St Matthew's Newsletter 22nd November 2026

RODNEY WILLIAMS

It is with great sadness that we share the news that Rodney Williams died at home on Wednesday 18th November. Rodney was a much-loved and lifelong member of St Matthew's, a church that he served with devotion in a variety of roles from Choir Boy to Church Warden. We will remember his great kindness, warmth, and humour, and he will be greatly missed by all of us. Funeral arrangement will be shared in due course, in the meantime please keep Rosemary, Anna, Lucy and all his extended family in your prayers.

Message from the Vicar

Dear friends,

All Christians share the same holy book – the Bible – but they differ in how they interpret it. Some Christians take a 'literalist' view, believing that every passage is a straightforward statement of historical fact, whilst others emphasise its metaphorical or symbolic meanings. There is no single 'Anglo-Catholic interpretation' of the Bible, but here at St Matthew's we try to avoid both literal and overly liberal approaches.

The Bible is, first and foremost, a collection of texts written over a period of more than a thousand years, and its pages contain a variety of genres including poetry, myth, history, biography and prophecy. Within the Bible we can find legal codes, ancient hymns, letters to First Century churches, and even an erotic poem! Therefore, how we interpret the Bible really depends on which part of it we are reading. This can seem like a daunting task when dealing with such a complicated collection of texts, but this is why we read from the Bible every time we gather together for worship. This is also why every Mass, even a small midweek service, contains a sermon, so that some aspect of the readings can be explained and applied to our daily lives.

The richness of the Bible means that it is still relevant to our lives today, but it needs to be handled with care. We need to pursue intelligent understanding of the entire biblical narrative rather than cherry-picking individual verses that seem to support our pre-existing views and prejudices. We need to allow the words of Scripture to speak to us and shape us. Some of the Bible is challenging and even offensive to our 21st Century ears, and so we need to try to understand the context in which it was written, and to read the whole of Scripture through the

lens of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, who demonstrates God's redeeming love for all creation. We should also be informed by the wisdom of our fellow Christians throughout the history of the Church, learning from how the great saints and teachers of the faith have approached challenging texts. This means that we should not flatten Scripture into a set of historical facts, but neither should we render it meaningless by dismissing the Bible as simply a collection of ancient fables and metaphors. The truth is far more complicated, but also far more exciting and life-changing.

If you want to read the Bible but are unsure where to begin, I recommend the 'Bible in a Year' podcast by Fr Mike Schmitz, an American Roman Catholic priest. This provides helpful context for exploring the deeper meanings of the texts, and how they inform our Christian beliefs. Why not give it a go?

With my prayers,
Father George

This week's Services

Sunday 22nd November –10 am Parish Mass and Sunday School

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

Fr. George will be in Rome this week, so the weekday services will be conducted by Fr. Sam Rigby

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. 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 29th November – Advent Sunday

10am: Parish Mass and Sunday School

This service will be conducted by the Revd Canon Douglas Machiridza

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

service

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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.

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 22nd November - Christ the King

	Matthew 25.31–end
Monday 23rd Nov	Luke 21.1–4
Tuesday 24th Nov	Luke 21.5–11
Wednesday 25th Nov	Luke 21.12–19
Thursday 26th Nov	Luke 21.20–28
Friday 27th Nov	Luke 21.29–33
Saturday 28th Nov	Luke 21.34–36

A Collect for Sunday 22nd November

God the Father,
help us to hear the call of Christ the King

and to follow in his service,
whose kingdom has no end;
for he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, one glory.

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