

St Matthew's Newsletter 1st November 2026

Message from the Vicar

Dear friends,

Last week, we looked at why the saints are important for Anglo-Catholics, and today I want to turn our attention to one saint in particular: the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary occupies an important place in Anglo-Catholic devotion, but often this is mistaken for 'worship' of Mary that undermines our worship of Jesus. I hope that this letter will clear up any confusion about the role of Mary in our faith.

On one level, Mary is so special precisely because of her ordinariness. When you stop and think about it, there is something incredible about the fact that a teenage mom from an obscure small town in the Middle East is one of the most important people in our faith. There seemed to be nothing to mark her out as special, and yet she was – as Luke's Gospel puts it, she was 'highly favoured' in the eyes of God, 'blessed among women', the one whom 'all generations will call blessed'.

God chose Mary for an incredible task, and she responded to that calling with humility and obedience. When she was told that she would bear the son of God, she did not run away, but responded 'here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word'. And she went on to constantly point others towards her son, during her life and throughout the history of the Church. We look to Mary not to distract from Jesus, but to point us to him.

Mary didn't just bear Jesus in her womb; she would have also taught him and nurtured him in the faith throughout his childhood. She was with him throughout his public ministry, from his first miracle at a wedding feast to the cross where he died. She was not a passive bystander, but had an active role to play – and we believe that she continues to play an active role, praying for us in heaven.

That is why we say the 'Hail Mary' prayer every Sunday. The first part of this prayer reaffirms what Scripture tells us about Mary's importance, whilst the second half asks for her to pray for us, now and at the hour of our death. It should be clear that this is not worship of Mary, for worship belongs to God alone. It is, instead, our way of appropriately honouring the Mother of Christ, the 'God-bearer' who brought Jesus into the world. It is also a reminder that all Christians share in Mary's calling. We too are called to be 'God-bearers', those who make Christ known through our words, our deeds, and our love for others. And so, in the words of the Blessed Virgin, 'let it be'.

With my prayers,
Father George

This week's Services

Sunday 1st November - All Saints

10 am Parish Mass and Sunday School

All are welcome to tea, coffee and biscuits in the lounge after the service

After Mass there will be a Christmas Fair Meeting

Monday

1:30 pm to 3:30 pm Bereavement & Friendship Group

6 pm All Souls Day Mass

Tuesday

7:30 pm Phone-in Service

Wednesday

4:30 pm: Evening Prayer at St. Paul's Hamstead

7 pm: Mass in the Chapel

Thursday

9:15am Morning Prayer

10 am Mass in the Chapel

Friday

9:15am Morning Prayer

10 am Mass in the Chapel

11 am. Coffee morning

Sunday 8th November – Remembrance Sunday

10am: Parish Mass and Sunday School

All are welcome to tea, coffee and biscuits in the lounge after the service

CONTACT DETAILS:

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Dates for your Diary

Friday Coffee Mornings

All are welcome for Coffee/Tea and Cake in The Lounge. Every Friday 11am – 1pm

Bereavement and Friendship Group

If you've suffered a bereavement or are feeling isolated and lonely come and meet others who know how you are feeling. Every Monday, 1:30 to 3:30 pm in The Lounge.

Book Club.

The next meeting of the Book Club is on Wednesday 4th November. The book for October is "Out Of The Ashes" by Emma Törzs. If you love reading and would like to join us over a cup of tea/coffee you are warmly invited to our next meeting.

Guest Preachers

We are delighted to be welcoming a series of guest preachers at our 10am Parish mass during the season of Autumn and Advent. For further details see notices in church or the Web Site.

From 25th October-6th December, Fr Sam Rigby will be serving a placement in the Diocese of Birmingham, working in several churches including St Matthew's. Fr Sam is currently Assistant Curate in the Wenlock Team Ministry in the Diocese of Hereford. He will be with us most Fridays, and will be preaching one Sunday during this time. We look forward to welcoming him here.

All Souls

This Monday, 2nd November, there will be an All Souls' Day Mass in the Chapel at 6pm, where we will remember those who have died. A sheet will be put out in church next week if you want to add any names to the list to be read out during this service.

There will be a Christmas Fair meeting after Mass today. If you are a stallholder, please come along, we will gather in the Family Room.

The next meeting of the PCC will be on Wednesday 18th November; Mass at 7pm, followed by the meeting.

Early notice of a new date for St. Matthews Christmas Fair. This year it will be moving to Saturday 5th December

NOTICES

A reminder that we welcome contributions towards the cost of flowers, perhaps in memory of a loved one. Please place any donations in the pot on the table.

Contributions of food for the **FOODBANK** are always welcome. Please give as generously as you can and place any items in the basket by the door.

Our church relies on the generosity of visitors and worshippers. If you would like to contribute to the ministry and mission of St Matthew's but don't have any cash, there is a contactless card reader on the table by the front door.

Please put your request for prayers during the intercessions on the sheet on the table.

If you could offer a lift to someone to Church, please let us know.

We are buying a memorial stone to commemorate Fr Michael Westlake's time at St. Matthew's. Contribution towards the cost of this would be gratefully received

Scripture Readings for This Week

Sunday 1st November (All Saints Day)

	Matthew 5.1–12
Monday 2nd Nov	Luke 14.12–14
Tuesday 3rd Nov	Luke 14.15–24
Wednesday 4th Nov	Luke 14.25–33
Thursday 5th Nov	Luke 15.1–10
Friday 6th Nov	Luke 16.1–8
Saturday 7th Nov	Luke 16.9–15

A Collect for Sunday 1st November

God of holiness,
your glory is proclaimed in every age:
as we rejoice in the faith of your saints,
inspire us to follow their example
with boldness and joy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

St. Matthew's Prayer List,

Please Pray for The Sick and Those in Need:

Please contact Margaret Cox if you would like to add anyone to our prayer list.

- Sat:** Barbara Linley, Andrew & Gail Walker, John Hope, Barbara Hayward
Mon: Fr Barry Smart, Revd Frank and Margaret Finch, Bali Dhugga, John Duncombe, Pam Millard
Tue: Jayne Middleton, Loretta Charles, Bernadette O'Sullivan, Lorna Wild, Barrie Greenwood, Graham Staton, Rachel & Fay.
Wed: Shirley Woodley, Eileen Eveson, Jean Hayes, Irene Roberts
Thu: Dai & Lal Gravell, Shirley and Ray Hollins, Mark Hawkins Ann Edwards, Roger Furnell, Helen Haig
Fri: David & Anne Gadd, Barbara Dring, Sue & Tony Kyte, Henry Cole

