



St. Matthew's Church Perth

e- Newsletter No. 13

Fri 19th June

Dear all

In her "Meditations" last week, Janet Martin spoke about the "**Mirror of Light**" and how attaching mirrors to her shed has provided a whole new look and depth to her garden by reflecting the plants, flowers and birds and a sense of light and perspective that wasn't there before.

She said (and I'm sure is not alone in this, particularly with our Zoom experiences!) that she occasionally catches glimpses of herself in the mirrors, which she finds a less attractive reflection!

Janet went on to ask: "Why is it we human beings often feel uncomfortable in accepting our own reflection looking back at us I wonder?"

Why is it, for some people, looking in a mirror often means focusing on their imperfections. They may see a reflection of failure, worthlessness or perceive themselves to be insecure or inadequate compared to others. Many of these thoughts can be brought on by the demands of a busy life, competitive attitudes of work colleagues, expectation of peers or the pressure of social media's fads and fashions, as well as perhaps acknowledging that we don't always get it right in life".

As Robert Burns said "O wad some power the giftie gie us, to see ourselves as ithers see us".

She cited Soren Keirkegaard who said "The fundamental purpose of God's word is to give a TRUE self-knowledge. God's word is the REAL mirror and when we PROPERLY look at ourselves in that mirror, we see ourselves as God wants us to see ourselves. However, God cannot transform us until we FIRST acknowledge how we see ourselves".

As Janet says, "God wants us to see past our own reflection. He has the ability to repair all our

imperfections if we look deeper and focus on Him and His Word."

In 1st Corinthians v 12 it tells us "For NOW we see through a glass, darkly; but THEN face to face: NOW I know in part; but THEN shall I know even as also I am known."

Therefore, we might not see it now, but when we take time to listen to and follow God's Word, we will be able to see God as HE sees US!

Janet asks : "So how does one reflect God? You turn to Him like a mirror facing the sun." The Bible says God will make His face shine upon us ([Psalm 67:1](#)). Why? So WE can reflect HIM!

There's an old gospel hymn that says:
Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in His wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.

She concluded by saying "So when you look in a mirror, take time to make sure that you are not only seeing your own reflection, but that of our Lord. Walk with Him and others will then see the reflection of HIS love in you."

Fiona Bruce, Session Clerk
FMBruce6@googlemail.com

Prayer:

Loving God, we know we have SO much to learn about your love and your way.

Help us to look into the mirrors of our souls, to acknowledge our sins and those things we have left undone or unsaid.

We ask that you give us wisdom and insight to understand where you are leading us.

Show us how we might lead others by reflecting your amazing and gracious love in everything we do and say.

Shine the light of your loving kindness upon us.

Let your light radiate from each one of us, giving us courage and strength to go forth, believing that we can reach out to others and help to heal our broken world until your Kingdom comes.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

A few Seasonal Clippings about the Garden From Nicola McNee



Isaiah 58:11

And I will always guide 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 that never runs dry.

Gardening for Bumblebees

During lockdown many people have had a lot more time to reflect and take time to enjoy being outdoors. You can't fail to notice the bee activity on a sunny day. Bees are really valuable as they are great pollinators and help to give us good crops.

Bee numbers are under threat because of changes in our landscape and loss of habitat. They are also affected by the use of chemicals in our environment, mainly pesticides.

There is plenty we can do and might already be doing as gardeners to help bees. Bees visit flowers to feed on the nectar and at the same time they pick up pollen and move it from flower to flower. This helps to pollinate the flowers which then go on to produce the fruit/vegetable/ seed that we need.

As gardeners we need to plant a year round nectar source for bees. This is fairly easy and many gardeners are already doing that without even realising. When we plant to create all year round colour it provides a food source for the bees. However, there are certain plants the bees prefer. If a flower has been bred a lot and has double rows of petals it can look good to us but the bees can't get in to find the nectar and pollen. Think simple single flower shapes where you can see the yellow centre of the flower! Wild roses are a classic example.

Some Bee favourites: most of the herbs we grow are bee magnets: thyme, marjoram and chives for example. Many flowers we grow from seed are also

perfect, the poached egg plant, comfrey, hollyhocks and foxgloves are all great for bees.

Many scented plants like honeysuckle, lavender and bergamot are intoxicating to bees too.

Favourite shrubs for bees include Buddleia, Cotoneaster and Deutzia (in full flower now with clusters of pink flowers). I have one at my driveway and the bees are going crazy for it. It's great to watch even for a few minutes and see all the different types of bee enjoying it.

Andrew Tait wrote this moving poem following some hospital stays in 2015 but thought the sentiments were very pertinent for today and our clap for the NHS staff on a Thursday evening.

OUT OF THE NIGHT

In the still of the night
Wires monitor life signs.
Bathed in soft, soporific light
I lie in silent contemplation.

I am told:
Time will ease my pain.
Each healing hour seems endless,
Elusive sought-after sleep
Protectively wraps around me.

Out of the night a tender touch,
A gentle, caring voice.
How are you?
Life-affirming morning light
Heralds another new day.

The Unexpected

This is a column when different members of the congregation will tell us something unexpected about themselves. Several people have said how much they have enjoyed these articles as they are varied and interesting and this one by Alastair Byers is no exception. I love the idea of working in the mobile bank on Skye:

I must admit my heart sank a bit when I received an email from Fiona asking me to write an article for the magazine on some aspects of my life which some folk may be surprised to hear about. What on earth can I write about that may interest the good folk of St. Matts, I thought? So, out with the dog in Scone Woods I got my thinking cap on!

I was born in Hamilton and the family moved to Castle Douglas when I was three. My Dad was one of the two Church of Scotland ministers in the town at that time. So, it was an interesting and eventful childhood to say the least, but sometimes I used to think that I should have been born with wings as I was expected to be an angel, and nothing was further from the truth! I was lucky to have a huge park to play in as the manse was on the park boundary and looked over Carlingwark Loch. The freedom was fantastic as were the adventures I enjoyed with my pals which would never exist nowadays. I remember my folks used to put a newspaper in the window of the manse when it was time to come home for food!

I joined the Bank of Scotland when I was seventeen as a 'year out' before going to university. Surprisingly, that did not go to plan either as I remained in the Bank for the next 35 years! I was lucky to join as an office junior / tea-boy (sadly that is not an opportunity for youngsters today!) in the local branch before heading to Kyle of Lochalsh a couple of years later. That was an opportunity which I grasped with open arms as it allowed me to be my own man for once. What a great time I had with lovely people to boot. Twice a week I would man the mobile bank on Skye, carrying a suitcase of money across on the ferry! The local minister heard I could play an organ a bit and asked me to play for a service where there was a harmonium rather than an organ (which was still frowned upon a

bit in the highlands at that time). There was no chance of leading a congregation, I quickly found out. As I finished the first verse, I could hear the congregation ending the first line! Unfortunately, there is not enough space in this edition to recount all my stories and the fun I had.

The years passed as did the number of offices I passed through. These were the days when you were transferred 'at the Bank's behest' rather than applying for a vacancy! It was easier and cheaper for the Bank to move you whilst single! Most of my postings were good and enjoyable and I even met Carolyn along the way – what more can I say? The last 15 years in the Bank was spent in Corporate Banking which was a part of my career that I really enjoyed and, as part of that journey, the family and I spent 4 years in Nottingham which was a very vibrant and multi-cultural city. I should say though, that I knew nothing about Corporate Banking before this – I used to think that MBO's, MBI's and BIMBO's were some kind of sweetie! So, I was on a steep learning curve as the number of zeros I was dealing with escalated accordingly.

As I look back now, I remember that a lot of opportunities I was able to grasp were due to people I met along the way, who encouraged me and cajoled me into situations because they believed in me. I hope that in some small ways I was able to do likewise for some junior colleagues as we all need a 'leg-up' now and again. This leads me to thinking about the way Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those He wanted, and they came to him and became disciples. As we come slowly out of lockdown after this awful and unexpected pandemic into perhaps a new and better world, perhaps we can encourage and cajole people to come forward into new situations within St Matthew's. I think we all have an opportunity to shape what will undoubtedly be a different 'Church' and, with vision, seize opportunities to perhaps make it a better place. Jesus said, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:19.

Reader Messages

Ann McIntyre has sent us this message:

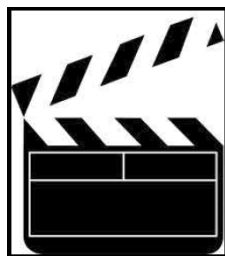
"As a former editor myself, I am impressed beyond words at the dedication, presentation, care and the outstandingly beautiful quality of all the material which you present,...I love it.....And that John Spence article - wow!

So this comes to you with my very many congratulations - a former member of St Matthews along with my late husband Donald and our son Ewen (The Upper Springland staff are doing a wonderful job at this challenging time and though I haven't seen Ewen for ten weeks now, the phone chats are cheerful and express remarkable contentment.)

Ann also recommended the "outstandingly beautiful video services - much of them presented outdoors - from St John's Kirk as yet another joyful and rewarding experience within these crazy times"

FILM QUIZ

Do you know your films? As with the Book Quiz, I'll ask 5 questions each week and then ask you to let me have your answers at "the end". There will be a draw of correct answers – and a prize!



Fiona Bruce

11. The opposite of many bad women.
12. Eating utensils are not in.
13. Conjecture about the person who is arriving for an evening meal
14. My Italian mother
15. A number of marriage ceremonies and a burial

A PERSONAL VIEW BY ERIC DUFF

After reading two very good articles on racism in last weeks magazine it left me needing to ask the following questions:

1. Are we in the Church racists ? do we have any minority groups in St Mathews?
2. Is the very Church that we are members of racist?

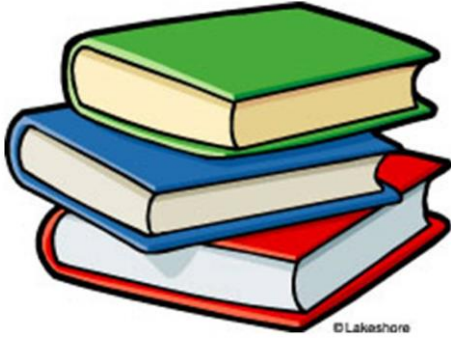
To me a racist and a homophobic person are two sides of the same coin, people who are prejudiced towards a particular race or ethnic group. Sometimes there can be a very fine line.

When I look back to the Inquiry into the Steven Lawrence murder by Sir Ian McPherson QC his conclusion was that the Metropolitan Police force was institutionally racist. As you know he was not saying that every policeman or woman was a racist but that the very organisation was.

Secondly we have the terrible racist abuse by successive British Governments of the "Windrush" people. They were systematically abused because they were black. Once again the majority of individuals in government need not have been racist.

I am not a racist and I don't know anyone within our Church who is. However, when I look around our membership I don't see any black or brown members nor do I see any people from minority groups. Why is this? When you read this you are possibly saying "I am not racist" but what are you doing about it? Yes, it's very easy to hit the like button or the share on Facebook but a very different thing to stand up and say what you really feel about it. Our last minister, Rev Scott Burton, certainly always welcomed people of all colour and minority groups. I was very supportive of him addressing the gay community in Perth.

Should we as an organisation have followed it up? Of course we should, an opportunity missed. It's very easy to talk the talk but can we walk the walk?



WHAT ARE YOU READING?

Lorna Gray, a member of St Matthew’s Book Group, writes about “THE FOUNDLING” by Stacey Halls.

The Foundling is very much a book about motherhood. The Foundling Hospital was founded for babies at risk of being abandoned. No option for some young mothers in the 1740's and 50's. What is more important when raising a child - Love or Money?

Bess and Alexandra come from very different class backgrounds. Bess is constantly looking forward while Alexandra spends most of her time in the past. An moving story which played tug- of- war with my emotions.

Fiona Bruce writes that “it is interesting to hear about a book which concerns the Foundling Hospital as I remember visiting it on a trip to London and it was also mentioned in a recent edition of “Long Lost Family” on STV when the presenters, Davina McCall and Nicky Campbell, traced the origins of 2 foundling babies who had been abandoned.”

Janet’s Jams

Sadly, no jam stall this year folks!



However, in true ‘Blue Peter’ style, I have some I made earlier! I only have marmalade available, so if anyone would like to buy a jar or two (small jars) I am happy to deliver. A suggested donation of £1.50 per jar will go to church funds.

First come, first served! Tel: 01738-625074.

John Spence was very disappointed last week that I didn't include this photo of him as a nun at a performance of the Sound of Music at an Iona Community Gathering!



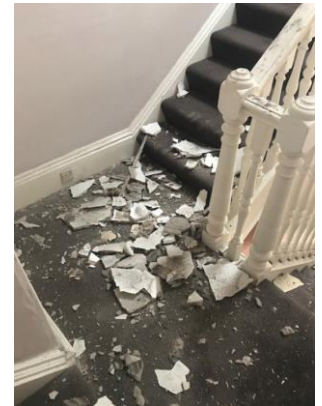
Any more nuns out there? Don't hide your light under a bushel.

Please send in your photo for next week's Newsletter - there will be a prize for the best one!

Manse Update

In anticipation of a relaxing of the “viewing” rules, I visited the Manse on Monday with the Surveyor who was updating the Home Report, only to find that part of the ceiling next to the cupola had collapsed! It was a bit of a shock (see photo below) as only last week I had been in taking photographs and everything looked fine. The surveyor advised that it was caused by the “wear and tear” on the aged lathe and plaster ceiling.

Unfortunately it will cost £876 to repair but hopefully the work will be carried out within the next couple of weeks and our Manse will then go “on the market”.



Fiona Bruce

PRAYER FROM ANDREW DAVIES

Dear God

I know there are some challenges in life and opportunities. Help us to live a life, put other people first and keep our heads held high and face our fears as they lead ahead.

Please keep all Down Syndrome people in your prayers and people with other conditions and illnesses too.

Please God help us to help other people.
Amen

Notices

COFFEE AND CHAT on Zoom

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

Meeting ID: 869 3092 8235

WEDNESDAY MEDITATIONS at 9am on Zoom

Meeting ID: 859 7983 1315

Jean Young is the administrator of these Zoom meetings . Drop Jean an email and she will ensure that you are kept informed, should the link go wrong.

[jy2@btinternet.com](mailto: jy2@btinternet.com)

KIRK SESSION

There will be a "Zoom" Kirk Session on Wednesday 24th June at 7pm.
Marjorie will e-mail Elders with the link.



Would you like to sponsor Beverley on a virtual walk from Perth to Iona? She is as I write on the 19th June setting out from Oban on Day 19 of her challenge. 94 miles down. £454 pledged. Beverley has been posting details of her progress in the St. Matthew's Facebook Page as she walks on her treadmill. Please post comment on her Facebook entry. **She may complete her 140 mile challenge this week with some encouragement.**

Please pledge your support by emailing Bev at [office@stmatts.org.uk](mailto: office@stmatts.org.uk). giving a note of your A 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

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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

BIRTHDAY CONGRATULATIONS to **Abbie Crichton** who was 13 on 14th June.

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CONGRATULATIONS to Liz Barratt who has entered the Liberal Democrats Community Champions Hall of Fame for her work to help the vulnerable and carers at this time, including organising over 30 volunteers (many from St Matthew's) to deliver 1400 button bands to NHS staff and careworkers.



THANK YOU to our sewers- **Jean Young, Carolyn Byers, Sheena Beange, Janet Martin and Lorna Morrison** and to the several others who together made 1400 button bands, and also to **Tom Morrison** for cutting fabric and **Sheena Clark** for donating materials and making scrubs bags.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Sheena Clark wishes to thank her friends from St. Matthews for the kind messages and good wishes on her 85th Birthday. Sheena has also sent us a photo of some of the hearts she knitted for the NHS during lockdown.



She sent 100 hearts to Ninewells for patients who died with out having any relatives with them , 50 to a Home in Blairgowrie and another 50 to the Abbeyfield Home in Perth. What a fantastic effort, Sheena!

All contributions welcome to

[FMBruce6@googlemail.com](mailto: FMBruce6@googlemail.com)