

The Parish Church of St Matthew
Northampton

The Fifth Sunday of Easter

Year A



Jesus, the way, the truth and the life

All Age Mass for the Parish Family

Sunday 3 May 2026

10.15 am

Welcome to St Matthew's Parish Church



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

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

GDPR Some of St Matthew's services (most Sunday mornings and some special services) are live-streamed or recorded for those who cannot attend church in person. Under GDPR, the church must gain the consent of anyone whose image may be captured, as this constitutes collection of "personal data". This includes clergy, readers/intercessors, musicians and congregation. Whilst every attempt is made not to capture the faces of members of the congregation, this may occasionally happen if people turn around or move around the church during the service. The exception is communion, when the congregation is not filmed. The side aisles and back of the nave are so far as possible film-free areas not covered by the camera. Any-one whose personal data is collected must give their consent. Consent forms are available both in church and on the website. The full policy can be read on our parish website or on the noticeboards in church.

Toilet and baby changing facilities may be found at the base of the church tower. There is also a small servery.

For younger children In the north aisle (nearest to Collingwood Road), a carpeted is provided for infant children. Please feel free to make use of these facilities.



Collection - 'Building a Generous Church'



Our response to God's generosity

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

* * * * *

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

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

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

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

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

Your generosity is gratefully received. Thank you.



Good morning everyone, and a very happy Easter to you all!

It's wonderful to be together today, as one church family - young and old - gathered in this joyful Easter season, when we celebrate that Jesus is alive and with us.

In today's Gospel, from the Gospel according to John, we hear Jesus speaking to his friends at a time when they are feeling worried and unsure. He knows they are troubled, and he gently reassures them: "*Do not let your hearts be troubled.*" He reminds them that they are not alone, and that they belong with him, now and always.

Jesus speaks of preparing a place for them - a home with God - and he tells them something very important: that he himself is the way to that home. When we look at Jesus, when we listen to him, we come to know what God is like - full of love, kindness, and faithfulness.

And even more than that, Jesus tells his followers that his work in the world will continue through them. The love he showed, the care he gave, the hope he brought - these are now entrusted to his disciples. And that includes us.

So as we begin our worship today, let's remember: we are part of that story. We are invited to trust in Jesus, to follow his way, and to share his love in our homes, our schools, our workplaces, and our community. Let us open our hearts now, as we worship together.

Prayer/Reflection

For Jesus, to die was to return to the Father from whom he had come. In other words, it was to go home. So it is with us. When we die, we do not so much go to God as return to him. Like homesick cranes flying night and day back to their mountain nests, let all our life take its voyage to you, O Lord, for you have made us for yourself, and our hearts will never rest until they rest in you.

Order of Service

¶ Gathering to Worship God

§ *All stand at the sound of the bell*

Call to Worship

Priest Lord God, to know you is life, and to serve you is freedom. We come to know Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life. Help us to follow his way, live by his truth, and share in his life. So with joy in this Easter season, let us sing the praises of our risen Lord.

Hymn

§ *The flags are presented*

All **I AM the light whose brightness shines
 on every pilgrim's way,
 and brings to evil's darkest place
 the glorious light of day.**

**I am the gate that leads to life
 along the narrow way,
the Shepherd who will tend my sheep
 that none are lost or stray.**

**I am the well from whose fresh springs
 life-giving water flows
and on each side a tree of life
 with leaves for healing grows.**

**I am the Bread, God's gift from heaven,
 send down to satisfy
that hunger which cries out for food;
 who eats shall never die.**

**I am the Vine whose branches grow
united in one root;
who dwell in me, and I in them,
shall live and bear much fruit.**

**I am the Resurrection life,
the power of God whereby
whoever truly trusts in me
shall live and never die.**

**I am the Way, the Truth, the Life,
and truth shall set you free
to seek and find the way to life
and live that life in me.**

Words Robert A Willis b. 1947

Music Richmond

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

The Greeting

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

The Easter Proclamation

**Alleluia. Christ is risen.
All He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

The service is introduced

Washing away our Sins

Father God,
your gift of water brings new life to the earth;
in baptism it is a sign of the washing away of our sins
and the gift of life in heaven.
Bless † this water.
Renew the river of life within us,
that we may be free from sin, healthy and strong to follow you,
through Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The congregation is sprinkled with holy water

Water of Life

Refrain



All Wa - ter of Life, cleanse and re - fresh us; Raise us to life in Christ Je - sus.

Choir All you who thirst, come to the waters;
and you will never be thirsty again. **Refrain**

As rain from heaven, so is God's word,
it waters the earth and brings forth life. **Refrain**

Dying with Christ, so we shall rise with him,
death shall no longer have power over us. **Refrain**

Turn to the Lord, cast off your wickedness,
you will find peace in his infinite love. **Refrain**

God's Forgiveness

Priest May the God of love and power
 forgive † and free us from our sins,
 heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,
 and raise us to new life with Jesus 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

Let us pray.

Risen Christ,
your wounds declare your love for the world
and the wonder of your risen life:
give us compassion and courage
to risk ourselves for those we serve,
to the glory of God the Father.

All **Amen.**

All sit

¶ Hearing and Responding to the Word of God

First Reading

Reader A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Stephen gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 'Look,' he said, 'I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!' But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he died.

Acts 7.55-60

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

All stand

Gospel Reading

Acclamation



Choir Jesus said, 'I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.
No one comes to the Father except through me.

All **Alleluia ...**

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

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

All



Jesus said to his disciples, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.' Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.'

Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 'I am this dark world's light;
Look unto me, thy morn shall rise,
 And all thy day be bright.'
I looked to Jesus, and I found
 In him my star, my sun;
And in that light of life I'll walk
 Till travelling days are done.

Words Horatius Bonar 1808-1889

Music Kingsfold

Talk / Presentation

All sit

The themes of the day are briefly explored

We believe

§ Stand

As God's family, let us declare the faith of the Church.

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.**

Our Prayers to God

All kneel

Priest Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.
Let us pray with confidence to him who shared our earthly life
in order to bring us to our heavenly home.

Intercessor Lord God, teach us to walk in your way and to rejoice in your truth,
that we may know the fullness of eternal life.
We ask you blessing upon all spiritual leaders,
preachers of the word and ministers of the sacraments.
We pray for all who are new to the faith
and all who are growing in a deeper awareness of your presence.
May we all know that wherever we do and whatever happens
you are with us and ready to lead us.

All Lord, guide our journeying:
be with us always.

Lord God, we ask your blessing
upon all leaders of nations and peoples.
We pray for your guidance in the decisions they make this week
concerning the well-being of the world
and of the communities they serve.
We remember before you
all who strive for justice and peace in our world.
We ask for protection upon all who are seekers and travellers.

All Lord, guide our journeying:
be with us always.

Lord God, we give thanks for all who have taught us
and guided us into the ways of truth,
those who shared with us their faith and their vision of life.
We ask your blessing upon all schools, colleges and universities.
We pray for our own homes and loved ones
and ask that our homes may show your abiding presence and love.

All Lord, guide our journeying:
be with us always.

Lord God, we ask your blessing upon all
who feel confused about life and all who have lost their way.
We pray for all who are caught up in the darkness of despair
and those involved in drugs and vice.

We pray for those who live a lie and cannot face the truth.
Lord, bless all who are suffering from broken relationships
and who are troubled in heart.

We remember all who are ill (the acutely ill ...),
and fearful for their future.

All Lord, guide our journeying:
be with us always.

Lord God, in your Son
you have prepared for us a place in your kingdom.
Lead us into the fullness of life and joy in your presence.
Bless all our loved ones departed (the recently departed ...,
and those whose anniversary of death is this week ...).

All Lord, guide our journeying:
be with us always.

Priest Merciful Father,
All **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

All stand

¶ Preparing to meet Jesus in Bread and Wine

§ *The bread and wine are presented to the presiding priest and the altar is prepared*

Hymn

§ *A monetary collection is taken. For alternative ways of giving please refer to the front of this booklet. Your generosity is much appreciated. Thank you.*

§ *The children are invited to stand either side of the altar.*

All **GUIDE me, O thou great Redeemer,
 Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty,
 Hold me with thy powerful hand:
 Bread of heaven,
 Feed me till I want no more.**

**Open now the crystal fountain
 Whence the healing stream doth flow:
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
 Lead me all my journey through:
 Strong delivered,
 Be thou still my strength and shield.**

**When I tread the ferge of Jordan,
 Bid my anxious fears subside:
Death of death, and hell's destruction
 Land me safe on Canaan's side:
 Songs of praises
 I will ever give to thee.**

Offering the Bread and Wine

O God, you gave us this sacrifice
and opened to us a share in your heavenly life;
grant, we pray, that we may come to know your truth,
and make it our own by a worthy way of life.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Prayer over the Bread and Wine

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.
In this Easter season
we celebrate with joyful hearts your risen life.
May you become our way, our truth, and our life,
that we may be lead towards heaven
and join in the song of the angels:

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

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

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 the Apostles
we give you glory,
through Jesus Christ,
in the strength of the Spirit,
today and for ever.

All **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray to God who is our resurrection and our life:

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.

Sign of Peace

Lord Jesus Christ, at the Last Supper, you said to your sad and frightened apostles, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me.'

Take pity on our troubled minds and fearful hearts, and grant us the peace of your kingdom where you live for ever.

All Alleluia. The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you. Alleluia.

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

S *The children and their leaders return to their seats*

Please kneel

Breaking of the Bread

All Lord, we died with you on the cross.
Now we share in your risen life.

Invitation to Communion

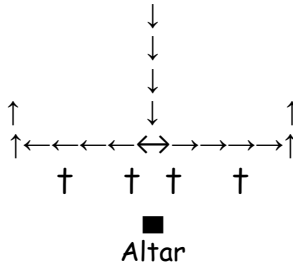
All Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

The clergy and other ministers receive Holy Communion

Giving of Communion

Jesus said, I am the vine and you are the branches, whoever remains in me, and I in them, bears fruit in plenty, alleluia.

§ Those who are baptised and are communicant members of their church are welcome to receive holy communion. Alternatively, if you wish to receive God's blessing, please bring this booklet with you as a sign. Thank you.



Spiritual Communion - for those at home

Act of Reception

All In union, blessed Jesus,
with the faithful gathered at every altar of your Church
where your blessed Body and Blood are offered this day,

(and remembering particularly my own parish ...)

I long to offer you praise and thanksgiving,
for creation and all the blessings of this life,
for the redemption won for us by your life, death,
and resurrection,
for the means of grace and the hope of glory.

(and particularly for the blessings given me ...)

I believe that you are truly present in the Holy Sacrament,
and, since I cannot at this time receive communion,
I pray you to come into my heart.
I unite myself with you and embrace you with all my heart,
my soul, and my mind.

Let nothing separate me from you;
let me serve you in this life until, by your grace,
I come to your glorious kingdom and unending peace.
Amen.

The choir sing Lamb of God

Motet

The Strife is O'er

Henry Ley 1887-1962

Thanksgiving after Communion

Let us pray:

All stand

All **Eternal God, whose Son Jesus Christ
is the way, the truth, and the life:
grant us to walk in his way,
to rejoice in his truth,
and to share his risen life;
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.
Amen.**

Hymn

S *The flags are returned to their bearers*

All **I DANCED in the morning when the world was begun,
And I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun,
And I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth,
At Bethlehem I had my birth.**

*Dance, then, wherever you may be,
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,
And I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
And I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.*

I danced for the scribe and the pharisee,
But they would not dance and they wouldn't follow me.
I danced for the fishermen, for James and John,
They came with me and the Dance went on. *Refrain*

I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame;
The holy people said it was a shame.
They whipped and they stripped and they hung me on high;
And let left me there on a cross to die. *Refrain*

I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black,
It's hard to dance with the Devil on your back.
They buried my body and they thought I'd gone;
But I am the Dance and I still go on. *Refrain*

They cut me down and I leapt up high;
I am the life that'll never, never die;
I'll live in you if you'll live in me,
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he. *Refrain*

Words Sydney Carter 1915-2004

Music Lord of the Dance
America Shaker melody arranged by Sydney Carter

Notices for the Community

All sit

¶ Going out to Serve God

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

All stand

God's Blessing

God the Father,
by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead,
strengthen you to walk with him in his risen life;

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

All Amen.

Sending Out

Deacon

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. ___

All

In the name of Christ, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. ___

§ *All are asked to turn toward the Madonna and Child sculpture*

Regina Caeli

All Joy to thee, O Queen of heaven, alleluia.
He whom thou wast meet to bear, alleluia.
As he promised, hath arisen, alleluia.
Pour for us to God thy prayer, alleluia.

(9 rings)

All Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia,
for the Lord is risen indeed, alleluia.

(9 rings)

God of life, you have given joy to the world
by the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.
Through the prayers of his mother, the Virgin Mary,
bring us to the happiness of eternal life.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Music

Toccata in B minor *from 10 Pièces pour orgue*

Eugène Gigout 1844-1925

- § Please remain standing until the procession has departed*
- § Those leaving immediately are asked to be aware of those who wish to listen to the organ voluntary.*
- § Refreshments are served after Mass in the parish centre. Please do join us.*

This evening at 5.30 pm

Choral Evensong

Our thanks are due to Anonymous Donor 10
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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