

The Parish Church of St Matthew
Northampton

The Solemnity of Christ the King

Year C



Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise

The Parish Mass

Sunday 23 November 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. 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 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.



The Feast of Christ the King

Good morning, and a very warm welcome to our celebration of the Feast of Christ the King, the final Sunday of the Church's year. Today we gather to honour Jesus Christ as Lord of all — the one who reigns not through power or force, but through love, mercy, and the gift of himself upon the Cross.

This feast invites us to look beyond earthly kingdoms and authorities, and to place our trust in Christ, whose kingdom is founded on justice, peace, and truth. As we prepare to enter the season of Advent next week, today we give thanks for Christ's eternal reign — a kingship that reconciles all things to God.

In our readings today, Saint Paul reminds the Colossians that in Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and that through him all things are held together. And in our Gospel, we see the paradox of Christ's kingship most clearly: as he hangs upon the cross, mocked as "King of the Jews," he reveals the true nature of divine authority — forgiveness, compassion, and the promise of paradise to the penitent thief.

So let us open our hearts to worship the King of kings, to renew our allegiance to him, and to rejoice in his unending kingdom of love and 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 reflection, based on today's themes, may be found helpful:

Reflection

On the cross Jesus endured insults and mockery. Yet his heart remained open, even to his enemies. He absorbed all the violence, transformed it, and returned it as love and forgiveness. One's pain can so easily turn to rage, so that one wants only to lash out blindly at whoever happens to be within range. From the depths of his own pain, Jesus reached out to comfort the thief. Some people are like sugar cane: even when crushed in the mill, what they yield is sweetness. Jesus stretches our capacity for compassion. He challenges our idea of love. Each of us has a great capacity for love. The pity is that it often goes unused. By our love people will know that we are followers of Christ the King.

Settings

The Salisbury Service (Gloria only)

Grayston Ives b.1948

Communion Service in G

Francis Jackson 1917-2022

Order of Service

¶ The Gathering

§ *The choir are in their stalls*

§ *At the sound of the bell please STAND*

§ *The sanctuary party enters and forms up in the centre aisle*

The priest intones

Let us go forth in peace.

All **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

Processional Hymn

The procession circumscribes the congregation

All **CROWN him with many crowns,
The Lamb upon his throne;
Hark how the heavenly anthem drowns
All music but its own:
Awake, my soul, and sing
Of him who died for thee,
And hail him as thy matchless King
Through all eternity.**

**Crown him the Virgin's Son,
The God incarnate born,
Whose arm those crimson trophies won
Which now his brow adorn:
Fruit of that mystic rose,
As of that rose the stem;
The root whence mercy ever flows,
The babe of Bethlehem.**

Crown him the Lord of love,
Behold his hands and side,
Rich wounds yet visible above
In beauty glorified:
No angel in the sky
Can fully bear that sight,
But downward bends his burning eye
At mysteries so bright.

Crown him the Lord of peace,
Whose power a sceptre sways
From pole to pole, that wars may cease,
Absorbed in prayer and praise:
His reign shall know no end,
And round his piercèd feet
Fair flowers of paradise extend
Their fragrance ever sweet.

Crown him the Lord of years,
The potentate of time,
Creator of the rolling spheres,
Ineffably sublime.
Glassed in a sea of light,
Where everlasting waves
Reflect his throne - the infinite!
Who lives, and loves, and saves.

Words Matthew Bridges 1800-1894

Music Diademata
George Job Elvey 1816-1893

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

The Greeting

All Blessed be God.
Blessed be God's kingdom now and for ever.
Amen.

Words of welcome and introduction are said

Invitation to Confession

Jesus says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.'
So let us turn away from sin and turn to Christ,
confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

Silence for recollection

Confession

All **O King enthroned on high,
filling the earth with your glory:
holy is your name,
Lord God almighty.
In our sinfulness we cry to you to take our guilt away,
and to cleanse our lips to speak your word,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Kyries

Lord Jesus, you help us to spread your kingdom
by making peace with others:
Kyrie eleison.

All **Kyrie eleison.**

You help us to spread your kingdom by forgiving others:
Christe eleison.

All **Christe eleison.**

Lord, you help us to spread your kingdom by caring for others:
Kyrie eleison.

All **Kyrie eleison.**

Absolution

Almighty God,
who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,
forgive † you your sins,
open your eyes to God's truth,
strengthen you to do God's will
and give you the joy of his kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

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.

Eternal Father,
whose Son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven
that he might rule over all things as Lord and King:
keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit
and in the bond of peace,
and bring the whole created order to worship at his feet;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All

Amen.

§ Sit

¶ The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Reader A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Colossians.

May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Colossians 1.11-20

This is the word of the Lord.

All

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 46



Choir

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble;
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved,
and though the mountains tremble in the heart of the sea;
Though the waters rage and swell,
and though the mountains quake at the towering seas. **Response**

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place of the dwelling of the Most High.
God is in the midst of her;
therefore shall she not be removed;
God shall help her at the break of day.
The nations are in uproar and the kingdoms are shaken,
but God utters his voice and the earth shall melt away.
*The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.* **Response**

Come and behold the works of the Lord,
what destruction he has wrought upon the earth.
He makes wars to cease in all the world;
he shatters the bow and snaps the spear
and burns the chariots in the fire.
'Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations;
I will be exalted in the earth.'
*The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.* **Response**

Psalm 46

§ *Stand*

Holy Gospel

Acclamation



Choir Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven.

All **Alleluia.**

§ 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 Luke.



When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!' The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!' There was also an inscription over him, 'This is the King of the Jews.'

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, 'Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!' But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' He replied, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.'

Luke 23.33-43

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



Homily

§ Sit

The Nicene Creed

§ Stand

Let us declare our faith in God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All **We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

All may bow **For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.**

Prayers of the Faithful

Priest Let us pray to our heavenly Father who has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.

§ *Kneel*

The response to each petition

All Lord, your kingdom come
in us as in heaven.

After the final petition

God of power and love,
may we do with loving hearts what you ask of us
and come to share the life you promise in the kingdom of your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, world without end.
All **Amen.**



The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Sign of Peace

To crown all things there must be love,
to bind all together and complete the whole.
Let the peace of Christ rule in your 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.

Hymn

§ *The bread and wine are presented to the priest at the dais step,
and the altar is prepared*

§ *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

**HAIL Redeemer, King divine!
Priest and Lamb, the throne is thine,
King, whose reign shall never cease,
Prince of everlasting peace.**

*Angels, saints and nations sing
'Praised be Jesus Christ our King;
Lord of life, earth, sky and sea,
King of love on Calvary.'*

**King whose name creation thrills,
Rule our minds, our hearts, our wills,
Till in peace each nation rings
With thy praises, King of kings. Chorus**

**King most holy, King of truth,
Guide the lowly, guide the youth;
Christ thou King of glory bright
Be to us eternal light. *Chorus***

**Shepherd-King, o'er mountains steep,
Homeward bring the wandering sheep;
Shelter in one royal fold
States and kingdoms, new and old. *Chorus***

**Eucharistic King, what love
Draws thee daily from above.
Clad in signs of bread and wine;
Feed us, lead us, keep us thine.**

***Angels, saints and nations sing
'Praised be Jesus Christ our King;
Lord of life, earth, sky and sea,
King of love on Calvary.'***

Words Patrick Brennan, CSsR 1877-1952

Music King Divine
Charles Rigby 1901-1962

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, as we offer you the sacrifice
by which the human race is reconciled to you,
we humbly pray that your Son may bestow on all nations
the gifts of unity and peace.

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, our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For with the oil of gladness
you have anointed Christ the Lord, your only Son,
to be our great high priest and king of all creation.
As priest, he offered himself once for all upon the altar of the cross
and redeemed the human race by this perfect sacrifice of peace.
As king he claims dominion over all your creatures,
that he may bring before your infinite majesty
a kingdom of truth and life,
a kingdom of holiness and grace,
a kingdom of justice, love and peace.

And so with angels and archangels and all the heavenly host
we proclaim your glory
and join 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.*

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:



The Blessed Sacrament is elevated and bells are rung

§ Kneel

The Lord's Prayer

God's kingdom is a kingdom of truth and life,
 holiness and grace, justice, love and peace.
 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

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

All **Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

Invitation to Communion

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

All **Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word and I shall be healed.**

The clergy receive Holy Communion

Giving of Communion

The Lord sits enthroned as king for evermore. The Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.

§ *Baptised 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.

The choir sing Agnus Dei

Motet

Choir

Judge eternal, throned in splendour,
Lord of lords, and King of kings,
with thy living fire of judgement
purge this realm of bitter things:
solace all its wide dominion
with the healing of thy wings.

Still the weary folk are pining
for the hour that brings release:
and the city's crowded clangour
cries aloud for sin to cease;
and the homesteads and the woodlands
plead in silence for their peace.

Crown, O God, thine own endeavour;
cleave our darkness with thy sword:
feed the faithless and the hungry
with the richness of thy word:
cleanse the body of this empire
through the glory of the Lord.

Words Henry Scott Holland 1847-1918

Music Malcolm Archer b.1952

Hymn

All

**LET all mortal flesh keep silence
And with fear and trembling stand;
Ponder nothing earthly-minded,
For with blessing in his hand
Christ our God to earth descendeth,
Our full homage to demand.**

**King of kings, yet born of Mary,
As of old on earth he stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture,
In the body and the blood:
He will give to all the faithful
His own self for heavenly food.**

**Rank on rank the host of heaven
Spreads its vanguard on the way,
And the Light of Light descendeth
From the realms of endless day,
That the powers of hell may vanish
As the darkness clears away.**

**At his feet the six-winged seraph;
Cherubim with sleepless eye,
Veil their faces to the presence,
As with ceaseless voice they cry,
Alleluya, alleluya,
Alleluya, Lord Most High!**

*Words Greek, Cherubic Hymn from Liturgy of St James
versified by Gerard Moultrie 1829-1885
after Thomas Rattray 1684-1743*

*Music Picardy
French melody, possibly 17th cent
collected by Jean-Baptiste Wekerlin 1821-1910
Chansons populaires, 1848
Harmony from *The English Hymnal*, 1906*

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray:

§ *Stand*

Lord, in the vision of your heavenly kingdom
you reveal among us the promise of your glory;
may that glory be ours
as we claim our citizenship in the kingdom
where you live and reign, one God, for ever and ever.

All **Amen.**

**We thank you, Lord,
that you have fed us in this sacrament,
united us with Christ,
and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet
prepared for all peoples.
Amen.**

Hymn

All **CHRIST triumphant ever reigning,
Saviour, Master, King!
Lord of heaven, our lives sustaining,
Hear us as we sing:
*Yours the glory and the crown,
The high renown, the eternal name.***

**Word incarnate, truth revealing,
Son of Man on earth!
Power and majesty concealing
By your humble birth:**

**Suffering servant, scorned, ill-treated,
Victim crucified!
Death is through the cross defeated,
Sinners justified:**

**Priestly King, enthroned for ever
High in heaven above!
Sin and death and hell shall never
Stifle hymns of love:**

**So, our hearts and voices raising
Through the ages long,
Ceaselessly upon you gazing,
This shall be our song:
*Yours the glory and the crown,
The high renown, the eternal name.***

Words Michael Seward 1932-2015

Music Guitting Power
John Barnard b.1948

§ Sit

Notices for the Community

¶ Sending Out

§ Stand

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Solemn Blessing

All May the Lord bless you with a noble and generous heart.
Amen.

All May he keep you joyful in his service.
Amen.

All And may he lead you through the darkness of this world
to the radiant glory of his everlasting kingdom.
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.

Acclamation and Dismissal

All Lift up your heads, O gates;
be lifted up, you everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.
‘Who is the King of glory?’
All **‘The Lord, strong and mighty,
the Lord who is mighty in battle.’**

All Lift up you heads, O gates;
be lifted up, you everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.
‘Who is this King of glory?’
All **The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.’**

All Go in the peace of Christ the King.
Thanks be to God.

Organ Voluntary

Coronation March “Orb and Sceptre”

William Walton 1902-1983

arranged by William McKie 1901-1984

- § *Please remain standing until the procession has departed*
- § *Those leaving immediately are asked to be aware of those who wish to listen to the organ voluntary*
- § *Refreshments are being served in the parish centre, adjacent to the carpark. Do please 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
Solemn Congregational Evensong

Next Sunday
The First Sunday of Advent

10.15 am The Parish Mass

4.00 pm The Advent Procession

Our thanks are due to John Folwell
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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