

St. Matt's Midweek Update – 15th December 2023



How has your week been?

Here in church it has been incredibly busy! We had the school in twice on Monday for their carol services, then Rosemary held an afternoon tea on Tuesday, Ignite went ice-skating, the hub had a Christmas session and lunch on Wednesday, we had the toddler group Christmas party yesterday, and this Sunday is the start of our Christmas services! And amongst all of that has been a lot of chair moving and tidying and rearranging!

It is easy to get caught up in all the organising and arranging and to get to Christmas feeling exhausted and like you haven't focused on the real meaning of Christmas.

But one thing I have realised this week is that almost every event we put on over Christmas enables those involved to hear the Christmas story. All the children, staff and families from school heard the story of Jesus coming to earth this week through beautiful songs and readings. The toddler children and parents heard the nativity read to them on Thursday. Everyone who comes into church over this Christmas period will hear of God's love for them through Jesus.

Something I read this morning described the gift of Jesus coming in the form of a baby at Christmas as a love-note from God. And a huge amount of people that we reach this Christmas will hear that love-note afresh this season, and will hopefully realise it is for them and for this broken world that we live in. Let's pray that each and every person who comes into our church this Christmas or who watches a service online, will know for themselves the love of God in the shape of a baby called Jesus.

Notices

Christmas Services

Sunday 17th December 10am - Christmas Nativity
Sunday 17th December 7pm - Christmas Carols

Christmas Eve 10am - A Reflective Christmas
Christmas Eve 4pm - Christingle Service
Christmas Eve 11.15pm - Midnight Communion

Christmas Day 10am - Family Christmas Celebration

Love
Hope
Peace
Joy

We really hope you can join us for some or all of our Christmas services this year!

And please do invite your friends, family, neighbours, colleagues to come along and see what St. Matt's is like at Christmas!

Nativity - we're kicking off with our nativity service this Sunday at 10am. We have narrators and Mary and Joseph lined up, but the rest of the parts are up for grabs on the day and no rehearsal is needed! So if you have children who would like to be involved, they can either come in a costume of their own from home, or we have costumes available at church for them to put on before the service. There will be coffee served before and after the service as usual.

Then at 7pm this Sunday we have **Christmas Carols**, which is a beautiful service where you can hear our amazing choir and hand bell players, sing some carols, listen to readings telling the Christmas story, and enjoy drinks and mince pies afterwards.

There will be a hand bells practice for the carol service straight after the service on Sunday morning for those involved.

The following weekend, on Christmas Eve (which is a Sunday this year), we have...

A Reflective Christmas at 10am. Because Christmas Eve is a Sunday, we want to provide a service that is quieter and more reflective, for those who wouldn't come to Christingle or to Midnight Communion but would like a Sunday service. Maybe you find Christmas a difficult time, or maybe you just prefer peace and calm to all the busyness and festivities. You are very welcome to join us. Please note, there won't be any provision for children at this service, but refreshments will be served before and after.

Christingle Service at 4pm is great for children and families and is a lovely short service on Christmas Eve afternoon that gets you in the festive spirit. There will be some carols, a story about Jesus, and time to make your own Christingle with an orange and some sweets!

Midnight Communion is a reflective service with holy communion and Christmas carols to welcome in Christmas Day. It starts at 11.15pm on Christmas Eve and finishes soon after midnight.

Then finally on **Christmas Day** we have our **Family Christmas Celebration**. This is at 10am and will be fun and festive with carols, a short talk, and a chance to see what presents you've received!

We have plenty of flyers in church with our Christmas services on, so please take some to give out, and do share our post on our Facebook

page <https://www.facebook.com/stmatthewshighbrooms>

Sunday after Christmas - there will be a 10am service on the Sunday after Christmas, which is 31st December. This will be a family service and Gill will be speaking with a new year theme.



Christmas Offering - every year at Christmas our offerings go to one of our mission partners, and this year we are giving to Life & Soul, who work with children and young people in schools in our town. They run one-to-one mentoring in secondary schools, and groups in primary schools, to help young people with their mental health and wellbeing.

If you would like to give....

- Scan the QR code on the posters and flyers in church to use your debit / credit card
- Put cash or cheques in the offering basket at our Christmas services
- Put cash in the change jar at the back of church
- Use the card machine at the back of church
- Go to the home page of our website and click on Donate <https://www.stmattschurch.org.uk/>

If you would like to find out more about Life & Soul, head to their website <https://lifeandsoul.org.uk/>



Alpha course - we will be running an Alpha course in January through to Easter, for anyone who would like to know more about the Christian faith, or have the chance to explore it more and discuss with others.

It will be on Tuesday evenings starting on 16th January, 7.30pm at Chris and Carole's house. There will be flyers at church so do give them to anyone who might be interested, or sign up yourself if you would like to. You can sign up here <https://stmatts.churchsuite.com/events/y3nc9fig>

There are a couple of events for families happening next week in the area...

TOC H IS INCORPORATED BY ROYAL CHARTER AND A REGISTERED CHARITY: 211042 (ENGLAND) SCO45491 (SCOTLAND)

CHRISTMAS FAMILY FUN DAY

FREE EVENT FOR ALL THE FAMILY TO ENJOY
COME & START YOUR CHRISTMAS, WITH LOTS OF
CHRISTMAS ARTS & CRAFTS.

MONDAY 18TH DECEMBER
11AM - 2PM

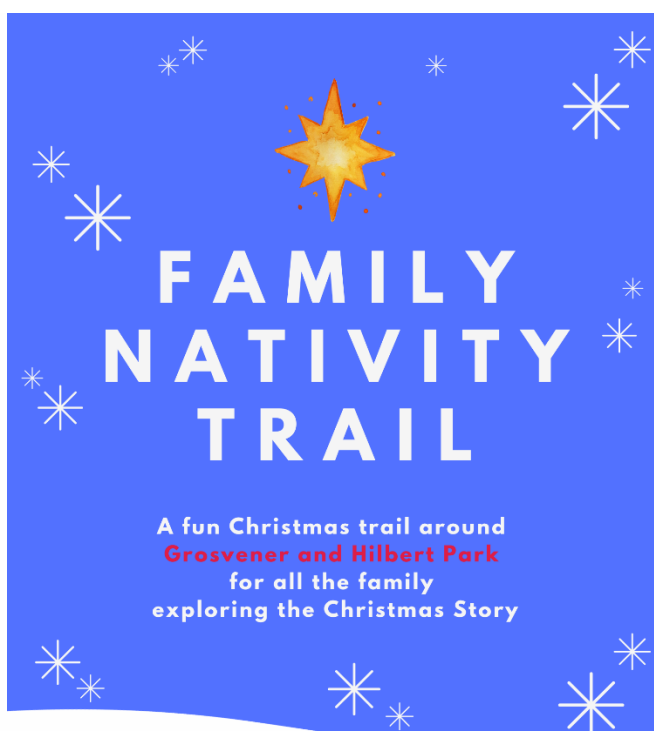
Toc H Hall, Woodland Road,
High Brooms, TN4 9HW



We look forward to welcoming you!

Call Sally on: 07719 249643 or
email: ssi@toch.org.uk

TOC^H
BUILDING THE COMMON GOOD



FAMILY NATIVITY TRAIL

A fun Christmas trail around
Grosvenor and Hilbert Park
for all the family
exploring the Christmas Story



23rd December
1pm-4pm

**COLLECT YOUR TRAIL MAP
FROM OUTSIDE THE HUB**

PROVIDED BY CHURCHES FOR TUNBRIDGE WELLS

That's all for now. There won't be a newsletter until January now.

Chris and I will be in the office all next week, but will then both be on leave after Christmas, so the church office will be closed from Christmas Day through to 3rd January.

We are looking forward to seeing you this weekend.