



St Matthew's News

No 94 November 2025

Rev. Fiona reflects

Friends, the schools went back this week after the 'tattie holidays.' Traditionally, a time when families came together to pick the potatoes, I suspect that few families do this now, technology having taken over. Pumpkin picking...now that's different! Curiously, given this photo, we did not go to a pumpkin patch during the holidays - we happened to see this one at the Scottish Deer Centre. As much as we did not pick either tatties or pumpkins, we did come together as a family to share quality time. Our holiday at 'Hamelldaeme' was full of cosy, lazy mornings; film nights; playing games together; going on adventures; and spending time with friends and family. It was a chance to set aside the 'to-do list' and exchange it for a 'what do we want to do list.' It was brilliant. We all feel the benefit of the break, which I was able to have through the support of others, so I want to thank Rev. Barbara Quigley for her poignant worship, Rev. Sandy Gunn for providing pastoral cover and our Session Clerk, Marjorie Clark for holding the fort.



During the holiday, Calum developed an interest in Harry Potter for the first time. Now I have to admit that I personally have not read the books – I did try the first one but it wasn't my cup of tea. However, I find the films captivating so we decided to watch them together. They are, quite simply, magical. It's not just the development of the characters or the mind-boggling variety of fantastical creatures or unpronounceable spells. I'm drawn to the constant theme of light and dark that weaves its way through the story. This seemed particularly appropriate to me last Sunday afternoon following the clocks going back – where on earth did that daylight go?

It is easy on the face of it to think that some characters in Harry Potter are 'goodies' whilst others are 'baddies,' but life is rarely so simple. Instead, each and every character is a complex mix of light and dark, as they strive to discover who they really are. Which voices will they listen to? What will they allow to influence them? Who do they want to be? What would they like their legacy to be? It may be a fantasy world but it's not so different to real life. In our complex world and challenging political climate, it's all too easy to draw thick lines between light and dark, 'goodie' and 'baddie.' We can be drawn into designating someone as 'other' due to differences of opinion, or because others look or act differently to us. So often we find that those who shout loudest about others are actually those who are not having their own needs met and are scared about the future. As they say, 'hurt people hurt people.' Yet underneath it all, aside from perceived or real differences, there lies a shared humanity and a shared experience of the battle between light and darkness, hope and struggle, in all of us.

In his ministry, Jesus saw beyond it all and reached out to those in need whoever they were and whatever labels others placed on them. He sought out the lost and the lonely and brought them back into relationship. As Christians, we have many, many opportunities in life to do likewise. We can help people to remember their own humanity and to see the humanity in others, if only we can see our own first. Jesus offered kindness, gentleness and grace through humility, but he also called out what was wrong in society. It's a great example for us to follow.

Later this week, some folk will celebrate Halloween. Amid the darkness, lights will shine from lanterns made of pumpkins or neeps. The next day we will be reminded of all the saints – those who have gone on before us and who illuminated the path for us. And before we know it, Christmas lights and decorations

will adorn our homes and our city. As we see these lights, may we be reminded to shine our light brightly in the darkness – we never know when someone else might need it!

I'd like to end my message with words from a powerful statement of faith written by Bruce Prewer. "We choose to believe that light is better than darkness, sharing is better than hoarding, truth is better than deceit, mercy is better than revenge, love is better than indifference, God is stronger than chaos. We choose to have faith in the God who is love." May we continue to reflect God's love and light to the world.

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/@stmatthewspertth

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

Flower Rota

Date	Donor	Delivery
2 nd Nov	Isobel Sinclair	Lesley Mackie
9 th Nov	Helen & John Dewar	Marjorie Clark
16 th Nov	Sheena Beange	Frances & Andy Turnbull
23 rd Nov	Alison Ford	Fiona Bruce
30 th Nov	Eileen & Bill Montgomery	Lorna & Tom Morrison

Thank You – I would like to take this opportunity to thank Nicola Macnee for stepping up and doing the flowers for me when I was on holiday. I was so grateful. Norma Wright

Sunday Morning Rotas for November

Nov	Welcome	Beadle	Readers	Tea / Coffee	AV Desk
2nd	Bridgend Alastair Byers	Tom Morrison	Carol Hull	Marjorie Clark	Peter Barrett John Paton
9th	Gannochy Wendy Burnett	Bill Chalmers	Alastair Byers	Isobel Sinclair	Andrew Davies Gillian Heath
16th	Muirton Janet Martin	Andy Turnbull	David Firth	Joyce Thom	John Paton Nicola Macnee
23rd	Perth City John Dewar	Malcom Thom	Lesley Mackie	Wendy Burnett	Peter Barrett Raymond Young
30th	Perth South Malcom Thom	Raymond Young	Charlotte Hay	Frances Turnbull	Nicola Macnee Alastair Byers

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 12th November.

Vine Trust – Tanzania Experience



As outlined in July edition of St Matthew's News Ruaridh Macnee is going on a Vine Trust school expedition to Tanzania in June next year during which volunteer students will help with the construction of houses for vulnerable families living in the poorest parts of the country. Ruaridh has been organising fund raising events to cover the costs of his flights,

accommodation, food and transport, as well as contributing to the purchase of construction materials.

A Bingo Afternoon Tea was held at St Matthews on Saturday 25th October that was well attended. After the event Ruaridh said "Thank you so much to everyone who donated or came along to the Bingo tea! Great fun and we raised £850. I was humbled by your generosity. Only a few £100 off my target! Thank you."

Ruaridh Macnee.

Bingo Afternoon Tea



WARM SPACES 2026

Advance Notice! We have again applied for Council funding to enable us to open our church doors on a Wednesday and Friday afternoon in January, February and March 2026. Watch this space! Fiona Bruce

A huge THANK YOU to all of the lovely generous people who compiled and donated a shoebox to this year's appeal. Thanks also to those who made a cash donation to support this appeal and the people of Ukraine.

A light in the darkness!!

If anyone has the time to help with the shoebox sort at Perth Baptist Church, they would be very grateful for your support.

The sort takes place on Monday 10th to Wednesday 12th November at the following times :
9.30am - 12.30pm, 1.30pm - 4.30pm, 7.00pm - 9.00pm
and on Thursday 13th November 9.30am - 12.30pm .

Please call Perth Baptist Church on 01738 621213 if you can help. Thank You, Janette Millar



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.

If you are able to help on the day, or can provide bottles or home baking for the fair, please contact Beverley in the office or add your name to the list on the noticeboard.

CHURCH WALK

Our next walk, on Saturday 1 November, will be led by Fiona, Alan and Andrew and is the Tayport Heritage Trail around Tayport and its environs. It's a 4-mile circular walk and mainly flat with one steep downhill and one steady ascent. We can go to the Larick Centre (which is en route) for lunch or bring a picnic. Meet as usual at Broxden Park and Ride at 9.30am from where we will share cars. It would be helpful if you could let Fiona Bruce know that you are coming on the walk. FMBruce6@googlemail.com

Who's in the pews? Donald & Helen Stewart

Where were you born/brought up?

Helen – I was born in Arbroath Infirmary (no blue plaque on the wall as far as I know!) and my family moved to the Blairgowrie area when I was two.

Donald - I was born at Meikleour (behind the same hedge as Freda Stewart!) and brought up in Perth.



What is/or was your occupation?

Helen – I was a shorthand typist in a solicitor's office and then a chartered accountant's office, and after that with the Council – in the Environmental Health Department!

Donald, I spent my working life with the Council in offices in Blairgowrie, Perth and Crieff with responsibilities in Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Waste.

What brought you to St Matthew's?

Helen – Donald's family came to St. Matthew's church, then I moved from St Andrew's in Blairgowrie when we got married.

Donald - The church I was brought up in closed and joined with three other churches to form St Matthews

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

Helen – I'm a member of the Scottish Country Dancing class and help with the coffees after the service

Donald - I am an elder, did a 10-year spell as session clerk and was much involved with the redevelopment of the Sanctuary. Now a little less busy, I am part of a Sunday morning welcome team and one of the tea/coffee teams.

Tell us about any hobbies you enjoy?

Helen – we are members of a walking group (called the Over the Hill club) and meet up with friends every few weeks for not too hilly, not too long walks. I go to a couple of Scottish Country Dancing classes in the winter and enjoy reading and crosswords. We both also enjoy trips to the theatre.

Donald - like Helen, in summer it's mainly walking in the great outdoors and enjoying short breaks and holidays. In winter I curl in Perth and at Kinross and if it snows, the sun shines and there is no wind, I go skiing

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

Helen – I was dux at Bendochy School, but with only six in the class, when I went to Blairgowrie High School, I discovered I wasn't quite as clever as I thought I was!

Donald - when I was young my dad would take me swimming in the Tay across from the church, it was more fun than having a bath.

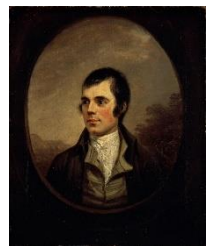
Save the Date - Burns Supper 2026

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 will be on sale from December, 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!



YOUR CHURCH NEEDS YOU – GIFT MONTH IN NOVEMBER

Yes, and there is no apology for having another Gift Month this year. The facts are quite simple. Rising costs – including energy – are not just affecting us as individuals. It affects what we in St Matthew's can do.

Once again, we are heading for a deficit in 2025 – our income is less than our expenditure. The Session has set a very strict set of rules to rein in expenditure as much as possible. The work being done on the outside of the building earlier this year was funded by grants which came from the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland, and vital repairs on the manse are being funded by grants from Presbytery and the General Trustees.

At our Annual Stated meeting in October, Raymond Young reported that while our income was up last year, our expenditure had increased by more than our income, with the result that our 2024 accounts show a deficit of £7798. The main causes were an increase of 21% in our Giving to Grow contribution to the central church, and heating and lighting costs which rose by 73%. With our reserves depleted because of the refurbishment, the Benevolent Fund had helped out with a loan of £10,000. Going forward, a major priority of the Finance team is to revisit the costs for our hall lets; and we are of course very grateful to all who, over the past year have raised funds for the church through particular initiatives – Janet's Jam Jar challenge, David and Michael's Flanders and Swann evening, and most recently, Debbie's Green Knight, to name but a few. However, more is needed to build up our reserves, which is why the Kirk Session has designated November as a Gift Month.

So we are therefore asking you – once again – to treat November as a special Gift Month for extra giving. Please donate whatever they feel able to give to allow St. Matthew's to continue to flourish. We realise that times are hard for everyone but please give as generously as you are able.

If at all possible, we would ask that your gift be made by BACS transfer, marking it "Gift Month" to the following account:- Account Name: St. Matthew's Church Sort Code: 83-47-00 Account Number: 00760133

If you are unable to make your donation in this way you can do so by cheque or cash in the offering plate on any Sunday or by sending your donation to St. Matthew's Church, Tay Street, Perth PH1 5LQ. Your donation can also be made using the card machine situated at the front of the church as you enter. Paying by these methods can also be done with Gift Aid added. If using the blue envelopes or the card reader you can do so by entering the appropriate details. If you are a taxpayer but have not previously registered for the Gift Aid scheme please consider doing so now.

We would also ask all members who are able to consider increasing their current regular givings by standing order or whichever method you use. If you wish to pay by bank standing order the account details are as above. If you are a taxpayer please consider making your donation under Gift Aid. This does not cost you any more but allows the church to reclaim the tax amount equivalent to 25% of your givings.

For further information on adding Gift Aid to your regular givings or your Gift Month donation please contact our Gift Aid Convenor, Evelyn McLaren (07974938330 or 01738 626377).

If we cannot increase our income significantly then the long term future of St. Matthew's Church may be in doubt. For this reason we would ask that you give this article serious thought and prayer.

St. Matthew's Church Kirk Session

CROSSREACH CARDS and CALENDARS

Thank you to everyone who has bought Christmas cards- I've put in an order for £130 worth from the church.

I've also sold 8 calendars so have 2 left for sale! Fiona Bruce



Guild News

Monday 10th November: Eric Duff - the role of physical education in the prison service

Monday 24th November: Beth Stakier painting stones.

Both meetings are in the sanctuary at 2 p.m.

CHRISTMAS FAIR BOOK SALE.

The Guild contribution to the Christmas Fair is running a bookstall. Donations of books will be gratefully received. Please bring them along to the church on the Sunday before the sale, 23rd November.



Prayer for the Month

God of creation,
the nights are longer, cooler, darker.
Yet you are
streaming light through the darkness.
As we journey through the seasons
and through life,
we know you journey with us
showing us the right path to follow.
We thank you, we honour you and we praise you,
Creator, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen



Kirk Session Update

We are delighted to welcome eight new elders, who were ordained and admitted at the morning service on Sunday 5th October. We look forward to their contributions to the smooth running of our church. At the same service, we held our Annual Stated Meeting, during which Fiona reflected over the past twelve months, and looked forward to the growing life of our church family, and the future. There's a lot going on. Talking of which – the revised Presbytery Mission Plan now envisages a union of St Matthew's Church with Craigie and Moncreiffe Church. The proposed plan sees the continued use of both buildings, and a team ministry of 1.5 people, with Fiona as the full-time part of that ministry. Obviously, there is much to discuss about the implications, challenges and opportunities which such a union would present. Our Kirk Session has already met with Presbytery representatives, for preliminary questions, and the next step is to have discussions with the Kirk Session of Craigie and Moncreiffe Church – we will keep you updated as to the progress of these discussions.

Finally, approval has been given, and funding sourced, for necessary repairs to the manse; please keep Fiona and her family in your prayers as they cope over the next weeks and months with the disruption which house repairs inevitably incur!

PS. The Annual Stated Meeting also included a financial overview - please read the article about our Gift Month in November – another decision of the Kirk Session! Marjorie Clark, Session Clerk

Faith Natters

**Thursdays 6th, 13th, 20th, and 27th November, 14.00-15.30,
Mission Hall**

Do you fancy a natter about faith? At Faith Natters, we create a safe space to discuss anything and everything to do with a life of faith. We meet on Thursday afternoons in the Mission Hall but you can join on Zoom if you'd prefer. In past sessions, we've talked about all sorts of things from what's going on in the world politically and socially to trying to understand the Creation stories in the Bible to reflecting on our understanding of the afterlife to having discussions about the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds – what they are and what they mean. If you have questions about faith or about life as a follower of Jesus in the world today, come along – there is no such thing as a silly question, except the question that is not asked! You can come along to listen and learn or to discuss and debate – there's space for you to engage whatever way is comfortable to you. All new and returning folks are welcome, as this is a place for us all to share. Plus there are always sweeties. Hope to see you soon. Rev. Fiona

Church membership at St Matthew's

At St Matthew's Church, we love to welcome new members of the church family. We do that each time someone engages in the life of the church, whether through our services of worship or our events, and that's great. However, did you know that you can make a further commitment? We sometimes call this 'becoming a member' or confirmation by profession of faith. Some people think of this step as choosing to sign the blank cheque that was written at the time of your infant baptism (if that was the case) – instead of parents/grandparents making vows about beliefs and commitment, you now have the opportunity to do this for yourself. It is an incredibly moving moment. It also results in your details being held in our membership roll and it allows you the right to vote on particular church matters, like when it comes to appointing a new Minister (hopefully not any time soon!).

To find out more about the church and making such a commitment, I have scheduled four sessions based on the 'ABC of Discipleship' materials from **Thursday 6th November at 19.00** and meeting weekly – **please note this revised start date**. These sessions will explore the themes of acceptance, belonging, commitment and what it means to be a disciple (follower of Jesus) as well as covering the vows made when we become church members. There is no requirement to attend the full course – each session will be open to anyone who is interested. Following the 'membership classes,' participants will have the opportunity to be confirmed by public confession of faith during worship on the first Sunday of Advent, 30th November, when we reflect on hope. For more information or to sign up for the sessions, please contact Rev. Fiona at FBullock@churchofscotland.org.uk or on 01738 570241. It is worth noting that those who are already church members elsewhere can choose to join by transference of membership certificate at any time they wish.

Rev. Fiona

Andrew's Prayer

Dear God
Thank you for the lovely
colours of Autumn.
The leaves are so bright and
beautiful. Autumn is a
lovely season – misty and
colourful and bright.
Thank you Lord for this time.
Amen



Who's in the pews? Edie O'Brien

Where were you born/brought up?

I was born in Wanstead, East London, then brought up in Buckhurst Hill. We lived in Henry VIII's hunting lodge which was built in 1543. Although that sounds glamorous, it was in fact a cold, damp building, which led to me getting bronchitis.

What is/or was your occupation?

I had a career in advertising. I started as a junior copywriter, which led on to promotional work. I was occasionally featured in adverts and was thrilled to be asked to be a 'Heineken girl'

What brought you to St Matthew's?

I was passing one day with my late husband Chris. We saw the door was open, so we came in. One of the 'warm spaces' events was on and we were warmly welcomed. I decided to attend a service and received another nice welcome, so I have continued coming. I had previously been an elder at Muthill Parish Church since 1998, before moving to Perth.

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

I am a member of the Guild and enjoy coming to 'Faith Natters' and Warm Spaces. I also am on the rota Bible reading rota on Sundays. I used to be the press officer at Muthill church.

Tell us about any hobbies you enjoy?

I love music and singing. I used to sing in the Muthill singing group. I also enjoy reading and watching films. I adore jewellery and often look out for bargains in the charity shops. I have a stall where I sell some pieces.

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

When I was young, I worked in the famous Barn nightclub in Essex. It was a popular venue and lots of celebrities used to come in. I was there on 5th Nov 1972 when the notorious armed robbery took place next door in the house of my boss Robert Patience, whose wife was killed in the process.



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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The next issue of St. Matthews News for December & January is due out on Friday 28th November. All contributions by Monday 24th November please to the Editor: david.roderick2@btinternet.com