

Purpose and Values Narrative

January 2026

In this time of change, some of us may find it helpful to have clarity around what we are aiming for, even if that's simply something to guide us along the right paths in our prayers and conversations.

Our Kirk Session believes that God is calling us to develop a shared vision as a church, rather than have a "top-down" strategy. This has been an outworking of the journey of maturity God has had us on over several years, as we learn to discern God's plan.

Part of this has led to our **Purpose** and **Values** – the Purpose was shared at the start of the Union in November 2024, and our Values were shared at the Church Conference in November 2025. Whilst both began to give an overarching direction and a broad framework to work within, we still heard feedback that a picture of what this could lead to, would be useful.

This narrative focuses on our Purpose and weaves this into each of our Values. As we see the way that each Value is described in terms of our Purpose, we are given space to imagine a 'vision' of what our church could mature into, and through this we hope to nurture a shared picture among the church family of what "could be", rather than having a vision from the leadership of the Kirk Session or Minister.

We expect as we pray into this, and our imagination is stirred, that God will raise up ideas, strategies and objectives within and among us, creating a shared pathway forward into all that He has for us.

A Vision of a Thriving Church Family on Mission with God

At Upper Braes Parish Church, our shared **Purpose** is simple and profound:

"To invite, encourage, and enable people to follow Jesus Christ."

We expect this purpose to shape everything we do and aspire to become.

As an integral part of this purpose, we seek to live out four **Values**:

- **Connected** with God
- **Equipped** for Life in the Kingdom
- **Belonging** to God's Family
- **Sent to Partner** with God

With these Values we can begin to see a picture of what a thriving church could look like.

Our Values

Connected with God - I am meeting with God in a personal, growing, and life-giving way.

We are a church that **invites** people to encounter God personally, not as a distant idea, but as a living and loving Presence.

We **encourage** one another to listen for His voice in Scripture, prayer, worship, and in the normal moments of everyday life, making space for Him to speak and sharing our experiences.

We **enable** one another to respond in trust, supporting each other as we learn to rest in God's delight and to grow through His challenge.

As such a church, we hear one another speak more naturally about what God is doing in our lives, recognising His faithfulness through answered and unanswered prayer, as well as seeing His Spirit shape our character and restoring what is broken. The fruit of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control - become increasingly visible.

Connection with God is not confined to Sundays and so our faith flourishes more than ever, overflowing into the whole of life, drawing others to see and seek the same transforming relationship.

Equipped for Life in the Kingdom of God - I know who I am in Christ and I am learning wisdom in living this out.

We are a church that **invites** people to discover their true identity in Christ - beloved, forgiven, called, and sent.

We **encourage** one another to grow in wisdom, discerning how our faith connects with the everyday parts of our lives.

We **enable** one another to live as citizens of God's Kingdom - confident, compassionate, and faithful in every place we find ourselves.

As such a church, we increasingly find Scripture is shaping our understanding of who we are, and all parts of our lives. We find meaning in our daily work, relationships, and responsibilities as places where the Kingdom is near, and this is sustained by learning rhythms of grace, of Sabbath and service, of pruning and growth, of saying "yes" and "no" with discernment.

To be equipped for life in God's Kingdom is to live hopefully and purposefully, participating with Christ in the renewal of all things, wherever we are and wherever we go.

Belonging to God's Family - I am supported by, and contribute to, the church family.

We are a church that **invites** people to belong - not as spectators or consumers, but as family.

We **encourage** one another to serve generously, using our gifts and resources for the good of all.

We **enable** one another to share life deeply, practising love, forgiveness, and unity across our differences.

As such a church, our relationships are marked by warmth and mutual care. We gather in large celebrations and small groups, to worship, learn, pray, and support one another. There is a balance between giving and receiving, between being cared for and offering care. Disagreements are handled with gentleness and grace; diversity is seen as a gift, not a threat.

Belonging is more than attendance - it is participation in a shared life of faith. It is through this love for one another that the world recognises the presence of Christ among us and in us.

Sent to Partner with God - I share locally and more widely in God's mission in the world.

We are a church that **invites** people to join God's mission of shalom - His vision of wholeness, justice, and peace for all creation.

We **encourage** one another to see every place we live, work and serve as a place where God's Kingdom can take root.

We **enable** one another to act with courage, compassion, and faith, trusting the Spirit's power and provision.

As such a church, we, collectively and individually, know the specific people, places, or issues that God has laid upon our hearts. We listen deeply to our neighbours, pray for our communities, and live out God's love in practical ways. Together, we proclaim the Good News, nurture new believers, respond to human need, challenge injustice, and care for creation.

Being sent is not the work of a few, but the shared calling of every person in the church - a living expression of God's hope of shalom for the world.

Following Jesus Christ

As these **Values** grow in our personal and shared lives, our **Purpose** comes more fully alive.

We become a people who **invite** others into the life of Christ, **encourage** one another to keep growing and serving, and **enable** one another to live as mature disciples.

As such a church, worship overflows into witness, community into compassion, and faith into faithful action; the life of Jesus Christ present and at work within us.

Together we follow Jesus Christ, a thriving church sharing in God's mission in the world - all to the glory of God.