

Church Handbook

Upton Vale

BAPTIST CHURCH

Welcome

Since this church was formed in 1832, Christians have been gathering together to worship God and to proclaim the Gospel.

Upton Vale has not just survived the intervening years, but has thrived and continues to be an exciting and inclusive church of all ages. It is passionate about making a positive difference in the local area and much further afield.

We hope that this handbook not only tells you a bit more about who we are, but also about who we want to become. The story is still being written, and if you haven't already joined us, we hope that you will become part of this next chapter.

Church Leadership Team



Why do we exist?

For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.

Colossians 1:16

Our purpose

In our lives as individuals, in our smaller groups and in our larger gatherings, we seek to live out our God-given purpose.



Worship

We were planned for God's pleasure



Serving

We were shaped for serving God and others



Fellowship

We were formed for God's family



Discipleship

We were created to become like Christ



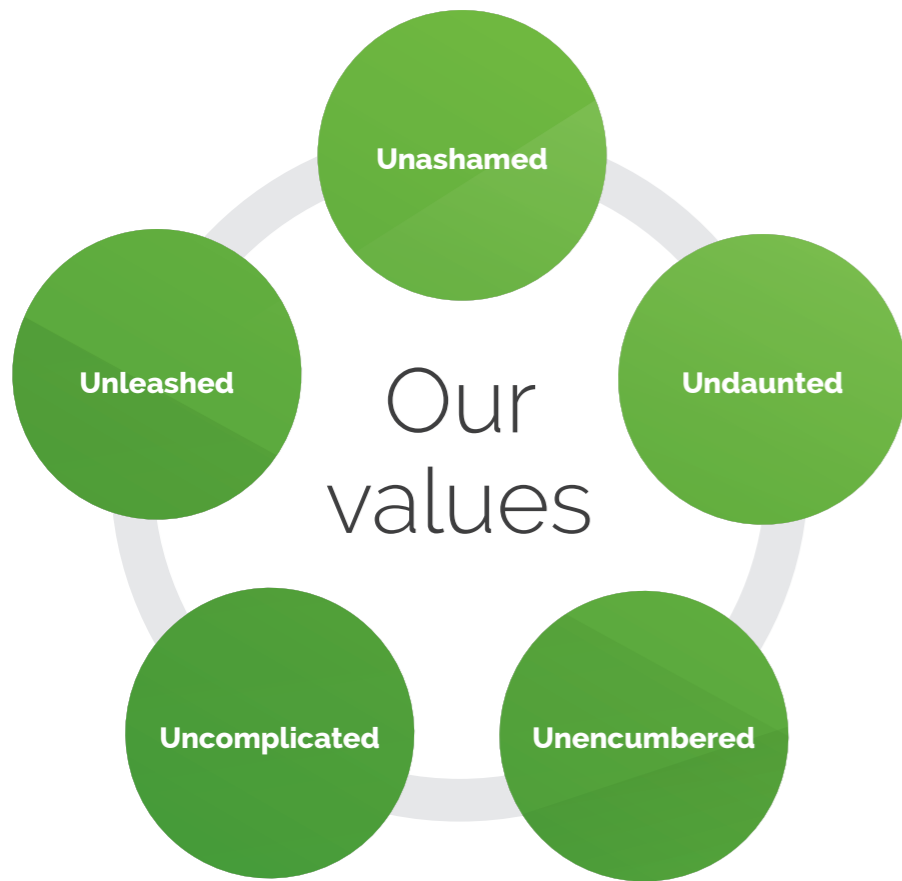
Outreach

We were made for mission

How do we live?

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Hebrews 12:1



Our values

Unashamed of the Gospel



For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.

Romans 1:16a

Undaunted by opposition



The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

1 John 4:4b

Unencumbered in our lifestyle



Do not take a purse or bag or sandals.

Luke 10:4a

Uncomplicated in our planning



Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

Psalms 119:105

Unleashed to be the people of God

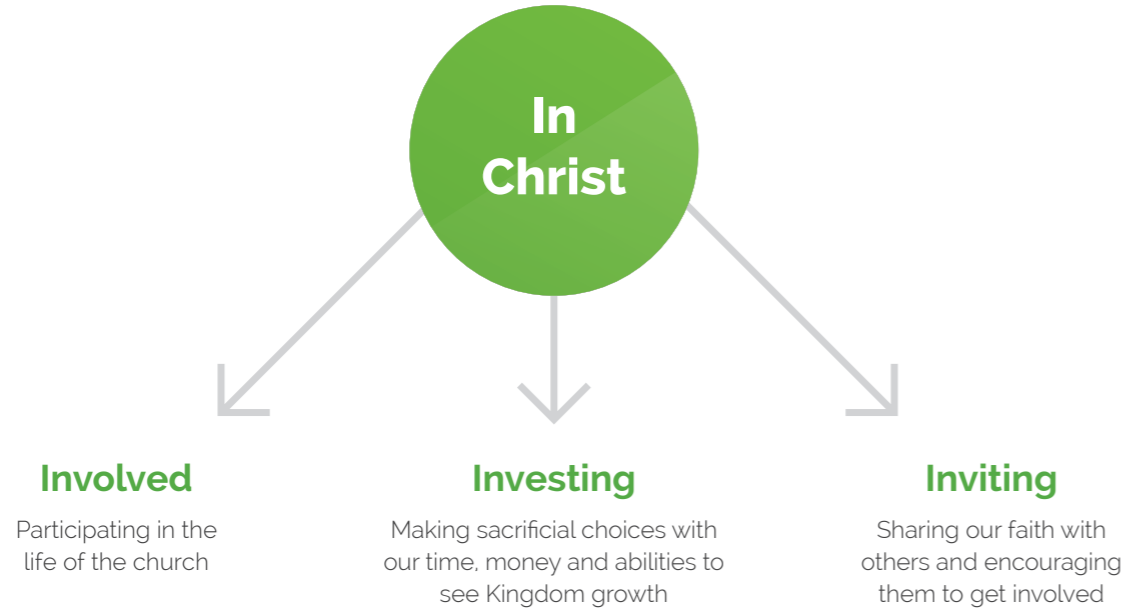


Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Matthew 28:19-20

Our expectations of one another

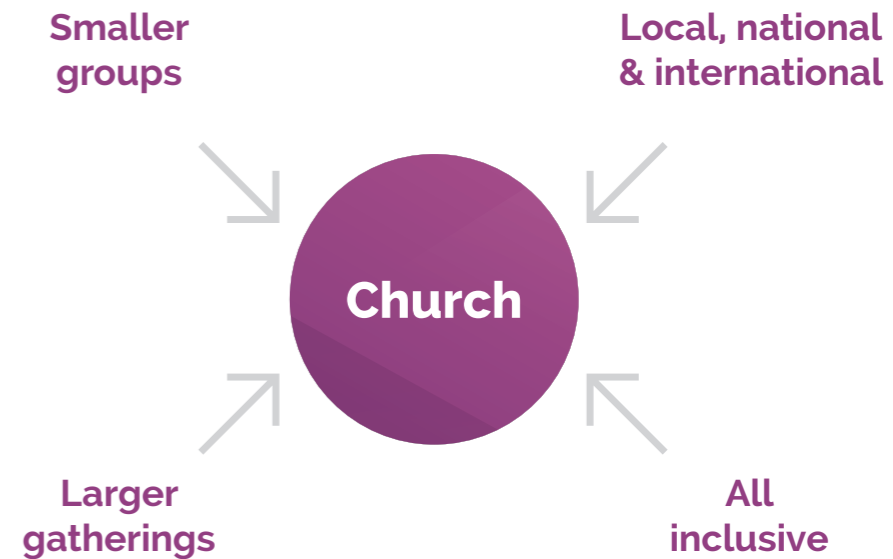
As members of Upton Vale, we expect each other to be 'in Christ'. As a result we will be...



What do we do?

"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people."

Matthew 4:19



For where two or three gather
in my name, there am I with them.

Matthew 18:20

A follower
of Jesus

A learner

A teacher



Disciple

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,
baptising them in the name of the Father and of the
Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey
everything I have commanded you. And surely I am
with you always, to the very end of the age.

Matthew 28:19–20



Our focus

In order to be fruitful we focus our resources, energy and prayer on...

Celebrations



Enabling a dynamic encounter with God in larger gatherings such as Sunday services.

Pastoral care



Caring for one another's practical, emotional and spiritual needs.

Children, youth and young adults



Equipping and releasing them to fulfil their potential.

Outreach



Reaching out to people with the Gospel, in words and actions, in the UK and overseas, so that they might become disciples.

Administration



Stewarding our finance, building and church office to release and support the life of the church.

Who are our key partners?

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labour

Ecclesiastes 4:9



South West Baptist Association

- A family of around 90 churches covering Cornwall, Devon, south Somerset and a small part of Dorset.
- SWBA churches come in all shapes and sizes, and are found in city centres, housing estates, suburbs, villages, rural and coastal areas.



Baptist Union of Great Britain

- A union of around 2,000 churches in covenant relationship.
- Mission statement – Growing healthy churches in relationship for God's mission.



BMS World Mission

- A Christian mission organisation, working with the most marginalised people, least evangelised communities and most fragile states.
- Mission statement – the highest goal of all we do is to bring people to faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and an experience of the abundant life that only he can provide.



Evangelical Alliance

- The largest and oldest body representing the UK's two million evangelical Christians. Since 1846, they have been bringing Christians together and helping them listen to, and be heard by, the government, media and society.

What do we believe?

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness

2 Timothy 3:16

Declaration of Principle the basis of the Baptist Union is:

- 1 That our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each Church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer His laws.
- 2 That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who 'died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried, and rose again the third day.'
- 3 That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world.

Evangelical Alliance Basis of Faith we believe in...

- The one true God who lives eternally in three persons — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- The love, grace and sovereignty of God in creating, sustaining, ruling, redeeming and judging the world.
- The divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which are the written Word of God—fully trustworthy for faith and conduct.
- The dignity of all people, made male and female in God's image to love, be holy and care for creation, yet corrupted by sin, which incurs divine wrath and judgement.
- The incarnation of God's eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ—born of the virgin Mary; truly divine and truly human, yet without sin.
- The atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross: dying in our place, paying the price of sin and defeating evil, so reconciling us with God.
- The bodily resurrection of Christ, the first fruits of our resurrection; his ascension to the Father, and his reign and mediation as the only Saviour of the world.
- The justification of sinners solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ.
- The ministry of God the Holy Spirit, who leads us to repentance, unites us with Christ through new birth, empowers our discipleship and enables our witness.
- The Church, the body of Christ both local and universal, the priesthood of all believers—given life by the Spirit and endowed with the Spirit's gifts to worship God and proclaim the gospel, promoting justice and love.
- The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to fulfil the purposes of God, who will raise all people to judgement, bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal condemnation to the lost, and establish a new heaven and new earth.

Upton Vale

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Give us a call

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www.uptonvale.org.uk



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