

St. Matt's Midweek Update – Happy Christmas!

First of all, we just want to wish you and your family a very happy Christmas, whatever that looks like this year! Christmas is about celebrating the birth of Jesus, and we can do that wherever we are and whoever we are with. The light of the world is with us.

This week Bishop Simon, the Bishop of Tonbridge, sent out a message to all the churches in the Rochester Diocese, and I just wanted to share some of it with you, as a thank you for helping us to keep our church going over the last 2 years when it has been so tough.

He says...

"If Jesus Christ be Son of God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too big for me to make for him.

The beauty of the Gospel expressed in the words of a once famous test cricketer.

And in one sentence lies the paradoxical comfort and challenge of being a follower of Jesus. Our lives are hid with Christ in God. But he calls us to the edgy daily task of giving those lives away to others.

That's service.

And it feels especially hard when your own needs are as great, if not greater, than those you are serving.

That's one reason why so many Christian people feel tired right now. They are not the only people who feel this way, by a long way. Across the UK is a huge swathe of people who have stepped up to the front line day after day so the rest of us could live more safely and comfortably.

Covid asks followers of Jesus to keep on giving out even though they feel the same anxiety, experience the same privation and suffer the same illness as everyone else.

I want to express my gratitude to, and admiration of, the churches of Rochester Diocese.

Despite the worry and the uncertainty of 2021, you have stepped up to your own front line without flinching. And across our communities are many whose lives have been enriched by that commitment; and many actions that will find their place in the coming kingdom."

So thank you to all of you who have served, whether that is in church, through the community larder, in your jobs and communities day to day, in your families. Thank you for making other people's lives better, for giving of yourself even when it has taken courage and more energy than you feel you have.

May we all find some rest and peace this Christmas time.

If you would like to watch all of Bishop Simon's message, you can see it here <https://youtu.be/eVPGppTzSdM>

Notices

Christmas services still to come...



Christingle at 5pm on Christmas Eve - we have decided to just have one Christingle service on Christmas Eve, due to the numbers we had booked in. There are still a few spaces, so please do book in using this link if you would like to

come <https://stmatts.churchsuite.co.uk/events/2omvjkl>
This service will just be in church.

Midnight Communion on Christmas Eve at 11.15pm - this service will be online and in church. No booking is needed.

Christmas Family Celebration at 10am on Christmas Day - online and in church, so do join us on Christmas morning if you can! No booking is needed.

Boxing Day 10am service - Richard will be leading a more traditional reflective service on Boxing Day, for anyone who would like to join him. It will just be in church.

Sunday 2nd January 10am - family service in church and online.

Christmas Offering



This year, all our offerings over Christmas will go to Ruth Radley and the work of the chaplaincy team at Birmingham Children's Hospital. They do amazing work supporting the children, their families, and the staff at the hospital, and they need our support more than ever at the moment. So please do give if you can.

We have a big Christmas card at church which you can sign, and then donate what you would have spent on cards for other church members.

There is a change jar at the back of church.

There are gift aid envelopes you can put cash or cheques in.

You can donate online using a debit or credit card - just follow this link <https://stmatts.churchsuite.co.uk/donate/fund/vtuivcez>

Thank you!

Church office closed - Chris, Lois and I will all be taking leave from Christmas Day, so the church office will be closed from Christmas until Tuesday 4th January. If you need help in the meantime, please email one of the wardens on wardens@stmattschurch.org.uk.

Services in January - lastly, we have been talking about and planning to restart the 5pm and 7pm services once a month from January and bringing them back gradually as people come back to church. However the rise in Covid now and the uncertainty this is bringing means it feels unwise to commit to starting in January. Please know that these services will be restarted as soon as it feels safe to do so. We will keep you updated in January.

Have a happy Christmas and a peaceful and safe new year.