

The Parish Church of St Matthew
Northampton

The Second Sunday of Advent

Year A



John the Baptist cried out, 'Prepare the way of the Lord'

All Age Mass for the Parish Family

Sunday 7 December 2025

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. Anyone 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-specific 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.



¶ Our Advent journey continues

Good morning everyone, and a very warm welcome to our All-Age Mass on this Second Sunday of Advent. Today we continue our Advent journey — a time of waiting and preparing for the coming of Jesus, the light of the world.

Our readings today speak powerfully about that peace and renewal. In our first reading, from the prophet Isaiah, we hear of a shoot growing from the stump of Jesse — a picture of new life, of God's Spirit bringing wisdom, understanding, and harmony to a world where even wolves and lambs live together in peace.

In the Gospel, John the Baptist bursts onto the scene, calling people to repent, to turn around and make a fresh start, because God's kingdom is near. John reminds us that preparing for Jesus' coming isn't just about waiting; it's about changing — opening our hearts to God's Spirit so we can live differently, with peace, justice, and love.

So, as we gather today — all ages, one family in Christ — let's open our hearts to God's word, sing with joy, and prepare ourselves to welcome the Prince of Peace at Christmas.

Prayer

Blessed are you, Lord our God,
for you send your messengers and prophets to tell of your coming.
As John the Baptist was a burning and shining light in the darkness,
help us to show your presence in our daily life. Amen.

Setting

Mass of the Altar of Life

David Halls b.1963

Order of Service

Q Gathering to Worship God

S Please stand at the sound of the bell

S From the south transept the choir sing ...

The Advent Prose



Choir We have sinned, and are as an unclean thing,
and we all do fade as a leaf:
and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away;
thou hast hid thy face from us:
and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

Hymn

S During which the flags are presented

All **ADVENT** candles tell their story
 As we watch and pray;
Longing for the day of glory,
 'Come, Lord, soon,' we say.
Pain and sorrow, tears and sadness
 Changed for gladness on that Day.

Prophet voices loudly crying,
 Making pathways clear,
Glimpsing glory, self-denying,
 Calling all to hear.
Through their message - challenged, shaken-
 Hearts awaken: God is near!

John the Baptist, by his preaching
And by water poured,
Brought to those who heard his teaching
News of hope restored:
'Keep your vision strong and steady,
And be ready for the Lord.'

Mary's gift, beyond all telling,
Was to give Christ room.
She gave God a human dwelling
In a mother's womb.
Who could guess the final story?
- Cross and glory; Easter Day!

Advent candles tell their story
On that Christmas Day.
Those who waited for God's glory:
They prepared the way.
Christ is with us; loving, giving,
In us living, here today!

Words Mark Earey b.1965

Music Angel Voices

Lighting the Second Candle of the Advent Wreath

A child lights the second purple candle, the candle of Peace

All

Lord Jesus, light of the world,
the prophets said you would bring peace
and save your people in trouble.
Give peace in our hearts at Christmas
and show all the world God's love.
Amen.

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

The Greeting

All The light and peace of Jesus Christ be with you
 and also with you.

The service is introduced

Saying Sorry to God

A voice cries out in the wilderness.
'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his path straight.'
So let us listen, and turn to the Lord in penitence and faith.

Kyrie Confession

Heavenly Father, you call us to repent of our sins:
soften our proud and stubborn hearts.
Lord, have mercy.
All **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus Christ, you declared the forgiveness of God:
teach us to forgive one another.
Christ have mercy.
All **Christ, have mercy.**

Holy Spirit, you search our hearts and show us the truth:
direct us in your way of righteousness.
Lord, have mercy.
All **Lord, have mercy.**

God's forgiveness

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 Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Almighty God,
purify our hearts and minds,
that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again
as judge and saviour
we may be ready to receive him,
who is our Lord and our God.

All **Amen.**

§ Sit

¶ Hearing and Responding to the Word of God

First Reading

Reader A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah.

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,

the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.
The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.
The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

This is the word of the Lord.

All

Thanks be to God.

§ Stand

Gospel Reading

Acclamation



Choir Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

All **Alleluia, alleluia ...**

S We 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 Matthew.



In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight."

Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

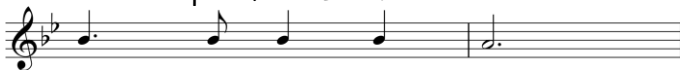
But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to

come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume 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.

'I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

Matthew 3.1-12

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



All

Praise to you, O Christ.

Hymn

The choir come and sit in the Nave

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 hearts 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 life a flower decayed.**

Stretch forth thine hand to heal our sore,
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 Holy Spirit, for evermore. Amen.

*Words Latin, Charles Coffin 1676-1749
tr John Chandler 1806-1876*

Music Winchester New

Talk - Presentation

S Sit

We believe

S Stand

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus,
and look forward to his return at the end of time,
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:
for by his will they were created
and have their being.

We believe in God the Son, who was slain:
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, who gives us life:
the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!'
Even so come, Lord Jesus!
Amen.**

Our Prayers to God

Priest Blessed are you, Lord our God,
 for you sent the prophets and John and Baptist
 to prepare your way.
 You have told us of your coming
 and you reveal yourself to us in Jesus.
 You come to each of us in power and in love.

Lord, come to us:

All **forgive us and guide us.**

S Kneel

Intercessor Father, we give thanks for all who tell of your love
 and who proclaim your coming.
 We ask your blessing upon all priests and preachers,
 upon all who teach the Scriptures and tell of your coming.
 Bless all who are baptised into your presence and power.
 Lord, we ask your forgiveness when your Church misuses
 the resources you have given it
 and when we fail to live up to your teaching and love.

Lord, come to us:

All **forgive us and guide us.**

We remember in your presence
the troubles and sorrows of the world.
We pray for all who are caught up in war and violence,
all who suffer from the greed and insensitivity of others.
May we not misuse or squander the earth's resources
but use them with care and for the benefit of all.
We ask your blessing upon all leaders and politicians.

Lord, come to us:

All **forgive us and guide us.**

We ask your blessing

upon all who do not look forward to Christmas.

We remember all who are poor or deeply in debt.

We pray that our homes may be places of love and peace
where you are welcome.

May we know that in the coming of others to us
you also come and seek our love.

Lord, come to us:

All **forgive us and guide us.**

We remember all who are ill and suffering at this time,
(*the acutely ill ...*),

all who are distressed and those who are overburdened.

May they know your peace and your presence.

May all who walk in darkness come to know your light
and your love.

We pray for all who are in hospital or in care at this time.

Lord, come to us:

All **forgive us and guide us.**

We remember all our loved ones departed,

And we pray for any who have died recently.

(*The recently departed ... anniversaries of death ...*)

May they rejoice in the fullness of life and be with you in glory.

Lord, come to us:

All **forgive us and guide us.**

Priest Merciful Father

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

Amen.

S Stand

¶ Preparing to meet Jesus in Bread and Wine

Hymn

The bread and wine are presented and the altar is prepared

All

LONGING for light, we wait in darkness.

Longing for truth, we turn to you.

Make us your own, your holy people,

Light for the world to see.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your Church gathered today.

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.

Longing for hope, many despair.

Your word alone has power to save us.

Make us your living voice.

Longing for food, many are hungry.

Longing for water, many still thirst.

Make us your bread, broken for others,

Shared until all are fed.

Longing for shelter, many are homeless.

Longing for warmth, many are cold.

Make us your building, sheltering others,

Walls made of living stone.

Many the gifts, many the people,

Many the hearts that yearn to belong.

Let us be servants to one another,

Making your kingdom come.

Words and music Bernadette Farrell b.1957

*S The children are invited to stand either side of the altar
in order to see better*

Offering the Gifts of Bread and Wine

Lord, accept our praises;
have compassion on our human frailty,
and since we have nothing of ourselves to offer,
let your mercy make us acceptable in your sight.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Prayer over the Bread and Wine

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

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

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

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

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

You give us sun and moon and star-lit sky,
everything that gives us light,
light for our eyes, our hearts, our minds.

You sent your servant John to prepare your way
and to make the road straight for you,
that all who hear your voice
may turn in faith to welcome you.

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

All sing

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

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

We thank you, loving Father,
because, when we turned away, you sent Jesus, your Son.

He gave his life for us on the cross
and shows us the way to live.
Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine
may be for us Christ's body and his blood.

Children

Why do we share this bread and wine?

Adults

Listen, and we will hear.

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

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

So Father, with this bread and this cup
we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life.

As you feed us with these gifts,
send your Holy Spirit,
and change us more and more to be like Jesus our Saviour.

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

Help us, Father, to love one another,
as we look forward to that day when suffering is ended,
and all creation is gathered in your loving arms.

And now with Mary, John the Baptist and all your saints
we give you glory, through Jesus Christ,
in the strength of the Spirit,
today and for ever.

All **Amen.**

S If you are able, please remain standing

The Lord's Prayer

Awaiting his coming in glory, let us pray with confidence
that Jesus will come to birth in 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.

Sign of Peace

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.

Those around the altar return to their seats

§ Kneel

Breaking of the Bread

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

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

Come, O Lord, visit us in peace,
that we may rejoice before you with a blameless heart.

Spiritual Communion - for those watching 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.

The choir sings Lamb of God

Motet

Choir A tender shoot has started up from a root of grace,
As ancient seers imparted from Jesse's holy race:
It blooms without a blight, blooms in the cold bleak winter,
Turning our darkness into light.

This shoot, Isaiah taught us, from Jesse's root should spring:
the virgin Mary brought us the branch of which we sing:
our God of endless might gave her this child to save us,
thus turning darkness into light.

*Words anonymous 16th century
Translation William Bartholomew
Music Otto Goldschmidt 1829-1907*

S All sit for a time of silent reflection and thanksgiving

Prayer after Communion

Priest Let us pray.

S Stand

All **Generous God,
you have fed 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.**

Thanksgiving Hymn

§ The flags are returned to their bearers

All **THOU didst leave thy throne and thy kingly crown
When thou camest to earth for me;
But in Bethlehem's home was there found no room
For thy holy nativity:
O come to my heart, Lord Jesus;
There is room in my heart for thee.**

**Heaven's arches rang when the angels sang,
Proclaiming thy royal degree;
But in lowly birth didst thou come to earth,
And in great humility:**

**Thou camst, O Lord, with the living word
That should set thy people free;
But with mocking scorn and with crown and thorn
They bore thee to Calvary:**

**When all heaven shall ring, and her choirs shall sing,
At thy coming to victory,
Let thy voice call me home, saying, 'Yet there is room,
There is room at my side for thee':**

Words Emily Elizabeth Steele Elliott 1836-1897

Music Margaret
Timothy Richard Matthews 1826-1910

Notices for the Community

§ Sit

¶ Going out to serve God

The Lord be with you
All and also with you.

God's Blessing

Christ, the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you,
scatter the darkness from before your path,
and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory;

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

Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme BWV 645

J.S. Bach

S Please remain standing until the procession has departed

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

S Refreshments are being served in the parish centre, adjacent to the carpark. Do please join us.

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

This evening at 5.30 pm
Choral Evensong

Carols by Candlelight

Saturday 13 December at 7.00 pm
(Tickets £10 / under 18's free)

sung by St Matthew's Choir with audience participation

Christmas Services

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

Sunday 21 December at 4.00 pm

Christmas Eve

Crib and Christingle Service

at 4.00 pm

Midnight Mass of the Nativity
and Blessing of the Crib

at 11.30 pm

Christmas Day

The Parish Mass on the Nativity

at 10.15 am

Our next All Age Service

The Baptism of Jesus

Sunday 11 January 2026 at 10.15 am

Our thanks are due to 32nd St Matthew's
Guides, Brownies and Rainbows,
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.**

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