



St Devenick's  
Church



# **St Devenick's Church**

**Bieldside Aberdeen**

**Profile  
2024**

# **St Devenick's Church Profile 2024**

## **Summary**

### **Who we are**

- a warm, open and welcoming church with a true sense of church family
- a church which values Bible-based ministry and has an evangelical ethos while being inclusive of a wide range of views
- a forward-looking church which is open to change
- part of the Scottish Episcopal Church
- a congregation of all ages with over 100 "adherents" of which just over 70 are on the communicants' roll.

### **Our life together**

- We have a variety of service styles, using a blend of traditional and current worship music, and a flexible approach to liturgy
- We have children's and young people's groups and our youngsters are regularly in the main service
- We run a monthly Messy Church session in term time which runs concurrently with the main service and attracts a steady number of families from outwith St Devenick's
- We have small groups meeting during the week
- The pastoral care team visit and support our older members and those in particular need, while the prayer network is available for one off prayer needs.

### **Location**

- We are based in the residential community of Bielside on the southwest side of Aberdeen
- The local Academy is one of the top-rated state schools in Scotland
- Local amenities include shops, medical and dental practices, restaurants, forest walks and the Deeside Way
- Aberdeen city has two universities, a full range of cultural activities, the North East Scotland College and Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)
- The North East of Scotland boasts stunning scenery: mountains, forests, rivers, Royal Deeside.

### **Our new Rector will be a man or woman who:**

- loves to seek God's heart through prayer and Scripture, and is open to the work and gifts of the Holy Spirit
- will lead us as we seek to grow our congregation and reach out to our local community, sharing with them the love of God, encouraging and supporting them in their faith journeys, and seeking to bring them into our church community.
- is a leader who will work collaboratively with others and encourage the congregation to fulfil its calling as the people of God, enabling every member to discover and use their gifts in God's service
- has a lively interest in encouraging our children and young people and those who work with them.

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# 1. Who we are

St Devenick's is a warm, open and welcoming church community in Bieldside, Aberdeen. We are a diverse church family from a range of backgrounds (including members of the Newton Dee Community), geographical areas and church styles, but we are united in our aim to bring the best that we can offer to God in worship, to grow in our faith and discipleship, and to reach out to those around us with the love of Jesus Christ. St Devenick's is a church with an evangelical ethos while being inclusive of a range of views. We are always exploring new ways to express our faith and engage with our local community.



St Devenick's is part of the Aberdeen and Orkney diocese of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

We see St Devenick's as having a true sense of church family, in which we share a loving concern for each other while being very welcoming and open to newcomers and those who use our church buildings. We value the blend of traditional and more informal worship which brings us into God's presence Sunday by Sunday, and the opportunities to meet in the week in small groups. Our life together and our outreach to families and the community are underpinned by biblically based preaching and teaching.

Under our previous rector we have used the Up-In-Out framework (Worship-Fellowship-Outreach) to think about the life of St Devenick's, and we have recognised the importance of a relational approach to the Out dimension of church. We can no longer expect people to come to us on a Sunday, and we need to engage with people where they are, with a journey to faith most likely to be characterised by positive engagement with the community of St Devenick's and God's love.

We were developing these sorts of ideas at the Vestry Away Day in 2019, however, subsequent progress has been held back by two significant events:

- In common with all churches, our life together has been impacted by COVID, and the consequent changes to patterns of church attendance. We have lost some members, and seen a tendency for committed members to come to the main Sunday Service less regularly.
- Prior to his resignation, our previous Rector had been on an extended sabbatical owing to the impact on him of the situation within our Diocese.

There has been a sense of coming together through the sabbatical and now interregnum period. We have a team of leaders and preachers drawn from the congregation, and help from visiting retired clergy. Some new members have joined the church, predominantly through the 9:00 Sunday and 10:30 Wednesday services. There has been sufficient interest to move to start a new small group, which draws members from all three of the weekly services.

Looking forward as we seek to follow where God is leading us, we see the following inter-dependent areas as priorities:

- Growing the church in faith and numbers
- Growing and nurturing the faith of our children and young people
- Continuing to develop our blend of music and worship, with informality, reverence and space for tradition.
- Strengthening fellowship outside Sunday services, including through small groups.
- Growing our experience of the person and work of the Holy Spirit and to see the gifts of the Spirit exercised as part of normal church life.
- Finding ways to respond to and build on current contacts in the community
- Continuing our biblical preaching and focus on Jesus.



## 2. Our life together

### 2.1 Worshipping together

A number of gifted and able people in the congregation are authorised to lead services and preach, including a Deaconess and a Lay Reader. We have a variety of service styles which enable us to worship God in different ways. We enjoy extended fellowship over tea and coffee in the church afterwards. In our main service we use a video projector and screen for songs and liturgy, and the service is streamed on Zoom.

- **Holy Communion** is celebrated every Sunday at 9.00am (said) and twice a month at our main 10.30am service. We use a variety of authorised liturgies and offer an open table, welcoming anybody who loves Jesus, or is genuinely seeking to know him, to receive the bread and wine. In addition, every Wednesday at 10.30am we have a said Communion service followed by coffee, cake and fellowship
- **Morning worship services**, which are flexibly structured, offer opportunities to have longer periods of sung worship and different approaches to prayers and liturgy
- Once a month we have **Café Church** as our 10.30am service on a Sunday. This is an informal morning for all ages with seating grouped around tables; coffee and cake are served throughout and there is a real variety of activities and opportunities to worship and deepen our faith in different ways
- **Messy Church** runs once a month concurrently with the main service in church and has attracted a steady succession of families with young children over the years



of the service. This gives us all a greater sense of belonging together as a church family and the children share what they've done in their groups.

- On the other weeks, **Sunday Club** is our children's group for those aged 3-11 years. The children and young people come and join the rest of church at 11.30 and we worship together for the remainder





## 2.2 Meeting together

There are a number of groups within the church which meet on different days and times.

Our Youth Group runs fortnightly on a Sunday afternoon for discussion, food and fun.

We have small groups that give opportunities to meet with others, to deepen relationships, study the Bible and pray together.

Social activities included Harvest celebrations, church lunches, and afternoon teas.



Before Christmas we hold a Christingle service which attracts attendance from outwith the regular congregation.

## 2.3 Caring for one another

**Prayer Network** We have a group who have committed to pray for any issues brought to us. These requests are circulated by email on the understanding they are matters for prayer and treated confidentially.

**Pastoral Care** A home visiting team who support and encourage any of our members who may be finding things challenging, or who can no longer manage to come to church.

## 2.4 Local outreach and community involvement

In addition to the opportunities arising from the use of our facilities, the church and individual members of the congregation are involved in the local community in different ways, including :

- Taking services at a local care home
- We have good relationships with local churches of other denominations and participate with them in the Chaplaincy Team for Cults Academy, including taking house assemblies
- Providing Flourish courses for children at the Cults Primary School
- Participation in the local Cults Hill Walking Club, which holds monthly day walks and evening meetings
- Leading an occasional small "Forest Church" gathering for men
- Supporting local food banks
- Volunteering for conservation groups
- Volunteering with Childline.

## 2.5 Mission and involvement further afield

St Devenick's supports mission partners in Namibia at Imkerhof Training Centre, and in Spain linked to Crosslinks. We also support Frontiers and Tearfund with regular contributions.

## 2.6 Facilities

Both the **church hall** and the **church** itself are great assets for the congregation which we offer for use to local groups and organisations. Regular users include a playgroup (20 places per day, meeting every morning through school termtime), Spanish and dancing classes, and Grampian Woodturners.

The **church building** is light and airy and can seat up to 130 in the nave and gallery. We have comfortable flexible seating which allows us to use the building in many different configurations. There is a sound system, computer, fixed video projector and relay screen. There is a tea station at the back of church which we use for tea and coffee after church and for groups that meet through the week. A side chapel can be used for smaller services and for prayer. The church has two toilets, one of which provides an accessible facility.



The **hall** is also available for one off hire. As well as the main hall space there is a meeting room, a kitchen and toilet facilities (recently refurbished) including baby changing. The church office is also located in the hall building. St Devenick's **Rectorry** stands on the same site as the church and church hall. It is a substantial, granite-built house with five bedrooms, two main reception rooms and a generously sized study for the Rector's use. Upstairs there is a main bathroom and a separate shower room, which can be used as an ensuite for one of the bedrooms. There is a downstairs toilet. The Rectory is regularly maintained and has had some recent refurbishments. There is a church car park, with plenty of additional parking in neighbouring streets.

## 3. Location

### 3.1 Local community and amenities

Bielside is a leafy suburb on the southwestern edge of Aberdeen and St Devenick's Church stands prominently at its main crossroads. The River Dee runs nearby and there are views of the far side of the valley, as well as of distant hills further west. Just down the hill from the church is the Deeside Way, a walking and cycling track on the route of the old Aberdeen to Ballater railway. The Dee Valley is a gateway to the Highlands, with iconic Munros at the head of the valley as well as easier forest walks nearby. The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route runs within two miles of the church, which makes travelling both north and south from Bielside easy and convenient.

The housing in Bielside is mainly detached properties. Many residents are either employed in, or have retired from, professions such as the oil industry, medicine, engineering, law and academia. Neighbouring suburbs Cults, Milltimber and Peterculter contain a wider range of property types.



The local schools are within easy walking distance of the rectory. Both Cults Primary School and Cults Academy perform consistently well in national rankings. The catchment area for the academy includes Cults, Bielside, Milltimber and Peterculter.

Bielside has a small Scotmid supermarket, a charity shop, coffee/cycling shop and a pub/restaurant, which are just across the road from St Devenick's. Deeside Golf Club is situated close by and is one of many in Aberdeen. At Cults (one mile east) there is a good range of local shops, including two 'local' supermarkets, two pharmacies, a post office and coffee shops. A GP practice, dental practice and optician are also based there, as well as a hotel and hairdressers.

Newton Dee village, one of the Camphill Communities for adults with special needs, is located along the road from St Devenick's. It is open to the public to walk through, and there is a shop and a café on the site which serves homemade soups, coffee and cakes. There are three other Camphill communities locally which cater for children and youngsters. Some members of Camphill attend St Devenick's regularly.

### 3.2 The North East of Scotland



The area offers many amenities and attractions, including National Trust for Scotland properties and other significant buildings (such as Balmoral and Dunnottar castles), RSPB reserves, Scottish Forestry (formerly Forestry Commission) managed woodlands with waymarked walks and many more challenging walks in the hills and mountains of the Grampians. The Cairngorms National Park is within easy reach and there are ski stations at Glenshee and the Lecht as well as a stunning coastline to enjoy. There are many opportunities for adventurous outdoor activities, and for simply enjoying the breathtaking scenery which is so easily accessible from this side of Aberdeen.



### 3.3 Aberdeen city



The city of Aberdeen has a population of about 225,000 and supports two universities (total student numbers about 30,000) including one of the oldest medical schools in the UK. The city hosts Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) and the North East Scotland College (one of the largest colleges of further education in Scotland). The city also benefits from a large central library, His Majesty's Theatre, the Art Gallery, the Music Hall and of course Aberdeen Football Club. It is worth noting that while Aberdeen can be seen as a prosperous city with oil companies, high tech businesses and a busy port, there are also areas of marked deprivation. To meet some of these needs there are a number of charities at work (Cyrenians, Bethany Trust, 'Somebody Cares' and food banks serving different parts of the city).



## 4. Our new Rector

We seek a man or woman to be our new Rector and join us on our journey with God; someone who:

- loves to seek God's heart through prayer and Scripture, and is open to the work and gifts of the Holy Spirit
- has a heart for God's people and those yet to find faith, who will engage the congregation in reaching out to our local community with the love of Jesus.
- is a leader who will work collaboratively with others in leadership positions to enable the church to fulfil its calling as the people of God, with every member discovering and using their gifts in God's service
- is able to lead the congregation through a time of change and uncertainty in the diocese.
- will lead on pastoral care of the congregation
- will share the development of gathered worship with the existing lay team, including by contributing to preaching and leading
- will work as a member of Vestry, but is not expected to be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the church
- is an ordained priest in the Scottish Episcopal Church or in other churches of the Anglican Communion or other denominations in full communion with the SEC
- is aligned with our evangelical ethos.

We recognize that to lead and feed us from God's word our Rector will need time to maintain a fresh and dynamic spiritual life, and we will encourage this as a vital part of our Rector's regular pattern, as well as by providing the opportunity for times of retreat.

### 4.1 Applying

The application form for this post can be found on our website ([www.stdevenicks.org](http://www.stdevenicks.org)). Click on the 'Rector Application' button.

If you would like to have an informal conversation prior to applying, including about the background to the wider situation in the Diocese, please contact our Lay Reader, Stephen Goodyear, on [stephen@stdevenicks.org](mailto:stephen@stdevenicks.org).

We appreciate that Aberdeen may seem a long way north! If you would like to visit us informally before applying you would be most welcome, and seeing this part of the UK for yourself may help you as you discern what God is calling you to.



# Appendices

## A.1 Leadership and staff

### The Vestry

The members of the Vestry are the trustees for the purposes of current charity law. The vestry consists of 12 members including the Rector, the Rector's warden (appointed by the Rector), the People's Warden (elected annually), Diocesan Synod Lay Representative (elected annually) 6 members elected by the congregation for a 3 year period and two Ex officio members: the Secretary and Treasurer. Vestry normally meets 10 times a year.

### The Ministry Team

In recent years the Rector has drawn together a group to consider ministry matters. This has included the Rector, the Deaconess, the Lay Reader, the wardens, the Youth Pastor and one other. During the interregnum the Vestry has asked Ministry Team to continue meeting and to help keep the life of the church moving forward, in particular: taking responsibility for organising service rotas, handling day to day pastoral issues and being alert to emerging needs.

### Children's and Young People's Leaders

Donna Kriel, our Youth Pastor, co-ordinates Sunday Club and Youth Group. There is a team of helpers for each. Donna also visits the local primary school including to deliver the Flourish course to groups of children.

### Staff

The church employs the Youth Pastor and an Administrator, both on a part-time basis.

## A.2 Finance summary

Like all churches in the Scottish Episcopal Church, St Devenick's holds separate charitable status, and is responsible for the Rector's stipend and maintaining the church property.

Total unrestricted income for 2022-23 from all sources was £115,000. This comprised congregational giving of £93,000, including tax reclaimed on Gift Aid and £1,500 of cash giving. Almost all giving is regular and/or committed. Hall lettings contributed most of the balance of £22,000.

Expenditure during the year was £84,000. This included sums transferred to Designated Funds to make provision for specific purposes.

Staff costs were £35,000. These were about £29,000 less than they would have been had there not been staff absences and vacancies.

Building maintenance, heating and lighting, and insurance costs were £33,000. These included a provision of £9,500 towards the cost of any future major repairs that might become necessary. A total of £27,000 is currently designated for that purpose.

5% of annual income is allocated for the support of world mission. Work by Crosslinks, Frontiers and the Imkerhof Training Centre Christian Trust is supported. 1% of income is allocated for the relief of poverty; contributions have been made to Tearfund and to support the work of local charities.



Normally St Devenick's makes a voluntary contribution to the Diocese each year (called Quota), to support its work. There are significant concerns about the governance and finances of the Diocese which have existed since before summer 2021. These issues remain unresolved by the Diocesan trustees. Vestry, mindful of its obligations under charity law, resolved that it could not make any contributions to the Diocese for the years 2021-22 or 2022-23.

St Devenick's has reserves of £142,000 in unrestricted or designated funds, which can be used at the discretion of Vestry.

### **A.3 Ethos**

St Devenick's has a long tradition of valuing biblically based teaching which gives the Bible an authority to challenge our contemporary presuppositions and worldviews. In a congregation of people with a wide variety of church backgrounds ranging from Brethren to Roman Catholic (and not a few Anglicans) there has grown a deep maturity and tolerance of different views on secondary issues which often divide Christians elsewhere. What unites the people of St Devenick's is a sincere regard for the importance of the Bible and an appreciation that hard work is often needed to discern what God is saying to us through his word to us today. Our previous Rector and other preachers have felt encouraged and inspired by the close attention and even anticipation that the congregation shows during the preaching of the sermon. Of course, from this comes the challenge to go and obey and we try to avoid the danger of being well fed without actually taking any exercise. Our emphasis in recent years on discipleship and the work of the Holy Spirit has seen many of us really trying to take into our week the teaching and challenge of the Sunday service. We are aligned in many ways with the statement of faith of the Evangelical Alliance, of which the church is a member, while leaving room for diversity of views on secondary issues. We would see ourselves as a church with an evangelical ethos exploring life in the Spirit.

