



St Matthew's News

No 95

December 2025 / January 2026

Rev. Fiona reflects

Friends, last weekend, Perth was full of people, music, laughter and lights, lots of bright lights. Yes, it was the Christmas Lights' Switch On. There was a buzz about the city centre as local bands and dancers took to the stages to entertain the crowds, Santa and his elves received lots of little visitors with their Christmas requests, and businesses and craftspeople attempted to keep warm as they sold their wares from gazebos and cabins. St Matthew's Church in conjunction with the Council offered hospitality and care for the performers on the main stage and staff members who needed a warm drink to keep them going during their shifts. It was a wonderful celebration of community and a lovely preparation for Christmas.



As a family, we enjoyed a wander through the festivities before helping at the church. After Calum visited Santa, the man himself wished me a 'Merry Christmas.' As I found myself responding in the appropriate way, I realised it felt too soon. Each year, it feels as though our preparations for Christmas begin earlier and that's certainly the case when the Christmas lights are switched on before stepping into Advent. It feels like we are always thinking a step ahead these days. Before Halloween has even taken place, the Advent calendars are creeping into the shops and, as a ministry friend pointed out, the eggs and flour are already on the shelves and it's nowhere near Shrove Tuesday! Are we too eager to get to Christmas? Do we need to slow down to appreciate the present?

Advent is traditionally a time of waiting and anticipation. It is a time to prepare our hearts and minds to renew the welcome to Jesus into our lives. I sometimes wonder if we are too quick to reach for the Christmas carols and too desperate to get to the celebration part. However, as I looked at the Christmas lights brightening the sky and the Christmas cheer brightening up folk's faces, I realised that there is a deep desire for Christmas to come into our community. Maybe Christmas isn't just for Christmas... At a time when there is so much discontent in society, why wouldn't we desire hope, peace, joy and love to come? At a point where there is frustration about education, the NHS, social work and the state of institutions, including the church, we need a beacon to lighten the darkness. We need Jesus. We need even more people to carry the Christ-light for those in need. In John 1:5, we read, "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it." We need to be the light-bearers. We need to share the hope that Christ brings into our lives. God is with us, alleluia!

There has been much hope and light in the St Matthew's church family this busy and wonderful year. We've celebrated three baptisms and one wedding. We've welcomed nine new members by transfer of membership certificate, and six new Elders. On Sunday 30th November, we'll be welcoming three more Elders and several people will be proclaiming their faith thereby becoming members of our church. This is good news. We've welcomed a new Session Clerk, Marjorie Clark, and a new Treasurer, Craig Robson. We've appointed all of our Team Leaders, had our first Kirk Session Executive meeting and we're going to be recruiting team members to help us develop our work in the areas of Faith and Worship; Pastoral Care; Mission and Outreach; Social and Fellowship; Communications; Finance and Admin; Property; and Facilities Management.

More than all of that, we have been growing together as a church family: getting to know one another better, taking care of each other, exploring faith together, and taking the love and acceptance we experience in our church family out into our communities. This is church and it is good news. We are light-bearers and messengers of hope.

Of course, the year has not all been light. There has been sadness as we have lost loved ones and worry as several people in our church family have undergone big operations. Along with this, there have been the usual ups and downs of family life and church life. Yet through it all, God has been with us, comforting, supporting and guiding us.

As we celebrate this Christmas and beyond that, welcome in another new year, may we be reminded that there is light in the darkness. We have hope. God is with us and God will continue to be at our side as we journey onwards. Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year when it comes.

With extravagant love and wild blessings, Your Minister, Fiona

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.

Flower Rota

Date	Donor	Delivery
7 th Dec	David Wright	Charlotte Hay
14 th Dec	Chrissie & Chris Dobbs	Janette Millar
21 st Dec	Ina Soreide	Janet Martin
28 th Dec	Ronnie Soreide	Alison Sweeney
4 th Jan	Lorna Morrison	Carolyn & Alastair Byers
11 th Jan	Freda Stewart	Evelyn McLaren
18 th Jan	Eileen Montgomery	Lesley Mackie
25 th Jan	May Selby	Nicola Macnee

Sunday Morning Rotas for December / January

Dec	Welcome	Beadle	Readers	Tea / Coffee	AV Desk
7th	Oakbank Donald Stewart	Tom Morrison	Lorna Morrison	Marjorie Clark	Raymond Young Gillian Heath
14th	Burghmuir Isobel Sinclair	Bill Chalmers	Janet Martin	Isobel Sinclair	John Paton Alan MacPhee
21 st	Bridgend Alastair Byers	Andy Turnbull	Alastair Byers	Joyce Thom	Peter Barrett Nicola Macnee
28th	Gannochy Wendy Burnett	Malcom Thom	Lorna Gray	Wendy Burnett	Andrew Davies Alastair Byers
Jan 4th	Muirton Janet Martin	Andy Turnbull	Fiona Bruce	Frances Turnbull	Raymond Young Alan MacPhee
11 th	Perth City John Dewar	Malcolm Thom	Michael Ellacot	Marjorie Clark	Gillian Heath Peter Barrett
18 th	Perth South Malcolm Thom	Raymond Young	Marjorie Clark	Isobel Sinclair	Alastair Byers Andrew Davies
25th	Oakbank Donald Stewart	Tom Morrison	Dave Roderick	Joyce Thom	John Paton Nicola Macnee

The Perth Blythswood team would like to say a massive thank you to everyone who contributed or helped in any way to make this year's shoebox appeal a great success. Over the four days of the sort volunteers opened, checked and repacked 6830 shoeboxes which were loaded onto the lorry destined for



Odessa in Ukraine on Thursday afternoon. Our best year so far!

It was a great effort and wonderful to see how everyone worked together to make this possible. Each hat or scarf that has been knitted, each pencil, notebook, toy or bar of soap donated will be gratefully received and will bring hope and joy to many people living in difficult circumstances.



The Edinburgh Bohemians make a welcome return to St Matthew's on Sunday 7 December at 3pm for their CRIMBOH Concert, a delightful mix of carols, Christmas songs and stories for all the family. Tickets from the office or from Andy Turnbull.

Events at St John's Kirk

Christmas Wishes

I would like to wish everyone at St Matthew's a very Happy Christmas and best wishes for 2026. I will not be sending cards this year because of my poor eyesight. My thanks to Marjorie for all her visits throughout the year. Thanks also to Angela and Wolfgang for all our chats on Zoom before and after the service every Sunday. Also my thanks to Carol for all her phone calls to make sure that I am OK. My love and Best Wishes to you all.

Margaret Wright

Perthshire Brass and the Scottish Police Community Choir

Sunday 14 December 2025, 3.00pm £10

Carols for Busy People

Wednesday 17 December 2025

12.30pm - Home-made soup, rolls & mince pies

1.00-1.40pm - Carols and Readings

Perth Action of Churches Together – Annual Carol Service

St Matthew's is delighted to be hosting this year's PACT Carol service, which is being held on **Friday 19th December at 7p.m.** Entitled "Room at the Inn?", the theme is around those seeking shelter and welcome, just like the Holy Family at the first Christmas. There will as usual be a collection for charities – local, national and international, and refreshments will be served after the service. The service is always a moving, ecumenical sharing of the Christmas story. All are welcome – we hope to see you there!



A Prayer for Advent

Lord Jesus,
In this holy season of waiting,
fill our hearts with hope that trusts in our promises,
grant us peace that rests in your presence,
pour out love that reflects your heart to others,
and awaken joy that overflows in praise.
As we prepare for Your coming,
may our lives shine with your light
and draw others to the wonder of our grace.
Amen.



Guild News

A change to the published programme for December at the Guild, we will have a meeting in the sanctuary as usual on Monday 8th December, and the Christmas Lunch will be on Thursday 18th December at 12.30pm in the Black Watch cafe. All the places are allocated, but just a reminder of the date.

The first meeting in January will be on the 12th - chat with Anne Dalziel,

26th January will be an afternoon of Scottish songs with Michel Ellacott.

And in February we will have a Coffee Morning on Saturday 28th February.

The Boys' Breakfast Blether meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 10 a.m. in Wetherspoons next door to the church - all (boys) welcome. Next blether 10th December

St Matthew's Walkers

Our next walk, on Saturday 6th December, will be led by Marjorie and is around the Methven Woods, in the Almondbank area. A walk of just over 3 miles, it is undulating, but with no long steep ups and downs! Those wishing to go should meet at the Broxden Park and Ride at 9.30a.m., and following the walk, a table has been booked at the Inn at Pitcairngreen. Please let Marjorie know if you wish to join the walk – Marjorie.clark@btinternet.com, or 07788 852908.

No decisions have yet been made about the January walk!

Festive Soup Lunch

Sunday 21st December 12:00 o'clock following the church service. Anybody willing to help either by donating soup or helping serve on the day please contact Wendy Burnett Tel 07958744795

Christmas Wishes

Just to say that Roy and I will not be sending Christmas cards this year but wish all our St Mathew's church family a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Thanks, **Marie Nicoll**

Andrew's Prayer

Shall we pray Dear Lord
we all love winter, advent and
Christmas time and it's a happy
time with so many celebrations, love
and traditions also it's very
exciting isn't it now @ It's all very
glitzy and fun to be out in
the snow takes me back to
doing that when being young
myself with my brother and sister.
advent is about lighting candles,
music, sharing experiences and
services. Christmas is about
being in the spirit, making sure
everyone's alive and sharing
presents and yourself. so let's
get out there it's not Christmas
yet but lights are on tonight
and singers too and more.
Amen.

WARM SPACES- Winter Well

We have received funding once more to host Warm Spaces in our church in January, February and March on a Wednesday and Friday afternoon 1.30-4pm.

I'm delighted to tell you that we start on Wednesday 7 January 2026 with Michael Ellacott playing some music for us with an appropriate theme of "Beginnings"

This will be followed by a variety of activities, such as carpet bowls, and speakers including Dave Roderick on "Railway Heritage" and Nicola Macnee on "Herbs for Health".

Please see the flyer for January which will give a full list of our January Schedule.

All are welcome and we look forward to seeing you there. As usual, we also need volunteers to serve tea and coffee and home baking so please contact me if you can offer help in this way on any of the dates.

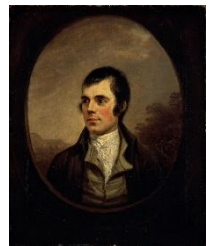
Fiona Bruce FMBruce6@googlemail.com

Burns Supper 2026

The St Matthews Burns Supper 2026 will be held on Saturday 31st January 2026 at 6:30 for 7pm in The Main Church Hall.

Tickets are available now from Wendy Burnett, priced £15 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!



Remembrance Sunday

On Remembrance Sunday, it was wonderful to see the church packed with our fantastic regular attendees along with children, young people and adults from Scouting and Guiding and their families and friends. It is essential that we remember the wars and conflicts of the past so that we do not forget that the task of working for peace is ours to do. In our place of sanctuary, young and old made that commitment together and it was a moment of real blessing. My thanks to the team who created the displays in the church and all who work so hard in our uniformed organisations. We look forward to welcoming you to the service for Founders/Thinking Day in February.

Rev. Fiona

Faith Natters

Faith Natters will meet for a wee Christmas gathering on Thursday 4th December at 14.00 in the Mission Hall. Bring along some Christmas goodies to share. We're going to have a short break after this. The next session of Faith Natters will be on Thursday 22nd January, 14.00 in the Mission Hall.

Rev. Fiona

Presbytery Mission Plan Update

We are having initial exploratory chats with representatives from Craigie and Moncreiffe about the potential for a union of the congregations of Craigie and Moncreiffe and St Matthew's. A small group of representatives from each church has met a couple of times to get to know one another and our churches through informal chats. It has been lovely to get to know our neighbours better. We will continue this exploration in the New Year and keep you updated.

Rev. Fiona

Christmas Lights' Switch on

A huge thank you to the team who offered hospitality, welcome and care in the Green Room at St Matthew's. It was really appreciated by all. Here's a glimpse of the fun.



Advent and Christmas services at St Matthew's 2025

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 think about joining in the services and events hosted by our Christian siblings in other local churches.

Sunday 30th November, 11.00, Worship for the First Sunday in Advent: Hope including the ordination and/or admission of new Elders and admission of new members

Sunday 7th December, 11.00, Worship for the Second Sunday in Advent: Peace

Sunday 14th December, 11.00, Worship for the Third Sunday in Advent: Joy

Sunday 14th December, 14.00, A Time to Remember service:

This short, 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. There will be refreshments afterwards and an opportunity to talk. Please extend an invitation to anyone who might appreciate this.

Each day from Monday 15th to Friday 19th December:

09.30 Advent reflections:

These reflections will be 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/egg rolls. No charge but donations are welcome.

12.00 – 13.00 Sacred Space:

The sanctuary will be open for an hour each lunchtime with an invitation to pray, reflect or pause. There will be candles to light and names can be added to the Tree of Remembrance.

Sunday 21st December, 11.00, Nativity service, Fourth Sunday in Advent: Love

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. Who will be the donkey?

Christmas Eve, Wednesday 24th 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, Thursday 25th December, 10.00:

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 28th December, 11.00, Worship for the space in-between

In-between Christmas and New Year can be a strange time so let's anchor ourselves through faith, worship and belonging.

Who's in the pews?

Chris & Chrissie Dobbs

Where were you born/brought up?

Chris - I was born in London, but as my father was a diplomat, I was brought up in several different countries, including India, The Soviet Union, Poland, Italy and Yugoslavia.

Chrissie – Born in Windsor. I was brought up at Eton College as my father was the bursar there until I was 14. On his retirement we moved to a village near Peterborough.

What is/or was your occupation?

Chris – I was a maritime archaeologist for 40 years. Mostly working on Henry VIII's ship 'The Mary Rose' in Portsmouth, but I also had the opportunity to dive on other shipwrecks around the world.

Chrissie – I was a veterinary surgeon working with small animals (not horses or farm animals), I worked p/t once I had children, until my retirement 2 years ago due to ongoing issues with my joints.



What brought you to St Matthew's?

Chris & Chrissie – We moved to Scotland 5 years ago to live with Chrissie's twin sister Charlotte, husband Steven and family. Charlotte had been singing in the choir and attending St Matthew's, so we came along and liked it and so we have stayed.

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

Chris – I am on the church Fabric Committee. My work as part of the team has included PAT testing the portable electrical items, as well as helping with odd jobs when required. I am looking forward to being ordained as an elder on 30th November.

Chrissie – I am in the Pastoral Care Team and like Chris will become an elder on the 30th Nov. I am on the Welcome team, the flower delivery team, help with teas and coffees at Warm Spaces and I go to the Guild meetings. I used to help with the café at the Summer Gallery

Tell us about any hobbies you enjoy?

Chris – I do rather a lot of DIY, helped by the fantastic facilities at Scone Men's Shed, which is a wonderful organisation. I also help Chrissie with a bit of gardening and look after the vegetables.

Chrissie – I enjoy everything to do with nature and wildlife. I loved walking, but it's a bit difficult now with my bad joints. I spend a lot of time gardening. I also enjoy reading and have made new friends through a local book group. I used to ski and when we had horses I loved riding.

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

Chris – I had leukaemia and a bone marrow transplant from an older brother. So, the last 40 years have been a bonus. I count myself a very fortunate man!

Chrissie – I played in an orchestra in the Albert Hall at 10 years of age.

Contact Details

Perth: St Matthew's Church of Scotland

Sunday worship at 11.00.

Address: Tay Street, Perth PH1 5LQ

Tel: 01738 636757

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fbullock@churchofscotland.org.uk

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Session Clerk: Marjorie Clark

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Church Office: Beverley Skene

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The next issue of St. Matthews News for February is due out on Friday 30th January. All contributions by Monday 26^h January please to the Editor: david.roderick2@btinternet.com

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