



St. Matthew's Church Perth

e- Newsletter No. 28

Fri 23rd October

Harvest or What?

A Harvest Thanksgiving meditation by Rev Barbara Quigley based on favourite harvest hymns:

*We plough the fields and scatter
the good seed on the land
but it is fed and watered
by God's almighty hand;
he sends the snow in winter,
the warmth to swell the grain,
the breezes and the sunshine
and soft refreshing rain.*

Well, not us. Not for some time either. We do not get our hands dirty, preferring instead to buy pre-packaged, pre-washed, pre-prepared everything, from sliced white bread to ready chopped carrots. Never mind that our choices are flown half way across the world.

We like quality. And, on occasion, we will even pay for it. Harvest is something we're prepared to leave to others. The physical harvest is someone else's worry. If the weather's bad or if crops fail we will simply shop elsewhere, move on, pay more. We certainly won't starve. We've not been that close to the land for a long time now. It's nothing new.

To reflect modern life and contemporary culture perhaps our harvest celebration needs to be revamped, needs to reflect our experience: of work and toil, of sweat and tears.

Isn't harvest about celebrating our gifts and our skills, all that God has given us to make life good? Isn't it about *giving thanks* for the comparative luxury we know, and that we protect at all costs. It is so far removed from work on the land so can we not find another way to celebrate?

We plough the fields and scatter? Not us, not any more.

*All good gifts around us
are sent from heaven above;
then thank the lord, O thank the Lord
for all his love*

Oh yes. It is good to give thanks once a year. Thanks for all those little luxuries. Thanks for God's blessings. Once a year, it is good to give thanks.

*For the Lord our God shall come
and shall bring his harvest home*

Now that is sounding a different note. God harvesting people. But we won't worry too much about that. We are simply here to give our thanks for now. We don't need to worry about the future harvest. We will just celebrate the present. And leave the future to God. That is part of harvest too, isn't it? That *God takes care of the future.*

*Come, ye thankful people, come,
raise the song of harvest home
For the fruits of all creation
thanks be to God*

We will celebrate all that we can see around us. We will congratulate ourselves on being so well off that we can sing heartily the words:

*In our worldwide task of caring
God's will is done
In the harvest we are sharing
God's will is done*

Yet, to make our words ring true today we have to see beyond our beautiful colourful displays of fruit to the responsibility



that God places on each of us to make the kind of harvest *we celebrate alive with meaning for the world,* alive with meaning for those who will sleep rough tonight, alive with meaning for those who will go to bed hungry, alive with meaning for the poor all around us, and, yes, alive with meaning in Iraq and Afghanistan, in Sumatra and Zimbabwe, in all the places where God's children are to be found.

May we and they know that our world is not as God intended, that in creation there is more than enough to go around if we could only share. And so, in our plenty, it is not that we should waste time on feeling guilty but that we should turn God's goodness to us into a call to *serve the world through our sharing.* Our God, who stretched out the heavens and created everything in wisdom, relies on us to care and gives us what we need to do just that and so we will take our fruit this morning:

symbol of all the goodness of God, and we will give thanks, we will share from our place of plenty, we will give thanks to the God of the harvest and we will share God's food for God's world.

COFFEE AND CHAT on Zoom

On Mondays at 11am – 11.45am

Meeting ID: 583 638 8728

MEDITATIONS on Zoom

On Wednesdays at 9am

Meeting ID: 583 638 8728

Communion on Sunday 25th Oct. at 11am

Rev. Anne Brennan will lead a short service of Holy Communion on Sunday 25th October at 11am. Given



the exceptional times we are currently living in, the service will be different from the usual format as we are obliged to limit movement and reduce any risk of spreading the virus.

Seating will as usual be in a semi-circle and remain physically distanced and small tables will be placed within reach of a small number of seats. The (non-alcoholic) wine and (gluten-free) bread will be on each table on a "self-service" basis. These arrangements will ensure you can relax and enjoy the service in safety and comfort.

Capacity remains at 50. Seats should be reserved through Eventbrite using this link

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/stmatthews-church-tay-street-perth-church-service-tickets-119178926377>

or phone Bev, our Facilities and Outreach Manager, on 01738 259961

Communion Retiring Offering is in aid of:

The Olive Grove Chapel, Bethlehem

The General Assembly in May 2019, instructed the World Mission Council "to assist the Tent of Nations in creating a sacred space for worship amongst the threatened olive groves just outside Bethlehem and invite other agencies and congregations to help and identify with this project". Work is now underway, and as a sign of commitment to justice and peace in the land of Christ's birth - as well as a mark of support for the Palestinian Christian community - as many congregations as possible are invited to become involved with the establishment of this special sanctuary.

Funds raised will be used to develop the Chapel and surrounding area by planting olive trees, grape vines, and other fruiting trees, as well as providing irrigation systems and other infrastructure and ongoing work.

Please give generously.

A Prayer for Peace

God of compassion, who came into our world in the frailty of human form, breathe your hope and grace over the troubled landscape of Israel and Palestine.

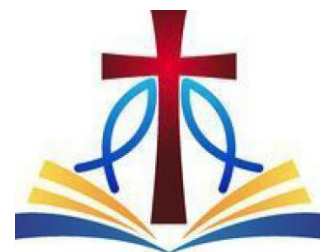
You came into our world to heal and restore, and you keep coming again and again, bringing the promise of renewal and hope. Help us to hear your voice calling us back to your heart of love. Open our eyes, that we may see your world and each other as you see us. Make all of us who live in the Holy Land hungry and thirsty for justice. Help us to see the other as made in your image.

Break down the walls of fear and separation, and plant seeds of hope and rebirth in the places of despair; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.



It is with sadness that we intimate the death last month after many years of illness of one of our church family, **Raymond Adam**, husband of **Moira**



We send a Wave and a Prayer to welcome back **Alison Sweeney** following her recent operation.

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 Whole lot of Mulch

It's about time to start the big Autumn tidy up in the garden but, don't be too tidy. If you can leave a few hollow stems, seed heads, piles of logs and fallen fruit around the garden all the wildlife will be very grateful. A great way of feeding the soil and helping with the Autumn tidy is to apply a thick layer of mulch to areas of bare soil or around plants that have died back for the season.

There are 2 types of mulch, biodegradable and non-biodegradable. Non-biodegradable mulch tends to include things like slate, gravel or pebbles which are laid as a permanent covering over a landscape fabric. Both types will suppress weeds and help to retain moisture in the soil but the biodegradable mulch has the advantage of helping to feed the soil and improve its structure as it breaks down. It can also protect vulnerable plants and roots from the worst of the cold temperatures in the winter. Some of the most common examples are, homemade garden compost, bark, leaf mould, grass clippings, well-rotted manure or seaweed (assuming you can obtain a ready supply).

The mulch is basically a loose layer of material laid on the soil surface. Ideally it should be at least 5cm deep. It's very important though not to lay the mulch over the top of plants and right up the stems as this can lead to rotting. I find it easiest to spread it around with a rake and then do the final adjustments near the plants by hand. Always wear gloves though as some materials aren't good for your skin. Don't put mulch on to frozen soil as this can stop it from defrosting all winter. Once you have spread the mulch it will suppress weeds and retain moisture in the soil.

There's nothing more satisfying than a nice, neat, weed free bed with its crumbly layer of mulch laid for the Winter. That is until all the falling leaves start to drop all over it!

LIFE AND WORK 2021

Our Life and Work Co-ordinator, Lorna Gray, has received word from 121 that the Church of Scotland is now offering a *special promotion* to anyone switching from purchasing their magazine via the church to placing a personal order to be sent to their chosen address at a cost of £30pa (= 2 free issues) on completion of a direct debit.

If you wish to do this, please contact Lorna Gray on 01738627075 by *6 November* and she will let you have the direct debit for completion.

Otherwise, please contact Lorna Gray by 6 November only if you do NOT wish to continue with your Life and Work subscription in 2021 (at a cost of £36pa).

CHRISTIAN AID SERVICE OF REFLECTION



Christian Aid are warmly welcoming everyone to join a Service of Reflection on **Wednesday 4 November at 5:30pm**, which will be held entirely online and can be accessed either through Facebook or YouTube or the Christian Aid website.

"This special service of reflection is a time to come together in our grief, in what has been a difficult year and to remember as well as celebrate those we love, who are no longer here. It is also a chance for those experiencing a more general sense of loss to carve out time to acknowledge and reflect upon these feelings."

The service will be introduced by Amanda Mukwashi, CA Chief Executive, and include a sermon from Dr Rowan Williams. It will give time and space for personal reflection, and there will be a moment in the service to light a candle at home.

In addition, if you would like to see the name of your loved one on the screen during a moment of reflection within the service, we can arrange that. Just email legacyteam@christian-aid.org.

The service of reflection is open to all; please do pass on to anyone who might be interested.

BLYTHSWOOD SHOEBOX APPEAL

We have been contacted by Karen Todd from Perth Baptist Church regarding this:

“We are looking for **volunteers** to help us during the sort from **16th November to 19th November** at **Perth Baptist Church**.

We will have three shifts per day : 9:30-11:30, 13:00-15:00 and 18:30-20:30 on Monday to Wednesday and the morning only shift on the Thursday. You will note the shift times are 2 hours with gaps in between- this is to minimise the time anyone spends indoors and the gaps are to allow us to clean all working areas and shared spaces between shifts.

Individuals can bring their own drink and snack should they wish to. We are unable to have children in the workspace this year.

Anyone who wishes to volunteer can contact me, Karen Todd, on blythswoodperth@btinternet.com letting me know their availability for the shifts.

We will also require volunteers to assist with the cleaning in between shifts so again if anyone wishes to volunteer just let me know.



We are encouraging people to give a **monetary gift** this year as this will allow us to make up bags and boxes in a very controlled environment.

A **Virgin Money Giving** page has been created to allow us to do this online, the link is:

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-display/showROFundraiserPage?userUrl=PerthBlythswood&pageUrl=1>

We do understand that many enjoy filling a shoe box and we will be happy to receive these at Perth Baptist Church, **Friday 6th November** at 10am - 12noon, 2pm – 4pm and 6pm – 7pm. and **Saturday 7th** 10am – 12noon and 2pm – 4pm.

We have also been advised that Shoeboxes can be delivered before 6th November to Beggs Shoeshop, in Scott Street.

Again if anyone wishes to donate fillers, for example, hats, scarves, gloves, underwear, soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, or sweets, these can be dropped off at Perth Baptist Church on the **6th and 7th November** too. If anyone has already purchased fillers it would be useful if they could let me know what and how many items they have to my email address too. This will help us in our planning of what we need to purchase.”

At St Matthew’s we understand that some housebound or isolating people may have difficulty delivering their boxes to Perth Baptist Church and, if this is the case, please contact Marjorie Clark on **01738 637017** and she will make arrangements to do so.

MAIN HALL HEATING AND LIGHTING

I am delighted to report that we now have a new modern, efficient heating and lighting system in our main hall thanks to a generous legacy from the late Patricia Lowry and courtesy of **Mark Crichton , Abbie and Malcolm Thom** who all voluntarily carried out this extensive work.

Thanks to them for their hard work over several weeks. We look



forward to feeling the benefit of their efforts when we return to use our hall.

**Traidcraft –
an ethical
way to
celebrate Christmas**



Although the Traidcraft stall is not currently operating, Traidcraft is very much alive and well, with lots of suggestions for Christmas gifts, cards, advent calendars, food, etc. These can all be found by visiting their website www.traidcraftshop.co.uk, and ordering online.

Postage is free on all orders over £50; however, if you wish to avoid paying postage on orders under £50, we can order for you by collating more than one order. Just contact me, Marjorie Clark at Marjorie.clark@btinternet.com, or phone 01738 637017 – with the details of what you want to buy (including the reference number of the item); once we have orders totalling more than £50, we will submit it, and make arrangements to get your items to you. Orders usually are processed in under a week.

Let’s make this an ethical Christmas – please do consider supporting Traidcraft.

CROSSREACH CALENDARS

One of our great supporters, Mary Wright, has contacted me regarding Crossreach calendars. As I'm sure you will be aware, Crossreach carries out "social" work in a huge variety of ways on behalf of the Church of Scotland and, like many charities, is suffering through a reduction in its funds at the moment.

In order to support Crossreach at this difficult time Mary has ordered 30 Crossreach calendars. The calendars are high quality and great value at £5.00.



Please let me know if you would like to order a Calendar and I can either bring them to church on a Sunday or Mary will deliver them to your house.

Fiona Bruce 01738 628154 or FMBruce6@googlemail.com



The Beavers, Cubs and Scouts have continued to meet outside and have also enjoyed a day trip to the Scouts Activity Centre at Fordell Firs where they enjoyed climbing and cooking activities.

Now that the evenings are drawing in and getting cooler we are delighted to have permission from the Scouts Association and Church of Scotland to come indoors.

We are being allowed to do this as youth work is being aligned with education by the Scottish Government. As such they have developed guidance with Youthlink which is then filtered down to the relevant youth organisations. To resume indoor activities we have had to develop a new Risk Assessment that meets these requirements and have it checked and approved by the Perth & Kinross Scouts District. This has been done in consultation with a team from St Matthew's and their Kirk Session. It includes social distancing, hand hygiene and cleaning measures and we are limited to 30 people at meetings.

This pandemic has obviously had an impact on our young people and I am thankful that we are able to support them through these challenging times. It will lovely to be home at St Matts again.

Sarah Ruse
Group Scout Leader
22nd Perthshire (St Matthew's) Scouts

CHRISTIAN AID COLLECTION



Wow! I just wanted to give everyone an update on the Collection for the Christian Aid Harvest Appeal at our Harvest Thanksgiving service. I'm delighted to report that the sum of £285.36 was raised which is higher than our usual total and this has been remitted to CA.

Thanks to everyone who gave generously!

Macmillan Coffee Morning

Many thanks also to the members and friends who contributed to this event making a fantastic total of £325.



Thanks also to Lorna and Tom Morrison for organising the successful coffee morning and quiz.



Street Pastors

seek to be available to show and share the transforming love of Jesus and never more



is this required than in these difficult times. We really value prayer, and welcome folk to come as observers e.g. to see if they could manage an evening shift (shorter than the 5-6 hour night shift.)

We also welcome anyone to join a *training session* on **Wed 4 November** on sharing the Good News. To arrange either contact ggloudos@aol.com asap.

The folk whom Street Pastors meet are the same shop assistants, professionals, tradesmen that all Christians meet 24/7. Church buildings may be closed or in restricted use, but the focus needs to be on Jesus! Lives with the radiant love and certain hope of Jesus embedded in them attract people to consider Jesus. "Be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in you with sensitivity" This is the glorious privilege and responsibility of all Christians.



The **walking group** will meet on Saturday 7th November for a walk based in Luncarty and lead by **Marjorie Clark**. Full detail in the next Newsletter.

A prayer from Andrew



Dear God
In this time of lockdown,
it's sad but we are all safe
and well. Oh please Lord help
us now in this time that
we need you. When we don't
know what we should be
doing anymore. We know that
we need to support each other
as we all need this help.
Please reassure us when we
go about our every day
life and remind us of
our faith in you God.
In Jesus name
Amen.

To Contribute please contact me on
FMBruce6@googlemail.com