



St. Matthew's Church, Perth

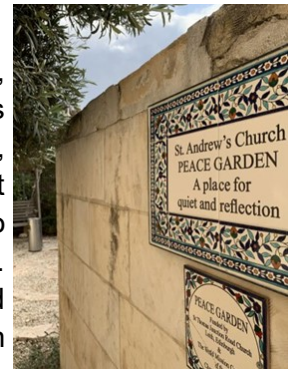
e-Newsletter No. 77

March 2024

Condolences We at St Matthew's send our deepest sympathy to our minister Rev. Fiona Bullock, on the recent death of her mother. Fiona remains on compassionate leave and we keep her and all her family in our prayers at this sad time.

Reflections on Israel and Gaza. The conflict in Israel and Gaza is never far from the headlines. On Saturday February 3rd, Perth Presbytery, meeting in St Matthew's, had the privilege of hearing from Rev. Muriel Pearson, minister of St Andrew's Church of Scotland in Tiberias, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Her presentation was recorded by our AV team, and it was shared with our congregation the following Sunday. It can also be found on the St Matthew's You Tube page. <https://youtu.be/f16dMKnRLF5>

Muriel began by describing the presence the Church of Scotland has in Israel, and has had for over 150 years. In Tiberias, along with her small church, with its Peace Garden (pictured), what used to be known as the Hospice is now a hotel, catering for pilgrims and other visitors; in Jerusalem, her colleague Rev Stewart Gillon is the minister of the beautiful St Andrew's Church, built as a memorial to soldiers who died in the First World War; there is also a guest house there. Finally, in Jaffa there is Tabeetha School, bequeathed to the Church of Scotland in 1912 by Jane Walker- Arnott, which includes Moslem, Jewish and Christian pupils, and has long encouraged mutual respect and understanding for all.



Things changed dramatically after the horrific Hamas attack on October 7th. The hotel in Tiberias is now hosting 100 evacuated Israeli families from the Lebanese border. There are no tourists visiting with a devastating effect on all those who rely on tourism for a living; in Jerusalem, guest house staff, who are Palestinian, are not allowed to travel from the West Bank, and have no source of income. Israeli society is 'fractured' with increasing polarization. Muriel described the situation in Gaza as 'unspeakable', with the death toll mounting ever higher with continuous bombing. (Gaza is the size of Arran, and houses 2 million people.)

The Hamas attack did not come out of nowhere; Muriel stressed that the wider context needs to be recognized in any discussions about the future. In this 'very very difficult situation', she commended organisations which are bravely standing up to advocate for human rights for all. Rabbis for Human Rights are delivering food parcels to families in the West Bank, and The Bereaved Families for Peace, with their Parents' Circles, bring together Israeli and Palestinian parents working through their grief and anger.

What can we do? Muriel and her colleague Stewart write a blog which can be found on the Church of Scotland website (www.churchofscotland.org.uk); Christian Aid are asking people to write to their MPs. Above all we can pray, and Muriel shared with us this prayer, originally from Christian Aid:

Pray not for Arab or Jew,
for Palestinian or Israeli,
but pray rather for ourselves,
that we might not
divide them in our prayers
but keep them both together
in our hearts.

When neighbours argue
peace be amongst us.
When nations disagree
peace be amongst us.

Where people struggle for justice
let justice prevail.
Where Christ's disciples follow
let peace be our way.

Amen.

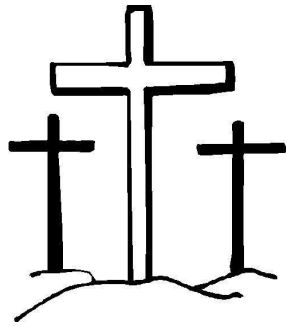
CHURCH NEWS

Please note that our celebration of communion on **Sunday 25th February** has been postponed. We will however be welcoming members that Sunday from our Scout and Guide sections as they celebrate Founders' Day.

Members of **Kirk Session** are reminded of our next meeting on Thursday 14th March at 7.30p.m.

Holy Week and Easter

It has become something of a tradition that we prepare ourselves for Easter with a series of morning reflections on the Monday to Friday of Holy Week.



Palm Sunday service— Sunday 24th March at 11a.m.

Holy Week reflections—Mon.25th to Fri. 29th at 9a.m. in the sanctuary, (followed by 'breakfast' together)

Easter Sunday—31st March—11a.m.

In addition, Perth Action of Churches Together (PACT) is organizing a **Walk of Witness** on Good Friday, 29th March, when folk from all denominations will follow a Cross round the City Centre. This year it is being led by pastors from the Baptist Church. Gather at St John's Kirk at 10.30a.m.

And for those early risers, there will be a Dawn Service at 7a.m. on Easter Sunday morning at Quarrymill, followed by breakfast at Scone Church's Burnside Hall. (This is an extra challenge this year, as the clocks go forward on Easter Saturday evening!)



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!

FELLOWSHIP LUNCH—17th March-

Following on from our enjoyable fellowship lunch in January, the Walking Group is hosting a similar lunch on Sunday 17th March following the morning service. We hope for an equally good turnout for our bread and soup lunch with tray bakes and tea and coffee. There are no tickets, but donations towards church funds will be appreciated.

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



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.

LIVE MUSIC TAYSIDE BIG BAND

ST MATTHEW'S CHURCH PERTH



SUNDAY 25TH FEBRUARY 7:30PM

PERFORMANCE OF
SWING & BIG BAND FAVOURITES

FEATURING LIVE VOCALS FROM MO HANNAH
LED BY ANDREW MANN

**KIDS
GO FREE**

TICKETS AVAILABLE
ON THE DOOR

**£10
ADULTS**

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK @TAYSIDEBIGBAND

The Guild

On 12th February we had an amazing talk from Avril Duncan of the Free to Live Trust which was a Guild project several years ago. Avril told us of her fund raising through Soroptomists, Rotary and many other friends as she raised money to help house children who were virtually on the streets of the red light district of Pune in India. Their mothers had been trafficked and put to prostitution. Avril and her friends were able to raise enough money to build a house in a small village outside Pune where the children could be safe and looked after, and attend the village school. The Guild nationally raised £90,000 for this Trust and this money is earmarked to feed these children in the home over several years. A remarkable achievement.

We have two meetings in March, on the 11th Marjorie Clark will talk to us about the Plaques of Perth and on the 25th Norma Wright is going to keep us right about using all these lovely spring flowers which should be around us. Our session finishes with the AGM on 8th April. *Lorna Morrison*

WARM SPACES Please see below the list of activities for March. This is the last month of our "Warm Spaces" and I'd like to thank Janet, Carolyn and Lesley for helping me organise them. I have tried to vary the activities, from talks to practical activities and sports and from quizzes to music, in the hope that there would be something to suit everyone. There has been a varied "take up" with some speakers talking to a disappointingly small audience but thank you to the core of people who have participated regularly.



What has been good throughout is that we have had our church doors open on at least 2 afternoons a week and welcomed everyone who has ventured through the doors for whatever reason. Anyhow, March is your last chance to come along and enjoy an activity and some fellowship too. Hope to see you there!
Fiona Bruce FMBruce6@googlemail.com

28 February	Quiz (Janet)
1 March	Quiz (Janet)
6 March	Guide Dog Training
8 March	Film ("Mamma Mia - Here We Go Again")
13 and 15 March	Wills & Powers of Attorney (Alan Davies)
20 March	Baking (Carolyn)
22 March	Craft (Lesley W)
27 March	"Don't Put your Daughter on the Stage" (Lesley Mackie)

St Matthew's Walking Group

February's walk saw our group at Birnam on a beautiful sunny day; the walk passed the statue of Neil Gow, as well as the Birnam Sycamore (pictured.) We hope for as good weather for the walk on **Saturday March 2nd**, which will be at Crieff by Lady Mary's Walk. Approx. 3.5 miles and relatively flat. Meet at 9.30a.m. at upper level of Broxden Park and Ride. We will be lunching in Crieff—if any non-walker wishes to join us for lunch, please let Marjorie (who is leading the walk) know beforehand for booking purposes. (Tel. 07788 852908 or email Marjorie.clark@btinternet.com)



Information shared at our Warm Spaces

Community Engagement: On 7 February we welcomed Heather Shields and Shelley Potter who are the Community Engagement Workers for Perth City. The Community Engagement Team are part of the Perth and Kinross Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP). This partnership is a collaboration between Perth and Kinross Council, NHS Tayside and other community partners to plan, fund and deliver a range of health and social care services.

The role of the Community Engagement workers is to

- help support community groups;
- encourage local people to get more involved in discussions around wellbeing and health and social care services;
- carry out engagement and listen to people.

They covered a variety of topics including **Care Opinion**

Have you experienced health or social care recently; either as a patient, a service user or as a carer or friend of someone else, if so, please tell us how it was. You can use Care Opinion to tell your story, safely and anonymously. Your story might be about you, or someone close to you. You can say what happened, what was good and what could have been better.

Your story will be handled confidentially by the social enterprise platform, Care Opinion, which is independent of Perth and Kinross Health and Social Care Partnership (P&K, HSCP).

[Care Opinion - Perth & Kinross Council \(pkc.gov.uk\)](http://pkc.gov.uk)

If you would like to receive the Community Engagement Newsletter which goes out fortnightly please let Fiona Bruce know and she will send you the link.

Kirsty Brown told us about the 'Lend & Mend' Hub which is based in the AK Bell library. It offers free use of equipment such as sewing machines and a variety of tools to help repair, reuse and upcycle items. Anyone is welcome to go and use the equipment. Before accessing the hub, all users will need a short induction in using the tools & equipment. If you would like to know more about what's on offer, you can book your induction by phoning 01738 444949 or email: lendandmend@culturepk.org



Gary Wiscombe from Alzheimer's Scotland (based in George St, Perth) gave a very informative talk on Dementia and Brain Health.

Alzheimer's Scotland offers people living with dementia, their families and carers, or anyone worried about dementia, information, advice or support. The Centre is also a base for a wide range of local groups and activities, promoting confidence and well-being.

An 'open door' policy exists where anyone is welcome to drop in and learn about brain health and risk reduction. Our trained staff can work with people of all ages to understand more about the factors that contribute to brain health and to build a personalised brain health plan. Call Gary on 07855 644018 or email helpline@alzscot.org



Nicola Macnee demonstrates "Windowsill Gardening at our Warm Spaces

while Tom Morrison demonstrates his indoor bowling technique at another session



Janet's Jottings

In the February newsletter our minister Fiona shared the verse from Ecclesiastes about 'time' and how there is a time for various life events to happen. It made me think about 'time' in general and how we spend it. How fast it flies when one is having fun, how slowly it can pass when one is kept waiting (in supermarket queues especially!), how we often feel we never have enough time to do everything we want or need to. Despite having a variety of time-savings gadgets, vehicles and tools, we still seem to not be able to find time for ourselves, or in some cases for God.

In school I learned a lovely poem by the Welsh poet WH Davies called 'Leisure'. It begins...

*"What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?
No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows..."*

Those lines have always stayed with me. A reminder that it is good to just stop every now and again and look, listen, breathe, prioritise and maybe recharge one's batteries. In this fast-paced world, we sometimes need to give ourselves permission to just stop. Then maybe take in a familiar view or look in a new direction.

I came across a rather dog-eared bookmark recently when doing a tidy up. It contains this poem by Martin Greyford. I hope his words encourage you to think about portioning your time, particularly as we walk along the Lenten path together towards Easter, the most important time in the Christian calendar.

Take Time

*Take time to think -
It is the source of power.
Take time to play -
It is the secret of perpetual youth.
Take time to read -
It is the fountain of wisdom.
Take time to pray -
It is the greatest power on earth.
Take time to love and be loved -
It is a God-given privilege.
Take time to be friendly -
It is the road to happiness.
Take time to laugh -
It is the music of the soul.
Take time to give -
It is too short a day to be selfish.
Take time to work -
It is the price of success.
Take time to do charity -
It is the key to Heaven.*



In 2022, The Cottage Family Centre in Fife teamed up with Amazon UK to launch a new initiative called the Big Hoose Project. It is one of the biggest family anti-poverty projects in decades (and former Prime Minister Gordon Brown was one of the prime movers behind it.)

The aim of the project is to provide vital household goods, free of charge, to help ease poverty, at a time when fuel and food bills are continuously rising and more families than ever are struggling to make ends meet. The goods provided are varied and range from cleaning products and toiletries to bedding, clothing and footwear. At least 30 partners have now signed up to support this project with donated goods, including Amazon, Asda, Co-op, Fishers Laundry and many more. The Big Hoose has now teamed up with PKAVS in our own area – more info can be found on the www.pkavs.org.uk

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

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Registered Scottish Charity NO. SCO16829

St Matthew's Church Benevolent Fund

During the current cost of living crisis, we are aware that there may be folk known to us who are struggling to pay bills or are facing difficult choices regarding their finances. Please be aware that St Matthew's has a Benevolent Fund which may be able to offer help in such circumstances. To find out more, please contact Alastair Byers (alastair.byers1@btinternet.com, tel. 01738 553835) or write to him c/o the Church Office, (address above) marking the envelope Private and Confidential. All approaches will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

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.

Sunday morning rotas for March

Welcome Teams

3rd	Malcolm Thom (Perth South)
10th	Donald Stewart (Oakbank)
17th	Isobel Sinclair (Burghmuir)
24th	Alastair Byers (Bridgend)
31st	Wendy Burnett (Gannochy)

Beadle Duty

3rd	Malcolm Thom
10th	Raymond Young
17th	Tom Morrison
24th	Bill Chalmers
31st	Andy Turnbull

Readers

3rd	David Sawyer
10th	John Dewar
17th	Janet Martin
24th	Fiona Bruce
31st	Joan Lackie

Tea/Coffee Teams

3rd	Marjorie Clark
10th	Isobel Sinclair
17th	Joyce Thom
24th	Wendy Burnett
31st	Frances Turnbull



FLOWERS

March	Donated by	Delivered by
3rd	Alison Ford	Lesley Williamson
10th	Helen Dewar	Lesley Mackie
17th	Alastair and Carolyn Byers	Nicola Macnee
24th	Fiona Bruce	Fiona Bruce
31st	Betty Lindores	Marjorie Clark

The next issue of the newsletter is due out on 29th March 2024. All contributions by **Sunday 24th March** please to the editor: Marjorie.clark@btinternet.com