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Summer
2026

Journeying Together by Faith - in Hope - with Love

World Cup, World Peace and World Unity

The World Cup is nearly upon us. It is frequently claimed that the FIFA World Cup football tournament is the most watched event in the world. In 2022 more than 5 billion people engaged with it across various media.

To put that into context, that is twice the estimated number of Christian adherents worldwide. You need to add all Hindus and Muslims to get to the same number! As such, FIFA, as the organisers of the World Cup, have an extraordinary responsibility.

Under the slogan "Football Unites The World", FIFA would appear to be taking that responsibility seriously. They have made a stand to "promote peace, prevent conflict and create the conditions in which international communities can flourish and thrive,

in harmony with one another."

It sounds great, doesn't it? An international body which is committed to use its global position and ground-roots impact to help promote peace and unity.

One can only wonder how much of that aspiration was thrown away in the spectacle last December when FIFA President Gianni Infantino gave the inaugural FIFA Peace Prize to the current President of the USA. So inspired by the prize was the President that he subsequently threatened Greenland, invaded Venezuela, started a war with Iran, and is set on Cuba next. Oh dear...

In the closing statement at the General Assembly by the Lord High

Commissioner, having spent some days visiting church projects across Scotland, Lady Elish Angiolini noted that "in a time of global division and conflict, it is our common ground that brings us together. We can give to and receive from one another's traditions and, in doing so, forge new ones."

Perhaps the new tradition of a FIFA Peace Prize is forever tainted. That is not the case for our long Christian tradition to find common ground with our neighbours near and far, to bear witness to the love of God, and to reveal what God's kin-dom is like. Jesus did it all the time, and he invites us into following just that same Way.

As we (some of us!) enjoy a bit of footie this summer, may we never lose focus on that greater goal.

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 Summer 2026 Edition of Discover Devana.

How many of you are looking forward to your Summer Holidays?

Whatever you are planning to do this Summer I hope and pray that it recharges your Mental, Physical and Spiritual batteries.

Please remember, no matter how busy life gets to make time to stop and breathe.

Hopefully, this edition of Discover Devana will help you relax and feel good.

Many thanks to all those who have contributed and supported me in prayer. I am extremely grateful..

Mary Thompson

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Family Beetle Drive

The Friendship Team are planning a fun afternoon for all ages with a traditional Beetle Drive. These are always a hoot, so make sure to scurry your way along!

There will be refreshments and homebakes as part of the afternoon. Tickets will be available (no charge, but a donation is most welcome) at both sites.

Saturday 27 June
Large Hall at Devana Parish Church (Fonthill Road)
2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Come along join the fun!



Summer Get-Together

1
JUN

While The Guild is having a summer break join for a cuppa and chat at 2 p.m. in the Jubilee Hall at Holburn Street.

7
JUN

Morning Worship 'Dining With Outcasts'

We move to Fonthill Road for June with a service that includes the Sacrament of Holy Communion and a contribution from Devana Choir.

Easter Craft Stall

"What shall we pray?"
Prayer Ideas

please pray for

Those newly elected or re-elected to the Scottish Parliament.

The candidates who have put their names forward for the Aberdeen South by-election.

Peace to be seen, once more, as a valued and sought after end to diplomacy around the world.

For the Church of Scotland's congregations seeking to serve Jesus in their communities.

The Devana Craft Group did an amazing job with their wonderful Easter craft gifts this year.

Thanks to everyone who exercised their creativity to fill the stall with goodies. £550 was raised from the stall.

The Craft Group asked Peter and David, our ministers, if there was anything they needed. They are going to be purchasing a couple of small adjustable wooden stands for each of the Communion Tables. This will help when leading worship from behind the tables. They will also be purchasing access to a church resource website to use for the next year.

Easter Fea

Our Easter Feast celebration was a lovely end to our Easter Day worship both at Duthie Park and in the sanctuary at Fonthill Road.

The Friendship Team did us proud with both breakfast and lunch on Easter Day. And those serving food at the Easter Feast really made their mark with their Spring outfits and beaming smiles.

We also had a special cake to celebrate Rev Peter Johnston's 25th anniversary of ordination as a minister. So young in the picture!

Thank you to everyone who helped make this a special celebration.

Devana Church Administrator

Since the last issue of Discover Devana we have appointed a new Church Administrator, Rachel Oien, who began working with us at the start of Holy Week, a very busy week indeed.

Rachel has done a fantastic job in getting to know the ins and outs of the job over a short period. If you are needing to contact the church then she should be your first port of call. Rachel is splitting her time between our two sites but is always at Holburn Street on a Monday and at Fonthill Road on a Wednesday. Thursdays and Fridays vary depending on which site we are worshipping in that month.

Particularly for bookings of usage of the buildings, please contact Rachel as she is managing the church calendar of bookings.



Sunday Club

Note that the Sunday Club will be taking a break over the weeks of the summer school holidays, from 5 July to 16 August.

We have a few folks who have offered their assistance in running the Sunday Club and are very thankful for them. It would be great to have one or two more folks join the team. If you might be interested then please do have a word with David or Peter or one of the Sunday Club leaders. This is a very important part of our witness to the love of God to all generations. Please do give this your consideration. Note that you would need to join our PVG scheme.

Morning Worship 'Levelling Up'

14
JUN

We look at the 'Sermon on the Plain' in Luke's Gospel, a very different framework from Matthew's 'Sermon on the Mount'.

21
JUN

Morning Worship 'Do To Others'

We focus on the command to love in this service. We will have our gift presentations to the children of the Sunday Club this week and also the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

st



Arctic Explorers Summer Club

We have a fun packed holiday club planned for 3-7 August (and following Sunday) this year with a theme based around creation, the environment, and their importance to providing our food. With a few parables from Jesus, who loved to tell stories based on nature.

The poster is on the back page of this issue with a QR code for registering children. We are looking to use a lot of recycled items to keep to our environmental theme and will be intimating over the next weeks via the weekly E-News and the printed Order of Service what items we are looking to have donated. Boxes to receive these are located in the Atrium (Fonthill Road) and Sanctuary (Holburn Street). Thank you!

3 Years On...

We celebrated the third birthday of Devana Parish Church on Pentecost Sunday, 24 May, with a look back at some of what has happened over these last three years, a look forward to what we hope is to come, and a little cake!



Love and Hope Foundation

The Love and Hope Foundation is a children's home in Tanzania for orphans who have been abused. James and Pendo are the house parents. They have two birth children and 25 children they have rescued.

Sandra Thomson, a member of Singing Hands, writes: "Singing Hands helped me to run a fundraising event at Devana in December 2025 to raise money to buy bunk beds for the Love and Hope orphanage in Tanzania. I am delighted to say that enough money was raised to buy the extra bunk beds they needed, plus mattresses and bedding. I went to visit the home in February and saw the beds in place. It was wonderful spending time with the children. The rent for the home they were in was very expensive so they moved in March to a new place which is a lot cheaper. The big dream is to buy the home they are in, but in order to achieve this, they need a sustainable income. This led to the Piggy Project idea! James wants to buy pigs to breed them and sell them."

Beetle Drive

27
JUN

Join the fun for a family event creating those pesky beetles! 2 p.m. in the Large Hall at Fonthill Road.

Morning Worship 'Known By Our Fruit'

28
JUN

We join Jesus for the closing part of his Sermon on the Plain with some fruity imagery.

South Holburn Church History

Following on from our history of St Mark's in our Spring edition this time it is the history of South Holburn. This starts long before the building came into being.

In 1876 as part of an outreach from Holburn Central to the new and expanding area of Ruthrieston (which was one and a half miles away) services were started in old Ruthrieston school. These were very popular and soon larger premises were needed. They relocated to the "Iron Kirkie" which was located beside the Old Ruthrieston Pack Bridge crossing Ruthrieston Burn.

As an interesting aside, that bridge, originally built in 1693, was moved in 1923 to the walk alongside the River

Dee, beside the flood gates, so you can walk across a piece of history.

For 13 years services were held in the "Iron Kirkie" which was cold, poorly lit by gaslight and had a leaky roof. Each successive minister managed to increase the numbers attending despite these problems. They started to raise funds for a purpose-built building of their own by renting out seats.

On Wednesday September 3rd, 1890, the foundation stone was laid. Just like St Mark's it was designed by A. Marshall MacKenzie. The Church had its opening service in April 1891. At that time it had a membership of 232, Sunday School of 85 and a Bible Class of 16. It was a church

plant from Holburn Church and not an independent parish at that stage. Steps were in hand to rectify this and in November 1902 Ruthrieston Parish was created..

In 1904 the Hall extension was added. Numbers were increasing all the time. 526 members, 260 in the Sunday School and almost 100 in the Bible Class.

Ruthrieston built up a reputation of having a "fighting Session" who were a force to be reckoned with!

In the summer of 1929 the name was changed to Ruthrieston South to differentiate between it and the new Ruthrieston West. After the Second World War numbers were reduced as



The Piggy Project Fair organised by Sandra and hosted by Devana Parish Church on 30 May is part of this project and we hope that it all goes to help provide a better future for the children that have been rescued by James and Pendo.

Summer Get-Together

While our Devana Guild takes a break over the summer months, there is still an opportunity for a monthly and less formal get-together.

This will be on the first Monday of each month, which are:

1 June, 6 July, and 3 August.

Do feel very welcome to come along for a chat with each other and a cuppa over the summer.

The Guild will return in the autumn with its full calendar of events.



Opening Times

Both our Café and Coffee Shop are open for their regular times and provide a warm welcome.

The Coffee Shop at Fonthill Road is open 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

The Café at Holburn Street is open each Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

5 JUL

Morning Worship 'Jesus Is Amazed'

For the next fortnight we are at Holburn Street for Morning Worship. In July we have a fortnightly pattern of worship. This service will include the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

12 JUL

Morning Worship 'Jesus Receives'

With whom would you choose to dine? Jesus' table fellowship always rose eyebrows. We'll look at just such an occasion when he is questioned and then anointed by a woman.

can be seen by the number of names on the Memorial Plaques. On a more positive note the first Spring Fayre was held in 1949.

March 1960 saw the installation of the first Electrical Organ to replace the deteriorating pipe organ, subsequently replaced again in later years. For the Centenary in 1977 Bonnington Church in Edinburgh donated the Stained Glass window of The Last Supper which had been in their church which was getting dismantled. It had originally been designed in 1896.



Around this time the hall facilities were enlarged with the creation of the Ruthrieston Hall and vestry (now church office) upstairs. And then later the facilities were extended with the creation of the Jubilee Hall and its associated rooms on the other side of the sanctuary, providing a useful modern addition.

2006 brought a completion of the circle when Ruthrieston South was united with Holburn Central to become South Holburn. Then in May 2023 Devana Parish Church came into being.



There have been many notable ministers over the years, but a couple of interesting links are that Rev J.A.W. Mulligan (1911-1919) also can from across the Irish Sea, just like Rev David Stewart. And Rev James Youngson (1934-1945) left to become full time chaplain to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, a link to our former student Rev Katrina Blackwood.

Legacy of Slavery

The Church of Scotland made a very important decision at this year's General Assembly (GA) when it chose overwhelmingly to adopt an apology for its historical relationships with chattel slavery.

The apology said that the church was "grieved beyond telling by the extraordinary suffering we have inflicted - through our actions and our inaction - on our brothers and sisters." It goes on to state: "We repent, committing ourselves to changing course and bearing fruit worthy of repentance." The full apology is available on the Church of Scotland website.

This decision has been a part of a long process within the Kirk, which included some years of research to understand the relationships that existed and how they were perpetuated. The GA also agreed to set up a new working group to recommend appropriate next steps.

A Narrative of Generosity

Over the summer we are spending some time in our worship nurturing conversations in the congregation on various aspects of the bigger picture of stewardship under the banner 'A Narrative of Generosity'.

As a part of this we will be considering our financial giving to support the church. While Devana Parish Church is financially secure, there are some signs that we should consider. One of these indicators is that our 'Giving to Grow allocation' which is our contribution to the work of the national church (a portion of which goes towards minister stipends) and our dues to the Presbytery in 2025 totalled £157,403. In contrast our income from offerings (and Gift Aid recovery) was £122,103. We have a lot more expenditure on buildings, other staffing costs, and so on. At the moment this means we are operating with a deficit on income/ expenditure, despite other income from investments, hall licencing fees, etc. Might this be an opportunity for us all to reconsider our financial giving to support Devana?

19
JUL

Morning Worship 'Sowers, Seeds, Soil'

We are worshipping for the final two Sundays of July at Fonthill Road. We will focus on one of Jesus' famous parables and consider why he uses parables so frequently.

26
JUL

Morning Worship 'Where Is Your Faith?'

We will dip into a variety of stories of people's experiences with Jesus and ponder the question Jesus raises: where is your faith?

Devana Development Group

On Pentecost Sunday, 24 March in our morning service, our congregation celebrated its 3rd anniversary. It was a pleasure to remember all that has happened over the last three years and realise how far we have travelled together as Devana Parish Church.

All the things we have done, all the conversations and celebrations, all the hymns and songs sung, all the friendships made. However, if all the church does is look back to remember what has been, we will never see where we are going.

Shortly after our anniversary service, our Devana Development Group met for the first time. This group's task is to look at how Devana Parish Church

will go forward into the future. There are representatives from each of the Devana Ministry Teams on the group. We will be considering all aspects of our church life, from how we develop our buildings to make them relevant to the community around us in today's world, to how can we get to know the parish we serve better.

This is an exciting time as we look to the future. All the ministry team are looking forward to sharing with the family of Devana the thoughts and ideas that will come from the work of the Development Group over the next months.

We will be working on creating a five year Action Plan as part of this work,

which will meet a requirement by the Presbytery for each congregation to be thinking about their future.

Look out for more updates to come!

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World Day of Prayer

This years' World Day of Prayer service was held at Devana Parish Church (Fonthill Road) on Friday 6 March, with our friends from Aberdeen South Church. The theme was 'I Will Give You Rest: Come', written by Christian women in Nigeria, and drew inspiration from Matthew 11:28. It serves as a heartfelt invitation from Jesus to all who are burdened and heavy laden. Bring all that weighs you down, so that you may find rest.

The table in the sanctuary was decorated with items such as fruit, oil and rice, associated with Nigeria. The leaders walked in carrying stones that represented the burdens that we all carry.

The service was very well attended both onsite and online. As well as an inspirational reflection given by Rev Peter Johnston, we were privileged to have Lola Dabiri talk to us on the Christian movement in Nigeria and

other positive happenings and events in her country.

We find our hope in a burdened world in Christ, who bears all of our burdens. We respond to overwhelming situations by remaining resilient, believing that the storm will pass. When those around us are weary and heavy laden we bear one another's burdens as Christ bears ours. Our call to action is to live out our informed prayers through prayerful action.



2 AUG

Morning Worship 'Commissioning And Blessing'

We are at Holburn Street for August worship (with exception of 9 Aug). This Service will include the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

9 AUG

Morning Worship 'Arctic Explorers'

We are at Fonthill Road for this Sunday only in August, with a special service to round off our Summer Club. Expect much singing, fun, and perhaps even a polar bear and talking parrot!

Will Rae At The GA

Being at the Church of Scotland General Assembly 2026 was an experience for me. It took place over a weekend rather than a full week. This was the first time and as an experiment. I was a Commissioner online this year, rather than going to Edinburgh.

I enjoyed hearing different voices and also seeing the passion people have for serving others and supporting local communities as well as their church.

The Assembly has reminded me that the Church is not just about meetings or decisions, but about people coming together in faith, hope, and love, as well as working and journeying together in God's name.

One of the funny things that stood out for me was that one commissioner used a surprising example in frustration after another had advocated for a return to what he called 'biblical Christianity' (with direct allusion to previous debates on same-sex marriage). Rev Justin Taylor responded: "What have I been doing all these years? What have I given my life to? *I don't preach from Winnie the Pooh on Sunday*. It's a lovely book, but I preach from the Bible. Am I less than a 'biblical Christian' than someone who takes a different view from me?"

The moment that stood out most to me was the Joint Report on the Legacy of Slavery and the apology for the role of the Kirk in perpetuating chattel slavery.

The General Assembly has also given me time to reflect personally on my own faith journey and the importance of continuing to support communities, especially those people who may feel forgotten, isolated, or struggling.

It reminded me that even small acts of kindness, listening, and encouragement can make a real difference. 'Walk in all his ways' was the theme of this year's General Assembly.

Overall, I feel grateful to have had the opportunity to be part of the General Assembly. It has been inspiring, thought-provoking, and uplifting, and I leave with renewed hope for the future of the Church of Scotland and the communities it serves.

Arctic Explorers

for
Primary 2-7s



Summer Holiday Club
3-7 & 9 August 2026

Devana Parish Church (Fonthill Road)

10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Games - Stories - Drama - Crafts - Activities



please register your child(ren) using the QR Code
www.devanaparishchurch.org