

The Parish Church of St Matthew
Northampton

The First Sunday of Advent

Year A



Keep awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming

The Parish Mass

Sunday 30 November 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. Anyone 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.*



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.



The beginning of a Christian New Year

Welcome to our Parish Mass on this First Sunday of Advent, the beginning of a new Church year, and a season of watching, waiting, and hope. Advent invites us to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ, both as the child born in Bethlehem, and as the Lord who will come again in glory. It is a time to awaken our faith, to seek peace, and to walk in the light of the Lord.

Our readings this morning set before us these Advent themes of hope and expectation. From the prophet Isaiah, we hear a vision of the nations streaming to the mountain of the Lord, where swords are turned into ploughshares and God's peace reigns. In Psalm 122, we join the joyful prayer of those who go up to Jerusalem, seeking the peace of God's holy city. And in the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus calls us to be alert and ready — to live each day in faithful expectation of his coming.

As we begin this holy season, may we open our hearts to God's promise of light amid the world's darkness, and prepare with hope and joy for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

It is our custom to spend some time in quiet preparation before the liturgy begins, and save further conversation until we meet socially for refreshments afterwards. The following reflection, based on today's themes, may be found helpful:

Reflection

Isaiah invites us to go up to the mountain of the Lord.
But who will climb the mountain of the Lord?
Who will stand in his holy place?
'Those who walk without fault and who act with justice.
Those with clean hands and pure heart, who desire not worthless things,
but whose delight is in the law of the Lord'
Lord, send forth your light and your truth;
let these be our guide.
Let them bring us to your holy mountain,
to the place where you dwell.

Setting

Communion Service in D Op. 45

Kenneth Leighton 1929-1988

Order of Service

¶ The Gathering

§ *Stand at the sound of the bell*

From the south transept the choir sing ...

The Advent Prose



Choir

Be not wroth very sore, O Lord,
neither remember iniquity for ever:
thy holy cities are a wilderness,
Sion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation:
our holy and our beautiful house,
where our fathers praised thee.

Hymn

§ *The procession enters and the altar is honoured with incense*

All

THE Advent of our God
With eager prayers we greet,
And singing haste upon the road
His glorious gift to meet.

The everlasting Son
Scorns not the Virgin's womb;
That we from bondage may be won
He bears a bondman's doom.

Daughter of Sion, rise
To meet thy lowly King;
Let not thy stubborn heart despise
The peace he comes to bring.

**On clouds of dazzling light,
As judge he comes again,
His scattered people to unite,
With him in heaven to reign.**

**Let evil flee away,
Ere that great hour shall dawn,
Let this old Adam day by day
The new Man all put on.**

**Praise to the incarnate Son,
Who comes to set us free,
With Father, and with Spirit one,
To all eternity. Amen.**

Words Latin, Charles Coffin 1676-1749
tr Henry Putman 1861-1935

Music St Thomas
from Aaron Williams
New Universal Psalmist, 1770

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

§ *The first purple candle, signifying hope, is lit by a member of the congregation*

All **Lord Jesus, light of the world,
born like him to be a king:
be born in our hearts at Christmas,
be King of our lives today.
Amen.**

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

The Greeting

All May the light and peace of Jesus Christ our Lord be with you.
and also with you.

The service is introduced

Invitation to Confession

When the Lord comes,
he will bring to light things now hidden in darkness,
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.
Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins:

Silence for personal recollection

Confession

All **Lord our God,
in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us;
deliver us from judgement;
bind up our wounds and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Kyries

Choir *Lord, have mercy upon us
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.*

Absolution

May the God of love bring you back to himself,
forgive † you your sins,
and assure you of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
All **Amen.**

The Collect

Let us pray.

Almighty God,
give us grace to cast away the works of darkness
and to put on the armour of light,
now in the time of this mortal life,
in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;
that on the last day,
when he shall come again in his glorious majesty
to judge the living and the dead,
we may rise to the life immortal;
through him who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All

Amen.

§ *Sit*

¶ The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Reader A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah.

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

In days to come, the mountain of the Lord's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised above the hills;
all the nations shall stream to it.

Many peoples shall come and say,
'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.'

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between the nations,
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;

they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
 and their spears into pruning-hooks;
 nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
 neither shall they learn war any more.
 O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

Isaiah 2.1-5

This is the word of the Lord.

All

Thanks be to God.

Psalm



Choir

I was glad when they said to me,
 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'
 And now our feet are standing
 within your gates, O Jerusalem; **Response**

Jerusalem, built as a city
 that is at unity in itself.
 Thither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord,
 as is decreed for Israel,
 to give thanks to the name of the Lord.
 For there are set the thrones of judgement,
 the thrones of the house of David. **Response**

O pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
 'May they prosper who love you.
 'Peace be within your walls
 and tranquillity within your palaces.' **Response**

For my kindred and companions' sake,
 I will pray that peace be with you.
 For the sake of the house of the Lord our God,
 I will seek to do you good. **Response**

Psalms 122

Holy Gospel

§ Stand

Acclamation

1. Choir only
2. Choir and Congregation



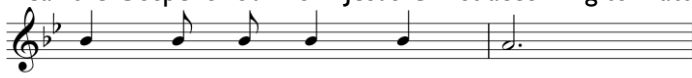
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Choir Show us your mercy, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.
Alleluia.

§ We turn to face the Book of the Gospels

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

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



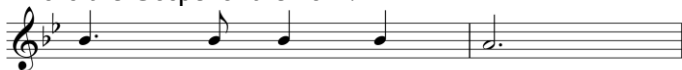
Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples, 'About that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left.

'Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.'

Matthew 24.36-44

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



Praise to you, O Christ.

Homily

§ Sit

Affirmation of Faith

§ Stand

We say together in faith:
All **Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come.**

We believe in God the Father, who created all things:
All **for by his will they were created
and have their being.**

We believe in God the Son, who was slain:
All **for with his blood, he purchased us for God,
from every tribe and language,
from every people and nation.**

We believe in God the Holy Spirit:
All **the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!'
Even so come, Lord Jesus!
Amen.**

Prayers of the Faithful

Watchful at all times,
let us pray for strength to stand with confidence
before our Maker and Redeemer.

§ Kneel

After each petition

All **Come, Lord God,
make yourself known among us.**

After the final petition

Priest Heavenly Father,
may your Son at his coming strengthen us,
so that we may shun the works of darkness,
and walk in the light of truth and goodness.
We make our prayer through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

§ *Stand*

¶ The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Sign of Peace

In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

All 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

The gifts are presented and the altar is prepared

Hymn

All

**WAKE, O wake! With tidings thrilling
The watchmen all the air are filling,
Arise, Jerusalem, arise!
Midnight strikes! No more delaying,
‘The hour has come!’ we hear them saying;
Where are ye all, ye virgins wise?
The Bridegroom comes in sight,
Raise high your torches bright!
Alleluya!
The wedding song swells loud and strong:
Go forth and join the festal throng!**

**Sion hears the watchmen shouting,
Her heart leaps up with joy undoubting,
She stands and waits with eager eyes;
See her friend from heaven descending,
Adorned with truth and grace unending!
Her light burns clear, her star doth rise.
Now come, thou precious crown,
Lord Jesu, God’s own Son!
Hosanna!
Let us prepare to follow there,
Where in thy supper we may share.**

**Every soul in thee rejoices;
From man and from angelic voices
Be glory given to thee alone!
Now the gates of pearl receive us,
Thy presence never more shall leave us,
We stand with angels round thy throne.
Earth cannot give below
The bliss thou dost bestow.
Alleluya!
Grant us to raise to length of days
The triumph-chorus of thy praise.**

Words German, Philipp Nicolai 1556-1608
tr Francis Crawford Burkitt 1864-1935

Music Wachet Auf
Melody by Philipp Nicolai 1556-1608
Harmony by Johann Sebastian Bach 1685-1750

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

O Lord, we pray that you will accept these offerings,
gathered from among your gifts to us,
and may what you grant us to celebrate devoutly here below,
gain for us the prize of eternal redemption.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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.

It is indeed right and good to give you thanks and praise,
almighty God and everlasting Father,
through Jesus Christ your Son.
For when he humbled himself to come among us in human flesh,
he fulfilled the plan you formed before the foundation of the world
to open for us the way of salvation.
Confident that your promise will be fulfilled,
we now watch for the day
when Christ our Lord will come again in glory.

And so we join our voices with angels and archangels
and with all the company of heaven to proclaim your glory,
for ever praising you and singing:

Choir *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.*

Accept our praises, heavenly Father,
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,
and as we follow his example and obey his command,
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us his body and his blood;

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.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus:

All



Therefore, heavenly Father,
 we remember his offering of himself
 made once for all upon the cross;
 we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension;
 we look for the coming of your kingdom,
 and with this bread and this cup
 we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

Accept through him, our great high priest,
 this our sacrifice of thanks and praise,
 and as we eat and drink these holy gifts
 in the presence of your divine majesty,
 renew us by your Spirit,
 inspire us with your love and
 unite us in the body of your Son,
 Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, and with him, and in him,
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,
 we worship you, Father almighty,
 in songs of everlasting praise:

All



Bless-ing and hon-our and glo-ry and pow'r be yours for ev-er and ev-er. A - men.

The Blessed Sacrament is elevated and bells are rung

§ *Kneel*

The Lord's Prayer

Awaiting his coming in glory
 let us pray with confidence as our Saviour Christ 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

All Every time we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Agnus Dei

Choir *Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.*

*Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.*

*Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.*

Invitation to Communion

All Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.
**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word and I shall be healed.**

Giving of Communion

The Lord will indeed give all that is good, and our land will yield its increase.

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.

Motet

Choir

Thou shalt know him when he comes,
Not by any din of drums,
Nor his manners, nor his airs,
Nor by any thing he wears.

Thou shalt know him when he comes,
Not by a crown nor by a gown,
But his coming known shall be,
By the holy harmony
Which his coming makes in thee.

Thou shalt know him when he comes.
Thou shalt know him when he comes

Words and music Mark Sirett b.1952

Hymn

All

**THE Lord will come and not be slow,
His footsteps cannot err;
Before him righteousness shall go,
His royal harbinger.**

**Truth from the earth, like to a flower,
Shall bud and blossom then;
And justice from her heavenly bower,
Look down on mortal men.**

**Rise, God, judge thou the earth in might,
This wicked earth redress;
For thou art he who shalt by right
The nations all possess.**

**The nations all whom thou hast made
Shall come, and all shall frame
To bow them low before thee, Lord,
And glorify thy Name.**

**For great thou art, and wonders great
By thy strong hand are done:
Thou in thy everlasting seat
Remainest God alone.**

Words John Milton 1607-1674
Poems both Latin and English, 1673
based on Psalms 85, 82, 86

Music St Stephen
William Jones 1726-1800

§ *We sit for a time of personal reflection and thanksgiving*

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray:

§ *Stand*

O Lord our God,
make us watchful and keep us faithful
as we await the coming of your Son our Lord;
that, when he shall appear,
he may not find us sleeping in sin
but active in his service and joyful in his praise.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All

Amen.

**Generous God,
you feed us at your heavenly table.
Set us on fire with your Spirit
that when Christ comes again
we may shine like lights before his face;
who with you and the Spirit lives for ever.
Amen.**

Hymn

All

**HARK what a sound, and too divine for hearing,
Stirs on the earth and trembles in the air!
Is it the thunder of the Lord's appearing?
Is it the music of his people's prayer?**

Surely he cometh, and a thousand voices
 Shout to the saints, and to the deaf are dumb;
 Surely he cometh, and the earth rejoices,
 Glad in his coming who hath sworn: I come!

This hath he done, and shall we not adore him?
 This shall he do, and can we still despair?
 Come, let us quickly fling ourselves before him,
 Cast at his feet the burden of our care.

Through life and death, through sorrow and through sinning,
 He shall suffice me, for he hath sufficed:
 Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
 Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.

Words Frederic William Henry Myers 1843-1901

*Music Highwood
 Richard Runciman Terry 1865-1938*

Notices for the Community

§ Sit

¶ Sending Out

§ Stand

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Solemn Blessing

All May God the Father, judge all-merciful,
 make us worthy of a place in his kingdom.
Amen.

All May God the Son, coming among us in power,
 reveal in our midst the promise of his glory.
Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit make us steadfast in faith,
joyful in hope and constant in love.

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.**

The Dismissal

As we await our coming Saviour,
go in the peace of Christ.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Organ Voluntary

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland BWV 659

J S Bach 1685-1750

- § *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 being served in the parish centre, adjacent to the carpark. Do please join us.*
- § *If you are a newcomer to the parish, please introduce yourself to the clergy or speak to a member of our Welcome Team.*

The Advent Procession
takes place this evening by candlelight
at 4.00 pm

Our thanks are due to Christine Bentley
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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