

FIVE YEAR PLAN (2021-2025)

**Arbuthnott, Bervie
and Kinneff Church**



Our Vision is:

“To reach all with Christ’s love.”

Our Mission is to be a church who are:

“Introducing people to Jesus.

Loving our community.

Growing as disciples.”

Introduction

A message from Rev. Andrew Morrison

Since my appointment as Minister of Arbuthnott, Bervie & Kinneff Church (ABK Church) in March 2019, it is clear that there is much to be thankful for. Upon my arrival, I found many committed people willing to be involved to serve the purposes of God in their lives and community. This is not a new phenomenon, for our congregations at Arbuthnott and Bervie (with Kinneff in the past) have a rich heritage of faithful service to God and his Kingdom over the centuries.

However, we can never be content with standing still and looking back while society and the culture changes around us. Instead, we are called to go onward, with God before us, to continue in the legacy our ancestors have left us: that of a people committed to God, and committed to seeing the Kingdom of God built in their community.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the associated lockdowns gave the Kirk Session (i.e. the leadership team) of ABK Church a chance to reflect upon the past, and look to the future. We sought to create a plan for the next few years, helping us be proactive in living out our faith, both as individuals and as a church family. This Vision Document and Five Year Plan for ABK Church is the outworking of this.

I recall standing before my new congregation of ABK Church, having only just been ordained a minister minutes before, saying that I longed for the day when our church buildings would overflow with people coming to worship God together, and then living out their faith throughout the week. My prayer is that, as we all take our part in the future of ABK Church, we will be a church family increasingly comprised of people of all ages and backgrounds living out their faith in Jesus, and that the people of Arbuthnott, Bervie, Catterline, Gourdon, Kinneff and beyond will be richly blessed as God's people work to advance the Kingdom of God in our parish.

As you read this Five-Year Plan & Vision for ABK Church, you will learn of our Vision and Mission Statements that shape our thinking; the five key distinctives or characteristics that we pray would be evident in our church family, and the actions we intend to make over these next five years (until the end of 2025).

I ask that you join us by praying, sharing your resources, and helping us serve the purposes of God's Kingdom within our congregation and community.

May our God be Glorified!

Andrew Morrison

Minister of Arbuthnott, Bervie and Kinneff Parish Church

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Our Vision and Mission

In order to know where we are going, and what our goals and plans are for the future, we must first establish who we are. This entails establishing what makes ABK Church who it is. Furthermore, we have crafted a Vision and a Mission Statement to give us direction. ¹

The Vision of ABK Church is: “To reach all with Christ’s love.”

Over 20 years ago, the Kirk Session adopted a slightly longer version of this as the vision statement. While it hasn’t been focused upon in recent years, the underlying thought behind it still rings true, and applies to ABK Church today. This shorter version, more than twenty years on, still encapsulates all that we want to do. We want to be a body of God’s people who are reaching everyone – whether on our doorstep or on the other side of the world; whether they are within our family & friend group, or they are a stranger—with the good news of Christ’s love for them.

The Mission of ABK Church is to be a church who are: “Introducing people to Jesus. Loving our community. Growing as disciples.”

If we are going “To reach all with Christ’s love”, we need to be doing three things.

1. Firstly, we need to be introducing people to Jesus himself. For people to know Christ’s love, they must know who Christ is through us sharing the Good News about Jesus, the Gospel.
2. Secondly, for people to understand that Jesus loves them, and what he’s done for them, they must experience that love he offers. Thus, as the people of God, we need to be those who love those around us, in the way that Christ loves us all.
3. Thirdly, for us to be able to love people like Jesus, and to be ready to share Good News of Jesus’ love, we must be growing as disciples. We cannot be complacent, and satisfied with standing still in our faith. Rather, we should be eager to know and love God more, to understand and appreciate his love for us, and to live the lives he calls us to day by day. In other words, to be growing as disciples.

Thus, we can say our mission, our day to day objectives, are to be a body of God’s people who are doing three things: ***Introducing People to Jesus, Loving our Community and Growing as Disciples***. As we do these things, we will increasingly be ***reaching all people with Christ’s love***.

1. A ***Vision Statement*** is a short statement describing the inspirational long-term desired change resulting from our work.

A ***Mission Statement*** is short statement detailing the reason we exist. It defines how we will fulfil the vision.

Our Key Distinctives

As a body of God's people, who are called "***to reach all with Christ's love***", and to do this through "***introducing people to Jesus, loving our community and growing as disciples***", we believe there are five key distinctives that should shape us – they make us who we are. These are characteristics of our church family that we wish to increasingly grow in, so that we might fulfil our calling that God has placed upon the people of ABK Church. We have not achieved perfection in them, and cannot perfectly achieve them this side of eternity, but with God's grace, we desire to be a people who are maturing in them. We believe that as we do so, we will increasingly move closer to our vision for our church.

All About Jesus

The person of Jesus Christ is central to all that we do, and through him we have relationship with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. What Jesus Christ has done for us in his birth, death, resurrection and ascension is good news for humanity. It is the gospel upon which our faith is founded, and this defines us as individuals and as a community of his people. ABK Church exists to enjoy, declare, defend and display this Good News about Jesus in all that we are and do; without it we are nothing and are still lost in our sin and rebellion. We must never move away from it; rather we will preach it, live it and enjoy it as we trust in the infallible Word of God.

Whole-Life Worship

We were made to worship, to display the praises of the one who has redeemed us. Jesus Christ, who has transformed us is worth living and dying for, so we seek to be devoted to him and make him the object of our desire in all of our life. ABK Church exists to worship God in all we are and do, whether we are responding to him in praise and worship together or seeking to serve others in the community. Worship is not about a one-hour event, but our commitment to honouring the God who deserves our all, through all aspects of our life. As such, all 168 hours in a week are opportunities to praise the one who has loved us with an everlasting love in prayer, delving into the scriptures and relying on the Holy Spirit's prompting in our life.

Intentional Relationships

The foundation of our faith is a God who first loved us, and calls us to love one another in response. The church of Jesus Christ is comprised of a body of believers, who are united around their shared love, devotion and commitment to God. ABK Church is a local fellowship of God's people, committed to loving and serving one another around our shared commitment to Christ. The church is not our social club; rather it comprises the people God has given us to love and serve in the way that Christ has graciously loved and served us first. They are our brothers and sisters in Christ, the people that we are committed to loving and serving, praying for and journeying with throughout life. We value the diversity of God's global Church, and rejoice that our church family reflects something of that glorious variety – whether in ability, circumstance, age or cultural background.

Reaching Out in Mission

God's partners in reaching the world with the gospel are his people; you and me – his disciples. When God's grace in Jesus grips our hearts by his Holy Spirit, it inevitably flows over to friends, family and the wider community as we enjoy and share his goodness. ABK church exists to live, share and speak the gospel of Jesus to those who need to hear it in our town, our country and our world. We believe all people matter to God, and therefore, they matter to us. God has blessed us with Good News, and it is our joy to help others find the abundant life, the eternal love, and the glorious purpose for which they were created to know and enjoy forever.

Serving our Community

Partnership with God leads to partnership with other people; there is something very special about an intentional Christian community seeking to love others. ABK Church exists to welcome, care for and support people. We believe everyone has an important role in the life of the church family and in the wider community. God gives gifts to us and we want to encourage everyone to identify and use them, for the building of the church family, and the expansion of God's good and loving purposes in our community. We refuse to be insular and neglectful of those around us. Rather, out of the overflow of love that God has poured into us, we will serve the last, the least and the lost wherever they may be found.

Our Plan for 2021—2025

In order to achieve our three-fold mission of *introducing people to Jesus, loving our community, and growing as disciples*, we will commit to five key areas of work for ABK Church from mid-2021 until the end of 2025). The rest of this document sets out actions in three areas: Ministry, Mission and Administration. We have arranged action points under each heading for ease of reference in this document, but we recognise that not all actions fit neatly into one of these areas.

MINISTRY

To “minister” means “to serve”. The words used to describe ministry or ministers in the New Testament mean “servant” in different ways. One of these words is also closely related to the word for worship. When you add this up, you get a good description of our church: We are a worshipping community serving God and each other. While Andrew is our ‘Minister’, every Christian’s calling is to be minister, or to serve, those in their church family.

Many different elements that make up this service. It includes our Sunday worship gatherings, but also our everyday worship as we live for God in our daily lives at work, education and home. This service, or ministry, that we are all involved in happens as we pray with and for one another, as we help one another grow as disciples of Jesus, as we care for each other and increasingly love each other. Fundamentally, it is the living out of the ‘one another’ statements throughout the Bible.

Caring for our Church Family

- We will launch a pastoral care team to be at the forefront of pastoral care for our church family.
- We will motivate every church member to discover their God-given skills to serve one another in our goal to build a cohesive family where everyone is connected and new people are both welcomed and included in community life.
- In our goal to grow as a family, we will work towards having a yearly church weekend-away, providing a relaxed and fun space for fellowship to develop among our members.

Children & Families

- Parents, grandparents and guardians will be equipped with the resources and practical skills to disciple the young people in their family.
- We seek to work towards our Sunday groups growing in numbers and regularity of attendance, ensuring that any barriers to coming to gathered worship as a family are minimised.

Encountering God in Worship

- We plan to review our worship services and ministry to be effective and accessible for as many as possible, considering the possibility of introducing Fresh Expressions of worship to help those out with our church family encounter Jesus in an accessible way.
- We will keep under review the worship in ABK Church and consider numerous options to enhance our worship spaces and experience, including producing a high quality livestream for worship; upgrading our Audio-Visual systems in our church buildings & experimenting with a greater variety of ways to worship
- More members will be equipped in the preparing and leading of worship.

Meeting God in Prayer

- Every church member will be encouraged and equipped in being more dependent upon God in personal and corporate prayer.
- The Prayer Course will be utilised to aid our understanding and passion for prayer.
- Building on the ‘Beyond Lockdown’ prayer fortnight in September 2020, a yearly focus upon prayer will take place.

Growing as Disciples

- The number of our house-groups and participants will be grown, striving to make being part of a house-group a normal rhythm of life within the church family.
- Periodically, Discipleship Explored, or other course designed to help grow whole-life disciples within the membership of the church will take place.
- The minister will seek to develop a one-to-one discipleship pathway for those interested in growing much deeper in their faith; with the aim to having a few individuals on this every year.

MISSION

“It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world, as that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission – God’s mission.”²

Mission, at its core, is the building of God’s Kingdom throughout the world. This mission has various aspects to it. Primarily it’s the proclaiming of the Good News of Jesus, and the nurturing of new believers. However, God’s Kingdom is also to be lived out in practical ways, through serving others in need, pursuing peace and justice, and safeguarding the integrity of God’s creation. Our action points over these next five years reflect these various aspects of mission, both locally and beyond.

Local Mission

- We seek to ensure that everyone living and working in our local communities has access to the Good News of Jesus in a way that’s relevant and accessible to them.
- We will run the Natural Evangelism Course (or similar) to train people within the church family in sharing the gospel with their friends and family.
- We will initiate a strategy to extravagantly welcome and serve those who move into our community, and those who are visitors or first-time guests of our congregations

World Mission

- We will establish a formal relationship with a missionary partner, offering support and prayer.
- Yearly, we will have a World Mission focus in our Sunday worship services.

Caring for our Community

- Research will be conducted into the perceived needs of the community, and explore ways in which we can serve the people in our local area.
- We seek to be a people, both individually and corporately, who excel in caring for the people in our community, particularly those who are among the poorest and most vulnerable.

Caring for our Environment

- In our recognition of our calling to be good stewards of creation, we will take deliberate steps to reduce our environmental impact, and to play our part in the restoration of creation. This may involve reinvigorating our involvement with Eco-Congregation Scotland.

Children & Families

- We seek to encourage the ongoing development of a dynamic ministry that reaches the children and young people in our community, providing a safe and welcoming environment for them to hear and understand the good news of Jesus.
- We will develop and grow chaplaincy links with local primary schools and nurseries, offering pastoral and spiritual support, encouragement and prayer to the pupils, staff and parents.

² Christopher J.H. Wright, (2006), *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission*

ADMINISTRATION

Administration is an important spiritual gift, with Paul clearly pointing out that for the body of Christ to function well, we need people who God has given the gift of administration to. Our goal is that we would steward the resources (of time, talents and money) that God has been kind to give to us, so that our work in the world will be effective. Administration in the church has been compared to the trellis upon which the fruitful vines grow, or the foundation upon which the mission and ministry of the church can thrive. Without the admin parts of our church, the whole of what the church is about fails to happen. We are grateful for the ways in which people give generously to our work, and our action points seek to ensure that we continue to have a strong trellis or foundation for the future.

Finance

- Our members will be motivated to give regularly and generously through regular stewardship teaching.
- Ensuring that we continue to pay for the full costs of ministry in our parish, we seek to increase our giving by more than 5% a year.
- We seek to build up our financial reserves to an appropriate and sustainable level.

Property

- We will maximise the use of our facilities during the week for ministry, outreach and community use, ensuring that they are multi-functional and user-friendly in order to help us advance our mission to our wider community.
- We seek to develop a programme of agreed, prioritised and continuous improvement of properties.
- We seek to market Arbuthnott Church to a wider audience, promoting it as a historical place of national importance, a beautiful wedding venue, and a serene space to encounter God.
- We will have an effective and enhanced online presence, through our website, social media and other online locations.

People

- We will help church members identify their God-given gifts, skills and talents, in order that they might use them for the furtherance of the Kingdom and the mission of the church.
- We seek to use the Growing Leaders Course [or similar] to develop the breadth and depth of leadership in the church, thereby facilitating future church ministry.
- We aspire towards having a 'shadow' (i.e. disciple or apprentice) for key post holders; e.g. Treasurer, Property Convener, Safeguarding Co-ordinator, Gift Aid Convener etc.

Wider Church

- We will investigate the possibility of greater collaboration with neighbouring churches. We seek to develop practical ways to share the available pool of combined resources in order to reduce areas of unnecessarily duplicated effort and free-up human and financial resources for mission.