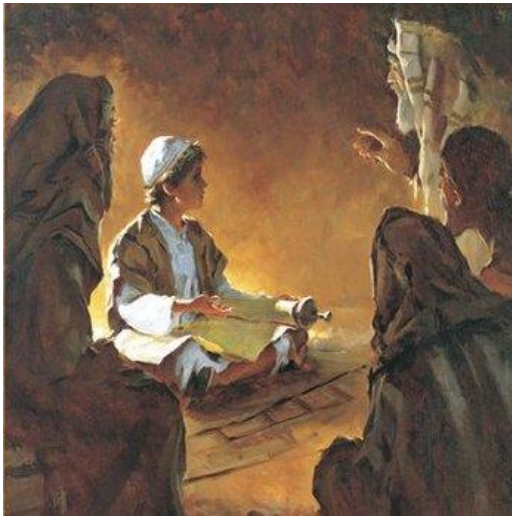


The Parish Church of St Matthew
Northampton

The First Sunday of Christmas

Year C



The finding in the Temple

The Parish Mass

Sunday 29th December 2024

10.15 am

Welcome to St Matthew's Parish Church



Safeguarding St Matthew's is committed to providing a safe environment for all who come. If you have any concerns, please speak with one of our welcomers or a churchwarden who may be identified by their lanyard. They will be happy to help you.

Live streaming Please note that this service is being streamed. You may sit where you wish. If, however, you prefer not to be seen online, please sit in a side aisle. The administration of Holy Communion will not be shown.

GDPR Some of St Matthew's services (most Sunday mornings and some special services) are live-streamed or recorded for those who cannot attend church in person. Under GDPR, the church must gain the consent of anyone whose image may be captured, as this constitutes collection of "personal data". This includes clergy, readers/intercessors, musicians and congregation. Whilst every attempt is made not to capture the faces of members of the congregation, this may occasionally happen if people turn around or move around the church during the service. The exception is communion, when the congregation is not filmed. The side aisles and back of the nave are so far as possible film-free areas not covered by the camera. Any-one whose personal data is collected must give their consent. Consent forms are available both in church and on the website. The full policy can be read on our parish website or on the noticeboards in church.

Toilet and baby changing facilities may be found at the base of the church tower. There is also a small servery.

For younger children In the north aisle (nearest to Collingwood Road), a carpeted area equipped with age-related Christian resources is provided. Please feel free to make use of these facilities.



Collection – ‘Building a Generous Church’



Our response to God’s generosity

We believe in a generous God, who longs for us to share his generosity with others. A generous life is therefore a hallmark of our faith and a testament to it, as the more generous we are, the more we reflect the generous God we believe in. Generosity is, therefore, at the heart of our faith, and our own generosity is a sure sign of our faith in action. Generosity is a spiritual gift, and we need to encourage people to seek this gift as they grow in their faith. The ministry and mission of The Church of England is largely funded through the incredible generosity of those who give to it.

* * * * *

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.



This morning's Gospel tells the story of how the twelve-year-old Jesus got lost in Jerusalem. It shows that misunderstandings can occur even in the best of families. We are inclined to say that Jesus got lost in the Temple. But Jesus did not get lost in the Temple. Rather, he was at home there. It was there he began to find himself, and to discover his true identity. He was not just the son of Mary, but the unique Son of God.

Many lost, lonely, homeless souls have come to the house of God, or have wandered into it almost by accident, and felt at home there, and found peace there, and found themselves there. In God's house we discover who we are. Whatever the world may think of us, in God's house we know we are God's precious daughters and sons.

It is our custom to spend some time in quiet preparation before the liturgy begins, and save further conversation until we meet socially for refreshments afterwards. The following reflection, based on today's themes, may be found helpful:

Prayer / Reflection

Lord grant us children, who will be strong enough to know they are weak;
who will be unbending in defeat,
yet humble and gentle in victory.
Grant us children, whose wishes will not take the place of their deeds;
children who will know you and know themselves.
Lead them, we pray you, not in the path of ease and comfort,
but rather in the path of difficulties and challenges.
Grant us children, whose hearts will be clear, and whose goals will be high;
children who will master themselves before seeking to master others.
And after all these things, add, we pray, a sense of humour,
so that they can be serious,
yet never take themselves too seriously.
Then we, their parents, will dare whisper, we have not lived in vain.

(From a prayer by General MacArthur)

Order of Service

¶ The Gathering

At the sound of the bell, all STAND

Hymn

The procession enters

All **WHILE** shepherds watched their flocks by night,
 All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
 And glory shone around.

'Fear not,' said he (for mighty dread
 Had seized their troubled mind);
'Glad tidings of great joy I bring
 To you and all mankind.

'To you in David's town this day
 Is born of David's line
A Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;
 And this shall be the sign:

'The heavenly Babe you there shall find
 To human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands,
 And in a manger laid.'

Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith
 Appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, who thus
 Addressed their joyful song:

'All glory be to God on high,
 And on the earth be peace;
Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men
 Begin and never cease.'

Words Nahum Tate (1652-1715)

Music Winchester Old
Thomas Este's *Psalter* 1592

† In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
All **Amen.**

The Greeting

We meet to celebrate the coming of Christ into the world.
Grace, mercy, and peace be with you
All **and also with you.**

The service is introduced

Invitation to Confession

As we kneel with the shepherds before the Christ-child
who came to save us from our sins,
let us open our hearts in penitence and faith.

Silence for personal reflection

Confession

**Lord of grace and truth,
we confess our unworthiness to stand in your presence
as your children.
Forgive our disobedience to your will,
our greed and rejection of your ways,
our self-interest and lack of vision,
and fill our hearts with your self-giving love
as we see it in your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

Kyries

Lord Jesus, you came to unite us to one another
and to the Father:

All **Lord, have mercy.**

You heal the wounds of sin and division:

All **Christ, have mercy.**

You intercede for us at the right hand of the Father:

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Absolution

May the God of all healing and forgiveness
draw you to himself,
pardon † and cleanse you from all your sins
that you may behold the glory of his Son,
the Word made flesh,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Gloria in Excelsis

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 Collect

Let us pray that our joy in the birth of Christ will last for ever.

Almighty God,
who wonderfully created us in your own image
and yet more wonderfully restored us
through your Son Jesus Christ:
grant that, as he came to share in our humanity,
so we may share the life of his divinity;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All

Amen.

§ *Sit*

¶ The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Reader A reading from the First Book of Samuel.

Samuel was ministering before the Lord, a boy wearing a linen ephod. His mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year, when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, 'May the Lord repay you with children by this woman for the gift that she made to the Lord'; and then they would return to their home.

Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favour with the Lord and with the people.

I Samuel 2.18-20,26

All This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Psalm

Reader Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps;
Fire and hail, snow and mist,
tempestuous wind, fulfilling his word;

All **O praise the name of the Lord.**

Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars;
Wild beasts and all cattle,
creeping things and birds on the wing;

All **O praise the name of the Lord.**

Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the world;
Young men and women, old and young together;
let them praise the name of the Lord.

All **O praise the name of the Lord.**

For his name only is exalted,
his splendour above earth and heaven.
He has raised up the horn of his people
and praise for all his faithful servants,
the children of Israel, a people who are near him.

All **O praise the name of the Lord.**

Psalm 148:7-14

§ *Stand*

Holy Gospel

Acclamation

1. *Choir only*
2. *Choir and Congregation*

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

All Open our hearts, O Lord, to accept the words of your Son.
Alleluia.

§ Turn to face the Book of the Gospels

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

All

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

All



Musical notation for the beginning of the Gospel reading. It features a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, C5, and D5. The second measure begins with a forte (f) dynamic marking and contains quarter notes E5, D5, C5, and B4. The third measure contains a half note A4. The lyrics "Glo - ry to you, O Lord." are written below the notes.

Every year the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.' He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.

Luke 2.41-52

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All



Musical notation for the end of the Gospel reading. It features a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, C5, and D5. The second measure begins with a forte (f) dynamic marking and contains quarter notes E5, D5, C5, and B4. The third measure contains a half note A4. The lyrics "Praise to you, O Christ." are written below the notes.

Homily

§ Sit

At the end, there may be a time of quiet reflection

The Nicene Creed

§ Stand

Let us reaffirm our faith in God who, for love of us,
gave us his Son in our flesh.

All **We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

All may bow ***For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.***

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.**

Prayers of the Faithful

Priest The Son of God became part of a human family.
Let us pray to him for the well-being of all families.

§ *Kneel*

After each petition

Intercessor Lord, ever present,
All **help us to rejoice in your love and power.**

After the final petition

Priest O God, Father of every family,
 against whom no door can be shut,
 convert our hearts and our homes into fit dwelling places
 for your Son,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.
All **Amen.**

§ *Stand*

¶ The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Sign of Peace

‘I will comfort you,’ says the Lord,
‘as a mother comforts her child, and you shall be comforted.’

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.

The Offertory

§ *The bread and wine are presented to the priest at the dais step, and the altar is prepared*

Hymn

§ *A monetary collection is taken. Please give as you are able using any of the ways indicated at the front of this booklet. Your generosity is much appreciated. Thank you.*

¹
All **ONCE** in royal David's city
 Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
 In a manger for his bed.
Mary was that mother mild,
 Jesus Christ her little child.

²
He came down to earth from heaven
 Who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable
 And his cradle was a stall;
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,
 Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

³
And through all his wondrous childhood
 Day by day like us he grew,
He was little, weak, and helpless,
 Tears and smiles like us he knew:
And he feeleth for our sadness,
 And he shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see him,
 Through his own redeeming love,
For that child so dear and gentle
 Is our Lord in heaven above;
And he leads his children on
 To the place where he is gone.

Not in that poor, lowly stable,
 With the oxen standing by,
We shall see him; but in heaven,
 Set at God's right hand on high;
Where like stars his children crowned,
 All in white shall wait around.

Music 'Irb'y' Henry John Gauntlett (1805-1876)

Words Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895)

Invitation to Prayer

Pray, my brothers and sisters,
that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God,
the almighty Father.

All **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands
for the praise and glory of his name,
for our good, and the good of all his Church.**

Prayer over the Gifts

Eternal God,
in the Word made flesh you joined together heaven and earth.
Uniting our prayers with the intercession
of the Virgin Mother and Saint Joseph,
may our sharing in these gifts by your grace
make us holy to serve your Son.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The 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 him thanks and praise.

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere,
mighty creator, ever-living God.
We give you thanks and praise for your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who for love of our fallen race humbled himself,
was born of the Virgin Mary by the power of your Spirit,
and lived as one of us.

In the mystery of the Word made flesh
you have caused his light to shine in our hearts,
to give knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.
In him we see our God made visible
and so are caught up in the love of the God we cannot see.

Therefore with all the angels of heaven
we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name
and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

All

**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 praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:

Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:

Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

All

Jesus Christ is Lord:



Lord, by your cross and re sur rec - tion you have set us free. You are the Sa viour of the world.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
In him we plead with confidence his sacrifice
made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with Mary the Virgin Mother of God,
Saint Joseph, and all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All



A- men.

The Blessed Sacrament is elevated and bells are rung

The Lord's Prayer

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us,
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour 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

We break the bread of life,
and that life is the Light of the world.

All **God here among us, light in the midst of us,
bring us to light and life.**

Agnus Dei

All **Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Invitation to Communion

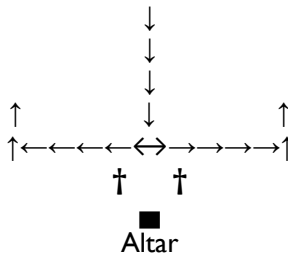
All Christ is the bread which has come down from heaven.
Lord, give us this bread for ever.

The priest receives Holy Communion

Giving of Communion

Our God has appeared in the earth, and lived among us.

Holy Communion, alternatively God's blessing, is administered standing at a 'station', as indicated below. Please approach the clergy via the centre aisle and return to your seat via the side aisles whilst maintaining physical distancing. If you wish to receive God's blessing please bring this booklet with you. Thank you.



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.

Hymn

All **○ LITTLE one sweet, ○ little one mild,
 Thy Father's purpose thou hast fulfilled;
 Thou cam'st from heaven to dwell on earth,
 At one with us through humble birth,
 ○ little one sweet, ○ little one mild.**

O little one sweet, O little one mild,
With joy thou hast the whole world filled;
Thou camest here from heaven's domain,
To bring us comfort in our pain,
O little one sweet, O little one mild.

O little one sweet, O little one mild,
In thee love's beauties are all distilled;
Then light in us thy love's bright flame,
That we may give thee back the same.
O little one sweet, O little one mild.

O little one sweet, O little one mild,
Help us to do as thou hast willed.
Lo, all we have belongs to thee!
Ah, keep us in our fealty!
O little one sweet, O little one mild.

Words German, Samuel Scheidt's *Tabulatur-Buch*, 1650
Translated by Percy Dearmer (1867-1936)

Music O Jesulein süß
Harmony by J S Bach (1685-1750)

§ *All sit for a period of silent reflection and thanksgiving*

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray.

§ *Stand*

Heavenly Father,
whose blessed Son shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home:
help your Church to live as one family,
united in love and obedience,
and bring us all at last to our home in heaven;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All

Amen.

**Son of Mary, Son of God,
we have joined the worship of the angels;
may we never lose that heavenly vision.
Like the shepherds,
we have rejoiced at the news of your birth;
help us to proclaim that message in word and deed,
to your praise and glory. Amen.**

Hymn

All

**UNTO us a boy is born,
King of all creation:
Came he to a world forlorn,
The Lord of every nation,
The Lord of every nation.**

**Christ, from heav'n descending low,
Comes on earth a stranger;
Ox and ass their owner know
Now cradled in a manger,
Now cradled in a manger.**

**Herod then with fear was filled:
'A prince', he said, 'in Jewry!'
And all the little boys he killed
At Beth'em in his fury,
At Beth'em in his fury,**

**Of his love and mercy mild
Hear the Christmas story:
O that Mary's gentle child
Might lead us up to glory,
Might lead us up to glory.**

**Omega and Alpha he!
Let the organ thunder,
While the choir with peals of glee
Doth rend the air asunder,
Doth rend the air asunder.**

Words Latin, 15th century
Translated by Percy Dearmer (1867-1936)

Music Puer Nobis
Harmonised by G H Palmer (1846-1926)

Notices for the Community

§ Sit

¶ Sending Out

§ Stand

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Solemn Blessing

All May the Father, who has loved the eternal Son
from before the creation of the world,
pour that love upon you his children.
Amen.

All May Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one
things earthly and heavenly,
fill you with joy and peace.
Amen.

All May the Holy Spirit, by whose overshadowing
Mary became the God-bearer,
give you grace to carry the good news of Christ.
Amen.

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

The priest stands before the Crib

Angelus Domini

(Luke 1:28 ff)

All The angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary,
and she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. (3 rings)
Blessed art thou among women
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

All **Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now
and at the hour of our death. Amen.**

All Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
Be it unto me according to thy word.
Hail Mary ... (3 rings)

All And the Word was made flesh,
and dwelt among us.
Hail Mary ... (3 rings)

All Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,
that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

Lord, open our hearts to your grace. (9 rings)
Through the angel's message to Mary
we have learned to believe in the incarnation of your Son.
Lead us by his † passion and cross
to the glory of his resurrection.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Dismissal

All Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.
Glory, thanks and praise to God.

Organ Voluntary

Menuet Gothique [Suite Gothique, Opus 25, ii]

Léon Boëllmann (1862-1897)

- § *Please remain standing until the procession has departed*
- § *Those leaving immediately are asked to be aware of those who wish to listen to the organ voluntary*
- § *Refreshments are being served in the parish centre, 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.*

Christmas and Epiphany Services

New Year's Day
Wednesday 1st January 2025
10.15 am The Parish Mass

The Second Sunday of Christmas
5th January
10.15 am The Parish Mass

The Epiphany of the Lord
Monday 6th January
7.30 pm The Parish Mass with the Offering of the Magi's Gifts

Our thanks are due to Mandy and Mark Ludlow
who have generously financed
the production of this week's service booklet.

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

Copyright © The Archbishops' Council of the Church of England.
All of the official *Common Worship* publications are being published by Church House Publishing.
Church Copyright Licence No. 248548. Streaming Licence No. 93626.

St Matthew's Parish Church, The Parish Office, 27A The Drive, Kingsley, Northampton NN1 4RY
Tel: 01604 791251 www.stmatthews-northampton.org.uk office@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk