

The Parish Church of St Matthew  
Northampton

# The Fourth Sunday before Advent

Year A



The Temple in Jerusalem

'Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here upon another;  
all will be thrown down'

**All Age Mass for the Parish Family**  
with admission of a chorister

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2023

10.15 am

# Welcome to St Matthew's Parish Church

Today the Church's yearly cycle takes on a new dimension: we begin to look towards the preparation for Advent and Christmas. This period is kept as the 'kingdom Season': we look at the kingdoms of the world and the kingdom of Christ.

Jesus grieves for Jerusalem and the Temple. It could be that some of the followers of Jesus had never seen another building like the Temple. The disciples are horrified when Jesus says that the Temple will be destroyed.

Jesus talks of the unrest not only of people but the earth itself. People will be led astray by false-Christ, there will be wars and rumours of war, with nation rising against nation. Along with this there will be famines and earthquakes. It sounds a real picture of doom, and yet it is something that is always happening to the world and temporal powers.

The Good News is that these are signs of the coming of Christ. His kingdom is near. Christ the King will bring in the age of peace. We are not promised a journey without storms but are promised we will not be alone and at the end of the journey we will arrive into the fullness of his kingdom.

## Prayer

Lord God,  
you know we are often in the midst of troubles  
and there are dangers all around.  
Keep us in the protection of your love  
and in the life which is eternal.  
Amen.



## Order of Service

### ¶ Gathering to Worship God

*All stand at the sound of the bell*

### Hymn *The flags are presented*

*All*           **Love Divine, all loves excelling,  
                  Joy of heaven, to earth come down,  
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
                  All thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesu, thou art all compassion,  
                  Pure unbounded love thou art;  
Visit us with thy salvation,  
                  Enter every trembling heart.**

**Come, almighty to deliver,  
                  Let us all thy life receive;  
Suddenly return, and never,  
                  Never more thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing,  
                  Serve thee as thy hosts above,  
Pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,  
                  Glory in thy perfect love.**

**Finish then thy new creation,  
                  Pure and spotless let us be;  
Let us see thy great salvation,  
                  Perfectly restored in thee,  
Changed from glory into glory,  
                  Till in heaven we take our place,  
Till we cast our crowns before thee,  
                  Lost in wonder, love, and praise!**

Words Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Music Blaenwern  
William Rowlands (1860-1937)

† In the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All **Amen.**

## The Greeting

The Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.

All **Let us rejoice and shout for joy,  
giving God the glory.**

*The service is introduced*

## Saying Sorry to God

Jesus says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.'  
So let us turn away from sin and turn to Christ,  
confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

*Silence is kept*

## Kyrie Confession

We have refused to enter our own dark places  
and let the light of the saints shine on them.

Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

We have not let ourselves be still in your presence  
and let the light of Christ transform our faces.

Christ, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

We have not believed that you wish to make us holy,  
nor that we should even desire to be transformed.

Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

## God's Forgiveness

Almighty God,  
who forgives all who confess their sins in penitence and faith,  
have † mercy on you,  
cleanse you from every kind of wrong,  
make you faithful in following him,  
and keep you in eternal life,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All*      **Amen.**

## Glory to God

*All*      **Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you,  
we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

## The Opening Prayer

Living God, steady as a rock,  
placing before us stones to raise and stones to stumble over,  
help us to discern when to build and when to dismantle,  
knowing that nothing that we do can last for ever,  
and that the Christ is the only cornerstone we need.  
We make this prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All*      **Amen.**

*Please be seated*

## ¶      Hearing and Responding to the Word of God

### First Reading

*Reader*    A reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians.

You remember our labour and toil, brothers and sisters; we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and God also, how pure, upright, and blameless our conduct was towards you believers. As you know, we dealt with each one of you like a father with his children, urging and encouraging you and pleading that you should lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God's word, which is also at work in you believers.

This is the word of the Lord.

*All*      **Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand*

# Gospel Reading

## Acclamation

1. Choir  
2. Choir and Congregation

Fintan O'Carroll

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

*Choir* Not one stone here shall be left upon another, says the Lord.  
*All* **Alleluia ...**

The Lord be with you  
*All* **and also with you.**

Hear the *Gospel* of our Lord Jesus Christ according to **Matthew.**

*All* Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

As Jesus came out of the temple and was going away, his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. Then he asked them, 'You see all these, do you not? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.'

When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?' Jesus answered them, 'Beware that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, "I am the Messiah!" and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: all this is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

'Then they will hand you over to be tortured and will put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name. Then many will fall away, and they will betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold. But anyone who endures to the end will be saved. And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come.

Matthew 24.1-14

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



All

Praise to you, O Christ.

## Hymn

*The Choir come and sit in the nave*

All

***Spirit of God, unseen as the wind,  
Gentle as is the dove,  
Teach us the truth and help us believe,  
Show us the Saviour's love.***

**You spoke to us, long, long ago,  
Gave us the written Word;  
We read it still, needing its truth  
Through it God's voice is heard. Chorus**

**Without your help, we fail our Lord,  
We cannot live His way,  
We need Your power, we need Your strength,  
Following Christ each day. Chorus**

Words Margaret V Old (1932-2001)

Music Skye Boat Song  
Scottish folk melody  
arranged by Peter Nardone (b.1965)



Talk / Presentation

*All sit*

*The themes of the day are briefly explored*

**We Believe**

*All stand*

*Priest* Let us declare our faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*All* **We believe in God the Father,  
from whom every family  
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,  
who lives in our hearts through faith,  
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,  
who strengthens us  
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

*Please kneel*

**Our Prayers to God**

*Priest* Blessed are you, Lord our God,  
for amidst the trials and troubles of the world  
you are present and ready to help us.  
You sent your Son so that we should not perish  
but have eternal life.

*Intercessor*

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the Church  
and the hope that it brings to troubled lives.  
We ask your blessing upon Christians  
who are being persecuted for their faith  
or who risk their lives in the care of others.  
We pray for all Jews and Arabs,  
remembering the on-going conflict between Israel and Gaza.  
We remember all relief agencies  
and those who work in war-torn areas,  
in areas of earthquake and famine.

Lord, we put our trust in you:

*All* **hear us and help us.**

We give thanks, O Lord,  
for all who seek to bring peace and harmony to our world.  
We ask your blessing upon leaders of nations  
and all peace-keeping forces.  
We pray especially for those held hostage  
and whose lives are endangered at this time.

Lord, we put our trust in you:

*All* **hear us and help us.**

We give you thanks, O Lord, for our homes and our loved ones.  
We ask your blessing upon all who have been driven out  
of their homes through acts of violence, natural disaster or debt.  
We pray for those who find they can no longer  
cope in their own home.

Lord, we put our trust in you:

*All* **hear us and help us.**

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the healing professions.  
We pray for all doctors and nurses,  
for paramedics and those who work in ambulance rescue vehicles.  
We pray for the acutely ill ...

We ask your blessing upon all whose world has fallen apart through sickness or bereavement.

Lord, we put our trust in you:

*All* **hear us and help us.**

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the gift of eternal life.

We rejoice in the fellowship of all your saints and ask your blessing upon the faithful departed.

For the recently departed ...

and those who have died at the hands of others, for those whose anniversary of death falls this week ...

Lord, we put our trust in you:

*All* **hear us and help us.**

*Priest* Merciful Father,

*All* **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

*All sit*

## Admission of a Chorister

*Director of Music* Fr Nicholas, I present to you David Wierzbicki to be admitted as a chorister in the choir of St Matthew's Church.

*Fr N Probationer* David, do you wish to become a chorister in this church?  
**Yes, I do.**

*Fr N* As a chorister here at St Matthew's you become part of a century-old tradition of worship offered to God in this place. Do you promise to devote your effort and skill to helping others in their worship?

*Probationer* **With the help of God, I will.**

*Fr N* Do you promise to perform your part in the worship of God to the best of your ability?

*Probationer* **With the help of God, I will.**

*Fr N* Do you promise to be faithful in fulfilling all the duties involved in being a member of the choir?

*Probationer* **With the help of God, I will.**

*The senior chorister clothes the probationer with his surplice. The Vicar takes the probationer's right hand and says:*

*Fr N* David, I admit you as a chorister in the choir of this church, in the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*All* **Amen.**

*Fr N* The Lord has given you musical gifts;  
may he also give you happiness in his service;  
may he † bless you and keep you from this day forward  
and give you his peace.

*All* **Amen.**

*The congregation congratulates the new choristers.*

## Uniformed Organisations

*Awards may be presented*

## Sign of Peace

May the God of peace bless you:  
may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness  
that you may be blameless before him  
at the coming of our Lord Jesus with his saints.

*All*           The peace of the Lord be always with you  
and also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of Christ's peace.

## Hymn

*The Choir returns to their stalls. The altar is prepared.*

*All*           **In Christ alone my hope is found,  
          He is my light, my strength, my song;  
          This Cornerstone, this solid Ground,  
          Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.  
          What heights of love, what depths of peace,  
          When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!  
          My Comforter, my All in All,  
          Here in the love of Christ I stand.**

**In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,  
          Fullness of God in helpless babe!  
          This gift of love and righteousness,  
          Scorned by the ones He came to save:  
          Till on that cross as Jesus died,  
          The wrath of God was satisfied -  
          For every sin on Him was laid;  
          Here in the death of Christ I live.**

**There in the ground His body lay,  
          Light of the world by darkness slain:  
          Then bursting forth in glorious Day  
          Up from the grave He rose again!  
          And as He stands in victory,  
          Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,  
          For I am His and He is mine -  
          Bought with the precious blood of Christ.**

No guilt in life, no fear in death,  
This is the power of Christ in me;  
From life's first cry to final breath,  
Jesus commands my destiny.  
No power of hell, no scheme of man,  
Can ever pluck me from His hand;  
Till He returns or calls me home,  
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand!

*Music and words Stuart Townend (born 1963)  
and Keith Getty (born 1974)*

## Prayer over the Bread and Wine

As a mother gathers her family,  
so do you, our God, gather us about your table.  
Make this gathering a place of welcome to the stranger,  
of challenge for the strong and support for the weak,  
that our communion may be truly that of Christ,  
who is alive now and for ever.

*All* **Amen.**

## Eucharistic Prayer

*All* The Lord be with you  
**and also with you.**

*All* Lift up your hearts.  
**We lift them to the Lord.**

*All* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give thanks and praise.**

*Children* Why is it right to give thanks and praise?  
*Adults* Listen, and we will hear.

Lord of all life, you created the universe,  
where all living things reflect your glory.  
You give us this great and beautiful earth,  
to discover and to cherish.

You give us happy times  
and things to celebrate.  
In these we taste your kingdom,  
a feast for all your children.

You made us all, each wonderfully different,  
to join with the angels and sing your praise:

*All sing*

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

We thank you, loving Father,  
because, when we turned away, you sent Jesus, your Son.  
He gave his life for us on the cross  
and shows us the way to live.

Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine  
may be for us Christ's body and his blood.

*Children  
Adults*

Why do we share this bread and wine?  
**Listen, and we will hear.**

On the night before he died,  
when darkness had fallen, Jesus took bread.  
He gave thanks, broke it,  
and shared it with his disciples, saying:  
'This is my body, given for you.  
Do this to remember me.'

After they had eaten, he took the cup of wine,  
gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples, saying:  
'This is my blood, poured out for you and for many,  
for the forgiveness of sins.'

So, Father, with this bread and this cup  
we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life.  
As you feed us with these gifts,  
send your Holy Spirit,  
and change us more and more  
to be like Jesus our Saviour.

*Children* How do we follow Jesus Christ?  
*Adults* **Listen, and we will hear.**

Help us, Father, to love one another,  
as we look forward to that day when suffering is ended,  
and all creation is gathered in your loving arms.  
And now with Mary and Matthew and all your saints  
we give you glory, through Jesus Christ,  
in the strength of the Spirit,  
today and for ever.

*All* **Amen.**

## The Lord's Prayer

Joining our prayers with the whole company of heaven  
let us pray with confidence as Jesus has taught us:

*All* **Our Father, who art in heaven  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.**



**And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

## Breaking of the Bread

Creator of all, we have gathered many grains  
and made them into this one bread.

*All* **We look for your Church to be gathered  
from the ends of the earth into the kingdom.**

## Invitation to Communion

Christ is the bread which has come down from heaven.

*All* **Lord, give us this bread for ever.**

*The clergy receive Holy Communion*

## Giving of Communion

Jesus said, 'This is the bread that came down from heaven,  
not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died.  
But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.'

*Baptised persons who are communicant members of other  
churches are warmly invited to receive Holy Communion.*

*Alternatively, if you wish to receive a blessing, please bring  
this booklet with you as a sign.*

## Spiritual Communion - *for those at home*

### Act of Reception

*All* In union, blessed Jesus,  
with the faithful gathered at every altar of your Church  
where your blessed Body and Blood are offered this day,

*(and remembering particularly my own parish ...)*

I long to offer you praise and thanksgiving,  
for creation and all the blessings of this life,  
for the redemption won for us by your life, death,  
and resurrection,  
for the means of grace and the hope of glory.

*(and particularly for the blessings given me ...)*

I believe that you are truly present in the Holy Sacrament,  
and, since I cannot at this time receive communion,  
I pray you to come into my heart.

I unite myself with you and embrace you with all my heart,  
my soul, and my mind.

Let nothing separate me from you;

let me serve you in this life until, by your grace,

I come to your glorious kingdom and unending peace.

Amen.

*Lamb of God is sung by the choir*

## Motet

### *Translation*

*Choir*

The souls of the just are in the hand of God,  
and the torment of death shall not touch them.  
In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die;  
but they are in peace.

Justorum animae op 38 no 1  
Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)

## Prayer after Communion

Let us pray:

*All stand*

*All*

Lord of heaven,  
in this eucharist you have brought us near  
to the whole company of heavenly:  
as in this spiritual food of our earthly journey  
we have shared their fellowship,  
so may we come to share their joy in heaven;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Hymn

*The flags are returned to their bearers*

*All*

Hark what a sound, and too divine for hearing,  
Stirs on the earth and trembles in the air!  
Is it the thunder of the Lord's appearing?  
Is it the music of his people's prayer?

Surely he cometh, and a thousand voices  
Shout to the saints, and to the deaf are dumb;  
Surely he cometh, and the earth rejoices,  
Glad in his coming who hath sworn: I come!

This hath he done, and shall we not adore him?  
This shall he do, and can we still despair?  
Come, let us quickly fling ourselves before him,  
Cast at his feet the burden of our care.

Through life and death, through sorrow and through  
sinning,

He shall suffice me, for he hath sufficed:  
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,  
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.

*Words* Frederic W H Myers (1843-1901)

*Music* Highwood  
Richard Runciman Terry (1865-1938)

Notices for the Community

*All sit*

¶ Going out to serve God

*All stand*

*All* The Lord be with you  
and also with you.

God's Blessing

May God give to you his comfort and peace,  
his light and his joy,  
in this world and the next;

and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son †, and the Holy Spirit,  
be upon you and remain with you always.

*All* Amen.

## The Dismissal

Go in the light and peace of Christ.

*All*      **Thanks be to God.**

## Music

Prelude on hymn tune Highwood      *Richard Lloyd (1933-2021)*

*The procession departs*

*Those leaving immediately are asked to be aware of those who wish to listen to the organ voluntary.*

*Café Guides are serving refreshments in the church. Please do join us.*

*If you are a newcomer to the parish, please introduce yourself to the clergy or speak to a member of our Welcome Team.*

This evening at 5.30 pm

# Choral Evensong

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## Collection - responding to God's generosity

*We invite you to make a monetary offering towards the ministry and mission of St Matthew's Church. You may do so using any of the following methods:*

**Cash, cheques, stewardship envelopes** - using the receptacle provided at the back of church. If you are a taxpayer please use the envelopes in the chairs, and fill out the details in order that our parish may also benefit from the Gift Aid (an extra 25p for every pound given) associated with your giving.

**Contactless giving** - using the terminal provided. Just press the button for the amount you wish to give - £5, £10, or £20, and then hold your bank card over the reader.

**Giving on your smart phone** - using the QR code printed below. It gives you the option of any amount, Gift Aid, and making a regular payment.

**Giving online** - click the donate button on the parish website or Facebook page and follow the instructions.

*Your generosity is gratefully received. Thank you.*



*Our thanks are due to Anonymous Donor 14  
who has generously financed  
the production of this week's service booklet.*

## Our next All-Age Service

The First Sunday of Advent  
Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December  
at 10.15 am

## Christingle Service

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December at 4.00 pm

## Crib Service

Christmas Eve at 4.00 pm

(Children are invited to come dressed  
as a shepherd, angel, or king)

**Please take this booklet home  
as an aid to prayer and reflection during the week,  
and then re-cycle it.**

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