



St. Matthew's Church, Perth

e-Newsletter No. 76

February 2024

Letter from the Manse

Friends, the turn of the year always gives us cause to pause, reflect and do. As I mentioned in church a few weeks ago, I'm not a fan of New Year's resolutions because I think they just set us up for failure. However, stepping into a New Year, I believe it is a good time to stop, take a breath and reflect on the past year or even further back. It is a chance for us to celebrate all that has been good. On the more challenging days, it is an opportunity to find the moments of joy. It is a time to learn from what could have been better and to mourn what was hard.

The writer of the book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament of the Bible sums it up well:

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover, he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end." (Ecclesiastes 3:1-10, 11b, *NRSV*)

At the beginning of a New Year, we reflect on what was, what is and what is to come. This Bible reading helps us to do so as we think about getting our timings right. We seize the prospect of what life could be and we dream dreams about the future. This is why we often find ourselves having big clear outs and planning redecoration or renovations at this time of year. We find a drive to do things differently because the world has shifted since this time last year. May we bring this philosophy to the ways in which we 'do' and 'are' church too.

Whatever this New Year may bring, I pray that we might all know God accompanying us along the way. There will be times when we help others and there will be times when we need to accept help ourselves. We will have times of joy and times of sorrow. For some, death will become very much a part of life. For yet others, new life will burst into the world. Through it all, may we know God's presence, God's guiding, God's peace and the embrace of God's love.

With blessings, Your Minister, Fiona

Into a dark world a snowdrop comes,
A benison 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 light our journey through Lent and beyond.

Kate McIlhagga



CHURCH NEWS



You are warmly invited to the Sacrament of Holy Communion on **Sunday February 25th** at 11a.m.

There will be a retiring collection to support the work of CATH (Churches Action for the Homeless) here in Perth.

WARM SPACES These are continuing in the church **1.30-4.30pm on Wednesday and Friday afternoons.** So far Janet and Carolyn have led Games afternoons and Michael Ellacott has entertained us musically in his own inimitable style! We have also had a talk from Citizen's Advice Bureau on "Worried this Winter" and our own Nicola McNee on "Windowsill Gardening". Thanks to all organisers and helpers who give of their time.

As well as being able to chat and play games and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, there is an activities programme as follows:



- 31st Jan. Carpet Bowls (Tom Morrison)
- 2nd Feb. Carpet Bowls (Tom Morrison)
- 7th Feb. P&KC on Community Engagement
- 9th Feb. **Please note no warm spaces**
- 14th Feb. Talk on Library "Lend & Mend" Hub
- 16th Feb. Dementia Advice (Centre Manager)
- 21st Feb. Papercraft (Lorna Morrison)
- 23rd Feb. Craft (Lesley Williamson)
- 28th Feb. Quiz (Janet)

Come along and enjoy a warmth of space and company in the winter months!

Any queries to:
Fiona Bruce
FMBruce6@googlemail.com

The next **Boys' Breakfast Bletcher** will be held in Wetherspoons (next door to the church on Tay Street) on **Wednesday 14th February** at **10a.m.** As always, new attendees will be made welcome (assuming you are male—the clue is in the name!)



Zoom and You Tube Links for Sundays

Please note that the Zoom codes for Sundays and Wednesdays have changed with the new year. Click the following link and when asked provide your name then join the meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82349848787...>

OR "Join a meeting" on ZOOM providing the following: **meeting id = 823 4984 8787** then provide the **password = 296100**

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

youtube.com/@stmatthewsperth OR

youtube.com/@stmatthewsperth/streams

Midweek Musings

Wednesday at 9 a.m. Zoom at
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89813870441...>

Meeting ID: **898 1387 0441**

Passcode: **077305**

A short time of reflection and discussion led by various church members

Feel free to join us!

KIRK SESSION FELLOWSHIP LUNCH

This took place on Sunday 14th January and we were pleased that over 50 people enjoyed a bread and soup lunch with tray bakes and tea and coffee.

We were particularly delighted with the warm and friendly atmosphere and hope that everyone enjoyed that too. In addition the sum of around £275 was raised by way of donations to church funds. Thank you to all helpers and providers of soup and traybakes.

We hope to hold such a lunch every couple of months with a different church organisation taking the lead each time.

Fiona Bruce

World Day of Prayer Friday 1st March

This year's service, which has been prepared by Christian women in Palestine, will be held in St John's Roman Catholic Church in Melville Street at 11.30a.m. All welcome.

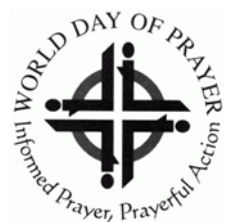


Photo Club



From Monday 5th February I will be in the Photo Studio (Tower Room) from 7pm each Monday during February and would be pleased if anyone with an interest in photography would like to come along. Come and talk photography, learn photography, use the photo studio lights and equipment - and potentially form the nucleus of a photo club.

The studio is now up and running and is available for members of the church to use. It is also available for hire. I hope to see some of you there on Monday the 5th at 7pm.

Tom Morrison

St Matthew's Walking Group

This group meets on the first Saturday of every month for a walk; not only is it good exercise, but it is also great fellowship, and almost always followed by refreshments at a nearby café. Our January walk was an extremely interesting and scenic walk around Kinesswood and Scotlandwell, following the Michael Bruce Trail



Our February walk on Saturday 3rd February will again be led by Fiona Bruce and family, and is around the Birnam area. It's a shortish flat walk (3-4 miles) which will take 1.5 hours in total. We will stop for a light lunch on the way back.

Participants are asked to meet at Broxden at 10am (please note later time); new walkers are welcome, but please let Fiona know by Monday 29th January whether you wish to go on the walk and/or lunch so that she can book a cafe. fmbruce6@googlemail.com

The Guild

On 12th February we have Avril Duncan from the Free to Live Trust which was a Guild project several years ago. Avril will bring us up to date with the work that has been achieved with the Guild funding.

On 26th February we will have one of our own members Cathy Gray telling us about her life with cats. You might remember Cathy told us a bit about her cats in a Newsletter last year.

We have two meetings in March, and then our session finishes with the AGM on 8th April.

We would be delighted to have some new members this year, and look forward to welcoming you all. *Lorna Morrison Convener*



St Matthew's is delighted to be hosting this popular current affairs Radio 4 Programme on **Friday 9th February**. Doors open at 6.30p.m. and close at 7.30p.m., and the programme is broadcast live from 8 - 8.50p.m. If you would like to be part of the audience, free tickets can be booked via www.eventbrite.co.uk/stmatthews-church-31067389003

Andrew's prayer

Let us pray
Dear Lord we are very grateful
to have a church which keeps us safe
and warm also to welcome us well.
Not all people don't have churches
all round Perthshire Scotland but
we are very lucky but help us to
reach out for the people who are
elderly, homeless, struggling, mental
health and dementia also physically and
emotionally. All are welcome and we
love you all no matter what your going
through at the moment in this time
Thanks Lord. Amen

Janet's Jottings *by Janet Martin*

The Rev Ewen Gilchrist provided us with a real 'blast from the past' during his Advent meditation in St Matthew's. His pile of 'Look and Learn' comics had us all strolling down memory lane as we each recalled the comics we got as children. The Victor, Hotspur, Beano, Dandy, Bunty, Judy, The Tiger and The Topper, were only a few of the many that quickly came to mind over our coffee.



We agreed that comics had played a great role in our growing up. For some, it was the only reading matter they had access to, others felt that the simple words and cartoons were a great reading aid for children who struggled to read (no-one had heard of Dyslexia in those days), for me and others, comics provided social interaction – we could only afford one comic each, so the big treat was to swap comics with friends. As they made their way around the village, those comics opened a world of adventure, fantasy and of course, heroes.

I am not sure if characters such as Dennis the Menace, Billy the Whizz, or Roy of the Rovers could actually be called 'heroes' as such, but there always seemed to be a moral message in their scrapes and antics (probably 'don't try this at home!') and they either got their come-uppance, or were rewarded for inadvertently coming to the assistance of others. As I grew into a teenager, the Bash Street Kids were outgrown and the Jackie magazine was eagerly awaited each Wednesday. It provided us with the latest fashions (you can see that I paid a lot of attention to that page!), information on pop stars, competitions and the Cathy & Claire 'problem page'. I guess this was the forerunner of Social media as it is now, the only difference being the reader had to wait a week or more for follow up answers – nowadays a social media post travels the world in seconds. My hero then was David Cassidy. I got very excited once when the Jackie announced that a free 'life size' poster of David was to be included the following week. I was hugely disappointed, when opening the magazine I discovered that the poster came in 4 parts and the first section was of his feet! It took a whole month before I had my full size idol. A lesson in both clever marketing and in patience.

Heroes come in all shapes and sizes. The Bible is full of them. Ordinary folks who never thought that God would call them to help others: Mary & Joseph who bore us Christ; David who battled Goliath; Moses, who as a baby, survives a river trip in a basket, then as an adult brings us God's Commandments; Esther who saved the Jewish people from destruction; Noah, who built the Ark; Deborah, the prophetess and only female judge in the Bible. The list is endless and the challenges they overcame are to be wondered at. Heroes are sometimes the most ordinary of folks just going about their business. Who would have suspected that Jesus, the son of a humble carpenter, would go on to become a lifesaving hero and whose name is still on the lips of people over 2,000 years after his birth?

Can you help? A plea from the Harbour Counselling Service

We write on behalf of the board of Harbour Counselling Service, a Christian counselling organisation based in Shore Street Perth. Harbour was begun through the faith of two Christian counsellors in 2005 and since then has maintained a distinct Christian identity whilst welcoming clients and counsellors from all faiths or none. The leadership of the organisation, board of trustees and practice manager are practicing Christians with a living faith and strong church connections. Their desire is to offer professional counselling for clients from Perth and the surrounding area, free at the point of access.

Over the 18 years Harbour has been in existence, it has supported over 1000 clients from all over Perth and Kinross. As the service is not income-generating, we are dependent on grants and donations to maintain this work and ministry. As we begin 2024, we are grateful that we are financially stable having already raised enough funding for the year ahead. However, we have recently been affected by the deeply upsetting and unexpected news of the passing of our chairperson, Nicholas Morris. This, along with the resignation of our treasurer and other board members, has left us urgently seeking new board members.

As a result, we are looking to recruit new, enthusiastic members to our board. We ask your church members to give this their prayerful consideration.. Please share our contact details and we would be very happy to discuss this further with any interested person. Thank you for your consideration of this.

Julie Gardner, julie@harbourperth.org.uk Jamie Fry, jamie@harbourperth.org.uk
Lisa Christmas, lisac@harbourperth.org.uk

The following article comes from Harry Wilby, who lives in Crieff

When we kneel at the start of each day to talk to our Creator I guess a request for protection this day is included; and most days the protection is given. But what about the occasion when God allows something else to happen?

May 30th this year was one of those hot spring days here in Scotland. Having spent the afternoon in my allotment, I headed home around 5.30 on my electric bike. As I approached a T-junction I heard traffic coming from both directions so began to brake. Suddenly the car coming from the left turned into my road, *on my side of the road*, to avoid being held up by the one coming towards her.



I had braked to a halt, but not had time to jump off, (not that I'm capable of jumping anywhere these days.) The driver must have seen me in the last split second and braked before smacking into my front wheel. Electric bikes are considerably heavier than ordinary ones, mine in particular. It lurched to the left throwing me down to the road on to my back, My helmet thumped on to the tarmac with a bang that sounded like dropping a saucepan. Then the bike landed on top of me, the pedal tearing open a 5 inch gash on my right shin.

For a few seconds I lay there feeling a bit dazed - and quite annoyed that someone could be so careless! When I sat up I could see that the wound was bleeding very freely but not spurting. Nurse's first aid knowledge was engaging automatically. I was wearing my favourite frayed and tatty old Australian work shorts, and all I had on me was a grubby handkerchief which I slapped on the wound and applied pressure. Then I became aware of voices, and several pairs of legs standing around me. Looking up, I recognized a couple of retired doctors; they were out for a walk. Also the couple from the corner house, who had been working in their front garden. Next was one of our community nurses. She had been driving the other car and seen it all happen. She arrived with all her medical kit. Last, but not least was a pale looking, and very apologetic but guilty driver.

Someone lifted off the bike and parked it in their garden, The doctors assessed the wound, and the nurse cleaned it and did a proper pressure dressing. Someone else had phoned for an ambulance but was told all were in use, and one would have to come 18 miles from Perth. However there was a paramedic nearby on his way home who would attend. By the time he had had a look, control had diverted an ambulance, complete with two lovely ladies crewing it. The paramedic told them that a vein had been severed, and they should take me to Dundee rather than Perth, as it might need micro surgery.

After details were swapped with the driver, I was loaded into the ambulance and given a thorough examination before we went anywhere. Almost as

an afterthought, they asked, "Where is your bike, and where do you live? We'll take it home for you". The heavy bike was hoisted into the back of the vehicle by these two petite young women, and we completed my journey home. While they unloaded the bike, I had time to swap my shorts and dirty garden shoes for something more appropriate, and collect my phone, some cash, and my bus pass. They may take you in by ambulance, but they don't take you home again.

At Ninewells Hospital, I joined a waiting area crowded with people. and an hour and a half passed before being triaged. It was 11pm before the wound was stitched and glued. Then followed x-rays of the leg and full spine, and a scan of my head. They kept me in overnight for observation, so any sleep was disturbed every half hour to check my blood pressure and vital signs. The next morning was idled away as I waited for the medical teams to deal with the urgent cases. Then they could deal with sending 'The Cured' home, and freeing precious beds for the next batch. Unfortunately, I was discharged just before the dinner trolley arrived.

God certainly provided all the help that was needed in such an emergency. But we may never know how many times His angels have steered us away from both physical and moral dangers. God grant me the opportunity to be in the right place when someone else needs my skills, help and sympathy. Thank you, Heavenly Father.

This poem was shared by Raymond Young during the first of our Midweek Musings in 2024.

New beginnings by Anirudh Iyer

What are they,
Well, they're each day,
each second,
each friend,
each year,
each fear,
each gleam,
each dream.
So many chances,
so many nuances,
but why don't we use them,
Why live ignorance mayhem,
The slate is always clean,
Only by us, dust is seen,
Let's use each new beginning,
one which includes happiness winning
Instead of ironically reminiscing.

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

Address: Tay Street, Perth, PH1 5LQ

Church Tel: 01738 636757

Minister: Rev. Fiona C Bullock

Tel: 01738 570241

fbullock@churchofscotland.org.uk

Session Clerk: Raymond Young

rky@btinternet.com

Clerk@perthstmatthews.org.uk

Church Office: Beverly Skene

office@perthstmatthews.org.uk

Newsletter Editor: Marjorie Clark

Marjorie.clark@btinternet.com

Treasurer: John Dewar

Dewar34@hotmail.com

Registered Scottish Charity N0. SCO16829

A message from Norma Wright, our Flower Convener

Now we are into 2024, I would like to thank everyone who gave so kindly towards the church flowers in 2023. Also my gratitude to those of you who give so freely to help me out when I have dates to fill, making sure that there are flowers in the church every Sunday. Flowers are just a little thing, but they brighten up the day of those who receive them, and lets them know how much we care.

Thanks also to Bill and Eileen Montgomery for the lovely Christmas welcome rings that stand in the windows over the festive season.

A big thank you again to Marjorie for arranging the distribution of the flowers, and to all of you who give up your time to deliver them.

With kind regards,

Norma Wright, Flower Convener

There are still opportunities to donate flowers on the following dates; please speak to Norma if you would like to contribute.

March 31st, May 19th, June 30th, July 21st and 28th, September 22nd, December 15th and December 29th.

Sunday morning rotas for February

Welcome Teams

- 4th Bridgend (Alastair Byers)
- 11th Gannochy (Wendy Burnett)
- 18th Muirton (Janet Martin)
- 25th Perth City (John Dewar)

Beadle Duty

- 4th Raymond Young
- 11th Tom Morrison
- 18th Bill Chalmers
- 25th Andy Turnbull

Readers

- 4th Alastair Byers
- 11th Lesley Mackie
- 18th Carolyn Byers
- 25th Lorna Gray

Tea/Coffee Teams

- 4th Isobel Sinclair
- 11th Joyce Thom
- 18th Wendy Burnett
- 25th Frances Turnbull



FLOWERS

Feb.	Donated by	Delivered by
4th	Frances Turnbull	Tom and Lorna Morrison
11th	Freda Stewart	Janet Martin
18th	Roy and Marie Nicoll	Evelyn McLaren
25th	Ronnie Soreide	Andy and Frances Turnbull

The next issue of the newsletter is due out on 23rd February 2024. All contributions by **Sunday 18th February** please to the editor: Marjorie.clark@btinternet.com

If you do not already receive this newsletter electronically and would like to receive future issues via email, please send your email address to the editor, and you will be added to our distribution list.