



# St. Matthew's Church, Perth

## e-Newsletter No. 80

### June 2024

#### Letter from the Manse

Friends, I survived General Assembly and I'm back – yay! What a week it was! In time, I will offer a deeper reflection but for now, I'll share a few comments. Our new Moderator the Right Reverend Dr Shaw J Paterson charmed the Assembly with his humility and his wonderful sense of humour. Several times, he reflected that he could not believe that he had been appointed as Moderator and that God had called him to this role. The Moderator's theme was 'Building Together,' reflecting on his father's life in the trade and even showing us his father's trowel at one point. As an online Commissioner, I attended the Assembly on Zoom and I used the official General Assembly 2024 background, which showed the words of the theme. This meant that no-one could see my study, for which they should be thankful, but it also meant that when I had a Zoom meeting last night with a lovely couple who are getting married in August, I realised that I had not removed the background again. It looked like I was being interviewed on the telly and I was representing the General Assembly!



Whilst being a Commissioner at General Assembly is a wonderful experience, it is intense. This is particularly true now that the business is condensed into a shorter period of time – the Assembly now closes on the Thursday rather than the Friday of the week. It involved lots of sitting, watching, listening, processing, reflecting and praying. I am now praying for my back and my eyesight to recover as well as working to reduce my caffeine intake to a normal level again.

We were reminded that “unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain” (Psalm 127:1) and it was a timely reminder for every congregation, Kirk Session and Presbytery in the Church of Scotland. We must ask ourselves, “where does the Lord feature in our plans?” As you'll see in the Session Clerk's article later in the newsletter, we are facing difficult challenges at St Matthew's Church and we will need to ask and answer difficult questions about our future. In the midst of challenge and change, it is vital that we keep God at the centre of all we do, seeking God's guidance and discovering God's vision for St Matthew's Church as a people, as a building, as part of a team with St John's Kirk, working with other churches on city centre mission, as a part of Presbytery, as part of the national church. These connections allow us to build relationships, through which we seek to support others and receive support ourselves. Being part of the wider church family gives us the assurance that we are being held in prayer, allows us to ask for help as we need and gives us access to a wide range of knowledge and experience.

What can we do in response? I'm going to ask you to reflect on what church means to you. Let's encourage conversations about what is important. Let's talk about who we are, what we believe and what we do. Let's talk about the ways in which we see God at work in St Matthew's and our local communities. I encourage you to come along to worship on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June, during which we will have our Stated Annual Meeting. Don't be put off by the formal name – this is an opportunity for us all to reflect on 2023, our current situation and looking ahead to what the future may bring. Most of all, I invite you to pray. Pray for St Matthew's Church. Pray that the decisions we make will be influenced by God's vision for Perth. Pray for our Kirk Session and Teams, who are working incredibly hard to keep us going and to make a plan for a sustainable future. Let's heed the Moderator's call and continue to build together: build disciples, build faith, build our church.

With blessings,

Your Minister, Fiona

## CHURCH NEWS

**In Memoriam** It is with sadness that we record the deaths last month of members David Donaldson and Grace Rosenfeld. Both were regular attenders at Sunday worship, and we send our condolences to their families.

**WELCOME** to our new evening caretaker and cleaner, Jimmy Forrester. Jimmy is no stranger to St Matthew's and we look forward to his working with us and the many who use our church facilities.



**Come along** to the Classic Car Rally in Tay Street on **Saturday 1st June**; the church will be open, and we'll be serving teas, coffees, juice, homebakes, burgers and ice-cream—something for everyone!

**St Matthew's Walking Group** : Because of the Classic Car Rally on the 1st, our next walk will be on the 2nd Saturday of **June (8th)** and will be led by Bill Chalmers. It is a walk of about four miles around part of Loch Leven. Meet as usual at Broxden Park and Ride at 9.30a.m. For catering purposes for our post-walk lunch at a hostelry in Kinross, please let Bill know if you wish to join us—all are welcome. Bill.chalmers@yahoo.co.uk

**All Aboard:** also on Saturday 8th June, at 7.30p.m. our own Michael Ellacott will be entertaining with friends in a Titanic-themed evening.

Tickets for this are £10, and are selling fast! This will be 'a night to remember' - for all the right reasons.



The next **Boys' Breakfast Blether** will be held in Wetherspoons (next door to the church on Tay Street) on **Wednesday 12th June** at **10a.m.** As always, new attendees will be made welcome.

**Photo Studio** Tom Morrison writes: This is a reminder that there is a photo studio available for members use in what is known as the Tower Room. We are hoping the Scout and Guides will use it next Session to work towards their badges. However it is there for everyone. This week we secured the first professional use of the room. Hopefully this is the start of successful future for the studio.



**Happy Birthday, Jenny** Happy birthday to Jenny Fraser, whose 97th birthday is on June 27th. Warmest wishes come to you from all your friends at St Matthew's.



### Midweek Musings

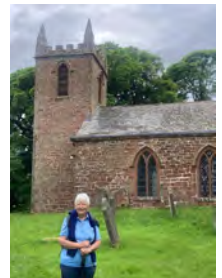
Wednesdays at 9 a.m. Zoom at <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89813870441...>

Meeting ID: **898 1387 0441** Passcode: **077305**

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

**Feel free to join us!**

**"A huge thank you"** says Marjorie Clark "to everyone who supported my "70km in May" sponsored walk for Christian Aid. Having decided to make it 70 miles instead, I reached my target while on holiday in Cumbria, and am delighted that over £1500 has been raised."



*A picture from our walk in May, beside the River Forth to Old Stirling Bridge*



**And another thank you** to Lesley Mackie; Fiona Bruce writes "A very appreciative audience of around 75 people enjoyed Lesley Mackie's recent account of her life as an actress and the "ups and downs" involved.

As well as enjoying copious amounts of baking and tea and much hilarity all round, the sum of £548 was also raised for church funds.

## Looking forward to our Summer Gallery

Work on this year's Summer Gallery has progressed rapidly over the last few weeks. On Sunday 2nd June we are launching the brochure for this year's event. The brochure is in print and is also available on the St. Matthew's Facebook page; it can also be downloaded at: <https://publuu.com/flip-book/77653/1163806>

We have a full programme of artists throughout the summer; in addition, we will have musical entertainment each Wednesday evening. Many thanks to Andy Turnbull for putting together these music evenings. We have also prepared a church exhibition, explaining who we are, what we believe, what we do and how we use the various pieces of church furniture in the sanctuary.

There has been a great deal of work to get to this stage by the Gallery Group. Now is the time for you to do your bit! We are looking to have church members on the premises whilst the gallery is in progress, to welcome visitors to the building, offer tea/coffee, and hand out leaflets re the church exhibit. The rota is on the notice board next to the cafe. For more information on the rota speak to Nicola or Tom or any one of the week leaders whose names you will find on the rota.

On Saturday 30th June there will be an Art Market day, from 10am - 4pm which will give a preview of the Summer Gallery. During this market there will also be a Book Sale and Plant Sale. (Please note—we are **not** looking for donations of more books for this sale—the 1500 books on sale are from a legacy, and have been donated to raise funds for the church.)

*Tom Morrison*



## Janet's Jottings

### Use your loaf!



I had a nostalgic and humorous conversation the other day with a lady who had asked me to do some messages for her. With her shopping list in my hand, I was heading to the door, when she reminded me she needed bread. "Just a half loaf and I prefer a plain one, as that makes the best toast!". We both had a laugh as I replied that I didn't think I would get very far if I asked for a 'half loaf' these days as the young folks in the supermarket wouldn't know what I was talking about!

It reminded me of when I first left home (at the age of 16) relocating to Bedfordshire as a nanny. A few days into my post I was asked by my boss to cycle into the village to pick up some bread. My response to her "Plain or pan?" was met by a totally bemused look; even more puzzlement was expressed by my follow up question "Is it just a half loaf you're needing?" I then had to explain the difference between plain and pan bread and that in Scotland a whole 'loaf' came from the double sectioned pan that bakers used and hence the term a 'half loaf' meant just one. None the wiser to what I was rambling on about, she replied "Just ask for a cob dear". The poor woman must have wondered what kind of a person she had employed, as I pedalled off on the bike thinking to myself that the only 'cob' I had heard of was a horse! Later in life as I travelled the world I was enlightened by discovering many types of bread existed. Some with most exotic names, such as Pumpernickel, Ciabatta, Foccacia, Pitta, Naan, Sourdough, Beremeal, Challah and a variety of others. Nowadays they are available in our supermarkets and very familiar to us. Whatever kind of bread we eat, it seems that people the world over rely on it daily. It's importance knows no bounds. As the Scots song goes "700 hungry weans will testify to that..." as they mourn the loss of a jeely piece no longer being flung out the window when they were rehoused from tenements to high rise flats. As our climate changes and crops fail, hunger and famine are rife in many countries. The first thing people ask for is flour to make the bread that they are familiar with. Like water, bread is our sustenance.

Throughout the Bible, there are many examples of bread sustaining us. God sent 'Manna' down to the Israelites as He led them through the desert, Jesus feeds the 5,000 with loaves and fishes and of course, at the Last Supper when Jesus breaks bread and shares it with his disciples. It was only after his death that they recognised the significance of that meal. Now we too acknowledge its importance when we share bread in communion with each other. In Corinthians 1 v 11-16, Paul stated that every time we share communion, we proclaim the death of Jesus and acknowledge His resurrection. Jesus is the Bread of Life. This bread comes in the form of His love and we are obliged to share it with others to sustain our health and our faith in God. Oh yes, and don't forget that 'a half loaf is better than none'!

## Kirk Session update—from our Session Clerk , Raymond Young.

The Kirk Session met on 7 May. It was a long but important meeting. As usual there were the regular management updates - membership, safeguarding, finance, and property.

Two members of the Session have recently stepped down - Lesley Williamson and Jean Young—and the Session thanked them for their contribution over the years. Being an elder involves being ordained for life, so if either of them wishes to come back to be a Trustee elder they would be welcomed back at any time. And four new members were admitted to membership who have joined from other churches - David Roderick, Margaret Roderick, Keith Gordon and Debbie Gordon. So welcome to them!

Finance and Property dominated our discussions. At an earlier meeting, we carried out a SWOT analysis- what we thought were the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats that face St Matthew's over the next few years. There are all sorts of positive things that are our Strengths - these include: the worship both in person and online, which is very much appreciated and is attracting some new people; the welcome both on a Sunday and when the sanctuary is open for visitors like Warm Spaces, Open Church and the Summer Gallery; the warmth of fellowship and mutual support within the congregation; the use of the church by youth organisations and outside groups, particularly for conferences, music and meetings (and that includes the Presbytery which meets here). And there are real Opportunities to develop these strengths and develop a City Centre Mission towards which we are now working with both St John's Kirk and the North Church. So, it all sounds very good.

However, there are three serious Weaknesses and Threats which cast a very dark shadow over our future. First is an issue about our people. We are an ageing congregation (no different to most churches), and our volunteers who keep the work of the church going are themselves in the older category. Many are tired and getting people to take on jobs is increasingly difficult. Which is why we are starting a 'Situations Vacant' piece in the newsletter. Not everything is done by volunteers. Yes, we have a couple of staff who work hard to attract people and organisations to use the church and to ensure that those who use it are welcomed and looked after. But they must be paid!

And finance is a critical concern. Like the last few years, we are not covering our costs from a mixture of income from letting out the church to other groups and from income from members. We have virtually no reserves, no money put away for a rainy day. We are borrowing from the Benevolent Fund to help pay for our rising energy costs. We are almost broke.

And thirdly, our building needs a lot of money spent on it. It's now eight years since the Sanctuary was refurbished. And we haven't been able to find the money to maintain the building in the way we should have. The manse is four years old and although we are required to redecorate and carry out maintenance, we only do the bare minimum. We have not been able to look after our property as we should have. We now have a Property Maintenance Committee, which is looking at how best to maintain the buildings. We have applied for grant from the church nationally for support (from the General Trustees) and a meeting with them will take place very soon. But even if that grant support is forthcoming, there are serious questions about how long we can continue as we will need resources to ensure that proper maintenance is undertaken.

The Session therefore has concluded that the way St Matthew's currently works is unsustainable and that a whole different approach is necessary. We don't have an answer to what kind of future - we have to consider what options there might be for us, which might involve the Kirk Session no longer being responsible for the day-to-day management of the church and halls. So, a feasibility study needs to be carried out. We hope to be able to say more about all this at the **Stated Annual Meeting which will take place during worship on Sunday June 9.**

**Situations Vacant** There are several vacancies in the management group of the Congregation. You do not need to be an elder to do any of these jobs .

Treasurer - John Dewar has looked after our finances exceedingly well for over 10 years and has decided that the time has come to hand over to someone else. This is an important role looking after the finances of the congregation. Induction and training will be provided.

GDPR coordinator – a new post to look after our data and ensure that the information we hold on members is secure.

Property Maintenance Committee – we are looking for members and particularly someone who is willing to take minutes and look after the records. Building experience is not required! Further information from Raymond Young at [rky@btinternet.com](mailto:rky@btinternet.com)



**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:

**Wendy and Lenny Burnett** and **Roy and Marie Nicoll**

**Where were you born/brought up?** *Wendy: born in St Asaph's, Wales, and grew up in Colwyn Bay. Lenny: born and brought up in Dundee*

**What is or was your occupation?** *Wendy: Community nurse; Lenny: a GP*

**What brought you to St Matthew's?** *We visited a few churches when we moved here in 1996 and settled on St Matthew's.*

**Are you involved with any groups or volunteering at St Matthew's or anywhere else?** *Wendy: I'm an elder and volunteer on Sunday tea rota and café duty. Lenny: we are the current fellowship conveners and host the annual Burns Supper.*

**What hobbies do you enjoy?** *We both play bridge and golf. We are also members of Perth Road Runners. Lenny is a Perth High Constable.*

**What is the most surprising thing about you that we might not yet know?** *Wendy: we have both done a Bungee jump and a sky dive! Lenny: I am related to Robert Burns*



And for **Roy and Marie**



**Where were you born/brought up?** *We were both born at View Park Nursing Home in Alyth—quite some time ago! Roy: I was brought up on a farm at Meikle.*

**What was your occupation?** *Marie: pre-retirement, I worked in the Social Work team for PKC. Roy: I am the Scottish manager for a firm selling animal nutrition products to farmers.*

**What brought you to St Matthew's?** *Our church (St Stephen's) closed. We came to St Matt's one day and the rest is history.*

**Are you involved in any groups or volunteering at St Matthew's or anywhere else?** *We organize the annual theatre trip to Pitlochry and help out at various fundraising events. Roy: I make a cloutie dumpling for the Burns Supper and other events. Marie: I volunteer at the Dementia café once a month in the North Church Hall.*

**What hobbies do you enjoy?** *Roy: I like going to agricultural shows in the summer months. Marie: I enjoy knitting, and (since new hip in 2023) walking my dog.*

**What is the most surprising thing about you that we might not yet know?** *Roy: I played cricket for years. I still like to watch when time allows. I am also a keen supporter of Jeanfield Swifts FC. Marie: the first time I was ever on a plane was to Australia!*

## Andrew's prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, what a busy hot and sunny weather we had, I love summer but not too hot, and also it's about family, love, friends and kindness, all sharing as well that we all do in our church family too. Please pray for the families with grief, alone, sad, and help them remember the good times and positive. Lastly we pray for other outside friends too who are struggling to love, compassion and to show kindness to all. We love you for creating us. Amen, let us bring our light.



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

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### 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)

The next issue of the newsletter is due out on **Thursday 27th June 2024**, and will cover the months of July and August. All contributions by **Sunday 23rd June** please to the editor: [Marjorie.clark@btinternet.com](mailto: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.

## Sunday morning rotas for June

### Welcome Teams

- 2nd Perth City (John Dewar)
- 9th Perth South (Malcolm Thom)
- 16th Oakbank (Donald Stewart)
- 23rd Burghmuir (Isobel Sinclair)
- 30th Bridgend (Alastair Byers)

### Beadle Duty

- 2nd Bill Chalmers
- 9th Andy Turnbull
- 16th Malcolm Thom
- 23rd Raymond Young
- 30th Tom Morrison

### Readers

- 2nd Roy Nicoll
- 9th Lorna Morrison
- 16th Nicola Macnee
- 23rd Sheena Beange
- 30th Lesley Mackie

### Tea/Coffee Teams

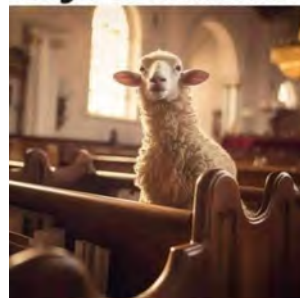
- 2nd Wendy Burnett
- 9th Frances Turnbull
- 16th Marjorie Clark
- 23rd Isobel Sinclair
- 30th Joyce Thom

### AV Team

- 2nd Raymond Young and John Paton
- 9th Gillian Heath and Peter Barrett
- 16th Peter Barrett and Raymond Young
- 23rd John Paton and Alastair Byers
- 30th Gillian Heath and Andrew Davies



### Forget Elf on the Shelf



Jesus wants Ewe in a Pew