

Church of Scotland- Presbytery of Aberdeen and Shetland



COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

*'Are your ears awake?
Listen to the wind words, the spirit blowing through the
churches'
Revelation 2 v 29 The Message*



Sundari Catherine Joseph

Dr. Sundari Joseph joins the Presbytery of Aberdeen and Shetland as their Communications Officer from Nov 2020. This new MDS post has been created to engage with internal and external audiences to support the work of the Church to develop and sustain a Christian presence in every community.

Sundari will be working closely with Rev Dr. John Ferguson, Presbytery Clerk, and Mrs. Cheryl Brankin, Depute Clerk, to develop an understanding of the workings of Presbytery and all Church matters.

Sundari will work collaboratively across Presbytery, supporting appropriate committees in the development and implementation of a communications strategy.

She will identify opportunities to engage with the wider community to explain and express the mission of the Church.

When Sundari went for interview for this post she had to present her views on the communications strategy. She focused on the need to recognise the culture of communication and relational context of communication. It was important, she felt, to be flexible, inclusive and engaged. She presented her model of how this might work, adopting a consultative approach to discover what people wished to have within a communications strategy document. When preparing for the interview she was drawn to the verse quoted above.

Sundari will use a variety of mediums to generate positive news stories and other editorial copy to support the mission of the Presbytery of Aberdeen and Shetland by developing good working relations with the media. She will use social media and digital platforms to ensure the message of the Church is communicated to all generations. She will build a network of communication and media contacts at a local level and provide advice and support to kirk sessions and members of their congregations and local communities.

Sundari will liaise regularly with the Church of Scotland's National Communication Team in Edinburgh adopting a collaborative approach for policy and decision-making pertaining to communication issues. Out of hours media related queries will be directed to the National Communications Team.

This is a part time role of 2.5 days per week. Sundari will work flexibly to try and accommodate the varying responsibilities of the post.

You can contact her via email and telephone:

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From Southern India to Bonny Scotland

My journey in life began in India. I was born in Madurai, a place 300 miles south of what is now known as Chennai, previously Madras. My mother's side of the family had strong Christian roots with my grandfather and great grandfather who were ministers in the Church of South India. Rev Devarul Santiago (my grandfather) wrote Christian lyrics for choruses or Keerthanai as they are called in the Tamil language which are still popular today.

My father's side of the family were Hindu and my father converted to Christianity with a public display of baptism in a river which I understand was attended by 5000 people.

I was blessed to be brought up in the Christian faith and came to know our Lord Jesus Christ for myself in my teens through a local youth fellowship.

I grew up in Nottingham and later we moved to Lancashire- a place called Saddleworth. I still consider this home although I have lived and worked in the Aberdeen area for the past 35 years and it's the longest time I have lived in one place

I have always felt very welcomed in Scotland and was happy to settle here. I was blessed with two wonderful children during my 25 year marriage and we are very close. Alex (32yrs) lives in Oslo Norway and Anthony (29yrs) in London so getting together these days is a rare occasion.



My career in nursing began in Leeds and then took me to London, North Wales and Aberdeen. I have worked in education as a senior lecturer at Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen and conducted many research projects in healthcare. This led me to develop good working relationships with the local press and involved writing press releases and preparing radio interviews. Website pieces and posts on social media were also very important to communicate the message.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, I have returned to the NHS and am currently part of a team coordinating contact tracing for NHS Grampian. I have reduced this to a part time role to commence the role of communications officer.

I was at Portlethen Parish Church for 20+ years and occupied roles in Sunday School as a teacher and superintendent. I am a member and elder at South St Nicholas Church and have enjoyed the fellowship and welcome there for the past 10 years. I enjoy living in Portlethen and have immersed myself in community activities for many years.

This is a new beginning for me and I seek guidance and direction from my Lord and Saviour as I learn how to make this role work for everyone and convey the messages of the Church. It's a new beginning for Presbytery as well as this is the first paid professional post of 'Communications Officer' within a Presbytery. I look to you for support and would value your prayers to make this post work for all concerned.

Saying goodbye to family in Bombay....



My mother and younger brother and I travelled for 21 days from Bombay to Tilbury Docks on a P&O liner to meet my father who was working in the NHS as a medical doctor.

In the photo above the little girl is me- all of 5yrs old! My mother is holding my hand and my brother, Emmanuel is next to her. My youngest brother Vijay was born in England. Here we are settling into UK life.

