



02 WELCOME
Harvest
Living Well Café

04 The Moderator
World Day of Prayer
The Ministry Team
Rev Katrina

06 Eco-Congregation
Worship Team
Scotland Demands
Better



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Autumn
2025

Journeying Together by Faith - in Hope - with Love

Celebrating Welcome & Belonging

This year's Summer Club held 4-8 August and with a special Summer Club Service on 10 August was another great success.

Those who were part of this event had a wonderful time and the week flew past! The theme explored during the week was one of welcome and belonging.

One of the highlights was the



contribution of the special guests who were invited along each day. It was a very diverse selection from a four-month-old baby, a police constable, a South African emigrant to Scotland, Rev Mary Whittaker and her hearing dog, Clark, and two of our members who are blind. The children were really interested to hear about the different experiences that people had and how it affects their sense of belonging.

The week contained lots of laughter, singing and creativity culminating in a lively service on the Sunday with lots of action songs!

Well done to everyone involved, adults and children alike. Some of the members of the team are pictured above after enjoying a most welcome



lunch on the Friday at the end of the week. Thank you to all who volunteered their time to make the week happen and bring a sense of welcome to all who visited the Summer Clubhouse.

E-News

If you would like a weekly email with news from Devana Parish Church of Scotland you can subscribe at www.devanaparishchurch.org

Welcome

Welcome to the Autumn issue of Discovering Devana.

In this issue we look both backwards and forwards. Reflecting on events that have happened and letting you know what's (hopefully) going to occur in the future.

As the nights start to draw in, we can look back to the long, hot sticky nights when sleep was elusive and look forward to the clocks changing at the end of October.

Autumn brings the restart of groups which were paused during the Summer including The Guild, the Devana Crafting Group, at which you will be very welcome and the Sunday Club and Chosen Youth Group for younger folks.

I hope you find this issue enlightening and informative. Please remember I would welcome any suggestions for future articles.

Happy reading!

Mary T editor@devanaparishchurch.org

Harvest Thanksgiving

Our Harvest Thanksgiving Service for 2025 will take place on Sunday 5 October.

We look forward to our annual celebration of God's generosity in our Harvest Thanksgiving service. This is always a festive moment but we also want to make it a meaningful one symbolically and practically.

We will again be supporting Instant Neighbour Foodbank with donations and if you wish to bring tinned, bottled or packaged food, toiletries or pet food we will gladly receive these as we week-by-week receive donations to support the foodbank. For our Harvest Thanksgiving service, however, we would like to encourage you if you wish to make a donation for the work of the foodbank to purchase a gift card from one of the supermarkets (it does not matter which). These we will pass on to Instant Neighbour who can then use them to top up their supplies with whatever they are missing. It provides greater flexibility for them. Thank you.

Fellowship Gathering

1
SEP

Join an afternoon fellowship gathering at 2 p.m. in the Jubilee Hall, Devana Parish Church (Holburn Street), for a cuppa and a blether.

7
SEP

Morning Worship including Holy Communion

On Sunday 7 September we will move our worship to Holburn Street with our normal celebration of Holy Communion within the service.

Church BBQ

While it is still warm(ish) and as we start back up after the summer holidays at Devana Parish Church the Friendship Team is organising another fabulous BBQ.

This will take place after morning worship on Sunday 14 September. Note that in September we will be at Devana Parish Church (Holburn Street).

Please prepare to stay a bit longer on that day and join us for food and a grand blether. You should find sign-up sheets to let us know of any particular dietary needs in both church buildings.

We look forward to a lovely time and thank the Friendship Team for organising this for us.

Living Well

As many of you will know, Linda and Jeanette, who organised the Living Well Cafés are retiring soon from their posts.

Both have been so influential in developing the work of the Living Well Cafés over the last number of years. Together they are an excellent team, bringing such joy and fun and welcome and kindness to the cafes. Of course, their work has not been just on the café days, but also in the prep work for the cafés, in fundraising, in offering ongoing support and friendship to café users, and in making the work of The Living Well Project more widely known, not least on social media.

"What shall we pray?"

Prayer Ideas

please pray for

Our brothers and sisters in the United States of America during these very troubled times.

Political leaders that they would seek to serve truthfully and honestly, for the sake of all.

Peace among nations, remembering particularly the areas of war and conflict in our world today.

For church organisations and groups that are restarting.

The Guild

The Guild will be starting back up on **Monday 6 October at 2 p.m., meeting in the Jubilee Hall at Devana Parish Church (Holburn Street) for a 'Welcome Afternoon.'**

With a theme of 'Living Stones' for this session, upcoming meetings will be:

20 Oct Ian Lord (Quiz)

3 Nov Family History Centre

17 Nov Reflective Worship / Stones

The Guild Dedication will be incorporated in the morning worship on Sunday 16 November.

Sunday Club

Got kids aged 5–15? We'd love to welcome them to our fun and friendly Sunday Club with Bible stories, activities, prayers, songs, and more!

Sundays (term-time) 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. We usually start in the morning service and then go out to our own room.

Kids, come along and join the fun!

For more information, contact John Amalanand at 07378 777996 or on his email (see page 7).

Family Church

We will be organising Family Church events during the Autumn monthly on the first Sundays of October, November and December, 4–6 p.m.

This is a chance for parents/guardians and children to come along to Devana Parish Church (Fonthill Road) for an afternoon of activity usually based around a bible story that we all do together. It includes a light supper.

You will be very welcome to join us and we will put a note up on Eventbrite before each event so that you can inform us of any dietary needs and we can plan accordingly.

Church BBQ

14
SEP

Time to gather with friends old and new over lunch following morning worship.

23
SEP

Scotland Demands Better Panel

Organised by The Poverty Alliance, you are invited to hear about some of the issues affecting our communities and what we can collectively demand better from our leaders. Held in Devana (Fonthill Road).

ell Café

While it is very sad to say goodbye to Linda and Jeanette, we wish them and their families well in their retirement. Some of the Devana volunteers took Linda and Jeanette out for a farewell meal earlier in the summer.

The two lucky people who will replace Linda and Jeanette are now in post and we are delighted to welcome Karen (on the right) and Brenna who will soon take over the reins. We all look forward to getting to know them better over the months and years ahead.



ChoZen Youth Group

Devana's Youth Group, ChoZen, meets regularly during term times.

This is for young people who are S1 to S4 ages. ChoZen meets on Friday evenings 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the Main Hall at Devana Parish Church (Holburn Street).

Please scan the QR code if you would like to register your young people or speak to John Amalanand.



The Mod!

The members of St John's enjoyed a visit from the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rt Rev Rosie Frew at the start of the summer.

She experienced worship in a deaf context all in silence with only visual cues, and joined in signing a simple song led by Lap Tan Hunt, "Do what is right".



World Day of Prayer

Let us take a few moments to look back to Friday 7 March.

The service for the World Day of Prayer 2025 was written by women from the Cook Islands. This tiny island nation is only two thirds the size of the Isle of Wight. However, the surrounding seas are seven times larger than that of New Zealand. Christianity is now the religion most prevalent in the Cook Islands.

The theme was "I made you wonderful", based on Psalm 136 v1 – 18. This taught us that each one of us was made with care and love by God, and how we must treat every person with respect.

This is particularly relevant to women and girls. Proclaiming and believing that they are fearfully and wonderfully made helps them fulfil their potential and improve their self-worth.

5
OCT

Harvest Thanksgiving Service including Holy Communion

On Sunday 5 October we will move our worship to Fonthill Road for our Harvest Thanksgiving which will also include Holy Communion.

5
OCT

Family Church

We continue the harvest theme in our monthly Family Church event held in Devana Parish Church (Fonthill Road) from 4-6 p.m. This is full of activity for children and families.

The Ministry Team

And now the summer is over, everything is gearing up again.

As we said our farewells to Katrina (see article on next page) at the start of the summer, the role of supervisor does not stop. For the year ahead (October to May), Peter is going to be supervising a candidate for the Ordained Local Ministry (the same role for which Katrina trained). But, it is not going to be just the same for us at Devana. The candidate is Tim Morrison and he resides on Sanday in the Orkney Islands.

As you can imagine, that makes life a little bit more complicated! Most of the time, Tim will be fulfilling his training locally on Sanday, but there may be times over those months

when we have a contribution from Tim remotely in our worship or involvement in our discussion groups in Advent or Lent. If you have a chance to interact with Tim, please do make him feel welcome!

Peter will be going up to Orkney to meet with Tim in person on Sunday 21 September.

We want to thank all of the guests who joined us in leading worship over the summer with our Crossroads of Faith and Culture series. The wisdom and insight offered by our guest speakers added greatly to the series as we delved deeper into areas of cultural life from a faith perspective. This has been a real blessing for us all over the summer.

Note that David is going to be on holiday later in September for a well-earned break, returning 6 October.

Please keep Mary in your prayers as she continues, as the only minister who is deaf and uses BSL (British Sign Language) within Scotland, to serve the deaf community with the responsibilities that brings.

Rev Peter Johnston
pjohnston@churchofscotland.org.uk
01224 513662

Rev David Stewart
dstewart@churchofscotland.org.uk
01224 317995

Rev Mary Whittaker
mwhittaker@churchofscotland.org.uk

For the service in Aberdeen South Church (in conjunction with Devana Parish) everyone was given a garland to wear, and the table was decorated with articles associated with the ocean and the Cook Islands, as can be seen in the photo.

It was an interesting insight into life on a remote island.

Although this was a few months ago it is worth noting that every day should be a day of prayer.

Next year's World Day of Prayer takes place on Friday 6 March.



Could You Help?

We need a few extra volunteers to help our Coffee Shop and Café run smoothly. Drop in and ask how you could play a part.

The Coffee Shop at Fonthill Road is open Wednesday and Saturday mornings from 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon.

The Café at Holburn Street is open on Fridays from 10-11:30 a.m.

The Guild

6
OCT

The Devana Guild will start its new session on Monday 6 October at 2 p.m. in the Jubilee Hall at Devana Parish Church (Holburn Street). New attendees will be warmly welcomed.

12
OCT

Commitment Service

After the summer break we like to include an act of commitment for the year ahead. We will be doing that on 19 October during morning worship for all our teams and organisations.

Newly Minted Rev Katrina Blackwood

On Sunday 4 July we said goodbye to Katrina Blackwood as her time in training with us had come to an end.

She had been part of Devana for 18 months, supervised by Rev David Stewart as she progressed through her training to become an Ordained Local Minister. Her input was magnificent as she assisted with services. No matter what nonsense Peter and David asked her to perform she rose to every challenge with a ready smile and lots of humour.

On her last Sunday she was presented with a Home Communion Kit (see picture) which she had requested when asked what she wanted. She also received a beautiful bunch of flowers.



Here is a quotation from Katrina received the week after she left:

"I have been so blessed. You welcomed me in, encouraged me and always made me feel part of the family. I am going to miss being among you but I will definitely be coming back to sit in the pews from time to time."

At a service on 1 August in her own congregation of Mannofield Parish Church, Katrina was ordained by the Presbytery. We wish Rev Katrina Blackwood all the best in the future.

God bless you, Katrina.

Eco-Congregation Scotland

Devana Parish Church of Scotland is a part of the Eco-Congregational Scotland network.

Eco-congregation Scotland is a faith-based movement, supporting churches to care for the environment. They encourage environmentally inspired worship, practical action and speaking up to promote environmental issues.

They were officially launched in Scotland at Dunblane Cathedral on 28th March 2001 with senior representatives of all the major denominations in attendance. It became a registered charity in 2010.

Networks are formed between award winners and new eco-congregations to share information and help to achieve the awards.

Their theme for 2025 is "Peace with Creation".



Now that we are a new congregation as Devana Parish Church, we have recently joined the network under that name (rather than the previous congregations). We hope to be working towards getting an Award.

Watch this space for further information! You can find out more about Eco-Congregation Scotland at their website:

www.ecocongregationscotland.org

Note that on Sunday 18 September 2025 hundreds of people from across Scotland will converge on the Scottish Parliament to lobby their MSPs on behalf of Nature and the Planet.

Morning Worship including Holy Communion

2
NOV

On Sunday 2 November we move our morning worship back to Devana Parish Church (Holburn Street) and this service will also include Holy Communion.

Family Church

2
NOV

Family Church is held in Devana Parish Church (Fonthill Road) from 4-6 p.m. This is full of activity for children and families.

The Worship Team

The Worship Team is one of the Devana teams which has a specific focus on the worship and all things around that aspect of the church's life.

Encouraging Worship

While it can be easy to slip into thinking worship is just about the hour or so that we meet together on a Sunday morning, the Worship Team has a more holistic vision of worship, seeing it as extending beyond that time of communal worship into the rest of our lives.

The team works creatively with our Ministers to plan ahead for worship and special themes that may come up. We prepare the schedule of services for the year and ensure that plans

for holy communion are in place. We work to ensure that the facilities and resources needed to enable worship are all in place, from music resources for the Devana Choir to the Audio-Visual installation that enables streaming of services online. And when David and Peter have an idea for something, then the Worship Team works to make it happen.

Beyond The Routine

The Worship Team also coordinates the monthly services in the two Care Homes of Cowdray Club and Riverside, with a rota of people who lead services and accompany the singing. We coordinate the Remembrance Book service, ensuring that the arrangements are in place and the

book has been updated with the Church Administrator, Julie.

And, of course, when we start getting nearer to Christmas and Easter we often have more extended planning to make. That often includes a discussion series which we plan alongside the Mission and Discipleship Team, exploring an area related to faith and the season which are always illuminating, challenging and encouraging.

You may also see some of the members of the Worship Team being involved in leading worship on occasions. We encourage that and if you would like to know more then do ask our joint conveners, Rev David Stewart and Rev Peter Johnston.

Remembering Our Loved Ones

Take time out this year to remember someone special to you, particularly if you have lost a loved one recently.

At Devana Parish Church we have two opportunities during the course of the year to come together to remember those to whom we have said our farewells.

On Sunday 2 November, All Souls Day, we will have our annual Remembrance Book Service. In the sanctuary at Devana (Fonthill Road) we host a book into which the names of those who have died and whose funerals have been conducted by our ministers or who have a connection to Devana are added on the family's request. During the service we will

read a litany of all the names that have been added. Anyone is welcome to come and join us for this service, bringing your own memories of loved ones. The service will take place in the Memorial Chapel within the sanctuary at Devana (Fonthill Road) at 6 p.m.

Then as we get nearer to Christmas we will have a service on Wednesday 17 December that provides an opportunity amidst all the business of that season to remember loved ones in the sanctuary at Devana (Holburn Street) at 6:30 p.m.

Useful Contacts

JULIE MACKIE
Church Administrator
01224 213093 or 01224 961430
admin@devanaparishchurch.org

MORAG LEDGERWOOD
Treasurer
treasurer@devanaparishchurch.org

LORNA GLEN & SHELAGH JOHNSTONE
Session Clerks
sessionclerks@devanaparishchurch.org

JOHN AMALANAND
Students & Families Worker
jamalanand@churchofscotland.org.uk

2
NOV

Remembrance Book Service

In Devana Parish Church (Fonthill Road) at 6 p.m. in which we add the names of people who have died during the year to our Remembrance Book.

9
NOV

Remembrance Day

Our Remembrance Sunday service is held at the usual time on Sunday 9 November in Devana (Fonthill Road). We also have an Armistice Day service at 10:40 a.m. on Tuesday 11 November at our Holburn Street site.

Scotland Demands Better

The Poverty Alliance encourages a march for all of us in Edinburgh, 25 October.

Change for the better happens when people stand together and demand it. The Poverty Alliance (supported by many charities, including the Church of Scotland) is organising a march in Edinburgh to make a demand to political leaders for positive change. Too many people are cut off from life's essentials, too many are frightened about what the future will bring. Too many are hungry, without a home, or dreading winter while struggling to get by.

In the lead up to the march, The Poverty Alliance is organising events

around the country to talk about the issues. In Aberdeen this evening meeting will take place on Tuesday 23 September, in the sanctuary of Devana Parish Church (Fonthill Road). Everyone is welcome to come along to ask questions of the panel. More details will be intimated nearer the time.



Albury Community Sports Hub

It is good to remember that our local community run facility is open all year round if you are an Annual User (and bring your own equipment when out of the summer season).

For the remainder of the year (up to 21 April 2026), Annual User membership is now half price.

There are facilities for tennis, lawn bowling, petanque and putting in a lovely environment. It is the base for a Croquet Club, Walk Aberdeen, and a Wellbeing Group.

<https://alburyhub.org.uk/>

When Life is a Big Black Hole

When you're in a dark place and can't see a ladder to climb out with,
(And even if there were one you don't have the strength to use it)
All you can feel is the dirt under your feet.
You try to remember walking in the daylight, in the Sunshine, on the grass,
Crying for the feel of the warmth on your skin.

It just makes the darkness seem blacker than ever.
The hardest thing to do is to look up. Your neck muscles seem completely atrophied.
You just let yourself collapse in the dirt. Curled up in a ball.
Now you're flat on your back, you can't get any lower.

Open your eyes. What do you see? Myriads and myriads of STARS.
There's no light pollution to dull your view, every star is visible and shining above you.
Focus on those stars. Enjoy their light.
God put every one of those stars in exactly the right place
To give you the perfect picture of his night sky.

Keep focusing on the God who put them there.

The walls of the hole are shrinking.
Just lie there and feel God's love for you radiate from each and every star.
Let that love permeate every fibre of your being.

REST...

ABSORB...

Now you realise... you're lying on the grass... the Sun is shining on your face.
It is warm. It is comfortable. It is relaxing.
When you feel rested, then you can slowly get up and look around about you.

You have friends who can help. You have a God who loves you, soooo much!
You don't have to face anything alone.

Swallow your pride or even better, SPIT IT OUT.

Admit to having problems, be vulnerable.
You will be amazed how many people want to help.
Let people pray for you
and enjoy being wrapped in God's love.

Whatever your circumstances remember,
God Is Good All The Time
And
Never Underestimate The Power Of Prayer.