

St. Matt's Midweek Update – 12th January 2024



I hope you are managing to keep warm! Please do let us know if you need any help or support at the moment. It's such a dark, cold time of year, so let's look out for each other.

Last week in the office, Chris and I were talking about favourite Psalms, as that's going to be our sermon series in Lent this year. My favourite Psalm is 139, and there is so much in it about how God sees us.

Although I wrote in my email last week that I haven't made any new year's resolutions, one thing I have tried to do this month is get back to reading or listening to the Lectio 365 app each day. I know that it helps me to focus on some verses of the Bible each day, so I am trying to get a habit going again! God is also very faithful in using it to speak to me or to remind me of his truths, and a couple of times this year already, different verses from Psalm 139 have come up. How amazing is that!

The verses that came up today were verses 7-10...

"I can never escape from your Spirit!

I can never get away from your presence!

If I go up to the heaven, you are there;

if I go down to the grave, you are there.

If I ride on the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans,
even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me."

As many of you will know, last year was a really tough year for me and my family. My mum was progressively ill for most of the year, and on end-of-life care for almost 5 months before she died in October. There was a lot of time last year where I couldn't feel God, I felt like He wasn't answering our prayers or being fair, I couldn't see what He was doing or why.

And yet, 3 months on, I can look back and see the evidence that God was there with us on the day mum died, that he worked His timing for the funeral arrangements and for us being able to all be together as a family. I can even begin to see how He might have been working in those long dark months of illness and hospital and the care home, and of mum slipping away incredibly slowly.

But in those months while I was going through it all, I couldn't see it, and that was ok. It is ok to be hanging onto God by the skin of your teeth, to cling onto a tiny bit of trust deep down inside you even though you can't see what He is doing or why. It is ok to think it's not fair or to feel like you are in a thick fog and can't see the way out. Because God IS there, and He is still working, and you will come through it and look back one day and see the bigger picture.

It reminded me of the song Way Maker written by Nigerian gospel singer Sinach. Some of the lyrics say...

"Even when I don't see it, You're working

Even when I don't feel it, You're working

You never stop, You never stop working

You never stop, You never stop working

I feel like there are people who need to hear that today, and I pray that God would give you the strength to keep going, and to know deep down that He is with you through it all.

(There are lots of different versions of Way Maker out there, but this is the original artist singing it <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n4XWfwLHeLM>).

Notices



Alpha course - Alpha starts this Tuesday evening so it's the last chance to sign up if you would like to know more about the Christian faith, or if you know someone who would be interested in joining. You can sign up here <https://stmatts.churchsuite.com/events/y3nc9fjg>

Can you make cakes for Alpha? We would like to offer cake or pudding each week at Alpha. If you are able to make something for one or two weeks, between now and Easter, could you let me know please? It is only for about 6 people.



This Sunday we have two services, at 10am and 5pm.

In our morning service, we are starting a sermon series called 'A new beginning' and the Bible reading this week is John 1:1-5.

We have got groups for our children and youth this Sunday morning - thank you to those who have stepped in to help!

Knitting Hub is on this week, on Monday 15th January 7.30pm in the church centre. Everyone is welcome, whether you can knit or would like to learn with others.



Our monthly **mission prayer meeting** is on Wednesday 17th January 3.30pm at Mary's house and on Zoom. This is a chance to hear updates from our mission partners and to pray for them and the work they do.

The next **Unite Youth event run by YFC** is on Friday 19th January, from 5.30pm - 8pm at TW Christian Fellowship. There is a guest speaker from Ambassadors Football who will be sharing a faith talk and there will also be a talent showcase where any young person that would like to can come and perform. The rest can just enjoy watching. Berti hopes to see your young people there! (see below for the poster for this term)

Help for people going through relationship breakdown - The charity Restored Lives are running a course for anyone who has been through separation or divorce. The course runs on Thursday evenings from 25th January at St. Nicholas' Church in Sevenoaks. More information is here <https://www.restoredlives.org/go-on-a-course#find-a-course>



YFC inter-church quiz - Youth For Christ are running an inter-church quiz on Saturday 24th February to raise money for the work they do in Tunbridge Wells. It is £15 per person including hot food. Teams need to be 8 people.

It would be great to have a St. Matt's team (or 2!) if we can, as our youth group wouldn't run without Berti. If you would like to be part of a team, let me know and we can see how many people we have.

That's all for this week. We hope to see you on Sunday.



Tunbridge Wells
**YOUTH
FOR CHRIST**

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unite.
youth

#FUN #FOOD #FAITH

SCHOOL YEARS 6 - 13 : SUGGESTED DONATION £2

19
JAN

5:30 PM - 8:00 PM

**WORKSHOPS, FOOD, FOOTBALL, FAITH,
CONSOLE GAMES, SURPRISES, TUCK SHOP**

@TWCF CHURCH, HANOVER RD, TN1 1EY

09
FEB

5:30 PM - 8:00 PM

**WORKSHOPS, FOOD, FOOTBALL, FAITH,
CONSOLE GAMES, SURPRISES, TUCK SHOP**

@TWCF CHURCH, HANOVER RD, TN1 1EY

15
MAR

5:30 PM - 8:00 PM

**WORKSHOPS, FOOD, FOOTBALL, FAITH,
CONSOLE GAMES, SURPRISES, TUCK SHOP**

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