



St. Matthew's Church Perth

e- Newsletter No. 34

Fri 22nd January

Dear All

On Wednesday, Marjorie Clark in her Meditations talked about Blue Monday, as Monday of this week has become known— it is supposed to be the most depressing day of the year, since it is far enough after Christmas for all the excitement to have dissipated, but also far enough away from the next pay cheque at the end of the month.

Marjorie then went on to talk about hope, and in particular Christian hope. She cited two verses from Paul's letters – the first, that well known verse in 1st Corinthians, where we are told that *Faith, Hope and Love remain – (and the greatest of these is love.)* But also in Romans ch 13.v13, Paul says *“And may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace, by your faith in him, until y the power of the Holy Spirit, you overflow with hope.”*

What do we mean when we talk of Christian hope? It is more than 'wishful thinking'.

She emphasised that rather, Christian hope begins with what is – facing reality – but it also sees what can be. It is not blind to obstacles, taking them seriously and looking for practical ways to address them. Hope is active, flowing from the activity of the Spirit within us; Hope is an expression of God who is enduringly creative and resourceful. Hope moves us into God's vision for ourselves, our church and our neighbourhood. And Hope can be seen as cooperation with the Spirit. It expresses a willingness to work in partnership with God as, in our lives and our work we seek to understand what the Spirit is doing and to cooperate with this work.

Hope involves waiting – we wait actively, working and searching, for life is in our hands. It is the one who seeks who finds, the one who asks who receives, and the one who knocks who finds the door opened. And yet we also wait passively, - for the right time to

come, for growth to take its course, and to receive by gift what cannot be ours alone.

Previously Jean Young shared with us a passage from Jim Wallis of the Sojourner movement which talks about hope and is very appropriate for our circumstances in 2021:

Hope means more than just hanging on. *It is the conscious decision to see the world in a different way than most others see it. To hope is to look through the eyes of faith to a future not determined by the oppressive circumstances of the present. To hope is to know that the present reality will not have the last word. It is to know, despite the pretensions and cruelties of idolatrous authorities, that God rules. It is God who will have the last word. We need more than resistance; we need hope and a positive vision of where we are going. We begin to live out new possibilities in our daily living.*

Prayer

In all our uncertainty
We come to you, Lord, for you are constant.
In the midst of uncertainty your love is sure.
In the darkness of disappointment, you never fail.
In heartbreak and anguish your loving arms enfold us.

We see your constancy and love not only in our lives
But in the world around us.
As year succeeds to year,
As day follows night,
As the seasons change,
From the new life of spring,
To summer's rosy glow,
Then autumn's harvest hew
To winter's sleepy rest.



Lord, we long for the world to awaken
Not only from winter's rest
But also from the shutdown we have endured
For so many months.

As we wait expectantly for the brighter days of spring,
And for the world to live again
So we turn to you.
Continue to walk with us through these dark days,
Assure us of your light which
No darkness can ever overcome
And of your love
By which we are constantly surrounded.
Amen.

From Life and Work

COFFEE AND CHAT on Zoom

On Mondays at 11am – 11.45am

Meeting ID: 930 1458 2081

MEDITATIONS on Zoom

On Wednesdays at 9am

Meeting ID: 977 1495 2443

Sunday Worship on Zoom

On Sunday 10th January we tried out having a Sunday Service using the Church's Zoom. 60 members joined in that day. On the 17th we had 63 members attending including 4 using their telephone line.

Whilst we are NOT permitted to have worship within the building it is intended to continue with this form of service each Sunday.

Date for your Diary - On Sunday 14th February

we will be having a **Communion Service**, more detail to follow in the next newsletter.

Here are the joining instructions for all Zoom Sundays:

If you have Zoom already it is a straight forward to enter the ID and Passcode. If you are not already connected to Zoom you simply need to click on the full link you will see below, follow the instructions on screen and that will take you into the Service.

Meeting ID: 953 7532 1288

Passcode: 058724

<https://zoom.us/j/95375321288?pwd=Z0ZQckF2dEVpcmNUTWtPdmZxeUhhGQT09>

Even though you can't go online you can still listen to this service on your phone by dialling this number and following the process:

For those who wish to use the telephone link.

Dial : 0131 460 1196

And enter the following when requested:

Meeting ID: 953 7532 1288

Passcode: 058724

For those connecting on the telephone please let the others know who you are as your name does not appear on screen. Simply say your name to introduce yourself.

Looking forward to seeing you on Sundays.
Tom Morrison, Stewardship Convenor

VACANCY- an update

There were no questions in relation to the first document sent out.

We therefore now proceed to the vote. You will shortly receive a Voting Slip which please return to the name and address given (Rev Allan Wilson) by Wednesday 10th February.

Once these are received it is hoped we can then proceed to the next stage in this long-winded process and Kirk Session can meet with the Presbytery Advisory Committee appointed by Presbytery to assist us.

Fiona Bruce, Session Clerk

SNOWDROPS

Marjorie also mentioned that she eagerly awaits the emergence of snowdrops (also known as Candlemas Daisies as they are often the only flowers flowering at Candlemas, at the beginning of February). Her heart rejoices at these delicate flowers, with their green heart, and their promise of life regenerating, and warmth eventually returning. Similarly, as Christians, we hold on to the hope of new life, of change, or regeneration, through Him who lived and died, and rose again to new life, and who has promised to be with us wherever life or the Holy Spirit leads us.

Invocation for Lent

Into a dark world
A snowdrop comes
A blessing of hope and peace
Carrying within it a green heart
Symbol of God's renewing love
Come to inhabit our darkness
Lord Christ,
For dark and light are alike to you.



May nature's white candles of hope
Remind us of your birth
And lighten our journey
Through Lent and beyond.

From "The Pattern of our Days" © Kathy Galloway

NOTICES

A Date for your Diary!

COMMUNION- this will be held on **Sunday 14th February** either in the church or by Zoom.

HELLO to all her friends at St Matthew's from **Chrissie Cramond** who is now resident in a Care Home in Blairgowrie.

HARBOUR COUNSELLING SERVICE

Harbour Counselling Service is an independent Scottish charity with a Christian ethos, offering free counselling to people in Perth and the surrounding area- a vital service particularly in these times. They are currently looking for some new Board members.

Please view their website, www.harbourperth.org.uk and if these voluntary service roles are of interest, email their Chair, alan@harbourperth.org.uk or call him on 07713182800 for an informal discussion in the first instance.

JAMBOUREE CABARET SINGERS

These well-known local singers are hosting a virtual Burns Supper this Sunday 24th January at 7pm and all are invited!

The link to tune in is:

www.jambouree.co.uk/burnsnight.

Andrew's prayer

Dear lord Jesus

I know at this time of lockdown is a full devastating Lockdown ever. At least we still have each other and to know that we're going to get past this I hope and keep on hoping Because Jesus we need your help and guidance for our friends, Churches, communities and our economy too. We need each other and to support each other too. We're together and nothing is going to take this from us. And to keep our organisations and churches going as well as possible otherwise these people will have nothing and we will have nothing. So in this Jesus name I say please help us.

Amen

SITCOMS QUIZ



Do you know your sitcoms? I'll ask 12 questions in total in the next 3 Newsletters and then ask you to let me have your answers – and the phrase made by the first letter of each answer- at “the end”.

There will be a draw of correct answers – and a prize!

5. Affirmative Boris
6. I'm staying in
7. Get more than just the basics
8. I don't know what became of the smart Alecs



Thank you letter from CATH

I would like to thank you on behalf of the CATH Management

Committee, staff and those we continue to support for your Church's incredibly generous donation of £500. We will be able to put this donation to great use throughout our projects.

Your Church's continued support of CATH means a great deal to us and we'd like to wish you and your congregation all the best for 2021.

Yours sincerely

D Somers, Finance Assistant.

MARY'S MEALS

This is a charity which impacts the lives of more than 43,000 children living in Bong County, Liberia and which the Guild and St Matthew's have supported in the past.

I thought people would be interested to know that as part of the “Double The Love” appeal, until 31 January 2021, public donations made to their appeal will be matched by the UK government, up to £2 million.

Fiona Bruce

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Unfortunately the incidence of domestic abuse is another casualty of our COVID restrictions and has risen throughout these “lockdown” months.



Ask for ANI (Action Needed Immediately) is a codeword scheme developed by the Home Office to provide a discreet way for victims of domestic abuse to signal that they need emergency help from the safety of their local pharmacy.

How does the scheme work?

Victims of domestic abuse will be able to use the codeword ANI in participating pharmacies (including all Boots stores and participating independent pharmacies) to let staff know that they require an emergency police response or help contacting a helpline or specialist support service.

**For further information VISIT:
GOV.UK/DOMESTIC-ABUSE**

WHAT ARE YOU READING?

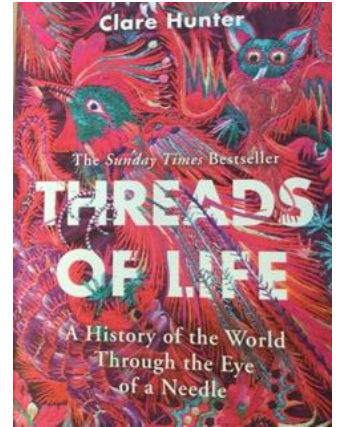
This week Maureen Pearson writes about “The Bible The Biography” by Karen Armstrong



This is a fascinating book which explains the many situations that occurred throughout the centuries. There were many influences at work within and without Israel and Judah. Neighbouring tribal gods were well known to the Jews. It becomes clear that religious beliefs have always changed over time. They have kept evolving and developing in both Old and New Testaments and continued to do so before and after the reformation, especially with the invention of the printing press which gave more people the opportunity to read the Bible for themselves.

Different interpretations were made and are still being made by scholars and theologians. This book teaches us so much about the history and heritage of our faith and is, I think, well worth reading.

Also this week Lorna Morrison writes about “Threads of Life” by Clare Hunter



If in lockdown you are looking for a good read, **Clare Hunter's** book **Threads of Life** will fascinate you. It takes the reader from the Bayeux Tapestry and 1066 and the Battle of Hastings, through the middle ages, and the stitching of church vestments, banners, suffragettes, Glasgow School of Art, Charles Rennie MacIntosh, First World War soldiers with PTSD, the Great Tapestry of Scotland, community projects as far apart as Australia and Leith in Scotland - history through the eye of a needle.

An interesting section tells of children at school in the 18th century learning to stitch and incorporate geography at the same time. They would be asked to stitch a map of the area they live in, then extend it out to the surrounding villages and towns, learning about the crops in the fields, and all that went on around them. Eventually a world globe was stitched. Sadly, none of these maps seem to have survived.

Community projects were a large part of Clare Hunter's life, she visited Australia and worked with a group of Aboriginal people, encouraging them to tell their story through stitching a banner. Through working together the women gradually relaxed and began to chat and even laugh as they worked, working through their life problems and difficulties. Back home in Scotland she found the same situation replicated when she worked with a group in Leith who felt their community was falling apart with re-development going on around them.

The book comes up to date with the stitching of the Great Tapestry of Scotland, 160 panels stitched by 1,000 people in Scotland during 1913. It will find its new home in Galashiels in the next year.

The Unexpected

*This is a column when different members of the congregation relate something unexpected about themselves. Today **Janet Martin** tells us about an exciting episode in her life:*

All the excitement of the Presidential inauguration in USA has rekindled memories of an unexpected opportunity that happened in my life when I found myself living in Washington DC at the time of the inauguration of President Ronald Reagan.



In 1980 I was offered the post of nanny to a British Diplomatic family who had a 4 -year posting to DC and had 2 young children. We landed in Washington to find deep snow and every single tree festooned with yellow ribbons. Although I was aware from the news that Iran was holding US citizens hostage, it all seemed so 'remote' until I found myself face to face with yellow ribbons each day.

The family settled in Maryland, about 7 miles outside DC and we soon found ourselves having to adjust to living an American lifestyle. For me, it was a huge culture shock and it sometimes felt like I was living on a film set. I not only had to get used to driving an automatic car (the size of a tank!), but also on the right-hand side of the road. A couple of weeks into my stay I found myself on the 'Beltway' which is the circular road round Washington, which has 6 lanes – a big adjustment from driving on a single-track road (with passing places) in Kinloch Rannoch not long before that!

Washington was an amazing city, full of politicians, Government employees, diplomats, World Bank staff, visiting foreign dignitaries and tourists. The family I worked for were obliged to host Government officials or foreign diplomats for meals and so one often wondered who was coming to dinner! One memorable evening I was whisked off, in full ball gown, to a ball at the Naval Academy in Annapolis. After a banquet I spent the evening dancing with handsome young naval officers all in uniform (complete with pristine white gloves!) who were instructed that no young lady should be left sitting on

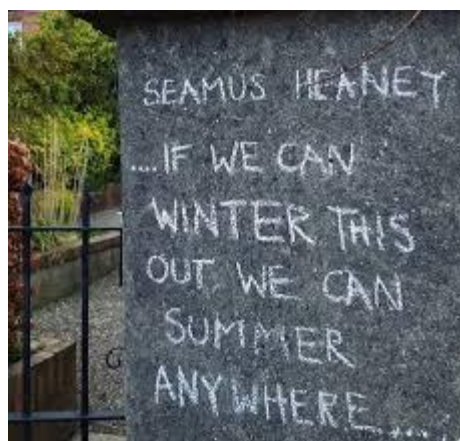
the side lines. I felt like a cross between Cinderella and Eliza Doolittle!

We also got the opportunity to attend unusual events. The most exciting one for the children was the annual Easter Egg roll held in the garden at the White House. The children hunted for Easter eggs, met the Easter bunny (a giant creature that leapt out from behind some bushes and scared me to bits!) and rolled eggs. The President and First Lady took a quick walk round the garden and spoke to a few children on the way. Although there were Security guards around, it seemed very informal and I can't imagine that it still happens today.

One of the things that I remember most clearly about Reagan's Inauguration parade that it was led by Roy Rogers and Trigger the horse! Changed days!

The other thing I can remember clearly about Reagan's inauguration was how Jimmy Carter handed over office to his successor. Ronald Reagan pointed out that the fact that the orderly transfer of authority happens as 'normal' in every US election is nothing less than a miracle.

What a marked difference from the Inauguration of the 46th President Joe Biden this week. It saddened me greatly to see the beautiful city of Washington DC under siege and surrounded by troops at a time when it should have been full of its citizens, cheering and waving flags and rejoicing in their democratic process. I am glad to have witnessed a handover that the forefathers of America would have wished and also experienced happier aspects of life in USA. I now, like everyone else pray for peace and reconciliation in the months and years ahead.

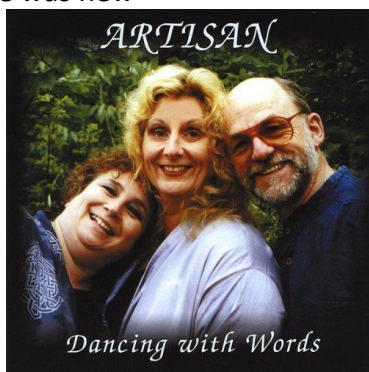


FAREWELL SONG

Each beginning marks an ending, see the sunrise
end the night
Just one step can start a journey, even shadows
need their light
There's no sadness in conclusion, every door was
made to close.
There's no start without a finish, after farewells
come hellos.

And when I think I'm passing time, it's really time
that's passing me
I'll make each moment last an hour there's no
lifetime guarantee
But I remember all those endings, each departure
that I've known
For all the memories I cling to, for all I have to call
my own.

Each beginning marks an ending, wave goodbye
and then hello
Leave the shelter of your shadow, reach for a
hand that first let go.
There's no sadness in conclusions, doors that
close will open too.
For every start must have its finish, every old
friend once was new

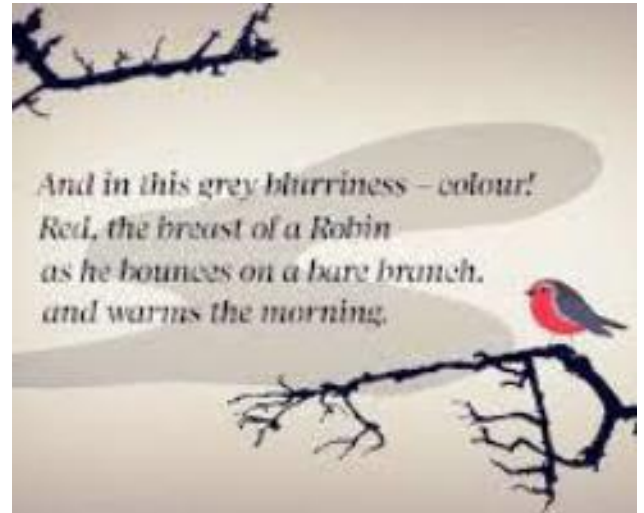


Each beginning marks an ending, see the sunrise
end the night
Just one step can start a journey, even shadows
need their light
There's no sadness in conclusion, every door was
made to close.
There's no start without a finish, after farewells
come hellos.

And as I leave to catch the next day don't know
where it's leading to
Tomorrow's just a new departure from an ending
it outgrew

And though the clock says it is over, for a moment
let me dwell
Before the morning whistle calls me, let me turn
and say farewell

By Artisan



St. Matthew's Walking Group

Sadly, due to the Covid Pandemic the walks have had to be suspended until further notice. However we encourage everyone to follow the rules and take appropriate exercise, making sure you are fit to return to the enjoyment of walking with the group.

The next edition of the Newsletter, No. 35 will be on **Friday 5th February 2021**. All contributions to FMBruce6@googlemail.com by Wednesday 3rd February 2021