



St. Matthew's Church

Perth

e- Newsletter No. 10

Fri 29th May

Dear all

We are honoured this week to have our frontpiece written by Raymond Young, Chairman of the General Trustees (he will explain what that is). This time is pivotal for the Church of Scotland and he goes on to explain why:

“ What? No General Assembly? Well, something virtual.....

Last week should have been General Assembly week. Like most gatherings it was cancelled due to Coronavirus. But that did not stop Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair from Arbroath being installed as Moderator in an empty Assembly Hall nor both the Assembly Trustees and the General Trustees from reporting progress and highlighting some of the key issues facing the church. Both the installation and the reports were broadcast on the Church's website and if you missed them they can be seen there. (www.churchofscotland.org.uk)

The reports came by a webinar, for which you had to book your space. Nearly 1000 secured their place last Friday to hear Very Rev John Chalmers, the Convener of the Assembly Trustees, Dave Kendall the new Chief Officer for the Assembly Trustees and the Chair of the General Trustees - me.

The Assembly Trustees were created in 2019 to manage the central functions of the Church except for congregational buildings which are the responsibility of the General Trustees (yes - the structure of the Church is quite confusing!). In particular the Assembly Trustees are responsible for managing the Church's finances and they were told by the General Assembly in 2019 to reduce central expenditure by 20 to 30% which was why much of their presentation was about money. The Church has been running at a loss for years, and Coronavirus will make the annual loss even worse. Could be up to £15 million!

Why? The Church's income comes from congregations - most of it goes back to congregations to pay for ministers. Many congregations don't contribute enough to cover the minister's stipend. And many who do only do so by

income from letting out their halls (like St Matthew's). And while churches are closed just now, one of the Church's major Christian witness - Crossreach- is under huge pressure. The Assembly Trustees are having to try to keep the Church's priorities - including its commitment to serve the whole of a Scotland and giving priority to our poorest areas - balanced against declining income. Yes, reserves are being called upon. Yes, overheads and central costs are being reduced. Yes, the plan is for growth - of encouraging new (and younger) disciples - and for a worshipping Church which is welcoming, inclusive and living out the gospel.

John Chalmers talks about the Church having been wandering in the wilderness over many years, and that Coronavirus has got us to the point that must now cross the Jordan into a new land. We've become comfortable in the desert but the virus is forcing us to deal with new challenges and new ways of doing church. For example the online church is very popular and is likely to be part of the future not just a temporary way of seeing us through lockdown. People may chose to worship in different ways.

Jesus tells us that to get more and better fruit we need to prune the vine, One of the big elephants in the Church is buildings. We've too many, and many are in the wrong place (or too many in the one place). Entering many is like entering a time warp - going back many years. Do they indicate a thriving tomorrow?

Whose job is it to prune this vine? We are a Presbyterian Church and the responsibilities sit with the Presbytery. New and larger presbyteries are being created - one of the first is the Presbytery of Fife bringing together the three existing Fife presbyteries. And we in the General Trustees are working with them to identify buildings that should stay, buildings that should go and new spaces required for new growth (like Bertha Park). Helping them make hard but right decisions about where to prune.

It was strange giving a General Assembly type report from my own home - and not being able to feel or hear audience reaction. But there was a 'chat box' with plenty of comments to consider. There are a lot of good ideas for us to work through. And the interest and the comments indicate that the Church has life after Covid -19. But it's going to have to be different. Not back to normal - but a new and exciting one guided by the Holy Spirit.”

A Prayer For May:

May you be happy.
May you stay healthy.
May you feel safe.
May you find comfort.
May you sense peace.
May you give love.
May you possess courage.
May you have faith.
May you spread joy.
May you be kind.



A few Seasonal Clippings about the Garden From Nicola McNee



Isaiah 58: 11

And I will always guide you and satisfy you with good things. I will keep you strong and well. You will be like a garden that has plenty of water, like a spring of water that never runs dry.

A little light pest control

Warmer weather not only suits us it also encourages lots of garden pests. They are too many to mention but here are my top 3. It's much better to try to live in harmony with nature and encourage lots of natural predators in the garden. I really don't like using chemicals but sometimes it's the last resort.

No. 1 Top of the Charts.....the dreaded slug!!

Control - slug pellets can be used but with great care as they can harm wildlife. A few other options for control:

- Hand pick the slugs after a night-time search with a torch and dispose of them (drown them or pop them in the freezer).
- Encourage their predators in the garden, birds, frogs, hedgehogs.
- Use a slug pub, this is simply a jar half full of beer buried in the ground up to the lip of the jar. The slugs are attracted to the beer and fall in.
- Biological control uses a nematode to infect and destroy the slug (works best in warmer weather). It's called Nemaslug. If you find a clump of small white eggs under pots or stones then leave it out for the birds to munch on. Most folk use a combination of controls.

No. 2 - Aphids (greenfly/blackfly)- Are easy to control if they are spotted early. If not, try hosing them off with a jet of water, squashing between fingers on smaller plants or spraying with an organic pesticide containing pyrethrum or horticultural soap. Don't grow plants too soft with lots of high nitrogen fertiliser. If it's a severe attack every year on something like a plum tree control may be easier with a winter application of a pesticide called winter wash which can kill the over wintering eggs. Aphids breed rapidly and the warmer the weather the faster they can breed. That's why we are seeing outbreaks now. Don't spray plants in flower in case you harm pollinating insects.

No. 3 - Vine weevil- A dull grey beetle that attacks ornamental garden plants. The adults cause distinctive notching on leaves but it's the young grubs that cause the worst damage. The adults lay eggs in pots and when the grubs hatch out they eat the roots of the plants. You only notice you have the pest when the plant wilts and dies!! The grubs are white, c shaped with a brown head.

Control- destroy the adults if you see them (they hide in dark places and come out at night). There are chemical controls but one of the most effective ways is to use a biological nematode control. Apply in the summer when soil is warm. Be aware they can affect pots of plants and check regularly for them. They love Primulas and Heucheras.

With any pest you can't beat checking the plants regularly for signs of pests and damage. It's much easier to control a few than trying to eradicate a well established problem!

WHAT ARE YOU READING?

Joyce Thom, a member of St Matthew's Book Group, writes that "All The Light We Cannot See" by Anthony Doerr is the most recent book the book group read and they all enjoyed it.

The story is set in WW2 Europe mainly France and Germany.

Marie-Laure is an 11 year old blind girl who is taken from her home in Paris to St Malo by her father to escape the bombing in Paris.

Werner is an 11 year old German boy living in a German orphanage. He is a genius at recycling old radios and was sent to an elite German school where he eventually progresses to be an important part of discovering illegal radios used by the resistance in the St Malo area.

In the story the lives of these two become intertwined and eventually they do meet up. We read of bombs blitzing Paris under German control and then St Malo as the Allies move in and also of the French resistance in St Malo.

It reminds us all of the horrors of war but also of the kindness of which humans are capable. Although it is a long read (530 pages), it keeps you turning the pages to see what happens next and I would thoroughly recommend it.



BOOK QUIZ



I have received several entries for this so far. Please e-mail me with your 25 answers to FMBruce6@googlemail.com or post them to me at 6 Kincarrathie Crescent, Perth PH2 7HH to arrive by Sunday 31 May when I shall draw the winner from the correct entries.

Thanks
Fiona Bruce.

Beverly Challenge



Would you like to sponsor Beverly on a virtual walk from Perth to Iona? She is in training at the moment, and starting on the Monday 1st of June, Beverly will post details of her progress in the ST.Matthew's Facebook Page and in the newsletter, as she walks on her treadmill. A big challenge of 140 miles which she intends to complete by the 30th June.

Please pledge your support by emailing Bev at office@stmatts.org.uk. giving a note of your support and making your sponsorship using the following Go Fund Me link.

[https://www.gofundme.com/f/june-walk-to-iona?utm_source=customer&utm_medium=copy link&utm_campaign=p_cf+share-flow-1](https://www.gofundme.com/f/june-walk-to-iona?utm_source=customer&utm_medium=copy_link&utm_campaign=p_cf+share-flow-1)

OR once we are back at church the sponsorship money can be collected.

THE MURIEL SMITH PAGE

HAPPY 90TH BIRTHDAY to Muriel Smith who received flowers and a card from St Matthew's, as well as her own special concert from our Organist, Michael Ellacott.



From Muriel ; I would like to thank all my friends in the Church for the many cards, e-mails, telephone calls, visits, flowers and gifts which I received on the occasion of my 90th Birthday. It was so nice to be remembered and made the day very enjoyable, in spite of all the current restrictions. Thank you!

THE UNEXPECTED

This is a column when different members of the congregation will tell us something unexpected about themselves

And today Muriel Smith is reminiscing about when she was a Sunday School Superintendent at the old St Andrew's Church:

"Before joining St Matthew's, I was a member of St Andrew's Church, the now sadly defunct church in Atholl Street. I attended Sunday School there in my childhood from Primary to Senior and then Bible Class and then Youth Fellowship. I was married in the Church

and my son was christened there. At that time it was a vibrant, busy and friendly place.

In the 1960's, I and my husband Lawson, were the Sunday School Superintendents, which involved organising all the activities of the Sunday School and with the help of a number of other members, teaching classes every Sunday. There were over 120 children in the Sunday School with ages ranging from Primary to Senior. In the summer, we organised the Sunday School Trip and we had to hire four double-decker buses to convey all the children, the teachers and quite a few Mums to a country or seaside destination, where the children played games, ran races and then were given a paper bag with sandwiches and cakes and refreshments were provided.

At Christmas, we held two parties, one for the younger children on the Saturday afternoon and the other for older children on the Saturday evening. Lawson and I had to choose and wrap a present for every child and at the end of each party Lawson appeared dressed as Santa Claus and distributed the gifts. HAPPY DAYS !

The Church also organised a Parish Visitation, which involved volunteer members of the congregation visiting every house in our Parish to speak about the Church and reach out to people. It was quite an undertaking and fairly daunting at times. It was also rewarding and the Church gained quite a few new members.

My outstanding memory of that time was when my friend and I went to one of the half-villas on the Dunkeld Road. A lady came to the door and we explained why we were visiting, whereupon she turned and in a very imperious voice she called "Mother, the people from God are here".

Which, when we thought about it, we were !!"

VE day

In our St Matthew's Newsletter on 8th May I spoke about the VE Day celebrations and I was delighted to hear recently from Dave Dykes about his personal commemoration. Many of you may remember Dave, a former Perth Academy teacher, who played a big part in our "Always With Us" events at St Matthew's in 2018 commemorating the centenary of the end of WW1. Dave writes below:

"VE DAY 75th ANNIVERSARY, 8th MAY 2020

In normal circumstances my plans would have included: a visit to Perth Academy to take part in a ceremony to commemorate VE Day 75; attending the SSAFA event at Loch Leven Community Campus and then arranging a family get-together. Sadly, not to be, but...if Plan A fails, you need to think of a Plan B. Problem: How to commemorate VE Day, share the day with family and friends, and still observe social distancing rules?

Solution: "Operation Backyard Memorial". If people can't come into the house, take everything outside and thanks to iPhones, Facebook and Twitter I was able to share it all with my family and friends.



VIRTUAL REMEMBRANCE

People have had to be very creative to ensure that acts of remembrance and the commemoration of key events can still take place.

In the lead-up to the 75th anniversary of VE Day the Commonwealth War Graves Commission asked people to up-load tributes to everyone who served to their website. This then rolled on to include the anniversaries of Dunkirk and D-Day. I uploaded a number of tributes to people who are part of the Perth Academy family and this included Johnnie Williamson, the great-grandad of a

young lady called Eva who went on the French Trip last year.



Johnnie was a member of the 51st Highland Division, who fought so bravely as part of the British Expeditionary Force, but eventually had to surrender at St Valery. **They were featured in a programme on Saturday 23 May on Channel 4 "Dunkirk: The Forgotten Heroes"**. Such a moving account, told mainly by the men who were there, and well worth a watch on catch-up.

FIGHTING DIGITAL POVERTY

There are many young people and children in Perth who are unable to study effectively due to lack of IT or Internet facilities.



You can help by:

1. Donating your old tablets and computers
2. Giving a donation via our website (www.esolperth.co.uk)

Thank you on behalf of our students

 English for Speakers of Other Languages is a Scottish Registered Charity SC046650

NOTICES

Church Services

www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship/services-online.

Please note there will be a Pentecost service conducted by the Moderator at 10am this Sunday 31 May on the Church of Scotland website

Also, Rev Scott Burton, is streaming online worship at www.westkintyreandgighachurchofscotland.org

BBC 1 Scotland will also be broadcasting their new half-hour weekly show "Reflections at the Quay" on a Sunday morning. (Check the TV programme for the time)



ZOOM Weekly Meditations

Weekly meditations have been taking place on Zoom on a Wednesday morning at 9am. Jean Young is the administrator of these Zoom meetings and extends the invitation to Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5836388728>

Meeting ID: 884 1477 3163

NEW: COFFEE AND CHAT on Zoom

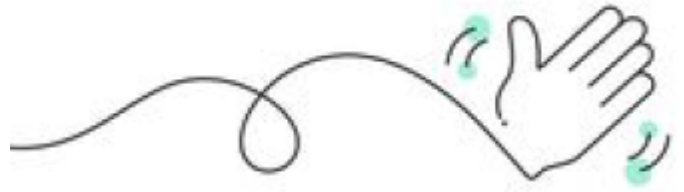
On Mondays at 11am – 11.45am
Bring your own cake and coffee, "drop in, drop out" basis!

(Use link above to connect)

Meeting ID: 846 1454 6578

What is required beforehand:

- 1) Download the ZOOM app onto your PC, Laptop, iPad, or iPhone.
- 2) Use the link above and follow the instructions to fill in the Meeting ID above



Doris Robertson home from a brief stay in hospital

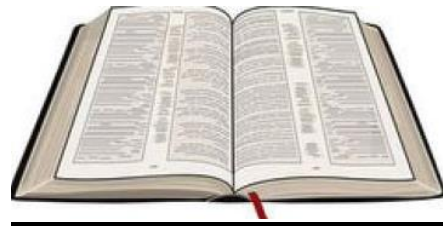
And **Chrissie Crammond** who misses seeing everyone.

We're thinking of you both!

Thanks

From **Rita Dalton** to all her friends at St. Matthew's for all the good wishes she received on her recent 85th birthday.

Condolences



We send our condolences to **Margaret Wright** on the sad death of her husband, Ian, on Monday 18th May.

The restricted funeral service at Perth Crematorium was conducted by Marjorie Clark who included in the service this Native American Poem for the Grieving; (Ian had a particular interest in the history of the native Americans and the 19th Century frontiersmen.)

*I give you this thought to keep –
I am with you still, I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow,
I am the diamond glints on snow,
I am the sunlight on ripened grain,
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning hush,
I am the swift, uplifting rush –
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not think of me as gone –
I am with you still – in each new dawn.*

Photo Gallery

A new member of St. Matthew's. Your gardening team, Isobel and Sheila came across this Pigeon while pruning one of the garden bushes. The pigeon is sitting on a nest of 2 eggs.

Sheila and Isobel have named our new member as Matty. Hopefully we will get a report on the offspring in the next week or so. (Photo Lorna Morrison)



A photo I took on my walk today of the Primula Menziesia 'plum drops' in the church garden looking very healthy!

Thanks to our gardeners.
Fiona



Stewardship and Finance Committee update

An informal S&F Meeting took place on Tuesday 26th May using Zoom. It was a very constructive meeting giving the Treasurer support in how he is managing the church finances during this difficult time and reaffirming how we may progress with the sale of the Manse and purchase of a new one.

Zoom meetings are becoming normal with not only ourselves doing it Presbytery and 121 are also using this media.

We are now distributing at least 165 copies of this newsletter by email and many more are hand delivered by Elders. Thanks to those who have added their email addresses in the last week. If you have an email address please let us know. It will mean you get the Newsletter sooner and also help to save the environment. Please advise Fiona at the address below.

All contributions welcome

To Contribute please contact me on
FMBruce6@googlemail.com

