

*St Matthew's*  
**MAIL**

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**Suggested  
Donation**

**£1.00**

**News from the Parish of Kingsley, Northampton**

**DECEMBER 2025**



**[www.stmatthewsnorthampton.org.uk](http://www.stmatthewsnorthampton.org.uk)**

# Services at the Parish Church of St Matthew

## Sundays

10.15am	The Parish Mass (sung)
5.30pm	Evensong — according to The Book of Common Prayer

## First Sunday in the month

10.15am	All Age Mass for the Parish Family
5.30pm	Choral Evensong

*When the choir is on holiday (coinciding with school holidays and half terms)  
Choral Evensong is replaced with Congregational Evensong*

## Second Sunday in the month

10.15am	Laying on of hands and Sacrament of Anointing is offered in the Lady Chapel
5.30pm	Congregational Evensong

## Third Sunday in the month

5.30pm	Choral Evensong and Benediction
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## Fourth and Fifth Sundays in the month

5.30pm	Congregational Evensong
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## Weekdays *(during winter months of November to March, may be held in the Parish Centre)*

Morning and Evening Prayer are said publicly at 9.00am and 5.30pm daily

<b>Monday</b>	7.00pm Mass (on Bank Holidays at 9.30am) (Healing Mass and Devotions on the first Monday in the month)
<b>Tuesday</b>	Currently suspended
<b>Wednesday</b>	12 noon Mass
<b>Thursday</b>	12 noon Mass
<b>Friday</b>	12 noon Mass
<b>Saturday</b>	9.30am Mass (Mass of Our Lady of Walsingham followed by a Cell Meeting on the second Saturday of the month)

## Major Feast-Days      Procession and Sung Mass at 7.30pm

*(Always held in church. The morning Mass may be cancelled — refer to literature in church and on website)*

**Sacrament of Reconciliation**, commonly known as Confession, is celebrated in the Lady Chapel by appointment with the clergy. They are also available for advice and guidance on any matter of concern.

All aspects of the sacrament are in confidence.

# Worship Calendar for December

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<i>Date</i>	<i>Observance</i>	<i>Intention</i>
1	Feria	The ministry of healing
2	Feria	The poor in God's sight
3	S Francis Xavier, Pr	The Eucharist as our "daily bread"
4	Feria	Our willingness to meet the cost of discipleship
5	Feria	Moral blindness today
6	S Nicholas, B	Generosity within the Church
7	THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT	The Parish
8	Immaculate Conception of the BVM	Mary's place in God's scheme
9	Feria	Those who have lost faith
10	Feria	Reaching out to the weary
11	Feria	Having courage to proclaim Christ
12	Monthly Requiem	The Faithful Departed
13	Of OLW	Our Cell and the Shrine
14	THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT	The Parish
15	Feria	Honesty of Character
16	Feria	Those trying to turn their lives around
17	Feria	Appreciating our forebears
18	Feria	Those trying to make ends meet
19	Feria	Christian values in the home
20	Feria	Reading the signs of the times
21	THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	The Parish
22	Feria <i>O Rex Gentium</i>	Those yearning for a child
23	Feria <i>O Emmanuel</i>	Gratitude versus lukewarmness
24	Feria <i>(in the morning)</i>	Our spiritual preparations
THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD		
24	CHRISTMAS EVE	Thanksgiving for the Incarnation )
25	CHRISTMAS DAY	of Our Lord Jesus Christ )
26	S Stephen, First Martyr	Religious and family division
27	St John, Ap, Ev	Jesus, true God and true man
28	THE FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS	The Parish
29	In the Octave of Christmas	The light of Christ today
30	In the Octave of Christmas	Rough sleepers and associated issues
31	In the Octave of Christmas	Those dependant on charity

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*The Church prays for the community daily.  
Please include these topics in your daily prayers.*

# December Pastoral Letter from the Vicar

## What on earth are you waiting for?

For Christians, one word recaptures the essence of Advent: we are waiting. But that word presents us with a problem. How many of us, honestly, are waiting? And if we are, what exactly are we waiting for?

Plenty of people say, "I just can't wait for Christmas to come," and for all sorts of good reasons: the return of loved ones long absent, a welcome break from classroom tyranny, a new computer game, that outfit in the shop window, Christmas carols and all their charm, or the annual battle on the north face of the Christmas turkey. Good reasons indeed.

But how many of us find ourselves saying, "I just can't wait for Christ to come"?

Here lies the difficulty: why should we wait for Christ to come at all? Why wait for someone who has already come, someone we already have, someone who is actually here? Christ came one midnight clear, wrapped in the swaddling bands of a child. And when he left us, paradoxically he remained with us. He took from us the physical charm of his presence – the face his mother knew so well, the voice that was music to the ears of his friends. And still he is here, now.

So what exactly are we waiting for? His final coming on a pink cloud, separating saved sheep from damned goats? If so, you might not want to hold your breath.

If there is no Christ to wait for, it is little wonder that Advent means so little to the average Christian, let alone to anyone else, and plays second fiddle to the advertisements urging us to buy, buy, buy. I am not saying we shouldn't celebrate the first Christmas, remembering it lovingly and reliving it each year in our worship. I am asking whether waiting for Christ makes any sense when he surrounds us and rests within us. Is our waiting mere pretending – playacting, holy make-believe?

Then there is the human experience of waiting – both joyful and painful. What was it like for Mary to wait for Jesus? As a man I can only imagine; only mothers truly know. Jesus was there, and yet not quite there – not in the way she longed for, not as he would be in a stable a hundred miles away. In the meantime there was the paradox of pregnancy: years of joy offset by days of discomfort, anxiety and fear, and sleepless nights. Those sleepless nights I do know something about!

And then came that night – amid the dung and dust of a Palestinian stable – when Jesus was born of her. He came to light, came from her to her. Of course, he was hers before, but what a difference one night makes. This was what Mary had been waiting for; here Jesus became real, enfleshed, in a way he had never been before.

So what does all this say about our Advent? It tells us that we do not wait for Christ to move toward us; we wait for Christ to come alive within us. The real question is: how alive is he for you? If Christ is thrillingly alive for you, if he is as real and breathing a presence as your nearest and dearest, close this magazine and go and do something more worthwhile.

But if Christ within you is still an embryo, if you have not felt him move or been startled by his gentle kicking, if you do not embrace him as a friend, then perhaps his birth in you is long overdue. If Christ is someone you ‘soak up’ on Sundays because the ritual is familiar, while the rest of the week is Christ-less (not sinful, just Christ-less), then these next twenty days may be demanding ones.

What did Mary do when the angel left her? “Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country” – to the home of Elizabeth, who needed her help. Here our own Christmas frenzy might actually help us. Every shop window and colourful commercial urges us to give. What we must rediscover is that the best gift is always symbolic – regnant with meaning that money cannot buy. A gift is most perfect when it stands for the giver, when in the giving I offer something of myself.

Like Mary, we must activate our waiting. Give yourself. Bring Christ to your neighbour, especially to those who resemble him only because they seem pinned to a cross. If, like Mary, you carry Christ to someone who needs your care, the effect can be quietly transforming.

This kind of Advent is not easy. Twenty-odd shopping days to Christmas; twenty or so days to shop for Christ – for a living, breathing Christ. It might feel too short if we had to travel to Bethlehem or Calvary, or Ukraine.

But the good news for Advent shoppers is that the risen Christ has been seen here. In fact, you can find him anywhere in Northampton, on any face – if you want to, and if you have eyes to see.

Happy hunting.

Your sincere friend and parish priest,

*Fr. Nicholas*

# The Christingle Service

I wonder how many oranges will be used in our churches and schools this year as we celebrate a Christingle Service. For me, the lighting of the candle and the singing of 'Away in a Manger' has always been one of the most profound moments of the Christmas season. To watch young children (and adults, too!), be stilled in the gentle candlelight and to sing gently of the birth of Jesus, is a powerful way to recapture the joy and wonder of Christmas.



The Christingle itself is a sign of God's love for the world, it is a promise of hope at times of darkness, it is a message that Jesus is indeed the light of the world. As each candle is lit, we can see how each one joins together to banish the darkness. This is our calling – to live lives that burn brightly with the love of Jesus and to work together to bring hope.

My prayer for you, is that you will know the light of Jesus in your own lives this Christmas and that you will experience that joy that comes from welcoming the Son of God into our lives.

+ Debbie

The Rt Revd Debbie Sellin  
Bishop of Peterborough



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## Weekday Scripture Readings for December



Our weekday scripture readings, one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament, taken from the 'Additional Lectionary' which was constructed by the Church of England principally for use in Cathedrals at weekday Evensong.

Monday	1	Zechariah 8.20-end	John 1.35-42
Tuesday	2	Zephaniah 3.14-end	1 Thessalonians 4.13-end
Wednesday	3	Isaiah 65.17–66.2	Matthew 24.1-14
Thursday	4	Micah 5.2-5a	John 3.16-21
Friday	5	Isaiah 66.18-end	Luke 13.22-30
Saturday	6	Micah 7.8-15	Romans 15.30–16.7, 25-end
Monday	8	Jeremiah 7.1-11	Philippians 4.4-9
Tuesday	9	Daniel 7.9-14	Matthew 24.15-28
Wednesday	10	Amos 9.11-end	Romans 13.8-end
Thursday	11	Jeremiah 23.5-8	Mark 11.1-11
Friday	12	Jeremiah 33.14-22	Luke 21.25-36
Saturday	13	Zechariah 14.4-11	Revelation 22.1-7
Monday	15	Isaiah 40.1-11	Matthew 3.1-12
Tuesday	16	Lamentations 3.22-33	1 Corinthians 1.1-9
Wednesday	17	Proverbs 8.22-31	1 Corinthians 2,1-13
Thursday	18	Exodus 3.1-6	Acts 7.20-36
Friday	19	Isaiah 11.1-9	Romans 15.7-13
Saturday	20	Isaiah 22.21-23	Revelation 3.7-13
Monday	22	Jeremiah 30.7-11a	Acts 4.1-12
Tuesday	23	Isaiah 7.10-15	Matthew 1.18-23
Wednesday	24	Zechariah 2	Revelation 1.1-8
Thursday	25	Isaiah 65.17-25	Philippians 2.5-11
Friday	26	Genesis 4.1-10	Matthew 23.34-end
Saturday	27	Isaiah 6.1-8 1	John 5.1-12
Monday	29	Micah 1.1-4; 2.12-13	Luke 2.1-7
Tuesday	30	Isaiah 9.2-7	John 8.12-20
Wednesday	31	Ecclesiastes 3.1-13	Revelation 21,1-8

# Chippings from the Vicar's Work Bench

## Healing Mass

Our next monthly Mass for healing and wholeness will be held in the Lady Chapel on Monday 1 December at 7.00pm. This quiet and prayerful service concludes with intercessions for the sick offered before the Blessed Sacrament and a simple Benediction. The liturgy lasts approximately thirty minutes. This Mass provides a gentle and hopeful space in which to bring our hurts, anxieties, and needs before God, as well as the needs of those who are on our hearts. It is also encouraging to see that Monday evening Mass is enjoying a real renaissance, with attendance regularly in double figures from our own congregation and neighbouring parishes. You would be most welcome to join us.

## Standing Committee

Members of the Standing Committee are reminded that our next scheduled meeting will take place in the Parish Centre on Wednesday 3 December at 2.00pm. As the last PCC meeting had to be cancelled due to the number of apologies received, it is especially important that we meet with full attendance and regain momentum in our shared responsibilities.

## Christmas Fayre

Our Parish Christmas Fayre is always a joyful occasion, drawing many semi-familiar friends from the Kingsley area who regard St Matthew's as 'their church'. We welcome them warmly and value their presence among us. The Fayre offers a wonderful opportunity for outreach, friendship, and gentle evangelism. We never fully know what seeds of faith and goodwill may be planted simply by enabling local people to leave our church happy, welcomed, and uplifted. Warm thanks, in advance, go to Nick and Denise Bailey for their leadership and organisation of this considerable undertaking, and to all who will run stalls, set up, clear away, or carry out the many unseen tasks essential to the event. We also hope, of course, to raise much-needed funds for our parish's ministry and mission. If you are not able to volunteer on the night, please do come and support us, enjoy the evening, and help us show our wider community something of the love and warmth that is at the heart of our worshipping life. The Fayre takes place on Friday 5 December, 7.00–9.00pm.

## Monthly Requiem

We offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the souls of the faithful departed this month on Friday 12 December at 12 noon in the Lady Chapel. If you have loved ones to remember, please make a special effort to attend and participate in this act of loving prayer, rather than leaving it to others.

## **Parish Cell of Our Lady of Walsingham**

Members of the Cell are reminded that our next Mass of the Holy House will be celebrated on Saturday 13 December at 9.30am, followed by our Cell meeting in the Parish Centre. All Cell members and visitors are warmly welcome.

## **The Northampton Philharmonic Choir – Handel's *Messiah***

The Northampton Philharmonic Choir will perform Handel's *Messiah* on Saturday 6 December at 7.00pm. Long renowned for presenting major choral works, the choir is joined by distinguished soloists Rachel Nicholls (Soprano), Jennifer Westwood (Alto), Niki Zohdi (Tenor), and Andrew Slater (Bass), with orchestral accompaniment provided by the Nene Sinfonia under the direction of Thomas Moore. *Messiah*, first performed in 1742, remains one of the most beloved oratorios in Western music, celebrated for its rich scriptural storytelling, expressive arias, and powerful choruses – particularly the iconic *Hallelujah Chorus*. Full booking details may be found on the parish website.

## **All Age Parish Mass – Second Sunday of Advent**

Our final All Age Mass of the year will be celebrated on Sunday 7 December at 10.15am. This service focuses on the message of John the Baptist and his call to "Prepare the way of the Lord." As we continue our Advent journey, we reflect on Isaiah's promise of new life and God's spirit of wisdom and peace. John the Baptist reminds us that preparing for Christ is not only about waiting, but about opening our hearts to change – embracing peace, justice, and love. Please join us as we pray, sing, and prepare together to welcome the Prince of Peace at Christmas.

## **DRET Carol Services**

We are delighted once again to host the David Ross Education Trust school carol services on Wednesday 10 December at 1.30pm and Monday 15 December at 11.00am. Do join us for these lively and heart-warming celebrations.

## **Carols by Candlelight**

Our much-loved Choir will present their annual Carols by Candlelight concert on Saturday 13 December at 7.00pm. The programme includes works by Bob Chilcott, John Rutter, Peter Warlock, and Mack Wilberg, alongside many traditional carols for the whole audience to sing. Tickets (£10, under-18s free) are available via the parish website. Wine, soft drinks, mince pies, and shortbread will be served during the interval. Bring friends and family and enjoy a magical, festive evening.

### **Cedar Road School Christingle Service**

The children and staff of Cedar Road Primary School will join us for their Christingle service on Wednesday 17 December at 2.00pm. Parishioners are warmly invited to come and share in this joyful occasion.

### **Northampton Bach Choir – O Holy Night**

On Saturday 20 December at 7.00pm, the Northampton Bach Choir returns for its annual Christmas concert, featuring seasonal choral music, festive favourites, and plenty of opportunities for the audience to join in singing beloved carols. Held at St Matthew's, this uplifting evening promises a rich blend of traditional and contemporary music, capturing both the joy and the quiet beauty of the season. Reserved seating is available, with street parking nearby. General admission: £17–£20; students in full-time education: £10.

### **The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols**

Our traditional Nine Lessons and Carols, by candlelight, takes place on Sunday 21 December at 4.00pm, followed by refreshments in the Parish Centre. This much-loved service, which originated in the late 19th century, weaves together scripture, poetry, and music to tell the story of God's loving purposes – from the Fall to the prophecy of the Messiah and the birth of Jesus. For many, it has become a deeply cherished part of their Christmas preparation, drawing them anew into the wonder and hope of the Nativity.

### **Parish Crib & Christingle Service – Christmas Eve**

On Christmas Eve at 4.00pm, we gather for our informal Crib and Christingle service, lasting around forty minutes. With a simple nativity tableau and the glow of Christingles, we celebrate the birth of Jesus – the Light from Light – who comes among us in humility and love.

### **Midnight Mass and Blessing of the Crib**

Our Midnight Mass begins at 11.30pm on Christmas Eve, a beautiful and deeply atmospheric service that draws us away from the purely secular bustle of Christmas and calls us to reflect on the mystery of God's love in Christ. All are warmly encouraged to attend.

### **Christmas Morning**

On Christmas Day at 10.15am, we celebrate the Incarnation – God coming among us in the vulnerability of human flesh. In a world often marked by hostility and uncertainty, we rejoice that God chose to be with us out of sheer, boundless love.

## Off Duty Notice

Please note that Fr Nicholas will be off duty from Friday 26 December until Saturday 3 January inclusive. He will, however, be present on New Year's Day.

The Parish Office will be closed from 29–31 December.

## New Year's Day

We begin the new year spiritually on Thursday 1 January 2026, celebrating the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus. The Parish Mass is at 10.15am, after which worshippers are invited back to the Vicarage for refreshments and further 'spiritual' interaction. Please do join us as we begin the year in fellowship and prayer.



### 'Doing Christmas'

*Sally Hunt*

Some years ago I was at work one day when a colleague was talking about what she was 'doing' for Christmas, all the usual things about how many were coming for dinner and what presents she still had to buy etc. I told her that I hadn't cooked a turkey or put up a Christmas tree for years and, having hardly any family, didn't spend lots of hours or money in the shops buying presents.

On the day we returned to work after Christmas several of us had lunch together and the conversation went round the room about what we had 'done' for Christmas. When I was asked, my colleague butted in and said "There's no point asking Sally, she doesn't 'do' Christmas". I said that wasn't true and actually I love Christmas, it's just that mine was different to hers. I explained that during December I'd been to the Advent carol service, two other carol concerts, sung carols round the streets, manned a stall at the Christmas Fayre, attended Midnight Mass, Christmas Day and other services and written a cheque for charity – wasn't that enough?

"No, not really" she said, "That's not 'doing' Christmas is it?"...

Sigh.

St Matthew's Church

# Christmas Fayre



**Friday  
5 December**

**Doors open at 7.00pm  
Lots of fun till 9.00pm**

in the Church (Kettering Rd/Collingwood Road corner)

**Adults £1 / Children FREE**

- ❄️ NSB Sax Quartet ❄️ Santa's Grotto ❄️
- ❄️ Carol Singing ❄️ Christmas Food & Drinks ❄️
- ❄️ Tombolas ❄️ Raffles ❄️ Games & Stalls ❄️

**❄️ CASH ONLY PLEASE ❄️**

St Matthew's Church

# Christmas Fayre



**Friday  
5 December**

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| ❄️ 7.00pm        | Doors Open                              |
| ❄️ 7.00 - 9.00pm | Santa's Grotto                          |
| ❄️ 7.00pm        | NSB Sax Quartet                         |
| ❄️ 8.15pm        | St Matthew's Choir<br>and Carol Singing |
| ❄️ 8.45 - 9.00pm | Raffle and prize winners announced      |

*(Timings are approximate)*

*Please note there will be an official photographer (wearing a badge) taking photos of the Fayre for an article on our website and in our parish magazine — if you do not wish to be photographed please tell the photographer! Thank you.*

❄️ **CASH ONLY PLEASE** ❄️

# Northampton Philharmonic Choir



Rachel Nicholls – Soprano

Jennifer Westwood – Alto

Niki Zohdi – Tenor

Andrew Slater – Bass

Nene Sinfonia

Directed by Thomas Moore

St Matthew's Church, Northampton NN1 4RY

Saturday 6 December 2025 7pm



Tickets £17.50 adults £6 under-16

Available online or on the door

[www.northamptonphilharmonicchoir.co.uk](http://www.northamptonphilharmonicchoir.co.uk)

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST MATTHEW • NORTHAMPTON

# Carols by Candlelight

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

*Including music by  
Archer, Chilcott, Rutter and Warlock*

*Directed and accompanied by  
Thomas Moore and Paul Weston*

**Saturday 13 December  
at 7.00pm**

**Tickets £10 / 18s and under free  
From the Parish Office, on the door, and via Eventbrite**

Northampton NN1 4RY 01604 791251 [www.stmatthews-northampton.org.uk](http://www.stmatthews-northampton.org.uk)

90<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary



NORTHAMPTON BACH CHOIR

# O Holy Night

Including:

Excerpts from *The Messiah*

Finzi *In Terra Pax*

Join in with audience favourites  
including *The Twelve Days of Christmas*

20 | SATURDAY  
DECEMBER 2025

7.00pm

Doors open 6.30pm

St Matthew's Church Kettering Road, Northampton, NN1 4RY

Conductor - Simon Toyne | Northampton Bach Choir | Bach Camerata

Soloists: REBECCA BOTTONE, GARETH BRYNMOR JOHN

Tickets: Nave £20 Side aisles £17

Children & students in full time education £10

All seats numbered - select and reserve your seat when booking

Bookings: Scan QR or visit [www.trybooking.com/uk/FHPX](http://www.trybooking.com/uk/FHPX) (booking fee applies)

Tickets cash or card on the door +£1 fee per ticket

Complementary programme



Reg Charity No. 276390

[www.northamptonbachchoir.org.uk](http://www.northamptonbachchoir.org.uk)

## Letters to the Editor

Yes, *really* – we've had one! Here it is (the email):

Dear Dorrie Parker & Gary Drinkwater,

My sister-in-law, Susan Robertson, visited me here on the Isle of Wight last week & told me all about her amazing walk. She then sent me St Matthew's MAIL.

I must say it so impressed me I have been showing it to my friends.

It is so all encompassing from worship to welfare, companionship & jolly events.

It is a splendidly good read.

I might try the recipe even if a bit late!

*Valerie Robertson*

## Next month's magazine

Contributions to our magazine are always appreciated so let us know what you / your group are up to! If you don't have the confidence to write something yourself, just let us have the details and we'll write it for you.

Please leave paper contributions in the 'P' (for 'Parker') pigeon hole in church or email files to: [magazine@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk](mailto:magazine@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk)

**When attaching photographs to the email address please send no more than 7mb -worth per email, otherwise it jams the system! Thank you.**

**Deadline for the JANUARY magazine is SUNDAY 14 DECEMBER**

*Editor:* Dorrie Parker

*Layout and production:* Gary Drinkwater

## 50 Years a Leader

*Hedgehog*

*Akela: What date is the camp in September? I'm not sure I can go as I think I'm already busy that weekend.*

*Hedgehog: But you've got to go – you're Akela. Mr Badger wants to use the new tents we bought with the money we raised from the old copper pipes and cables we collected.*

*Akela: OK, if I can leave early on Sunday morning I should be OK to stay on the Friday and Saturday nights.*

It was proving rather difficult to keep the real reason for the camp a secret from Akela.

Ian Rivett, who recently received his Silver Acorn Award for outstanding services to Scouting and was still glowing slightly with pride was in for another surprise. The Group realised that Ian, currently Akela, had been a leader at St Matthew's Scout Group in various roles for 50 years, so we wanted to say 'thank you' and give him a party. We knew he would not want any fuss so we had to keep it under our belts so a secret group chat was set up to organise the exciting event.

So for 19-21 September 2025, Overstone was invaded by St Matthew's Scout Group for a jolly Group camp.

The Beavers, Cubs and Scouts were to be using our brand new tents purchased with the monies raised from our copper collection – thank you, Mr Badger.

We had a lovely camp. On Friday evening the Cubs and Scouts had a hockey match down in the archery range which used to be a swimming pool (Ian swam there as a Cub).

The Beavers arrived on Saturday morning and all Sections did archery, Roy's Challenge Assault Course, Golf Ball Hunting and other Scouty stuff. On Saturday afternoon there was a Group hike but some leaders stayed behind and the reason for this was revealed on our return. The big mess tent where we ate and where we all met at night to play games and talk had been transformed with bunting and balloons in blue and gold, our Group colours. There were cakes and songs and much jolliness and congratulations. Akela was pleased and surprised. But this was not all, because Mr Badger began to cook a large amount of burgers and sausages and then lots of important people including Father Nicholas started to arrive.

A Beaver was heard asking a Scout “Why are there so many people arriving?” The Scout replied that it’s for Akela’s party. “Oh”, said the Beaver, “but why are they all old?” “Well”, said a wise Cub, “that’s because Akela is so old – he’s over 50 years old”. “Yes” said the Scout, “he’s been a leader for 50 years – that’s forever!” “Gosh”, said the Beaver, and wandered back to the other Beavers who all said “Wow”.

There were many speeches and photographs taken and everyone had a splendid time. The young people ate lots of toasted marshmallows after the burgers and hot dogs had been consumed.

But that wasn’t the end – there was yet another surprise for Ian.

Mr Badger had organised for a new Troop flag to be made to replace our old flag which was showing signs of wear after many years of sterling service. The flag was dedicated by Father Nicholas at our All Age Worship Service on 2 November. Ian was presented with his 50 years badge and certificate by our District Commissioner Ian Malcolmson and then Ian was presented with the old Troop flag by Mr Badger. Our new Troop flag had its first outing at the town’s Remembrance Parade on 9 November.

Akela does have a lot to be proud about and we all have a lot to be thankful for so a big

**BR A V O** for Ian Rivett, our Akela for St Matthew’s Cubs.

Hip Hip Hooray!



The Parish Church of St Matthew

**Sunday  
30 November**

**The First Sunday  
of Advent**

10.15am  
The Parish Mass



4.00pm  
The Advent Procession



The Parish Church of St Matthew

**Sunday  
7 December**

10.15am  
**All Age Mass**  
for the Parish Family



## Junior Church

Every Third Sunday of the Month



Join us during the 10:15am mass  
in the children's area  
for adult led stories and crafts  
linked to the Church Year

The next Junior church session is on  
**Sunday 21 December 2025**

The Parish Church of St Matthew

**Sunday  
21 December**  
**A Festival of  
NINE LESSONS  
AND CAROLS**



The Parish Church of St Matthew

# Crib Service & Christingle

Christmas Eve  
at 4.00pm



The Parish Church of St Matthew

# Wednesday 24 December CHRISTMAS EVE

11.30pm  
Midnight Mass



The Parish Church of St Matthew

# Thursday 25 December CHRISTMAS DAY

10.15am  
Procession  
and Parish Mass



The Parish Church of St Matthew

# Thursday 1 January THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS

10.15am The Parish Mass



# Hallowe'en & Bonfire Night

Tom Moore

The annual fireworks display and bonfire was held at church on the evening of Friday 31 October, and a great time was had by all in attendance. Many of the children who came really entered into the spirit of Hallowe'en by dressing up in Hallowe'en fancy dress, and the evening started with hot drinks in the Parish Centre whilst the fancy dress competition was judged by choir member Lisa Geary. Well done and thanks to those who dressed up, including one or two adults! In the meantime, the Guy was being made ready to take his place on top of the bonfire out in the church garden.



The main event was a resounding success, with a blazing fire burning throughout (the embers were still warm the next morning), and spectacular fireworks display. Regrettably, although many saw the funny side, the fire brigade turned up part way through after having received a false report that a tree in the church grounds was on fire. Fortunately, the fireman in charge of the watch saw that the event was well organised and safe, and after a quick inspection of the premises the fire engine trundled off down The Drive. After the excitement of the fire and fireworks, everyone went into the Parish Centre for a hearty meal, which was traditional Guy Fawkes night fare.



Many thanks to those who helped organise this very successful community event, notably Andrew Geary, Ian Parker, Adam Setterfield and Dave Wilson who helped dig the fire pit, and Heidi Moore and Kay Warçaba who laid on a true feast for a hungry throng of around 65 people. Special mention goes to Andrew Geary who helped me fill the fire pit in a few days later. That's a job that is at best unattractive and is very hard physical work!

Thanks to everyone who supported this event in any way, which was a fundraiser for the Friends of St Matthew's Music. It's great to stage these events which bring so many people together for fun, food and fellowship.

## The History of The Friends of St Matthew's Music

*Chris Ludford-Thomas*

Never take anything for granted. I assumed that most members of the Parish were aware of the origins of The Friends. But given that Basil and I initiated its founding in the late 1980s, it is hardly surprising that its origins have been lost and confused. So to put the record straight I am detailing exactly how in 1987 the **Friends of St Matthew's Choir** was born which eventually evolved into the **Friends of St Matthew's Music** which we know today.

When Basil and I came to live in Northampton we were told about St Matthew's, its Anglican tradition and excellent support for the arts, particularly **music**. At our first service we were amazed as the Clergy and Choir processed from the vestry. What a joy to hear Sung Eucharist within a Parish Church when we had previously only heard such quality when visiting Cathedrals. We were captured, quickly becoming involved in the life of St Matthew's. At the time we were newly married and developing our careers in Education.

As the years went by our family grew and when our sons were old enough, one by one they exchanged Sunday School for the Choir stalls. At the time the Choir of men and boys (all recruited from local schools) had to make a big commitment. The boys rehearsed three times a week as well as singing at Weddings on Saturdays and twice on Sundays. There were weekday festivals too. We were fortunate because we only had sons but there were boys with sisters whose parents had far more difficulty dividing their time.

By the early 1980s the glory days of St Matthew's Choir were diminishing. Michael Nicholas had become Director of Music at Norwich. His successor Stephen Cleobury left for Westminster Cathedral and then moved onto Kings

College Cambridge leaving a choir without an effective successor. At the same time recruitment of boy trebles was becoming more difficult as Northampton having abolished the 11+, adopted the Comprehensive System of Education and as a result, the shared Music post with the Boys School was lost. Our boys were infants at this stage attending Sunday School and along with other members of the congregation we wondered how the Choir would progress.

The Vicar Fr John Morton had a brainwave and invited Derek Gillard, a local teacher with a background of Choral singing from Guilford Cathedral, to take up the position of Director of Music as he had formed a successful boys choir at St John the Baptist Church Kingsthorpe. This was transformative. Derek had both the choral background and credibility with local boys. He arrived in leathers on his motorbike and like a Pied Piper he was able to bring local boys into the choir who stayed and developed into committed choristers.

By the mid-1980s all three of our sons were part of this band of choristers attending choir practices, workshops in the holidays and Cathedral tours in the summer. It became a way of life for us with Basil and I regularly helping to ferry our sons and other boys backwards and forwards to these events.

Whilst all three of our sons sang, it was Daniel our middle son who shone and we had to resist pressure not to send him to Cathedral Choir School. Derek Gillard therefore suggested Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) courses for him to attend, and the rest is history. From these RSCM courses Daniel was selected to sing with the Southern Cathedral Singers. On Saturdays and in the holidays boys from a variety of Churches sang Evensong in Cathedrals in the South of England. So our family life was further dominated by driving to these events. We viewed it as a family day out, although I suspect Jonathan and Timothy would have preferred other activities (the latter eventually was also recruited). Whilst the Choir was rehearsing we would be exploring Cathedrals etc and it was here that we picked up leaflets for Friends of various Choirs. It was demanding on our time and finances. Canon Met Clarke (retired former curate of St Matthew's during Hussey's time and now returned to worship with us once again) asked us who was meeting the cost. We were fortunate to enjoy it and to be able to give our sons this opportunity. But there were other boys less fortunate. The Head Chorister at the time had a very good voice, but he was the only son of a single mother. To this end when Daniel won Choir Boy of the Year in 1986 winning £2000 for the Church, we approached the Vicar Fr John Morton and the then Director of Music Andrew Shenton about setting up a Friends Association initially to support other boys.

The inaugural meeting took place at our house, attended by over 25 enthusiasts. A draft constitution was approved and a bank balance set up.

**The Friends of St Matthew's Choir** was established and began to attract some young musicians. The brief was quickly extended to include Organ Scholars and for a period of time music at St Matthew's was more secure. But funding such an enterprise is always demanding, and in time it became imperative to find other means of raising money. Whilst the PCC has the responsibility of funding the Director of Music's salary, it became increasingly difficult to offer scholarships to young organists and choristers. It was therefore agreed to set up 100 club to attract more support. This worked for a while, but in time this alone could not meet requirements. The brief had to change to embrace a wider audience. **The Friends of St Matthew's Choir** became **The Friends of St Matthew's Music** with a new constitution.

Throughout this time a number of Directors of Music have been employed, bringing varied skills of musicianship to the role whilst dealing with high expectations on limited funding. Young musicians have been given opportunities establishing the tradition of support Basil and I wanted for others. Whilst St Matthew's proudly celebrates the compositions of famous composers of the past (Britten, Finzi, Tippett, Arnold et al) who have greatly enhanced our musical reputation, today we must adapt to enable wider talents (not least females) to benefit from our musical heritage. To date our present Director of Music Tom Moore is a musician who understands the demands of providing music in a Parish Church. He is successfully fulfilling the brief so that St Matthew's Choir is now not only part of parochial life but is reaching out to the wider community and as our present Vicar Fr Nicholas Setterfield also champions this musical heritage, it is imperative that as a congregation we continue to support the endeavours of **The Friends of St Matthew's Music** to secure the future.

## **Friends of St Matthew's Music 100+ Club**

Congratulations to the lucky winner of £50 in our NOVEMBER draw —

Number **78**, held by **Kay Warçaba**



You too could win the **single prize of £50** in our monthly draw if you had a number! For just £3.00 a month you'd be in with a chance, whilst also helping pay for our Director of Music's salary.

For full details and a form, please email [jonathan.starmer@yahoo.com](mailto:jonathan.starmer@yahoo.com)

*Jonathan Starmer*

# Friends of St Matthew's Music

## Saturdays @ 4 Concerts 2025

*Pamela Rawlinson*

### May: Piano Duet by Simon Toyne and Jem Lowther

*Music by Ravel, Poulenc, and Milhaud*

It was interesting to see two Directors of Music playing so well together and enjoying every minute!

### June: Piano Recital by Anthony Adkins

*Music by Chopin, Mozart, and Bach's 'Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring'*

Anthony Adkins was born in Northampton and brought up in Harrow. He won scholarships to both the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music.

### July: Piano Recital by Lewis Kingsley Peart

*Music by Schubert, Sibelius, Stephen Montague and Alfred Grünfeld*

Lewis Kingsley Peart is a Chetham's School of Music alumnus and graduate of London's Trinity Laban Conservatoire.

### August: Terpsichore (early Music Ensemble)

(Did not attend this concert)

### September: Vocal Duo – Elle Stevens and Jonathan Stuart

*Music by Rossini, Richard Strauss, Michael Head, Roger Quilter, Reynaldo Hahn and Bellini*

Elle Stevens and Jonathan Stuart gave us wonderful solos and duets. Their voices blended together so beautifully that they enhanced the music. Tom Moore provided a wonderful accompaniment.

### October: Vocal Duo – Sopranos Charlotte Brett and Clare Robertson-Hughes

*Music by Handel, Purcell, Alban Berg, Schumann, Hahn, Fauré, Grieg, Ivor Gurney, Liza Lemann and Delibes*

Clare Robertson-Hughes and Charlotte Brett gave us solos and duets which were so attractive. *The Flower Duet* from the opera *Lakmé* by Delibes was magical. The two voices were one and the music was heavenly. Their accompanist Julie Moffat was a perfect musician.



# 'St Matthew's Mail' Magazine Subscription 2026

In order that St Matthew's can claim Gift Aid on your subscription, we'd like to ask you to make a 'donation' of, say, £1 a copy, so a donation from you of £12 for the entire year would also be able to give the church £3 extra because we can claim that back from the tax you pay to HM Government.

Sign up here and you could also get a hard copy of the magazine posted to you each month!

*PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY IN BLOCK CAPITALS AND RETURN TO **DORRIE PARKER, St Matthew's Parish Office, 27A The Drive, Kingsley, Northampton NN1 4RY***

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*Please tick box(es) as applicable:*

- I enclose cash for my donation (£12 suggested)
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If you would like the magazines to be **posted** to you, we shall require, along with this form, a book of 12 First/Second Class stamps with your name clearly printed on the cover.

- I enclose a book of 12 stamps with my name printed on the cover

*In order that we can claim Gift Aid on your donation:*

- I would like St Matthew's Parochial Church Council to reclaim tax on this donation (and any future sum). I confirm that I will have paid an amount of UK income or capital gains tax equal to any tax reclaimed.

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WE TOOK PART IN  
*Harvest for Hope*



**CERTIFICATE**

Of Participation

This certificate is proudly presented to

**ST MATTHEWS CHURCH CHOIR AND CONGREGATION**

Northampton Hope Centre would like to thank you for your  
incredible generosity during Harvest 2025.



*Alex Copeland*

CEO

DATE: OCTOBER 2025

#HarvestForHope

Registered charity no: 1015743

**Christmas Flowers:**

If you would like to make a donation towards flowers for our beautiful spiritual home over Christmastide, please put in an envelope marked Christmas Flowers and give it to me, one of the



Churchwardens or through the Parish Centre letterbox. Thank you so much. *Sarah Oughton*

## **32<sup>nd</sup> St Matthew's Multi-Aged Girlguiding**

*Mandy Ludlow*

In the weeks leading up to half term, our units continued with the 'Be Well' theme. The Brownies practised more first aid skills, while the Rainbows enjoyed a range of fun and engaging activities. Guides have been busy with their clay craft designs, dedicating several Mondays to create and paint their masterpieces. The final Guide took her creation home just last week, marking the end of a creative journey for all.

This term, we have been delighted to welcome three new volunteers: Verity (whose sister is in Rainbows), Lacey-May, and Remy. All three are joining us as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award and have quickly become valued members of the Brownies and Rainbows teams. Their enthusiasm and dedication are truly appreciated by both the girls and leaders alike.

We also have a new leader with Guides, Jess, who is a friend of Sienna. Together, they bring fresh energy and a youthful spirit to our leadership team. The Guides have already expressed how much they enjoy having Jess and Sienna on board – their positive influence is making a real difference.

After half term, we marked Hallowe'en and Bonfire Night with a fantastic evening full of activities: apple bobbing, cupcake decorating, pumpkin carving, and making chocolate apples. Instead of traditional toffee apples, the girls sliced apples, placed them on lolly sticks, dipped them in chocolate, and finished them with sprinkles – a tasty treat with no waste. Our Young Leaders also organised some lively games, adding to the fun.

At 7pm, the Brownies went home, giving the Guides a chance to enjoy 'apple hockey' – a creative game using apples destined for food waste and sturdy cardboard tubes. The laughter and excitement from both teams was great to see.

Before the end of each meeting, all the girls went outside to enjoy glow sticks and sparklers, rounding off the evening with smiles.

Our girls and leaders joined others from the Northampton Nene Valley Division for the Northampton Town Remembrance Day Service and Parade. Everyone looked very smart and behaved impeccably, representing St Matthew's with pride. Marching ahead of us were leaders and members from St Matthew's Scouts, showing once again how St Matthew's uniformed organisations come together and represent St Matthew's.

Café Guides continues to grow in popularity and innovation. We have recently started using a digital till to help speed up payments, following feedback about queues. Now, customers can pay by cash, card, or even by phone. The trial run at November's Café Guides went well, and we plan to invest in more terminals to make the process quicker still. We are also exploring a separate system for those who just want drinks, aiming to improve everyone's experience.

Don't forget to visit us at the Christmas Fair on 5 December and again after the All Age Service on 7 December. We'll be serving mulled wine and mince pies – we hope to see you there.

Although I'm writing this in November, you will be reading it in December. I would like to take this opportunity to extend a very big thank you to everyone who has supported us throughout 2025. Your encouragement and involvement mean a lot to our girls and leaders.

We wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas.



## Lots of Christmas cards...

...dropping through your door this month also means lots of postage stamps! Don't forget that we collect stamps to recycle for Charity, so please don't throw the envelope in the recycling box until you've first torn out the stamp. There's a box in the bookstall area in church in which to put them. (And not just at Christmas time!)

*Thank you for your contributions!*



# Café Guides Recipe for December

## Turkey Roulades with Pork, Sage and Onion Stuffing

This recipe is for those who want to enjoy all the traditional flavours of Christmas without having to go through the whole turkey-cooking marathon.

35 mins - 40 mins to cook

### *Ingredients*

#### **For the turkey:**

- 4 x 6 oz (175g) turkey breast escalopes
- 14 oz (400g) smoked rashers streaky bacon, de-rinded (16 rashers)

#### **For the stuffing:**

- 12oz (350g) pork sausage meat
- ½ oz (10g) chopped fresh sage
- 1 small onion, very finely chopped
- 1 oz (25g) fresh white breadcrumbs

#### **For the gravy:**

- 1 dessertspoon plain flour
- 5fl oz (150ml) dry white wine
- 5fl oz (150ml) chicken stock
- salt and freshly milled black pepper

### *Method*

1. First of all, take the turkey escalopes and place them one at a time between two pieces of clingfilm.
2. Take a rolling pin and gently roll each escalope so it measures about 9 inches (23cm) long by 4 inches (10cm) wide and ¼ inch (5mm) thick. It does not matter if these measurements are not perfect! Next, mix the stuffing ingredients together. Then, take one of the flattened escalopes and a quarter of the stuffing and roll it into a sausage the same length as the escalope (dampen your hands with water if the stuffing is sticky) and place the sausage-shaped stuffing 1 inch (2.5cm) from one side of the length and carefully roll the turkey around the stuffing.
3. Repeat with the other escalopes. Then, taking one rasher of bacon, wrap it round one of the roulades, starting at one end, overlapping it slightly until the roulade is completely wrapped. Then do the same with the other 3 rashers – you need 4 for each roulade. Repeat with the other 3 roulades. Cover and chill for a minimum of 2 hours.

4. When you are ready to cook the turkey, preheat the oven to gas mark 6/ 200°C. Place the 4 roulades, well apart, in the greased roasting tin and roast on the middle shelf of the oven for 35-40 minutes or until crispy and firm to the touch. Remove the roulades from the tin and then cover them with a sheet of foil to keep warm.
5. To make the gravy, place the roasting tin over direct heat turned to fairly low, and when the juices begin to sizzle, sprinkle in the plain flour, stirring vigorously with a wooden spoon till you get a smooth paste. Then mix the wine with the stock and add it, little by little, exchanging the wooden spoon for a whisk. Whisk thoroughly until the stock and wine are incorporated and bring it to simmering point, then let it bubble and reduce for about 5 minutes. Then taste and season with salt and freshly milled black pepper and pour into a warmed serving jug.
6. To serve, slice each roulade diagonally into 3 or 4 pieces and place on a warm serving dish. Serve with cranberry sauce and bread sauce

*Winter*  
**CAFE GUIDES**  
11.15AM - 12.30PM  
ST MATTHEW'S PARISH CENTRE, 27A THE DRIVE,  
NORTHAMPTON NN1 4RY

SUNDAY  
DECEMBER 7TH 11.15AM - 12.30PM

MULLED WINE AND MINCE PIES,  
BAILEYS HOT CHOCOLATES AS  
WELL AS  
JACKET POTATOES, BACON ROLLS, SAUSAGE  
BAPS, A SELECTION OF TEAS AND FRESHLY  
BREWED COFFEE, LATTE AND CAPPUCCINO, AS  
WELL AS YUMMY HOT CHOCOLATE  
PLUS OUR POPULAR LUNCHTIME SPECIALS

FOOD HYGIENE RATING  
5  
VERY GOOD

**Bonus Recipe!** Perfect to serve with the turkey on the previous page

## Parisienne Potatoes

### *Ingredients*

- 800g waxy potatoes (such as Maris Piper or Yukon Gold)
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter (melted)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp garlic powder (optional)
- 1 tsp dried thyme or rosemary
- Fresh parsley (chopped, for garnish)

### *Method*

1. Preheat your oven to 200°C (180°C fan) or 400°F. Line a baking tray with parchment paper.
2. Peel the potatoes and use a melon baller to scoop out small, even-sized potato balls. Place the potato balls in a bowl of cold water to remove excess starch.
3. Drain the potatoes and pat them dry with a paper towel.
4. In a large bowl, toss the potatoes with melted butter, olive oil, salt, black pepper, garlic powder, and thyme until evenly coated.
5. Spread the potatoes in a single layer on the prepared baking tray. Roast in the preheated oven for 30-35 minutes, shaking the tray half-way through for even browning.
6. Once golden and crispy, remove from the oven and sprinkle with fresh parsley.

## **St Matthew's Ladies Group**

Meetings are on Monday afternoons from 2.00pm till 4.00pm in the Parish Centre, on the second and fourth Mondays of the month.

### **Meetings in December**

8 December Christmas Lunch at Kingsthorpe Golf Club

The full Autumn/Winter 2025 programme is on our website:  
Click on the 3-bar menu, go to News & Events  
and then St Matthew's Ladies Group



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## Parish Giving Scheme

The Parish Giving Scheme exists to allow members of the St Matthew's community to support the life and work of the Parish, and the upkeep of our church, through regular giving. It provides our principal source of income and helps us meet our main financial commitments, including our contribution towards the Diocesan Common Fund (the 'Parish Share') and the costs of our employees.

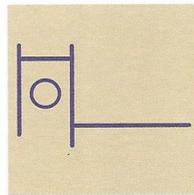
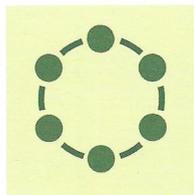
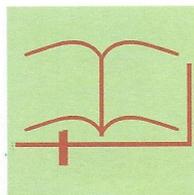
The Scheme is the most tax efficient way of contributing to the church because contributions may be eligible for Gift Aid (raising your donation by 25% at no cost to either you or St Matthew's).

There are two methods of payment available: by a banker's direct debit or by weekly-numbered envelopes via the collection plate. The amount that you give is entirely confidential and is known only to the lay people who administer the Scheme.

If you are interested in learning more or in joining the Scheme, please speak to our Stewardship Recorder Polly Matthews. She can be contacted via the Parish Office as below.

Polly Matthews

<[office@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk](mailto:office@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk)>



PARISHGIVINGScheme

## Parish Office

27A The Drive, Kingsley, Northampton NN1 4RY (*within the Parish Centre*)

Telephone: 01604 791251 Email: [office@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk](mailto:office@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk)

Parish Administrator: Anita Speake Office opening hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays 9.30am till 12.30pm, 1.00pm till 4.00pm; Wednesdays CLOSED

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## Ministry Team

Parish Priest	The Revd Canon Nicholas Setterfield	Tel: 01604 604412
	<a href="mailto:vicar@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk">vicar@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk</a>	
Assistant Priest	The Revd Canon Nicholas Gandy OGS	
Honorary Assistant Priest	The Revd Canon Peter Garlick	

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## Parish Officers

Churchwardens	Gary Drinkwater <a href="mailto:churchwarden@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk">churchwarden@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk</a> Dave Wilson <a href="mailto:churchwarden@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk">churchwarden@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk</a>
PCC Secretary	Sarah Oughton <a href="mailto:pcc-secretary@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk">pcc-secretary@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk</a>
PCC Treasurer	Donald Cran <a href="mailto:treasurer@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk">treasurer@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk</a>
Stewardship Recorder	Polly Matthews

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## St Matthew's Trust

Ben Drouet  
[chairman@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk](mailto:chairman@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk)

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## Particular Responsibility

Safeguarding Officer	Sarah Oughton (Assistant: Ben Drouet) <a href="mailto:safeguarding@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk">safeguarding@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk</a>
Verger	Gary Drinkwater
Head Server	Nick Everitt <a href="mailto:head-server@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk">head-server@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk</a>
Sacristan	Seymour Franklin <a href="mailto:sacristan@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk">sacristan@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk</a>
Electoral Roll Officer	Seymour Franklin
Archives	Patrick Rawlinson
Website & Magazine Editor	Dorrie Parker <a href="mailto:magazine@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk">magazine@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk</a>

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## Music Department

Director of Music	Tom Moore <a href="mailto:music@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk">music@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk</a>
Parish Organist	Jonathan Stamer
Friends of St Matthew's Music	Steve Stringfellow <a href="mailto:friends@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk">friends@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk</a>

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## Walsingham Cell

Cell Secretary	Dave Wilson <a href="mailto:walsingham@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk">walsingham@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk</a>
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