

St. Matt's Midweek Update – 9th February 2024



How has your week been?

Mine has been a bit different, as I swapped my day off so that I could go to a Church Administrator's quiet day on Wednesday. So all the days have felt out of sync this week!

Going to the quiet day was great though. As I wrote several weeks ago, just knowing you are not alone is powerful, so meeting up with others doing the same job as me and understanding the challenges and frustrations was helpful.

The person leading the quiet day was Andy Wooding-Jones, who some of you will know. In one of the sessions he was talking about the conditions needed to bear fruit as a Christian. Fruit doesn't just happen automatically; we need to be nurturing our faith and ourselves as human beings in order to be able to bear fruit.

There were a couple of things that stood out to me about this.

Andy suggested that fruit comes from a place of rest, rather than from a place of stress and striving. We can't avoid the seasons of challenge and stress, but we may not see fruit in those seasons as the conditions are not right. So trying to create rest and calm for ourselves in our work and in our home lives may encourage fruit to grow.

Some of the fruit he was talking about was the fruits of the spirit, that you can find in Galatians 5:22-23. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

The other thing he said about this that struck me is that some of these fruits of the spirit come fairly naturally to us, whereas other things need a lot more work and effort from us. So we may find we are a generally joyful person, or a patient person, but self-control is a lot harder for example.

But even if that is the case, we shouldn't be trying to just be one fruit - we need to be a fruit salad not just stewed apple! So we shouldn't settle for just bearing the fruit that is easy, we should still try to develop all the fruits of the spirit and ask God to help us in this, so that we can be the people God wants us to be.

So today, try and be a fruit salad!

Notices



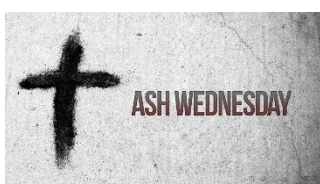
This Sunday we have our 10am service and our 5pm service.

At 10am, we will have groups for our children and youth during the service.

We are continuing our series through John 1, and Richard will be speaking to us from John 1:15-18.

The 5pm service is more traditional with hymns on the organ and liturgy, with tea and cake served from 4.30pm.

Next Sunday we just have our 10am service with children's and youth groups.



This Wednesday (14th February) is Ash Wednesday, which marks the start of Lent. We will be having an **Ash Wednesday service** in church at 8pm for anyone who would like to come along. It is a reflective communion service to start the period of Lent.

Lent resources

There are lots of Lent resources out there for individuals and groups - daily and weekly reflections to read through Lent. Here are a few ideas...

- The Church of England's Lent campaign is called 'Watch and Pray'.

You can sign up for free daily email reflections here <https://www.churchofengland.org/faith-calling/what-we-believe/lent-holy-week-and-easter/watch-and-pray-lent-reflections> or download the app 'Watch and Pray' from the App Store or Google Play Store.

- **The Bible Society** also have daily email reflections called '**Shadow of the Cross**'. You can sign up for these emails here <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/resources/the-lent-encounter-sign-up/>

- Tearfund have weekly email reflections with discussion questions which would work well in a small group. You can find out more here <https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/lent-devotional>

Half term this week

All our normal children and youth groups are having a break for half term next week, but the following things are happening still:

Knitting Hub - Monday 12th Feb 7.30pm in the church centre

Coffee morning - Tuesday 13th Feb 10.30am - 12pm in the church centre

Community Hub - Wednesdays 11am - 3pm in the church centre

Community Larder - Fridays 9.30am - 10.45am in the Bethel Hall



High Hopes, the charity which Mike Harrowing runs, is having a **jumble sale** to raise funds, on Saturday 17th Feb, 2-4pm at Christ Church URC in Tonbridge.

Mike is looking for volunteers, donations and shoppers on the day!

If you can help or have things to donate, email admin@childrensworkshop.org.uk

We need 4 more people to make up a team for the **Youth For Christ inter-church quiz**. It's on Saturday 24th February to raise money for the work they do in Tunbridge Wells. It is £15 per person including hot food. Let me know asap if you would like to join the St. Matt's team so we can book in!



Lastly, Chris and I are both in the office at the start of next week, but we are both on leave from Thursday to Saturday next week. You can contact the church wardens if there is anything urgent in that time, on wardens@stmattschurch.org.uk

Have a lovely weekend, and we hope to see you on Sunday.