

The Parish Church of St Matthew  
Northampton

# The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Year C



*The grace of visitation*

## The Parish Mass

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> 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.*



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## 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 readings*

When Micah was writing (late eighth-century BC) Jerusalem was under siege and David's dynasty was in jeopardy. But salvation would come from a comparatively insignificant place – Bethlehem. From there a new leader would come to gather together the scattered exiles and unite the nation once more. Christians see this promise as foreshadowing the coming of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, who was born in Bethlehem and descended from the line of David.

The Gospel tells the story of Mary's visit to Elizabeth. Both are pregnant. Enlightened by the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth praises Mary and hints at the uniqueness of the child she has conceived.

*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:*

## Reflection

Lord Jesus, come into our weakness.  
Come into our fears.  
Come into our anxieties.  
Come into our failures.  
Come into our divisions.  
Come into our grieving.  
Come into our loneliness.  
Come into our darkness.  
Come into our doubting.  
Come into our despair.  
Come into our poverty of heart.  
Come into our searching.  
Come into our joys and hopes.  
Come into our dying.  
Come, Lord Jesus, come.

## Settings

Mass of the Altar of Life (Kyries only)

*David Halls (born 1963)*

Missa de Angelis

*plainsong*

# Order of Service

## ¶ The Gathering

§ *Please stand at the sound of the bell*

## The Advent Prose

1. *Choir*  
2. *All*



Drop down, ye hea-vens from a - bove, and let the skies pour down right - eous - ness.

*Choir*      Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,  
my salvation shall not tarry:  
I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions:  
Fear not, for I will save thee:  
For I am the Lord thy God,  
the Holy One of Israel, thy Redeemer.

## Hymn

*The procession enters*

*All*                    **O COME, O come, Emmanuel!**  
**Redeem thy captive Israel,**  
**That into exile drear has gone**  
**Far from the face of God's dear Son.**  
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel*  
*Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

**O come, thou Wisdom from on high,**  
**Who madest all in earth and sky,**  
**Creating man from dust and clay:**  
**To us reveal salvation's way.**  
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel*  
*Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

**O come, thou Lord of David's key!  
The royal door fling wide and free;  
Safeguard for us the heavenward road,  
And bar the way to death's abode.  
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.***

**O come, O come, thou dayspring bright!  
Pour on our souls thy healing light;  
Dispel the long night's lingering gloom,  
And pierce the shadows of the tomb.  
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.***

**O come, desire of nations! show  
Thy kingly reign on earth bestow;  
Thou cornerstone, uniting all,  
Restore the ruin of our fall.  
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.***

Words German trans. T A Lacey from the ancient Advent antiphons  
Music adapted from a French Missal by Thomas Helmore (1811–1890)

## Lighting of the Advent Wreath

§ *A member of the congregation lights the remaining purple candle*

*All*     **Lord Jesus, light of the world,  
blessed is Gabriel, who brought good news;  
blessed is Mary, your mother and ours.  
Bless your Church preparing for Christmas;  
and bless us your children, who long for your coming.  
Amen.**

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

## The Greeting

*All*            May the light and peace of Jesus Christ our Lord be with you.  
**and also with you.**

*The service is introduced*

## Invitation to Confession

In a few days we celebrate the birth of Christ.  
Christ comes most readily to those who realise their need of him.  
Let us draw near to him now  
bringing with us our spiritual poverty, wounds, and sins.

*Silence is kept*

## Confession

*All*            **Lord our God,  
in our sin we have avoided your call.  
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,  
like the dew that goes away early.  
Have mercy on us;  
deliver us from judgement;  
bind up our wounds and revive us;  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

## Kyries

Lord Jesus, you rouse up your might and come to our help:  
Kyrie eleison.

*All*            **Kyrie eleison.**

You let your face shine on us so we might be saved:  
Christe eleison.

*All*            **Christe eleison.**

You bring us back, never to forsake you again:  
Kyrie eleison.

*All*     **Kyrie eleison.**

## Absolution

May the God of love bring you back to himself,  
forgive † you your sins,  
and assure you of his eternal love  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All*     **Amen.**

## The Collect

Let us pray.

God our redeemer,  
who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary  
to be the mother of your Son:  
grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour,  
so we may be ready to greet him  
when he comes again as our judge;  
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 prophecy of Micah.

You, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
who are one of the little clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me



one who is to rule in Israel,  
 whose origin is from of old,  
 from ancient days.  
 Therefore he shall give them up until the time  
 when she who is in labour has brought forth;  
 then the rest of his kindred shall return  
 to the people of Israel.  
 And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord,  
 in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.  
 And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great  
 to the ends of the earth;  
 and he shall be the one of peace.  
 If the Assyrians come into our land  
 and tread upon our soil,  
 we will raise against them seven shepherds  
 and eight installed as rulers.

Micah 5.2-5a

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

## Psalm

Response Andrew Moore



Show the light of your coun-*te*-nance, O Lord God of hosts, and we shall be saved.

*Choir* Hear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
 you that led Joseph like a flock;  
 Shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim,  
 before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh. **Response**

Stir up your mighty strength  
 and come to our salvation.  
*Turn us again, O God;*  
*show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.* **Response**

O Lord God of hosts,  
 how long will you be angry at your people's prayer?  
 You feed them with the bread of tears;  
 you give them abundance of tears to drink. **Response**

You have made us the derision of our neighbours,  
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.  
*Turn us again, O God of hosts;  
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.* **Response**

Psalm 80.1-8

## Holy Gospel

§ *Stand*

Acclamation

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



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


*Choir* Mary said, 'I am the handmaid of the Lord:  
let it be according to your word.'

*All* **Alleluia.**

§ *Turn to face the Book of the Gospels*

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

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



Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

And Mary said,

'My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

Luke 1.39-55

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



## Homily

§ Sit

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

## Affirmation of Faith

§ *Stand*

We say together in faith:  
*All* **Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty,  
who was, and is, and is to come.**

We believe in God the Father, who created all things:  
*All* **for by his will they were created  
and have their being.**

We believe in God the Son, who was slain:  
*All* **for with his blood, he purchased us for God,  
from every tribe and language,  
from every people and nation.**

We believe in God the Holy Spirit:  
*All* **the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!'  
Even so come, Lord Jesus!  
Amen.**

## Prayers of the Faithful

*Priest* Let us pray to our heavenly Father, who so loved the world  
that he sent his only Son, not to condemn us, but to save us.

§ *Kneel*

*After each petition ...*

Lord, guide us:  
*All* **let your kingdom come among us.**

*After the final petition*

*Priest* Father, fill our hearts with love through the coming of your Son.  
Give us grace to overcome our fears and anxieties,  
and keep us joyful in your service.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
*All* **Amen.**

# ¶ The Liturgy of the Sacrament

## Sign of Peace

§ Stand

God will speak peace to his people,  
to those who turn to him in their hearts.

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.*

All

**NOW** in holy celebration  
Sing we of that Mother blest,  
In whose flesh for our salvation  
God incarnate deigned to rest,  
When her cousin's salutation  
Named in faith the mystic guest.

**Lo**, the advent Word confessing,  
Spake for joy the voice yet dumb,  
Through his mother's lips addressing  
Her, of motherhood the sum,  
Bower of beauty, blest and blessing,  
Crowned with fruit of life to come.

**'Whence,' she cried, at that fair meeting,  
'Comes to me this great reward?  
For when first I heard the greeting  
Of the Mother of my Lord,  
In my womb, the joy repeating,  
Leapt my babe in sweet accord!'**

**Lo, at that glad commendation  
Joy found voice in Mary's breast  
While in holy exultation  
She her maker's power confessed,  
At whose word each generation  
Now henceforward names her blest.**

**Triune Godhead, health supplying,  
Ruler of eternity,  
On the fount of grace relying,  
We uplift our hearts to thee,  
Praying that in realms undying  
We at one with Life may be.**

Words *Festum Matris gloriosae*,  
translated Laurence Housman (1865-1959)

Music *Tantum ergo* (Webbe)

## 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

○ Lord, may the Holy Spirit sanctify these gifts  
laid upon your altar,  
just as he filled with his power the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary;  
we ask this 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 thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right and good to give you thanks and praise,  
almighty God and everlasting Father,  
through Jesus Christ your Son.

He is the one foretold by all the prophets,  
whom the Virgin Mother bore with love beyond all telling.  
John the Baptist was his herald  
and made him known when at last he came.  
In his love Christ fills us with joy  
as we prepare to celebrate his birth,  
so that when he comes again he may find us watching in prayer,  
our hearts filled with wonder and praise.

And so, with angels and archangels,  
and with all the company of heaven,  
we proclaim your glory,  
and join in their unending hymn of praise:

*Choir*     *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,  
heaven and earth are full of thy glory.  
Glory be to thee, O Lord most high.*

*Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.*

*Remain standing*

Accept our praises, heavenly Father,  
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
and as we follow his example and obey his command,  
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit  
these gifts of bread and wine  
may be to us his body and his blood;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed,  
took bread and gave you thanks;  
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:

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

In the same way,  
after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks;  
he gave it to them, saying:

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.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus:

All



Dy-ing you de-stroyed our death, ris-ing you re-stored our life: Lord Jes-us, come in glo-ry.

Therefore, heavenly Father,  
we remember his offering of himself  
made once for all upon the cross;  
we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension;  
we look for the coming of your kingdom,  
and with this bread and this cup  
we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.



Accept through him, our great high priest,  
this our sacrifice of thanks and praise,  
and as we eat and drink these holy gifts  
in the presence of your divine majesty,  
renew us by your Spirit,  
inspire us with your love  
and unite us in the body of your Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, and with him, and in him,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,  
we worship you, Father almighty,  
in songs of everlasting praise:

All



Bless-ing and hon-our and glo-ry and pow'r be yours for ev-er and ev-er. A - men.

*The Blessed Sacrament is elevated and bells are rung*

§ *Kneel*

## The Lord's Prayer

God does great things for those who trust in him.  
Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour Christ 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

*All* Every time we eat this bread and drink this cup,  
**we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**

## Agnus Dei

*Choir* O Lamb of God,  
that takest away the sins of the world,  
have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God,  
that takest away the sins of the world,  
have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God,  
that takest away the sins of the world,  
grant us thy peace.

## Invitation to Communion

*All* God's holy gifts for God's holy people.  
**Jesus Christ is holy, Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.**

*The clergy receive Holy Communion*

## Giving of Communion

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.

*Baptized 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.

### Motet

Choir The Angel Gabriel from heaven came

*Basque Traditional*

# Prayer after Communion

Let us pray:

§ *Stand*

Heavenly Father,  
who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary  
to be the mother of the promised saviour:  
fill us your servants with your grace,  
that in all things we may embrace your holy will  
and with her rejoice in your salvation;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All* **Amen.**

**Generous God,  
you feed us at your heavenly table.  
Set us on fire with your Spirit  
that, when Christ comes again,  
we may shine like lights before his face;  
who with you and the Spirit lives for ever.  
Amen.**

## Hymn

*All* **JOY to the world; the Lord is come;  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare him room,  
And heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

**Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns;  
Let all their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of his righteousness,  
And wonders of his love,  
And wonders of his love,  
And wonders, wonders of his love.**

*Words* Isaac Watts (1674-1748)  
based of *Psalms* 98

*Music* Joy to the world  
William Holford's *Voce di Melodia*, c1834  
arranged by John Rutter (born 1945)

## Notices for the Community

§ Sit

## ¶ Sending Out

§ Stand

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

## Solemn Blessing

*All* May God the Father,  
who loved the world so much that he sent his only Son,  
give you grace to prepare for life eternal.  
**Amen.**

*All* May God the Son,  
who comes to us as redeemer and judge,  
reveal to you the path from darkness to light.  
**Amen.**

*All* May God the Holy Spirit,  
by whose working the Virgin Mary conceived the Christ,  
help you bear the fruits of holiness.  
**Amen.**

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

As we await our coming Saviour,  
go in the peace of Christ.

All **Thanks be to God.**

## Organ Voluntary

Fuga sopra il Magnificat BWV 733

J S Bach (1685-1750)

- § *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. Do please join us*

# Christmas Services

## This Evening

4.00pm A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

## Christmas Eve

4.00 pm Crib Service

11.30 pm Midnight Mass of the Nativity

## Christmas Day

10.15 am The Parish Mass of the Nativity

## The First Sunday of Christmas

29th December

10.15 am The Parish Mass

## 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 Anonymous Donor 8  
who has 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.**

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