

St. Matt's Midweek Update – 20th December 2024



I hope you have survived your week! There are going to be a lot of tired children and adults this evening, as schools break up today ready for Christmas!

I don't know about you, but I love singing carols! It was so nice to sing a few at our Reflective service on Wednesday evening, and I can't wait to sing more this weekend and over Christmas. The words are lovely, and they make me feel very Christmassy and sometimes a bit emotional!

The other thing I like about Christmas services is some of the different liturgy and words we use. There is a Christmas blessing which we use at our Midnight Communion service which says this:

May the joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the perseverance of the wise men,
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,
and the peace of the Christ-child,
be yours this Christmas.

As we hear the Christmas story over the next few days, and sing familiar carols, let's enter into it, and feel what all those who were there for the birth of Jesus were feeling. Let's invite the joy of the angels into our hearts. Let's learn from Mary's trust and contemplation. Let's be as enthusiastic as the shepherds to meet Jesus. And let's open our hearts to the peace of Jesus.

As it says in 'O Little Town of Bethlehem',
"where meek souls will receive Him still,
the dear Christ enters in."

So let's open our hearts this Christmas to experience all Jesus has for us.

Notices

Update from Chris and Carole

We have good news and we should not keep it to ourselves.... 2 Kings 7:9

Chris had the outpatient appointment following his second round of surgery this week and we wanted to let you all know the good news. The doctor shared the histology from the tissue that was removed and we are thrilled with the result. The margins around the cancer they removed are clear of any further cancer cells so they are confident that they have removed it all and the sections of lymph node they removed have all come back clear too, meaning that it has not spread any further.

So for now Chris is cancer free (praise the Lord!) Because it is such an aggressive form of cancer they will be monitoring Chris every three months going forward. We are so grateful for the care we have received which been absolutely amazing. We also want to thank our church family for all your prayers, meals, lifts and practical support - it has made a massive difference to how we have navigated this challenging season. The hospital are pleased with Chris' progress and he hopes to start to be able to get out more. If all goes to plan he will be back at work early in the new year.

Can we wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas as we celebrate the birth of our Saviour.

Our Christmas Services have started!



This Sunday we have our **Christmas Nativity** as our 10am morning service. This will be in church only, not live streamed. The nativity is a 'no rehearsal nativity', so you can just turn up and put a costume on and get involved. We will have narrators telling the story and then everyone will come on stage at the right time to help act it all out.

If you would like to be in the nativity, we suggest coming to church a bit early, so you can choose a costume and get ready. And feel free to invite friends to come and get involved as well!

On Sunday evening at 7pm we have our **Christmas Carols**. This is a lovely evening service where you can hear our amazing choir, sing some carols, listen to readings telling the Christmas story, and enjoy mulled wine and mince pies afterwards. It is a great way to start Christmas!

On Christmas Eve we have our **Christingle Service** at 4pm. Come and join us for this short family-friendly service which has carols, a story about Jesus, and time to make your own Christingle with an orange and some sweets!

We also have **Midnight Communion** at 11.15pm. This is a reflective service with holy communion and Christmas carols to welcome in Christmas Day.

And then on Christmas Day we will have a **Family Christmas Celebration** at 10am.

There are still a few Christmas flyers around in church, so please do take some and give them out to family, friends and neighbours.

This year our Christmas giving is going to go to **MAF Uganda**. Sam and Abby Baguma are



our mission partners with MAF (and my sister and brother-in-law!).

MAF Uganda have developed a link with CURE Children's Hospital in Uganda to enable children in South Sudan with neurological conditions to have life saving surgery. It's mostly children with hydrocephalus. So any money we raise will go to flying children and their parents to the hospital in Uganda to have the surgery. The surgery is also heavily funded so everyone can access it. One flight for 10 children and their parents costs \$7500, so by giving £60 you could give one child and their parent the flight to get the surgery they need.

There are lots of ways to give. All money given during our Christmas services will go to MAF. You can scan the QR code on the flyer and give online (or use this link <https://stmatts.churchsuite.com/donate/fund/mk6sejem>).

There is also a change jar at the back of church with the inside of our giant Christmas card, so do sign that for your church family and give the money you would have spent on cards.

I just wanted to say thank you to everyone for all your support, prayers and practical help while Chris has been off. I really appreciate all the help in making our St. Matt's Christmas happen! I will be working until Christmas Eve, but then will be off for a week (apart from the wedding!).