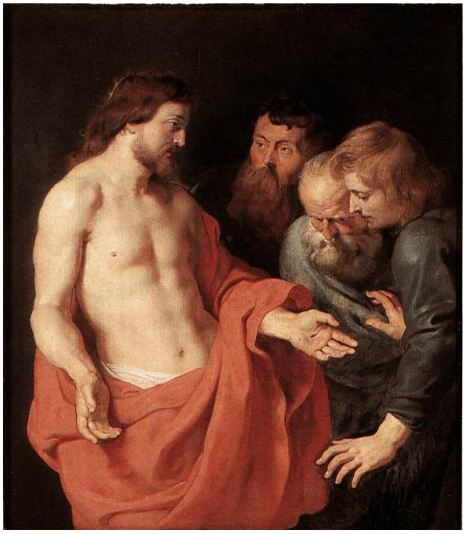
The Parish Church of St Matthew
Northampton

The Second Sunday of Easter

Year A



The Incredulity of Saint Thomas, 1613 by Peter Paul Rubens 1577-1640

The Parish Mass

Sunday 12 April 2026

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-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 St Matthew's 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.

Welcome to our celebration of the Second Sunday of Easter

Each year on this Sunday we hear the Gospel of the apostle Thomas, often remembered as 'Doubting Thomas'. Yet Thomas is not simply a figure of doubt; he is a companion for us on the journey of faith. Like him, we can experience uncertainty and questioning, and so his story offers us both honesty and hope.

In today's Gospel, the risen Jesus comes among his disciples, shows them the wounds of his passion - signs that he is truly the same Lord who was crucified - and greets them with his gift of peace. He then entrusts to them his own mission: the mission he received from the Father, fulfilled through his death and resurrection - the reconciliation of all people through the forgiveness of sins. To sustain them in this calling, he breathes on them the Holy Spirit and gives them authority to forgive sins.

While all the Gospels acknowledge the struggle to believe in the resurrection, Saint John places that struggle in the person of Thomas. And yet it is Thomas who gives voice to one of the most profound declarations of faith in all Scripture: "My Lord and my God."

Writing for those who would come to believe without seeing, the evangelist reminds us of Jesus' words: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." In these words, we too are included. We share in the same blessing as the first disciples, called to trust in the risen Lord and to find in him our peace.

May this celebration strengthen our faith, deepen our trust, and renew in us the gift of Christ's peace.

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 prayer, based on today's themes, may be found helpful:

Reflection

We are asked to believe without seeing.
Sometimes this can be very difficult.
There can be dark moments in our lives
when God seems far away,
and we seem to be on our own.
Lord Jesus, in those dark moments,
may your gentle words echo in our hearts:
'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.'
And through the power of those words,
we will cease doubting and believe.

Order of Service

¶ The Gathering

§ ***Stand*** *at the sound of the bell*

Hymn

§ *The procession enters and the altar is honoured with incense*

All

COME, ye faithful, raise the strain
Of triumphant gladness;
God has brought his Israel
Into joy from sadness;
Loosed from pharaoh's bitter yoke
Jacob's sons and daughters;
Led them with unmoistened foot
Through the Red Sea waters.

'Tis the spring of souls today:
Christ hath burst his prison,
And from three days' sleep in death
As a sun hath risen;
All the winter of our sins,
Long and dark, is flying
From his light, to whom we give
Laud and praise undying.

Now the queen of seasons, bright
With the day of splendour,
With the royal feast of feasts,
Comes its joy to render;
Comes to glad Jerusalem,
Who with true affection
Welcomes in unwearied strains
Jesu's resurrection.

Neither might the gates of death,
Nor the tomb's dark portal,
Nor the watchers, nor the seal,
Hold thee as a mortal;
But today amidst thine own
Thou didst stand, bestowing
That, thy peace, which evermore
Passeth human knowing.

Words Greek, St John of Damascus *c*675-749
translated by John Mason Neale 1818-1866

Music St John Damascene
Arthur Henry Brown 1830-1926

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

The Greeting

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

The Easter Acclamation

Alleluia. Christ is risen.
All **He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

The service is introduced

Invitation to Confession

Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord,
we come to you in sorrow for our sins,
and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.

A pause for reflection

Confession

All **God our Father,**
long-suffering, full of grace and truth,
you create us from nothing and give us life.
You give your faithful people new life
in the water of baptism.
You do not turn your face from us,
nor cast us aside.
We confess that we have sinned against you.
We have wounded your love
and marred your image in us.
Restore us for the sake of your Son,
and bring us to heavenly joy,
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Absolution

May the God of love and power
forgive † you and free you from your sins,
heal and strengthen you by his Spirit,
and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Ordinary of the Mass is sung to The Mass of St Thomas by David Thorne

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.

Almighty Father,
you have given your only Son to die for our sins
and to rise again for our justification:
grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness
that we may always serve you in pureness of living and truth;
through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

Brothers and sisters in Christ,
to discover further the meaning of this joyful Eastertide,
let us listen attentively to the Good News of Christ's resurrection.

§ *Sit*

¶ The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Reader A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them:
'You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know— this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. For David says concerning him,

"I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken;
therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
moreover, my flesh will live in hope.
For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,
or let your Holy One experience corruption.
You have made known to me the ways of life;
you will make me full of gladness with your presence."

'Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying,

"He was not abandoned to Hades,
nor did his flesh experience corruption."

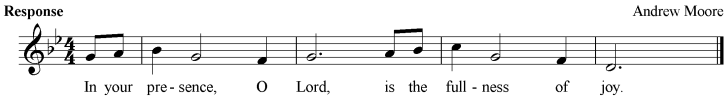
This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.

Acts 2.14a & 22-32

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm



Preserve me, O God, for in you have I taken refuge;
I have said to the Lord, 'You are my lord,
all my good depends on you.'
All my delight is upon the godly that are in the land,
upon those who are noble in heart. ***Response***

Though the idols are legion that many run after,
their drink offerings of blood I will not offer,
neither make mention of their names upon my lips. ***Response***

The Lord himself is my portion and my cup;
in your hands alone is my fortune.
My share has fallen in a fair land;
indeed, I have a goodly heritage. ***Response***

I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel,
and in the night watches he instructs my heart.
I have set the Lord always before me;
he is at my right hand; I shall not fall. ***Response***

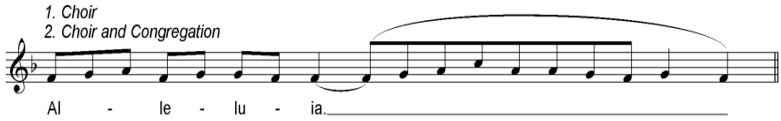
Wherefore my heart is glad and my spirit rejoices;
my flesh also shall rest secure.
For you will not abandon my soul to Death,
nor suffer your faithful one to see the Pit. ***Response***

You will show me the path of life;
in your presence is the fullness of joy
and in your right hand are pleasures for evermore. ***Response***

Psalm 16

Holy Gospel

Acclamation



Jesus said, 'Blessed are those who have not seen
and yet have come to believe'.

All **Alleluia.**

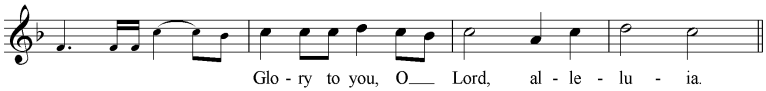
§ *We turn to face the Book of the Gospels*

Priest The Lord be with you

All **and also with you.**

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

All



When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed

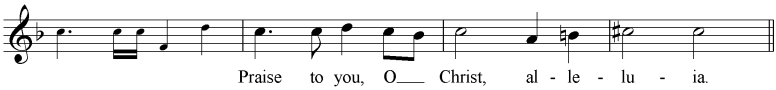
because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

John 20.19-31

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All



Homily

§ *Sit*

At the end there is a period for quiet reflection

The Apostles' Creed

§ *Stand*

Brothers and sisters,
I ask you to profess the faith of the Church.

All **I believe in God, the Father almighty,**
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

Prayers of the Faithful

Priest As people who have not seen and yet believe,
we turn in prayer to the God of life with all our needs.

§ *Please kneel*

After each petition

Risen Lord, be known among us;
All **make haste to help us.**

After the final petition

Priest Almighty and ever-living God,
strengthen our belief that beyond death there is a life,
where broken things are mended, and lost things are found;
where there is rest for the weary and joy for the sad;
where all that we have loved and willed of good exists,
and where we will meet again our loved ones.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
All **Amen.**

§ *Stand*

¶ The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Sign of Peace

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples
and said, 'Peace be with you'.
Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.

The peace of the Lord be always with you
All **and also with you. Alleluia.**

Let us offer one another a sign of Christ's peace.

The Offertory

§ *The Gifts are presented to the presiding priest and the altar is prepared*

Hymn

§ *A monetary collection is taken. For alternative ways of giving please refer to the front of this booklet. Your generosity is much appreciated. Thank you.*

All **ALLELUYA, alleluya, alleluya!**

O sons and daughters of the King,
Whom heavenly hosts in glory sing,
Today the grave hath lost its sting. Alleluya!

On that first morning of the week,
Before the day began to break,
The Marys went their Lord to seek. Alleluya!

An angel bade their sorrow flee,
For thus he spake unto the three:
'Your Lord is gone to Galilee.' Alleluya!

That night the apostles met in fear,
Amidst them came their Lord most dear,
And said: 'Peace be unto you here!' Alleluya!

When Thomas afterwards had heard
That Jesus had fulfilled his word,
He doubted if it were the Lord. Alleluya!

'My piercèd side, O Thomas see;
My hands, my feet, I show to thee;
Not faithless, but believing be.' Alleluya!

No longer Thomas then denied;
He saw the feet, the hands, the side;
'Thou art my Lord and God,' he cried. Alleluya!

Blessèd are they that have not seen,
And yet whose faith hath constant been,
In life eternal they shall reign. Alleluya!

Words Latin, Jean Tisserand, OFM *d* 1494
tr John Mason Neale 1818-1866

Music O filii et filiae
Melody in *Airs sur les hymnes sacrez*, 1683
arranged by Henry Walford Davies 1869-1941

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

O Lord, accept the offerings of your people
and those you have brought to new birth,
that, renewed by the confession of your name and by Baptism,
we may attain unending happiness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

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

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

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

It is indeed right and just, our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
almighty and eternal Father,
and in these days of Easter to celebrate with joyful hearts
the memory of your wonderful works.

For by the mystery of his passion
Jesus Christ, your risen Son,
has conquered the powers of death and hell
and restored in men and women the image of your glory.

He has placed them once more in paradise
and opened to them the gate of life eternal.

And so, in the joy of this Passover,
earth and heaven resound with gladness,
while angels and archangels and the powers of all creation
sing for ever the hymn of your glory:

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.

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness;
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit,
and according to your holy will,
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;

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:

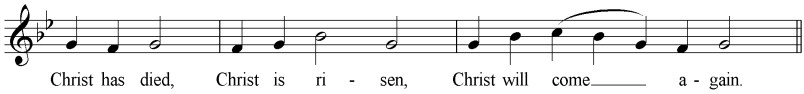
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

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.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All

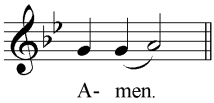


And so, Father, calling to mind his death on the cross,
his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of the whole world,
rejoicing in his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,
and looking for his coming in glory,
we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.
As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,
we bring before you this bread and this cup
and we thank you for counting us worthy
to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people
and gather into one in your kingdom
all who share this one bread and one cup,
so that we, in the company Mary, the Virgin Mother of God,
Saint Thomas, and all the saints,
may praise and glorify you for ever,
through Jesus Christ our Lord;

by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,
for ever and ever.

All



The Blessed Sacrament is elevated. Bells are rung.

§ *Kneel*

The Lord's Prayer

Rejoicing in God's new creation,
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

Jesus says, I am the bread of life,
whoever eats this bread will live for ever.

All **Lord, our hearts hunger for you;**
give us this bread always.

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

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

All **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

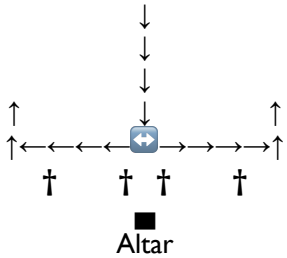
The clergy receive Holy Communion

Giving of Communion

Jesus stood in the midst of his disciples and said to them:
Peace be with you, alleluia.

§ *Baptized persons who are communicant members of other Churches are warmly invited to receive Holy Communion, as indicated below.*

Alternatively, if you wish to receive a blessing, please bring this booklet with you as a sign to us. Thank you.



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.

Hymn

All **JESU, my Lord, my God, my all,**
Hear me, blest Saviour, when I call;
Hear me, and from thy dwelling place
Pour down the riches of thy grace:
Jesu, my Lord, I thee adore,
O make me love thee more and more.

Jesu, too late I thee have sought,
How can I love thee as I ought?
And how extol thy matchless fame,
The glorious beauty of thy name?

Jesu, what didst thou find in me,
That thou hast dealt so lovingly?
How great the joy that thou hast brought,
So far exceeding hope or thought!

Jesu, of thee shall be my song,
To thee my heart and soul belong;
All that I am or have is thine,
And thou, sweet Saviour, thou art mine.

Words Henry Augustine Collins, OCSO 1827-1919 *Music* Stella
based on an English traditional melody

§ *All remain seated for period of personal reflection and thanksgiving*

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray:

§ *Stand*

Lord God our Father,
through our Saviour Jesus Christ
you have assured your children of eternal life
and in baptism have made us one with him:
Deliver us from the death of sin
and raise us to new life in your love,
in fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All **Amen.**

God of truth,
we have seen with our eyes
and touched with our hands the bread of life:
strengthen our faith
that we may grow in love for you
and for each other;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Hymn

All

THE Lord is risen indeed!
Now is his work performed;
Now is the mighty captive freed,
And death's strong castle stormed.

The Lord is risen indeed!
Then hell has lost his prey;
With him is risen the ransomed seed
To reign in endless day.

The Lord is risen indeed!
He lives, to die no more;
He lives, the sinner's cause to plead,
Whose curse and shame he bore.

Words Thomas Kelly 1769-1855

Music Narenza
Melody from Johann Leisentritt
Catholicum Hymnologium Germanicum, 1584
adapted by William Henry Havergal 1793-1870

Notices for the Community

§ *Sit*

¶ Sending Out

§ *Stand*

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

Solemn Blessing

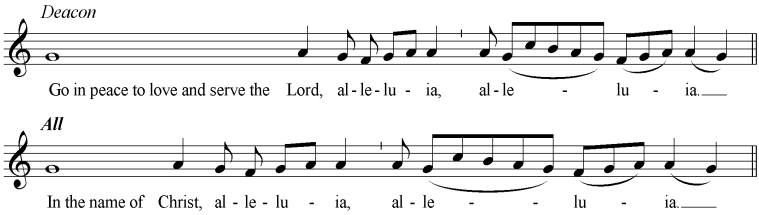
May you never doubt that God will fulfil the promises
he has made to us in Christ.
All **Amen.**

May the Lord keep you steadfast in faith,
joyful in hope, and untiring in love.
All **Amen.**

By his holy and glorious wounds
may Christ our Lord guard you and keep you.
All **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.**

Sung Dismissal



§ *Please turn to face the Madonna and Child sculpture*

Regina Caeli

All **Joy to thee, O Queen of heaven, alleluya** *(9 rings)*
He whom thou wast meet to bear, alleluya
As he promised, hath arisen, alleluya
Pour for us to God thy prayer, alleluya.

Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluya
All **for the Lord is risen indeed, alleluya.**

God of life, you have given joy to the world *(9 rings)*
by the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.
Through the prayers of his mother, the Virgin Mary,
bring us to the happiness of eternal life;
we ask this through Christ our Lord.
All **Amen.** *Music* The Easter Hymn

Organ Voluntary

Christ ist erstanden BWV 627 *(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 served in the parish centre, please do join us*

§ *If you are a newcomer to the parish or area please introduce yourself to one of the clergy or speak to a member of our Welcome Team.*

This evening at 5.30 pm

BCP Evening Prayer

is said in Quire

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.

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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