



St. Matthew's Church, Perth

e-Newsletter No. 83

October 2024

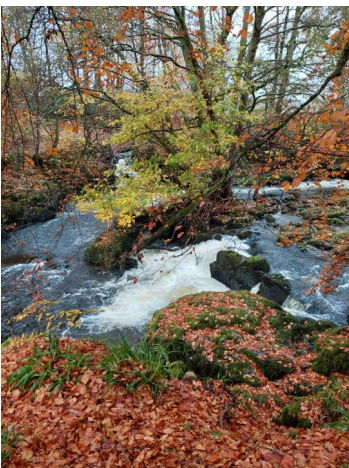
Letter from the Manse

Friends, as I stood in the school playground this morning with a chill wind dancing around me, I watched the children arriving wearing their gloves. We're seeing the signs of the season changing, whether it's the winter gloves coming out, or your winter coat, or the leaves changing colour on the trees. Very soon, those same leaves will become a carpet of colour on the ground. I don't know about you, but at this time of year, I just want to cosy in, eat comforting food, have lots of warm drinks, and watch movies. Maybe I'll get to do some of that on my upcoming holiday but I certainly can't do that the rest of the time.

The arrival of autumn is a poignant reminder of the many different seasons we go through in our lives too. We experience seasons of grief. Sometimes we are mourning the loss of a loved one or we might be grieving the life we thought we might have had or the things we used to be able to do. We may go through seasons of restlessness, when we feel ready for change but we're not quite sure what we want or how to go about it. You may find yourself in a season of contentedness, in which you are able to focus on gratitude. Perhaps you are going through a season of joy or conversely, it may feel like everything is upside down, for now. These are all seasons – experiences, emotions and thought-patterns that we go through for a time.

We go through seasons on our life journeys and I believe we also go through different seasons on our faith journeys. We endure seasons of questions and doubts. Sometimes we even step away from faith for a wee while. There will be a season of celebration that follows: a homecoming, when we're able to return to faith and to church. We have seasons of deep, soul-searching, passionate faith. We have times of busy, dedicated service and there are other times when we need to step back and allow others to serve us too. We'll have seasons of prayer and worship, seasons of meetings and work, seasons to do and seasons to be.

At the change of the seasons in the year, I find myself more reflective. As I watch the trees shed their leaves, it makes me wonder what I might be called to let go this autumn. What might I need to set down in order to flourish in an upcoming season? Immediately, I have a desire to set down negative self-talk and being too critical of myself. I might need to set aside some of the expectations I have of myself or that others have of me in order to focus on God's expectations. I realise that I should listen to the Minister when she asks all this of you! May I encourage you to take time to think about what you might be called to set down in this season.



So, in this season of wishing to cosy in, I am choosing to make time to cosy in with God – to spend time in study, reflection and prayer. I am choosing to let go of unhelpful things to allow me the freedom to move into a new season. And I am choosing to put on my winter coat and find some matching gloves so I stay cosy throughout.

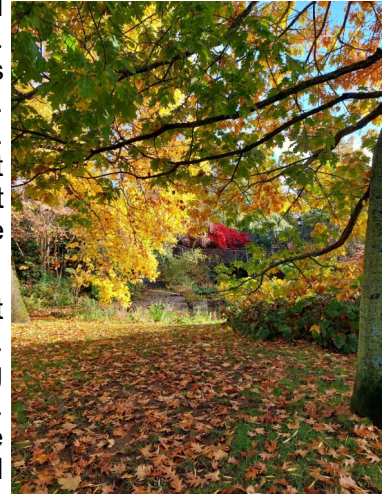
Friends, whatever season you find yourself in, may you know God journeying with you. Please remember I am here if you need me.

With blessings,

Your Minister,

Fiona

Photos courtesy of our Walking Group, taken last year.



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. The same number can be used to call in to the Midweek Musings Zoom call (see below) 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/@stmatthewsp Perth

OR youtube.com/@stmatthewsp Perth/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**

Or phone 0131 460 1196

A short time of reflection and discussion led by various church members - open to all—please feel free to join us!

GUILD NEWS

St Matthew's Guild is back in full session, with an opening talk by our Minister on Monday 30th September, followed by our own Bill Montgomery talking about The Bakers on 14th October. James Lamb of the Sherpa Foundation will be with us on Monday 28th October. All meetings are held in the Sanctuary at 2 pm.

We are also planning to support the Sunshine Boxes for NHS Tayside children's departments between now and Christmas.

Our meetings are open to all, both women and men; you will be made welcome!

Lorna Morrison, Guild Convener

Christians and Climate Change

St Matthew's in the venue for this Presbytery Conference on **Saturday 19th October** from 10—1, with input from Christian Aid and Eco-congregation Scotland—free and open to all. Register at [Christians and Climate Change Tickets, Sat 19 Oct 2024 at 10:00 | Eventbrite](#)



Sacrament of Communion and Harvest Thanksgiving

These will both be held on
Sunday 20th October at 11a.m.

The Lord's Table is open to all.

You are invited to bring along donations for the local Foodbank (see list below) and/or financial donations for the same. The Foodbank is particularly needing the following: UHT milk, long life juice, instant snacks/noodles, jars of cooking sauce, tinned fruit, tinned vegetables, small boxes of cereal, long-life puddings, coffee, shampoo, small washing powder.

The next **Boys' Breakfast Blether** will be held in Wetherspoons (next door to the church on Tay Street) on **Wednesday 9th October** at **10a.m.** As always, new attendees will be very welcome.

St Matthew's Walking Group

is looking forward to its next outing on **Saturday 5th October**, when we will be doing the Errol/Taybank circular walk.

Meet at Broxden at 9.30a.m., (or at Errol

Church car park no later than 10a.m.) The walk will be followed by lunch at the Lass o' Gowrie Café in Errol, so please let us know if you wish to join us, by contacting Bill Chalmers bill.chalmers@yahoo.co.uk; tel 07791 507628 (The photo was taken on our August walk round the Murthly Estate.)



Let us pray Dear Father
God Autumn is a lovely
Season and it feels like
exciting time with
laughter, love and play
too as well but we love
nature and being in
The moment in the
here and now with
Gods love Amen.

**Andrew's
prayer**

Music and me (*David Sawyer reflects on the importance of music in worship*)

People that know me also know that I love music—particularly classical music. Radio 3 is a permanent presence in my house and is always on in my car. I'm afraid pop music has passed me by since the days of Nat King Cole and Glen Miller and I've been hooked on the alternative after I got a record of The Lord's Prayer sung by a Russian male voice choir.



In the last year or so the relevance and importance of music in relation to Christian worship has been in my thoughts and it was discussed at one of our Wednesday musings sessions. It also arose during a Faith Natters meeting so the subject is not lying dormant. What has particularly engaged my mind has been trying to understand the range of emotions that great music (particularly choral works) engenders. I can certainly feel uplifted and then disappointed when a wonderful piece has finished and I am emotionally drained. I suppose it's possible that I do feel sadness as well although interestingly I am not aware of any feeling of happiness. Perhaps this is more a reflection on my personality!! Sentimentality certainly features as does bewilderment at the ability of such a wide variety of composers to produce magnificent sounds that invade the senses. But, deep down there is something more that I can't pin down. But what?

Hymn singing has been going on for centuries in Christian worship and we sing four or five in our service each week. We do so with varying degrees of ability and enthusiasm— but in the final analysis it is the words that count and the tune is a bit like that famous spoonful of sugar. However, what would a service be without the music? Well, for a start Michael would be out of a job! But I think we all realise there would be a totally different feel which, in my musically biased view, would be for the worse.

So, trying to distil these jumbled thoughts into one simple question it would be—Does music help us to become nearer to God? Answers please on a postage stamp to our minister, Fiona.

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

The Kirk Session met on Monday 16 September. The new Faith and Worship Team recommended plans for the future. This team initially involves the Minister, Michael the organist (of course), and John from the AV team, and Maureen, Janette, Janet, and Ann. Not all of them are elders – and this will be pattern for the new Teams that are being set up. Once the rest of the Teams are set up between now and Christmas there will be more information about what they are and what they will do; we hope that you would consider joining a Team to help shape the future of St Matthew's and to get involved in the work of the church. Working together like this is a good way of getting to know people; with the number of new faces every week it provides a great welcome to the church family. Dates for future services recommended by the Team were agreed by the Session (the Minister is responsible for the content of worship, but the Session is responsible for agreeing dates and times). So, come and join the service of Harvest Thanksgiving and Communion on 20th October. Further services will be announced in the newsletter. A date for your diary – there will be a service on Christmas Day!

Unfortunately, the Session has to spend quite a bit of time looking carefully at the church finances. With our high-quality Sanctuary, the perception is that the church is fine financially. But it is not. Since all of our reserves went into the upgrade of the Sanctuary we have nothing to fall back on when things get tough. Work is about to start to catch up with external maintenance but that is only because we have been able to get grants from the national Church's General Trustees. Balancing the books is very difficult, with having to decide not to spend monies that we ought to to develop our Christian witness and mission. We are having to use monies that were originally designed for mission and benevolent work simply to keep the building open, to pay the energy bills (which have gone up again this winter), salaries (without our hard working staff we couldn't continue to operate at the level we do) and our contribution to the National Church. And while the Sanctuary is busy (and to a lesser extent the halls), the income from other users does not fill the gap. A large proportion of our members give very little or nothing at all to St Matthew's. So, we will be having another Gift Month in November. And in the meantime we will be reminding Sunday worshippers that since we do not 'pass the plate round' during Sunday worship, there is a plate at the door and if you say you have no cash we have a card machine! We will also start to leave gift envelopes on the tables.

The Session also agreed to develop the closer relationship with St John's Kirk. We are looking at opportunities to see how we can mutually benefit from working together – to begin with on Faith and Worship, on Pastoral Care and on external events and marketing. Again, this is not just for the Session. So if you would be interested in getting involved - even just for a few months (we are not asking for a life-time commitment!) please let Rev Fiona or me know.

And finally we have some specific tasks for which we are looking for help. Our Treasurer, John Dewar, steps down at the end of the year after more years than I have fingers. We still need a replacement. Please talk or phone me if you think you might help. And Isobel Sinclair is stepping down from looking after the church garden - another labour of love which makes such a difference to the appearance of and welcome to St Matthew's. Have you green fingers and could help?

Janet's Jottings Belt and braces

Well, what do you know, a quick mention of a wee elasticated belt (in last month's jottings), has caused an eruption of nostalgia in our congregation! A few folks have been reminiscing with me about owning an S-belt and what a useful thing it was. I have enjoyed hearing stories of how it was utilised in some childhood escapades. These ranged from using it as a sling to stabilise a broken arm when a pal fell off a tree swing, to tying school bags on a bike. Also for pulling a 'cartie', an emergency dog lead, a strap to hold a wee brother onto a sledge (don't ask!) and a catapult for pinging conkers. There were other examples, but 21st Century Health & Safety rules forbid me from sharing them.

This led to me to thinking about belts and their importance in life. I remember in the 1960s/70s (think Mary Quant), coveting the chain belts that the older girls wore, as they were all the rage. Sadly, by the time I was old enough to wear one, they were out of fashion. Belts were not just fashion items; many professions had their own belts with very recognisable buckles on them. I loved the navy belt that nurses wore, each with a beautiful intricate buckle. Kilts have magnificent buckles, some with family crests on them. My father's old brown leather army belt with the regimental buckle, lay in our dressing up box, alongside an old boy scout belt, a gamekeeper's belt, which had sections for gun cartridges (great for storing marbles in) an elasticated 'waspie' waisted belt of the 1950s belonging to my mother and a stripey dressing gown cord belt with tassles. Dad preferred braces to keep his trousers up – utilitarian black or grey and always hidden beneath a sweater. Some of the old farmers and tradesmen round the village wore both belt and braces, just to be on the safe side.

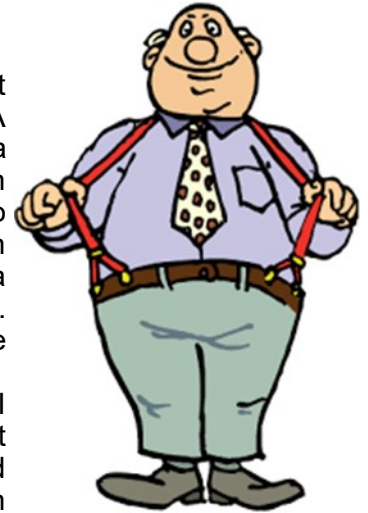
Today braces are a fashion icon amongst the young, often very bright & colourful, worn to be seen and admired.

When living in the USA, I discovered that 'braces' are worn on teeth and not trousers! I was invited to a dinner dance and when enquiring of my partner what the dress code was; I was rather bemused when he replied, "Oh not that formal, I won't wear the full Tuxedo, just my vest, pants and suspenders". For those not in the know, this translates as 'waistcoat, trousers and 'braces'!

Our faith is often our belt and braces in life. Holding us up when the going gets tough. Occasionally, the elastic might get a bit stretched, or we need another hole punched into our belt to keep everything held together for extra strength, when we're full of doubts. While some of us have a strong faith, like braces, it may be hidden under our jumpers, but just as active as those others that are happy to be bold and bright and openly display their faith on the outside.

If your spiritual trousers are in danger of sagging at times, then utilise the Bible to look for verses of encouragement such as in Isaiah 41:10 "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." That certainly sounds like God lending us His 'belt & braces'!

Janet Martin



Crossreach calendars Fiona Bruce has



once again ordered a supply of Crossreach calendars "featuring breath-taking scenery from around Scotland", and great value for money at £5.50 each.

Help for local asylum seekers

Jean Young writes "Two hotels in Perth are being used to house asylum seekers and we are privileged to have some of them attending worship.

The Baptist Church is doing a wonderful job collecting toiletries and razors to give to our friends but they go very quickly. There is a box in the cafe area for donations which we can all access.

In the light of the approaching winter it would be a good gesture to add in some warm clothing e.g hats, scarves and gloves to help out."

PRAYER from Rev. Maggie Roderick

Lord God, We thank you, as we know you are a merciful and compassionate God, yet so many in our world need to see that compassion in action.

We ask that those in authority review their hearts and minds to see that peace is possible in the world;

that everyone is encouraged to love and not to hate;

that leaders will bring forth policies to reduce poverty;

that we will show the way by sharing more of what we have

and not simply a little bit of what we have left.

We ask you to show us the way, to lead us in the right paths, that we may do everything we can to reduce the suffering of your people.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Amen.

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

Michael Ellacott

Where were you born/brought up? Perth – in the great metropolis of Craigie.

What is/or was your occupation? I am a professional Musician, Music teacher, choir leader and also an English teacher.

What brought you to St Matthew's? The opportunity to play the organ. This is my 2nd stint as church organist in St Matt's.

Are you involved in any groups/or volunteering at St Matthew's or anywhere else? I am involved in the church Worship Group, various community choirs & music groups. I volunteer my time and musical skills when I am available, to help with fundraising events at St Matthews and for other charitable causes.

Tell us about any hobbies you enjoy? I enjoy playing Bridge, theatre going, reading, going out for coffee with friends and a bit of relaxing stargazing from time to time!

What is the most surprising thing about you that we might not yet know? I am a huge fan of Nana Mouskouri – I have been a fan for over 54 years!



Andrew & Rosemary Tait



Where were you born/brought up? We were both born and brought up in the Aberdeenshire fishing town of Fraserburgh (the 'Broch') - so are well conversant in the 'Doric' language/dialect!

What is/or was your occupation? *Rosemary:* I started as a Primary School teacher then spent most of my career as a teacher of children with Special Educational Needs, retiring as teacher-in-charge of a Special Needs Nursery. *Andrew:* I spent much of my career as Head Teacher of three differing Primary Schools- a small rural school in Aberdeenshire (the 'dominie'), a city school and a new Open Plan School in Stonehaven. The remainder of my career was spent as Assistant Director of Education in the former Grampian Region.

What brought you to St Matthew's? When we moved to Perth in 2005 we decided to get a 'feel' for city churches. St Matthews was first on our list. Due to a number of factors, not least the friendly and welcoming reception, we remained.

Are you involved in any groups/or volunteering at St Matthew's or anywhere else? Andrew is member of Kirk Session. Rosemary on Flower List. We also volunteer on the Transport rota and Sunday Door/Welcome Duty. Until more recently, Andrew was a volunteer patient in the Clinical Skills Unit at Ninewells Hospital assisting in the training of medical students.

Tell us about any hobbies you enjoy? *Rosemary:* I am an avid reader and music lover. *Andrew:* I am a member of a rambling group. We 're both regular walkers and members of a Poetry Group.

What is the most surprising thing about you that we might not yet know? *Rosemary:* All 5 feet of me was the goal attack shooter in the school netball team! *Andrew:* I have a banjo at home!

Sadly, we are about to lose Andrew and Rosemary from our fellowship, as they return to their roots in the North-east. We thank them for their contributions to St Matthew's over the years, and wish them well in their new home—we will miss them, and won't forget them! Ed.

And a message from two of our newer members, Maggie and Dave Roderick: We'd like to thank members of the congregation for making us so welcome here at St Matthew's. We moved to Perth and intended to visit various different churches to see where we may fit in. Having come to St Matthew's first, we decided not to go anywhere else. We feel at home here and we are delighted that we have found a church where the welcome for everyone is real. We love the Services, both from Rev Fiona's inspiring worship leading and Michael's superb musical contributions. We really enjoyed the Summer gallery and the musical evenings and we are delighted that the church is open so often. So, we're here to stay. 😊

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

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CHURCH FLOWERS

Oct.	Donated by	Delivered by
6th	Joyce Thom	Janet Martin
13th	Betty Lindores	Alastair and Carolyn Byers
20th	Rosemary Tait	Evelyn McLaren
27th	Nicola Macnee	Janette Miller

Would you like to get involved?

As you can see from the next column, there are many teams helping Sunday mornings to run smoothly. We are always looking for new volunteers to join our existing teams— serving the tea and coffee, welcoming folk at the door, helping with the AV, doing the readings in the morning service, delivering flowers, and so on. It is a great way to get to know people, (and to get known!), so if you would be interested in helping out, please speak to the folk at the door, who will be able to point you in the right direction; team leaders will be delighted to hear from you! See also Raymond's plea on page 3 for help with the garden, now that Isobel is looking to a well-earned retirement.

Sunday morning rotas for October

Welcome Teams

6th Bridgend (Alastair Byers)

13th Gannochy (Wendy Burnett)

20th Muirton (Janet Martin)

27th Perth City (John Dewar)

Beadle Duty

6th Raymond Young

13th Tom Morrison

20th Bill Chalmers

27th Andy Turnbull

READERS

6th Ann Attridge

13th Andrew Tait

20th David Sawyer

27th Joseph Munro

TEA/COFFEE TEAMS

6th Isobel Sinclair

13th Joyce Thom

20th Wendy Burnett

27th Frances Turnbull

AV Desk

6th Peter Barrett and Kylie Murray

13th Alastair Byers and Raymond Young

20th Nicola Macnee and John Paton

27th Alastair Byers and Kylie Murray

The next issue of the newsletter is due out on Friday 25th October. All contributions by **Sunday 20th October please** to the editor: Marjorie.clark@btinternet.com

As we go to print, it is with deep sadness that we record the death of John Spence on Wednesday 25th September. John was a much loved member of our fellowship, and an elder. He will be laid to rest in his beloved Orkney on Saturday 5th October and there will be a service of celebration of his life at a later date in St Matthew's. We send condolences at this sad time to his cousin Jake and the wider family, and to his many friends.