biggest assets is three Congregational Worship Leaders, two at Fort Augustus and one at Glengarry. Since they are in the same charge each is eligible to lead services in either parish, so that we can more than provide the pulpit supply to which a minister is entitled.

11. Churches, Manse and Hall

Manse

The stone built manse, built in 1894, is south facing and is situated in the centre of the village of fort Augustus. Access is by a driveway from the A82 past the Church hall and the church, and also from a footpath in Station Road. The garden is well established and surrounded on two sides by a stone wall. The majority of the windows have been recently replaced with double-glazed units. The remaining single glazed windows are scheduled for replacement in 2017.



The property is over three floors.

Ground floor: Large reception hall, large dining/study, large sitting room with wood burning stove installed in 2014, (both enjoying views to the front of the property), and kitchen/dining room leading off to the kitchen (with oil fired central heating and hot water boiler). A utility room, small storage room and cloakroom are situated to the rear of the property and near the back door.

First Floor: A large landing leads to three very large double bedrooms one with adjoining dressing room. A large family bathroom and a separate shower and toilet.

Second Floor/Attic: Accessed by a stairway from the first floor landing – this leads to a box room off the landing where an adjacent cupboard houses the electric meters. Either side of the landing are two large double rooms with coombed ceilings and dormer windows with excellent views of Loch Ness. A third generous room/dressing room is accessed directly from the bedroom on the left of the landing.

The fabric of the manse has been maintained in good, sound decorative order.

Fort Augustus church

The present church in Fort Augustus is late Georgian, but was reconstructed by Henry Burrell in 1866-1867. The church porch was added in 1949. In 1960, the interior of the church was re-modelled. The church is in good, sound condition, and is fully accessible by wheelchair, since the floor is virtually level with the ground outside, which is a tarred drive.



Fort Augustus church hall

A new church hall, adjacent to the church building, was opened in April 1992, and was redecorated in 2015. There is one big room, a kitchen, storeroom, and toilets. As would be expected of so modern a building, a ramp makes the hall accessible by wheelchair.

Glengarry church

Glengarry Church, built in 1864, is in good sound condition. The architect of this simple Gothic house of worship was Alexander Ross of Ross & Joass. The building was 'B' listed on 5th October 1971. A toilet, accessed from outside the Church, has recently been added.

Although a ramp makes this Church accessible by wheelchair from the ground outside, the church is reached by a gravel track which is not wheel-chair friendly.



Tomdoun church

The deeds to Tomdoun church in Glengarry parish seem not to be held by the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland, and Lochaber Presbytery does not consider it a necessary building. The Glengarry congregation nonetheless consider it a valuable resource, and think it important to maintain public worship there. The building is cared for by the community within Glengarry, and in particular by those who worship there. The partial replacement of and repairs to the floor in 2015, and the installation of a wood burning stove, were accomplished by fund-raising through “The Friends of Tomdoun”, and the volunteer labour of the menfolk from Tomdoun and Invergarry. Alas, the building’s position on a hillside makes wheelchair access impracticable.



12. Web Links

Website: www.greatglenchurches.co.uk

2011 Census data for Fort August can be found at

http://cos.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/statistics_for_mission/parish_profiles/382173.pdf

2011 Census data for Glengarry can be found at

http://cos.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/statistics_for_mission/parish_profiles/382177.pdf