

The Parish Church of St Matthew  
Northampton

# The Third Sunday of Advent

Year C



*The Lord is near*

## The Parish Mass

Sunday 15<sup>th</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*

The prophet Zephaniah, writing in the seventh century BC, bids Jerusalem to rejoice because salvation is near. God stands in her midst and will deliver her from her enemies. God is portrayed, not only as a king and warrior, but also as a loving bridegroom, who steadfastly loves his unworthy and unfaithful bride.

The theme of nearness of the Lord is also at the heart of the Gospel. John the Baptist tells the people what they must do in order to prepare for the Lord's coming and to escape his searching judgement. At the same time, he makes it clear that he is subordinate to Jesus.

*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

There is a clear note of joy in today's liturgy.  
Joy is a blend of laughter and tears.  
It consists in having a love affair with life.  
It is having a heart aglow with warmth  
for all one's companions on the road of life.  
It is looking for the happiness that comes in small packages,  
knowing that big packages are few and far between.  
It is making the most of the present, enjoying what is at hand right now.  
Joy is love bubbling over into life.  
And it can coexist with pain.  
Joy is the flag we fly when Christ, the Prince of Peace,  
has taken up residence in our hearts.

## Setting

Mass of the Altar of Life (Kyries only)

*David Halls (born 1963)*

Mass in D

*Kenneth Leighton (1929-1988)*

# 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* Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord,  
and my servant whom I have chosen;  
that ye may know me and believe me:  
I, even I, am the Lord,  
and beside me there is no Saviour:  
and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.

## Hymn

*The procession enters*

*All*            **ON Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry  
Announces that the Lord is nigh;  
come then and hearken, for he brings  
Glad tidings from the King of kings!**

**Then cleansed be every Christian breast,  
And furnished for so great a guest!  
Yea, let us each our heart prepare  
For Christ to come and enter there.**

**For thou art our salvation, Lord,  
Our refuge and our great reward;  
Without thy grace our souls must fade,  
And wither like a flower decayed.**

**Stretch forth thine hand to heal our sire,  
And make us rise, to fall no more;  
Once more upon thy people shine,  
And fill the world with love divine.**

**All praise, eternal Son, to thee  
Whose advent sets thy people free,  
Whom, with the Father, we adore,  
And Spirit blest, for evermore. Amen.**

Words *Jordanis oras praevia* Charles Coffin (1676-1749)  
translated by John Chandler (1806-1876)

Music Winchester New  
Adapted from a chorale in *Musicalisches Hand-Buch*  
Hamburg 1690

## Lighting of the Advent Wreath

*A member of the congregation lights the rose-pink candle*

*All*     **Lord Jesus, light of the world,  
John told the people to prepare,  
for you were very near.  
As Christmas grows closer day by day,  
help us to be ready to welcome you now.  
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

On this *Gaudete* Sunday let us rejoice in the nearness of the Lord.

When the Lord comes,  
he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness,  
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.  
Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our 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, by your presence you turn our sorrow into joy:  
Kyrie eleison.  
*All*      **Kyrie eleison.**

You turn our fear into trust:  
Christe eleison.  
*All*      **Christe eleison.**

You turn our indifference into love:  
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.

O Lord Jesus Christ,  
who at your first coming sent your messenger  
to prepare your way before you:  
grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries  
may likewise so prepare and make ready your way  
by turning the hearts of the disobedient  
to the wisdom of the just,  
that at your second coming to judge the world  
we may be found an acceptable people in your sight;  
for you are alive and reign with the Father  
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 Zephaniah.

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;  
shout, O Israel!  
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,  
O daughter Jerusalem!  
The Lord has taken away the judgements against you,



he has turned away your enemies.  
 The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;  
 you shall fear disaster no more.  
 On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:  
 Do not fear, O Zion;  
     do not let your hands grow weak.  
 The Lord, your God, is in your midst,  
     a warrior who gives victory;  
 he will rejoice over you with gladness,  
     he will renew you in his love;  
 he will exult over you with loud singing  
     as on a day of festival.  
 I will remove disaster from you,  
     so that you will not bear reproach for it.  
 I will deal with all your oppressors  
     at that time.  
 And I will save the lame  
     and gather the outcast,  
 and I will change their shame into praise  
     and renown in all the earth.  
 At that time I will bring you home,  
     at the time when I gather you;  
 for I will make you renowned and praised  
     among all the peoples of the earth,  
 when I restore your fortunes  
     before your eyes, says the Lord.

Zephaniah 3.14-20

This is the word of the Lord.

All

**Thanks be to God.**

## Psalm

Response

Simon Lesley

I will praise the Lord as long as I live.

Choir

Happy are those who have the God of Jacob for their help,  
 whose hope is in the Lord their God;  
 Who made heaven and earth,  
 the sea and all that is in them;  
 who keeps his promise for ever; **Response**

Who gives justice to those that suffer wrong  
and bread to those who hunger.  
The Lord looses those that are bound;  
the Lord opens the eyes of the blind; **Response**

The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;  
the Lord loves the righteous;  
The Lord watches over the stranger in the land;  
he upholds the orphan and widow;  
but the way of the wicked he turns upside down.  
The Lord shall reign for ever,  
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. **Response**

Psalm 146.4-10

## Holy Gospel

§ Stand

### Acclamation

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

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

**Choir** The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me.  
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor.  
**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.

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, ‘You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our ancestor”; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.’

And the crowds asked him, ‘What then should we do?’ In reply he said to them, ‘Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.’ Even tax-collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, ‘Teacher, what should we do?’ He said to them, ‘Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.’ Soldiers also asked him, ‘And we, what should we do?’ He said to them, ‘Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.’

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, ‘I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.’

Luke 3:7-18

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* Saint Paul said, 'If there is anything you need, pray for it.'  
In obedience to these words, let us bring our needs  
and those of the world to the Lord in prayer.

§ *Kneel*

*After each petition*

*Intercessor* God, ever present,  
*All* **reveal yourself in peace and joy.**

*Priest* Lord, may the coming of your only Son  
dispel the darkness of our hearts  
and help us to walk in the light of truth and goodness.  
We ask this through the same 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*

**LO, he comes with clouds descending,  
Once for favoured sinners slain;  
Thousand thousand saints attending  
Swell the triumph of his train:  
Alleluya!  
God appears, on earth to reign.**

**Every eye shall now behold him  
Robed in dreadful majesty;  
Those who set at nought and sold him,  
Pierced and nailed him to the tree,  
Deeply wailing  
Shall the true Messiah see.**

**Those dear tokens of his Passion  
Still his dazzling body bears,  
Cause of endless exultation  
To his ransomed worshippers:  
With what rapture  
Gaze we on those glorious scars!**

**Yea, Amen! let all adore thee,  
High on thine eternal throne;  
Saviour, take the power and glory:  
Claim the kingdom for thine own:  
O come quickly!  
Alleluya! Come, Lord, come!**

Words Charles Wesley (1707–1788)  
final couplet by John Cennick (1718-1755)

Music melody noted by Thomas Olivers (1725–1799)

## 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 sacrifice of our worship  
be offered to you unceasingly,  
to complete what was begun in sacred mystery  
and powerfully accomplish for us your saving work;  
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.*

*Please 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 is the source of our strength and our hope.  
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

Say to those who are fearful in heart, 'Be strong, do not fear!  
Here is your God. He will come and save you.'

*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 Zion, at thy shining gates

*George Guest (1924-2002)*

# Prayer after Communion

Let us pray:

§ *Stand*

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts;  
kindle in us the fire of your Spirit  
that when Christ comes again  
we may shine as lights before his face;  
who is alive and reigns now and for ever.

*All*

**Amen.**

**Loving Father,  
your Son Jesus Christ has come to us  
in word and Spirit,  
in bread and cup.  
Make us holy and bring us to perfection,  
when we shall stand before him  
as he comes to judge the living and the dead,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

## Hymn

*All*

**COME, thou long-expected Jesus,  
Born to set thy people free,  
From our fears and sins release us,  
Let us find our rest in thee.**

**Israel's strength and consolation,  
Hope of all the earth thou art;  
Dear desire of every nation,  
Joy of every longing heart.**

**Born thy people to deliver,  
Born a child and yet a king,  
Born to reign in us for ever,  
Now thy gracious kingdom bring.**

**By thine own eternal Spirit,  
Rule in all our hearts alone;  
By thine all-sufficient merit  
Raise us to thy glorious throne.**

*Words Charles Wesley (1707-1788)*

*Music Halton Holgate  
Melody by William Boyce (1711-1779)*

## 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

Kommst du nun, Jesu, vom Himmel herunter BWV 650

*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.*

This evening at 5.30 pm

**Choral Evensong and Benediction**

# Carols by Candlelight

Saturday 21st December at 7.00 pm

Well-loved music sung by the Choir of St Matthew's Church  
with audience participation carols.

Including music by Leighton, Lloyd, Carter and Rutter.

Tickets £10 18s and under - FREE

## Christmas Services

### The Fourth Sunday of Advent

22nd December

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 5  
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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