

## St. Matt's Midweek Update – 24<sup>th</sup> November 2023

How has your week been? Are you getting used to the dark mornings and evenings?

I find the dark, cold and rain quite tiring. It makes me not want to go outside and then I don't feel good because I'm not getting enough fresh air and exercise. I'm definitely a summer person!

Sometimes it can feel like the seasons we experience are a metaphor for our walk with God. I am definitely in a season at the moment where I don't feel very connected to God, I'm not in a good routine or habit of praying or spending quality time with God. When we are feeling like this, it is easy to feel that God is far away from us. We can think that He is not there, or that He is interested in other people but not us.

But I feel like God has reminded me this week that He is never far away from us. Whatever we feel about His presence in our lives, He is actually always there with us, always in our hearts, always there guiding us and helping us. How we feel about God or how much we can feel God is not about where God is, it is about our perception of where God is.

Psalms 139 is such an amazing Psalm, and verses 7-10 say this:

"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,  
even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast."

Someone I met with yesterday prayed using the picture of God being our anchor. I like that picture of the unseen anchor on the seabed holding the boat fast. The boat may still be getting tossed and turned by the waves if it is stormy, but the anchor is always there keeping it steady.

So whatever you are feeling today, whatever your relationship with God is like at the moment, remember that He is with you, He is your anchor, and He will never leave you, and there is nothing you can do about that!

## Notices



**Ladies film night tonight!** We'll be watching 'Last Christmas' and there will be drinks and snacks provided. It's at 7.30pm in the church centre and is for women aged 15+. We'll have a donation basket out if you feel able to give something small to help cover costs.

**St Matt's Community *Larder***  
**Christmas Fair**

**Community larder Christmas Fair** - is on Saturday 2nd December, 10am - 12.30pm in the Bethel Hall. Do go along and support the team on the day.

If you are able to donate anything for the fair, they need:

- Bottles and chocolate items for the two tombolas
- Christmas type food for hampers for the raffle (e.g. nuts, preserves, chutney etc....)
- Homemade cakes for the super popular cake stall.

If you can help, please leave any items at the back of church and/or speak to Liz, Jan or Chrissy about cake making.



**This Sunday** we have two services...

**10am** is our normal Sunday service with children and youth groups. Chris will be speaking about the disciple John and the **Bible reading is John 21:20-25**.

We also have our **7pm** service, which is more relaxed and informal, and Matt Taylor will be speaking. We will be sharing communion together at Seven.

**Next Sunday** is the first Sunday of December and of Advent. As well as our 10am family service, Richard will be leading our monthly 8am communion service.

Christmas is coming, and we will soon have our Christmas publicity out. We'll be giving more information about our Christmas services over the coming weeks, but here are the services we have planned:

Sunday 17th December 10am - Nativity family service

Sunday 17th December 7pm - Christmas Carols

Christmas Eve 10am - A Reflective Christmas

Christmas Eve 4pm - Christingle

Christmas Eve 11.15pm - Midnight Communion

Christmas Day 10am - Family Christmas Celebration



As Christmas Eve is a Sunday, the morning service will be a service aimed at those who wouldn't come to Christingle or Midnight Communion. It will be a quiet reflective service and won't have any provision for children.



### Rehearsals for the Carol Service

We now have all the dates for choir rehearsals for the carol service. If you would like to be in the choir this year, the rehearsals will be:

Monday 27th November 6pm in church

Wednesday 6th December 6pm in church

Tuesday 12th December 6pm in church

Sorry for the different days each week for the rehearsals - trying to match Suzy's free time with the church being free proved tricky!!

The next rehearsal for the hand bells for the carol service is on Sunday 3rd December after the morning service.

### Other dates for your diary:

**Knitting hub** is on tomorrow morning 10.30am in the church centre.

Our next monthly **prayer meeting** is on Monday 4th December 8pm in the church centre.



### Ice skating for youth at St. Matt's!

All our youth at St. Matt's, both at Ignite and youth on Sunday mornings, are invited to come ice skating on Tuesday 12th December. Parents should have had an email with all the information, but just a reminder that we need numbers this week, so please get your young people booked in if they would like to

come <https://stmatts.churchsuite.com/events/sbvmesfw>



Youth For Christ run **Unite** once a month, a town wide youth event. They are having their Christmas party on Friday 15th December 6pm - 8pm at TW Christian Fellowship. You can book at [www.uniteyouth.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.uniteyouth.eventbrite.co.uk)

### **Job opportunity**

St. Benedict's Centre is a retreat venue in West Malling, and they are looking for a part-time housekeeper. If you would like the details about this job, please let me know.

That's all for now! Please do be in touch if you need any help and support.  
Chris is on leave next week from Wednesday to Sunday, but I will be in the office.  
Have a lovely weekend and stay warm!