The Parish Church of St Matthew Northampton

On

Christmas Pay

in the morning



The Parish Mass of the Nativity

Thursday 25 December 2025 10.15 am

Welcome to St Matthew's Parish Church

Safeguarding St Matthew's is committed to providing a safe environment for all who come. If you have any concerns, please speak with one of our welcomers or a churchwarden who may be identified by their lanyard. They will be happy to help you.

Live streaming Please note that this service is being streamed. You may sit where you wish. If, however, you prefer not to be seen online, please sit in a side aisle. The administration of Holy Communion will not be shown.

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-related 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.



Reflection

Joseph and Mary set out for Bethlehem.

When they arrived there, the time came for Mary to have her baby, and she gave birth to a son.

All of us are journeying to Bethlehem, where we hope to be born.

I know we were born once.

Nevertheless, we are still unborn.

in the sense that our true and full self hasn't yet seen the light of day.

When our second birth occurs,

then all the gifts of grace and nature, which God gave us as seeds, will blossom and bear fruit.

Our ultimate goal is the heavenly Bethlehem

where we shall see God face to face.

Setting

Missa Sancti Johannis de Deo

Joseph Haydn 1732-1809

Order of Service

¶ The Gathering

§ **Stand** at the sound of the bell

Priest

Welcome all wonders in one sight! Eternity shut in a span. Summer in winter, day in night, heaven in earth and God in man.

Great little one whose all-embracing birth brings earth to heaven, stoops heaven to earth.

The sanctuary party enters. Incense is blessed.

The priest intones

Let us go forth in peace

All in the name of Christ. Amen.

Processional Hymn

ΑII

CHRISTIANS, awake! Salute the happy morn Whereon the Saviour of the world was born; Rise to adore the mystery of love Which hosts of angels chanted from above; With them the joyful tidings first begun Of God incarnate and the Virgin's son.

Then to the watchful shepherds it was told, Who heard the angelic herald's voice, 'Behold, I bring good tidings of a Saviour's birth To you and all the nations upon earth: This day hath God fulfilled his promised word, This day is born a Saviour, Christ the Lord.'

He spake; and straightway the celestial choir In hymns of joy, unknown before, conspire; The praises of redeeming love they sang, And heaven's whole orb with alleluyas rang: God's highest glory was their anthem still, Peace upon earth, and mutual goodwill.

To Bethl'hem straight the enlightened shepherds ran, To see the wonder God had wrought for man, And found, with Joseph and the blessed maid, Her son, the Saviour, in a manger laid; Amazed, the wondrous story they proclaim: The first apostles of his infant fame.

Like Mary let us ponder in our mind God's wondrous love in saving lost mankind; Trace we the babe, who hath retrieved our loss, From his poor manger to his bitter cross; Then may we hope, angelic thrones among, To sing, redeemed, a glad triumphal song.

Words John Byrom 1692-1763

Music Yorkshire (Stockport) John Wainwright 1723-1768

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

The Greeting

ΑII

ΑII

Welcome in the name of Christ.
God's grace, mercy and peace be with you and also with you.

The service is introduced

Invitation to Confession

The grace and loving kindness of God have appeared for the salvation of all:
so, to welcome the coming of our Saviour who is Christ the Lord let us acknowledge our sinfulness and our need for forgiveness and mercy.

Silence is kept

Confession

All Lord of grace and truth,
we confess our unworthiness to stand in your presence
as your children.
Forgive our disobedience to your will,
our greed and rejection of your ways,
our self-interest and lack of vision,
and fill our hearts with your self-giving love
as we see it in your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Absolution

May the God of all healing and forgiveness draw you to himself, pardon † and cleanse you from all your sins that we may behold the glory of his Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Gloria in Excelsis

The choir sings

Gloria in excelsis Deo

et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

Laudamus te. Benedicimus te. Adoramus te. Glorificamus te.

Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam. We give thanks to you for your great glory.

Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens,

Domine Filil unigenite, Jesu Christe. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.

Qui tollis peccata mundi,

miserere nobis.

Qui tollis peccata mundi,

suscipe deprecationem nostram.

Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,

miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus sanctus. Tu solus Dominus.

Tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe.

Cum Sancto Spiritu

in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

Glory to God in the highest

and on earth peace to men of goodwill.

We praise you. We bless you. We worship you. We glorify you.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God the Father,

O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.

You take away the sins of the world,

have mercy on us.

You take away the sins of the world,

receive our prayer.

You sit at the right hand of the Father,

have mercy on us.

For you only are holy. You only are the Lord. You only are the most high, Jesus Christ.

With the Holy Spirit

in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Collect

Let us pray that our joy in the birth of Christ will last for ever.

Almighty God, you have given us your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin: grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

ΑII Amen. Brothers and sisters in Christ,
now that we have prepared for this encounter
with the Word made flesh,
let us be seated to receive into our hearts and minds
the great joy of our Saviour's birth.

§ Sit

¶ The Liturgy of the Word

Old Testament Reading

Reader A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'
Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the Lord to Zion.

Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem.
The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Isaiah 52.7-10

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

New Testament Reading

Reader A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews.

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Hebrews 1.1-4

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

§ Stand

Gradual

ΑII

GOD rest you merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour,
Was born on Christmas Day,
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray:
O tidings of comfort and joy,
Comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy!

From God our heavenly Father
A blessèd angel came,
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name:

The shepherds at these tidings
Rejoicèd much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding,
In tempest, storm and wind,
And went to Bethlehem straightway
This blessèd babe to find:

And when they came to Bethlehem
Where our dear Saviour lay,
They found him in a manger,
Where oxen feed on hay;
His mother Mary kneeling down,
Unto the Lord did pray:

Now to the Lord sing praises,
All you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood
Each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas
All other doth efface:

Words English traditional carol Possibly 18th century

Music God rest you merry London carol melody harmony by John Stainer 1840-1901

Holy Gospel

Acclamation

ΑII



Choir The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory.



§ We turn to face the Book of the Gospels

The Lord be with you and also with you.

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

ΑII



In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

John 1.1-14

ΑII



Homily

§ Sit

At the end, a time for silent reflection

§ Stand

Let us profess our faith that the Word has indeed become flesh to dwell among us.

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.

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 As we come into the presence of the Christ-child,

we bring our prayers through him to our heavenly Father:

§ Kneel

Intercessor We pray, Father God,

for all who are celebrating the birth of your Son

with us this Christmas time.

We ask that, with them,

we may be joyful witnesses to your saving love.

Eternal Word,

All be born in us today.

We pray, Father God,

for all whose experience of Christmas will be dark, lonely or sad. (the acutely ill ...).

We ask that we may bring them the comfort of your presence and the joy of your unending love.

Eternal Word,

All be born in us today.

We pray, Father God,

for all those whose Christmas will be wrecked

by hatred, tension or violence.

We ask that the peace your Son came to bring may reign in the hearts of your children everywhere.

Eternal Word,

All be born in us today.

We pray, Father God,

for all whom we love, living and departed, (the recently departed, and anniversaries ...),

and for all who share our life in this community.

We ask that the love of Christ

may be seen in all our relationships one with another.

Eternal Word,

All be born in us today.

Priest We pray, Father God,

that your Son will be at the heart of our celebrations today,

and our lives for evermore.

Eternal Word.

All be born in us today,

and bring us to share in your unending life.

Amen.

§ Stand

¶ The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Sign of Peace

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and his name is called the Prince of Peace.

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

Hymn

§ 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 SEE amid the winter's snow,
Born for us on earth below,
See the tender Lamb appears,
Promised from eternal years.

Refrain

Hail, thou ever-blessèd morn!

Hail, redemption's happy dawn!

Sing through all Jerusalem,

Christ is born in Bethlehem.

Lo, within a manger lies
He who built the starry skies,
He who, throned in height sublime,
Sits amid the cherubim.

Sacred infant, all divine,
What a tender love was thine,
Thus to come from highest bliss
Down to such a world as this!

Teach, O teach us, Holy Child, By thy face so meek and mild, Teach us to resemble thee In thy sweet humility.

Virgin Mother, Mary blest, By the joys that fill thy breast, Pray for us, that we may prove Worthy of the Saviour's love.

Refrain

Hail, thou ever-blessed morn!
Hail, redemption's happy dawn!
Sing through all Jerusalem,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.

Words Edward Caswell 1814-1878

Music Humility (Oxford) John Goss 1800-1880

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

Almighty God,

the saving work of Christ made our peace with you. May our offering today renew that peace within us and give you perfect praise.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our incarnate Lord.

All Amen.

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty creator, ever-living God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who for love of our fallen race humbled himself, was born on this day of the Virgin Mary by the power of your Spirit, and lived as one of us. In the mystery of the Word made flesh you have caused his light to shine in our hearts, to give knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. In him we see our God made visible and so are caught up in the love of the God we cannot see.

Therefore with all the angels of heaven we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

Choir

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth.

Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.

Osanna in excelsis.

Holy, holy, holy,

Lord God of power and might.

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Osanna in excelsis Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

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

who, in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:

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

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying:

Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Jesus Christ is Lord:



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

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

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

ΑII



The Blessed Sacrament is elevated and bells are rung

§ Kneel

The Lord's Prayer

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us, 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

ΑII

ΑII

We break the bread of life, and that life is the light of the world. God here among us, light in the midst of us, bring us light and life.

Invitation to Communion

Christ is the true bread which has come down from heaven. Lord, give us this bread for ever.

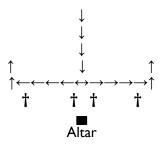
The clergy receive Holy Communion

Communion Sentence

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

§ If you are baptized, 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, as indicated below.



Spiritual Communion – for those at home

Act of Reception

Amen.

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.

The choir sing Agnus Dei

Carol

Choir

In the bleak mid-winter,
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter,
Long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him, Nor earth sustain; Heaven and earth shall flee away When he comes to reign: In the bleak mid-winter A stable place sufficed The Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.

Enough for him, whom cherubim, Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk,
And a mangerful of hay;
Enough for him whom angels
Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
Which adore.

What can I give him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man
I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give him
Give my heart.

Words Christina Georgina Rossetti 1830-1894

Music Harold Darke 1888-1976

Hymn

All AWAY in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes. I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky, And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay Close by me for ever, and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear children in thy tender care, And fit us for heaven, to live with thee there.

Words Anonymous Little children's book, Philadelphia 1883 based on Czech carol Hajej, nynej, Jeziaku Music Cradle Song Melody William James Kirkpatrick 1838-1921 Czech cradle song harmony by Martin Shaw 1875-1958

§ All sit for a period of private reflection and thanksgiving

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray:

§ Stand

God our Father, whose Word has come among us in the Holy Child of Bethlehem: may the light of faith illumine our hearts and shine in our words and deeds; through him who is Christ the Lord.

All Amen.

Hymn

ΑII

HARK! The herald angels sing Glory to the new-born King; Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled: Joyful all ye nations rise, Join the triumph of the skies, With the angelic host proclaim, Christ is born in Bethlehem:

Hark! The herald angels sing Glory to the new-born King.

Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord, Late in time behold him come, Offspring of a virgin's womb! Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail the incarnate deity! Pleased as man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel:

Hark! The herald angels sing Glory to the new-born King.

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings;
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth:
Hark! The herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.

Words Charles Wesley 1707-1788 and others

Music Mendelssohn From a chorus by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy 1809-1847

¶ Sending Out

The Lord be with you and also with you.

All and also with you.

Solemn Blessing

May the Father,

who has loved the eternal Son from before the creation of the world, pour that love upon you his children.

All Amen.

May Christ,

who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with joy and peace.

All Amen.

May the Holy Spirit, by whose overshadowing Mary became the God-bearer, give you grace to carry the good news of Christ.

All Amen.

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

All Amen.

ΑII

The priest stands before the Crib

Angelus Domini (sung)

(Luke 1:28 ff)

The angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary, and she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. (3 rings) Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

All Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

All Be it unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary ... (3 rings)

And the Word was made flesh,

All and dwelt among us.

Hail Mary ... (3 rings)

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,

All that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

Lord, open our hearts to your grace. (9 rings)
Through the angel's message to Mary
we have learned to believe in the incarnation of your Son.
Lead us by his passion † and cross
to the glory of his resurrection.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Dismissal

Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.

All Thanks be to God.

Organ Voluntary

Fantaisie sur deux Noëls Op 5 no 8 Joseph Bonnet 1884-1944

- § 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.

Christmas Services

The First Sunday of Christmas

10.15 am The Parish Mass 5.30 pm BCP Evening Prayer

New Year's Pay - The Holy Name of Jesus Thursday 1 January 2026 10.15 am The Parish Mass

The Second Sunday of Christmas 4 January

10.15 am The Parish Mass 5.30 pm Congregational Evensong

The Epiphany of the Lord Tuesday 6 January

7.30 pm The Parish Mass with the Offering of the Magi's Gifts

Our thanks are due to Anonymous Donor 5 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.

Copyright © The Archbishops' Council of the Church of England.

All of the official Common Worship publications are being published by Church House Publishing.

Church Copyright Licence No. 248548. Streaming Licence No. 93626.

St Matthew's Parish Church, The Parish Office, 27A The Drive, Kingsley, Northampton NNI 4RY Tel: 01604 791251 www.stmatthews-northampton.org.uk office@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk