

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT LUKE.

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The prophecy of Elisabeth, and
circumcision of

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DISCOVER DEVANA PARISH CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

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Winter
2025

Journeying Together by Faith - in Hope - with Love

A Year In Luke's Gospel

We embark on a new journey through the whole of the Gospel of Luke in one year.

The picture above is of a page in a New Testament Bible that was gifted by Queen Victoria to the mother of John Brown complete with a personal message and signed by the monarch back in 1871 that we have in our Devana archives. It makes it a little bit more special, but the real treasure is what lies in the chapters and verses that follow.

From Advent, starting 30 November, through to the final Sunday of the Church year in 2026 we are going to explore the whole of Luke's wonderful account of Jesus' life and ministry. We may bounce around a bit here and there for particular seasons but

over the course of the year we will have read the whole gospel together through out worship.

We do not really know who the author was nor exactly when it was written though it may be around 85 CE. Some think Luke may have been an accompanier of Saint Paul, others that he might be a Syrian from Antioch. What we know is that he did his research well, he gained a lot of knowledge of Jewish belief and practice, but there are occasional moments that may reveal that this was not while being a practitioner himself. Luke may well have been a Gentile, which gives a quite different perspective on Jesus' life than those of the other gospel writers.

What is clear about the Gospel

according to Saint Luke is that it is very engaging. His writing style draws you in. Despite the familiarity of many passages, you can still be left surprised at how events turn out. Jesus deploys parables liberally with all their twists and turns, inviting us into Jesus' own thoughts about life, about communities, and about the Kingdom of God.

The Gospel of Luke has had a profound effect on shaping the world. Many phrases that are commonplace originate from this gospel, and we are going to dive in, letting the good physician and author help to shape our understanding of Jesus and his transformative work in the world.

Join us in the journey together!

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 our Winter 2025 edition of Discovering Devana.

Many thanks to all the contributors. Your willingness to assist me in compiling this magazine is greatly appreciated!

We have lots of information for you, including dates and times for our Christmas Fair, our Advent activities and the dates our Coffee Shops will be closed during the Christmas holidays.

As the weather potentially deteriorates we might need something to keep us amused. I have devised a Word Search Puzzle for you. See if you can find all the words.

Take care of each other and yourselves.

Happy reading!

Mary T

editor@devanaparishchurch.org

Devana Wordsearch

S C H N O I N U M M O C
T U G N R U B L O H S H
N Y N Z H S I R A P C B
E E I D I T H C O R O W
V E S I A R P H U W S L
D X N G N Y S H L U T L
A P I V R E C I N P J I
J N M O E R N L S G O H
C R A F T G R O U P H T
V H F V C H O I R B N N
H O Y L E S L A Q U S O
C T U K L D Y L I M A F
R B Q L W S K R A M T S

Can you find the following words in the grid?

DEVANA HOLBURN FONTHILL ST MARKS ST JOHNS
PARISH PRAISE PRAY SING ADVENT COMMUNION
COFFEE SHOPS CHOIR CRAFT GROUP GUILD LECTERN
SUNDAY CLUB FAMILY CHURCH BOWLING CLUB

30
NOV

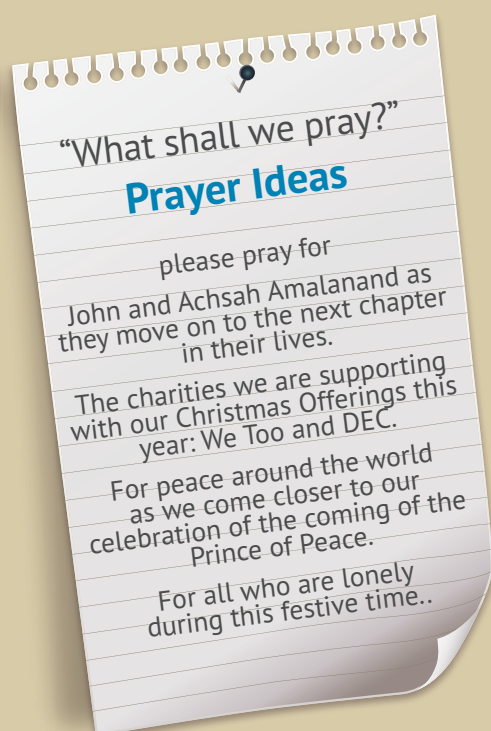
Morning Worship First Sunday in Advent

A joint service with Devana and St John's Deaf Local Mission Church to celebrate the start of Advent and Saint Andrew's Day.

30
NOV

Advent Discussion Series Who Am I?

Our Advent series begins at 7 p.m. in the Foyer at Fonthill Road and will continue each Sunday evening through Advent (details below).



Carols by Candlelight

Carol Singing time is coming! You are very welcome to join us for a fun night of song.

Saturday 13 December 2025
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Main Hall
Devana Parish Church (Holburn Street)

The Friendship Team are hosting this event. Along with yourselves and your voices, if you have a Christmas jumper then please do wear it and bring along a battery candle or torch.

Refreshments will be provided.

To help us with catering, there are sign up sheets in both church buildings.

Who Am

Advent Sunday Evening Discussion Series

For Advent 2025 we are hosting another short four week discussion series to take us through the season.

The Worship Team has selected what looks like an excellent course devised by Bishop Nick Baines.

The course, titled "Who am I?" has been created to help groups and individuals prepare for Christmas by exploring some of life's biggest questions: What gives me meaning? How does God see me? Where do I truly belong?

Advent/Christmas Family Church

Christmas is Coming! The Devana Holiday Club Team has a Christmas-themed event for Sunday 7 December for families (from toddlers through to teens). This will include talking about the Christmas story and creating some Christmas decorations, along with song and sharing supper together.

Sunday 7 December 2025, 4-6 p.m., Devana Parish Church (Fonthill Road)

This is not just for children, it is for families to come together. We would find it really helpful to plan catering for the supper if you could register and let us know how many adults and children will be coming with you. You can quickly do that from the church website which has a link to the Eventbrite page..



Christmas Fair

Saturday 29 November 2025

2 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Devana Parish Church (Fonthill Road)

We are looking forward to our festive Christmas Fair. Donations of homemade bakes, sweets and preserves are most welcome. You will find boxes for donations available at the back of the Sanctuary in Holburn Street and in the Atrium at Fonthill Road.

Come along to enjoy a fun afternoon with afternoon cream teas, mulled wine, Christmas Crafts and Gifts, homemade treats, competitions and prizes, and children's activities. We look forward to seeing you.

Morning Worship Second Sunday in Advent

7
DEC

On Sunday 7 December we will move our worship to Fonthill Road with both a celebration of Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Baptism within the service.

7
DEC

Christmas Family Church

Join together across generations for our Christmas-themed Family Church event held in Devana Parish Church (Fonthill Road) from 4-6 p.m. This is full of activities for children and families.

I?

Through four thought-provoking sessions, Bishop Nick Baines invites us into honest reflection and lively discussion about identity and faith, drawing you deeper into the heart of Advent and the wonder of Christ's coming.

Sundays 7 to 8:30 p.m. in Foyer (Fonthill Road) or Jubilee Hall (Holburn Street)

**30 November (Fonthill)
7 December (Holburn)
14 December (Fonthill)
23 December (Holburn)**

An online option is available via Zoom. Details on the church website.



Retirement of Bill Manclark

The Kirk Session has received a letter from Bill informing it of his retirement from serving as one of our organists at Devana Parish Church.

Bill has been part of leading worship at South Holburn and then at Devana for 15 years, though he has been at the organ console for many more years than that. A music teacher serving in Aberdeenshire before his first retirement from teaching, Bill has continued to use his skills both to enhance our worship and to lift our spirits on many social occasions too.

In his letter to the Kirk Session, Bill noted his appreciation to David, Peter, our other organist Kevin and to the friends he has made at the church. We all wish you well, Bill, and hope to say a proper farewell next year.

Singing Hands Concert

The Singing Hands BSL Choir (with members from St John's Deaf LMC) is organising a fundraising concert.

Saturday 6 December 2025

2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Main Hall, Devana Parish Church (Holburn Street)

£10 adults, £5 children

The BSL Choir will be performing various songs. Refreshments will be available along with a craft table. Tickets are available at the church on Sundays from Cecilia Young or contact Sandra Thomson (sandrathomson@hotmail.com). Proceeds are supporting children in Tanzania.

Craft Group

The Craft Group meet every second Wednesday in the Den at Devana Parish Church (Fonthill Road).

You enter by the side door up the lane to the right of the building and will find a warm welcome awaiting.

Like-minded people working away, each with their own current project. Be it knitting, cross-stitch, crochet or patchwork to name just a few of the variety of talents displayed. They are very good at teaching someone to learn a new skill or helping out with a difficulty in your own project.

Tea or coffee is distributed as everyone knows this helps with any type of craft work. Friendly chatter ensues as the good company is shared.

By the time you are reading this there will be a selection of beautiful cushions in the Fonthill foyer for use during

Carols by Candlelight

13
DEC

A fun festive evening of carol singing and fellowship held in the Main Hall, Devana Parish Church (Holburn Street) from 6:30 p.m.

14
DEC

Morning Worship Third Sunday in Advent

Our service of worship at Fonthill Road as we continue our journey through the season of Advent.

Farewell from John

Hello everyone!

It's been a while since I last wrote an article, so it's lovely to be able to share a few thoughts with you here. As many of you already know, my time with Devana Parish Church comes to an end in November. This change is part of the new Presbytery Plan 2022. When I first learned back in 2022 that my post would be the only MDS role to come to an end, it was quite a shock, but with time, prayer, and reflection, I've come to see this as part of God's bigger plan and as Scripture reminds us, "all things work together for good for those who love Him."

It has been a real privilege to serve the children, young people, and

families of Devana—through Sunday Club, Youth Club, SU (Scripture Union) groups in schools, weekend aways, Magnitude camps, and, of course, my much-loved and most-missed Holiday Clubs. I am so thankful for every volunteer who has supported me in these ministries over the years to whom I am very grateful.

I will deeply miss the young people I've had the joy of working with and I'm already missing them! It has also been a blessing to serve under the leadership of David Stewart, whose guidance I've greatly valued. Since the birth of Devana, it's been a joy to get to know Peter Johnston better and to appreciate the energy and joy he brings to everything he does. I am also grateful to the Kirk Session,



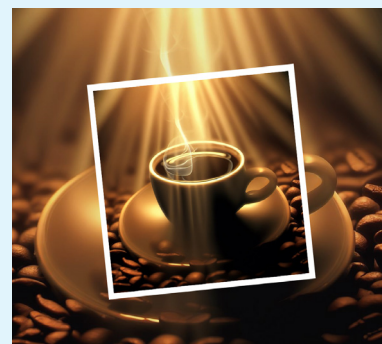
services and meetings for anyone who needs them.

These were created by the very talented members of the group in response to a need. The Holburn Street building had cushions already, but Fonthill did not!

A field trip to the Glass Needle Studio inspired their own beautiful glass creations that truly shine when a tealight is lit behind them.

Who knows what they might do next?

Anyone who wishes to join them will be made most welcome.



Opening Times

Note that both our Café and Coffee Shop will close over the festive time.

The Coffee Shop at Fonthill Road will be open on Saturday 13 December, closing thereafter and reopening on Wednesday 14 January 2026.

The Café at Holburn Street will close after Friday 12 December, reopening on 16 January 2026.

17 DEC

A Blue Christmas Service of Thanksgiving

In amidst the busy-ness of Christmas come for a reflective service as we give thanks for those who we want to remember, lighting a candle for them. 6:30 p.m. at Devana (Holburn Street).

21 DEC

Morning Worship Fourth Sunday in Advent

It is the final Sunday of Advent and we may be doing something a bit different this Sunday so be prepared for a Nativity with a twist!

especially the Mission & Discipleship Team (the best bunch of people to work with!), for their encouragement and support. And a special word of thanks to Julie, our administrator, who has been a wonderful office buddy.

As for the future, Achsa and I plan to continue living in Aberdeen, with a heart to keep reaching out to children and young people across the city and shire. I'll also continue in my part-time role as a Community Development Worker while studying part-time for an MSc in Community Learning & Youth Work (CLD) with the University of Dundee, a two-year journey.

I look forward to all that God has in store for all of us, because when one

season ends, it only means another season has just begun.

I give all glory to my God Jesus Christ, for all He has done and will continue to do.

Every blessing,

John Amalanand
(proudly Devana's first-ever Youth Worker)

Thank you, John

The former congregations at Garthdee and South Holburn and now Devana have been richly blessed to have John's contribution to our life and mission amongst young people

and families over the years. For his enthusiastic involvement and leadership we are grateful. John has made a difference in the lives of our young people, the importance of which will bear fruit in their lives over years to come.

We wish you, John (and Achsa), well for the future and look forward to hearing how you are getting on with your studies and ongoing work in the community.

On behalf of all of us in Devana, thank you for everything you have contributed.

God go with you both.

David & Peter

Open Office

The Church Office at Devana Parish Church (Fonthill Road) is open again so we have an Office base back in both our buildings.

The Property Team has been busy over many months coordinating work that has affected the office in our Fonthill Road site. That work has included some repairs to the spire to deal with water ingress, cleaning of the interior of the spire where pigeons had made themselves all too comfortable, placing new mesh within the belfry openings, redecoration of the office, a new carpet and a good clear up.

That frees up the Gallery above the Atrium which now becomes more usable. This is the working space that Rev Mary Whittaker uses and she will be relieved to have that space back again!

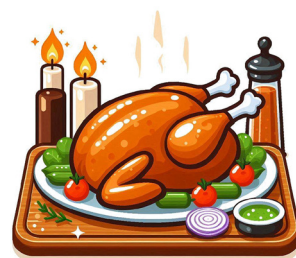
Christmas Lunch

If you are going to be on your own on Christmas Day or know of someone who will be, then please know you are invited (or share this invitation) to a Christmas Lunch.

Thursday 25 December 2025, 12:30 p.m. for a 1 p.m. start
Jubilee Hall, Devana Parish Church (Holburn Street)

As we have done for the last few years, a traditional Christmas Lunch will be served on Christmas Day. Fiona and Nigel Firth & Diane and Ian Cumming extend this invitation.

There is no charge, but modest donations are welcome. It would greatly assist our planning if you could contact the Church Office to book a place on 01224 961430 or at admin@devanaparishchurch.org.



Christingle Service

24
DEC

Our traditional family-friendly Christmas Eve celebration of Christmas using the Christingle at Devana (Fonthill Road) starting at 6 p.m.

24
DEC

Watchnight Services

We will hold a Watchnight Service in both of our worship centres on Christmas Eve. Services will start at 11:30 p.m. We will have carol singing before that so please join us from 11 p.m. onwards.

My Experience as a Young Elder in the CofS

William Rae shares his experiences.

Stepping Into The Role

Being a young elder in the Church of Scotland is something I never imagined I would do, but it has turned out to be one of the most meaningful parts of my life.

When I was first asked to become an elder in 2018 at Garthdee Church, I felt a mix of surprise, pride, and nervousness. I wanted to say something at the time, but the Session Clerk told me to “just say yes.” After all, the word ‘elder’ usually makes people think of someone much older and wiser! But over time, I learned that being an elder isn’t about age—it’s about faith, commitment, and being willing to serve others.

At first, I didn’t know what to expect. Sitting in Kirk Session meetings and helping make decisions for the congregation felt like a big responsibility. I worried that my voice might not matter as much as those who had been there for years. But very quickly I found people were supportive and encouraging. They valued my ideas and were genuinely interested in hearing a younger perspective on how we could make the church more relevant.

On a cold, wet 18 December 2018, with no heating in the church, I officially said “I do.” That day, I was lucky to have a number of high-profile and distinguished guests in the

congregation—a moment I’ll never forget.

In 2020, Garthdee Church sadly closed. I moved to Ruthrieston West Church, but soon after COVID-19 arrived. During lockdown, I felt God was calling me to a new place. In 2022 I joined Ferryhill Church—now Devana Parish Church—where I’ve been ever since. I continue to serve and balance responsibilities in the Presbytery of the North East and the Northern Isles.

Faith in Everyday Life

Being an elder has helped me live out my faith in a practical way. It’s not just about going to church on Sundays, it’s about caring for people, being

A Retirement Party for Jeanette and Linda

To mark Jeanette and Linda's retirement from the Living Well cafes an Afternoon Tea was held on the 13th September at Oldmachar church, which was very well attended by both volunteers and committee members.

Those who attended were treated to a fine spread of delicious scones, cakes and biscuits. It was lovely to spend time together, enjoy lovely food, chatting, and then to see Jeanette & Linda receive their gifts and hear the tributes to them.

The gifts they received were a Spa day at The Marcliffe Hotel including an "Ultimate Tranquility" full day package with four hours of treatments plus a 5-star lunch with Champagne. They also received a word cloud picture as a memento using words that

symbolize the goings on at the cafes, Happy Retirement sashes, clocks, flowers and spending money.

Rev Hugh Wallace was able to join us on the day as without him the Living Well Project would not have come into being. Linda and Jeanette also shared lots of photographs and stories from their time at Living Well and shared their song based on My Favourite Things from the Sound of Music. A truly wonderful afternoon. Jeanette and Linda will be sorely missed for all their wonderful work.



Christmas Day Service

25
DEC

A short family-friendly service to celebrate the birth of Jesus on Christmas morning. The service will start at 10 a.m. at Devana (Fonthill Road).

28
DEC

Carols And Readings

For the first Sunday of Christmas we will enjoy singing carols with Bible readings for the season. 10:30 a.m. at Devana (Fonthill Road).

part of the community and showing God's love through small acts of kindness. Visiting members, helping with services, supporting events like the Christmas meal all remind me that faith is something we do, not just something we say.

Sometimes it's as simple as listening to someone who's struggling or sharing a laugh over a cup of tea after worship. Those small moments remind me why I said "yes".

Bridging the Gap

One of the parts I enjoy most about being a young elder is acting as a bridge between younger and older members of the congregation. The Church of Scotland has such a rich

mix of generations, and that's one of its greatest strengths.

I've learned so much from older elders – their stories, experience, and steady faith – and I've seen how much they appreciate the energy and new ideas that younger people bring.

Challenges and Rewards

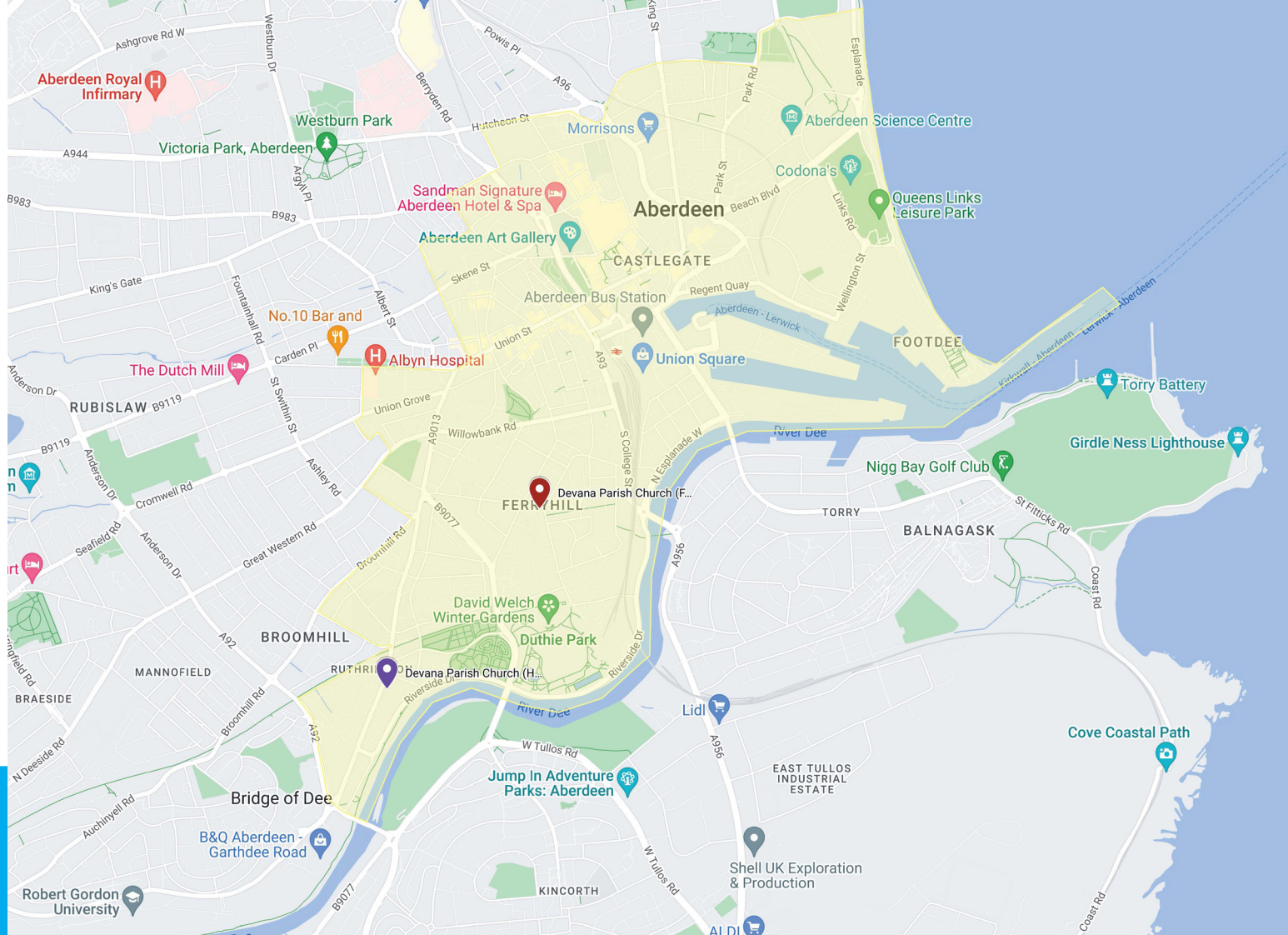
It's not always easy. Balancing church duties with work and personal life can be challenging. There are moments when I feel unsure of myself, especially when facing difficult decisions or helping someone through a tough time. But those moments have taught me patience, humility, and trust in God's guidance.

The rewards far outweigh the challenges. Seeing people come together in faith, friendship, and love—especially during special occasions or times of need—makes me proud to be part of something much bigger than myself.

Looking Ahead

Being a young elder has deepened my faith and given me a sense of purpose. It's shown me that leadership in the Church isn't about having all the answers: it's about listening, caring, and walking alongside others on their journey with God.

I hope that more young people will consider taking on this role. The Church of Scotland needs us all.



Devana Parish Map

Have you ever wondered how large an area Devana Parish actually covers?

The picture above shows you. The area shaded yellow is our parish.

Huge, isn't it? It is bordered by the River Dee on one side and the North Sea on another.

It covers the cultural hub of the city including His Majesty's Theatre, The Music Hall, The Tivoli Theatre, The Art Gallery, the Library, to name but a few.

The busy harbour is also within our parish, a very industrial area.

The Municipal and Judicial centres

of Aberdeen, The Sheriff Court and Marischal College are within our boundary, not to mention many of the city's shops! But, alas, says one of our ministers... not Pittodrie!

The main area of our concern is obviously none of the above but the people who live and work in this vast expanse. Around 27,000 people live in this area, let alone all those who come into the city to work.

The logistics of covering an area this size is challenging and all respect to those who must deal with it.

Not everyone who attends Devana Parish Church lives within the

"catchment" area. We are a very diverse and cosmopolitan church with members across the city and, indeed, some across Scotland and even as far afield as the Falkland Isles.

A wonderful aspect of the Devana church family is that there is a warm welcome and sense of acceptance as you enter our doors. No matter who you are or where you come from.

You are always welcome to join us or to bring along a friend or neighbour to worship with us or to join in some of the special events that take place within the church buildings or within our parish.