

St. Matt's Midweek Update – 26th September 2025



I hope you've had a good week.

Isn't it funny how, when you are focusing on something or doing something yourself, you see lots more of that thing happening around you?! For example, now Zara is learning to drive, it feels like there are learner drivers everywhere!!

And this week, having been focusing on prayer in our Sunday morning services, I feel like God has been sending things my way about prayer.

The last two weeks, Mark and Sheila in their talks have spoken about the importance of a daily habit of spending time praying. I don't know about you, but I always think of excuses why that doesn't work for me, or why I can't fit that into my life. And some of it is justifiable, but some of it is just laziness!

This week two things came into my inbox on the same day, about the struggle and the importance of solitude with God.

One was from Lectio 365 - it's the post on their Facebook page from 20th September and it has some tips to help stop the distractions when you are praying <https://www.facebook.com/lectio365app>

The other was an email someone sent me with a quote from Henri Nouwen about the Rhythm of Daily Prayer. Here it is:

"One of the interesting things that happen when we spend time with God in prayer is that we find out how tired and anxious we are. If we don't fall asleep, we find out how full our head is of worries and concerns and things we need to do. While we are trying to be with God, we are busy thinking about all the plans we have made. A thousand distractions will come our way, like jumping monkeys filling a banana tree.

As soon as we enter into solitude, we discover how chaotic our inner life is. Suddenly all sorts of thoughts, feelings, and fantasies come to the surface, and we soon find ourselves thinking about old pains and old rewards, about appointments we forgot to keep and letters we forgot to write, about people we hope to see and people we hope we never see, about a future vacation, a possible promotion, or our approaching retirement. Instead of being prayerful we become restless and can't wait until our half hour is over.

Don't be surprised at this. You can't just suddenly shut the door of a house that was always open to strangers and expect no one to knock on the door. It will take a while for these countless distractions to disappear, but eventually they will, especially when they realize that you refuse to open the door to them for at least half an hour. If we faithfully keep our time of prayer, every single day, then slowly the distractions diminish and our mind and body join in a rhythm of daily prayer." Henri Nouwen

Distractions are normal, but the way to overcome them is to keep going and to form a habit by persistently practicing it. I'm sure the reward will be worth the struggle!

Notices



This Sunday (28th September) we just have our 10am service. I will be speaking on the first line of the Lord's Prayer, and we will have groups for our children and young people. The Bible passage is Romans 8:14-17.



Next Sunday (5th October) is our harvest service.

This will be a family service and we are welcoming Will from Tearfund to share about their work during our service. Any money collected during the service will go to Tearfund, and we will also be collecting food items for our community larder.

The larder currently needs: Pasta, cereal, teabags, Tins - sweetcorn, baked beans, kidney beans, chickpeas, fruit, tuna etc

Please bring your donations along on Sunday 5th October and we will have somewhere to collect them all before the service.

We are also having a **bring and share lunch** after the harvest service. We would love you to stay for lunch if you can - it is a great chance to have more time to chat and get to know people.

Please sign up for the lunch if you are coming, either on the sheet at the back of church or using this link <https://stmatts.churchsuite.com/events/cxfk2tlx>



Some other dates for your diary coming up:

Knitting Hub - Saturday 27th Sept 10am in the church centre

School harvest service in church - Monday 6th October

PCC meeting - Monday 6th October

Prayer meeting - Thursday 16th October 8pm in the church centre

Save the date - Quiz night - Friday 14th November in the evening

Save the date - Women's Christmas Craft Evening - Friday 5th December

Youth For Christ Prayer Meeting

Each month YFC host some of their supporters at The Youth Centre in town for a prayer time. The next one is on Wednesday 8th October from 1pm - 2pm. If people work in the town and can join them for a short while, with their lunch, they are very welcome.

Saying Goodbye Service for baby loss

On the 4th October at 11am in Canterbury Cathedral, Saying Goodbye (part of Mariposa International) will be hosting one of their Saying Goodbye Services - a baby loss remembrance and support service.

This service is for anyone who has either personally lost a baby at any stage of pregnancy, at birth, or in early years, or who has been affected by family members' or friends' loss. Whether the loss was recent or 80 years ago, everyone is welcome to attend. They also welcome anyone who is grieving the fact that they haven't had children.

Babies and children are also invited to come with their families, as the Saying Goodbye service is truly a family event for all.

VACANCY at PETLEY & DEAKIN ALMSHOUSE CHARITY, TONBRIDGE

ACCOMMODATION: recently refurbished one person first floor flat, with bedroom, sitting room, kitchen and bathroom, in central Tonbridge. Single occupancy only.

ELIGIBILITY: applicants must be able to live independently, be 'poor', of good character and be living in the ancient parish of Tonbridge (which includes Hildenborough, Tonbridge, Southborough and parts of Tunbridge Wells) at the time of their application

CONTACT: please contact Mrs Emily Case, Warden either by telephone to 07480 591947 or by email on wardenpetleyanddeakin@gmail.com.

If you need any help or support during the week, please be in touch with me in the office. We hope you have a lovely weekend and see you at church on Sunday!

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