

The Parish Church of St Matthew
Northampton

The Second Sunday of Lent

Year A



Nicodemus on rooftop 1923 Oil on panel by Henry Ossawa Tanner 1859-1937

The Parish Mass

Sunday 1 March 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 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.



Good morning and welcome to St Matthew's on this Second Sunday of Lent.

In today's Gospel we meet Nicodemus, who comes to Jesus at night with questions. He is thoughtful, searching, and not yet certain what he believes. Lent is a season for people like that — a time to step back from the noise of life and reflect more deeply on who Christ is and what his presence means for us.

If you are visiting, or exploring faith with questions of your own, you are very welcome here.

In this service we will pray, listen to Scripture, sing, keep silence, and celebrate the Eucharist — our great act of thanksgiving, where we receive again the self-giving love of Christ.

Over these Lenten weeks we are also reflecting on what it means to grow as a generous church — generous in faith, in service, and in the sharing of our resources for God's work among us. Today's Gospel speaks of new birth and renewed life, a renewal that touches every part of who we are.

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:

Prayer

Lord, you are our light and our salvation;
let us put our trust in you.
Lighten our darkness and drive far from us all the snares of evil,
that in you we may find eternal life.

Setting

Mass of the Altar of Life

David Halls b.1963

Order of Service

¶ The Gathering

- § *The choir are in their stalls*
- § **Stand** at the sound of the bell
- § *The sanctuary party enter in silence, and go to their places*
- § **Sit** with the priest for a period of silent prayer and recollection

- § **Stand** with the priest

Hymn

- § *The priest reverences the altar and honours it with incense*

All

**SOLDIERS of Christ, arise,
And put your armour on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through his eternal Son;**

**Strong in the Lord of Hosts,
And in his mighty power:
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.**

**Stand then in his great might,
With all his strength endued;
And take, to arm you for the fight,
The panoply of God.**

**Leave no unguarded place,
No weakness of the soul:
Take every virtue, every grace,
And fortify the whole.**

**From strength to strength go on,
Wrestle and fight and pray;
Tread all the powers of darkness down
And win the well-fought day.**

Confession

All **Almighty God,**
long-suffering and of great goodness:
I confess to you,
I confess with my whole heart
my neglect and forgetfulness of your commandments,
my wrong doing, thinking, and speaking;
the hurts I have done to others,
and the good I have left undone.
O God, forgive me, for I have sinned against you;
and raise me to newness of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Absolution

May God who loved the world so much
that he sent his Son to be our Saviour
forgive † you your sins
and make you holy to serve him in the world,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Collect

Let us pray.

Almighty God,
you show to those who are in error the light of your truth,
that they may return to the way of righteousness:
grant to all those who are admitted
 into the fellowship of Christ's religion,
that they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession,
and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same;
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

Dear friends, in his forty days in the desert wilderness the Lord Jesus sought to draw close to the Father. Let us pray that the Holy Spirit will open our hearts and minds as the Word of God is proclaimed to us.

§ Sit

¶ The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Reader A reading from the book Genesis.

The Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him.

Genesis 12.1-4a

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm

Response

Stephen Moore



Choir I lift up my eyes to the hills;
from where is my help to come?
My help comes from the Lord,
the maker of heaven and earth. **Response**

He will not suffer your foot to stumble;
he who watches over you will not sleep.
Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel
shall neither slumber nor sleep. **Response**

The Lord himself watches over you;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand,
So that the sun shall not strike you by day,
neither the moon by night. **Response**

The Lord shall keep you from all evil;
it is he who shall keep your soul.
The Lord shall keep watch over your going out and your coming in,
from this time forth for evermore. **Response**

Psalm 121

§ Stand

Holy Gospel

Acclamation



Choir Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
All **Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.**

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

All The Lord our redeemer be with you
and also with you.

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



There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and

what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, “You must be born from above.” The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.’ Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can these things be?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?’

‘Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

‘Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

John 3:1-17

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



Homily

§ Sit

§ *At the end, a time for personal reflection*

Affirmation of Faith

§ *Stand*

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

All **Though he was divine,
he did not cling to equality with God,
but made himself nothing.
Taking the form of a slave,
he was born in human likeness.
He humbled himself and was obedient to death,
even the death of the cross.
Therefore God has raised him on high,
and given him the name above every name:
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

Prayers of the Faithful

Priest Scripture assures us that God our Father
 hears the prayers of those who come in faith and hope.
In the power of the Spirit and in the name of the Son,
let us present our petitions to him.

§ *Kneel*

After each petition

All Lord, hear us:
come, lighten our darkness.

Priest Ever-faithful God,
you hear the prayers of those who turn to you in faith and trust:
hear these our prayers
that our Lenten journey may bring us closer to you
and each other.

All We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

§ *Stand*

¶ The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Sign of Peace

Since we are justified by faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has given us access to his grace.

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 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 **TAKE us thy cross, the Saviour said,
If thou wouldst my disciple be;
Deny thyself, the world forsake,
And humble follow after me.**

**Take up thy cross; let not its weight
Fill thy weak spirit with alarm;
His strength shall bear thy spirit up,
And brace thy heart, and nerve thine arm.**

**Take up thy cross, nor need the shame,
Not let thy foolish pride regel;
The Lord for thee the cross endured,
To save thy soul from death and hell.**

**Take up thy cross then in his strength,
And calmly every danger brave;
'Twill guide thee to a better home,
And lead to victory o'er the grave.**

**Take up thy cross, and follow Christ,
Nor think till death to lay it down;
For only they who bear the cross
May hope to wear the glorious crown.**

**To thee, great Lord, the one in three,
All praise for evermore ascend;
O grant us in our home to see
The heavenly life that knows no end.**

Words Charles William Everest 1814-1877

Music Breslau
Melody from *As Hymnodus Sacer*, 1625
arranged by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy 1809-1847

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, make us holy.
May this eucharist take away our sins
that we may be prepared to celebrate the resurrection,
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.

For in these forty days you lead us into the desert of repentance
that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline
we may grow in grace
and learn to be your people once again.
Through fasting, prayer and acts of service
you bring us back to your generous heart.
Through study of your holy word
you open our eyes to your presence in the world
and free our hands to welcome others
into the radiant splendour of your love.

As we prepare to celebrate the Easter feast
with joyful hearts and minds we bless you for your mercy
and join with saints and angels
for ever praising you and singing:

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.**

Please remain standing

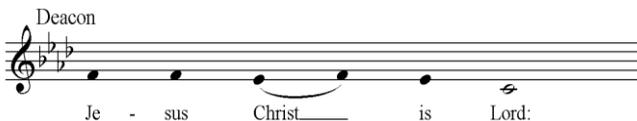
Accept our praises, heavenly Father,
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,
and as we follow his example and obey his command,
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us his body and his blood;

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.



Response

Lord, by your cross and re - sur - rec - tion you have set us free.

You are the Sa - viour of the world.

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,

President

in songs of e - ver last - ing praise

Response

Bless - ing and hon - our and glo - ry and power

be yours for e - ver and e - ver. A - men.

The Blessed Sacrament is elevated and bells are rung

§ *Kneel*

The Lord's Prayer

Let us ask our Father to forgive our sins
and bring us to forgive those who sin against 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

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

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

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

Invitation to Communion

All Come and receive the living Lord.
May we live in him and he in us.

The clergy receive Holy Communion

Giving of Communion

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

§ *If you are baptised and a communicant member of another church, you are most welcome to receive Holy Communion. Alternatively, if you would like to receive God's blessing please bring this booklet with you to the communion rail.*

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

Call to remembrance, O Lord,
thy tender mercies and thy loving kindness
which hath been ever of old.
O remember not the sins and offences of my youth,
but according to thy mercy think thou on me, O Lord,
for thy goodness.

Text Psalm 25.5,6

Music Richard Farrant c.1525-1580

Hymn

All

**MY faith looks up to thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour divine!
Now hear me while I pray,
Take all my guilt away,
O let me from this day
Be wholly thine.**

**May thy rich grace impart
Strength to my fainting heart,
My zeal inspire;
As thou hast died for me,
O may my love to thee
Pure, warm, and changeless be,
A living fire.**

**While life's dark maze I tread,
And griefs around me spread,
 Be thou my guide;
Bid darkness turn to day,
Wipe sorrow's tears away,
Nor let me ever stray
 From thee aside.**

**When ends life's transient dream,
When death's cold, sullen stream
 Shall o'er me roll,
Blest Saviour, then in love
Fear and distrust remove;
O bear me safe above,
 A ransomed soul.**

Words Ray Palmer 1808-1887

Music Olivet
Lowell Mason 1792-1872

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

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray:

§ *Stand*

Almighty God,
you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves:
keep us both outwardly in our bodies,
and inwardly in our souls;
that we may be defended from all adversities
 which may happen to the body,
and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All

Amen.

**God of our pilgrimage,
you have fed us with the bread of heaven.
Refresh and sustain us as we go forward on our journey,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Hymn

All **SOLDIERS, who are Christ's below,
Strong in faith resist the foe;
Boundless is the pledged reward
Unto them who serve the Lord.**

**'Tis no palm of fading leaves
That the conqueror's hand receives;
Joys are his, serene and pure,
Light that ever shall endure.**

**For the souls that overcome
Waits the beautiful heavenly home,
Where the blessed evermore
Tread on high the starry floor.**

**Passing soon and little worth
Are the things that tempt on earth;
Heavenward lift thy soul's regard;
God himself is thy reward;**

**Father who the crown dost give,
Saviour by whose death we live,
Spirit who our hearts dost raise,
Three in one, thy Name we praise. Amen.**

Words Latin, 18th century
tr John Haldenby Clark 1839-1888

Music Orientis partibus
French melody, 13th century
Harmony by Ralph Vaughan Williams 1872-1968

Notices for the Community

§ Sit

¶ Sending Out

§ *Stand*

All The Lord our redeemer be with you
and also with you.

Solemn Blessing

All May God the Father, who does not despise the broken spirit,
give to you a contrite heart.
Amen.

All May Christ, who bore our sins in his body on the tree,
heal you by his wounds.
Amen.

All May the Holy Spirit, who leads us into all truth,
speak to you words of pardon and peace.
Amen.

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

The Dismissal

All The Mass is ended, go in peace.
Thanks be to God.

Organ Voluntary

Wir glauben all an einen Gott BWV 680

J S Bach 1685-1750

§ *Remain standing until the procession has departed*

- § *Those leaving immediately are asked to be aware of those who wish to listen to the organ voluntary*
- § *Refreshments are being served in the parish centre, please do join us*
- § *If you are a newcomer to the parish, please introduce yourself to the clergy or speak to a member of our Welcome Team.*

This evening at 5.30 pm

Choral Evensong

Our thanks are due to Anonymous Donor 18
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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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