



St. Matthew's Church Perth

e-Newsletter No. 65

Dec. 22 / Jan.23

As this newsletter goes to print, our minister Fiona continues to be on sick leave; we send our best wishes and assure her that our thoughts and prayers are with her and her family.

At our Wednesday reflections recently, Marjorie shared thoughts prompted by a Facebook post.

I've been thinking a lot about kindness recently, about how we speak to one another, and how we treat the people around us, both those who are known to us and those who are strangers. Recently on Facebook I read something posted by a local friend, describing how a lady approached her at a meeting, saying "you won't remember me, but many years ago you were so kind and I have never forgotten it. My good friend was dying in the Hospice where you were chaplain. I was at her bedside – you visited that afternoon, then you came back in the evening and you brought me a sandwich." The writer of the post had no memory of this occasion, but she says "I'm posting this to encourage you as I was encouraged. The little things you do can mean so much more than you realise." And, to be fair, the opposite is true – the wee bit of negativity I or you emit thoughtlessly can have equally lasting ramifications.

Last year, the psychologist and broadcaster Claudia Hammond conducted the Kindness survey, in which 60,000 people participated. When asked to define kindness, the most common words used were empathy, care, thoughtfulness, love and compassion. Folk were asked to think back to when they had last received an act of kindness, and how they felt after it; not surprisingly, we get 'happy, loved, relieved and supported.'

The survey also asked "What stops you from being kind?" and acknowledged that there is a fear that the act of kindness would be misinterpreted. So being kind is risky, but the survey found that the consequence of taking that risk is very seldom negative.

Finally, the survey found (not surprisingly) that giving, receiving or witnessing an act of kindness enhances our sense of well-being; acts of kindness can be transformative, to both the giver and receiver.

None of these findings are earth-shattering discoveries, but just imagine how transformed our society – and our church – would be if we all made a conscious effort to be kinder. The Bible has plenty to say about kindness: from Proverbs "Those who are kind benefit themselves but the cruel bring ruin on themselves" In his letter to the Colossians, Paul urges them to 'put on then, as God's chosen ones, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness and patience." And last but not least, in 1 Corinthians, chapter 13, speaking of God (who is love): "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant."

So let us pray: Lord, help us to be more kind. Help us to be slower in judging or criticising others and quicker to appreciate their worth and value their contributions. Open our eyes to see the little acts of kindness we can do, and help us also to receive acts of kindness from others. Give us patience and understand-



ing. And help us also to be kind to ourselves. All of us are precious in your sight, and recipients of your loving kindness. So be with us today, in all we say and do; we pray that any kindness we do to others, known or unknown, will always point back to you and your generous and gracious love. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Count that day lost by George Eliot

If you sit down at set of sun
And count the acts that you have done,
And, counting, find
One self-denying deed, one word
That eased the heart of him who heard,
One glance most kind
That fell like sunshine where it went --
Then you may count that day well spent.

But if, through all the livelong day,
You've cheered no heart, by yea or nay --
If, through it all
You've nothing done that you can trace
That brought the sunshine to one face--
No act most small
That helped some soul and nothing cost --
Then count that day as worse than lost.

CHURCH NEWS

While Rev Fiona Bullock remains on sick leave. Perth Presbytery has appointed Rev Bob Milne as our Interim Moderator during her absence. We are also grateful to those who will be leading worship during this period.

Rev. Marc Bircham has agreed to provide pastoral cover for the period so, if you or someone you know has pastoral care needs, please contact the office or Marjorie Clark of our Pastoral Care team in the first instance and contact will be made with Marc as required.

Fiona Bruce, Session Clerk

Presbytery Mission Plan

Perth Presbytery met in Bankfoot Church Centre on Tuesday 22nd November, to discuss the final report of the Presbytery Mission Plan. As a result of decisions taken at the General Assembly in recent years, Presbyteries have had to reduce the number of ministries within their bounds. Over the last year there have been consultations with every Kirk Session and audits made of each church. Perth Presbytery has been divided into 9 networks, and we are in Network 3, along with the North Church, St John's Kirk, St Leonard's and Craigie and Moncreiffe Church. Going forward, St Matthew's has been allocated one minister in unrestricted tenure, but the expectation is that we will work closely with our neighbouring churches, in outreach and mission, and will also take some of the parish responsibilities for St John's.

The packed meeting on the 22nd November allowed questions to be asked, giving every network the chance to clarify the implications for themselves. The vote subsequently taken resulted in 68 votes for, 6 against the Plan, and it has now gone to a Central Committee for further approval. For more information, please speak to Tom Morrison a member of the Presbytery's hard-working Planning and Development Committee.

Advent and Christmas services at St Matthews



Mon. 19th—Fri. 23rd Dec. —9a.m.
Morning reflections in the Sanctuary, followed by breakfast.

Sat. 24th—7p.m. Christmas Eve service in the Sanctuary

Sun. 25th—10.30a.m.—Christmas Day
worship in the Sanctuary

More Volunteers Required – AV Team

St Matt's AV Team are seeking additional volunteers to help operate the equipment on the sound desk during Sunday Service and to cover an increasing number of other events taking place in the Sanctuary. No experience required and full training will be provided. In terms of commitment, we hope, with additional volunteers, that you would be required to assist a maximum of one or two Sundays a month. If this is something which interests you, please speak to one of the team or pop up to see us on a Sunday for a chat with no obligation.

Thank you.

That was the year, that was!



Our 150th Anniversary Year is now over. Time to get back to normal, whatever that maybe. It has been a very busy year, welcoming not only one Moderator of the General Assembly to preach for us but two, namely Jim Wallace and Martin Fair at either end of the year. We also welcomed back previous ministers, Scott Burton and Ewen Gilchrist. Add to that the induction of our new minister Rev. Fiona Bullock together with the support of Revs. Barbara Quigley and Anne Brennan we have had a tremendous year of worship.

Follow that with an exciting social calendar, Burns Supper, concerts with Rock Choir, Michael Ellacott and Friends, Perth Choral Society, and the Bohemians. In June we celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with a gala day linking in with the Council's vintage car rally. This event, the biggest in my memory of St. Matthew's, was a great success for the community and the church with the Sunday Service taking place outdoors. A tree was planted to mark the Queen's Jubilee. The Walking Group set themselves the challenge of walking the Fife Pilgrim Way during the year. With a very wet start from Culross in December, the group celebrated the end of the walk, 11 months on, next to the beach at St. Andrews with a Communion Service conducted by Anne Brennan. Many thanks to you all for your support during this year.

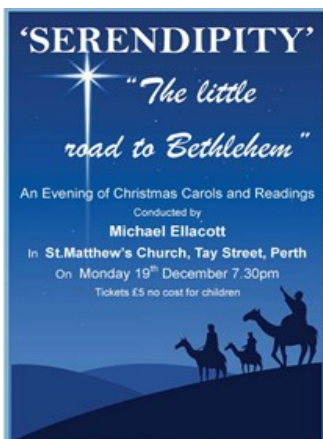
Tom Morrison & the 150th Anniversary Committee

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

We have been given a small grant by Perth & Kinross Council to enable us to open our doors and provide a Warm Space for those struggling with heating bills. We are proposing opening one afternoon a week in January, February and March so please let me know if you would be able to support this venture by giving of your time to help with activities and/or serve teas and coffees as required. Thanks. *Fiona Bruce*
FMBruce6@googlemail.com



10a.m., not 10p.m. of course! Bev would really appreciate donations for the stalls (bottle and cake and candy) and the raffle.



Calling all knitters.....

- Over the past two years we have gifted Christmas mementos to our uniformed organisations. The first year it was advent candles; last year it was stars. This year we would like to give hearts symbolising God's love for us at Christmas.



We are looking to knit several hearts to give to our youngsters - 200 of them!! Last year, adding ties to the stars took up a lot of time, so it would be very helpful if you can add a tie (knitted or crocheted) so that they can be handed on direct. Get in touch with Jean Young (07801 889820) if your knitted hearts need collected. Patterns can be picked up at the church or sent to you by email. (jy2@btinternet.com)

2. Cosy Rugs Project

Community and church groups and individuals across Perth and Kinross are being invited to help make cosy rugs for those who need them this winter. I know many of us who knit or crochet are happy to get busy in the winter evenings, and folk using Warm Spaces may like to get involved too. It's great to work together to make warm lap blankets for those who need them, and an opportunity to have a clear out of odds and ends of yarn – or I've ripped down a less than successful cardi for my first squares. We need:

- Donations of double knitting yarn and size 8 (4mm) knitting needles
- Knitted or crocheted squares (6 x 6 inches). Squares can be knitted by increasing up in every row from 1 stitch – depending on tension, going up to about 40 stitches on no 8 (4mm) needles. Knitting straight is about 28 stitches for a 6” square (or 200 stitches to knit a whole rug).
- Volunteers to help with sewing up squares to make rugs – it would be especially helpful if church groups could help with this
- Finished rugs -42 x 36 inches is very useful as a lap rug, or large square can also be a shawl, but all sizes will be welcome for families and children. These will be distributed through Warm Packs and Warm Spaces to those who need them.



The Guild are very kindly going to co-ordinate this for St. Matthew's, with a box for donations. Please contact Lorna Morrison if you can help. lmstitch@yahoo.com
Many thanks! Liz Barrett

The Foodbank Reverse Advent Calendar is back— donate an item a day during Advent. Available for collection on Sunday 27th November—ask Marjorie!

Janet's Jottings

Smoothing the fire

With these dark, chilly nights upon us (and the cost of heating rapidly rising!) I have been making good use of my open fire. Apart from the warmth and comfort, it also brings back memories of childhood days when an open fire was the only source of heating for the majority of houses. Everyone gathered round trying to get warm, being frequently warned by one's mother "not to sit too close or you'd end up with 'granny's (or tinker's) tartan' on your legs!" The fire was the life and soul of our house and the majority of household rubbish was burned on it – who remembers the 'squeal' of the potato peelings as they shrivelled up in the flames?



Our fire was permanently on as it had a back burner and heated our water as well. In the winter months, on going to bed, one of my parents would 'smoor' the fire. This involved putting a big shovel full of ashes and dross on top to keep the fire tamped down until the morning, when it would be brought back to life. I loved the word 'smoor', Not so harsh as 'smothering.' It was more of a soft, comforting expression. It felt to me that it was like putting a heavy blanket over the fire and tucking it in all cosily for the night. Mum said she thought smoothing came from the Gaelic, as my granny in Islay used it. One can imagine in days gone by that the fire, being the life and soul of the house, providing heat and cooking facilities, it would be essential to keep the fire going. People would nurture and nourish their fire in the hope that it would, in turn, nurture and nourish them.

It was thought that if the fire went out, then 'the soul also went out of the people of the house'. There was an elderly lady we knew, who had Irish Gaelic origins; when she smoothed the fire, she would put three long, thin bits of peat over the embers. These represented the Holy Trinity. She would, as she laid each peat, say a prayer to the 'God of Life, the God of Peace and the God of Grace' before she retired to bed for the night.

The only other time I have come across the mention of 'smoothing' the fire is in a Gaelic poem, which I am familiar with, but unfortunately I do not know the author. I share it with you now, praying we all keep warm this winter, and that the blessings of the Christmas Season and the warmth of love that Christ brings to us all will be rekindled in the New Year.

Smaladh an Teine

Smalaidh mise nochd an teine,
Mar a smaladh Muire 'n t-aingeal.
Co bhios air an fhaire nochd?
Muire gheal's a Mac,
'S aingeal geal an dorus an taighe
Gus an dig a ' la maireach.

Smoothing the Fire

I shall smoor the fire tonight,
As Mary would smoor the fire.
Who shall be on watch tonight?
Bright Mary and her Son,
A white angel at the door of the house
Until tomorrow comes. *Anon*

St Matthew's walkers: Change of Plan!

Please note we will meet at Broxden as usual on Saturday 10th December at 9.30 a.m. and not at the church as previously announced. The walk from the church (followed by Tom's lasagne lunch) will now be on Saturday 7th January – for catering purposes, please let us know if you are coming by Tues. 3rd January. *Jean Young*

Christmas is coming! Do you or your family buy online? Remember

Easyfundraising.org.uk

One of the easiest and painless ways of raising money for the church is to purchase goods on line through the website above. If you have not already done so, please go to the website above, create an account, follow the instructions and opt for 'Perth St Matthew's Church of Scotland' when asked for your favourite cause. Then, when you shop on line, go through Easyfundraising.org.uk and search for your retailer. Every time you make a purchase a proportion of what you spend comes to the church—at no extra cost to yourself. As fundraising ideas go, this is a simple and effective way to support St Matthew's. Fiona Bruce comments "it occurred to me that it's my grown-up children who order online so I've passed this information on to them too!"



News from PACT

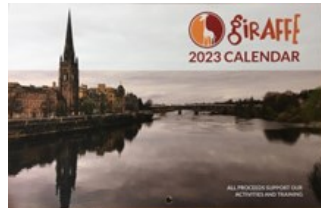
As we get ready to celebrate the season of Advent and Christmas, Perth Action of Churches Together invite you to join in a Lantern Advent Parade on **Saturday 3rd December**, leaving from St Ninian's Cathedral at 4.45p.m. Following behind the Perth Pipe Band, and carrying lanterns*, lights or torches, we parade through the town to the Nativity Tableau outside St John's Kirk, where members of Perthshire Brass will lead us in some community Carol singing. All are welcome, and there will be refreshments following the carol singing. (* There will be a lantern making workshop at St Ninian's from 2-4 led by local artist Lisa Earl, in which all ages are welcome to participate.)

Then on **Friday 23rd December**, we will be holding our annual Carol service at 7p.m. This year it is in St Leonard's in the Fields Church in Marshall Place, and our guest speaker is Lt. Col Carol Bailey from the Salvation Army. She is the East Scotland Divisional Commander and Secretary for Scotland (and has an appropriate Christian name for our service!) A collection will be made at the service for local charities. All are very welcome to join in either or both of these activities. For further information, please speak to your PACT reps, Marjorie Clark or Jean Young.



CROSSREACH

These are available for sale again this year - at the same price of £5- a bargain!



GIRAFFE

A local social enterprise group—cost £10

For either of these calendars, please speak to or contact Fiona Bruce

Does anyone remember the communal St Matthew's Christmas Card? It is being resurrected this year. There will be a large card available in the café area for people to sign, sending Christmas wishes to other members of the congregation. This will be available from 4th December. If you still wish to send individual cards, the post-box will also be making a return – cards posted here will be sorted and made available for collection by the recipients each week. But please note: we are unable to deliver uncollected cards.



Andrew's Prayer

Let us pray
Dear Lord Jesus
we all know that we are
so lucky to have a family
that loves us. And we
are very precious to the
world and we should
be grateful in whatever
have in this world as
we look to each other for
support, compassion and
love. Please Lord look
after our world.
Amen.



Boys Breakfast Blether

We met up recently for a blether over a nice breakfast in sunny Dunning. Whilst we were chatting, we acknowledged there are few opportunities for the Boys (OK - maybe men is probably more appropriate!) in St Matthew's to have a get together and a chat. With that in mind, we thought it may be a good idea to try a meeting for those interested one morning in The Capital Asset (Wetherspoons pub next to the Church) over a coffee or breakfast and just see what happens – maybe it could become a regular event. There is no hidden agenda nor guest speaker and all that is required is that you pay for what you have to eat or drink! How it moves forward and whether it becomes a 'regular' thing is up to us!

We acknowledge Christmas is coming up, so we are thinking maybe **Wednesday, 11th January at 10am** to start off, so please put this date in your shiny new diary or 'phone if this is something you would like to try. We look forward to seeing you.

Raymond Young (01764 684640) and Alastair Byers (Tel 01738 553835).



Margaret Wright (a regular Sunday morning Zoomer) wishes everyone at St Matthew's a very happy Christmas.

**Perth: St. Matthew's Church
Sunday worship at 11.am**

Address: Tay Street, Perth, PH1 5LQ

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Session Clerk: Fiona Bruce

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Treasurer: John Dewar

Dewar34@hotmail.com

Registered Scottish Charity N0. SCO16829

CHURCH ROTAS

Door Duty For December

Dec. 4th Muirton (Janet Martin)
11th Perth City (John Dewar)
18th Perth South (Malcolm Thom)
25th Oakbank (Donald Stewart)
Jan. 1st Burghmuir (Isobel Sinclair)

Readers for December

Dec. 4th John Dewar
11th Janet Martin
18th Nicola Macnee
25th David Firth

CHURCH FLOWERS

Dec.	Donated by	Delivered by
4th	Bill and Eileen Montgomery	Janet Martin
11th	David and Norma Wright	Janette Millar
18th	<i>Vacant</i>	John and Helen Dewar
25th	Ina Soreide	Marjorie Clark

Links to services on You Tube and Zoom

Sunday morning Zoom (from 10.45)

ID 953 7532 1288 Pass Code 058724

Here are links for the next few YouTube services up until 8th January 2023

27th November - <https://youtu.be/oQFzMpmJJxc>

4th December - <https://youtu.be/77nlmksrISU>

11th December - <https://youtu.be/EGiVzcN0jtY>

18th December - <https://youtu.be/i00Oc-Z5JX0>

25th December - <https://youtu.be/ZbW0H9WQPi4>

1st January - <https://youtu.be/4vvlv9XkOz4>

8th January - <https://youtu.be/aBBtc2htWuY>

For those who would like to join the weekly

Wednesday morning meditations

On Zoom at 9a.m.

ID: 818 8897 1376 Passcode: 905980

All welcome

The next issue of the newsletter is due out on Friday 27th January 2023. All contributions **by Sunday 22nd January please** to Marjorie.clark@btinternet.com (A 'newsletter extra' with January rotas, etc. will be sent at the end of the year.)

Wills and Powers of Attorney

This is a reminder that, until the end of December, Solicitor Alan Davies is willing to draft Wills and Powers of Attorney for members of St Matthew's Church, in return for a donation to church funds. Full details in previous newsletters; contact Alan on 01738 620451 or email Alandavies@mccash.co.uk.

2 dates for the 2023 diary:

Saturday 28th January—St Matthew's Burns Supper— more details to follow, and soup makers wanted!

Sunday 19th February—Tayside Big Band return to St Matthew's—7.30p.m.