



1875 - 1914

A PERIOD OF PROSPERITY

The last quarter of the 19th century saw the church benefit from the prosperity in the area. A number of the major landowners were involved in the church, and farming was doing well with few of the poor harvests of earlier decades. Additionally, the herring fleet was expanding to over 200 vessels at one

point. The New Town area of Stonehaven was expanding up the hill towards the railway station, with large family houses. Many of the important people in the Town were Episcopalians.

St James was very well served first by Revd George Grub (1881 – 1890) and then by the very

long service of Very Revd William Christie (1890 – 1931). Revd Christie was married by the Bishop in his own church in 1895, and was later, in 1917, made Dean of the Diocese.

The Bapistry and Narthex was added in 1905 to create a better entrance to the church.

1914 - 1960

WORLD WARS AND THEIR AFTERMATH

Clearly, World War One, the Great Depression and the Second World War had dramatic effects on church going and church giving. Instead of church-going on a Sunday morning and evening being the thing to do, and to be seen to do, many people found reasons not to be so involved. Attendances slowly but steadily declined. Whilst many found solace in their faith during these traumatic times, just as many started to feel doubts.

In the 1920's, there was a move to update the 1662 Prayer Book that was still the mainstay of worship. In England this created the 1928 Prayer book, which, although approved by the General Synod, was rejected by Parliament, and the matter was dropped.

In Scotland, however, no such Parliamentary approval was necessary, since the Episcopal church was not the established church. So, the 1929 Scottish Prayer Book became the one in general use. It contained both a Scottish Liturgy and an English

Liturgy, and also retained much of the familiar and well-loved prose of the 1662 Prayer Book, albeit with some modern word changes.

1960 – present day

A CHANGING SOCIETY

The 1960s started a long process of reform, both in society at large and within the church. The liturgies were completely re-written, first in 1970 with the 'Grey Book', and then in 1982 with the 'Blue Book', which is version currently in authorised use.

Congregations steadily declined in numbers, and reforms in schooling did away with church-based assemblies in the morning, and compulsory religious education. The changes to Sunday Trading and the Licensing laws, and the playing of sport on Sundays meant that going to church on a Sunday morning was now not the only thing to do.

The church has altered its laws – known as 'Canon Law' – in an attempt to reflect social changes. The equality of women was recognised in the ordination of women. The Scottish Episcopal Church has often been at the forefront of these changes - even to the extent that in 2017 it agreed to authorise and celebrate gay marriages in church.