



St. Matthew's Church

Perth

e- Newsletter No. 57

Fri 4th March 2022

Friends, as I write this from the vestry, the rain playing like a wee percussion section on the skylight, it represents an opportunity to stop and reflect. I love these moments in the day. Sometimes it is the sight of a rainbow that stops me in my tracks or the feel of a snowflake gently brushing against my cheek. When I work in the study at the Manse, our Border Collie, Freya, will often come in to support me by keeping my feet cosy. Every so often, she'll give me a nudge or her wee face will appear in my lap, a lovely reminder to get my head up from what I am doing. Calum and Ian are not quite so subtle!

In the course of our days, it is easy to get so caught up in details, tasks and lists that we forget to lift our heads to look at the big picture. It can therefore be easy to miss the moments when God shines through. In a tumultuous world, we need to look for the kindness offered to us and always look for the helpers. We each have a part to play to ensure that everyone has a sense of belonging and worth.

So here's my challenge to you this month – carry out a random act of kindness. Make someone's day by offering a kindness in whatever way you can. You might send a letter or card, or pay for someone's else's drink in a café. You could surprise someone by leaving flowers on their doorstep. I received an act of kindness from one of my favourite artists last week and I cannot express how much it meant to me. It made me so excited to display the seascape canvas on the wall of my study, as I can look to it for inspiration as I write.

I am writing this on Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. Some people will give something up for the period of Lent. Instead I choose to pay attention to the God-moments in my day and to share kindness. Instead of giving something up, I

am going to give something to myself and to others. As one of my ministry supervisors used to say, "serve God and love the people; love God and serve the people."

Every blessing on your Lenten journey.
Your Minister, Fiona

**A prayer for Ukraine
on**

Ash Wednesday

All-powerful God

In our powerlessness

We switch off the lights

And sit in solidarity with our siblings

In Ukraine and Russia

We pray protection for our friends,

Love for our enemies,

**And Peace- That peace which passes all
understanding,**

-to abide in hearts and minds.

**That a passionate, prophetic peace
would permeate political stalemates,
halt this invasion,**

And disarm the threat of nuclear war.

**In this day of dust and ashes
we bring all our fears and hopes
into the thickening darkness,
knowing that there,**

You are found

Amen





DIARY

Sunday: Live streamed Worship from 10.45

ID 953 7532 1288 Pass code 058724

Wednesday Meditation at 9am

ID: 818 8897 1376 Passcode: 905980

The above can be accessed using the telephone by dialling : 0131 460 1196 And enter ID, and Pass Code where required, above when requested.

To Unmute yourself press *6

Quick link for Sunday Worship

<https://zoom.us/j/95375321288?pwd=Z0ZQckF2dEVpcmNUTWtPdmZxeUhGQT09>

Quick link for Meditations

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81888971376?pwd=UkYxcHo5SVV2Ky9JN0swc3JleitLZz09>

In **addition** , all church services are now also being steamed on YouTube. To access YouTube service simply open You Tube and search “ st matthews church perth “ and select the service you would like

COVID omicron

Guidance from the **Church of Scotland** suggests that all the present precautions should be kept in place with the addition of recommending that those attending should take a **Lateral Flow Test**.

Church Givings

Have your Gas and Electricity Bill escalated in the past few months? I expect the answer to that is YES. Unfortunately, the church electricity and gas bills have also escalated which has a detrimental effect on the church funds.

There are no immediate plans to have another Stewardship initiative but perhaps in light of the increases we are all facing you may want to consider when you last increased your church offering and make an increase sooner rather than later.

Account Name: St. Matthew's Church

Sort Code: 83-47-00

Account Number: 00760133

Tom Morrison, Stewardship Convenor

TAYSIDE BIG BAND

St Matthew's was delighted to play host last Sunday evening to Tayside Big Band as part of their 150th Anniversary Celebrations.

A packed church of about 120 people enjoyed a wide variety of music and vocals. It was indeed a 5- star performance and we hope to welcome Tayside Big Band back later in the year.



TRAIDCRAFT
Fighting poverty through trade

Traidcraft are back in business at St. Matthew's. On Sunday last Marjorie introduced us to the new stock on the Traidcraft table, now located in the Sanctuary. Stock has started coming in and we are up and running again ready for Fair Trade Fortnight (February 21st – 6th March.)

We are proud to be a Fair Trade Church, and are committed to continue our support for farmers and producers overseas by paying realistic prices for their produce. Thank you for your support in the past, and we hope to welcome you again to our Traidcraft stall to try out our new stock..

The future of the Church in Perth Presbytery

On Saturday 11th February the Rev Allan Wilson, Convenor of the Planning and Development Committee of Perth Presbytery presented his Interim Report on the Presbytery Mission Plan.

Following some years of unsuccessful attempts to adjust the numbers of ministers in presbyteries the Faith Nurture Forum with the Approval of the General Assembly instructed Presbyteries to reduce the numbers of ministers by 2025. In doing so presbyteries were advised of the permissible number of ministers allocated. For Perth Presbytery this meant a reduction from 26 Full Time Equivalent ministers to 16.5 FTE. A reduction of 37%.

The Planning and Development Committee spent approximately 600 hours in discussion, investigation and examination of the Charges. Charges were requested to return a questionnaire, referred to as a Toolkit. This toolkit supplied to the committee not only statistical information of numbers and finance but information on the health of the congregation, its outreach, its mission.

These Toolkits were the core of our discussions together with substantial local knowledge.

During the time of preparation of the report the committee have had to maintain a very high level of confidentiality, as not only were we working on assessing places where members have worshipped for many years, but we were discussing the future employment of ministers. This has been very stressful for the Committee who only now are able to talk about the report with family, friends and colleagues.

The presentation of the report can be viewed on line using the following link.

<https://vimeo.com/676667727/e66afb33e6>

A copy of the report is attached to the email that came with this newsletter. Should you need a printed copy of the report please contact Beverly at the church office 01738 636757.

You will note this is an Interim Report. We now move into an 8 week consultation period during which Kirk Sessions are asked to look closely at the plan and think positively and prayerfully about how it can be implemented in their congregation and Network of Congregations. During this period of time the Planning & Development Committee seek to discuss the Plan with Kirk Sessions before setting out to finalise the report.

The Report will not only have to be approved at Presbytery but will be looked at by representatives of the Faith Nurture Forum.

In parallel with this there is also an instruction from the General Trustees that a survey of all properties is done and reported on. A Property Toolkit has been prepared for this and will be coming our way shortly.

Tom Morrison, Presbytery Elder and Member of Presbytery P&D Committee.



DEATH

It is with sadness that we note the death on 23rd February 2022 of one of our oldest Members, **Margaret (known as Daisy) Stratton.** Her funeral is private and we send our prayers and condolences to her family.

Retiral Collection This took place following Communion on 20th February and the sum of £275.52 was raised for one of the Guild's Projects- **"Starchild", Uganda.**

Kirk Session

This will take place in the Mission Hall on **Wednesday 16th March** at 7.30pm.

What does this Interim Report on the Presbytery Mission Plan mean for St Matthew's Church?

As Tom said, every congregation across the Presbytery will be affected by the proposals. In terms of ministry allocation, St Matthew's Church will retain 1.0 full time equivalent – currently me. However, this will include increased responsibilities in pastoral care and mission.

We are being encouraged to work more closely with our neighbours, which can only be a good thing for the city centre and for us. We will work closely with the pastoral team at St John's, learning from each other, as we seek to provide pastoral care across the two parishes. This may result in an increase in the number of bereaved families I'll work alongside to prepare funerals but it may also represent an opportunity for others within our congregations to train for such a worthwhile and treasured ministry.

St John's, the North Church and St Matthew's will work together to maintain and develop our city centre mission, enabling us to share our resources, our vision and our passion. We have different identities and might even have different ways of doing things but we can use these to reach out to more people together. We will explore ways of working ecumenically too (that is to say, we'll work with other religious communities locally where possible).

This is an important time of change in the life of the Church of Scotland. Through it all, I encourage you to pray. Please pray for all those who have given their time and their energy into putting together the interim report. Please pray for all congregations across the Presbytery as we now discuss how to take change forward. Please pray for our friends and neighbours across the Presbytery who are hurting and angry about difficult decisions. Please pray that we will have our eyes fixed on Jesus and our hands ready to serve those in need, as part of the Church of

Scotland, regardless of our particular congregations or parishes.

Please read the report and watch Allan Wilson's presentation, if you can. These decisions are being made in a context of necessity. For too long as a church we have put off making difficult decisions, hoping for a brighter day. I still believe that a brighter day will come but the time to act is now so that we ensure that the Church of Scotland is a church for the future. It will take all of us together so Elders, members, adherents, anyone who claims St Matthew's or St John's as their church or other places throughout the Presbytery – let's talk and listen to each other, our concerns and our dreams, our hurts and our hopes. We're going to make space in one or two of our services to have these conversations and someone might have suggested doing this over lunch at some point – we are all about the food at St Matthew's, after all! Don't let this stop you chatting to each other now. As a Kirk Session, we are committed to listening to your thoughts and keeping you informed about developments so talk to us too.

This is your church, our church, and the future of the church depends on us, just as it did the first disciples who reached out beyond their comfort zones, but always guided by their Lord, Jesus. May we know his guiding hand in these next steps on our journey.

Fiona Bullock



DR ELSIE INGLIS- advance notice!

At the moment we are working on bringing some Speakers to our church to talk about Dr Elsie Inglis. Hopefully, some of you will know her work as a remarkable pioneering doctor who didn't "Sit Still". When she volunteered to work as a doctor in WW1 this was how the War Office responded to her!

A skilled physician and surgeon, much revered and praised by her patients, she overcame considerable opposition to women doctors and other barriers throughout her life. She raised huge amounts of money for the Scottish Women's Hospitals and is more widely commemorated in Serbia (where she worked instead in WW1) than in Scotland..



An amazing statistic is that there are more statues to animals in Edinburgh than to women so there is a campaign at the moment to raise funds to erect a statue in her honour.

Various events are happening in March – see www.elsieinglis.org and we would like to hold some in our church as well later in the year. Watch this space!

In the meantime, if you have an interest in her or information to share please contact me on FMBruce6@googlemail.com

Thanks

Fiona Bruce

Meditation by Allan Kelman, a member of our Wednesday Meditation Group

The Rs of Worship and Recycling...!

Psalm 24:1-10

If you think back a few years maybe you can remember what it was like to throw cans, and plastic, and cardboard cereal boxes into the normal rubbish bin. Remember when we used to do that...

We've come to the realisation that if we want to be better stewards of the creation, if we want to make difference in our world, we can start by taking cans,

plastic and cardboard and recycling them. Recycling has become a normal part of life for us now, it feels wrong to throw a can or a newspaper in the green bin, instead of looking for a recycling container to put it in.

And this has happened because we have been educated about the importance of recycling and the difference it can make in using our limited resources.

And recycling is more than just sorting out our household rubbish isn't it - it's really a lifestyle, a way of living that focuses on **Reducing, Reusing, and Recycling** – the Rs.

When I saw this the recently, I thought that this was a very biblical way of thinking really... and Psalm 24:1 which begins by stating – The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;

So, if this world does belong to God – all of it and everything and everyone in it - and if there is a way of living which helps us to be good stewards and caretakers of the earth, if there is something we can do to save the world, then surely, we should do it - right?

Have we ever considered that a lifestyle of "worship" might be just the thing to help save our world?

Some people think of worship as something we do on Sunday morning, which involves prayer, singing and a sermon, and hopefully this doesn't take longer than an hour – heaven help me if this takes longer than 12 minutes...!

Or, we might say that worship is the feeling of adoration and devotion that we express to Christ while we sing to Him. And these experiences of worship are perfectly correct and wonderful, singing in particular.

But this isn't really the full experience of worship that the *bible* wants us to have.

And it's not really the kind of worship that will help save our world.

So, what does Psalm 24 have to say to us about worship. It tells us that worship is a lifestyle – just like recycling is. And to help us grasp what it means to understand worship as a lifestyle, to help worship become a part of our everyday life it gives us the Rs of worship.

Reason, Requirements, and Results.

**Remembering we've also had the R's of recycling - Reducing, Reusing, and Recycling
Now we have the Reason, Requirements, and Results.**

So, the **Reason** why we worship is first, and this focuses on the foundations of what God intended for worship to be.

Let's look at vs. 1-2 of the Psalm.

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.

Why do we worship? Because everything belongs to God! Doesn't it?

What a huge claim this verse makes –everything in existence belongs to God...?!

Now, we often think about how "nature" – the rocks and trees the sky and seas belong to God - but what about cities, and houses? What about theatres, parks, schools? What about abstract things like art, and what about the internet?

These are all part of God's creation and they all belong to God as well – don't they?

Surely, if a lifestyle of worship means that we begin to look at everything around us in this way, then all these things do belong to God. Yes? No?

If you're anything like me, and I'm always **very** happy to admit this, then I think this is a very, very difficult concept to grasp.

It's kind of like looking at something to see if it can be recycled – you know when you look for the Recycling symbol on it. Lifestyle worship begins to see the first R of worship – The **Reason** - stamped on to everything around us.

Now there are two very important words in verse two - founded, and established. Elsewhere in scripture these two words are used to describe the building of cities, and temples. So, when they are used here to describe how God created the earth, the Bible is telling us that when God created the world, he was creating a very big temple – or an environment where worship can take place.

Now we still might think that worship is only prayer, singing and sermons, but not according to this Psalm. Not a bit of it...! This is telling us that everything belongs to Him.

Again, If someone had said this to me years ago, I would have been totally confused, and as I said, I sort of still am.

In verses 3-4, it reminds us that there are **Requirements** for worship. It asks the question - Who

has the right to go up the Lord's hill and who can enter? The answer is those who have clean hands and a pure heart. Those who have not given themselves to an idol, or swear by what is false - if you meet these requirements –then come on in.

It's quite the questionnaire isn't it...?!

Do we think that we meet these requirements?

Do we have clean Hands – In other words are our lives characterised by the right actions and do we do the right thing?

Do we have a pure Heart – In connection with clean hands this is speaking about the motivation for our actions?

And it's not enough to just do the right thing – we must have the right motives too.

The bible reveals to us that the root problem in our world is Sin and how it affects those whom God has called to rule over the creation. Change that, and you change the world!

Imagine how many wars would stop if governments were honouring Christ instead of themselves. Imagine where the Russian/Ukrainian crisis would be now if they honoured Christ and not themselves...?

But what of the **Results**?

What's in it for me?!

Worship that can save the world – that's the **Result**. In finishing, let's pray that we will become as affected by the **Rs** of worship as we have been by the **Rs** of Recycling so that it feels odd, wrong even... not to worship Christ in every area of our life.

Because we now know the **Reason** for worshipping, let's try and meet the **Requirements** for worshipping, and let's glory in the **Results** of worshipping!

PRAYER

Loving God,

we thank you for being with us this day and every day, in everything we do and say. Look upon us all favourably, wrapping us with your love and care, and help guide us along the right path.

Your path.

Give us strength to help others far more in need than us – and you know Lord that there are plenty of folk in need of our help – all known to You.

Help us to be better stewards of the planet, not only in our own daily recycling but also in our daily worship, helping others to see that there are great reasons for worship, helping us all to meet those requirements for worship, but ultimately to see the great results of our worship.

Grace and peace be with us all.

Amen.

Creche and Baby Sitting

We now have two toddlers coming to our premises on a Sunday. This would therefore seem the right time to reinstate the crèche. Would you be prepared to help? If so please get in touch with me on my e-mail. If enough people volunteer, duties should not be too onerous and a lot of fun could be had by all.

When we first came to St Matthews, one of the attractions was the babysitting service run by Christian Smith and Chrissie Crammond. Sadly we have lost these two stalwarts in the past year but the Session has agreed to restart this support. Our children have fond memories of members of the congregation who looked after them in the evenings.

We are looking for early indications of interest at this stage with more details to follow.

Thanks

Jean Young Jy2@btinternet.com

PILGRIM'S WAY WALK



Unfortunately the torrential rain put paid to last month's walk so the next stage of our walk is on **Saturday 5th March**.

Jean and I have done a recce and, unfortunately, the part from Kelty back to Dunfermline is part of a huge construction site at the moment- they are building an "eco-therapy and wellness park" over a 12-mile area! (see www.stninianswellness.com if you are interested.) It is passable but very muddy at the moment so we would hope to walk that part when the ground is drier.

However, we can still park at Blairadam Forest Car Park off the B914 (The road is signposted to Knockhill Junction 4 off the motorway and then turn right for a short distance to the car park). We will then walk to Lochore Meadows Country Park which is a distance of about 4.5 miles and very flat- so shorter than usual but I thought it would be good to be able to finish at the Lochore Meadows cafe. Jack Rough has kindly agreed to take the drivers back to the start to pick up their cars.

Please meet at Broxden carpark (up near the electric chargers) at 9am.

Please bring a snack/ packed lunch with you if you wish though there will be a chance to stop for a cuppa at the (basic) cafe at Lochore and , if wished, on our way back to Perth we could stop at Vane Farm for lunch.

Please let Jean Young know on jy2@btinternet.com if you intend to join us.

Thanks.

Fiona Bruce

ROTAS

Door Duty For March

6 th	Oakbank	TL Donald Stewart
13 th	Burghmuir	TL Isobel Sinclair
20 th	Bridgend	TL Alastair Byers
27 th	Gannochy	TL Jean McIntyre

Readers for March

6 th	Marjorie Clark
13 th	Alison Sweeny
20 th	Jack Rough
27 th	Maureen Pearson

Flower for March

6 th	Marion Stewart
13 th	Helen Dewar
20 th	Alastair and Carolyn Byers
27 th	Fiona Bruce & Andrew

Flower delivery for March

6 th	Fiona Bruce
13 th	John And Helen Dewar
20 th	Alastair and Carolyn Byers
27 th	Janet Martin

Beadle for March

6 th	Colin
13 th	Andy
20 th	Tom
27 th	Malcolm

Coffee Rota for March

6 th	Joyce's Team
13 th	Francis's Team
20 th	Marjorie's Team
27 th	Wendy's Team

St Matt's Scout Troop are looking for adult volunteers!!! We are keen to fill a variety of roles in the group, including committee work - if you are interested in getting involved with a great group of young people please contact Euan at perth22ndscouts@outlook.com



**Rachel Leitch
&
Rock Choir**



SPRING CONCERT

Refreshments
Raffle



Friday 27th May

Doors at 6.30pm for 7pm start

Tickets £10

Available from office
or at Sunday service



**St. Matthew's Church,
Tay Street, Perth.**



MARCH	26th	MICHAEL ELLACOTT EASTER CONCERT	150th
APRIL	28th	MOVIE DAY	
MAY	19th - 22nd	PERTSHIRE ARTS ASSOCIATION	
	27th	RACHEL & ROCK CHOIR	150th
JUNE	5th	JUBILEE STREET PARTY / SUMMER FETE	150th
JULY	9th July	WIMBLEDON AFTERNOON TEA	150th
	2nd July - 3rd Sept.	SUMMER EXHIBITION	150th
AUGUST			
SEPTEMBER	11th	WALKING TREASURE HUNT	150th
OCTOBER			
NOVEMBER	19th	CHRISTMAS LIGHT SWITCH ON	
	20th	END OF 150th YEAR SERVICE	150th
	26th	PITLOCHRY THEATRE	
DECEMBER	3rd	CHRISTMAS FAIR	150th
	tbc	ROCK CHOIR CONCERT	150th

Afternoon Tea

with

MICHAEL ELLACOTT



SATURDAY 26th MARCH 2pm

Tickets £8pp

includes afternoon tea



Raffle in aid of Ukraine



St. Matthew's Church, Tay Street, Perth

Please note the newsletter is now being created Monthly to reflect the church being back to a more normal footing

Next Issue No. 58 on Fri 1st April 2022 All contributions to FMBruce6@googlemail.com by Fri 25th March 2022