

The Parish Church of St Matthew
Northampton

Mothering Sunday

The Fourth Sunday of Lent - Refreshment Sunday



All-age Mass for the Parish Family

Sunday 15 March 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 and welcome to our All Age Mass on this Fourth Sunday of Lent, which in this country we also know and love as Mothering Sunday.

In England, this day has been kept for centuries as a time of going home - returning to the mother church where people were baptised, or to the cathedral of the diocese. It was a day for family reunion, when young people in service were given time off to visit their mothers and often brought a simnel cake as a sign of love. So, it has long been a day of thanksgiving, belonging and joy.

Today we keep that tradition in a wider way. We give thanks for the Church, our mother in faith. We remember Mary, the mother of Jesus, standing faithfully at the foot of the cross in today's Gospel. We give thanks that God loves and cares for us with the tenderness of a parent. And we give thanks for our own mothers and for all who have nurtured us in love.

Mothering Sunday is also *Laetare Sunday* - a word that means "Rejoice." In the midst of Lent it is a moment of refreshment, which is why our worship has a lighter tone. In our readings we are called to be clothed with compassion, kindness and love, and we see in Jesus' words from the cross a new family formed - a family that includes us all.

Whether this is your church home or you are visiting, you are very welcome. Let us rejoice together and prepare our hearts to worship God.

A woman's prayer

O God, the giver of life, thank you for creating me as a woman by allowing me to share your image. Thank you for the gift of life, the gift of my body, my womb, which enables me to participate in creating new life. Thank you for the gift of your sacrificial love, which enables me to care for and nurture children, aged, invalids and nature. Thank you for breaking your body for all. By sharing it, I'm strengthened when my body is broken and humiliated. Lord, in the midst of suffering, oppression, discrimination and humiliation, you are my hope, my strength and my comfort, for you suffer with me and have conquered death. Lord, help me to strive on to nurture life in the midst of my struggles against the powers of death.

Order of Service

¶ Gathering to Worship God

§ Stand at the sound of the bell

Call to Worship

Priest Jesus Christ lived in a family at Nazareth. As we come together to worship him, may we learn more about what it is to love one another as God loves us.

Hymn

§ The procession enters and the flags are presented

All

**OUR Father God in heaven
On whom our world depends,
To you let praise be given
For families and friends;
For parents, sisters, brothers,
A home where love belongs,
But on this day for mothers
We bring our thankful songs.**

**What wealth of God's bestowing
For all the world to share!
What strength of heart outgoing
To children everywhere!
Our deepest joys and sorrows
A mother's path must trace,
And earth's unknown tomorrows
Are held in her embrace.**

How well we know the story
That tells of Jesus' birth,
The Lord of heaven's glory
Become a child of earth;
A helpless infant sleeping,
Yet King of realms above,
Who finds in Mary's keeping
The warmth of human love.

Our Father God in heaven,
To you we lift our prayer,
That every child be given
Such tenderness and care,
Where life is all for others,
Where love your love displays:
For God's good gift of mothers
Let earth unite in praise!

Words Timothy Dudley-Smith 1926-2024

Music Ellacombe
German melody, 18th century

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

The Greeting

All The Lord our redeemer be with you
and also with you.

The service is introduced

Saying Sorry to God

God knows us and loves us as his children.
Through his Son Jesus Christ we ask forgiveness
for those times when we have fallen short.

We reflect on our wrongdoing

Confession

Lord, we are sorry for the times
when we have failed to respect parents or encourage our families.

All Lord, forgive our sin,
and help us to do your will.

We are sorry for the unkind words and selfish actions
which spoil family life and love.

All Lord, forgive our sin,
and help us to do your will.

We are sorry for uncaring attitudes and unfair judgements
which create unhappiness and resentment.

All Lord, forgive our sin,
and help us to do your will.

We are sorry for the ingratitude and self-centredness
which takes for granted all that we have and enjoy.

All Lord, forgive our sin,
and help us to do your will.

God's Forgiveness

Almighty God, merciful and forgiving Father,
pardon † all our sin, in thought, word and deed,
and restore us to a right relationship
with you and with one another,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

God of love,
your Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary,
shared the life of a home in Nazareth,
and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself:
strengthen us in our daily living
that in our joys and in our sorrows
we may know your presence to heal and make whole;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

§ Sit

¶ The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

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

God has chosen you and made you his holy people. He loves you. So always do these things: Show mercy to others; be kind, humble, gentle, and patient. Do not be angry with each other, but forgive each other. If someone does wrong to you, then forgive him. Forgive each other because the Lord forgave you. Do all these things; but most important, love each other. Love is what holds you

all together in perfect unity. Let the peace that Christ gives control your thinking. You were all called together in one body to have peace. Always be thankful. Let the teaching of Christ live in you richly. Use all wisdom to teach and strengthen each other. Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Everything you say and everything you do should all be done for Jesus your Lord. And in all you do, give thanks to God the Father through Jesus.

Colossians 3:12-17

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

S *Stand*

Gospel Reading

Acclamation

1. *Choir* 2. *All*

Praise to you, O Christ, King of e - ter - nal glo - ry.

Choir Children are a heritage from the Lord
and the fruit of the womb is his gift.

All **Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.**

S *We turn to face the Book of the Gospels*

All The Lord our redeemer 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.

Jesus' mother stood near his cross. His mother's sister was also standing there, with Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Jesus saw his mother. He also saw the follower he loved standing there. He said to his

mother, "Dear woman, here is your son." Then he said to the follower, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this follower took her to live in his home.

John 19.25b-27

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



All

Praise to you, O Christ.

Hymn

S During which the choir move to the nave bringing their candles with them

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 FATHERS and mothers,
Sisters and brothers,
All those who love us,
For whom we care:
Help and befriend them,
Keep and defend them,
Jesus our Saviour,
This is our prayer.</p> | <p>2 And for those others,
Fathers and mothers,
Children who hunger,
They must be fed:
We would be caring,
Readily sharing,
One with another
Our daily bread.</p> |
| <p>3 Sisters and brothers,
Fathers and mothers,
We who together
Offer our praise:
Hear our thanksgiving,
God ever living,
May we walk with you
All of our days.</p> | |

Words Timothy Dudley-Smith 1926-2024

Music Bunessan
Gaelic melody

Talk - Presentation

S Sit

The themes of the day are briefly explored

We believe

S 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.**

Prayer action

Jesus was a mother's son. He shared with us the most common fact of our humanity: we all have a mother. In our prayers today we are going to remember our own mothers, to pray for all those who are mothers and all those who wish they could be. Let's fill the church with light as a sign of our prayer.

S The acolytes move down the centre aisle lighting the candle of those on the end of each row. Please share the light with your neighbour until everyone's candle is lit.

S You are invited to place your lit candle on the card daffodil in front of the Madonna and Child sculpture, dedicating it to God with a personal prayer intention.

At the end

Priest Mothering God,
All **we pray for the mothers we have,
the mothers we have lost,
the mothers we are and
the mothers we would like to be,
in Jesus' name.
Amen.**

Our Prayers to God

Priest God watches over us with a parent's care,
and shares our joys and sorrows.
Let us bring before him the needs of our brothers and sisters
in the Church and in the world.

S Kneel

S The first section is led by children

For our parents and the love that they give us,
God, we thank you
All **and we praise you.**

For our mother's love and care,
God we thank you
All **and we praise you.**

All For our father's love and protection,
God, we thank you
and we praise you.

All For the love we share with our brothers and sisters,
God, we thank you
and we praise you.

All For our homes and all that you give us,
God, we thank you
and we praise you.

S *Led by parents*

We pray for Mother Church that helps us to grow in the faith,
for our clergy and all who minister to us and care for us,
for all who help us to know and love God.

All Loving Father
hear us and help us.

We remember today all homeless peoples,
all who are separated from their loved ones
through war or troubles.

We pray for any who are taken into care,
whether they are young or old.

We ask your blessing upon all who have lost loved ones this year
and upon all who are feeling lonely or unwanted.

All Loving Father
hear us and help us.

We give thanks for our own homes
and ask your blessing upon our families and friends.

We ask you especially to bless our mothers at this time.

We pray for mothers throughout the world;
may they never be taken for granted and always respected.

Loving Father
All **hear us and help us.**

We pray for all who are ill at home or in hospital.
For the acutely ill ...
We remember families where the mother is ill
or where she is tending an ill child.

We ask your blessing upon families where there is poverty
or the inability to cope.

Loving Father
All **hear us and help us.**

We give thanks, O God, for your loving care
and we ask your blessing upon all our loved ones and friends
who have departed this life:
The recently departed ...
Those whose anniversary falls this week ...
May they be at peace in your kingdom.

Loving Father
All **hear us and help us.**

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

[Uniformed Organisations]

*At this point, members of the uniformed organizations
may be invested or presented with awards etc.*

¶ The Liturgy of the Sacrament

§ *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.*

§ *Stand*

All

**FOR the beauty of the earth,
For the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies:**

*Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our sacrifice of praise.*

**For the beauty of each hour
Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale, and tree and flower,
Sun and moon and stars of light:**

*Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our sacrifice of praise.*

**For the joy of human love,
Brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth and friends above,
For all gentle thoughts and mild:**

*Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our sacrifice of praise.*

For each perfect gift of thine,
To our race so freely given,
Graces human and divine,
Flowers of earth and buds of heaven:
*Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our sacrifice of praise.*

For thy Church that evermore
Lifteth holy hands above,
Offering up on every shore
This pure sacrifice of love:
*Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our sacrifice of praise.*

Words Foliott Sandford Pierpoint 1835-1917

Music England's Lane
Geoffrey Turton Shaw 1879-1943

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 Bread and Wine

Lord, accept the prayers and gifts we offer in faith and love.
May this eucharist bring us together as one family
in the glory of heaven.

All **Amen.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

All Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

All Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

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 give us Mary, the mother of Jesus,
a wonderful example of faith, hope and love
that we may learn to care better for our mother, the Church,
and be thankful for our own mothers.

You made us all, each wonderfully different,
to join with the angels and sing your praise:

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 Joseph and all your saints
we give you glory,
through Jesus Christ,
in the strength of the Spirit,
today and for ever.

All **Amen.**

§ If you are able, please remain standing

The Lord's Prayer

As God's children, and heirs with Christ
we pray to God our Father.

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 Christ's Peace

We are children of God.
Let the peace of Christ our Brother rule in your hearts,
and be thankful.

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

Let us share a sign of Christ's peace.

Breaking of the Bread

All We break this bread,
communion in Christ's body once broken.

Invitation to Communion

All God's holy gifts for God's holy people.
**Jesus Christ is holy, Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

The clergy receive Holy Communion

Giving of Communion

Jesus said, 'Whoever does the will of God is my brother
or sister or mother.'

S *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 watching 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

Choir Ave, maris stella,
Dei mater alma,
atque semper virgo,
felix caeli porta.

Solve vincla reis,
profer lumen caecis,
mala nostra pelle,
bona cuncta posce.

Vitam praesta puram,
iter para tutum,
ut videntes Jesum
semper collaetemur.

Sit laus Deo Patri,
summo Christo decus,
Spiritui Sancto,
tribus honor unus.
Amen.

Words From a medieval hymn
traditionally sung at Vespers on Marian feasts

Hail, star of the sea,
nurturing Mother of God,
and ever Virgin,
blessed gate of heaven.

Loosen the chains of the guilty,
bring light to the blind,
drive away our evils,
obtain for us all good things.

Grant us a pure life,
prepare a safe path,
so that, seeing Jesus,
we may rejoice forever.

Praise be to God the Father,
glory to Christ most high,
and to the Holy Spirit,
one honour to the Three.
Amen.

Music Edvard Greig 1843-1907

S All sit for a period of silent reflection and thanksgiving

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray.

S Stand

Loving God,
as a mother feeds her children at the breast
you feed us with the food and drink of eternal life:
help us who have tasted your goodness
to grow more like Jesus within the household of faith,
today and every day.

All **Amen.**

Hymn

All **GOD of Eve and God of Mary,
God of love and mother-earth,
Thank you for the ones who with us
Shared their life and gave us birth.**

**As you came to earth in Jesus,
So you come to us today;
You are present in the caring
That prepares us for life's way.**

**Thank you that the Church, our Mother,
Gives us bread and fills our cup,
And the comfort of the Spirit
Warms our hearts and lifts us up.**

**Thank you for belonging, shelter,
Bonds of friendship, ties of blood,
And for those who have no children,
Yet are parents under God.**

**God of Eve and God of Mary,
Christ our brother, human Son,
Spirit, caring like a Mother,
Take our love and make us one!**

Words Fred Kaan 1929-2009

Music Love Divine
John Stainer 1840-1901

Notices for the Community

§ Sit

¶ Going out to serve the Lord

§ Stand

All The Lord our redeemer be with you
and also with you.

God's Blessing

May God who gave you life,
who watched over you in your mother's womb,
protect, nurture, and guide you as you grow in his love.

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

All **Amen.**

The Dismissal

All Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Organ Voluntary

The arrival of the Queen of Sheba *G F Handel 1685-1759*

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

Our next all age service:

Good Friday

3 April at 10.30 am

Stations of the Cross for all ages

followed by hot cross buns and other refreshments

Easter Day

Sunday 5 April

10.15 am The Parish Mass of the Resurrection

5.30 pm Solemn Choral Evensong

*Please do come and help us celebrate Jesus' rising from the dead,
the greatest event in history!*

*Children worshipping with us on Easter morning
will be given a Real Easter Egg
made from high quality fairtrade chocolate
with an illustrated Easter activity book.*

Our thanks are due to 32nd St Matthew's Guides,
Brownies and Rainbows who have 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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