

St. Matt's Midweek Update – 24th January 2025



I hope you have had a good week.

Over the last couple of weeks I have been trying to listen to the Lectio365 app a bit more and it has been focussing on the sermon on the mount in Matthew 5.

Jesus starts the sermon on the mount with the Beatitudes, the list of the kind of people who are blessed and the blessing they will receive.

Matthew 5:1-10:

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them.

He said:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

It is easy to read these verses and just skim over them, but a few things struck me as I was listening to Lectio.

All the things Jesus lists as reasons for a blessing are characteristics of a godly life, ways that we can be as people which the world often looks down on. These characteristics are basically what Jesus is like, so blessings come from trying to become more like Jesus.

Similarly, the blessings that Jesus is promising for this life of godliness are not earthly blessings like wealth or status or an easy life, but they are the blessings of heaven - mercy, comfort, righteousness, being called children of God. What Jesus was teaching the disciples was completely opposite to the way the world then, and the world now, thinks. It is a radical way of living and being but it brings blessings beyond anything we could imagine.

There has been an example this week of someone living this kind of kingdom life.

Bishop Mariann Budde preached a sermon at President Trump's inauguration urging those present, and all of us listening, to live a life that shows mercy, that sees the value in those who are marginalised, meek and poor in spirit. She showed through her sermon that she is a godly woman who understands what it means to follow Jesus and showed incredible courage in expressing it when she did.

Let's pray for her as she will inevitably face persecution because of this, as Jesus goes on to say in the next verses. But let's also pray for ourselves, that we would see her example and live for Jesus in the same way, showing mercy, being peacemakers, being pure in heart, and bringing heaven to earth as we seek to become more like Jesus.

Notices



This Sunday we just have our main 10am service. Steve Morris and his family are coming to speak to us this Sunday about the work of one of our mission partners - Sozo South Africa. The youth are going to stay in for the whole service as the work Sozo do is all about training young people. The children will be going out to their group as usual.

Next Sunday is the first Sunday in February, so we have two services - 8am communion service and 10am family service.

Knitting Hub is on tomorrow morning (Sat 25th Jan), 10.30am - 12pm in the church centre.

Eating out at St. Matt's



Our dining out evening at church is only 2 weeks away! So if you are planning on coming, please sign up in the next few days so we have a good idea of numbers for catering.

It's a great chance to get together and have fun at this dark and depressing time of year, and to be able to go out for dinner for a very small cost. Bring friends and family along too!

Dedo will be cooking a variety of main courses, and there will be puddings as well. We're asking for a donation of £2.50 per person or £5 per family, but please feel free to pay what you can afford. You don't need to pay till the night, but please sign up soon so that we know how many people to cater for.

Sign up here <https://stmatts.churchsuite.com/events/ssl8xdti>



Could you join the team??

As you may have heard a couple of weeks ago, Berti from Youth For Christ will be moving to Albania in a couple of months, so we will be losing him from Ignite. Chris and Carole have also been on the Ignite team, so with them leaving soon as well, we are going to be incredibly short of volunteers and may struggle to keep the group going without more people joining the team.

Ignite is our youth group for secondary school age young people. We have between 20 to 25 young people most Tuesday evenings, and it has grown by them bringing friends, so it is a really regular and close-knit group.

If you are interested in volunteering to help at Ignite, please do let me know, and you can come along to a session to see what it is like. Most volunteers help once a month, and the session runs from 6pm - 7.30pm, with dinner provided.



Easter Sunday
baptisms

We will be baptising adults on Easter Sunday this year, as we often do. If you are interested in being baptised at Easter this year, then please speak to Chris or Hannah soon.



We know Easter feels like a long time away yet, but we wanted to give you the date of Chris and Carole's leaving service so that you can get it in your diaries! Their last Sunday in church will be **Sunday 27th April**, which is the Sunday after Easter. We won't have children's or youth groups that day so that everyone can be in the service. We will also be having some food and drink after the service and over lunch so that people can stay and chat and say goodbye to Chris and Carole.

Life & Soul (one of our mission partners) are holding their annual quiz night on Saturday 1st February 7pm at Christ Church TW.

There will be desserts, drinks and snacks for sale, and a chance to hear more about the work of Life & Soul. Tickets are £8 (£5 for students). Entry is by tickets only so please book

here: <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/events/landing/75744?>



It is 15 years since Tunbridge Wells Youth for Christ received Chartered status from British Youth for Christ. They are holding a celebration evening at St James' Church on Sunday 16th Feb from 4.30pm - 6pm with light refreshments afterwards. Everyone is welcome.

I think that's all for now. Have a lovely weekend and we hope to see you on Sunday.

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