

FORMARTINE PARISH CHURCH



Parish Profile



Formartine Parish Church Aberdeenshire

Letter to our new minister

Here we are, looking for a new minister. Please join us in a great adventure, an adventure following Christ in the way of love.

Who are we? We are Formartine Parish Church in Aberdeenshire. You may not know us, we are a very new parish, a union of Barthol Chapel, Tarves, Udney and Pitmedden Churches. We are still getting to know each other and look forward to getting to know you.

We have a lot to offer. Many things we do well. We have exceptional youth outreach, we are faithful in worship, we offer fellowship, fun and hospitality, we care for our communities, we are generous with our time and talents, we are open to new ideas. But we also face challenges, we have had disappointments but we are never daunted.

We hope you may be the minister who will lead and inspire us to love and serve God, Christ and our neighbour in all the joys and sorrows we face as a congregation, a church, and as individuals.

We have a vision for our church, we would love you to join our vision with yours that we may be the very people God calls us to be. That would truly be a great adventure.



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PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

Formartine Parish Church is one of the newest Churches of Scotland but we have a long history. The church came into being on 1 January 2024, and the minister of Barthol Chapel and Tarves became the first minister of Formartine Parish Church until her retirement at Easter 2024.

From 2021 onwards, a union was being actively explored between Udney and Pitmedden, Barthol Chapel linked with Tarves, and Methlick parishes. After much prayerful consideration, Methlick decided that they could not be part of the union but Barthol Chapel, Tarves and Udney and Pitmedden Churches unanimously agreed to proceed. It was agreed that Barthol Chapel Church would close.

We continue to work closely together with Methlick particularly through the Formartine Youth Project which is a joint venture popular with the young people and the communities.



As we are a very new parish, we are still working through the finer details of our shared vision together. Our experiences of Covid and Presbytery planning have made the last few years difficult at times, but we are now looking forward to a time of renewal.

Udney and Pitmedden had been without a minister since 2021. It has been hard for Barthol Chapel to lose their church. But we look to the future as a forward-looking, open and inclusive community of faith.



We offer an opportunity and a challenge for a minister as we all set out on a new way, open to fresh ideas for worship and service. We draw together the best of our previous parishes with the strengths we now have as a union.

A number of teams have been set up to take care of the practical and spiritual aspects of our united congregation.

- Worship
- Pastoral Care
- Communication and IT
- Administration – Data protection, Safeguarding, Rolls, etc.
- Property
- Finance

We have decided to depart from historic and current practice, in order to permit the ordination, induction or appointment of a minister who is in a civil partnership or same sex marriage.

WORSHIP

Formartine is a warm and inclusive congregation, welcoming members from diverse backgrounds. During our current vacancy, services are led by a team of lay preachers under the guidance of our Interim Moderator. We are fortunate to have a Reader who leads services and conducts funerals.

United services take place every Sunday at 10.00 am, alternating between our two kirks. These are uplifting and filled with spirit. We embrace the diversity of worship styles brought by different preachers. Worshippers engage in responsive calls to worship and prayers, members of the congregation give Bible readings and sometimes prayers. Once a month, we hold an intergenerational service using *Spill the Beans* resources, with active participation from congregation members.

Both kirks are set out café-style, offering a welcoming space for fellowship following each service.

We sing a combination of traditional hymns and contemporary songs, accompanied by talented musicians playing the organ, piano, and guitar. Special services may feature a choir, family group, or soloist. We primarily use *CH4* and *God Welcomes All*, among other resources.

Tarves Kirk has a fine traditional pipe organ and piano, Pitmedden Kirk an electric organ and piano.

Both churches are equipped with full audiovisual systems, utilising large screens to display the words of hymns, images, and videos during worship. Services are also broadcast via Zoom, ensuring that those unable to attend the kirk can still participate. A dedicated and enthusiastic team manages our technology, enhancing the worship experience.

An order of service is available on our website and a printed version is delivered to those unable to join us in person.



Detail from stained glass in Tarves Kirk

Fellowship

Services are followed by a time of fellowship. This has been especially valued as an opportunity for members of the uniting churches to get to know each other. Friendships are formed and deepened over tea and coffee.



Priorities

- To keep an active and lively worshipping congregation in Formartine parish
- To improve outreach to the community
- To encourage younger members of the community to join us



SPECIAL SERVICES

There are several special services in the worship calendar which draw members of the wider community. These include

- Easter Sunday service
- World Day of Prayer
- Summer Club service
- Harvest Thanksgiving
- Remembrance Day service
- Christmas Eve family service
- Watchnight service
- Thinking Day service
- BB Dedication Service
- Guild Dedication service

We are open to change and look forward to our new minister bringing their own ideas and forms of worship.



OUR COMMUNITY



Young family recently moved to the area:

“ It’s all about community, the people make it special...”

View to the west

Formartine parish lies in beautiful farmland and woodland countryside to the north of Aberdeen. To the west are the blue hills of the eastern Grampians. To the east, are miles of sandy beaches and sea cliffs teeming with seabirds.

This unique area has its own traditions of language, history and culture. It has changed dramatically since the advent of North Sea oil, but retains a strong community spirit and deep roots in the land.

We have strong links with our agricultural and rural heritage but the community is diverse. Many people work in the energy sector, both onshore and offshore.

We offer the best of rural life combined with easy access to city life.



Collieston – popular nearby beach

Community Groups

Church members are engaged in the community at all levels.

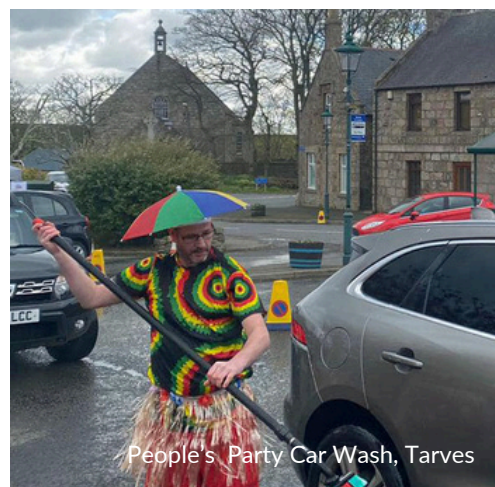
Udny Community Trust manages income from a community owned wind turbine. The Trust administers the funds, welcoming grant applications from local groups and organisations. The Trust purchased a former hotel in Pitmedden and have transformed it into the Medan Centre, a focal point for the community with numerous community activities and home to Café 48 and the Community Shelf.

Barthol Chapel Community Association, Tarves Development Trust, Tarves People's Party, Udny Climate Action, Udny Resilience Group and Pitmedden Amenities Trust are just a few of the groups active in the community.

Local newsletters, The Pitmedden News and TBC (Tarves and Barthol Chapel Newsletter) are produced quarterly and the church provides regular articles for them both. These are distributed to every household in the parish.



Clearing paths, Udny Paths group



People's Party Car Wash, Tarves

Villages

The parish includes the villages of Barthol Chapel, Pitmedden, Tarves and Udny Green, each with its own character. All the villages have expanded in recent years and there is a high percentage of young families and working age adults. Nearby are the thriving towns of Inverurie, Ellon and Oldmeldrum.

Barthol Chapel is a scattered rural settlement with a population of over 400. The community are looking to take ownership of the former church for use as a community hub.

Pitmedden has a population of over 1400. Amenities include village hall, the Medan Centre, sheltered housing complex, well stocked Co-op, Thai takeaway, public house, garage, bowling green, tennis court and playing fields. Nearby are a sheltered workshop, café with coffee roastery, farm shop and whisky shop.



Pitmedden in Spring



Resident for 25 years:

“The community has been welcoming from day one...”

Kirk Brae, Tarves

Udny Green is a small picturesque village with around 88 homes. The village green has been designated a conservation area. A recently refurbished hall on the green hosts many activities.

Tarves is an attractive village with a Victorian village square, designated as a conservation area. It has a population of over 1100. There is a village hall, sheltered housing complex, heritage centre, busy local shop with post office, hotel, lively café, playing fields, football park and bowling green. Local businesses include agricultural engineers, garages, hairdressers and kilt hire.

Healthcare

The Haddo Medical Group is in a modern health centre in Pitmedden and there is a pharmacy located in Tarves. First responders operate in the local area.

Aberdeen has a large university teaching hospital – Aberdeen Royal Infirmary.

Dental practices can be found in nearby Ellon and Oldmeldrum.

There are veterinary services in Oldmeldrum and Ellon.



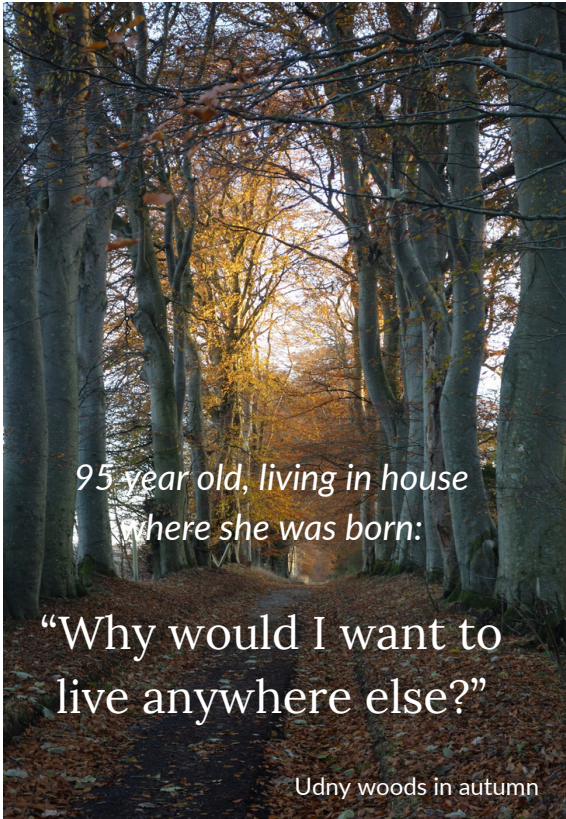
Approach to Barthol Chapel



New Housing development, Tarves



Udny Green



Education

Educational facilities are excellent

Primary

- Primary school in Barthol Chapel (roll 24)
- Primary school with Nursery in Pitmedden (roll 156)
- Primary school with Nursery in Tarves (roll 158)
- Primary school in Udney Green (roll 49)

Secondary

Secondary education is at Meldrum Academy in Oldmeldrum which has a school roll of 1004
School buses serve the area

Further and Higher Education

Aberdeen is a university city offering excellent opportunities at the University of Aberdeen and Robert Gordon University

North East Scotland College has campuses in the city and the shire

Local attractions and recreation

There are wonderful walks in the area and many places of interest including

- Haddo House and Country Park
- Pitmedden Garden and Museum of Farming Life
- Tolquhon Castle
- Tarves Heritage Centre
- Tolquhon Gallery
- The Prop of Ythsie
- Udney Castle grounds
- Ythsie Stone Circle



A number of venues host regular events throughout the year.



We have music, dance, theatre, art, crafts. There is a choral society, musical theatre, folk club, woodturning group and craft groups to name a few...and not forgetting the annual local pantomime. Also SWI group and annual Flower Shows.

Sports and keep fit enthusiasts, both participants and supporters, can enjoy football, tennis, bowling, cycling, martial arts, guided walks and more. A popular health club/gym is located near Tarves. There are a number of golf courses nearby and a community swimming pool and rugby club in Ellon.

Children and young people enjoy Brownies, Guides, Boys Brigade, toddlers group, playgroups, dance classes, theatre groups, youth clubs and various sporting activities.



Formartine FC



Haddo Children's Theatre



Tarves Folk Club



Pitmedden Tennis

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Children and families are always welcome in church. We have a fantastic Youth Project, weekly Mainly Music sessions for pre-school children and a thriving Boys Brigade company. We also have strong links with Brownies and Guides.

Be, Belong and Believe

Formartine Youth Project, or FYP as it is known, is all about the children and youth in the communities of Udney Green, Pitmedden, Tarves, Barthol Chapel and Methlick.



The project was established in 2013 by the churches in the area, including Methlick. The aim was to help meet the needs of young people in this rural area by creating safe places for them to meet, to develop relationships, to be themselves, to believe in themselves and to feel they belong.

through Holy Week, distribution of study bags, holiday clubs, outings...there is always something going on. Upwards of 50 children join the after school Youth Club in Pitmedden each Thursday.

There is also regular chaplaincy involvement in the five local Primary Schools and the project supports youth activities in Meldrum Academy and the community.



It has been a huge success and continues to be a collaboration between Formartine Parish Church and Methlick Parish Church. We have a brilliant Youth Development Worker assisted by dedicated volunteers.

Youth cafes, youth clubs, special assemblies, fundraising events, walk

Since Covid restrictions ended, the Project has grown in strength. Our Youth Development Worker has built a terrific rapport with the young people and the team of volunteers, and through this we have been able to create connections between them, the schools and the different ministries that the churches offer.

As a result, the young people look on the Project as theirs and are no longer on the fringes but are beginning to take active roles in the running of the Project with some gaining or working towards Saltire Awards and Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Outreach to young people

Other aspects of outreach to young people have struggled, particularly since Covid. We previously had a thriving Messy Church in Tarves, a Toddlers group and other groups in the area. We are always open to revive activities with children.

PASTORAL CARE

We see Pastoral Care as an essential part of our ministry towards members and the wider community, identifying local and regional needs. We aim to work with those who need to be visited, need to be heard, need to be comforted. The elderly, ill, infirm and bereaved, those struggling socially or financially – all are in need of care.

Ours is a relatively prosperous parish but there are always people who struggle, often unseen. This became apparent during Covid. Members experienced in raising funds were able to raise £4500 for food and supermarket vouchers which were distributed by a wide pool of volunteers. We liaised with agencies who could provide bedding, clothing, and other family essentials.

We continue to distribute supermarket vouchers at the beginning of school holidays.

A new model of pastoral care is being developed in our new church with a Pastoral Care Team. The old practice of pastoral care being delivered by elders to districts had become fragmented. Pastoral work in future will be reliant on the Pastoral Care Team supporting the Minister.



Paving, Pitmedden Garden

The apparently simple act of delivering some flowers with a card can be of genuine comfort. Others may value prayer and discussion of their faith.

PARISH OUTREACH

We are pro-active in outreach. We have an excellent Church website and lively Facebook pages for both Formartine Parish Church and Formartine Youth Project. We aim to reach out to those in our community who are not regular church-goers, to engage with them and encourage them to become involved. We also regularly share posts on our local community Facebook pages.

Our online platforms also provide a way for former members of our church family, who have left the area, to keep in touch.

Church Groups and Events

Mid Formartine Guild – The Guild meets every month from April to September. There is a wide and varied programme each session. Meetings are enlightening, entertaining, and uplifting. There is always a warm welcome with tea, baking and conversation. The Guild is also excellent at fundraising.



Tarves Kirk Coffee Morning – Held in the kirk every Tuesday morning, this is an informal chance to meet with friends, make new friends and chat over tea or coffee.

Big Breakfast – The Big Breakfast takes place once a month, alternating between Pitmedden and Tarves. It began in 2007, initially raising funds to send local volunteers to South Africa, helping to build houses for Habitat for Humanity. The tradition of acting as a fundraiser, while serving delicious breakfasts, has continued.

WORLD CHURCH

We have always been outward looking. We have had a strong connection with Malawi in the past, we have supported Mission Partners and we have been very active in fundraising for Christian Aid and other organisations. In recent years these initiatives have lapsed but we are keen to engage more fully again in future.

We promote Fair Trade and encourage respect for the environment.

Udny Good Companions – The Club has been running for over 55 years and is funded mainly by an annual Coffee Morning and contributions from members via a donation box. At each meeting there is an hour of musical entertainment followed by tea and home bakes.

Gingerbread Village – A time for festive creativity. Everyone is invited to make a 'gingerbread' house to form a village. There is then a light switch on with carols and refreshments before Christmas.



Knitting – Knitters are spread across the parish and county. A dedicated knitting group meets every week at the sheltered housing in Tarves. Those who benefit include AberNecessities, the Cyrenians, Street Friends and a number of wards at Woodend Hospital in Aberdeen as well as local families, schools and nurseries,

PROPERTY

Three churches, two manses, two glebes, one hall and a jungle

THREE CHURCHES

Our centres of worship are Tarves Kirk and Pitmedden Kirk.

Barthol Chapel Church closed for worship in 2023 and is due to be sold. It is currently let to Barthol Chapel Community Hub which is hoping to purchase the building for community use.

Udny Green Church has been sold to a private buyer who wishes it to be used for community events.

PITMEDDEN KIRK

The church sits on a prominent, raised site, overlooking the centre of Pitmedden village. A Grade II listed granite building, it dates from 1864.

The church remained largely unchanged until 1993 when a Development Appeal began and the entire building was upgraded and transformed. An extension was built at the rear of the church to house a reception/crèche area, a meeting room, kitchen and toilets. The area under the gallery was enclosed to create a separate space from the nave. Pews were removed and upholstered wooden chairs introduced. The original wooden roof structure and ceiling remain unaltered.



Today the interior is a bright, modern and versatile multi-use space, a warm and welcoming place to worship God and conduct activities.



TARVES KIRK

Replacing a mediaeval structure, Tarves Kirk was built in 1798. Stonework from the earlier church has been used in places and sections of carved gravestones have also been used and can be seen in places in-situ. A stone dated 1613 is built into the walls.

The church is a Grade II listed building and sits at the heart of the village, off the village square which is a conservation area. A fine granite building, it retains many original elements including a horseshoe gallery and organ chamber. There is a porch, vestry, kitchen, toilet and store rooms.

Pews have been replaced by individual seats and sensitive adaptations over the years have given us a warm light, airy, flexible space conducive to different styles of worship and fellowship.



Maintenance, Repairs and Vision

Both church buildings are in a good state of repair but inevitably, being old stone built properties, they require ongoing maintenance.

The wall at the front of Pitmedden Kirk has recently been undergoing stabilisation work. Further work is necessary and works to create disabled access will be included in the next phase.

The kitchen in Pitmedden Kirk is well used, particularly for monthly Big Breakfasts. It is currently functional but improvement is desirable.

In 2014, Tarves had a plan to firstly, extend and renovate the Manse, secondly upgrade the Youth Hall and thirdly make improvements to the church. The first two stages have been completed, the third we would hope to complete in future.

TWO MANSES

The manse is in the village of Tarves, a five minute walk from the church. Udney manse is currently let.

TARVES MANSE



The manse is in a quiet street on a pleasant residential estate. Built in the 1970s, it is light, bright, comfortable and spacious. Extended in 2016, it has been upgraded and renovated throughout to a high standard.

- entrance vestibule and hall
- large lounge with open views, fully carpeted
- open plan dining/family area leading to kitchen
- fully-fitted Howdens kitchen with integral appliances – hob, new oven, extractor, fridge, freezer and dishwasher, French windows to garden
- utility room with washing machine, door to garden with rotary washing line
- study
- 4 bedrooms, fully carpeted, 1 en suite
- family bathroom
- cloakroom
- partially floored loft and a number of storage cupboards
- double garage and ample off-road parking

FEATURES

- double glazing
- oil central heating – recently installed fuel efficient Grant eco-boiler
- light oak laminate flooring in hall, kitchen, dining and utility areas
- disabled access throughout



From kitchen through to dining area and lounge



Kitchen



View from Manse



Lounge

Manse Garden

There is a good sized sheltered garden, easily maintained. Open at the front with lawn, shrubs and a fine silver birch. Very private fully enclosed rear garden, mainly lawn with mature hedging. Greenhouse, raised beds, water butt, compost bin. Patio area.

TWO GLEBES

Tarves Glebe is currently let to the Tarves Development Trust to be used for the community. It is used for grazing sheep but also for events. Among its activities, the Trust hosts a hugely popular annual bonfire and fireworks display in the Glebe.

Udny Glebe is currently let for agricultural use.



Annual bonfire and fireworks

YOUTH HALL

Tarves Youth Hall was built in 1958, converted from old steadings, with volunteers and local tradespeople combining to create a space for youth organisations to meet.

In constant use, the hall has been maintained and improved over the years but it was beginning to need more radical improvement. In 2018, an ambitious renovation programme began. An energetic fundraising campaign garnered funds both locally and by way of grants to the tune of £250,000. Progress was interrupted by Covid but the hall has now been transformed and it re-opened earlier this year.

Major improvements include an eco-friendly air source heating system, a large commercial quality kitchen, entrance porch, new floor, new toilets including wheelchair accessible toilet and baby changing facilities.

REGULAR USERS include Guides, Karate class and Indoor Bowling. It is also popular for children's parties and other events.



JUNGLE

To the rear of the Youth Hall is a wooded area affectionately known as “The Jungle”. This is used and enjoyed by Tarves Primary School, as part of a Forest School initiative. It is fun to see the crocodiles of children in their jackets and boots as they make their way through the village. The Jungle has previously been used by Playgroup and the Brownies also have fun with cookouts in the space.

FINANCE AND FOLK

Stewardship and Finance

As a new union we've spent time amalgamating the accounts of our former three churches and we're pleased that these are now available. This gives a helpful picture of the financial situation of Formartine Parish Church

Although the congregation has, so far, met its obligations through members offerings and fundraising efforts, like many churches, our finances are quite tight. We have previously raised a lot of money through events such as Gourmet Auctions, Fashion Shows, Fiddle Concerts and Quizzes. We are pleased to have some other sources of income from the lease of Udney Green Manse, Barthol Chapel Kirk, our two glebes and various hall bookings. There is also capital from the sale of the Udney Green Church building in the Consolidated Fabric Fund which the Finance Team and Kirk Session are considering how to best use for the benefit of the mission and ministry at Formartine following the recent relaxation of restrictions in these funds from the General Trustees.

Roles

Many roles are carried out by elders and members of the congregation as volunteers. We have a part time paid Church Treasurer, cleaners and organists.

Some facts and figures

We operate under a unitary constitution
Size of Communion Roll: 435 with 25 adherent
Average weekly attendance: around 40 to 50
Age profile of congregation : predominantly over 50
but with a number of younger members

Kirk Session

How many: 23
Age profile: mainly over 50
Gender mix: approx 50/50



Palm Sunday Walk – Tarves to Pitmedden

LINKS

You can find out much more about our Church and lively communities online.

Church Website:
formartineparishchurch.org.uk

Church Facebook:
facebook.com/FormartineParishChurch

Formartine Youth Project Facebook:
facebook.com/formartineyouthprojectfyp

Tarves Community Facebook (*public*)

Barthol Chapel, Udny Green and Pitmedden also have Facebook pages but they are private

Udny Community Trust

Tarves Community website

Barthol Chapel Community website

Tarves Heritage Centre

Church of Scotland website

The Presbytery of the North East and the Northern Isles

DATA SOURCES

Ythsie Intermediate Zone Statistical survey 2023 – nearest to the parish but omits Barthol Chapel and includes Methlick

Formartine Facilities Monitor

Population estimates (2020)





AN INVITATION

We are committed to finding effective ways of sharing God's love. We want our Church to be alive with those who serve our Lord and to attract others to share our faith. We invite you to join us and lead us in our adventure in faith and love.

We welcome applications, and ask that you submit your CV, together with a covering letter and the names of 2 referees, to the Clerk to our Nominating Committee,
Jacqui Guild E: formartinenomcom.clerk@gmail.com

Informal enquiries may be made to our Interim Moderator,
Rev Alastair Bruce E: abruce@churchofscotland.org.uk
T: 01358 723787 or T: 07929 832061

Our **Formartine Parish Church** logo has been designed by one of our elders. The Cross is the symbol of Christianity . Three Flames represent the three former congregations and the living flames of Pentecost. The Dove represents the moment when the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus at his baptism, marking the start of his ministry.

