



# St. Matthew's Church, Perth

## e-Newsletter No. 78

### April 2024

#### Letter from the Manse

Friends, at this time of year, I typically write to you about Spring but I find myself in a deeper frame of mind this Easter. Lately, I have been thinking about identity: who I am and where I find my sense of worth. As many of you are aware, my Mum passed away a month ago and I'm sure that this has inspired my reflection. I will always be her daughter but I am now a daughter without a mum. It's a very surreal time in life, losing a parent, and realising that I have to be a grown up. Don't get me wrong – I'm an adult...you can't get to forty-something without making your own way in life, but there's something to be said for being able to call your Mum to confirm you're making the right decisions. I find it amusing now to recall past conversations in which I'd call Mum for advice but still go ahead with what I had originally planned. I realise that it helped to have her listen as I articulated my thoughts aloud. I miss being able to share stories of my days with her and I miss the way she loved Calum.

Daughter, Sister, Auntie, Wife, Mother, Stepmother, Friend, Minister, Christian – these are some of the 'hats' I wear and they form a big part of my identity. I wonder what hats you wear. I've learned that it doesn't do to try to wear too many hats at once so the priority changes as life does. I am grateful to you for your patience and understanding when I set down my "Minister" hat for a few weeks in order to prioritise the family ones. There are also times when we can't help but wear more than one at a time. On Mother's Day, I found myself in a quandary. It was my first Mother's Day without Mum and I was feeling sad. At the same time, I had the most gorgeous wee boy giving me hugs and kisses and wishing me a Happy Mother's Day. Daughter and mother, sadness and happiness, mourning and celebrating life, all combined in one day. Such is the complexity of life.

As we approach Holy Week and the journey towards Easter, I am pondering the question of identity. I am certain that Jesus and his disciples did exactly that too. Jesus, the God-man, was trying to balance deity and humanity through the most challenging week of his short life. The disciples, who had followed Jesus through many storms would be tested to their limits. As they began to question Jesus' identity, they must also have questioned their own. And what about the cost of following Jesus? Was it worth the price they might pay? As they cowered together in the locked room following Jesus' crucifixion, they were disciples without a leader and in that moment, all sense of their identity must have crumbled. They felt lost, as they contemplated a future without their leader and friend. However, it was not the end.

There is another hat – one that is for all of us and it reads, "Beloved Child of God." Jesus wore it. The disciples wore it and we, as modern day disciples, can choose to wear it as well. This is our identity and this is where we find our worth: we are beloved children of God. We are loved. We matter. We are not alone. God will accompany us through the storms and dance with us in the sunshine. So on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March, let us choose to wear this hat, our Easter bonnet, and continue to wear it on our onward journeys proclaiming that we are beloved children of God. May we always remember who and whose we are.

With blessings, Your Minister, Fiona

Prayer For Easter  
Dear God  
Thank you for creating our  
world.  
We are very excited for Easter  
and spending time with our  
families.  
We look forward to spring  
days and new birth.  
Amen

Andrew's prayer



## CHURCH NEWS

### From Raymond Young, our Session Clerk

The Kirk Session has decided that I should use the newsletter to regularly update everyone about what we are doing and planning. This is the first, which I hope you find useful and informative

So, what is the Kirk Session and why is it important? The Kirk Session is like the Board of the church. Comprised of the Elders (33 of us) we meet at least 4 times a year (in 2023 we met 13 times). The chair (the church word is Moderator) is the Minister. Members of the Session are the Trustees. And we are responsible for all matters concerning the congregation ('the spiritual and the temporal affairs') – for agreeing the times of services, for keeping a roll of members, for finance, for staff, and for looking after the building. As a Church of Scotland congregation, we are accountable to the Presbytery and through it to the General Assembly, and equally we are supported by them. Both the minister and one elder (in our case Marjorie Clark) are members of the Presbytery and therefore part of the wider decision-making arrangements of the Church of Scotland.

Different congregations operate the Kirk Session in different ways. We have a small Committee that deals with safeguarding, a Stewardship and Finance Committee (includes property issues) and a couple of short life groups. In 2024 we have begun to reshape the Session to make our governance fit for the future, and to be able to bring more people into leadership roles – not just Elders (who will remain the Trustees) but others into helping to develop the congregation and to run this complex place we call St Matthew's. A worship team, a communications team, a care team, a communities team, and of course teams to deal with finance, property and the day-to-day management of the building. We will be building these teams over the next few months, and I'll provide more information about each of them, hoping that you might be interested in playing a part in the way ahead.

And while that reorganisation is going on, the Session continues to deal with issues like finance (our budget for this year must deal with rising costs, including energy); building maintenance, and how we develop with both St John's Kirk and the North Church a City Centre Mission plan. After all we're here to share the Good News of Jesus and not simply look after money and buildings. Lots to report on next time.... *Raymond Young, Session Clerk.*

## Zoom and You Tube Links for Sundays

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](https://youtube.com/@stmatthewsperth) OR

[youtube.com/@stmatthewsperth/streams](https://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!**

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

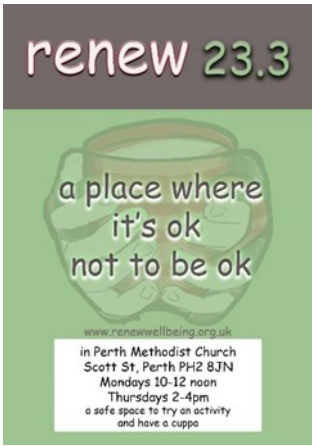


### St Matthew's Walking Group

Jean Young will be leading our next walk on **Saturday 6th April**. It will be along the banks of the Forth near Stirling, approx. 4 miles, there and back. Lunch likely to be at the local Dobbies. If you would like to join us, meet at Broxden P&R at 9.30a.m. and please let Jean know you're coming. [jeanyoung012@gmail.com](mailto:jeanyoung012@gmail.com).

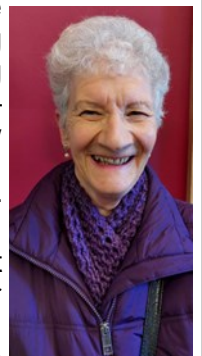


*A photo taken on last month's walk at Crieff.*



**Renew 23:3** has now been running in Perth for a couple of years; its name comes from Psalm 23, verse 3 – “He restores my soul.” A drop-in centre, it is open twice a week, based in the Methodist Church in Scott Street, but with helpers from a variety of Perth churches. It is described as ‘a place where it is OK not to be OK’ and is aimed at supporting people with well-being needs in the community. I spoke with Janette Taylor, one of our members who has recently got involved with this venture. “I first heard about it at the PACT Carol service in December” she says “I was missing my volunteer work with PKAVS, since their sessions had moved from the Gateway out to Muirton, which was more difficult for me to get to.” So she called in to the Methodist Church after the New Year, and was made to feel very welcome; they were delighted to have her join as one of their ‘hosts’ – they don’t use the term volunteer – and they said someone from St Matthew’s meant that there were now 8 different churches involved. During the sessions, there is a choice of activities that folk can get involved with, so it is not just sitting chatting; there is no referral

protocol, and there is no differentiation made between the hosts and the visitors; Janette says, “we use names rather than labels.” People are invited to make their own drinks, and the sessions are underpinned with simple prayer times – one at the beginning, one in the middle and one at the end in a quiet space, “There is no compulsion for anyone to attend these prayer times, but I have found that they really work for me” says Janette. She prefers the Monday morning sessions – “they really set me up for the week” she says. She is currently undergoing training to join the hosts, and learning more about the Renew Wellbeing Café concepts – being present, being prayerful and being in partnership. There are now over 200 Renew Wellbeing cafes throughout the UK and Ireland, and their founder Ruth Rice has written the definitive book “Slow down, show up and Pray – simple shared habits to renew well-being in our local communities.” Janette is delighted to be involved with our local initiative; “last year was a difficult time for me” she says “because of personal circumstances; but right now, I feel as if I am in the right place. I am enjoying meeting folk from the other churches, which extends my ‘church family’ and I feel as if I am connecting, learning, keeping active and giving – as well as receiving.” Her enthusiasm for this work is infectious, and her commitment obvious; she would be happy to share with anyone who would like to find out more. (or visit [www.renewwellbeing.org.uk](http://www.renewwellbeing.org.uk))

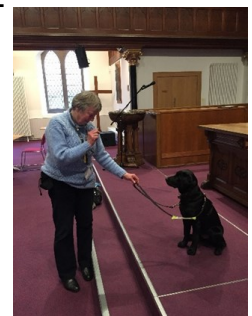


**WARM SPACES** Our church has been open throughout January, February and March and we have



welcomed 374 people into our Sanctuary throughout that time. Some of these are people who come regularly to our Warm Space activities and others are visitors from all over the world who enjoy hearing about our church and its history and/or appreciate being able to spend a time of quiet reflection.

In March we enjoyed hearing about Guide Dog Training from Kirsten Walker; later that week we watched the film “Mamma Mia 2” whilst munching our cornettos! The following week Alan Davies from McCash & Hunter, Solicitors, gave us a talk on “Wills & Powers of Attorney” -every home should have one- and answered the many and varied questions.



Our own Carolyn Byers gave a display on making Easter cakes. Along with her able assistant Isobel Sinclair, they demonstrated how to make some cute animal faces on the buttercream iced cakes. They looked good enough to eat – so we did! Lesley Williamson then led us in Easter cake decorating and making an Easter card and Michael Ellacott “played us

out” for our last Warm Space on 27 March. Thank you to Janet, Lesley and Carolyn who helped organise the Warm Spaces and the other church members who came along to assist. *Fiona Bruce*



Thanks also to Norma Wright, not only for her flower demonstrations to Warm Spaces and the Guild, but also for her flower arrangements every Sunday which enhance the sanctuary and our worship.

**WANTED! CAKE STANDS**—we are looking for donations of any kind of cake stands for afternoon teas in the church—if you have any lurking about, they will be gratefully received!

## Janet's Jottings

### What's in a Name?

I have a confession to make, okay here goes... I am an Anthophile! I know there are others in St Matthew's, as Nicola MacNee, Isobel Sinclair, Norma Wright and many others will confirm. If you aren't familiar with the term, it's a person who loves plants. When I checked online, I discovered that there are over 70 other names to describe Anthophiles. These range from a Botanist, Floraphile and Naturalist (not to be confused with a Naturist!) to trendy terms, such as a being a plantaholic, a weed botherer, a tree hugger, green-fingered or a 'greeny' to name but a few. My favourite in the list was 'Anthomaniac'. It translates as 'a person who has a passion for flowers' it also has a slight tinge of insanity about it, which appeals to my sense of humour. It certainly describes my love of anything that sprouts from the earth from daisies to giant oak trees.

Non-anthophiles would probably agree that most gardeners and 'greenies' are possibly just a teeny bit mad. For one thing, you'll find them gardening in all weather. They are never short of an excuse to buy plants. Also, they tend to buy plants, even when they know the garden is full to bursting. If they are like me, they won't just pop a new plant in into the soil, but will spend hours shifting existing plants to new locations in the garden to find the right space. We swap cuttings, nurture them to maturity, are delighted when they bloom and yes, we have been known to talk to them (don't worry HRH King Charles, you are not alone!) and then are bereft when they die.

In Genesis 1 v 29 God said *"Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food."* What an amazing gift to us. Plants and trees not only bring us joy, but some also feed us, clothe us, or provide us with materials for tools & baskets, dyes, medicine, creams and even poisons. Growing up in Rannoch, I was surrounded by flora and fauna. As children, my pals and I foraged (long before foraging became 'trendy') for flowers, fruit, nuts, herbs and leaves. If I wasn't lying flat on my belly studying a flower, or pressing it in a book, I was up a tree perusing the world from a high – I guess that makes me a 'tree hugger' as well! The wonder of nature never ceases to amaze me.

In 1 Corinthians 3 v 7, we are told *"So neither he who plants, nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth"*. Which reminds us that clever as we are, we are not as creative as our God. This poem by Alfred Joyce Kilmer (1886-1918), says it all.

I think that I shall never see  
a poem lovely as a tree.  
A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed  
against the earth's sweet flowing breast;  
A tree that looks at God all day,  
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;  
A tree that may in summer wear  
a nest of robins in her hair.  
Upon whose bosom snow has lain;  
Who intimately lives with rain.  
Poems are made by fools like me - but only God can make a tree.



## OPENING THE CHURCH

"An Open Door" has been an important part of St Matthew's mission and, when we refurbished, this was the basis of many of our Funding Applications too. We wish to welcome the person who comes in for prayer and quiet reflection as well as those interested in the history of our church or those who simply want to rest with a cup of tea!

To that end we are proposing to open our doors as often as possible in April, May and June and I have "volunteered" to organise the Rota. Can you please therefore contact me on [FMBruce6@googlemail.com](mailto:FMBruce6@googlemail.com) or see me at church to let me know which day and time would suit you to volunteer – 11am -1pm and 1-3pm are the usual "slots".

**Who's in the Pews? (or who's there on the chairs?)** How many of us recognise faces in our congregation but know little about them? This column will provide you with a photo and some information about each person's background. It's only what might be called 'A Starter for Ten' but will arm you with basic clues to seek them out and to start a conversation. You may discover that you have lots of things in common and end up having a good blether! This month we introduce to you: **John and Kim Paton and Alison Mailer**



**Where were you born/raised?**  
 John – Perth, Scotland  
 Kim – Levin, New Zealand

**Where were you born/raised?**  
 Born at home in Methven & raised there.

**What brought you to St Matthew's?**  
 John – The wife! ☺  
 Kim – Sunday school for the children

**What brought you to St Matthew's?**  
 A few years ago a church member invited my mum & I came with her for support.



**What is/was your occupation?**  
 John – BT Telecoms Engineer  
 Kim - Civil Servant

**What is/was your occupation?**  
 Staff nurse

**Tell us about any hobbies you enjoy?**  
 John – Genealogy/family history  
 Kim – Reading, keep fit/walking.

**Tell us about any hobbies you enjoy?**  
 Reading, dog walking, listening to music

**Do you enjoy any groups/volunteering at St Matthew's or elsewhere?**  
 John – St M's A V team & Boys Breakfast.  
 Kim – St M's Tea & Coffee rota

**Do you enjoy any groups/volunteering at St Matthew's or elsewhere?**  
 I do St M's door duty, Warm Spaces, Arts Café duty and I also enjoyed being on the creche rota when we had one.

**What is the most surprising thing about you that we don't yet know?**  
 John – I won a national software competition, twice.  
 Kim – I never helped my dad cut the grass as we had a Billy Goat!

**What is the most surprising thing about you that we don't yet know?**  
 I can play the trumpet.

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

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Church Tel: 01738 636757

Minister: Rev. Fiona C Bullock

Tel: 01738 570241

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### 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](mailto: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.

**Birthday Greetings** We extend warmest wishes to Gordon Webster, who faithfully joins our congregation every Sunday online from Western Australia. Gordon hails from Perthshire and celebrated his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday on 5<sup>th</sup> March. Here he is with a gift of tartan decorated shortbread made by the owner of his local café in Pemberton. 'Lang may ye'r lum reek' Gordon!



## Sunday morning rotas for April

### Welcome Teams

- 7th Wendy Burnett (Gannochy)  
14th Janet Martin (Muirton)  
21st John Dewar (Perth City)  
28th Malcolm Thom (Perth South)

### Beadle Duty

- 7th Malcolm Thom  
14th Raymond Young  
21st Tom Morrison  
28th Bill Chalmers

### Readers

- 7th Joan Nicol  
14th Alison Sweeney  
21st Lorna Gray  
28th David Firth

### Tea/Coffee Teams

- 7th Marjorie Clark  
14th Isobel Sinclair  
21st Joyce Thom  
28th Wendy Burnett



### AV Team

- 7th Raymond Young and John Paton  
14th Gillian Heath and John Paton  
21st Raymond Young and Andrew Davis  
28th Alastair Byers and Peter Barrett

## FLOWERS

April	Donated by	Delivered by
7th	Lorna Gray	A and C Byers
14th	Freda Stewart	T and L Morrison
21st	Norma Wright	Fiona Bruce
28th	Alison Fulton	Alison Sweeney

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.

The next issue of the newsletter is due out on 26th April 2024. All contributions by **Sunday 21st April** please to the editor: [Marjorie.clark@btinternet.com](mailto:Marjorie.clark@btinternet.com)