



# St. Matthew's Church Perth

## e- Newsletter No. 21

### Fri 14<sup>th</sup> August

Dear all

As we know, prayer is an essential element in our Christian life and our Moderator, Rt Rev Dr W Martin Fair has designated this coming week **17-22 August**, as a **Week of Prayer**.

At 8am each morning a pre-recorded reflection will go live on the Church of Scotland website and on Facebook. These will include contemplative music, Scripture readings, a brief 'thought for the day', a prayer and blessing and a prayer activity which should be suitable for all ages.

In the evenings, there will be a 'live' gathering on Zoom which will commence at 8.30pm. The prayers from each evening will also be watchable on catch-up through the Church's digital platforms.

The evening gatherings will include the following:

- Prayers led by designated individuals, these including leaders from our ecumenical partners, Church of Scotland youth workers, ministers and staff members.
- Breakout rooms, during which participants will have a short time to reflect on the Scripture passage that was shared during the morning reflection, to pray together, and to 'compare notes' from around the congregations and communities represented.
- Reflective music and time to simply be still; there will be opportunity for individuals to bring prayer requests and causes for prayerful concern and thanksgiving.

The link for participating in the evening gatherings is as follows:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8568913+++?pwd=>

Meeting ID: 856 8913 ++++

Passcode: ++++

People who cannot connect to Zoom will be able to phone in:

Dial 0131 460 1196

Type the Meeting ID followed by #

Press # for Participant ID

Type Passcode when prompted (2020) followed by #

As the Moderator says:

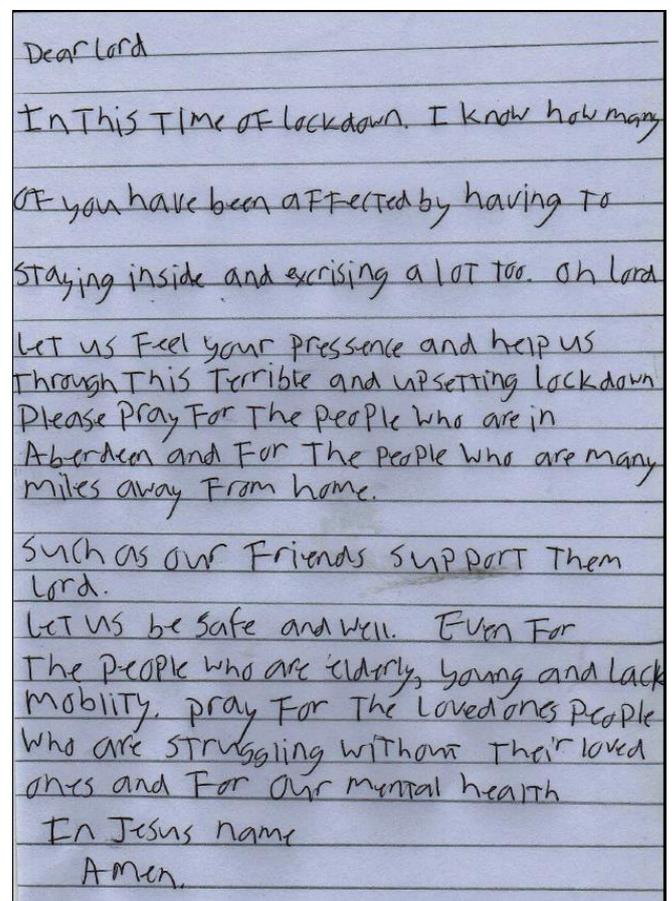
"What the week is really about, is creating space for the Church to come together from all 'airts and pairts,' to still ourselves and to listen for what the Spirit might be saying to us in these days (Revelation 3:22)."

I hope you will feel able to join some, if not all, of these morning reflections or evening gatherings.

Fiona Bruce, Session Clerk

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

A prayer from Andrew.



### **COFFEE AND CHAT on Zoom**

On Mondays at 11am – 11.45am

Meeting ID: 844 4336 9464

No password this week

### **MEDITATIONS on Zoom**

On Wednesdays at 9am

Meeting ID: 895 1638 1268

No Password this week

## **Seasonal Clippings about the Garden From Nicola McNe**

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.



### **Seed Collecting**

Often gardeners are known for their thrifty habits and I'm no exception! Saving seed from one year to the next is a really easy and satisfying job. Many flowers will have seed heads forming on them just now and these can be collected and saved to be sown next Spring. A few of my favourites are Nasturtiums, Calendula (Scotch Marigold), Foxgloves and Poppies.

Collect ripe seed on a dry day, as soon as the seedheads (e.g. capsules or pods) ripen. This is often indicated by a colour change from green to brown or black, but must be before they open and spread their contents around the garden.

Pick the seedheads, either singly or on stalks, and lay them out to dry on a greenhouse bench, warm windowsill or in an airing cupboard. This enables seed to be more easily extracted from pods, cones or capsules. If they don't open when they are dry then gently crush pods and capsules to release the seeds. Poppies form a pepper pot shape and the seeds easily drop out. Make sure they are over a saucer to catch them. Nasturtium seeds can be picked off easily, they look like a group of 3 wrinkled green peas. They fall apart when you pick them. Calendula seed is easy to handle too as it comes off the plants almost as a flower head and then the c shaped seeds fall off

separately. Foxglove seeds are tiny and there are millions of them contained in each capsule along the flower stem.

Don't forget to label the seeds!

Some plants have exploding seedheads, these will need checking every few days. Place a bag over them and shake – this will usually cause the ripe seedheads to explode into the bag. Alternatively, remove the seedheads on their stems as they turn brown and place in a labelled paper bag.

With any saved seed, clean off any surrounding material (chaff) attached to them, as this material could rot and lead to the seed damping off. Store the dry seeds in an airtight container in a cool dry place or in the fridge and it will be ready to sow next Spring.

### **Flowers and Plants Quiz**

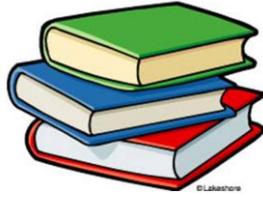
Congratulations to **Janet Martin** who had the most correct answers. Well done as this required dedicated reading of various books of the Bible!

The answers are as below:

1. Genesis – Apples, Almonds and Grapes
2. Proverbs – Aloe
3. Judges – Brambles and Olives
4. Exodus – Coriander and Dill
5. Song of Solomon – Crocus, Pistachio, Pomegranate, Saffron and Tulips
6. Isaiah – Cucumber
7. Joel – Figs
8. Numbers – Garlic and Leeks
9. Samuel – Lentils
10. Kings – Lily
11. Matthew – Palm and Mint
12. Psalms – Poplar Trees
13. Job - Willow

## WHAT ARE YOU READING?

**Raymond Young**, a member of our Meditations Group tells us about **"Protestants-the radicals that made the modern world"** by Alec Ryrie and I, in turn, have presented this book to Craig Dobney as a gift from St Matthew's congregation in the hope that he, too, will gain inspiration from it!



What are you reading just now, asked Fiona? Says I (without thinking) - Protestants - the radicals that made the modern world by Alec Ryrie. And before I knew it, I was asked and - because Fiona is one of these people to whom it's difficult to say 'no' - I had agreed to write about it.

I grew up in Glasgow where you were either a Catholic or a Protestant. The story goes that a Muslim child going to school for the first time was asked 'but are you a Catholic or a Protestant Muslim?' I am clearly in the Protestant camp. Brought up in Church of Scotland (and now deeply involved with its structures). Know about Martin Luther (or so I thought). Know about Calvin and John Knox (again, so I thought). About Henry VIII breaking away from the Pope to marry another wife. And a little more about the Mayflower and the Puritans. And missionaries in Africa. And is there something about China? And what about these large churches in South Korea - could these be Protestants! After all they're not Catholics.....

This book has been an eyeopener. It's not a short read. Over 500 pages (it's also on Kindle). It has been written by an academic from Durham University. But don't let that put you off - it is an easy read - flows almost like a novel - and is difficult to put down.

It starts with a quarrel - the stubborn monk Martin Luther in 1517 - and traces the growth over the years to where there now a billion Protestants across the globe. The book is less a history of religion and more the story of people who made and are remaking what is still a quarrelsome group of people of faith (we Scots are far from alone in fighting and schisms). And in that journey, we meet Protestants who, fired by what Martin Luther regarded as a 'love affair' with God, were inspired by their newly accessible bibles and their own interpretation of those bibles. Not only did they change their inner lives but that change spilled over into social upheavals and political revolutions.

Protestants have played decisive roles on both sides of the great ideological battles of modern times. They have been for and against slavery, liberalism, imperialism, communism, apartheid Nazism, feminism and most other isms. They've demanded alarming freedoms and created experimental new forms of government. No wonder the book's subtitle is 'the Radicals that changed the world'.

The variety of biblical interpretations has created an exceedingly wide range of Luther's children. The author argues that Protestants are best treated as a family - a sprawling, diverse and extremely quarrelsome one, but tied together by more than accidents of birth. In every continent. From Adventists, through Deists, Millerites, Philippists, to Unitarians. Yes, we Presbyterians are in the book, as well as Mormons whose religion was hugely influenced by Protestantism. Currently the fastest growing group are Pentecostals. Time to introduce one quote (as much to show the style of writing) "Pentecostalism unique selling point is that it values the personal and the private over the political and the public. This comparison with its historic rival, Marxism, is instructive. Marxism calls the poor to struggles for a future revolution that is defined by public events.....dismisses religion as the 'opium of the people' capable of luring working people away from their own true interests. On this view, Pentecostalism is the crack cocaine of the people, a fiendishly strong drug that herds the poor into conformity with the right-wing forces that exploit them" Apologies to any Pentecostals in Perth.

So, what of the future? Ryrie sees further varieties of Protestantism developing, with groups on sides of the big issues of today - Black Lives Matter, the role of women in the church, sexuality, politics. For those of us in an old established church like the Church of Scotland the author predicts a continuing decline. The future he says, 'will likely be newly built rather than a revival of historical denominational establishments.' And we need to look around to see the growth of independent churches in our country to realise how his predications might be true.

This book will enlighten, entertain and challenge, and some parts will make you worried. There are very dark moments like slavery and support for Hitler. There are clashes of culture. There are parts of the family that have sprung up and have disappeared. But underpinning it all remains that old love affair with God that Luther espoused and let out of the bottle like a genie - a direct encounter with God and his (or her) power. Where will God lead us next?



## Thanks

**Hazel and Archie McLean** would like to thank their friends at St Matthew's for all the cards and kind wishes on the occasion of their **Golden Wedding**.

**A wave to Lilian and David Donaldson** from all their friends at St. Matthew's

## THE UNEXPECTED

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

*This week one of our more illustrious members, award-winning actress and singer **LESLEY MACKIE**, tells us where life has led her:*

When I started my drama school training back in 1969 I could never have imagined that what I was essentially training for was a part time job! It's a well documented fact that approximately 85% of actors are out of work at any given time so it's not as glamorous a profession as some might think and my advice to any young aspiring actress is to marry someone in a secure job - a plumber would be ideal!

When I won an Olivier Award back in 1986, I hoped it might be a passport to all sorts of exciting work, but as I collected my award I was already six months pregnant and by the time I was ready to get back into the swing of things I had been unable to grab the moment – and people in our business can have very short memories.

Nothing daunted, I survived in the business for a long time, working with all sorts of people in theatre, television – and even in a couple of films including a tiny role in the cult film *The Wicker Man*. Having

moved back up to Scotland in 1993, I continued working in the theatre and when unemployed, got involved in a variety of jobs including taking drama classes in local primary schools.

Another ongoing feature since 1996 has been recording audio books for a company down in Whitley Bay – fairly accessible from Perth -- and I have enjoyed these immensely, recording over 180 books over the past 25 years. Sadly that company closed in March, bringing an era to an end, or so it seems at the moment. Of course, Covid has brought everything to a standstill for so many people in every area of life.

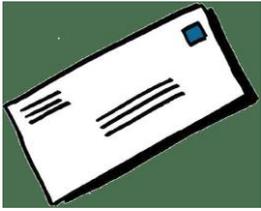
However, I was already exploring pastures new and was re-visiting an idea I'd harboured for a few years; that of becoming a Funeral Celebrant. Three years ago an old friend of my father's asked if I would be willing to organise and conduct his funeral and he wanted to plan it with me. This was the start of a fascinating journey. We both enjoyed the process, and shared many conversations in order to put the eulogy, music and service together. I did a lot of research, and having completed the preparation, I put everything on hold.

Of course, the old gentleman was still alive, and seemed to have a new lease of life – and partly because of the funeral planning. I couldn't decide whether to forge out on my own or wait until I conducted his funeral, should I outlive him! He departed towards the end of 2019 and I realised that I was, indeed, going to be conducting his funeral. It was a revelation for me and I found it such a rewarding experience that I decided to try and continue.

I have conducted seven funerals so far – all very different, and what I enjoy about it is spending time with a family, helping them to cope with the loss of a loved one by creating a service to reflect, celebrate and capture the essence of the person and tell the story of the life that has been lived. Of course, it is almost as difficult an area to get into as acting, as Funeral Directors all have particular Celebrants that they employ. However, I do hope to do more, once this lock down has eased and funerals and memorials, once again, take on a more people-friendly atmosphere. Life can take many unexpected twists and turns.

## READERS LETTERS

(the Newsletter has crossed borders to our Dunning friends too!)



“Hoping all well with everyone at St Mathew’s. As I opened my e-mail from Jean (Young) and read Newsletter no. 19, I

couldn’t quite believe it. Really? 19? Surely not...!

I’ve been privileged to have been sent these newsletters throughout the current lockdown from Jean, and look forward to reading them. An incredible amount of work goes into producing it and I, like others I’m sure, appreciate it more than you know. Not only do I enjoy reading them and catching up with all the news from St. Mathew’s, but I enjoy being a small part of a Church family that obviously cares so much about its congregation – the weekly meditations, the coffee mornings, the on-line communion that I enjoyed so much, the prayers, the interesting articles, the birthday and anniversary wishes – I could go on.

I also took great delight in sending congratulations to Craig Dobney. I watch and listen to him conducting worship with Rev Allan Wilson every Sunday morning on Facebook Live from Dunbarney and Forgandenny church. They’re quite the double act. Wonderful news for him and Donna.

With good wishes to you all.  
Allan Kelman”

### ***Pitlochry Theatre Outing from Marie Nicoll***

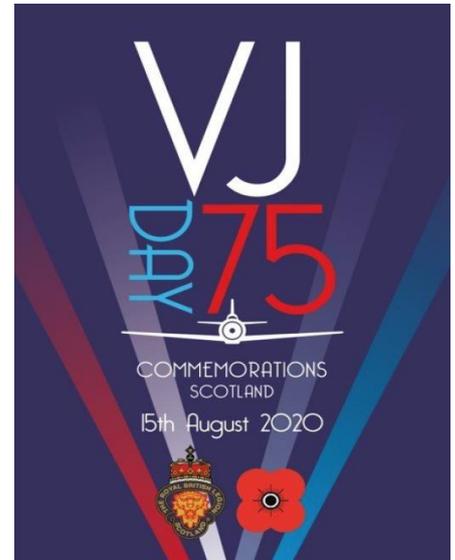
Those who want their money back can telephone myself or Roy and we will arrange this, either by bank transfer or collection.

I did not think that Church would be shut down for all this time and was going to speak to people on my return to the Church, but at the moment that seems quite a bit away.

Please get in touch on 01738 565195 or Roy's mobile which is 07710788611 and we will arrange for money to be refunded. Either that or E Mail myself on [m.nicoll265@gmail.com](mailto:m.nicoll265@gmail.com). Keep safe and we hope to meet everyone in the not too distant future.

## VJ Day

The 15th August 2020 marks 75 years since Imperial Japan surrendered in World War II, in effect, finally bringing the war to an end. Legion Scotland, in partnership with Poppyscotland and the Scottish Government, plan to mark the important milestone with a virtual service of remembrance followed by a virtual tribute concert online.



A virtual service of remembrance will be broadcast live from the [Legion Scotland Facebook page](#) on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August. The service will be conducted by Legion Scotland Padre Rev Dr Karen Campbell and will include a two minute silence at 1100. The service will then be followed at 12 noon with a virtual tribute concert.

Dave Dykes , a former Perth Academy teacher who has worked with Janet Martin and me on our 1WW memorial events, has let me know about 4 former Peth Academy pupils who were part of the "Forgotten Army" who lost their lives in the Far East. They were **Captain Douglas M Bell** who died on 28/10/43 in what is now Myanmar, **Sub-Lieutenant Robert H Campbell** died 15/2/42 (son of the late Robert Campbell of Sneddon, Campbell & Munro Solicitors, also chair of St Johnstone FC and former President of the SFA), **Signalman Alexander I Robertson** who died on 29/11/44 at the bridge on the River Kwai and **Lieutenant David R Robertson** who died in 5/3/43 in Singapore.

To Contribute please contact me on [FMBruce6@googlemail.com](mailto:FMBruce6@googlemail.com)