

60 YEARS

WESTERTON PARISH CHURCH

A potted look at its foundation and early history

From Small beginnings.....

July 1913 – the first fourteen houses were occupied in the new Westerton Garden Suburb.

August 1914 – Westerton Village Hall was built. Villagers attended **New Kilpatrick Parish Church** in Bearsden for worship. A bit of a walk! Uphill too!

1915 - Westerton Garden Suburb was completed with 84 houses. New Kilpatrick Mission, as it was called - for Westerton was part of New Kilpatrick Parish at that time - began with **monthly** services in the Village Hall, conducted by Assistant Ministers of New Kilpatrick Church, followed thereafter by a weekly Sunday School, a pattern which continued until 1946, with partial interruption by the Second World War.

1921 - Westerton's first Elder, Mr Sewell, was ordained on to New Kilpatrick Kirk Session.

By the time church services resumed in the Village Hall after the War, Westerton had grown in size – extending from its original core of 84 Garden Suburb Houses, to cover Switchback, Stonedyke and South Westerton. The pressure for Westerton to have its own church was great.

Step forward, the Fairlies, a farming family of New Kilpatrick!

The Fairlie family left a bequest of £32000 to the Church of Scotland, to build a church; and on 29th September 1956, George Fairlie, the surviving son of the Fairlie family laid the foundation stone on the new church site up the hill; a year later, on 5 September 1957, the new church was dedicated by Rev. Dr James McCardel, then minister of New Kilpatrick Church. Sadly by then, George Fairlie had died, so the new church became, in reality, the **Fairlie Memorial Church**.

26th June 1957 - the Rev. Frederick Smith was inducted to the Church Extension charge of Westerton Parish. A new Kirk Session was constituted for the church, with 7 elders from New Kilpatrick Church, and 1 elder from Bearsden North Church, presided over by the Rev Fred Smith. Their first decision was to establish weekly church services in Westerton Village Hall until the church was opened. A suitable church organ was then hired, until a new one could be purchased for the new church, the elders increased by 3 members, ladies of the Parish proposed to set up a Women's Guild, and a Church Officer post was planned – the church was on the march!

22 July 1957 - a committee was set up to consider standing orders for guidance in the use of the church premises. The church building was in the nature of a hall-church, ie it was both a church for public worship and a hall for church functions and organisations' meetings. Face one way for worship and the other way for secular meetings or entertainment! Clever or what!?

The existing Sunday School would be fully integrated into the new Parish church.

For the formal opening of the church, Elders were instructed to wear morning dress and black tie. (Also for subsequent Communion services) As there were no 'lady' elders, female dress code wasn't an issue!

August 1957 - 181 members were on the Communion Roll, there were plans to instigate a Freewill Offering Scheme, with Fred Smith laying down his famous guidelines – “the various schemes of the Church should be supported by the voluntary offerings and not by special efforts”.

600 Souvenir programmes were printed for the dedication service, and an electric organ installed. All was set: the sanctuary and hall at Westerton Parish Church Fairlie Memorial (sic) were formally opened and dedicated on Thursday 5 September 1957, by Rev Dr James McCardel, Minister-Emeritus of New Kilpatrick Parish Church.

We're on our Way to full Status!

Sunday 8 September, 1957 - Public worship began in the new church.

12 September, 1957 - The Westerton Kirk Session met for the first time, with 14 elders. Various gifts were donated to the new church: the Pulpit bible, a hymn book and Psalter; a pulpit fall; a book rest and vases; a miniature communion set. A christening font was rescued from a redundant church in Kinning Park!

The local drama Club, which became a church organisation in July 1957 sought permission to present its first show “Dear Octopus” in February 1958.

Cameron MacNicol was appointed organist in November 1957 – he later became the first Director of Glasgow Royal Concert Hall.

At the first Communion Service in November 1957, 83% of the 432 members attended. By the end of December that year, Westerton had the following:

455 Communicant members, 16 Elders, 262 children and 37 teachers in Sunday School; 37 young people in bible class.

The first Anniversary service preacher was Rev Sidney Adamson of Rothesay High Church.

The church at this time agreed to approach Garscube Estate with a view to buying more land for future church use. (ie opposite the church on the south side of Crarae).

The Kirk Session debated how the Communion Service was conducted, and eventually the Minister agreed that he be served the elements by an Elder – a tradition that persists!

February 1959 – Presbytery agreed that Westerton admit and ordain 8 Elders; Presbytery conducted a visitation in April that year!

In January 1960 – a new organist was appointed!

A Men's Guild was established, meeting on alternate Wednesdays; in 1963 it changed its name to Men's Fellowship and ultimately disbanded in 1966.

March 1960 – the congregation now numbered 670, with 23 elders in the Kirk Session, who, together with 9 elected Members, made up the Management Committee. There were 26 baptisms in 1959, and the Sunday School now numbered 312 children with 36 teachers!

25 May 1960 – Westerton Church was granted full status; the Committee of Management became the Congregational Board.

4 September 1960 – at the Anniversary Service, the Deed of Constitution was presented to the Church. Our Church was up and running!

Acknowledgement: Based on "The First Forty Years" compiled by Robin McLean.