



# St. Matthew's Church, Perth

## e-Newsletter No. 85

### December 2024

#### Letter from the Manse



Friends, in our house this year, Advent has already begun. We've been to the school Christmas Fair and we've built our first snowman. Calum is getting ready for his first school nativity and we're finding opportunities to practise the songs everywhere: in the car, in the bath, in coffee shops and playgrounds. I'm going to have to Sellotape my mouth shut when it comes to the actual performances so I don't join in! Yes, we're definitely getting prepared for Christmas and it's not quite December yet...not even Advent yet.

In the midst of all the 'stuff' of preparing for Christmas, I love the Advent season. Sometimes it's the anticipation, sometimes the waiting, sometimes the preparing that draws me to this season. This year, it's the sense of longing that has captured me. What are you longing for? I long for Christ to break into this broken world afresh through us, sending us to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to set people free from their prisons, and to comfort those who mourn, just as we read about in Isaiah chapter 61. In the world, I long for peace, acceptance and love to be the values by which we all live together. In our country, I long for people to be treated equitably so that everyone might be afforded the right opportunities and resources for them to flourish. In our city, I long for homelessness and struggles with addiction to become a thing of the past and for asylum-seekers and refugees to have a better quality of life that allows them to live rather than simply exist. In my family, it's hard not to long for better times, when Mum was still with us and we were able to celebrate chaotically together, but I long for plenty of opportunities to make memories. When it comes to our church family, I long for us to be a people of gathering in and sending out. I long for the church to be a place where we can gather to learn together, to encourage one another and to praise God together so that, filled up, we can go out into our ordinary lives and share God's love with more people. Please don't think that I am writing this to other people and not you – it takes all of us together.

Take the nativity story. It needs every single one of the characters to make it the treasured story shared over the centuries. Obviously, Jesus is a very important character but who would he be without Mary and Joseph, who welcomed him, raised him and loved him? Without the innkeepers who said, "no room at the inn," Jesus would not have had the most humble of beginnings. Jesus was born in a Travelodge doesn't quite have the same ring to it. Without the sheep, the shepherds would not have been out on the hillside. Would they have been alerted to the angel-song if they'd been at home? Without the animals, there would have been no manger in which to lay the newborn baby. Without the star, would the magi have made the journey? No matter the details of the story itself, it would not be the story we love and love to share without each and every character. The people who witnessed this great wonder then took their stories out into their lives and they not only told them to others but showed the impact of the birth of Jesus through their way of living. And this is God's challenge to us too: how will we take seriously our particular parts in the living-out and sharing of the Christmas story?

So while you make your Christmas plans and get stressed over the right presents or food, how to fit everyone in or how to make Christmas special on your own, please remember that you are a special part of the Christmas story too. For at Christmas, we celebrate how Jesus came to this world and continues to come to this world in our hearts and through our lives. May you know that you are part of God's plan to share his love with the whole world. May you be empowered to share this message in the way only you can. May you know that you are loved and treasured by your Church family, not only at Christmas but all the year through. You are one of a kind and we need you. Without you, St Matthew's would not be the warm, welcoming, supportive, encouraging, transformative church family we are today and will be into the future.

Friends, I give thanks for each and every one of you. I wish you a meaningful Christmas and a New Year that is full of peace and joy when it comes. I look forward to our opportunities to gather from near and afar this Advent and Christmas and hope to see you at our services and events along with those you are inspired to invite.

With love and blessings, your Minister, Fiona

## CHURCH NEWS

### 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** It

**is also possible to join these services by phone—tel. 0131 460 1196**, and when asked, key in the above meeting id, and follow the instructions. 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/@stmatthewspertth](https://youtube.com/@stmatthewspertth)

OR [youtube.com/@stmatthewspertth/streams](https://youtube.com/@stmatthewspertth/streams)

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

**Please note—details of our services during Advent and Christmas are on the final (extra) page of this newsletter**

### Midweek Musings

Wednesday at 9 a.m. Zoom at

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89813870441...>

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

Or phone 0131 460 1196

The **Midweek Musings** are taking a sabbatical from January—we will let you know if and when they return!

### St Matthew's Walking Group

On **Saturday 7 December** we will be doing a 4-5 mile walk around Auchterarder on the Provost's Walk near the Lochy Burn and Ruthven Water, led by the Bruce / Davies family, followed by lunch. It's a relatively flat walk but may be muddy in places.

Please meet as usual at Broxden Park & Ride at 9.30am and from there we can share cars. Please let Fiona know if you are coming and if you wish to stay for lunch.

[FMBruce6@googlemail.com](mailto:FMBruce6@googlemail.com)

Or 07787 103531.



**THE GUILD** The Guild Christmas lunch is planned for the Royal George hotel on **Monday 9th December**. Members who have not yet booked should contact me or Margaret Chalmers as soon as possible. We look forward to enjoying a meal together.

We were pleased to pass over a lovely box of toys, books, pyjamas and colouring pencils to Fiona for her Sunshine Box charity, and have received a beautiful thank you from her to say that our donation will help to make the children in Tayside hospitals very happy and blessed this Christmas. Thank you to all who donated to our box.

*Lorna Morrison.*

**The Boys' Breakfast Blether** meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 10 a.m. in Wetherspoons next door to the church—all (males) welcome.

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

The Kirk Session met again in November and besides the usual reports on finance, safeguarding, membership update, staffing, property, and Presbytery, we continued to look at the development of the new Teams which are designed to improve the management of the church and to get more people involved in the decision-making processes – including you?

In the last newsletter I said that we were planning a church lunch after the service on 1<sup>st</sup> December. However, with so many things going on in November and December, we have changed this to January 12<sup>th</sup>. At that lunch we will launch the Teams, explain what they will do and how you can get involved.

Session also noted that the end of December sees the retirement of three people who have played important roles over the years. They are not disappearing and will continue to be involved in the life of the church. But it's time to say 'thank you' for their contributions over the last few (and not so few) years.

**Isobel Sinclair** has lovingly tended the garden at the front and side of the church. It is typical of Isobel's energy that she needs to be replaced by a group of no less than 6 people! Thanks to them for volunteering and many thanks to Isobel for this important ministry which ensures that the gardens are a welcoming and calming space within the city.

**Marjorie Clark** has a number of roles within St Matthew's and one of them has been Newsletter Editor since Covid, (and magazine editor prior to Covid.) She is giving up the Editor role after this Newsletter which is her last! She is taking on other tasks – but many thanks to Marjorie for the Editorial role which has included patiently chasing up people like me! The new Communications Team will be responsible for the Newsletter – the name of the next editor will be announced in due course!

**John Dewar** has been our Treasurer for over 10 years. He has steered the church through the stormy financial waters – especially during Covid and thereafter. The role of Treasurer in a church is both critical and onerous. I cannot tell you just how he will be replaced – but plans are being worked through which will allow John to take the well-deserved break after December. There will be an opportunity to say more about John's years as Treasurer in the New Year, but in the meantime, many thanks to John for looking after our monies so well. As we are reminded by the Apostle Paul, the body of Christ involves all sorts of ministries – and certainly John's financial management was one of his ministries. John – thank

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

### **Sunday 8th December— 3p.m. Crimboh with the the Bohemians**

A concert full of cheer to get you in the festive spirit St Matthew's Church—tickets £10 (£5 for under-16s)

**Sat. 14th December—Carol-singing at  
Dobbies in aid of Christian Aid 11.00—3.00**

**Fri. 20th December at 7p.m.—PACT Carol  
service in the Congregational Church,  
Kinnoull St/Mill St.**

### **The St Matthews Burns Supper 2025**

will be held on **Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> January** at 6:30 for 7pm in the Main Church Hall. Tickets will be on sale from December, priced £10 for adults: £5 for children.

The evening will include a traditional three course meal as well as speeches, recitals and music from many of our own church members.

Any volunteers to help prepare or perform please let Wendy Burnett know. Mobile no: 07958 744795. Email: burnett4@blueyonder.co.uk

Particularly we will need volunteers to make Leek & Potato or Lentil soup!

### **“Warm Spaces” returns!**



I'm pleased to report that “Warm Spaces” is back again in St Matthew's Church on **Wednesday and Friday 1.30-4.30pm** starting on **Wednesday 8 January** through to **Wednesday 28 March 2025**.

As well as being able to chat and play games and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee with home baking, there will be an activities programme which will be advertised at church.

Come along and enjoy a warmth of space and company in the winter months!  
Any queries please contact me, Fiona Bruce, on [FMBruce6@googlemail.com](mailto:FMBruce6@googlemail.com)

### **More thank yous**

In November, Christopher Dobbs gave a fascinating talk on his life's work on the Mary Rose taking us from the early excavations to the recovery and finally the creation of the Mary Rose Museum. The following week, Michael Ellacott and his friends delighted us with an evening of music, song and recitation.

Many thanks to both Chris and Michael and the team of volunteers who made these evenings possible; they raised £1600 and £850 respectively for church funds.

## Janet's Jottings The long-awaited bairn

As I write this, I am in Worcester visiting my niece and her newborn baby boy Casey, who is her 4<sup>th</sup> child and my great nephew. Fiona had to be induced a few days early; not that that made any difference to Casey. He chose to ignore this 'encouragement' to appear and came in his own time the next day - not when the doctor suggested! As always, there is great anticipation and excitement as we await the arrival of a baby. Then the delight and wonder when we hold them in our arms and look at those tiny wee fingers and toes and the sheer perfection of a new creation.

As we journey through Advent towards Christmas where we mark the birth of a baby that was to change the world, I know that in amongst all the commercialism and hype of our modern world, there is still an anticipation and excitement of the real 'reason for the season'. It's so desperately sad that war, hate, pain, and suffering are still rife across our planet 2,000 years after the angels announced Jesus' birth and the anticipation of peace it was to bring to all. We must not lose hope that the world will achieve peace one day. Meanwhile, I leave you with this wonderful poem, which I have shared before, (written by the late David Ogston, a previous minister of St John's Kirk), who tells us in our own language, about the wonder of the Christ child. The last verse reminds us that we might not have much to give in the way of presents to this baby, but the greatest gift we can give him, is to tell HIS story to others and share HIS peace.

### Bairnie Jesus

Bairnie Jesus born for me  
Hear this song in praise o ye  
Jist like folk o Galilee  
I praise ye in yer glory.

Daunlit on yer mammy's knee  
Bairnie Jesus pure an wee  
On Christmas Day this sang I gie  
Tae tell the auld, auld story.

Luv came doon tae the warld yon nicht  
The stars shone oot wi aa their micht  
That fowk around could see the sicht  
O the bairn in the Christmas story.

I canna gie ye gifties gran,  
Myrrh or gowd frae a furreign lan  
But I hae a sang, sae weel I can  
Sing oot tae tell o yer glory.

David D. Ogston



### Andrew's prayer

#### St Matthew's Christmas Greetings

This Advent we hope to re-introduce the St Matthew's Christmas card; instead of sending individual cards to our fellow members of the congregation, we are invited to sign the large card which will appear on a display board in the sanctuary, or pin a signed card on the board. There will also be an opportunity to make a financial donation; this will be split between local charity CATH and the Christian Aid Gaza Appeal. For those unable to come to church, feel free to send your greeting by email or phone to the editor and your name will be added to the card.



Let us pray Dear Lord Jesus  
The sun is rising, The snow has gone away  
but we are so Thankful For everything  
That you do For us with our history  
love and hopes. can i sing to you my  
Lord. In how love means to me and  
Xmas means to you also in everything  
What can i give him,  
poor as i am,  
If i were a shepherd,  
I would bring a lamb,  
If i were a wise man  
I would do my part  
yet what i can i give him—  
Give my heart  
by song is Susan Boyel.  
Amen Have a wonderful Christmas



**Who's in the pews? (or who's there on the chairs?)** This month we introduce you to three more of our members:

## Muriel Smith

**Where were you born/brought up?** I was born in Perth and have spent all my days here.

**What is/or was your occupation?** Although I am well retired now, my career was in office administration—a posh description for a clerical typist!

**What brought you to St Matthew's?** My late husband Lawson and I were looking for a change of church. We visited St Matthew's away back in the 1980s and heard Ewen Gilchrist preach—we knew we didn't need to look any further!

**Are you involved in any groups/or volunteering at St Matthew's or anywhere else?** I am a retired church elder, also I enjoyed being a member of the church choir until Covid came along. Lawson and I both ran the Sunday School when we were in St Andrew's Church. At that time there were around 120 children attending which resulted in 3 double-decker buses having to be booked to go on the Sunday School picnic—changed days!

**Tell us about any hobbies you enjoy?** I really enjoy doing cryptic crosswords.

**What is the most surprising thing about you that we might not yet know?** In the 1980s I was delighted to receive an invitation to the Royal Garden Party at Holyrood House. I don't know why. Lawson and I attended and although we didn't meet the Queen face to face, the marvellous buffet provided was great compensation!



## Joyce and Malcolm Thom

**Where were you born/brought up?** *Joyce:* I was born and brought up in Perth and have lived here all my life. *Malcolm:* I was born in a cottage at Gloagburn Farm. I spent my childhood in various farms around Perth.

**What is/or was your occupation?** *Joyce:* I was a nurse/midwife. *Malcolm:* I was a joiner to trade and then I became a prison officer until I retired.

**What brought you to St Matthew's?** We were previously members of St Andrew's in Atholl Street. When it closed, we came to St Matthew's and have been members here for the past 35 years.

**Are you involved in any groups/or volunteering at St Matthew's or anywhere else?** *Joyce:* I am an elder and volunteer on the catering team, Sunday coffee, door duty and café and help at events held in the church. *Malcolm:* I am on the Beadle team, on the Property Committee, and repair things around the church. I also am part of the catering team, Sunday coffee, door duty and happy to be a general dogsbody!

**Tell us about any hobbies you enjoy?** *Joyce:* I like going to exercise class, and both Malcolm and I enjoy reading, playing golf and walking, and are part of the church walking group, as well as the badminton club.

**What is the most surprising thing about you that we might not yet know?** *Joyce:* I was Junior Sports Champion at Perth Academy—oh, to be as fit now as I was then! *Malcolm:* I have milked cows and brought lambs into the world. Not skills that have been required of me in my volunteering at St Matthew's—as yet!

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

**(see additional page for details  
Advent and Christmas services)**

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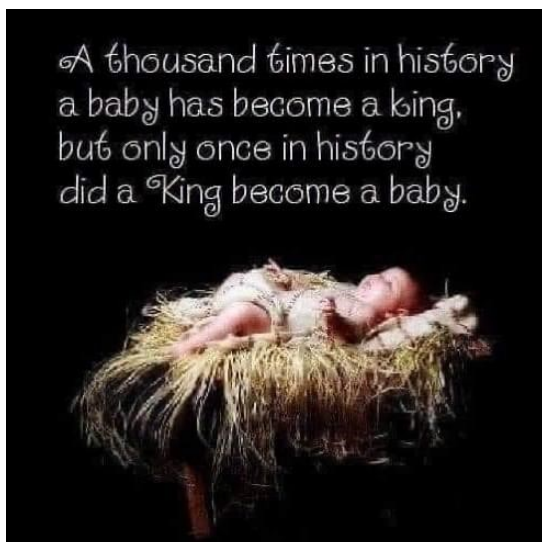
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**CHURCH FLOWERS**

Dec.	Donated by	Delivered by
1st	Bill and Eileen Montgomery	John and Helen Dewar
8th	David Wright	Nicola Macnee
15th	Norma Wright	Alison Sweeney
22nd	Ina Soreide	Marjorie Clark
29th	Ronnie Soreide	Marjorie Clark



**Sunday morning rotas for December**

**Welcome Teams**

- 1st Gannochy (Wendy Burnett)
- 8th Muirton (Janet Martin)
- 15th Perth City (John Dewar)
- 22nd Perth South (Malcolm Thom)
- 29th Oakbank (Donald Stewart)

**Beadle Duty**

- 1st Andy Turnbull
- 8th Malcolm Thom
- 15th Raymond Young
- 22nd Tom Morrison
- 29th Bill Chalmers

**READERS**

- 1st Janet Martin
- 8th Carolyn Byers
- 15th Alastair Byers
- 22nd Lesley Mackie
- 29th David Firth

**TEA/COFFEE TEAMS**

- 1st Frances Turnbull
- 8th Marjorie Clark
- 15th Isobel Sinclair
- 22nd Joyce Thom
- 29th Wendy Burnett

**AV Desk**

- 1st Alastair Byers and Nicola Macnee
- 8th John Paton and Kylie Murray
- 15th Raymond Young and John Paton
- 22nd Alastair Byers and Andrew Davies
- 29th Nicola Macnee and John Paton

***"And it's goodbye from her"*** As I complete this my final issue of the newsletter as its editor, can I thank everyone who has contributed to it with articles and information over the past years; I send my successor every good wish, and look forward to how the newsletter develops in the future. Thank you! *Marjorie Clark*



## **Advent and Christmas services at St Matthew's 2024**

The Church family at St Matthew's offers a warm invitation to all for our Advent and Christmas services and events. You are welcome whether you've been many times before, whether you come along when you can, or you're planning to come to St Matthew's for the first time. Please consider inviting others and consider joining in the services and events hosted by our Christian siblings in other local churches. A leaflet will be available in church shortly with details of our events and those of others.

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December, 11.00, Worship for First Sunday in Advent**

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December, 11.00, A Time to Remember service:**

This quieter, reflective service gives us permission to step outside the joy of Christmas and sit with the other emotions we experience at this time of year. There will be opportunities to light candles or add a name to our Tree of Remembrance, as we remember those who have died and who we miss at Christmas. Please extend an invitation to anyone you know who might appreciate this opportunity.

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December, 11.00, Worship for the Third Sunday in Advent**

**Each day from Monday 16<sup>th</sup> to Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December:**

**09.30 Advent reflections:**

These reflections are led by a variety of individuals so we will hear different voices as well as different perspectives. Our reflections will be followed by refreshments and bacon rolls.

**12.00 – 13.00 Soul Space:**

The sanctuary will be open for an hour each lunchtime with an invitation to pray or reflect. Candles will be available to light and you may add names to the Tree of Remembrance.

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December, 14.00, Carols and Capers:**

An afternoon opportunity to sing some carols and have some fun with the Christmas story, this will be followed by refreshments and some sweet treats.

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 11.00, Nativity service:**

Feel free to come along dressed as a character from the nativity or take the opportunity to dress up during the service as we celebrate the Christmas story with a nativity play in our morning worship. Will you be the star?

**Christmas Eve, Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December, 18.30, A Church Family Christmas:**

Come and take your place in the St Matthew's Church family for this relaxed service, as we share stories, sing carols, play games and celebrate Christmas together. The dress code is comfortable so wear your Christmas jumpers or your onesies; bring your baffies or your cuddly toys. Simply come as you are so we can celebrate as family together without sprouts or long speeches!

**Christmas Day, Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December, 10.30:**

Come and join the celebration, as we gather for a short service on Christmas morning. If you'd like to bring along a present you've received, there will be an opportunity for show and tell. However, it's more important to be together so just bring yourself.

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> December, 11.00, Worship for the space in-between**