



St. Matthew's Church, Perth

e-Newsletter No. 79

May 2024

Letter from the Manse

Friends, each May, Ministers and Elders of the Church of Scotland and representatives of other denominations across the world gather in Edinburgh for the General Assembly. I find it difficult to think of it without recalling a sketch by the comedian Rikki Fulton, showing otherwise sombre clergymen riding an open topped bus and enjoying an ice cream as if General Assembly was a holiday. In reality, whilst there can be glimpses of Rikki's vision, most of the time at GA is spent sitting down in the General Assembly Hall, listening, talking, reflecting, praying and making decisions. It is an important gathering, as it is the highest Court in our Presbyterian Church. During our time together that week, decisions are made that shape the future of our Church nationally, regionally and locally. As a reformed church, ever reforming, this is where we review and sometime reset our priorities and debate the most challenging aspects of what we believe and how this should impact our way of life.

We often think of the work of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland taking place over one week in May but the truth is far different. The reports presented by the many Committees, Councils, Fora and Programmes reflect the work that takes place throughout the year taking onboard the decisions of earlier Assemblies. Each Commissioner, whether present in person or online, will have spent hours reading and reflecting upon all of the reports in order that we can participate fully and faithfully in the debates and decision-making. The Assembly Business Committee have worked hard to make all of the preparations and sort out the timetabling, as well as ensuring that a hybrid General Assembly functions to allow people to speak and be heard and seen. Commissioners, Convenors and their Teams, and members of staff will travel: some long distances and some simply to their home office or lounge, but all Commissioners will make sacrifices to play their part as we discuss our Church of Scotland. And let's not forget the essential contribution made by cleaners, caterers, drivers, administrators, and stewards. All of this work and more besides comes together to create the opportunity for us to debate and make decisions during General Assembly Week.

This year, I am privileged to be an online Commissioner. It will not be my first rodeo! I was an online Commissioner in 2021 and it was a great experience. Although it is amazing to be in Edinburgh to take in the atmosphere, engage in fellowship and attend various side events, at home the seating was more comfortable, the snacks more readily available and I could kiss my son goodnight. This helped me to participate fully in the discussions and to make my vote count at the appropriate times. It might have been a lonely experience but I was connected with others through WhatsApp Groups, phone calls and messages and it helped me to identify with those who were joining from overseas. I even managed to have a brief chat online during the General Assembly with a minister of the Church of Bangladesh whom I had met during a trip there many years before. It does mean, however, that during General Assembly week, from Saturday 18th to Thursday 23rd May, I will not be available as your Minister because I will be taking up this call to work for the national church. There will be lots to process afterwards along with some much-needed family time so I will return to work in the parish of St Matthew's from Monday 27th May. As a Church of Scotland Minister, I promise in my ordination vows to fulfil my call to the parish, the Presbytery and the national church. Being a Commissioner at the General Assembly is one of the ways I achieve this alongside my contributions to the Connections Group of Perth Presbytery. It is a great reminder that we are part of a wider church, which gives us the opportunity to support and encourage one another in our worship and service through the sharing of resources, experience and vision.

Friends, I encourage you to play your part in the upcoming General Assembly too. Please pray for the Church of Scotland. Give thanks for the outstanding contribution of our outgoing Moderator, the Right Reverend Sally Foster-Fulton. Pray for the Moderator Designate Rev Dr Shaw James Paterson, as he leads us in devotions, chairs the main meeting and debates, and attends a wide variety of engagements during the week. Pray for safe travel for Commissioners and guests, for (relatively) comfortable seats and for copious snacks. Pray for full and healthy debate, tempered with kindness, generosity and love. Pray for God's vision for our church to be grasped and pray that we will be bold in our decision-making and our path-setting. Finally, pray that we might understand how blessed we are to be part of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland and let's give thanks for all the siblings we have in Christ across Scotland and across the world. I promise to report back afterwards!

With blessings, Your Minister, Fiona

CHURCH NEWS

From Raymond Young, our Session Clerk

KIRK SESSION UPDATE

The next meeting of the Kirk Session is on May 7 - after this newsletter is published. So, on the face of it, there's not very much to report, but we look forward in June to our Stated Annual Meeting (SAM) at which there will be several reports on behalf of the Session - the members of which are the Trustees of the charity of St Matthew's. The approval of the Annual Report and Accounts is the responsibility of the Trustees, so the SAM is about information sharing rather than decision making.

As part of the Church of Scotland the Kirk Session annually reports to the Presbytery to ensure that we are working within church law as well as reporting to the charity regulator (OSCR) as a charity and working within civic laws. Confusing? Slightly! Complex? Sounds it, but it is the same for any charity that is part of a wider organisation. So, over the last month there have minutes, statistical information, reports and accounts all sent to the Presbytery for inspection, policies reviewed, and annual inspection of buildings carried out.

The Session is responsible for the large operation in this building which many members may not see beyond the Sunday service. Our suite of sanctuary and halls is very well used by groups outside the congregation, which was why we spent so much money and time 10 years ago in refurbishing the sanctuary. And we continue to make our facilities available, and there is a demand for them. Our backroom team are very busy making bookings, setting up rooms, arranging and providing hospitality, and ensuring that those who use our premises enjoy the experience and feel that our welcome comes not from a commercial perspective but from Jesus' instruction to welcome the stranger and provide a place of sanctuary and hospitality. So, thanks to Beverly, our Facilities and Outreach Manager, and to Peter, who was our Caretaker until recently (the appointment of his replacement is under way), and to Joan, Joyce and the rest of the Hospitality Team who provide endless cups of coffee and tea to many who enjoy St Matthew's as place to meet.

Unpopular opinions

On Radio 1, presenter Greg James has a slot called, "Unpopular Opinion." It has an earworm of a jingle, "Come and give us your unpopular opinion...something up til now that you've been scared to say." I'd like to do something similar with the Bible and faith - what is your unpopular opinion? Would you be interested in a short-term discussion group which brings to the fore some of our doubts and struggles? What are the burning questions you have about faith? What Bible passages do you struggle with? What gets your goat in our hymns or practices?

Please get in touch with me to tell me your "unpopular opinion" or to register interest in the discussion group.
Rev. Fiona

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 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!

The next **Boys' Breakfast Blether** will be held in Wetherspoons (next door to the church on Tay Street) on **Wednesday 8th May at 10a.m.** As always, new attendees will be made welcome.

St Matthew's Walking Group

Our plans for our April walk were scuppered by the weather, so we will try again on the first **Saturday** of May, **May 4th**. We will be exploring the banks of the Forth near Stirling, through the Raploch to Old Stirling Bridge; it's approx. 4 miles, there and back. Lunch is 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.

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 May and June and I have "volunteered" to organise the Rota. Can you please therefore contact me on 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". You can also sign up on the rota in the café area of the church.

Thank you in advance! Fiona Bruce

More Dates for your Diary



"Don't put your daughter..."
with Lesley Mackie
Saturday 11th May
2-4pm
£6 inc. Tea & Cake
Tickets available from office or after Sunday service.
St. Matthew's Church,
Tay Street, Perth



PKC FORD CAR RALLY

Saturday 1st June

We will be serving refreshments & BBQ.

Please let Beverly know if you can help on the day.

Thanks.



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!

Christian Aid Book Sale



Kinnoull Church, across the river from St Matthew's, are hosting a Book Sale on behalf of Christian Aid on **Saturday 11th May** from 10—4p.m.

Tea and coffee available, and donations of books welcomed; call Gerry Watson on 07981 181260

Also for Christian Aid, your editor, Marjorie Clark is taking up the 70Km challenge, to walk 70 km during the month of May. All money raised goes to support Christian Aid projects overseas. Should you wish to support Marjorie, please visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Marjorie1714064584529 or speak to her at church.

AWAY DAY Monday 1st July

This is to give advance warning of our annual Away Day which this year will take in 2 places of interest—**Drummond Castle Gardens** in the morning followed by the **Library of Innerpeffray and grounds** in the afternoon. Both are in the vicinity of Crieff and we would hope to travel there by bus again.

I've had no word back yet from Drummond Castle but, having spoken to Innerpeffray Library, they can cope with up to 50 visitors at a time. Please, therefore, let me have an "expression of interest" by **17 May** so that we have an idea of whether there is sufficient interest to proceed. Thank you

Fiona Bruce

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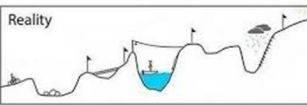
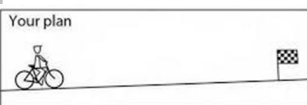
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Janet's Jottings

I hate them! Everyone I know hates them! They have not only invaded Perth, but every city, town and village in the UK is suffering a plague of them at present. No, not a plague of locusts, frogs or even boils, but potholes! I am sure there must be a noun to describe a collection of potholes, but I have yet to discover it, so a plague it is – after all, they certainly 'plague' me. Many years ago on a dark, foggy night, I inadvertently drove into a deep pothole. I not only got a puncture, but damaged the wheel of my car, which proved expensive to fix, since then I try to be on 'pothole' alert.

I recently read that Glasgow holds the title of the pothole city of UK and Derbyshire the pothole county, so potholes know no bounds. I have spotted some cars sporting stickers stating, "I am not drunk, just swerving the potholes"! They seem to magically appear on our roads overnight. Is there, I wonder, a pothole gremlin that comes out in the dark and digs new holes exactly where they are likely to cause the most damage? It certainly appears so. No one is safe from the ubiquitous potholes.

Now, here's a piece of useless information for you – I recently discovered why they are named 'potholes'. It seemed logical to me that they acquired their name due to being 'pot-shaped'. No, nothing so obvious. Apparently, in the mists of time, potters anxious to find a cheap source of raw material for making clay pots, would dig deep ruts and holes in the roads to reach the clay deposits underneath. The wagon drivers hence referred to the damaged areas as 'potholes' after the potters who dug the holes. So now you know!



Even on our own personal journeys through life, the road is not always smooth. Potholes, twists & turns, hairpin bends and from time to time, the steepest of hills can throw us off track. Life events, health, challenges and disappointments may leave us doubting our faith; sometimes to the extent we might feel trapped in our own personal potholes, leaving fearful of ever getting out of them again.

On our journey of faith, the Bible acts a bit like our own road map & manual. It tells us in Proverbs 3 v 5,6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him and *He will make your paths straight*". Again, in Deuteronomy 31 v 8-9 God reassures us that He himself goes before us. He will never leave us or forsake us, and we should never be discouraged. So, take heart, no matter how many spiritual potholes we are faced with on the road ahead, God is there to guide us through them. *Janet Martin*



Many thanks to Andrew Davies who sent in this poem, which he hopes readers will enjoy. We don't have room for all the verses, but the whole poem is available from the editor.

Back in the days of Tanners and Bobs,
When Mothers had patience and Fathers had Jobs.
When football team families wore hand me down Shoes,
And T.V gave only two channels to Choose.

Back in the days of Three Penny Bits,
when schools employed nurses to search for your Nits.
When snowballs were harmless; ice slides were Permitted
and all of your jumpers were warm and Hand Knitted.

Back in the days of Listen with Mother,
when neighbours were friendly and talked to each Other.
When cars were so rare you could play in the Street.
When Doctors made house calls; Police walked the Beat.

Back in the days when I was a Lad,
I can't help but smile for the fun that I Had.
Hopscotch and roller skates; snowballs to Lob.
Back in the days of Tanners and Bobs.



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:

Bill and Margaret Chalmers and **Mabel Rogers**



Firstly, Bill and Margaret, where were you born/brought up? *We both come from Perth.*

What is or was your occupation? *Bill – I was in the motor trade in Perth, and Ship's Chandlers in Edinburgh; Margaret – I was a secretary with P&K Council, A&J Stephen, British Gas and McCash and Hunter.*

What brought you to St Matthew's? *Margaret – I was christened in St Matthew's; Bill- I attended Moncreiffe Church but changed to St Matthew's when I met Margaret.*

Are you involved with any groups or volunteering at St Matthew's or anywhere else? *Bill – beadle, tea rota, summer gallery, Open doors; Margaret – the Guild, tea rota, Summer Gallery and Open Doors.*

What hobbies do you enjoy? *Margaret – knitting, walking and gardening; Bill – walking and cycling (in good weather!)*

What is the most surprising thing about you that we might not yet know? *Bill – as a blood donor, I have donated over 100 pints of blood; Margaret – when I was 13, I held the record for 100 yards hurdles at Perth Academy.*

As for Mabel...

Where were you born/brought up? *Anstruther, where I attended Wade Academy.*

What was your occupation? *I worked in retail – mainly shops.*

What brought you to St Matthew's? *I'm a Baptist, but the Baptist Church was too difficult for me to get to. I tried St Matthew's and felt at home.*

Are you involved in any groups or volunteering at St Matthew's or anywhere else? *I used to be part of the door duty/welcome team.*

What hobbies do you enjoy? *Knitting*

What is the most surprising thing about you that we might not yet know? *When I was young, I attended a cookery school in Kirkcaldy.*



Looking a bit further forward..... (a) Michael Ellacott and friends are offering an evening of sumptuous entertainment with a "Titanic" theme—**Saturday June 8th**, at 7.30p.m., tickets £10. More on this in next month's newsletter;



(b) there is a lot of work going on behind the scenes, preparing for our **Summer Gallery** in July and August with various exhibitions and evening events as well—thanks to Tom and Nicola and their teams who are organizing this;

(c) we are looking for someone take on the organizing of the **Macmillan Coffee Morning** towards the end of September. If this appeals to you, all you need to do is get a date from Beverly, get some friends together to help with baking and serving and you are all set to go, and you'll be supporting a good cause. Lots of resources, help and advice are available from www.macmillan.org.uk

Thanks....Liz Barrett writes "Please pass on thanks to everyone who has handed in carrier bags for Moncreiffe Community Fridge. They are very much appreciated, and more are always welcome."

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

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Many thanks to Norma Wright, our Flower Convener, for the beautiful flowers which decorated our sanctuary on Easter Day, as pictured above.

The next issue of the newsletter is due out on **Friday 31st May 2024**. All contributions by **Sunday 26th May** please to the editor: Marjorie.clark@btinternet.com

Sunday morning rotas for May

Welcome Teams

5th Isobel Sinclair (Burghmuir)

12th Alistair Byers (Bridgend)

19th Wendy Burnett (Gannochy)

26th Janet Martin (Muirton)

Beadle Duty

5th Andy Turnbull

12th Malcolm Thom

19th Raymond Young

26th Tom Morrison

Readers

5th Gillian Heath

12th Andrew Tait

19th Raymond Young

26th Ann Attridge

Tea/Coffee Teams

5th Frances Turnbull

12th Marjorie Clark

19th Isobel Sinclair

26th Joyce Thom



AV Team

5th John Paton and Peter Barrett

12th Gillian Heath and Raymond Young

19th Alastair Byers and John Paton

26th Alastair Byers and Andrew Davies

FLOWERS

May	Donated by	Delivered by
5th	Tom Morrison	Frances Turnbull
12th	Rae Simmonds	Evelyn McLaren
19th	Isobel Sinclair	John and Helen Dewar
26th	Cathy Gray	Janet Martin

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