St Matthew's Newsletter 8th November 2026 Remembrance Sunday

Message from the Vicar

Dear friends,

Anglo-Catholic worship is often described as 'bells and smells', a phrase that refers to two of the most distinctive features of our worship. Whilst Anglo-Catholicism is about so much more than just 'bells and smells', they provide an important place for us to start as we think about why we worship in the way that we do. Specifically, I want to address why we burn incense during Mass.

For some (myself included), the smell of incense brings back happy childhood memories and makes even the most mundane church service that little bit more special. For others, incense is an unpleasant distraction that is more likely to trigger a coughing fit than an encounter with God. Here at St Matthew's, we burn incense every Sunday, but do we ever stop to ask ourselves why we do this?

Incense has a long history as part of the worship of God. In the Old Testament, incense was offered in the Temple in Jerusalem, and it has been used by Christians from the early Church to the present day. Indeed, the Bible even suggests that there will be incense in heaven (take a look at the Book of Revelation if you don't believe me!)

When we use incense at Mass, it has three main purposes. Firstly, it reminds us that our worship is something which engages all the senses, thus bringing our whole selves into a posture of prayer and praise. Secondly, the rising smoke gives us a visual image of our prayers being offered to God. And thirdly, we use incense as a sign of reverence, to recognise the holiness of the altar, the Gospels, the ministers, and the entire congregation. Next time you come to church, try noticing what gets censed during Mass – it is a reminder that each of us is sacred in the eyes of God and called to a life of holiness.

Of course, we don't need incense to worship God. There are plenty of churches where incense is never used, including most of our fellow Anglican churches. God doesn't need anything that we offer him, but we do need signs and symbols that break us out of the mundane routines of our daily lives and point us back to him, highlighting the sacredness that surrounds us and giving us a glimpse of the heavenly worship in which we too will one day participate.

With my prayers,
Father George

This week's Services

Sunday 8th November – Remembrance Sunday

10 am Parish Mass and Sunday School

With remembrance for the fallen.

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

Monday

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

Tuesday

7:30 pm Phone-in Service

Wednesday

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

7 pm: Mass in the Chapel

Thursday

No services today

Friday

9:15am Morning Prayer

10 am Mass in the Chapel

11 am. Coffee morning

Sunday 15th November – 2nd Sunday before Advent

10am: Parish Mass and Sunday School

Preacher *Fr Sam Rigby*

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

Berevement 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 2nd December. The book for November is Needless Alley by Natalie Marlow. 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.

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

Saturday 5th December From 11am to 2pm, St. Matthews Christmas Fair.

Full details of Christmas Services are available on the Web Site, and on notices around the church centre.

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 8th November 3rd Sunday before Advent

	Matthew 25.1–13
Monday 9th Nov	Luke 17.1–6
Tuesday 10th Nov	Luke 17.7–10
Wednesday 11th Nov	Luke 17.11–19
Thursday 12th Nov	Luke 17.20–25
Friday 13th Nov	Luke 17.26–end
Saturday 14th Nov	Luke 18.1–8

A Collect for Sunday 8th November

Almighty Father,
whose will is to restore all things
in your beloved Son, the King of all:
govern the hearts and minds of those in authority,
and bring the families of the nations,
divided and torn apart by the ravages of sin,
to be subject to his just and gentle rule;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
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

ST MATTHEW'S
PERRY BEECHES