



St. Matthew's Church, Perth

e-Newsletter No. 72

September 2023

As we go to print, our minister Rev. Fiona is currently off on sick leave; we send her our best wishes with our prayers for a speedy recovery so that she can be back with us again very soon. In place of a letter from the Manse this month, the editor shares some reflections on a memorable visit this summer:

This May, I had the pleasure of spending a week's holiday on the island of Harris in the Outer Hebrides. With its stunning beaches, turquoise water, crashing breakers, and wandering sheep it was an ideal place for rest and recreation.

The highlight for me, however was the visit we made to the remote island of St Kilda, owned now by the National Trust for Scotland, and evacuated by its inhabitants in 1930. It's a bumpy 2.5 hour boat ride to get there – not for the squeamish – but well worth it, giving us time to explore this unique island. The museum, in one of the abandoned houses on the Main Street, explained how the islanders made their living, not by fishing or crofting, but by culling the birds on the rocky islands, using their meat for food, and their feathers and oil as commodities with which to pay their landlord. The island is covered with cleets – over 1300 of them – stone storehouses with grass roofs, in which were stored meat, fuel, wool and tweed (because there are so many sheep there), keeping things dry during the ferocious winter storms. This was a community which for most of the year had little or no communication with the outside world,

Two things in particular struck me. First was the strong sense of community which the islanders shared. With anything between 16 to 25 families on the island, it seems there was no hierarchy at all – no headman or chief. Every morning the men would meet together and discuss what work needed to be done, and then do it together. Once the birds had been culled, or sheep sheared, the meat, feathers, oil and wool would be shared out equally amongst the families, to ensure everyone had what they needed. There was a shared boat, and each family had their responsibility to take care of it. They all looked out for each other, and in this way, the elderly, the widows and the very young were all cared for. It sounds like an impressive society (and reminded



me of some poorer villages I have visited in Africa and India, where I found a complete absence of the 'me' culture, and decisions were made for the good of the whole community.)

The second thing that struck me about the history of St. Kilda was not quite so positive. There were few outside influences on the folk there, but there was a church, serviced by ministers and missionaries, many of whom were of a particular evangelical variety. Not surprisingly for a community which must have been acutely aware of the power of nature and the fragility of life, the St Kildans embraced the austere Calvinistic teachings, but at the cost of their traditional culture; there was no more singing and dancing, which was frowned on, and at one stage in the 19th century the islanders were expected to attend church every day, not just on a Sunday. (There were 3 services each Sunday, some lasting up to 3 hours long.) Sometimes these religious commitments impinged upon the time that was needed for urgent work to be done – and woe betide any visiting trawler or tourist that that tried to land on the Sabbath,

It sounded to me that religion had become more of a straitjacket rather than offering any sort of liberation and joy. I wonder how many people still have this image of our Christian faith as being more life-denying and life-restricting, and I wonder how we can dispel that illusion – after all, Christ said "I have come to bring life in all its fullness." So, I left St Kilda asking these two questions – how community-orientated are we, and could we do more? And how do others see us as Christians – are we life-denying or life-affirming; could we be less of the former and more of the latter?

Dear God, We know that you have called us to be a light in the world, and we ask that you would bless and strengthen our community as we seek to fulfil that calling. Help us to be a source of love, hope, and encouragement to all those who come to our church, and to all with whom we come into contact in our daily lives. Help us to be life- and people- affirming.

CHURCH NEWS

Zoom and You Tube Links for the Sunday services:

Zoom code for Sunday mornings from 10.30a.m.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86884300748>

Meeting ID: 868 8430 0748

You Tube links for Sunday services

We now have an easy to remember link to take you directly to the St Matthew's church YouTube home page as follows:

youtube.com/@stmatthewspert OR

youtube.com/@stmatthewspert/streams

Midweek Musings

Are you missing your church family by Wednesday? Want to connect with them? How about joining us on Zoom at 9am on a Wednesday morning? 15/20 minutes or up to 30 minutes if you want to stay and chat?

There's a group of us that started meeting on Zoom during lockdown. And we still meet - other than in the summer. We're starting again on Wednesday 6th September. One of us starts us off with some thought of the day. It can be a musing about anything that has attracted the person that week. It often is about something in the person's faith journey - a question raised by the sermon on Sunday, a reading, a prayer, something in the national or local news. It's a safe space to share a doubt or two.

There's about a dozen of us who regularly join in. Not everyone says anything - some just listen. We would be delighted if you joined us - even just to find out who else is on and to test the water. You'd be most welcome.

Wednesday at 9 a.m, from 6th September!
Zoom at

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88455159577>

Meeting ID: 884 5515 9577

John Dewar reminds us that the **badminton club** recommences for the new session on **Thursday 7th September between 7.30 pm and 10.00 pm.** All ages and abilities are welcome at any time between these hours. Any enquiries can be made to John on 01738

631350 or 07774438647.



A message from our German friends:

Thank you all for having us and giving us a wonderful five weeks in Perth. From now on we will again enjoy "meeting" with you online. With love from Angela and Wolfgang

Congratulations to Rosemary and Andrew Tait, who celebrated their Diamond Wedding on 10th August.



The next **Boys Breakfast Bletcher** will be held in Wetherspoons (next door to the church on Tay Street) on **Wednesday 13th September at 10a.m.** As always, new attendees will be very welcome.

The next meeting of the **Kirk Session** is on **Tuesday 12th September** at 7.30p.m..

An appeal from Councillor Liz Barrett.....

"The Moncreiffe Food Share Project is running out of plastic carrier bags—if you have any to spare, please bring them to church where I can pick them up from the Café area. Thanks!"

Guild News

September sees the start of the new Guild Year.

We begin on **Saturday 9th September** with a live link to the Annual Gathering which takes place in the Assembly Hall in Edinburgh. We will link in to our system in St Matthew's and watch on our own church screen. The day will begin in St Matthew's sanctuary with tea or coffee from 10.30a.m.; the link will go live at 11 a.m., and we will be able to join in with the hymns and prayers. The Moderator of the General Assembly will be one of the speakers, and the other this year is Jason Leitch CBE FRCS. You will remember him from the COVID days when he appeared regularly on our screens giving advice on how to cope with COVID. There will be a short lunch break; we ask you to bring your own packed lunch and we will provide tea and coffee. The afternoon will finish around 4 pm. This invitation is to all Guild members, and any others who would be interested; we will also be joined by Guild members from other churches.

Dates going forward are Monday 11th September with an informal meeting at 2 p.m; Monday 18th September at 7 p.m. Guilds Together annual service in St Matthews. Our regular Guild meetings will begin from Monday 2nd October at 2 pm. *Lorna Morrison, Convener*



Christian Aid Quiz Night! Friday 1st September

In Letham St Mark's Church at 7p.m. Teams of 4 - £6 per person

An evening of fun—and head-scratching! Refreshments. All welcome.

Future Proofing St Matthew's Building

Now that the Presbytery Mission Plan has been approved, which gives us in St Matthew's congregation new challenges in the City Centre, the Kirk Session is looking at how the building can be 'future proofed' to ensure it allows us to carry out our new mission. The Kirk Session set up a small group earlier this year to look at what needs to be done to the outside of the building and this work has now progressed to the point that an application for funds is being submitted to the Presbytery and the General Trustees who can give grants and loans.

What are the challenges given to us by the new Presbytery Mission Plan?

The Plan gives St Matthew's responsibility for working with St John's Kirk and the North Church in developing and delivering a Mission plan for the City Centre, and for providing extending pastoral care to the folks in the parish of St John' Kirk - effectively the city centre. A lot of younger people live in the city centre – many single person households. Flats, shops, restaurants, concert hall, theatre, civic buildings, museums, prison are all in the extended parish. A major challenge that will require a lot of time and energy. But a good challenge!

What do we mean by future proofing?

Making sure that our building can provide quality accommodation for the foreseeable future. Our Sanctuary is regarded – rightly – as one of the best spaces for meetings and events in Perth. This September Perth Choral Society joins the Rock Choir as a weekly user, effectively as its base. U3A meets monthly in it. The new Presbytery is using the Sanctuary for Presbytery meetings. We see it as part of our mission to use it to provide Christian hospitality. But we need to catch up with some external repairs that we haven't been able to do during Covid. Climate change is expected to bring much wetter weather and we need to ensure that our water management systems can cope. And we need to look at how close we can get to net zero carbon in the use of the building.

A challenge that we face, however, is that we used all of our reserves to refurbish the Sanctuary in 2016. And like many churches, Covid and lockdown meant that our original financial plans did not work out, and only now are we beginning to see our income growing as anticipated. We need financial help.

How are we going about it?

We've been discussing the future with both the Presbytery and the General Trustees, (the property holding arm of the Church, who can give grants and loans.) The Trustees have given an 'in principle' approval to the work that needs to be done and have asked us to obtain tender prices. We have engaged a conservation architect and quantity surveyor to help us.

We plan to undertake the work in two stages:

- a. Immediate work to ensure public safety and to undertake minimum work to protect the building in the short term by limiting any further ingress of water.
- b. A longer-term stage to 'future proof' the building which would involve further examination of the water management and drainage, more stonework repair, and a long-term building management plan.

We are now at the point of submitting a formal application which will go to the Presbytery which meets (in St Matthew's!) on 2nd September. If approved that will go to the September meeting of the Trustees.

How is it being paid for?

For the first stage we are asking the General Trustees for a grant to cover the cost. The second stage would involve a mixture of support from the General Trustees and some fundraising ourselves, mainly from Trusts and other bodies. We do not envisage a series of coffee mornings, events, and other congregational activities. We need to focus on the City Centre mission plan!

However, if you have skills in large scale fundraising, environmental sustainability, or building management, I would be very happy to discuss how you and your skills can be involved. And it doesn't necessarily mean joining a committee!

I'll give updates through the Newsletter.

Raymond Young Session Clerk

“Sunshine on Leith” at Pitlochry - are you interested in seeing this at Pitlochry Festival Theatre on **Friday 24th November at 2p.m**? Tickets are £35 each, and if enough people are interested, we will investigate booking a coach (adding £15 to the cost.) Please let Wendy Burnett know of your interest as soon as possible, with immediate payment. Wendy can be contacted at 07958 744795.

A Summer of Activity at St Matthew's

Summer Gallery 2023

By the time you are reading this the Summer Gallery will have closed for this year, However an event of this nature does not happen without a great deal of support, so a big thank you goes to all those who assisted. Particular thanks go to Peter our caretaker who has been a great support to the artists and our own team of volunteers.

A new innovation this year was the creation of the Facebook page "St. Matthew's Pop up Gallery." This allowed us to promote the exhibitions to a wider audience, and we thank Kylie Murray who set this up for us.

Having created this page, we increased our PR by creating a video of each of the artists on a week by week basis. The mastermind behind this was John Paton who recorded all the exhibits and, with assistance, interviewed the artists. John must be congratulated on the success of this work; the videos can be seen on the Church Facebook page and will soon be added to the Church website.

The Summer gallery has 3 objectives: (a) to provide an outlet for local artists to display their work; (b) to raise much-needed income for the church, and (c) to provide outreach to both the local community, as well as to visitors to Perth.

Exhibitors' work this year included paintings, glasswork, needlework, leatherwork, metalwork, quilting, and printing. We also hosted an exhibition of work by a Ukrainian Artist Dmytro Krishovsky.(see picture)

As far as income is concerned, there will be an update once all the monies are collected and added up. Suffice to say it was well worth doing the event.

We have had over 1400 visitors during this summer, this being one of the objectives of the Gallery. We have always been encouraged by the number of people who wish to see the inside of our building, hear something of our story, and of course enjoy the exhibitions.

Encouraging comments from visitors include their pleasure in knowing the building is a place of worship which has moved forward to modern times; they are also encouraged by the 'Cafe Church' we have created.

In closing I have a substantial list of those wishing to take part in Summer Gallery next year. It would be good to establish a team who can take it forward.

Tom Morrison, Exhibition Coordinator

*I saw a stranger today.
I put food for him in the eating-place
And drink in the drinking-place
And music in the listening-place.
In the Holy name of the Trinity
He blessed myself and my family.
And the lark said in her warble
Often, often, often
Goes Christ in the stranger's guise..
— The Celtic Rune of Hospitality*

Fiona Bruce adds:

Over the summer, during the 8 weeks of our Summer Gallery, our church has been visited by people from all over the world- from Brazil to New Zealand and from Costa Rica to Australia-as well as locals who may never have "darkened our door" before! During the time of the World Cycling Championships we were delighted to welcome many International cyclists and their supporters.

In particular, I'd like to draw your attention to the exhibition of graphic works which we hosted by Ukrainian artist Dmytro Krishovsky who lives and works in Kyiv. This was both moving and evocative in its symbolism of grandmothers with their gnarled hands and feet digging for potatoes and holding bread.

Thanks to John Paton who, in a new venture, made and edited 8 You Tube videos this year advertising each of the exhibitions. Thanks also to Tom Morrison for his overall organisation and to all our volunteers who served lots of cups of tea and coffee and spoke to these visitors daily.

I see this work as an essential part of the mission of St Matthew's and am glad that we can provide hospitality and a welcome in this way.



CAFÉ Bridge—Sat. 19th August



What a day! It was a very full, buzzing church! There was the weekly art exhibition, complete with piper, plus 100 or more bridge players registering at St Matthew's and playing their tournament and eating lots of bacon rolls! Plus lots of tourists visiting including from Brazil and Germany and Spain and Italy.

Marijke, from Perth Bridge Club, who organised the tournament said: "We can't thank everyone at St Matthew's enough for the tremendous support you have given us. It's been outstanding". Thanks to Marjorie, Joyce and Malcolm for all the cooking and Jane, Evelyn, Sheena, Lorna, Tom and Andrew who all helped make the day such a success. *Fiona Bruce*

NEWS FROM St MATTHEW'S WALKING GROUP



1/7/23

Our July walk— Fiona Bruce describes
LIMEKILNS TO CHARLESTOWN (4 miles)

The St Matthew's Walking Group enjoyed this Fife walk which had many interesting features. After walking along the Limekilns seafront we reached a series of 14 limekilns which had been quarried into the cliffs in the 1700's. It was hard to believe that the Charlestown Harbour (pictured above) had, at one time, been one of the busiest harbours on this coast ferrying lime, coal and salt throughout the country and abroad. We then followed the old disused Elgin Railway Line along the coast and eventually walked up a long drive leading to Broomhall House, occupied by the 11th Earl of Elgin, Andrew Bruce. This is the stately home of the Earls of Elgin and is over 300 years old.

What I certainly didn't realise when I saw this grand house was that it sits at the centre of the (in)-famous Elgin Marbles controversy! In the late 18th century, Lord Elgin was British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, which included Greece at the time, where he got permission to "liberate" items from the Parthenon, ostensibly to "spare them further damage by vandalism, weathering and pollution". In all he removed around half the sculptures and other items amounting to around 220 tonnes. In 1816 he sold some of the largest and most significant pieces to the British Museum for £35,000 but Broomhall is still "home" to many of the smaller sculptures. You may be aware that there is now a British Committee for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles which campaigns, along with Greece, for the return of the Marbles which would form the centrepiece of the new Acropolis Museum in Athens.

We ended our walk with a welcome lunch at the Ship Inn, after which we were privileged to have a tour of Limekilns Parish Church led by Keith Mason, their Property Convenor, organised by Jean and Raymond Young.

For the less energetic, Carolyn Byers lets us know thatthere is a Seated Yoga class available at Riverside Church on a Friday from 12.00 - 13.00 It is funded by the NHS so free of charge with no need to book as apparently there is ample space.

Meanwhile Andrew's view of the walk in August. (5/8/23)

MASPIE DEN IN FALKLAND(4 miles)
The walk in the rain

Well, it started off well though some of us were getting out of breath going uphill at the start. But we started fine though it got very cloudy, then it started to thunder so that wasn't a good sign. So after that it rained and rained and also got a wee bit cold. It wasn't good but we can't always beat it, can we? However we all carried on and took the alternative of a quicker way back so that was good and handy.

We had a nice lunch at the Falkland café and then it appeared to be nice again when we left. So yeah, that was the summary of the story of our walk in Falkland which I thought you would like to know. *Andrew Davies*



Our September walk will be led by Marjorie on **Saturday 9th September** (not the normal first Saturday of the month because of other commitments); we will explore some of the Glenalmond Estate. Meet as usual at Broxden Park and Ride at 9.30.a.m. It's a relatively short, but interesting, walk of 3—4 miles. If desired bring a morning snack; please let Marjorie know if you intend to join us.

Marjorie.clark@btinternet.com

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

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AWAY DAY – Monday 3rd July

40 church members and their friends, together with members of the North Church Guild, travelled together by bus to see the Great Scottish Tapestry which is housed in an impressive purpose-built gallery in Galashiels.

On arrival we enjoyed a light refreshment before a talk on the Tapestry by a staff member, ably supplemented by our own Lorna Morrison who described the process whereby she had contributed to stitching a panel for the Tapestry.

We then enjoyed lunch and another look round the many panels comprising the Tapestry before returning to Perth right on time!

It seemed to be such a successful "Away Day" that we are thinking of making it an annual event. Watch this space.....



The Battle of Stirling Bridge panel, worked on by Lorna Morrison, as mentioned above.

Sunday morning rotas for September

Welcome Teams

- 3rd Burghmuir (Isobel Sinclair)
- 10th Bridgend (Alistair Byers)
- 17th Gannochy (Wendy Burnett)
- 24th Muirton (Janet Martin)

Beadle Duty

- 3rd Andy Turnbull
- 10th Malcolm Thom
- 17th Raymond Young
- 24th Tom Morrison

READERS

- 3rd Lorna Gray
- 10th Carolyn Byers
- 17th Alistair Byers
- 24th Joan Lackie

CHURCH FLOWERS

Sept.	Donated by	Delivered by
3rd	Eileen Montgomery	Evelyn McLaren
10th	Alison Sweeney	John and Helen Dewar
17th	Fiona Bruce	Alison Sweeney
24th	Lorna Gray	Janet Martin
Oct. 1st	Joyce Thom	

TEA/COFFEE TEAMS

- 3rd Isobel Sinclair
- 10th Joyce Thom
- 17th Wendy Burnett
- 24th Frances Turnbull



The next issue of the newsletter is due out on Friday 29th September 2023. All contributions by **Sun. 24th September please** to the editor: Marjorie.clark@btinternet.com

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