

St Matthew's **MAIL**

Suggested
Donation

£1.00

News from the Parish of Kingsley, Northampton

JANUARY 2026



www.stmatthewsnorthampton.org.uk

Services at the Parish Church of St Matthew

Sundays

10.15am	The Parish Mass (sung)
5.30pm	Evensong — according to The Book of Common Prayer

First Sunday in the month

10.15am	All Age Mass for the Parish Family
5.30pm	Choral Evensong

*When the choir is on holiday (coinciding with school holidays and half terms)
Choral Evensong is replaced with Congregational Evensong*

Second Sunday in the month

10.15am	Laying on of hands and Sacrament of Anointing is offered in the Lady Chapel
5.30pm	Congregational Evensong

Third Sunday in the month

5.30pm	Choral Evensong and Benediction
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Fourth and Fifth Sundays in the month

5.30pm	Congregational Evensong
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Weekdays *(during winter months of November to March, may be held in the Parish Centre)*
Morning and Evening Prayer are said publicly at 9.00am and 5.30pm daily

Monday 7.00pm Mass (on Bank Holidays at 9.30am)
(Healing Mass and Devotions on the first Monday in the month)

Tuesday Currently suspended

Wednesday 12 noon Mass

Thursday 12 noon Mass

Friday 12 noon Mass

Saturday 9.30am Mass

(Mass of Our Lady of Walsingham followed by a Cell Meeting on the second Saturday of the month)

Major Feast-Days

Procession and Sung Mass at 7.30pm

(Always held in church. The morning Mass may be cancelled — refer to literature in church and on website)

Sacrament of Reconciliation, commonly known as Confession, is celebrated in the Lady Chapel by appointment with the clergy. They are also available for advice and guidance on any matter of concern.

All aspects of the sacrament are in confidence.

Worship Calendar for January

<i>Date</i>	<i>Observance</i>	<i>Intention</i>
1	THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS	Our resolutions
2	Ss Basil & Gregory, Bs, Drs	Those who teach the Christian faith
3	Feria	Our vocation as children of God
4	THE SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS	The Parish
5	Feria	The ministry of healing
6	THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD	Revealing Christ to the world
7	Feria	Recognising Christ in our lives
8	Feria	Our Finance & Stewardship Group
9	Feria	For Sarah Mullally, Archbishop designate of Canterbury
10	Of OLW	Our Parish Cell, the Shrine, and Society
11	THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD	The Parish
12	S Aelred of Rievaulx, Ab	The place of fasting in our lives
13	S Hilary, B and Dr	The importance of political integrity
14	Feria	Our House Group
15	Monthly Requiem	The Faithful Departed
16	Feria	Morality in public office
17	S Anthony, Ab	The gift of friendship
18	THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY	The Parish
19	S Wulfstan, B	Our application to work
20	S Fabian, Pp and M	For Pope Leo
21	S Agnes, V, M	Children who suffer
22	S Vincent, Dcn, M	The Friends of St Matthew's Music
23	Feria	Respect for human dignity
24	S Francis de Sales, B, Dr	Support for our designated charities
25	THE CONVERSION OF S PAUL	The Parish
26	Ss Timothy and Titus, Bs	Those who provide companionship
27	Feria	Remaining faithful
28	S Thomas Aquinas, Pr, Dr	Christian learning, holiness and humility
29	Feria	The good and positive features of our faith
30	Feria	The morality of the death penalty
31	Feria	God's mercy in our lives

The Church prays for the community daily.

Please include these topics in your daily prayers.

January Pastoral Letter from the Vicar

Renewed purpose in the depths of winter

As we stand at the threshold of a new year, the Church invites us not merely to turn a page on the calendar, but to enter more deeply into the mystery of Christ's revealing love. January is often a month of contrasts: the world around us feels cold and dim, the festive lights have been packed away, and yet the liturgy of the Church glows with the bright promise of Epiphany. In the very heart of winter, when the nights are long and the earth appears dormant, the Gospel speaks insistently of manifestation, illumination, and hope.

We begin this season with the great feast of The Epiphany of the Lord, when the wise men from the East – Gentiles, strangers, seekers – are drawn by a light they do not fully understand. They come with gifts, not knowing exactly what they will find, but trusting that the star has guided them to truth. Their journey is our journey. Like them, we offer what we have – our time, our talents, our material wealth – placing them at the feet of Christ so that he may use them for the building up of his Church and the blessing of the world.

Epiphany reminds us that our generosity is not just a practical necessity for parish life, but a spiritual act: a participation in the self-giving love through which God reveals himself.

This revelation continues in the feast of The Baptism of the Lord. In the waters of the Jordan, Jesus steps into the depths of our human condition, sanctifying the very elements of creation and opening for us the way of eternal life. As the heavens are torn open and the Spirit descends, the Father proclaims, "This is my beloved Son." It is a moment of profound unveiling: Christ is made known, not only to Israel, but to all nations. And in our own baptism, we share in that epiphany. We, too, are called to make Christ known, to be living signs of his presence in a world that often struggles to see beyond its present darkness.

Epiphanytide, coming as it does in the deep midwinter, invites us to persevere in faith even when warmth and light seem distant. This season teaches us the spirituality of winter: to trust in what we cannot yet see, to keep the flame of devotion alive when the winds of life blow cold, and to root ourselves more firmly in prayer, worship, and acts of charity. Like the Magi journeying by starlight, we walk by faith, guided by the quiet but unwavering radiance of Christ.

Our journey through this season finds its fulfilment next month in the feast of Candlemas, or The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, when we celebrate Christ as the Light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of God's people Israel. On that day, candles are blessed and carried – a reminder that the light which shone over Bethlehem and guided pilgrims from afar now burns in our own hearts. Candlemas marks the hinge between Christmastide, the unfolding story of his earthly ministry, and the events of Holy Week and Easter. It invites us to carry the light of Christ forward, not as something fragile, but as something triumphant, entrusted to us for the sake of the world.

May these weeks of Epiphanytide be for us a time of renewed clarity and purpose. As we journey through the coldest and darkest part of the year, may we do so with confidence that the true Light has come into the world, a light the darkness cannot overcome. Let us offer our gifts with generosity, our lives with devotion, and our witness with courage, that Christ may be revealed afresh in our parish, in our community, and in our own hearts.

With my prayers and every blessing for the year ahead.

Your sincere friend and parish priest,

Fr. Nicholas

Friends of St Matthew's Music 100+ Club

Congratulations to the lucky winner of £50 in our DECEMBER draw —

Number **72**, held by **Elizabeth March**



You too could win the **single prize of £50** in our monthly draw if you had a number! For just £3.00 a month you'd be in with a chance, whilst also helping pay for our Director of Music's salary.

For full details and a form, please email jonathan.starmer@yahoo.com

Jonathan Starmer

Can we follow Christ boldly?

As we step into 2026 together, I find myself filled with a deep and genuine hope for the year ahead. The season from January through Epiphany is an annual nudge to step into the light that Christ shines upon the world, this brilliant light that does not ignore the shadows, yet refuses to be overcome by them. Many will be familiar with the collects and prayers of Epiphany, of revelation, calling, and courage. They ask us not only to remember the star that guided the Magi but to look for the light that guides us now.



I wonder what might it mean, in this season, to follow Christ boldly? Perhaps it begins with the quiet conviction that hope is not naïve but instead necessary. It may look like choosing generosity even when the demands around us feel a lot and our resources thin. It may sound like the steady, gentle words we offer when our communities are carrying more than they let on. It might involve stepping beyond what feels safe and comfortable to bless and encourage what feels new.

Across our diocese, I delight in signs of Christ's light: communities praying faithfully, clergy leading with compassion, and disciples of all ages and stages of life and Christian journey offering their gifts with humility and joy. As we move toward 2026, may we boldly believe that God is not done with us, far from it, that a fuller, braver discipleship and relationship with God is possible for each of us.

My prayer is that, in this Epiphany season, Christ will reveal again the paths we are called to walk and grant us the courage to walk them with hope. Amen.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Becky Dyball".

The Revd Becky Dyball
Bishop's Missioner

Weekday Scripture Readings for January

Our weekday scripture readings, one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament, taken from the 'Additional Lectionary' which was constructed by the Church of England principally for use in Cathedrals at weekday Evensong.



Thursday	1	Deuteronomy 30.11-end	Acts 3.1-16
Friday	2	Isaiah 66.6-14	Matthew 12.46-50
Saturday	3	Deuteronomy 6.4-15	John 10.31-end
Monday	5	Isaiah 49.1-13	John 4.7-26
Tuesday	6	Isaiah 60.1-9	John 2.1-11
Wednesday	7	Genesis 25,19-end	Ephesians 1.1-6
Thursday	8	Joel 2.28-end	Ephesians 1.7-14
Friday	9	Proverbs 8.12-21	Ephesians 1.15-end
Saturday	10	Isaiah 61	Titus 2.11-14; 3.4-7
Monday	12	Isaiah 41.14-20	John 1.29-34
Tuesday	13	Exodus 17.1-7	Acts 8.26-end
Wednesday	14	Exodus 15.1-19	Colossians 2.8-15
Thursday	15	Zechariah 6.9-15	1 Peter 2.4-10
Friday	16	Isaiah 51.7-16	Galatians 6.14-18
Saturday	17	Leviticus 16.11-22	Hebrews 10.19-25
Monday	19	1 Kings 17.8-16	Mark 8.1-10
Tuesday	20	1 Kings 19.1-9a	Mark 1.9-15
Wednesday	21	1 Kings 19.9b-18	Mark 9.2-13
Thursday	22	Leviticus 11.1-8, 13-19, 41-45	Acts 10.9-16
Friday	23	Isaiah 49.8-13	Acts 10.34-43
Saturday	24	Isaiah 49.1-13	Acts 22.3-16
Monday	26	Ezekiel 37.15-end	John 17.1-19
Tuesday	27	Ezekiel 20.39-44	John 17.20-end
Wednesday	28	Nehemiah 2.1-10	Romans 12.1-8
Thursday	29	Deuteronomy 26.16-end	Romans 14.1-9
Friday	30	Leviticus 19.9-28	Romans 15.1-7
Saturday	31	Jeremiah 33.1-11	1 Peter 5.5b-end

Chippings from the Vicar's Work Bench

New Year's Day

We begin the new year spiritually on Thursday 1 January 2026, celebrating the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus. The Parish Mass is at 10.15am, after which all worshippers are warmly invited back to the vicarage for refreshments and further spiritual conversation.

Please do join us as we begin the year in fellowship and prayer.

Off Duty

Please note that Fr Nicholas will be back on duty on Sunday 4 January.

Healing Mass

Our next monthly Mass for Healing and Wholeness will be held in the Lady Chapel on Monday 5 January at 7.00pm. This quiet and prayerful service concludes with intercessions for the sick offered before the Blessed Sacrament, followed by a simple Benediction. The liturgy lasts approximately thirty minutes. This Mass provides a gentle and hopeful space to bring our hurts, anxieties, and needs before God, as well as the needs of those on our hearts. It is encouraging that the Monday evening Mass is experiencing a real renaissance, with attendance regularly in double figures from our own congregation and neighbouring parishes. You would be most welcome to join us.

The Epiphany of the Lord

The Feast of the Epiphany takes place on Tuesday 6 January. The Parish Mass, including the Offering of the Magi's Gifts, begins at 7.30pm.

For St Matthew, the story of the Magi anticipates the future of the good news of salvation, written in light of the resurrection. God revealed himself to the Jews through the Scriptures and to the Gentiles through nature; thus Matthew depicts the Magi (Gentiles) receiving revelation through astrology. The story highlights the paradox that those who possess the Scriptures reject Jesus, while the Gentiles, with the help of the Scriptures, find and adore him.

Speculation about the Magi's origins or the nature of the star gains us little: the star is simply the means by which a great mystery is revealed – Christ manifested as the Saviour of the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Light is therefore the central theme of Epiphany, as it is of Christmas.

Parish Cell of Our Lady of Walsingham

Members of the Cell are reminded that our next Mass of the Holy House will be celebrated on Saturday 10 January at 9.30am, followed by our Cell meeting in the Parish Centre. All Cell members and visitors are warmly welcome.

The Baptism of the Lord – All Age

We celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord on Sunday 11 January. At 10.15am, our first All Age Mass of the year focuses on Jesus' baptism by John in the River Jordan, the descent of the Holy Spirit like a dove, the Father's declaration that Jesus is his beloved Son, and the inauguration of his public ministry, including his time of discernment in the desert. We reflect on our own baptism – what it means to us, and the responsibilities and privileges we bear as members of Christ's Body, the Church. Please do come.

Epiphany Carol Service – Sunday 18 January at 4.00pm

The third in our series of Carol Services explores the themes of the Epiphany season and marks the conclusion of our festive observances. Epiphany celebrates the appearance of God's glory in the world through the birth of Jesus, our Emmanuel, and the revelation of the Incarnation to the Gentiles and to all creation. Observed since the 3rd century on 6 January, it is celebrated in both East and West in various rich traditions. In the Western Church, emphasis rests on the nativity and the recognition of Christ's kingship in the visit of the Magi with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. This revelation is echoed in Simeon's words in the Nunc Dimittis at the Presentation in the Temple (2 February), which marks the close of the Epiphany season. The Greek word epiphany means 'appearance' or 'manifestation', and refers to the unveiling of Jesus as more than teacher or moral guide, but truly God made man, the Word made flesh. Simeon proclaims him 'a light to lighten the Gentiles', and Jesus later names himself 'the Light of the World.'

The symbolism of light permeates this season and our service: Christ calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light, that we may recognise his divine imprint in all creation and respect every person made in the image of God. Please do join us. Refreshments afterwards in the parish centre.

Monthly Requiem

We offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the souls of the faithful departed on Friday 12 January at 12 noon in the Lady Chapel. If you have loved ones to remember, please make a special effort to attend and participate in this act of loving prayer, rather than leaving it to others.

The Conversion of St Paul – Sunday 25 January

This year the feast of the Conversion of St Paul falls on a Sunday. We recall the dramatic 'Damascus Road' encounter through which Saul – formerly an opponent of the Church – was transformed into Paul, apostle and evangelist. As we celebrate his conversion and wholehearted turning to Christ, we ask what within us needs to change so that we may be committed disciples, fulfilling our spiritual potential.

This feast also marks the final day of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The Week began in 1908 as the 'Octave of Christian Unity', founded by Fr Paul Wattson. In the 1930s it gained support from the Faith and Order Movement, and since 1968 it has been jointly promoted by the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. It invites Christians of every tradition to join in prayer that all may be one, as Christ himself prayed, and we remember in particular the people of Kingsley Park Methodist Church and St Gregory's Roman Catholic Church with whom we have particular connection.

Candlemas – for your diary

The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, also known as the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, falls forty days after Christmas, on Monday 2 February. This feast marks a turning point, as we take one last look back to the Christmas crib and begin to look forward toward Holy Week.

In accordance with Jewish custom, Mary and Joseph present Jesus in the Temple with an offering of two doves, their modest means. Into this ordinary moment steps Simeon, a devout man awaiting the Messiah. In this encounter another Epiphany takes place: Jesus is revealed as light for both Jews and Gentiles, though not without destined opposition.

On Candlemas we rejoice in the light of Christ, the light that scatters the darkness of sin and death and leads us to eternal life. May we place our lives in that light each day and live by it.



Little-known Epiphany Scene

The Parish Church of St Matthew

Thursday 1 January

THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS

10.15am The Parish Mass



The Parish Church of St Matthew

Sunday 11 January The Baptism of The Lord

**10.15am
All Age Mass
for the Parish Family**



The Parish Church of St Matthew

Tuesday 6 January

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

**7.30pm The Parish Mass
with the Offering of the Magi's Gifts**



The Parish Church of St Matthew

EPIPHANY CAROL SERVICE

**Sunday 18 January
at 4.00pm**





YouTube

Our YouTube Channel – The First Anniversary

Fr Nicholas

As we begin a new year, it seems fitting to mark an important milestone in the life of our parish: the first anniversary of our YouTube channel. Since the Covid pandemic, and thanks to the generosity of worshippers, we have been livestreaming our services – chiefly the Parish Mass on Sunday mornings – to ensure that those no longer able to be physically present can continue to join us in prayer and worship. What began as an emergency measure in extraordinary circumstances quickly became a genuine lifeline, and for many it remains so today.

Over the past year, this ministry has quietly but steadily grown, reaching far beyond what we could ever have imagined a decade ago. Adam has kindly collated a year's worth (up to 8 December) of viewing statistics, which illustrate just how valuable and wide-reaching this resource has become.

A Year in Numbers

- 88 subscribers now follow our channel and receive notifications whenever we go live.
- Our videos have been viewed 5,900 times since we began, with a peak of 218 views on a single day – 12 March.
- The single most-viewed service of the year was 28 September 2025, with 316 views (viewed over a two-week period).
- Viewers overwhelmingly report as over 65, with 80.2% male and 19.2% female users signed in; but watch-time tells a different story, with a near 55/45 split, suggesting that fewer female viewers watch for longer overall.
- In the last 28 days alone, 432 people have viewed our services, 65% of whom were completely new viewers.
- 69.3% of viewers are not subscribed, reminding us that we are reaching many people who may only be encountering St Matthew's for the first time.

People watch on a wide range of devices:

- TVs – 35.9%
- Mobile phones – 25%
- Computers – 24.7%
- Tablets – 14.5%

Our reach also extends well beyond the UK. Of the total 5,900 views:

- 47.4% were from the United Kingdom
- 1% from Canada
- 0.7% from the United States
- 0.6% from Argentina
- 0.2% from St Vincent & the Grenadines

Former worshippers now living abroad – including past choristers, PCC members, and sidesmen – have been in touch simply to say how moving it has been to worship with us again from such far-flung places as Canada, the USA, Australia, and Germany. For them, seeing the inside of their spiritual home once more has brought back precious memories.

How People Find Us

People come to our livestreams in many different ways:

- 36.3% arrive via browse features such as the YouTube home page or notifications.
- 22.4% come from external websites and apps, including our own church website.
- 16.6% visit via channel pages.
- 12% find us through YouTube searches.
- 5.8% from suggested videos.
- The remaining 7% come from other sources.

This variety shows that St Matthew's is now quietly present in digital spaces where we might never otherwise have been seen.

More than Numbers

Yet the statistics only tell part of the story. Behind every view is a person seeking connection, comfort, prayer, or simply familiarity with the rhythms of worship. For some, these livestreams are a cherished link with their spiritual home. For others, they offer a first glimpse into the life of our community. And for mourners unable to travel – sometimes from overseas – they have allowed families to gather and grieve together, even from across continents.

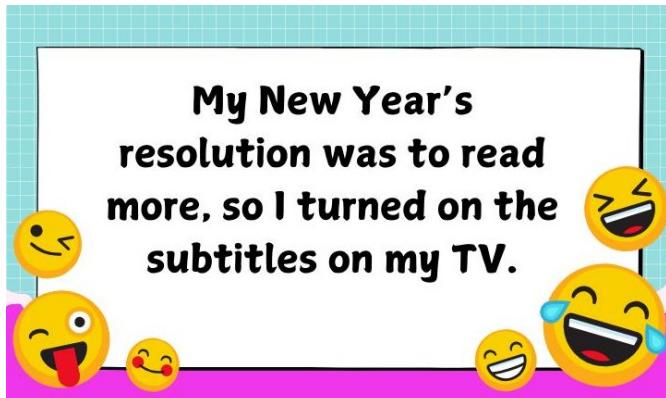
Livestreaming has now become an integral part of our ministry and mission. It enables us to reach people we do not yet know and to extend a gentle invitation: come and see us in person when you can.

Looking ahead, we hope to develop this ministry further. Ideally, investment in a second, mobile camera at floor level would enable us to share those elements of parish life currently hidden from the balcony view: baptisms, Remembrance Sunday at the Memorial Chapel, services in the Lady Chapel, concerts, and the great liturgies of Holy Week.

A Word of Thanks

We owe a particular debt of gratitude to Adam, and to those who now assist him, for the considerable commitment this ministry requires, often involving a lonely vigil beneath our rather drafty west window! Their quiet dedication enables our entire community to stay connected, and to reach beyond our walls in ways we could scarcely have imagined only a few years ago.

As we celebrate this first anniversary of St Matthew's YouTube channel, we give thanks for all that this ministry has already enabled, and we look forward with hope to all that it may yet become.



St Matthew's Scrabble Group

Tony Day

St Matthew's 'Happy Scrabblers' had a most enjoyable Christmas get-together with festive lunch at the Hopping Hare Hotel, Duston after Sunday Mass on 7 December. With plenty of spare room being available in our cars for those who don't drive, everyone set off to meet at the very nice venue for the 12.15pm booking.

With very friendly and excellent service from our waiters, our enjoyable festive lunch began and whether you tucked into traditional turkey or enjoyed the roast beef and finished with sticky toffee pudding, yule log etc it was a very happy occasion for all. One who shall remain nameless to avoid embarrassment even had fish and chips! (Well, I'm not a big meat eater!)

So as always, the St Matthew's Scrabble Group enjoy good social rapport as well as the entertaining (and educational) games of scrabble. We're looking forward to another such get-together in the New Year when the weather gets nicer and are thinking of which venue we would like to visit next.

The St Matthew's Scrabble Group will be meeting for their scrabble afternoons at 1.45pm on the first Monday of each month in 2026 in the Garden Room of the Parish Centre for refreshments, with a 2.00pm start and finishing at 4.00pm. If you would like to come along and enjoy good fellowship and entertainment, even if just to see what it's all about, you will be made most welcome!

Wishing you a "Happy New Year" from St Matthew's Scrabblers!

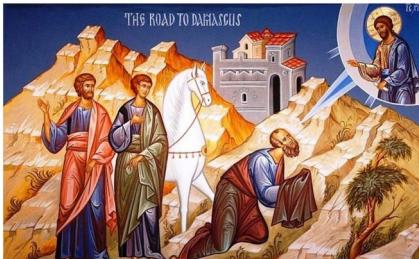


The Parish Church of St Matthew

Sunday 25 January

The Conversion Of Saint Paul

10.15am The Parish Mass



The Parish Church of St Matthew

Monday 2 February

CANDLEMAS

**The Presentation of
Christ in the Temple**

7.30pm The Parish Mass



Caption Competition!

It's been ages since we had one, and what better an image, taken at the Christmas Fayre, to kick off New Year 2026.

When you've woken up, sobered up, and got your brains back into working order again, see what gems spring to mind...

Email your suggestion(s) to magazine@stmatthews-northampton.co.uk or by paper copy via the Office or to me direct, marking it 'Caption Competition' by **Sunday 11 January latest** so we can get the winner in the next magazine. Can't wait to see them!

Dorrie Parker, Editor



On the Bookshelf

Dorrie Parker

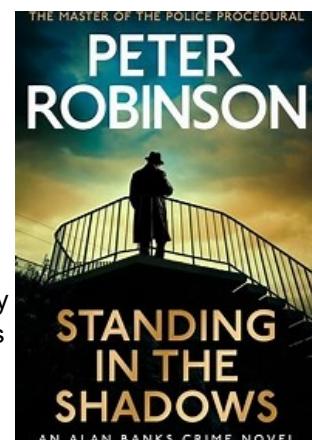
After the more light-hearted reading of the summer, I returned to the serious stuff – mostly murder mysteries – and among them, two books I've particularly enjoyed were by the same author. The first I picked up in Tesco as it looked interesting, one of the *Inspector Banks* novels by Peter Robinson. I'd never seen them on tv (with Stephen Tompkinson in the title role) or read any of the books.

The Summer That Never Was is set in two time zones, and Banks features in both of them. In 1965 a 14-year-old school friend of Banks disappeared one morning on his paper round in Peterborough. Just vanished. In the present day a skeleton has been unearthed, identified as that of his old friend Graham.

Meanwhile DCI Banks, now working in Yorkshire, is investigating the case of a young local teenager who has disappeared. He visits his hometown again to see if he can offer some unofficial help by having been there at the time of Graham's disappearance, while coping with similarities in his own case. It made an interesting slant on a story, and so I was keen to read another of his books.

I found one in TG Jones – *Standing in the Shadows*, written in 2023 – which is actually Robinson's last book as he has since died. Again, it's a 'dual' story (is this a feature of his books?) – one is a first-person narrative following a murder of a young woman committed in 1980 in Leeds, at the time of the Ripper Murders. The case was never solved, and the police seemed to have given up any interest in it, so the victim's ex-boyfriend determines to carry out his own investigation. This is interspersed by a story set in 2019 of a skeleton being unearthed by an archaeologist doing preparatory work before a supermarket is built on old farmland.

It's fascinating to see the two stories weave together and how they eventually come together in time – it kept me guessing all the way through, a book definitely worth reading.



A Christmas Cracker

Nick and Denise Bailey

Torrential rain failed to dampen spirits as people piled in for St Matthew's 2025 Christmas Fayre on Friday 5 December.

Numbers were slightly down due to the 'Biblical' storms, but we still managed to make a record £2,828 – that's £300 up on the previous year.



It was a fun-packed evening of music, games galore and fab food and drink.

A super sax quartet from Northampton School for Boys got proceedings underway. Our own choir seniors then led the crowd in a hearty carol singing session.

Santa and his glamourous elf assistant worked non-stop with children queuing from minute one.

St Matthew's scouts manned many of the games, including a human one-arm bandit which brought tears of laughter from the crowd. All the tombola and fun stalls did a roaring trade.

It was heartwarming to see the £100 raffle cash prize go to St Matthew's regular David Brook and his young family.

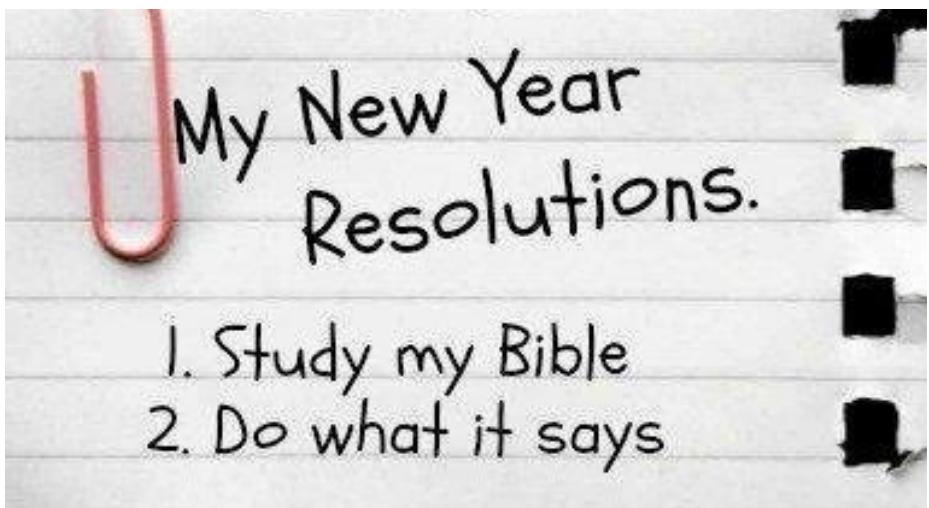
A wonderful array of hot food plus mulled wine and mince pies kept everyone fortified in what has become a cracking community event.

Thanks to everyone who donated their time and energy and gifts over the weeks to make this such a success.





[More photos of the event can be found on the church website]



32nd St Matthew's Multi-Aged Girlguiding

Mandy Ludlow

The last few weeks to the end of term have been particularly busy. We held our Winter Craft Market in November, and this was one of the best we have had. All the stalls were taken and stocked with handmade items; there were some really talented people there. Once the doors opened, we had customers steadily stream through and all the stallholders said that they had a good day.

We spent the last couple of weeks in November doing some Christmas crafts, icing gingerbread men and trees, making paper snowflakes and some lovely decorations which looked mugs of hot chocolate.

Then came the Christmas party. As usual the Rainbows and Brownies had a magic show and children's entertainer, and food – all the girls pre-order and then we make up their own party food boxes, a bit like a McDonalds Happy Meal. This was followed by a visit from Father Christmas, bringing all the girls a gift.

After a very quick clean up the Guides started to arrive and our coach was outside. The Guides, Young Leaders and Leaders were all off to Pizza Hut for their Christmas party – lots of laughter and chatter, pizza, fries, onion rings and salads, followed by the ice cream factory; the girls can all fill their bowls with ice cream and toppings, and this is unlimited as were the drinks. All 27 of us had a great time. For some of the girls this was the first time that they had been out for something to eat.

In the same week we attended our Division Christingle Service at The Abbey Centre. The girls had a lovely time, making their Christingles and other associated crafts. At the end of the evening, we had a very short talk about what the Christingle meant, followed by the singing of Away in a Manger.

No sooner had we got home from the Christingle than we were back at the Church Christmas Fayre – three turkey crowns, two joints of pork and over 30 jacket potatoes and gallons of hot chocolate! We were busy from the moment the doors opened until the last raffle ticket had been drawn.

Busy doesn't even cover how the previous week had been, but like the troopers we are we were back on Café Guides duty on the Sunday, with more jacket potatoes, bacon rolls, sausage baps, and as it was our festive Café Guides, we also sold mulled wine and Baileys hot chocolate, for which we had obtained a drinks licence.

A couple of days to get our breath back and we were off to see *Beauty and the Beast* at The Deco – our usual County Lion coach and driver Jono came to collect us. It was a great performance and there was lots of laughter, and at the end of the night the girls were all up on their feet singing and dancing. It was such a lovely way to end our year.



Café Guides Recipe for January

Mincemeat Bread and Butter Pudding

This is a comforting dessert at any time of year but is made more special by using up ingredients left over from the festive period. You can use brioche bread for an even richer flavour, but regular white bread is great too. If using something like sourdough, don't skip the soaking stage as it will take time for the sourdough to properly absorb the liquid.

Ingredients

- 50g (2oz) soft dried apricots
- 2 tbsp brandy or rum
- 12 thin slices white bread, buttered
- 450g (1lb) jar luxury mincemeat
- 50g (2oz) caster sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 300ml (½ pint) double cream
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 150ml (¼ pint) milk
- 1 tbsp demerara sugar

Method

1. Generously butter a 28cm (11in) fairly shallow round ovenproof dish.
2. Snip the apricots into smallish pieces and soak in the brandy or rum whilst making the pudding.
3. Make sandwiches of the bread using the mincemeat, but don't fill right to the edges because these are trimmed off. Cut off the crusts and cut each sandwich diagonally into four. Arrange the sandwich triangles across the dish, slightly overlapping.
4. Beat together the caster sugar, eggs, cream and vanilla extract. Stir in the milk.
5. Scatter the apricots over the bread. Gradually pour over the cream mixture, making sure all the bread is coated. If you have time, leave the pudding to stand for 30-60 minutes. Then heat the oven to 180C (160C fan, Gas 4).
6. Sprinkle the demerara sugar over the top of the pudding, and bake for about 40 minutes until well-risen, crisp and golden. Serve warm with custard, creme fraiche or cream.

Top tip for making a bread and butter pudding:

If you don't have time to soak the pudding you can let it soak for 10 minutes while your oven preheats. The soaking allows the bread to absorb the liquid, so it becomes light and crisp during cooking.



Result!

Dorrie Parker

Well done to all participants of this year's Parish Christmas Card Scheme – we raised £875, slightly up on last year, which with gift aid where applicable made a grand total of **£1,057.00** for church funds. An excellent result. Thank you to all the 49 families, couples or singeltons who joined in with the fellowship, and a special 'welcome' to those who joined in for the first time.

Christmas Get-togethers

It's always a good opportunity, or excuse, to get together for a meal out at this time of year. The Scrabble Group has told us about their Christmas 'Do' in this issue and Mandy with her Girlguiding Units too. I'm sure a lot of our other groups organised something...

Here's a photo from a loosely based 'office do' at the Imperial Raj, taken after the meal!



Next month's magazine

Contributions to our magazine are always appreciated so let us know what you / your group are up to! If you don't have the confidence to write something yourself, just let us have the details and we'll write it for you.

Please leave paper contributions in the 'P' (for 'Parker') pigeon hole in church or email files to: magazine@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk

When attaching photographs to the email address please send no more than 7mb -worth per email, otherwise it jams the system! Thank you.

Deadline for the FEBRUARY magazine is SUNDAY 11 JANUARY

Editor: Dorrie Parker

Layout and production: Gary Drinkwater

'St Matthew's Mail' Magazine Subscription 2026

In order that St Matthew's can claim Gift Aid on your subscription, we'd like to ask you to make a 'donation' of, say, £1 a copy, so a donation from you of £12 for the entire year would also be able to give the church £3 extra because we can claim that back from the tax you pay to HM Government.

Sign up here and you could also get a hard copy of the magazine posted to you each month!

***PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY IN BLOCK CAPITALS AND RETURN TO DORRIE PARKER,
St Matthew's Parish Office, 27A The Drive, Kingsley, Northampton NN1 4RY***

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A Christian Workers Co-operative supporting the local community and the wider world.

Parish Giving Scheme

The Parish Giving Scheme exists to allow members of the St Matthew's community to support the life and work of the Parish, and the upkeep of our church, through regular giving. It provides our principal source of income and helps us meet our main financial commitments, including our contribution towards the Diocesan Common Fund (the 'Parish Share') and the costs of our employees.

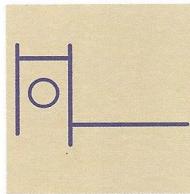
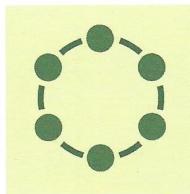
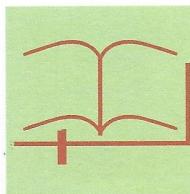


The Scheme is the most tax efficient way of contributing to the church because contributions may be eligible for Gift Aid (raising your donation by 25% at no cost to either you or St Matthew's).

There are two methods of payment available: by a banker's direct debit or by weekly-numbered envelopes via the collection plate. The amount that you give is entirely confidential and is known only to the lay people who administer the Scheme.

If you are interested in learning more or in joining the Scheme, please speak to our Stewardship Recorder Polly Matthews. She can be contacted via the Parish Office as below.

Polly Matthews
[<office@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk>](mailto:office@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk)



TM

PARISH GIVING SCHEME

Parish Office

27A The Drive, Kingsley, Northampton NN1 4RY (*within the Parish Centre*)

Telephone: 01604 791251 Email: office@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk

Parish Administrator: Anita Speake Office opening hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays 9.30am till 12.30pm, 1.00pm till 4.00pm; Wednesdays CLOSED

Ministry Team

Parish Priest	The Revd Canon Nicholas Setterfield	Tel: 01604 604412
	vicar@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk	
Assistant Priest	The Revd Canon Nicholas Gandy OGS	

Parish Officers

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	Dave Wilson churchwarden@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk
PCC Secretary	Sarah Oughton pcc-secretary@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk
PCC Treasurer	Donald Cran treasurer@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk
Stewardship Recorder	Polly Matthews

St Matthew's Trust	Ben Drouet chairman@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk
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Particular Responsibility

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Electoral Roll Officer	Seymour Franklin
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Website & Magazine Editor	Dorrie Parker magazine@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk

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Parish Organist	Jonathan Starmer
Friends of St Matthew's Music	Steve Stringfellow friends@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk

Walsingham Cell

Cell Secretary	Dave Wilson walsingham@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk
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