



St Matthew's News

No. 89 May 2025

Rev. Fiona reflects

Friends, as I write this, we've just journeyed through a thoughtful and moving Holy Week and Easter at St Matthew's. It has been a time of reflection, honesty and vulnerability, as we have chosen to discuss and explore our faith together. I have found this refreshing and challenging at the same time. There has been a lot to think about. In our Holy Week reflections, those leading grappled with various parts of the Easter story and the characters involved as well as exploring what faith is. There was much to feed the mind as well as our bodies being well-fed with bacon rolls and egg rolls and plentiful tea and coffee.



On Thursday, I found it incredibly moving to share Communion together around the same tables at which we'd shared breakfast. We had a wonderful Passion trail in the church, which provided a chance to interact with the stories we have been telling across the week. Our 'Faith Natters at Easter' session on Good Friday only convinced me further that we need another series of Faith Natters. At the PACT Walk of Witness on Good Friday and the Easter Day dawn service at Quarrymill, it was encouraging to join with Christians from various churches across the city.

On Easter morning at St Matthew's, I found myself wondering what on earth I was going to do with the hundreds of chocolate eggs that had been donated but I needn't have worried – the church was packed and everyone who enjoys

chocolate went away with several eggs (if they hadn't eaten them during the service!). We shared Communion together along with the assurance that none of us have all the answers when it comes to faith. It was a real time of celebration and joy. I offer heartfelt thanks to all who contributed to the Holy Week and Easter programmes and a special thanks to my 'coffee angel.'

And so we find ourselves in the post-Easter Day phase – we're still in the season of Easter but left feeling a bit like the first disciples did and wondering, 'what next?' Well, I'd love for us to continue our exploration of faith and life together. For the next four weeks, Thursday is going to become a contact point in the week. From 10.00 until 14.00, a prayer space will be open in the Session Room. From 10.30-12.00, I will be available at the church for anyone who would like to have a chat. There is no need to make an appointment but if demand is high, you may need to wait your turn. Faith Natters will return for four weeks, beginning on Thursday 1st May from 14.00-15.30 in the Session Room. For those who are not familiar with it, Faith Natters creates a safe space to discuss the questions you have about faith, religion and life in general. There is no fixed format but there is gentle moderation to ensure that everyone who wishes has the chance to speak. We accept that we will not agree on every matter but we commit to listen and engage with respect and openness. All are welcome.



In this Easter season, we will continue to build our Teams and we will be approaching individuals with a view to increasing our Eldership. I will also be running some sessions for those who might be interested in church membership – do get in touch if you'd like to know more. And we'll be working with our friends from Perth: North Church and St John's Kirk to plan an outdoor service of worship on the afternoon of Pentecost, Sunday 8th June.



Someone asked me this week if my diary was less busy now that Easter is past – I'm not sure about that but I do have time available. So please get in touch if you'd value a chat or if you know of someone in need who would appreciate a visit or phone call.

As 'Resurrection people with Easter in our hearts,' let's continue to explore our faith together and look for ways to support one another on our faith journeys. And let's invite others to be part of the 'gathering in' at St Matthew's Church.

Every blessing, your Minister, Fiona

Believing v. Relationship

An excerpt from a reflection presented on Good Friday 2025 by Maureen Pearson

Some approaches to being Christian focus on following the rules and on being 'good.' Yet a focus on being good is often misdirected into a legalism that makes one's acceptability conditional – God's willingness to be in relationship with us is reduced to a measure of how well we adhere to a set of rules.

When an American evangelist John Paton tried to translate the New Testament into the indigenous language of the people to whom he was sent as a missionary, he ran into a snag: there was no word for 'believe' in the people's language. When one of the natives came in, he sat down, stretched out and rested his legs on another chair. Relaxed, he commented on how good it felt to 'lean his whole weight' on those chairs. Immediately Paton knew he had the word he would use for 'believe': 'to lean one's whole weight on.'

Similarly, the Greek and Latin roots of the word 'believe' mean 'to give one's heart to.' Believing doesn't necessarily mean giving one's mental assent but something deeper – giving one's self at the deepest level. In our friendships and relationships with others, we don't 'believe' in the other person (at least not the way we talk about 'believing' in God) – we are in a dynamic, fluid relationship. We learn more all the time, depend on one another, learn to give and take, and spend time with one another out of sheer enjoyment.



Believing does not mean putting your allegiance in one another with a set of doctrines or teachings: it means moving from a second-hand religion of following rules to a religion of relationship. We learn from having heard about Jesus to being in a dynamic and fluid relationship with the Spirit of Christ. The day of Christians living in fear, intimidated by some vague sense of guilt that our Creator is waiting to punish us somehow, is obsolete. We have something other than fear to 'lean our whole weight on.'

Flower Rota

| Date | Donor | Delivery |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| May 4 th | Tom Morrison | Lorna & Tom Morrison |
| May 11 th | Rae Simmons | Helen & John Dewar |
| May 18 th | Isobel Sinclair | Fiona Bruce |
| May 25 th | Frances Turnbull | Frances & Andy Turnbull |

Thank you so much to everyone who donates towards the flower arrangements in the church every Sunday.



Also I would like to ask if there is anyone in the congregation who would like to assist me occasionally to arrange the flowers for the Sunday service. I would really appreciate your help. Norma Wright.

Margaret Kettles was presented with this flower arrangement by the Guild for her birthday. Norma Wright had given a flower arranging demonstration at the Guild's AGM

St Matthew's Church Benevolent Fund.

We often refer to ourselves in St Matthew's as a church family. Like any family we share each other's joys and sorrows, celebrating and supporting the fellow members of our faith community. Like all families, from time to time someone may be having a rough time and could do with a little extra support; this can be offered in different ways – through prayer, or a kindly word, or a bowl of soup! We want to remind you that St Matthew's also has a Benevolent Fund, which can offer financial help.

This is a fund which we have had (and used) for many years – it is ring-fenced specifically for benevolent purposes, and has been able to help people when they find themselves in straitened circumstances, which can cause them great anxiety or distress – perhaps an unexpected expense has derailed any budgeting, or a person has found themselves unemployed or unable to work because of illness but they still face big bills.

Our Benevolent Fund has been able to offer support to individuals in such circumstances. Other ways in which the Benevolent Fund has benefitted the congregation include making a substantial donation towards the Church refurbishment project and building of the ramp outside the church to facilitate easier entry to those with decreased mobility, giving financial assistance towards improving the AV system which allows the morning service to be streamed for those who are house-bound, or can't get to church, and in funding the creation of the church flat as a holiday let to provide a valuable additional income stream to the Church, and which, from time to time, can be offered for respite for carers as well.

You probably won't be much aware of our Benevolent Fund because, as you would expect, grants are given in strict confidentiality. A report goes to the Kirk Session each year, but no names are included. The Fund is in the care of a few Custodians, drawn from the eldership and including the Minister.

Applications are treated confidentially and can be submitted on a relatively simple form; we have left a few of these forms in the foyer of the church, and there are some in the church office too.



Recently I took myself off to the 'pictures' (for those of the younger generation, replace with the word 'Movies'!), being a regular cinema goer, I always enjoy the experience of watching a film on the big screen. On this occasion, it was to see the story of a remarkable man of whom I have admired since I read some of his quotes as a teenager.

The film 'Bonhoeffer' is the story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German Christian, whose strong faith and determination to love his neighbour, went against all that the Nazi regime promoted. Dietrich became a Lutheran pastor and theologian. His many insightful quotes, particularly on faith, obedience, and the importance of action in the face of evil, are still well known today.

He was arrested for speaking out against the hatred and towards Jews, disabled people, homosexuals, gypsies and humanity in general. As a committed Christian, he felt he could never swear an oath to follow Hitler and stated that "Christ was the head of the church, not the Fuhrer". He was the head of an underground seminary training pastors for the Confessing Church, which was eventually shut down by the Gestapo. In protestation, he served as courier for the German resistance. Risking his life, he supplied information to people in Britain and America informing them of the atrocities and murders of people being held in the death camps.

Bonhoeffer was arrested by the Nazis in 1943, but even from prison, he continued his Christian outreach. This included witnessing to his guards, some of whom smuggled his writings out of prison. On 9th April 1945 he was executed, by hanging - without any trial or evidence against him. He witnessed his faith and promoted the love of Christ to the end of his life.

What courage he had. How many of us would have had that same courage when facing such adversity. Would we be able to admit to being Christians and hold steadfastly to our beliefs knowing our lives were in danger? This sign often seen outside a church, may give us food for thought

**' IF YOU WERE ARRESTED
FOR BEING A CHRISTIAN,
WOULD THEY HAVE ENOUGH
EVIDENCE TO CONVICT YOU? '**

Dunkeld Reflective Walks

Fancy a walk with a purpose? Lots of people come to the Dunkeld area to enjoy the scenery but Dunkeld Congregation has created two lovely walks with time for reflection and prayer on the way.

Both begin and end at Dunkeld Cathedral and take in significant places in the community where we pause to consider what these places say to us now.

St. Colmes Walk (approximately 2½ hours) is the more demanding of the two in terms of terrain (though by no means difficult for those with no mobility issues.)

The Birnam Walk is about 1½ hours and takes in sites like the Birnam Oak.

You can join us on one of the regular walks scheduled through the summer starting on May 2nd. (details of future walks published on our website www.dunkeldcathedral.org)

Alternatively, these walks would be ideal for a church group to do for a day out - these can be arranged on a date to suit.

To book either email Rosie Mackie on Rosiemackie2@gmail.com

Who's in the pews?

Ian & Freda Stewart



Where were you born/brought up?

Ian – I was born in Woodside, Burrelton.

Freda – I was born in Meikleour (I like to say behind the big Beech hedge!) as the big house there was a maternity home then.

What is/or was your occupation?

Ian – I was a joiner & house builder until I retired.

Freda – I was in Retail management, but I am also retired now.

What brought you to St Matthew's? Years ago, we attended our

neighbour's funeral. We both appreciated Ewen Gilchrist's preaching so decided we would attend this church.

Are you involved in any groups/or volunteering at St Matthew's or anywhere else?

Ian – I used to help with some maintenance & joinery work.

Freda – I am on the door welcome team, the coffee rota and used to help on the flower rota. I also bake for coffee mornings and events when I can.

Tell us about any hobbies you enjoy?

Ian – gardening, golf and I used to be a keen curler.

Freda – I also enjoy gardening, going to the theatre and walking.

What is the most surprising thing about you that we might not yet know?

We spent the first few years of our marriage living in Canada. It was a great adventure, and our paths crossed with several celebrities through work and travel, including David Soul, Tony Blackburn and Lester Piggott!

Prayer

Creator God

Through you, we know life and love.

You sent your son for us

and we thank you.

Lord, Jesus Christ

Through your life we know life and love.

You gave your life for us

and we thank you.

Holy Spirit,

Through your guidance, we know life and love.

You are all around us

and we thank you.

Lord God, three in one

Let us mirror your love in our lives.

Amen

Maggie Roderick



Christian Aid Week
May 11th - 17th

Book Sale

Celebrating 80 years

Saturday 10th May
10.00am - 4.00pm

Kinnoull Parish Church,
Dundee Road, Perth, PH2 7EY

Coffee, Tea & Small Cakes
in Kinnoull Parish Church Hall



*Please dig out your old books and bring them to church
or ask to have them collected from your home!*
Contact Gerry Watson - 01738 631526 or 07981 181260

our "Warm Spaces" talking about the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

As you'll see, Dave is leading a tour of Jeanfield Cemetery on behalf of the CWGC on Saturday 10 May at 11am.

For details of how to book, please see the poster

EVERY STORY,
FOR EVERMORE
2nd - 11th May

We invite you to Discover, Learn and Remember about the lives of the 1.7 million men and women of the Commonwealth commemorated by the CWGC as we mark the anniversary of VE/VJ Day.

Join us at:

PERTH (JEANFIELD & WELLSHILL) CEMETERY

On the following date:

SATURDAY 10th MAY, 11.00am

Find out more and book your free ticket

www.cwgc.org/war-graves-week

or scan the QR code

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

80
VE/VJ DAY

Please see information below from Dave Dykes who many of you enjoyed hearing at our "Warm Spaces" event. Dave Dykes who many of you enjoyed hearing at



Singalong at St Leonard's. On the 3rd Monday of every month, we hold a dementia friendly singing group in St Leonards hall, followed by tea and biscuits and chat. Next meeting is on Monday 19th May at 2.00pm

Moncreiffe Community Fridge

is very grateful for all donations of plastic and strong paper carrier bags for our customers.

We aim to reduce waste of fresh food from supermarkets (free) and offer food and other items at low or no cost 4 times a week at Moncreiffe Community Centre, Glenlyon Road. Tuesday 5pm-6.30pm, Wednesday 2pm-3.30pm, Thursday 11-12.30pm and Saturday 9am-10.30am. We're not a foodbank, and everyone is welcome. Please give bags to Liz or Peter Barrett or leave them with the starter pack boxes. Many thanks.

WARM SPACES

We have now finished our “Warm Spaces” mission which took place on a Wednesday and Friday afternoon throughout January, February and March.

The funding from Perth & Kinross Council Warm Spaces fund enabled us to provide heating and lighting at times when we would not have otherwise been able to open the church doors and we welcomed many different people into our Warm Space (440 in total).



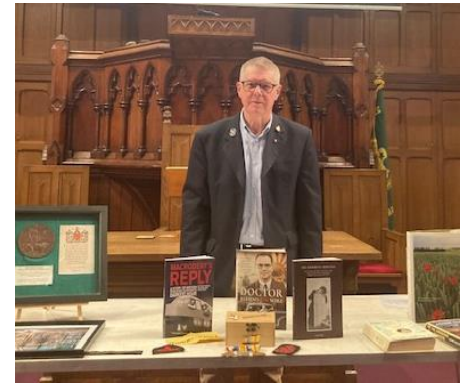
There were those who were lonely and isolated and appreciated the company and chat with tea and coffee and home baking. There were those who appreciated learning a new skill or listening to a speaker on a topic of interest both local and national. There were also people who came

inside as our door was open to pray and enjoy a time of contemplation. And there were some visitors to Perth who wanted to see the inside of a historic building.



We also welcomed regularly a couple of pre-school children (and their parents) who enjoyed playing in our children's play area. All in all, thanks to the 26 volunteers who

gave of their time and baking ability and to the Council fund, we had the opportunity to welcome a variety and diversity of people into our Warm Space over the winter months.
Fiona Bruce



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/@stmatthewsperth

OR youtube.com/@stmatthewsperth/streams where services can be watched at the time most convenient to yourselves.

Andrew's Prayer

Let us pray Dear Lord Jesus

We are grateful and Thank You for the sun, holidays, joy, love, hope and Faith
But also, we are grateful and thank you for our families, support workers and Friends as well.

We do love celebrations of Easter and of summer now it is getting hotter but also we are thankful and grateful for People, with all young, elderly and all ages and abilities as well.

Please Lord, give love and support for Those who are very alone. Amen

Walking Group

May's walk will be held on Saturday 3rd May and will be at Forteviot (not a walk we've done



before). It goes for 4 miles along the Water of May and the River Earn. We will eat at the close of the walk in the Tee Room in

Dunning. The walk is flat apart from 2 trips across the railway!

Sunday Morning Rotas for May

| May | Welcome | Beadle | Readers | Tea / Coffee | AV Desk |
|------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Rota | | | | | |
| 4th | Muirton: Janet Martin | Raymond Young | David Sawyer | Frances Turnbull | Alastair Byers Nicola Macnee |
| 11th | Perth City: John Dewar | Tom Morrison | David Firth | Marjorie Clark | John Paton Andrew Davies |
| 18th | Perth South: Malcolm Thom | Bill Chalmers | Alastair Byers | Isobel Sinclair | Alastair Byers John Paton |
| 25th | Oakbank: Donald Stewart | Andy Turnbull | Joan Lackie | Joyce Thom | Raymond Young Andrew Davies |

Contact Details Perth St. Matthew's Church Sunday worship at 11.00 a.m.

Address: Tay Street, Perth PH1 5LQ Tel: 01738 636757

Minister: Rev Fiona C Bullock fbullock@churchofscotland.org.uk Tel: 01738 570241

Session Clerk: Raymond Young rky@btinternet.com Clerk@perthstmatthews.org.uk Church Office:
Beverley Skene office@perthstmatthews.org.uk

News Editor: Dave Roderick David.roderick2@btinternet.com

Registered Scottish Charity No. SCO16829

The next issue of St. Matthews News is due out on Friday 30th May. All contributions by Monday 26th May please to the Editor David.roderick2@btinternet.com