



St. Matthew's Church, Perth

e-Newsletter No. 81

July/August 2024

Letter from the Manse

Friends, in Isaiah 43:19, the Lord says, "See, I am doing a new thing!" I am encouraged by this verse time and time again. At all times, and in all places, we are invited to look out for the new things that God is doing. I was reminded of this when I spoke to some Christian brothers from Perth: North Church on Sunday afternoon after the prayer gathering with and for refugees and asylum seekers. Having fled from Iran where they faced persecution for being Christians, they are viewing their life in Scotland as a new life, a fresh start. Although they miss their families and think of them every day, they are putting their energy into making a way for themselves, supported by their 'Scottish Mum' and their church family. God is doing a new thing in their lives and I pray that God will bless them abundantly as they work hard on their new path. They certainly blessed me.



The verse in Isaiah continues, "I am making a way in the wilderness." Even when we find ourselves in challenging times and we have a sense of hopelessness, God is preparing a path for us and we have the assurance that God will be doing a new thing. I wonder what new things God might bring to your attention today. I wonder what new things God might call you to do or begin – it's exciting, isn't it?

Over July and August, we have our Summer Gallery and Festival. Do not be fooled – this is never the same Summer Gallery as the year before! You are invited to spend time enjoying and being challenged by the various media of arts on display in the sanctuary across the summer. One visit is not enough as the displays will change often. There will be musical offerings on Wednesday evenings (and one Tuesday!). There will be a display giving information about the church and our artefacts on the chancel area (stage) and an opportunity to spend time in our Prayer Space, which can be found in the Session Room. Take time in the stillness or use the prayer activities to draw closer to God. Use this space as you need. We are doing some new things at St Matthew's Church and we invite you to come along, no matter what draws you to the church each day. Come along and be. Come along and enjoy some company. Come along and be inspired.

I'm also starting up a new group called, "Faith Natters," which will meet on Thursdays, July 11th, 18th and 25th and August 8th, 15th and 22nd in the café area of the church from 14.00-15.00. This will provide an opportunity to raise and discuss some of our 'unpopular opinions' - the Bible stories we struggle to understand, the beliefs we have come to challenge, the hymns we love but find difficult to sing because of the words they contain. We will build together a safe and encouraging space, in which we can share freely and respectfully without judgement as we explore real faith together. This is not a course so dip in and out as it suits you. If you have a question you'd like to ask anonymously or in advance to give me time to prepare my response, please use the post-box in the café area. Come along and listen or come along and share – all are welcome.



Whatever new thing God is calling you to see or experience, I pray that it will draw you into deeper wonder of the One who created you and the One who longs to be welcomed into your life. May you know God's presence as you walk your path through wilderness or abundance.

With blessings,

Your Minister,

Fiona

CHURCH NEWS

Kirk Session update - from our Session Clerk, Raymond Young.

Our next Session meeting will just miss the deadline for this newsletter. However, let me give you a taster of what being an elder involves. This month, members of the Session attended a training event being run by the Presbytery. This course was entitled 'What it means to be a Trustee' and 'Church Law'. CPD (Continuing Professional Development) course for elders! The Kirk Session members are the Charity Trustees of St Matthew's and therefore need to be up to date with charity law as well as church law. A lot of the business of the Session is about managing the affairs of the congregation considering the responsibilities as a charity and as part of the Church of Scotland.

The agenda of our Session meetings covers a wide variety of topics. We review membership changes, safeguarding, the finances, and our buildings. (We are currently waiting for word of a significant grant which will allow us to tackle some urgent building issues.) The Session also consider reports on the work of the Presbytery, PACT and on the developing working relationships with St John's Kirk and the North Church as our part in implementing the Presbytery's Mission Plan. And we discuss and support the Minister's vision for the future, which she talked about at the Stated Annual Meeting, and her plans, like, for example, for *Faith Matters* and a *Prayer Space* during the Summer Gallery and Festival. And all of this in meetings which begin with bible reading and prayer – meetings which integrate work and worship.

In memoriam We send condolences to the family of Freda Ross, who died on 13th June. Freda was a member of St Matthew's and enjoyed many walks with our walking group.

Our next Church walk is on **Saturday 6 July**, and will be led by Andrew. The walk is about 6km to Loch of the Lowes through Dunkeld Golf course, and will take about 2 hours. Please bring suitable clothing, water and wee snack. Meet at 9 30a.m. at Broxden Park & Ride. Please contact Andrew or Fiona Bruce (by 2nd July) to let us know if you're coming and we will book a cafe for lunch too.

On fmbruce6@googlemail.com and andyjd16@gmail.com 01738 638152
Or 07591 174167

The next issue of the newsletter is due out on **Friday 30th August**. All contributions by **Sunday 25th August** please to the editor: Marjorie.clark@btinternet.com

Zoom and You Tube Links for Sunday morning services

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 where services can be watched at the time most convenient to yourselves.

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 when we resume after the summer)

Our **Boys' Breakfast Blether** meets on the second Wednesday of every month in Wetherspoons (next door to the church on Tay Street) at **10a.m.** It's a chance for men to get together, enjoy a breakfast and have a blether. Come along on **10th July** and **14th August**— as always, new attendees will be made welcome.

Andrew's prayer

a simple poem

whatever is true
what is honourable
whatever is just, whatever is
pure, whatever is lovely, whatever
is gracious worthy of praise
Think about those things
and positives also special things
with love
Amen

REPORT ON OPEN DOORS IN MAY & JUNE 2024

When I had occasion recently to re-visit the Funding Applications Janet Martin and I made to re-furbish St Matthew's it struck me forcibly how, in line with our Vision for the future of our church, we emphasised the "Open Door" as part of our Application. All of the Trust Applications we made were on the basis of our vision "Opening the Past to the Future" where we talked about opening our church to the community as much as possible.



To that end, following our "Warm Spaces" openings in January, February and March, we have opened our doors once again throughout May and June. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those Elders and church members who have volunteered to do this and

have welcomed 140 visitors through our doors in May and June.

As usual, I am astounded to find these visitors came, not only from throughout the UK and Europe, but also from as far afield as Brazil, China, India, Columbia, Australia, Thailand and South Africa. Amazing! Hopefully they will all have gone home knowing a bit more about our church and the part it plays in the community of Perth.

Janet has also produced "Prayer Cards" which will be a great resource for our Open Doors in future.

Fiona Bruce

(see also Janet's Jottings later in the newsletter—Ed.)

St. Matthew's Summer Gallery and Festival

Saturday 5th July - Friday 30th August

Probably, by the time you are reading this we will have had our Introductory Art Market Day on Sat. 29th June, from 10—4p.m. Many thanks to all those who helped.

Help is the essence of what comes next. 8 weeks of opening the church to visitors to the Summer Gallery. In order to do that we require a lot of support from the congregation. We already have Team leaders for each week throughout the Summer, BUT, these leaders need to have a team to look after the visitors.

There is a list on the Café Notice board where you can add your name to the time slots you can be available to help. We would like two persons in each slot to be able to provide tea / coffee to visitors and to talk to visitors about the church. This year there is a church exhibit which helps to explain what the church is here in St. Matthew's.

There are many leaflets and brochures about the various artists and performers that will be at St. Matthew's during the summer. Please take some home and pass them on to friends.

The Summer Gallery and Festival is one of the major outreach contributions the church makes each year bringing in over 2000 visitors. Not many churches can boast that number. But it is all on the back of the volunteers that make it work. That is yourselves. Please check out the Rota.

Tom Morrison



This year's Summer Gallery will also include musical entertainment each Wednesday evening (apart from 20th August which is a Tuesday! Please note this change to what is advertised in the brochure.)

The evenings have been arranged by Andy Turnbull, who writes: Angie (10th July) and Neil (17th July) came round to St Matthew's for a sound check and I can guarantee you two very enjoyable evenings of gentle folk music with Angie (guitar and vocals) and a cool night of light jazz with Neil on sax, vocals and backing.

On 24 and 31 July, it's the turn of wind musicians, first, on the 24th, from Perth Symphony Orchestra and on 31st from Caledonian Winds. Relax and enjoy two evenings of gentle and varied wind music. Come to the café for a relaxing coffee or tea before each performance session which will last for no more than an hour.

The full brochure is available on the St. Matthew's Facebook page; it can also be downloaded at:

<https://publuu.com/flip-book/77653/1163806>

An Open Door

You often hear people say that summer has arrived when they have spotted their first swallow or heard the cuckoo call. No matter what the weather, I feel summer is here when the first visitors of the season appear at my house; some years that can be well before Easter!

I am blessed with having a multitude of friends from near and far and so I operate an open-door policy for visitors. I am convinced my neighbours think I run a youth hostel or a B&B as so many visitors come and go. I think it was Benjamin Franklin who once said something like "House guests are like fresh fish, after about 3 days, they go off". Fortunately, I don't share that sentiment, in fact I am always quite sad when it is time for guests to go. My only house rule is that they relax, make themselves at home, they can get up when they want, do their own thing, or we can do things together.

Living on one's own, it is nice to have someone to cook for, to sit a bit longer at the table after a meal reminiscing, sharing funny stories and planning trips out and about. I also find that what starts out as a light-hearted blether can often lead to mulling over deeper issues leading to a sort of mutual counselling – no need to pay for a therapist! Having visitors also means one is forced to make time to take a break from one's own routine. It's nice to go out with visitors and show them local attractions that one would normally drive past in the usual busyness of life. It can be fun being a tourist in your own area, as one learns so much about places that one normally takes for granted.

I have kept a visitor's book for a number of years. I enjoy flicking through it and remembering the visits of my friends and recollecting what we got up to. Visitors are instructed to write something memorable (preferably humorous) in it, so that we can enjoy sharing those memories the next time they return. The book is also a handy record of the dates people visited. It is amazing how quickly time flies and one forgets exactly when people stayed.

St Matthew's has a visitor's book as well. We will have our door open for the Art Gallery. We shall welcome visitors and tell them a bit about our church and our faith, as well as finding out where they come from. If you can spare some time to volunteer, I can guarantee you will find it very rewarding. People come from all over the world. They love learning about our church and worship as well as being keen to share their own stories. It is a very rewarding and enriching experience sharing God's love with strangers. In Hebrews 13 v 2 it tells us *"Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by doing so, some people have entertained angels without knowing it"*. What an exciting prospect – an opportunity not to be missed! Please help to keep our door open, you might be pleasantly surprised at who walks through it.



Important information about this year's Blythwood Appeal

This year in Perth the Shoebox Appeal will be launched with a coffee morning on Saturday 31st August and then the drop off days for boxes will be Friday 1st and Saturday 2nd November. The shoebox sort will take place from Monday 11th - Thursday 14th November. An important change is that this year, the filled shoeboxes from the central belt of Scotland are being sent to Ukraine. Blythwood are concentrating the shipment of shoeboxes to where the needs are greatest. This has implications for what will be included in the boxes—they do not need baby shoe boxes.

Last year 5% of all Tayside shoe boxes were baby boxes and this year, any baby boxes collected would need to go elsewhere and not to Ukraine. For the last few years we have been short of boxes for teens, boys and men, so it would be good to encourage supporters to concentrate on these recipients instead. More information will be included in our next newsletter.

Who's in the pews? (or who's there on the chairs?)

This new feature in the newsletter has been a hit with readers— many thanks to Janet Martin, whose brainchild this is, and who conducts the interviews. This month we introduce you to three more of our members:

Norma & David Wright

Where were you born/brought up? Norma - We were both born in Edinburgh, I lived in Southouse and Dave in the Royal Mile, a stone's throw from Edinburgh Castle.

What is/or was your occupation? Dave - I was a maintenance Manager with the prison service in Inverness and Perth. Norma – I was a florist.

What brought you to St Matthew's? Norma – a few years ago I met Ewen Gilchrist, who was minister at St Matthew's. he invited me along and I thought I would give it a try.

Are you involved in any groups/or volunteering at St Matthew's or anywhere else? Norma – I am the flower arranger in St Matthew's and Dave is my able assistant! We also volunteer at the Dementia Café in the North Church and a Drop In Centre in King Edward St.

Tell us about any hobbies you enjoy? We both enjoy gardening, reading, indoor bowls and floral art.

What is the most surprising thing about you that we might not yet know? Norma – at the age of 51 I had a career change. I followed my passion for floristry, took a college course and then opened my own shop in Edinburgh. Dave – I was born with a disability and had to spend years in hospital. I was determined not to let it bother me and I completed my apprenticeship and went on to further my career.



Dinah McAleese

Where were you born/brought up? I was born in Hampstead in London and then brought up in Chingford and then Maida Vale.

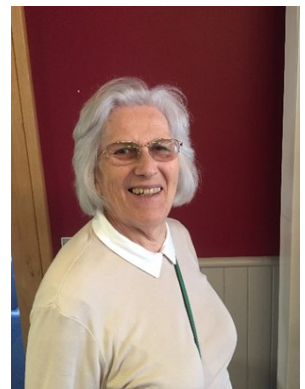
What is/or was your occupation? I was a primary School teacher specialising in art & movement. Latterly when I moved to Perth, I was employed in adult social care with P&K Council.

What brought you to St Matthew's? Janet Martin invited me. She collected us one frosty morning, the girls loved the Junior Church (and Andy the Youth leader!) and I soon made new friends, we felt instantly at home.

Are you involved in any groups/or volunteering at St Matthew's or anywhere else? I was involved in the Healing Ministry for many years, as well as being an elder and on the welcome team. I also enjoyed being the church librarian and hosting a Bible study at home. I still help church events and café duty when I am able.

Tell us about any hobbies you enjoy? Swimming and gardening. I loved hill walking and was a keen skier, but the body won't oblige anymore!

What is the most surprising thing about you that we might not yet know? I have Dyslexia, which went undiagnosed in childhood. I was friendly with the cellist Jacqueline Du Pre, who attended my school for a while.



Calling all quizzers



The annual Christian Aid Quiz is being held on **Friday August 30th** at **Letham St Mark's Church at 7p.m.** It promises interesting questions, delicious food, prizes and fun!

Anyone is invited to enter teams of up to 4 people. Friends, workmates, families, study groups, sports teams, or turn up by yourself and make a team with someone you didn't know before. It costs £6 per person, including refreshments, payable on the night. For further information, please contact Marjorie Clark.

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

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FLOWERS

July	Donated by	Delivered by
7th	Angela and Wolfgang	Alastair and Carolyn Byers
14th	Marjorie Clark	Frances Turnbull
21st	Janette Taylor	Nicola Macnee
28th	Cathy Gray	Evelyn McLaren
Aug. 4th	Jean Young	Marjorie Clark
11th	John Spence	Lesley Mackie
18th	Jenny Fraser	Janette Miller
25th	Roy and Marie Nicoll	Tom and Lorna Morrison

AV Teams

July 7th Alastair and Raymond

14th John and Andrew

21st Gillian and John

28th Peter and Gillian

Aug. 4th John and Alastair

11th Raymond and Gillian

18th Andrew and John

25th Alastair and Raymond

Sunday morning rotas for July/August

Welcome Teams

July 7th Gannochy (Wendy Burnett)

14th Muirton (Janet Martin)

21st Perth City (John Dewar)

28th Perth South (Malcolm Thom)

Aug. 4th Oakbank (Donald Stewart)

11th Burghmuir (Isobel Sinclair)

18th Bridgend (Alastair Byers)

25th Gannochy (Wendy Burnett)

Beadle Duty

July 7th Bill Chalmers

14th Andy Turnbull

21st Malcolm Thom

28th Raymond Young

Aug. 4th Tom Morrison

11th Bill Chalmers

18th Andy Turnbull

25th Malcolm Thom

READERS

July 7th Janet Martin

14th Alastair Byers

21st Carolyn Byers

28th David Firth

Aug. 4th Joan Lackie

11th Fiona Bruce

18th Lorna Gray

25th John Dewar

TEA/COFFEE TEAMS

July 7th Wendy Burnett

14th Frances Turnbull

21st Marjorie Clark

28th Isobel Sinclair

Aug. 4th Joyce Thom

11th Wendy Burnett

18th Frances Turnbull

25th Marjorie Clark