

## **NEW ECUMENICAL POLICY FOR THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND 2018**

*Local, Universal and Shaped By the Mission of God: An Ecumenical Policy for the Church of Scotland*

### **The Basis**

*God's Mission has a Church and it is the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. It is the Universal Church of which the Church of Scotland is a part and which is expressed in each Local Church. God calls the Church of Scotland to share in the mission of God and, in the light of this, to remove any obstacles that hinder our cooperation with our sisters and brothers in Christ.*

### **The Life of God**

*The life of God is manifest in the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The life of the God of Love is essentially relational and, as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, God enters into the life of Creation. The life of God is made known through Jesus Christ as the Life of the world and the Holy Spirit as the Life-giver who empowers and renews Creation.*

### **The Mission of God**

*The mission of God is an expression of the self-giving of the life of God. The mission of God is rooted in the being of God and is made known in the action of God through the Son and by the Holy Spirit. The mission of God is concerned for the whole of Creation and is made known through the proclamation of the Kingdom of God.*

### **The Church**

*The Church is shaped by the mission of God whose life is made known in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. The life of the Church is primarily expressed in the local Church which is itself an expression of the universal Church. We live out our calling to be the Church by intentionally developing flourishing relationships which embody the life of God.*

### **The Local**

*The development of flourishing relationships at a local level is realised through the sharing of the gifts that God has given to the people of God in particular, local settings. In the sharing of these gifts:*

*We shall more fully embody the life of God in the body of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.*

*We shall better enable our sharing in the mission of God through the ministry of the people of God.*

*We shall encourage participation in active, shared discipleship.*

## **The Universal**

*The development of flourishing relationships at a universal level is realised in the sharing of the life of God embodied in each part of the Universal Church as it participates in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Our shared realisation takes place through dialogue and in the affirmation of one another through participation in particular regional, national and international bodies and forums. In the sharing of the life of God:*

*We shall embody the life of God at a regional level as we share our experience in the context of the bodies through which oversight and mutual encouragement takes place.*

*We shall enable our sharing in the mission of God at a national level as we affirm that God has given to each tradition of the Church a particular insight into the life of God and that in humbly acknowledging one another we acknowledge the presence of God.*

*We shall encourage participation in the life of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church at an international level through our identification with the life of Creation and the common challenges we face and, in so doing, live out our response to the prayer of Jesus that we 'may all be one...so that the world may believe'. (John 17: 20-21)*

## **The Principle**

*The Policy commits the Church of Scotland to the support of the principle that, at local, regional, national and international levels, churches ought to act together except where deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately.*