

The Parish Church of St Matthew  
Northampton

# Harvest Thanksgiving

*'Building a Generous Church'*



*Jesus is the bread of life*

All Age Mass for the Parish Family

Sunday 5 October 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.*



Harvest Thanksgiving is a good opportunity to give thanks to God for 'all good gifts around us'. We give thanks to God for the food and possessions we rightly enjoy, and for those who have worked to provide them. Even though there is more than enough for everyone in the world, we confess that many of God's children do not share in it. Some are starving, poor, or going without the essentials for a healthy and hopeful life. We pray that humanity may learn to share with those who have not, as God intends.



**Becoming a Generous Church** There are many types of harvest. The Church of England has called this 'Generosity Week', and that is part of what we will be thinking about today. We will be asking ourselves what it is to be generous in every way, including with our money.

## Prayer

Lord, giver of life,  
your Son shared with us the bread of life.  
May we play our part in sharing that bread  
to meet the needs of the hungry and thirsty,  
both spiritually and materially,  
by listening and look, by responding and planning,  
by mobilising and encouraging,  
and above all, Lord, through prayer.  
Help us to be persistent and insistent,  
knowing that your Son sacrificed all  
through his commitment to make all things new.

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## Collection - 'Building a Generous Church'



### Our response to God's generosity

We believe in a generous God, who longs for us to share his generosity with others. A generous life is therefore a hallmark of our faith and a testament to it, as the more generous we are, the more we reflect the generous God we believe in. Generosity is, therefore, at the heart of our faith, and our own generosity is a sure sign of our faith in action. Generosity is a spiritual gift, and we need to encourage people to seek this gift as they grow in their faith. The ministry and mission of St Matthew's is largely funded through the incredible generosity of those who give to it.

\* \* \* \* \*

We invite you to make a monetary offering towards the ministry and mission of St Matthew's Church. You may do so using any of the following methods:

**Cash, cheques, stewardship envelopes** - using the receptacle provided at the back of church. If you are a taxpayer please use the envelopes in the chairs, and fill out the details in order that our parish may also benefit from the Gift Aid (an extra 25p for every pound given) associated with your giving.

**Contactless giving** - using the terminal provided. Just press the button for the amount you wish to give - £5, £10, or £20, and then hold your bank card over the reader.

**Giving on your smart phone** - using the QR code printed below. It gives you the option of any amount, Gift Aid, and making a regular payment.

**Giving online** - click the donate button on the parish website or Facebook page and follow the instructions.

Your generosity is gratefully received. Thank you.



## Order of Service

### ¶ Gathering to Worship God

*All stand at the sound of the bell*

#### Call to Worship

*Priest*    God is able to provide us with every blessing in abundance,  
so that by always having enough of everything,  
we may share abundantly in every good work.

*All*        As God's people we have gathered:  
**let us worship and adore him together.**

#### Hymn

*The flags are presented*

*All*            Now the harvest is all gathered,  
                let us eat the Sharing Bread,  
                in our family all together,  
                as our custom is, we said.  
And we pass the Bread among us,  
                thanking God that all are fed.

But there comes a gentle knocking,  
                just before we break the Bread,  
from our neighbours in the doorway:  
                'Harvest failed for us,' they said.  
so we share the Bread among them,  
                thanking God that all are fed.

Soon we hear a growing murmur,  
as we eat the Sharing Bread,  
from the neighbours of our neighbours:  
'We are starving, friends,' it said.  
Then we stretch the Bread out further  
thanking God that all are fed.

When the world begins to clamour,  
we cry, 'Take our Sharing Bread,  
miracles we cannot offer!'  
'Oh, it happened once,' they said,  
'Thousands of us ate together  
thanking God that all are fed.'

*Words Arthur Scholey b 1932*

*Music St Helen*

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

*All*      **Amen.**

## The Greeting

*All*      Let everything be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus,  
**giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ.**  
Let us bring our gifts to the Lord  
*All*      **that they may be used for his glory.**  
May the Spirit of God fill our hearts  
*All*      **as we come to meet him in this place.**

## Introduction

God created the world and all its wonders for us to use and enjoy, and he provides for all our needs. Nowadays few of us grow our own food or have to spend much time worrying about where our next meal will come from. But, traditionally, people have remembered God's loving care and goodness at harvest time, and thanked him for continuing to provide for our needs by sharing with others what we have so generously been given.

## Saying Sorry to God

As those who know the generosity of God, let us confess our sins,  
especially the ways in which we take his good gifts for granted.

## Kyrie Confession

Father, in all things you are generous towards us,  
yet we have sown sparingly;  
Lord, have mercy.

*All*     **Lord, have mercy.**

Jesus, you show us the way of humility,  
yet we have given reluctantly;  
Christ, have mercy.

*All*     **Christ, have mercy.**

Holy Spirit, you show us the gift of grace,  
yet we have loved grudgingly;  
Lord, have mercy.

*All*     **Lord, have mercy.**

## God's Forgiveness

Merciful God,  
forgive † our sins,  
and fill our hearts with gratitude to you  
and concern for the needs of all people,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All*     **Amen.**

## Glory to God

*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 Opening Prayer

**Creator God,  
you made the goodness of the land,  
the riches of the sea  
    and the rhythm of the seasons;  
as we thank you for the harvest,  
may we cherish and respect this planet and its peoples,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

*All*      **Amen.**

*Please be seated*



# ¶ Hearing and Responding to the Word of God

## First Reading

*Reader* A reading from the Revelation to John.

I looked, and there was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like the Son of Man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. Another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to the one who sat on the cloud, 'Use your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.' So the one who sat on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.

Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. Then another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over fire, and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, 'Use your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe.'

Revelation 14.14-18

This is the word of the Lord.

*All* **Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand*

## Gospel Reading

### Acclamation

1. Choir  
2. Choir and Congregation

Fintan O'Carroll

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

*Choir* Lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are ripe for harvesting.  
Gather the fruit for eternal life.

*All* **Alleluia ...**

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

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



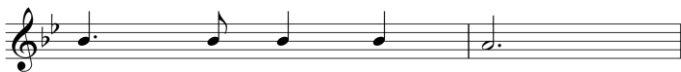
*All*                    Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

When they found Jesus on the other side of the lake, they said to him, 'Rabbi, when did you come here?' Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.' Then they said to him, 'What must we do to perform the works of God?' Jesus answered them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.' So they said to him, 'What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat." Then Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.'

Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'

John 6.25-35

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



*All*                    Praise to you, O Christ.

## Hymn

*The choir come and sit in the nave*

*All*

**God, whose farm is all creation,  
Take the gratitude we give;  
Take the finest of our harvest,  
Crops we grow that we may live.**

**Take our ploughing, seeding, reaping,  
Hopes and fears of sun and rain,  
All our thinking, planning, waiting,  
Ripened in this fruit and grain.**

**All our labour, all our watching,  
All our calendar of care,  
In these crops of your creation,  
Take, O God: they are our prayer.**

*Words John Arlott 1914-1991*

*Music Gott Will's Machen*

## Harvest Presentation

*All sit*

*The themes of day are briefly explored*

## We Believe

*All stand*

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

*All* **We believe in God the Father,  
from whom every family  
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,  
who lives in our hearts through faith,  
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,  
who strengthens us  
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

*Please kneel*

## Our Prayers to God

*Priest* Bountiful God, you gave us bread to eat and bread for life.  
Grant us a good harvest and grateful hearts.  
May we serve you with gladness and follow your ways in humility.

Lord, in your mercy

*All* **hear our prayer.**

*Intercessor* We pray for your Church  
for the freedom and authority you have given it;  
for the awareness it must have  
to be both courageous and sensitive;  
for the tasks before us in discipleship;  
for the brokenness that must be healed;  
and for the leaders you discern - and we deserve.

Lord, in your mercy

*All* **hear our prayer.**

We ask for your blessings on all who work on the land,  
all who sow, all who tend, all who harvest.  
We give thanks for the different skills and talents at work  
which bring to our table the fruits of the earth.  
We also pray for those who take risks  
to bring us the season's riches of fish,  
but may we hold back in our appetite for more,  
so that species can flourish and grow up again.  
We especially bring before you endangered stocks,  
and ask that agreement can be reached  
between people and nations to honour your generosity.

*All* Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who are sick  
and those who have suffered injury on farms or at sea.  
Bring hope and recovery to all who are unwell,  
including (*the acutely ill ...* ).  
Let comfort and care surround them as they recuperate  
or undergo treatment.

*All* Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

Let those who have died know the peace that you have promised,  
and we remember (*the recently departed ..., and this week's  
anniversaries of death ...*).  
May those who offer comfort bring to those who grieve  
encourage treasured fond memories amidst the tears.

*All* Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

*Priest* All-powerful God,  
Creator of all living things,  
your gifts of love bring us life and joy.  
Help us always to treasure and appreciate  
what we have so generously been given.  
We make our prayers through Jesus Christ your only Son.

*All* **Amen.**

*[All sit]*

**[Uniformed Organisations]**

**Hymn**

*All stand*

*The choir returns to their stalls*

*Harvest produce may be brought forward and placed around  
the altar*

*All* Take my life, and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to thee;  
Take my moments and my days,  
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move  
At the impulse of thy love;  
Take my feet, and let them be  
Swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing  
Always, only, for my King;  
Take my lips, and let them be  
Filled with messages from thee.

Take my silver and my gold;  
Not a mite would I withhold;  
Take my intellect, and use  
Every power as thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it thine;  
It shall be no longer mine;  
Take my heart: it is thine own;  
It shall be thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour  
At thy feet its treasure-store;  
Take myself, and I will be  
Ever, only, all for thee.

*Music Nottingham*

*Words Frances R Havergal 1836-1879*

## Prayer over the Bread and Wine

Blessed are you, Lord God of abundance:  
through your goodness we have this bread to set before you,  
which earth has given and human hands have made.  
It will become for us the bread of life.

*All* **Blessed be God for ever.**

Blessed are you, Lord God of abundance:  
through your goodness we have this wine to set before you,  
fruit of the vine and work of human hands.  
It will become for us the cup of salvation.

*All* **Blessed be God for ever.**

## 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.**

*Children* Why is it right to give thanks and praise?

*Adults*    **Listen, and we will hear.**

Lord of all life, you created the universe,  
where all living things reflect your glory.  
You give us this great and beautiful earth,  
to discover and to cherish.  
You give us sun and moon and star-lit sky,  
everything that gives us light,  
light for our eyes, our hearts, our minds.  
You have showered us with blessings  
and filled us with your gifts.  
By your Holy Spirit embed within us generous hearts  
that we may give ourselves in love.

*All sing*   **Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**



We thank you, loving Father,  
because, when we turned away, you sent Jesus, your Son.  
He gave his life for us on the cross  
and shows us the way to live.

Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine  
may be for us Christ's body and his blood.

*Children*      Why do we share this bread and wine?  
*Adults*        **Listen, and we will hear.**

On the night before he died,  
when darkness had fallen, Jesus took bread.  
He gave thanks, broke it,  
and shared it with his disciples, saying:  
'This is my body, given for you.  
Do this to remember me.'

After they had eaten, he took the cup of wine,  
gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples, saying:  
'This is my blood, poured out for you and for many,  
for the forgiveness of sins.'

So Father, with this bread and this cup  
we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life.  
As you feed us with these gifts,  
send your Holy Spirit,  
and change us more and more  
to be like Jesus our Saviour.

*Children*      How do we follow Jesus Christ?  
*Adults*        **Listen, and we will hear.**

Help us, Father, to love one another,  
as we look forward to that day when suffering is ended,  
and all creation is gathered in your loving arms.  
And now with Mary and Matthew and all your saints  
we give you glory, through Jesus Christ,  
in the strength of the Spirit,  
today and for ever.

*All*        **Amen.**

## Sign of Peace

The Spirit brings love, generosity and peace.  
The peace of the Lord be always with you  
**and also with you.**

*All*

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

## The Lord's Prayer

Offering ourselves into the hands of God,  
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

Creator of all, we have gathered many grains  
and made them into this one bread.

*All*     **We look for your Church to be gathered  
from the ends of the earth into the kingdom.**

## Invitation to Communion

*All*     O taste and see that the Lord is gracious;  
**blessed are they who trust in him.**

*The clergy receive Holy Communion*

## Giving of Communion

God who supplies seed for the sower and bread for food  
will increase the harvest of your righteousness.

*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.

*Lamb of God is sung by the choir*

## Motet

*Choir*    Thou visitest the earth

*Maurice Greene 1696-1755*

*S All sit for a time of personal reflection and thanksgiving*

## Prayer after Communion

Let us pray:

*All stand*

In our waking and sleeping  
Father, protect us.  
In our working and resting  
Jesus, encourage us.  
In our coming and going  
Spirit, direct us.  
In our daily living and lifelong pilgrimage  
God the Trinity  
guard, guide and watch over us,  
now and always.

*All*

**Amen.**

## Hymn

*The flags are returned to their bearers*

*All*

**Praise, O praise, our God and King;  
hymns of adoration sing:  
*For his mercies still endure  
ever faithful, ever sure.***

**Praise him that he made the sun  
day by day his course to run:**

**And the silver moon by night,  
shining with her gentle light:**

**Praise him that he gave the rain  
to mature the swelling grain:**

**And hath bid the fruitful field  
crops of precious increase yield:**

**Praise him for our harvest-store;  
he hath filled the garner-floor:**

**And for richer food than this,  
pledge of everlasting bliss:**

**Glory to our bounteous King;  
glory let creation sing:  
Glory to the Father, Son,  
and blest Spirit, Three in One.**

*Words Henry Williams Baker 1821-1877*

*Music Monkland*

## Notices for the Community

*All sit*

### **¶** Going out to serve God

*All stand*

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

## God's Blessing

May God our creator,  
who clothes the lilies and feeds the birds of the air,  
bestow on you his care  
and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

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

*All* **Amen.**

## The Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

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

## Music

Toccata in G

*Théodore Dubois 1837-1924*

*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.*

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

Our thanksgiving for the Harvest continues  
this afternoon at 4.00 pm

## Harvest Songs of Praise

## Our next All-Age Service

All Saints' Sunday  
Sunday 2 November at 10.15 am

Our thanks are due to Anonymous Donor 20  
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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