



St. Matthew's Church

Perth

e- Newsletter No. 25

Fri 11th September

Dear all

In this week's Wednesday Meditation, Jean Young considered the Parable of the Sower in Matthew ch 13 vs 1-9 which tells us of the crops which grow in the good ground.

However, weeds often thrive on poorer ground and she asked the question: Are weeds not also part of God's creation? The old gardener might say that if the garden was left to God it would be full of weeds, but another definition of a weed is "a plant that is growing in the wrong place." The Meditation she read out was by Jan Sutch Pickard, a former Warden of Iona Abbey, entitled "dandelions and thistles" and extols the way these colourful plants hang in and multiply!

Harvest Prayer

Lord,
we are often confused – are we good seeds in good soil? Are we the weeds that destroy? Are we the organic fertiliser or are we the chemicals that will do good for our own group but pollute your world when we have taken the goodness we need from it?

Forgive us when we sprout in the wrong way or hinder others from growing. Forgive us when we strangle fragile young shoots. Help us to be the strong productive plants that you would have us be.

We pray for all those who are struggling to grow in to strong shoots. Those who are surrounded by the thistles of life. Those who are finding this pandemic so very difficult because they are lonely or afraid – those who wonder whether this month will bring the redundancy notice – those who wonder how they will feed their family – those who are afraid to come out because they feel vulnerable with physical or mental health issues- those whose crops and livelihood have failed. Those who have lost a loved one and been unable to grieve properly with family and friends.

We pray for all those whose harvest has been good this year – who have found time and space to wonder at your creation – who have not had to spend many hours in traffic jams – who have had time to appreciate their family and friends. Help all to share the good times; to share their good crops; to love those they see as weeds or a nuisance.

Be with us when we stray to the roadside ground, who feel tempted by the quick harvest, who want to feel that we are in control.

Show us your way, your good soil and help us to become part of your good harvest for your world.
Amen

Re-opening of St Matthew's Church

Psalm 122: "I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!"

I am absolutely delighted to announce that we gathered together on Sunday 6th Sept at 11am for the first time in over 6 months. Our first service was led jointly by our Locums, Rev Barbara Quigley and Rev Anne Brennan.

Due to government and church guidelines, and in order to keep everyone safe, things will be very different from how we have done 'church' in the past. We could wait longer until the regulations ease but the Kirk Session felt that coming together, in what we decided to call 'Catch up Sunday,' was the right thing to do.

Each week there will be 35 spaces available for online booking 2-weekly ahead on "Eventbrite". This is the link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/stmatthews-church-tay-street-perth-church-service-tickets-119178926377>

If you are not on the internet, or the internet spaces are full, you can also make a telephone booking. Full details of who to phone will be given in the Friday Newsletters and today it is Carolyn Byers on 01738 553835 or 07759218623 and thereafter it will be Janet Martin on 01738 625074 or 07747 423557

COFFEE AND CHAT on Zoom

On Mondays at 11am – 11.45am

Meeting ID: 891 2068 7211

In booking a space you have agreed that the church can hold your details for purposes of “Track and Trace”. Kirk Sessions are required to keep a list of contact details of all who have attended worship for a minimum 21 days.

Appropriate physical distancing and sanitising facilities will always be in place. Before each service the Sanctuary is cleaned by our professional cleaners. We are all required to wear face coverings and unfortunately singing will not be part of the service at the moment (although I am delighted to say that music will be provided by our Organist, Michael Ellacott.)

This is very much a “learning curve “ for us all and I am grateful to all who have given us feedback. In order to keep everyone safe some things will have to be different but we hope still to provide a welcoming space for worship at St Matthew’s and I look forward to seeing you there.

Fiona Bruce, Session Clerk

VACANCY UPDATE

Just an update for everyone on where we are with our Vacancy:

Prior to the COVID-19 lockdown, the Kirk Session approved in principle the Presbytery’s plan for St. Matthew's to call a minister on the Basis of a FIVE year Reviewable Charge on the condition that we fully engage in reviewing the ministry and mission needs of the church across the city.

Presbytery approved this decision at its meeting in March 2020. All that was left to do was for the congregation to discuss and agree it. Sadly, the strict regulations surrounding COVID-19 stopped this from happening as our Annual Stated Meeting, which was to be held on Sunday 22nd March, had to be cancelled when we went into “lockdown”. These are exceptional circumstances.

MEDITATIONS on Zoom

On Wednesdays at 9am

Meeting ID: 811 6178 3954

Unfortunately, while so many things can be agreed online these days, church law does not permit a Basis of Reviewable Charge to be discussed and agreed other than holding a congregational meeting with everyone present. This means that we find ourselves bound by the legislation with no easy fix and are unable to proceed until this draft basis is agreed. The Principal Clerk is calling a virtual General Assembly on 2nd and 3rd October with the possibility of amending the legislation and I hope this can be done so that we can move forwards. It is frustrating that both the Kirk Session and Presbytery have approved the alteration, but the legislation of the church does not yet permit the congregation to do so at this stage.

I have recently received a letter from Rev Allan Wilson, Convenor of the Presbytery Planning and Development Committee advising us that

“I want you to know that Presbytery has not forgotten about your situation and that the Planning and Development Committee is keen to address these difficulties as soon as it can. I hope this process will commence once again very soon after the virtual General Assembly.”

As you can understand, this is all very frustrating for St Matthew’s Kirk Session and congregation and let’s hope that, come October, we can progress more speedily towards bringing our Vacancy to a satisfactory conclusion!



Guild News

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness can never extinguish it

John Ch 1 : v 5

This is Guild Week 2020, which started with the Virtual Annual Gathering last Saturday, an experiment which was very successful, with a talk from the Moderator, Reflections on the past year from the retiring Convener Marian Macintyre, passing over of the official badge to the new Convener Mabel Wallace and news of forward planning from Guild office. This was interspersed with hymn singing from previous Gatherings, which was really good since we are not allowed to sing hymns together in these restricted times. Communion was shared virtually, conducted by Rev Tom Macintyre, husband of the retiring National Convener.

Our Theme for 2020-21 is **The Extra Mile**, which will challenge us all to think what this means in our lives. Our particular project in the Perth St Matthew's branch along with many other Guild branches, is **the Free to Live Trust** which was set up by two Tayside ladies who were visiting the Pune district of India and staying with the World Association of Girl Guides in Pune. They were taken to see work being done under the name Seema's Project, which aims to help support abandoned street children and build a rehabilitation centre for rescued victims of human sex trafficking. Their first goal was completed in 2016 when a children's centre was built to house 32 children, and provide them with an education. Free to Live Trust aims, with the help of the Guild, to double the number of children cared for, to start a lunch programme for children of the red-light district, and to provide skills training for the teenagers when they leave school.

We have provisionally arranged for a speaker from the Free to Live Trust to visit our Guild in February of next year to tell us of the progress achieved, and it would be good if by that time we could do some fund-raising for the Trust. And therein lies the challenge. How to fund-raise in these times when our usual coffee mornings and concerts, are not possible?



As a starting point could I suggest a **Thanksgiving jar** ? Each time you sit down to a meal, or have a coffee out with a friend, put a coin in your jar to give thanks for what we have, and it will be surprising how these coins add up.

When we eventually meet again as a Guild we will be able to add all this together, and see how going this Extra Mile can help the children in Pune, and shine a little light on the darker places in this world.

Lorna Morrison

Guild President

MANSE UPDATE

I am pleased to report that the Manse sale was duly completed on Tuesday 8th September. Our thanks to all who cleaned and gardened and sold furniture and readied it for sale and those who showed round prospective purchasers.

Now we start the search for a new Manse- which, in terms of Church of Scotland regulations, requires to have 4 bedrooms and 3 public rooms- harking back to family size and Ministerial duties in days gone past I fear!

Fiona Bruce, Session Clerk

St Matthew's Walking Group



Please note that the walk planned for Saturday 26th September is now unlikely to take place due to the change in government guidelines regarding numbers.

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

St Matthew's Benevolent Fund

The recent pandemic and lockdown has affected people in different ways, some very negatively, where livelihoods have been put on hold, and income has diminished or stopped while bills continue to come in. Please be aware that St Matthew's has a Benevolent Fund which can offer help in such circumstances. To find out more, please contact Alastair Byers (alastair.byers1@btinternet.com, tel. 01738 553835 - or write to him c/o St Matthew's Church, Tay Street, Perth PH1 5LQ). All approaches will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

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.



Choosing and Buying Bulbs

At this time of year garden centres are well stocked up with lots of different varieties of bulbs so there's plenty choice out there. If you choose carefully you can have a display of bulbs from January right through till June. Tulips and daffodils are probably the most popular choices especially with the colour range in tulips. Start the display early though with Snowdrops and Winter Aconites, then follow it with Crocus, dwarf Iris and Daffodils. By April you could be enjoying Hyacinths and Muscari (Grape Hyacinths) before the Tulips start to burst in to colour too. Alliums and Lilies will take you in to the Summer months.

The most important things to remember when choosing is that the bulbs feel firm and healthy, generally the bigger the better as the bulb already contains the flower. Be generous when choosing quantities as there is nothing worse than a few wee puny bulbs striving for life. Bold displays look the best and generally I like to put up to 10 of one type of the smaller bulbs in each hole eg. Snowdrops. This will provide a good clump. Make sure the bulbs are not all sitting on top of each other and sprinkle some fish, blood and bone fertilizer in as you plant. Also make sure the bulb is the right way up! This might seem obvious but often you have to look carefully to see which is the top (it's usually more pointed plus there are small roots at the base). However, if you are trying to naturalise bulbs in the lawn then scatter them naturally and plant them singly where they fall. Over the years they will bulk up.

The next consideration is to think about is how tall your flowers are going to grow as it's a common mistake for people to plant lots of bulbs but to then

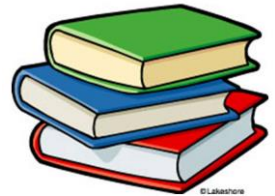
discover that you've got small flowers at the back of your border and tall ones at the front so always check the instructions on the packets.

Dig a hole at least twice the depth of the bulb and ensure the bulbs sit at the bottom of the hole. If bulbs are planted too shallowly it can affect their flowering ability plus they can get pushed out of the soil by frost. I don't normally water bulbs in unless the soil is really dry. There is usually enough rain throughout the Autumn!

If the bulbs start to grow and then we then get a particularly cold snap, the bulbs will simply stop growing until conditions improve.

WHAT ARE YOU READING?

Joan Lackie, a member of St Matthew's Book Group, writes about



The Garden of Lost and Found by **Harriet Evans**.

The Garden of Lost and Found is about a painting by Sir Edward Horner, a grand old house and a family with many secrets. The book covers a number of generations and their families.

The book begins in the late 19th century and continues through the years to the 2010s. Liddy found her artist husband, Sir Edward Horner, in Nightingale House burning his painting just before he died.

Many years later their granddaughter was sent the key to Nightingale House and after her marriage breakup chose to uproot herself and her children to the country to stay there. The children have to deal with belonging to a disjointed family, while their mother looks on. Their father has moved on with his life and this makes the children feel uncomfortable.

This is a book that you can get so engrossed in. A tale of the enduring power of family love told by three generations of extraordinary women - and with a final twist at the end!

The Grasp of Your Hand



*Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers
But to be fearless in facing them.
Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain,
But for the heart to conquer it.
Let me not crave in anxious fear to be saved,
But hope for the patience to win my freedom.
Grant me that I may not be a coward,
feeling your mercy in my success alone;
but let me find the grasp of your hand in my failure.*

Rabindranath Tagore

Biblical Anagrams

See if you can unscramble the letters below to find the names of people, books or places mentioned in the Bible. Janet Martin will post the answers in the next Newsletter!



No looms _____
Ransom _____
Evil is cut _____
Ill head _____
Wander _____
A shoe _____
As mule _____
A jeer him _____
Hog tail _____
Negate mesh _____
As martian _____
Chariots inn _____
Last again _____
Amen he hi _____
Neonatal mist _____
Beach razzed nun _____

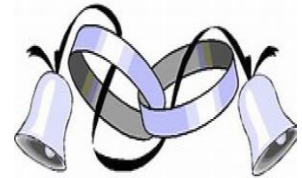


"Wave and Prayer" to Betty Bridgeford"

Congratulations

Congratulations to Rev Julie Jensen (now Rev Julie Higbee), Associate Pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Fernandina Beach, who was married to James Higbee last Sunday.

Sending our best wishes to Tom and Molly Gorham who celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary at the beginning of September



Church Keys

New locks are being fitted in the next week. Please return any keys you have for the old locks as the locks with their keys are to be sold. New keys will be distributed to those who need access regularly out with office hours.

Mark Crichton, Property Convenor

Christian Aid



As we approach the harvest season we are asked to remember those whom Christian Aid supports in other countries. Members are asked to consider making an e offering. For more information contact hello@christian-aid.org

Important notice

After 25 consecutive weeks this newsletter is changing from weekly to each alternate week. Newsletter No. 26 will be published on 25th September 2020

To Contribute please contact me on FMBruce6@googlemail.com