

*“Warm, welcoming and safe
- I love our church!”*

- Andrew Davies

St Matthew's Church **PARISH PROFILE 2021**

FORWARD IN FAITH



We are an outgoing, caring and inclusive community of Christians in Perth city centre.

In 2016 we completed our 'Opening the past to the future' major refurbishment of our Sanctuary. This leap of faith has provided us with a self-sustaining building for worship and other activities.

Our vision was to open our church to make it fully accessible for all ages and abilities by providing an

- Open Door
- Open Table
- Open Font
- Open Heart

This has allowed us to welcome people of all faiths and none in our front door. In opening our hearts, we are now able to invite everyone to join us at the Lord's Table and in baptisms, weddings and funerals.

"a self sustaining building for worship and other activities"

As a Kirk Session it was agreed unanimously to depart from the Church of Scotland's Ministers and Deacons in Civil Partnerships and Same Sex Marriages Act (Act I 2015), and so we will welcome applications from, amongst others, individuals who are in a civil partnership or a same sex marriage.



OUR NEW MINISTER



We would like someone who will:

- Be an inspiring and inspired preacher-preaching a contemporary message and relevant to the social issues of the day
- Grow our church family to include people of all ages
- Embrace partnership working with other city centre churches (experience in this field would be an asset)
- Use leadership skills to work with and develop effective church teams
- Be enthusiastic in relation to working with groups within and outwith the church
- Help us to develop an effective pastoral care policy
- Be visionary- help us to continue building on our successes and move "Forward in Faith".
- Be proficient with social media and modern technology

It was a considerable leap of faith for our congregation to undertake the refurbishment of the Sanctuary, funded as it was by congregational donations and fundraising as well as various Trusts, allowing us to adopt our ongoing mission statement "Forward in Faith".

We now hope and pray for a minister who will continue to nurture our family of faith as well as our spirit of mission and outreach to the community.

Our Vision

We have identified the following priorities:

- To be an inclusive, affirming, accepting and welcoming church
- To be an active community hub through which we can share our faith
- To work together with the City Centre churches to preach the Gospel and to meet the needs of the people in Perth City centre
- To be willing to take risks and be radical in an ever-changing society
- To be pro-active in using our Christian faith to address the social issues of the day such as climate change, poverty, refugees, modern slavery and poor mental health.

St Matthew's congregation is committed to work constructively with the other Perth City Centre churches to discern the most effective model for church and mission in the area and how best to use our joint gifts and talents.

Along with nurturing our own faith, we want to share God's love and grace with our neighbours; maintaining and strengthening connections with local schools and organisations where we have established links. We are very much a local hub with a ministry of hosting a diverse group of people and activities.

"I believe that music is one of the essential "life-bloods" of St Matthew's Church. Without music there would be less colour or feeling during a service"

- Michael Ellacott, Organist



OUR STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES



The Perth Christmas Party (2019) - an event sadly missed in 2020

OUR STRENGTHS

- Friendly, welcoming congregation and generous with time and talents;
- Hard-working and committed members and office-bearers;
- Reasonably stable finances even throughout Pandemic;
- Excellent suite of buildings in good repair – Flexible Sanctuary, Group of Halls (well utilised by the community), Flat and modern Manse;
- Staff - Administrator / Facilities Manager in post plus caretaking team;
- Music – talented and inspirational organist in situ plus good organ and electric piano;
- State of the art Sound / AV system;
- Advantageous Location – on the banks of the River Tay with iconic Church Spire.

OUR CHALLENGES

- Ageing congregation and depleting roll;
- Few young people and families;
- Need to focus our Mission and Discipleship;
- Where we fit in the City centre going forward;
- Attracting new members;
- Society's attitude to Church in current times;
- The reality currently facing the whole of the Church of Scotland in terms of deployment of ministers.

"I like being part of St Matthew's because it is inclusive and encourages us to put our faith into action. The church is also a lovely modernised building where we aim to play our full part in the community"

- Marjorie Clark - Elder

CONGREGATIONAL, COMMUNITY AND CIVIC LIFE

Congregational life:

On Sunday mornings we meet for worship at 11a.m. We enjoy fellowship prior to the service in the café area, and afterwards in the church hall. There is a monthly shorter midweek service specifically for those who cannot sit through a whole service.

There is also a monthly prayer meeting, and, during the last week of Advent and Holy Week, weekly morning meditations are led by various members of the congregation. A Pastoral Care team works with the elders and minister to reach out to those in vulnerable, difficult or painful situations.

“daily morning meditations are led by various members of the congregation”

The Guild meets twice a month, and during the summer months there is a Knit and Stitch group. A singing group is led by our organist (“not a choir!” he says), and we have a Traidcraft team, as well as a Walking group, Country Dance Club and Badminton Club, all of which are open to anyone to join, whether they be members of the church or not.

We are a Fair Trade Church; we were an eco-congregation, but our ‘green group’ is not as active as it once was. However, our Gardening Team lovingly maintain our church garden, and are currently developing a memorial garden there.

Congregational social events include frequent fellowship lunches, Burns Suppers, quizzes, and Car Treasure hunts. Ecumenically, we are members of, and support events run by, Perth Action of Churches Together. We also support financially a wide number of charities, local (e.g. CATH and ESOL) and international (e.g. Christian Aid, Mary’s Meals). Members are actively involved with the local Foodbank, Starter Packs, and Perth Street Pastors.

Over the past few years, thanks to pulpit



exchanges, we have enjoyed a closer link with First Presbyterian Church, Fernandina Beach, in Florida.

Our congregation is currently looking forward to a year of celebrations (starting in November 2021) to mark the 150th anniversary of the dedication of our church building.

Community Life:

Our halls are extensively used during the week, both during the day and in the evenings. We maintain good relations with the uniformed youth organisations who meet weekly, and who contribute increasingly to special church services during the year. Various community

groups enjoy our facilities, and the refurbished sanctuary has been well used by the Inspiration Orchestra (who really appreciate our disabled facilities), the Rock Choir, local drama groups and other musical groups, as well as hosting Art and Photography exhibitions. We are increasingly used for conferences, for which catering can be provided, thanks to our dedicated team of volunteers. A successful venture has been our monthly lunch and a movie “Afternoon at the Movies”, which has attracted a significant audience to enjoy entertainment and fellowship.

The minister has also been part of the chaplaincy team at Perth Academy. During commemorations tied in to the centenary of the end of the First World War, we worked with their staff and pupils to host a moving exhibition about the people whose names appear on our war memorials and held a special commemorative concert.

Civic life:

Our building with its iconic spire sits by the River Tay, with the local Council buildings as our near neighbours. During the summer months we aim to have our doors open to welcome the visitors from many countries who come to explore our city. We also seize opportunities to tie in with Council-run events, such as the switching on of the Christmas lights, and offering hot chocolate after the annual fireworks display on November 5th.



THE CHALLENGES OF THE PANDEMIC AND BEYOND



We have continued to reach out to our Members and the wider community. During the first lockdown, the Session Clerk asked each Elder to communicate with several Members of the congregation and, for many, this much-appreciated contact is still continuing. From the start we have enjoyed meeting weekly on Zoom on a Monday for "Coffee and a Chat" and on a Wednesday when members of the Congregation have led us in "Meditations".

"A recent innovation has been the live-streaming of our services to those unable physically to attend our services"

At Christmas we were delighted to welcome back the Rev Ewen Gilchrist, a former Minister of St. Matthew's who led a series of daily Advent meditations in the church. Similarly we appreciated a series of evening weekly Lent Studies and morning Holy Week Meditations, again led by members of the congregation.

The Session Clerk and Convenor of the S&F Committee have produced a bi-monthly Newsletter which is e-mailed out to 238 e-mail addresses and hand-delivered to many others. This is an attempt to keep people informed, particularly with regard to church services, the Vacancy and what is happening on Zoom!

Through the auspices of the Newsletter we have also been able to ask people to volunteer their time and give money to assist a variety of charities and the NHS –and highlight the indispensable work being done in our community.

The voluntary Pastoral Care Committee have continued to visit elderly, sick and housebound Members where they can and send cards and flowers when they cannot.

During this pandemic, we have endeavoured to open St Matthew's as and when regulations have allowed and Kirk Session set up a "Risk Assessment" Committee to facilitate this. In addition, we were able to work with the uniformed organisations who use our halls so that they were able to meet up as soon as regulations permitted them.

A recent innovation has been the live-streaming of our services to those unable physically to attend our services

for whatever reason. Our services re- started on Easter Day when we returned to church with the maximum 50 people. As the Regulations allow, we are welcoming back increasing numbers of people.



PEOPLE, FACTS AND FIGURES



Congregational Roll

After a recent review of our Congregational Roll it currently stands at 368 Members with some people being transferred to our Supplementary Roll. Attendance at Sunday worship pre-Covid was roughly around 130 people.

Kirk Session

The Kirk Session, with 32 Elders, normally meets 6 times a year in full session and, briefly, 3 times before the Communion Service. There is a Session Clerk. The various Committees, including Safeguarding, report regularly to Kirk Session.

Staffing

St Matthew's employs a full-time Outreach and Facilities Manager, a part-time Organist and a part-time Caretaker, together with a cleaning company. All other functions, such as A/V, catering, pastoral care and property, are managed by teams of volunteers from the congregation.

Finance and Stewardship

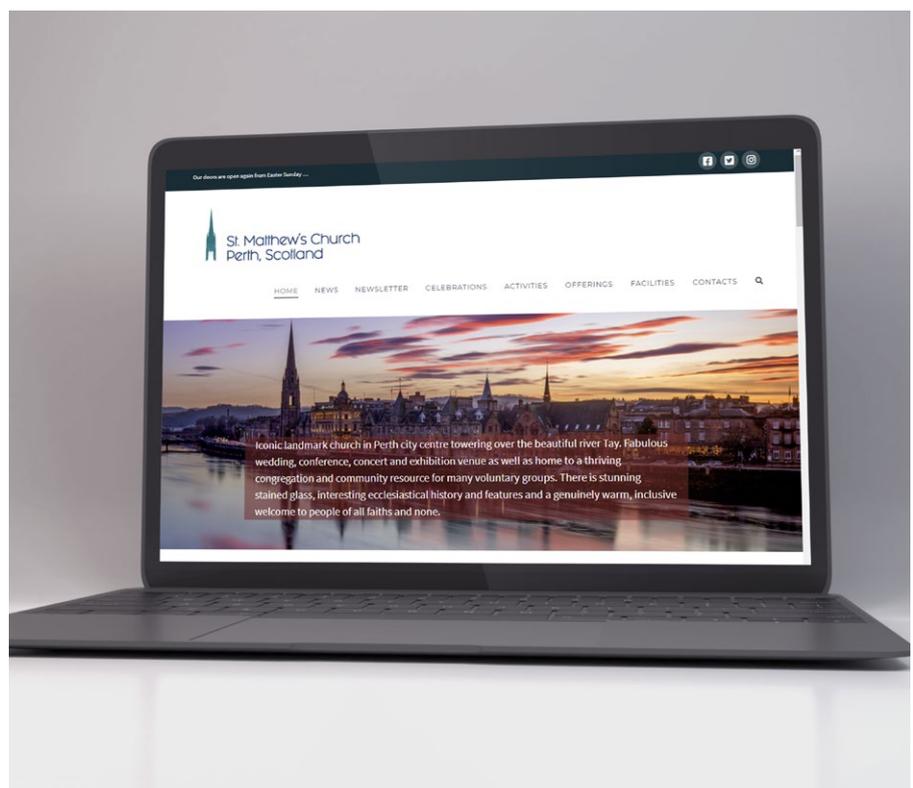
We have a Treasurer and a Stewardship & Finance team of volunteers. The congregation strives to be self-sustaining and we meet our Mission & Ministry contributions with our expansive hall

and Sanctuary lets programme and the let of our holiday flat, though we have had some budgeted deficits in recent years. Kirk Session took a decision to use our Reserves to contribute to the Refurbishment of our Sanctuary. Our Mission and Ministries contribution is £48,459 in 2021. The latest Annual Reports and Accounts are available on request.

Online Presence

We have a website:
www.perthstmatthews.org.uk

and also a Facebook group.
www.facebook.com/groups/22175229308





"When I first arrived in Perth around ten years ago, I started looking at various church websites to get a feel for what they offered. St Matthews immediately stood out as a church where you didn't need to 'fit in.' Inclusivity was in its DNA - it didn't matter what you wore, what questions or doubts you had, what church background you had or didn't have, you would be made welcome. Ten years on, nothing has changed except that now, the interior restoration of St Matthews offers an amazing space for all to come and be part of the church family."

- Ann Attridge, Elder

OUR PROPERTIES

We are a congregation which serves God and our community. We aspire to make St. Matthew's Church buildings accessible, welcoming, warm and inviting to all.

History

In 2021, we will be celebrating the 150th anniversary of the building now known as St Matthew's Church. It was built in 1871 by the congregation of the Free West Church, one of a number of local congregations which had left the Church of Scotland in the Disruption of 1843. (The landmark Church is 'B' listed and has the highest steeple in Perth (212 feet) which underwent extensive repair and maintenance in 2008-9.)

Reunited with the Church of Scotland in 1929, Perth West Church continued until 1965, when it joined together with another three local churches (Bridgend, Middle and Wilson); the West Church building was chosen as the place of worship, and the name of St Matthew's was adopted for the joint congregation. In the past, it was known as the Black Watch church, and some of their flags hang above the sanctuary.

In 1968, a new vestry, 2 committee rooms, a kitchen and toilet were built, and a large-scale redevelopment of all the halls took place in 1992 along with provision of a room in the tower especially for youngsters; this is now used as an Art room. The Sanctuary was totally refurbished in 2016. The Church is used for worship and other pastoral services, including weddings and funerals and also for concerts, exhibitions and talks.

There have been three ministries since 1965; we now look forward to this next stage in our life of service and worship.

The Manse



The welcoming modern home of the Minister and their family. During late 2020 a new manse was purchased in Craigieknowes Avenue, Perth. Schools within the catchment area of the manse are: Moncreiffe Primary; and Perth High. The property consists of the following accommodation:

- Lower Ground Floor – Lounge and Kitchen.
- Ground Floor – 4 Bedrooms, Bathroom, Shower Room, Study and Sitting Room.
- Outside – Good sized private Garden.

Our Suite of Halls

These buildings comprise the Main Hall and kitchen, the Mission Hall and kitchen, the Session Hall, The Vestry and the office which are served with admirable ladies and gents toilet facilities, all linked by an enclosed corridor to the rear of, and accessible from the sanctuary. The stage area in the main hall was redeveloped as a children's area in 2010. The suite of halls is used for smaller worship services, Church organisational activities and hire to the external community.

- Main Hall - Our Main Hall which is 46ft x 40ft can comfortably accommodate 200 people in a theatre style layout. The hall is already used by multiple organisations, ranging from Tai Chi, to Badminton players and Guides.



- Mission Hall – Our Mission Hall which is 36ft x 16ft can comfortably accommodate 40 people.



- Session Hall – Our Session Hall which is 22ft x 18ft can comfortably accommodate 20 people.



Church Flat



The Flat was developed in 2018 by our own volunteers and funded by our Benevolent Fund. The apartment is located above our Mission Hall and is accessed from the courtyard door up a spiral concrete stair with the accommodation on the first floor. The accommodation consists of:

- Two bedrooms: 1 x double with en-suite shower, basin and WC plus 1 x twin.
- Shower Room with shower, basin and WC.
- Open plan Living Room with Kitchen, Dining area and Sitting area.

The Flat has off-road parking at the front of the building plus a small quiet courtyard to the rear with lockable store for bicycles etc. Currently the Flat is let as a holiday property and provides additional income to the Church with a few weeks set aside to offer respite care for those requiring a holiday break.

The Sanctuary



Our beautiful Sanctuary (Early English Gothic in style) was totally refurbished in 2016. It can comfortably accommodate 240 people. The Sanctuary now provides flexible seating for a variety of purposes including different settings available for worship; Café area at the front of the Church together with a break-out area which is popular for small groups of people;

State of the Art Projector, Screen and Sound System which when not used for worship is available for concerts and large gatherings; moveable staging for varying purposes and events; and up-to-date heating and lighting.

Within the building there is the original 2 manual J W Walker of London Pipe Organ (1896) which was rebuilt in 1974 and has been regularly maintained since then. In addition, there is also a Clavinova electric piano.

The Church Garden



In September 2019 pupils and staff from Perth Academy, together with Leonie Paterson from the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh, dedicated our Church WW1 Memorial Garden commemorating, in particular, our member and professional gardener Alan Menzies who died in WW1. Outside the back entrance to the Sanctuary there is a small car parking area suitable for loading purposes and up to eight cars.



LIFE IN PERTH



Location:

The city of Perth sits on the banks of the River Tay in the heart of Scotland. It is the county town of Perth and Kinross with a population of approx. 50,000 people.

The city has a railway station and bus station, both providing good local and rural transport connections.

At a crossroads of the A9 and M90, Perth is 30 minutes from Dundee and just over 1 hour's drive to Edinburgh and Glasgow. Nestling in the surrounding beautiful countryside of Perth and Kinross there are many pretty towns and villages, lochs, mountains, national parks and other local attractions to visit.

History:

Historically, Perth was known as 'St John's Toun' after the town Kirk of St John's. The name now lives on in the local football team of St Johnstone. In 1559 John Knox preached in the Kirk, his impassioned sermon inciting the congregation to an uprising. Perth entered Scottish Reformation history when the local monasteries of Greyfriars and Blackfriars were then sacked. Perth is also affectionately named 'The Fair City,' after Sir Walter Scott's novel 'The Fair Maid of Perth'. Steeped in history, Perth once the ancient capital of Scotland is close to Scone - the place where the Kings of Scotland were traditionally crowned over the 'Stone of Destiny' at Scone Abbey. Perth has always been known as an

important place of commerce, with a harbour that still trades to this day with the low countries of Europe. Over the centuries, it has evolved into a vibrant city full of small enterprises alongside major employers such as the P & K Council, Aviva, SSE and Stagecoach transport.

Culture:

Perth is blessed with eclectic cultural opportunities. It boasts a theatre and a concert hall which hosts international orchestras, big bands and a cross section of well-known musicians, solo artistes, comedians and other celebrities. The city also has a library, museum, art galleries and some smaller venues offering local operatic and amateur dramatic productions. These locations cater to variety of entertainment to suit all tastes.

Regular events include the Perth Festival of the Arts, Perth Show and Highland Games. Parades for Armistice Day and the 'Kirking of the Council'. Special events at Christmas, Halloween, Chinese

New Year and the Kilt Run attract people in from rural areas and beyond. The refurbishment of the old city hall into a centrepiece attraction to house the returning 'Stone of Destiny' is eagerly awaited.



Shopping:

The city hosts 7 supermarkets, a retail park and an industrial park. There are a variety of small local businesses and has its own thriving café culture in the city centre with a good choice of restaurants, pubs and takeaways. Once a month a Farmers' market is held in town and other arts and craft markets take place throughout the year.

Leisure:

The vicinity of Perth has 4 tennis clubs, 4 bowling greens and 4 golf courses, one of which is uniquely situated on an island in the middle of the River Tay. Recreational facilities are plentiful with the North and South Inches and other smaller local parks within walking distance.

A sculpture trail, ancient burial grounds, woodland walks up the local Kinnoull and Moncrieffe hills, the Branklyn Gardens, a water activity centre at Willowgate, or a boat trip down the river Tay, offer alternative opportunities for outdoor leisure pursuits.

Indoor sporting facilities include a swimming pool, private gym club, ice-rink, Bell's indoor sports arena and many other venues such as church halls which accommodate dancing, exercise classes, badminton and other pursuits.

Educational facilities:

Perth has good provision of nursery and primary schools, including Fairview School for pupils with additional support needs and 5 secondary schools. There is one independent preparatory school in Perth and several Independent schools located within a half hour's drive of the city. Perth college, now part of the University of the Highlands and Islands, offers vocational and technical courses along with a range of degree and access programmes.



INVITATION TO APPLY



If you feel that God may be calling you to share your ministry with the people in St Matthew's Church, please feel free to contact the Interim Moderator, Rev Marc Bircham, for an informal chat - mbircham@churchofscotland.org.uk

HOW TO APPLY:

IN WRITING:

A letter of application should be submitted, accompanied by a CV. Applications, clearly marked "confidential", should be sent to the Clerk to:

Clerk to the
Nominating Committee,
St Matthew's Church,
Tay Street, Perth, PH1 5LQ.

BY EMAIL:

A letter of application should be submitted, accompanied by a CV. Applications should be sent to the Clerk to the Nominating Committee;

vacancy@perthstmatthews.org.uk

Interviews will be arranged with suitable candidates in due course.

The Kirk Session voted unanimously to "depart" from the Church's traditional position in respect of Ministers in civil partnerships or same-sex marriages. Applications from ministers in these relationships will therefore be considered.

Please note that Presbytery has granted us permission to call a minister on a Basis of Reviewable Charge as follows:

The Presbytery of Perth will form a Task Group that will review the current Presbytery Plan and consider the long-term ministry needs of the Presbytery in the city and requires the Minister, Kirk Session and congregation to engage in this process and the Presbytery shall review the appointment five years from the date of induction of the minister.

