



SC005478

October 2020

## The Gift Of Giving

The gift of giving is certainly a beautiful and wonderful gift and at St. Andrew's the level of regular giving whether by bringing an offering every week or by standing order through the bank or by other means has, over many years, been exceptional. Even in the challenges of this year to date, that continues. Clearly YOU, the people of St Andrew's, have a heart to give and as a result, you have given wonderfully for the previous annual Gift Days, and in response to many other requests. As a result, YOU make a difference. Now that is the spirit of giving!

So, as we approach Gift Day 2020, we do so in a world which is radically different from that of 2019, in ways we could never have possibly imagined. So much has changed affecting all our lives, and the impact will continue for some considerable time to come. And yet, in all of this there is a constant – our Father in Heaven in whom we place our trust.

As Christians, we know we are accountable to God for what we do with all our money, all our time and all our talents – not only the money, time and talents we give as an offering to support the work of the Church, but the stewardship of all we have and how we use it in our daily lives. The way in which we use our time, talent and money is a fundamental part of our Christian living, our Christian discipleship. There is also a responsibility for us collectively, as a fellowship, to demonstrate good stewardship of the resources with which we have been blessed. Due to the impact of the pandemic, the Kirk Session has had to make challenging yet necessary decisions to support the continuing activities of St Andrew's Church in times which, in so many different ways, are difficult for all.

To ensure the continuing work and day-to-day workings of what we do at St Andrew's, the Session has had to make the decision to draw on reserves to ensure the General Fund and General Bank Account contains sufficient funds to avoid running into deficit. To date (as of 30 September) we have had to draw on approximately £20,000 of reserves to achieve this. We give thanks to God that we have been blessed with the resources to enable us to do this.

We know how fully and completely Jesus gave Himself for us. Christ gave Himself as a ransom for our sins and He is our benchmark and model for giving. When God moves upon the hearts of people to give, it really is an exciting thing - because when we open our hearts to give unto the Lord, it is beautiful and we see God at work impacting on the lives of those who give and those to whom we reach out.

So, on Sunday, 29th November, we will have our Annual Gift Day. This is an opportunity for you to support our ministries and mission and ensure that our work continues to be well resourced and effective in reaching out to meet the spiritual and practical needs within our communities – even through these difficult times. We ask you to consider £50 as a starting point. You should however, only give that which you can give willingly from your heart - an amount which is 'loose change' to one person is the 'widow's mite' to another! Seek God and let Him be your guide.

Let's respond generously and pray fervently that our gifts may be used wisely and well in the furtherance of the Kingdom and the Love, Peace, Joy and Justice of Jesus Christ:

"We thank you, God, for all your gifts: for life in your wonderful world; for space and time to enjoy your gift of life; for talents that bring us a sense of fulfilment.

We thank you, God, for coming as Jesus: to show us how much you love us; to forgive us through the cross of Calvary; to raise us with Christ to new life with you.

We thank you, God, for your Holy Spirit: your presence to guide us day by day; your power to support us day by day; your assurance of your continuing love."

Yours in Christ,  
The Finance and Administration Core Group

(Did you know? If you are already giving and pay tax to HMRC have you considered Gift Aid (GA)? If you are not already giving by GA but you pay tax, joining means an immediate 25% increase in what the church can receive without any additional contribution or commitment from yourself – we make the claim from HMRC. It's easy to sign up for this, just speak to Linda in the church office..



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**ST. ANDREW'S ARBROATH****Member Records****September 2020****Baptisms and Blessings** - None**Weddings** - None**Funerals** - None**IMPORTANT DATE****NOVEMBER EDITION****Word Processed files, as attachments, should be sent directly to the Editor****Tuesday 24th October (Word-Processed file)**

## From The Moderator Martin Fair

A couple of days back, a friend asked me about my plans for November 2021. She was trying to work out travel plans of her own and the two were related in such a way that the one depended on the other. I remember my reaction exactly upon reading her message; I smiled and thought, 'I've no idea what I'll be doing next week never mind next November!'

And isn't that pretty much the way it is for all of us right now? As I write (mid-September), the newspaper lying in front of me leads with the headline: 'Covid curbs will last for six months, No: 10 warns.'

But what will these curbs amount to? Further restrictions, full-scale lockdown? What will they mean for schools, colleges and universities? What will they mean for workplaces, for the hospitality industry, for live music, sporting and arts venues? Can I plan a holiday? Can I visit elderly relatives? Social media is buzzing with all manner of speculation.

And what will it mean for the Church?

In every case we're going to have to get better at living with uncertainty. Of course this doesn't come naturally; we like to think that we have a degree of control over the circumstances of our lives. Uncertainty eats away at such confidence. And while it's difficult for all of us to one degree or another, imagine how much more difficult it is for those who are charged with setting plans and budgets and generating forecasts and scenarios.

I know it's something of a cliché but perhaps we're going to have to get much better at taking one day at a time - being more

comfortable with not knowing what the future holds but content that there is an Almighty and Loving God who holds the future. Isn't this what we mean when we speak of faith?

I'm minded to think of the Israelites as they journeyed through the desert after having left Egypt. In response to their predicament - and grumbling! - came God's promise of morning and evening provision; manna and quail, respectively. But so too came the promise that the food would be provided daily and, therefore, that no thought was to be given to storing supplies for subsequent days. It was simply to be a case of trusting God, one day at a time. Surely the meaning is closely linked to the petition of the Lord's Prayer through which we are urged to ask, 'Give us, this day, our daily bread.'

Of course there are times when planning ahead and stock piling are exactly what's called for! Wasn't it Joseph's strategic planning that saved the fledgling Israelite nation from starvation? And will we have bigger stockpiles of PPE to face up to future covid waves? That would be no bad thing. Trusting God doesn't equate to NOT being smart and organised!

In both cases - Joseph stock-piling grain and the Israelites only gathering enough manna for one day - the underlying quality is trusting God.

So perhaps that's where we're at right now. It's not a time during which we can be certain about much, but in the midst of the planning and organising that we are able to do, let's know that God is with us today and trust that nothing is going to change that.

With strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, I'm quite content to leave next November in the hands of the one who is master over beginning and end, yesterday, today and forever.

## Wednesday and Sunday Worship

I am very pleased to let you know that our Wednesday morning services at 10.30am have recommenced and will now take place every Wednesday. Rev Ian Gray will lead these services.

Sunday worship will recommence on Sunday 18th October at 11am. This service will be led by Rev Grant MacLaughlan. We will

celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion that morning.

Due to the limit in numbers who can attend church, booking will be necessary. To make a booking you should telephone the Church Office 01241 431135 between 9am and 12 noon on the Monday before the service you wish to attend.

Joan

Session Clerk

## Ask Theophilus

### Question :

Was Thomas wrong to refuse to believe that Jesus had been raised unless he saw the nail marks in his hands and the spear wound in his side? (John 20:24-29.)

### Theophilus answers :

Apart from this incident and the lists of Jesus' chosen twelve apostles, Thomas is only mentioned on two other occasions in the Gospels. The first is in John 11:16. Jesus had told the Twelve that he was going to go to Jerusalem, and some of them protested that he would be walking straight into the arms, so to speak, of men who were resolved to kill him. It was Thomas who said to his fellow disciples, 'Let us also go that we may die with him'. The second mention of him occurs when Jesus told them he was about to leave them for he was going to prepare a place for them and would return to take them to be with him forever. Thomas asked, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' (John 14:5.) Both these mentions of him show him up in a favourable light: he had a mind of his own, was courageous and also had an enquiring mind.

So was this man wrong to demand physical proof of Christ's resurrection and in his refusal to believe the others who claimed to have seen him? His protest was certainly in character.

Three points must be made. The first is that the disciples *had* physically seen the risen Jesus, and that was why they believed. The second is that Jesus acceded to Thomas' demand and appeared to him to show him both the nail prints in his hands and the spear wound in his side.

The third point is that in his First Letter, John makes the following statement about the risen Lord: 'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life...' (1:1). So he regarded his experience (and that of the other apostles) of seeing and touching the risen Jesus as undeniable evidence of the Christian faith.

So what about believers today? Or, more to the point, what about unbelievers? However could they have similar physical evidence of the reality of Christ? The answer is easy. God's purpose is that they should see Jesus is the daily living of his followers. Using a different metaphor, the apostle put it like this: '...you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts'. (2 Cor.3:3).

What a challenge to everyone who names Christ as their Lord and Master and claims to follow and obey him! *You and I are to be the physical evidence of the reality of the Saviour*, crucified and risen and Head of his body, the company of his followers. Think about that!

**David Searle**

## Guild News

As mentioned in last month's edition, the Guild Annual Gathering was a Virtual Gathering on the 5th of September. Usually each Guild can request a limited number of free tickets but as it was virtual many more of us were able to 'attend' online. It gave a great flavour of the day and it was good to watch. All at Guild office did a great job in putting it together. It was good to hear what is planned for the Guild and also to see Martin. It was also good to join in the singing. One of our Guild ladies commented "Great to see some 'weel kent faces'. I enjoyed the virtual meeting but hope we can all be together in person soon". If you'd like to watch, it's on YouTube and the Church of Scotland website.

The Annual Gathering is the start of Guild Week and on Guild Sunday a few of the ladies took part in the online service, with the guest speaker being Pete Cuthbertson from the Church of Scotland CrossReach who gave us an update on the "Join the Dots" project which the Guild is partnering. Monday 14th September saw the first meeting of our new session of "Guild at Home" when Ian Gray led us in our Dedication and Communion Service. One Guild member commented "just had my first solo Guild meeting and communion. Strange, unusual but meaningful". Thank you very much Ian for your encouraging words and inspiring

message. At every meeting there will also be a short life story of an inspirational person who went "the Extra Mile", our first one being Mary Slessor who went many 'extra miles' and did great work for God in West Africa.

We had hoped to have an Afternoon Tea as one of our fundraisers during Guild Week but, because of the circumstances, this was not possible and so we organised a limited number of Afternoon Teas to be ordered with home delivery. This went well and we had lots of lovely comments. We hope to repeat this as a way of raising funds for our Projects if restrictions allow.

Our next "Guild at Home" meeting is on Monday 28th September and Pam Cairns has sent us an update on the Free to Live Trust, "Seema's Project", which she and her husband Alan set up five years ago.

I'd like to end with the Guild Blessing which we heard for the first time at this year's Guild Gathering

May the love of God the Father enfold us,  
May the light that is His Son light our way,  
May the grace of His Spirit empower us,

Whose we are and whom we serve. Amen

## Harvest Thanksgiving Soup Lunch

Thank you to everyone who generously contributed to our collections for the Lighthouse Project and the Dalitso Project.

I would like to thank Doris and Sandy Bowie for all the hard work which they did in preparing the soup in containers and distributing to approximately 45 members of the congregation on Saturday.

Several of us shared fellowship over our bowl of soup via Zoom. (See picture on back page.)



## Earl Matthew A Tribute by Martin Fair

### A gentleman.

In fact if you wanted a definition of the word 'gentleman' you could do worse than point to Earl Matthew. He carried himself with great dignity, displaying a calmness of spirit and an attitude of mind that perfectly reflected the values he espoused.

### Committed.

Some of us do our bit here and there, showing up when required, but somewhat grudgingly and with a look that says, 'I'd rather be doing something else...'

Earl, on the other hand, was absolutely committed and faithful and understood that serving is a privilege not to be taken lightly. In his leadership of the 7th Arbroath Boys Brigade Company and as the Senior Elder of the Kirk Session of St. Andrew's Church, he gave of himself selflessly in a way that is altogether uncommon today.

### Supportive.

As a brand new minister, green behind the lugs, Earl was a source of unstinting support and encouragement from the day I was inducted until the day I last visited with him before leaving for Edinburgh to take up my Moderator duties. It meant much to me that Earl was so very pleased about my appointment. My only sadness is that these very duties preclude me from being with you in person today.

### Faithful.

Never loud and demanding, or pushy and controlling, Earl exhibited the Christian values that his life was built on - humility, self control, respect, godliness. Though he was just as happy to be in the background than on the stage, his influence from there was immense and there are people today, too many to count, who saw something of Christ because they saw something of the Christian who was Earl Matthew.

The phrase 'Well done, good and faithful servant' is ringing out from the heavens this day.

May peace be yours, Earl, and may that same peace be there in abundance for Helen, the family, and all who mourn this day.

## Dalitso Update

Since last month, schools in Malawi have begun a phased return. Those in exam years (final year of primary and secondary) have gone back first to prepare for the delayed examinations with all others returning mid-October. Please pray for the children as they return to school, for good teaching as they prepare for their important exams and for the teachers that have many months of missed learning to catch up on with their pupils. We still await a decision on centres like ours, but we hope soon to have the go ahead for them opening. Kiri and Charles continue to monitor each child on our programme, stepping in with support when a situation arises and ensuring that our children and families have enough food, soap and other essentials.

As the work in Malawi has expanded over the years it has always been an aim to find ways for both centres to generate their own money and to provide experiences for our young people to be trained for the world of work. This has

been happening for a few years now at the shop and wedding dress hire at Thyolo and starting next month at a shop at Kambilonjo. At medical centres in Malawi it is the responsibility of the families to provide food for the sick so it was thought the presence of a shop would be a good addition to the area. It will be used by the clinic, those being trained at the Mary Spink centre and the local community (many, many people walk past our centres on the way to the market) and will provide employment for older children that have finished school. We have also built a bakery that will allow baked goods to be sold and be also enjoyed by our children. Charles is full of ideas so it is exciting for him to see this become a reality and we look forward to trying the baked goods when we next get to visit!

As always we thank you for your continued support and for the church selecting us for the harvest giving of soap. The soap will be sent in our container and distributed to our babies and children. On behalf of the children, thank you.

Charis



Above - Some of the members who took part in the soup lunch

Right - The Kambilongo shop

