

# St. Matt's Midweek Update – 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025



I hope you have had a good week and are enjoying the run up to Christmas!

This week Mark has kindly written a reflection for us...

*The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. **Isaiah 9 v2***

These verses are so often read at our Christmas Services and this Sunday is our Carol Service which falls on 21<sup>st</sup> December – the shortest and darkest day of the year.

Isaiah describes the land Jesus was born into as one of DEEP darkness, a world that he refers at the end of the previous chapter, as one which people look on with distress and fearful gloom.

You may never have experienced deep darkness (unless you live miles away from a town or have a cellar), however as Lisa Riley her recent Bushtucker trial on I'm a Celebrity can confirm, it is a terrifying and unpleasant experience.

What enormously helps us get through this time of year is the millions of tiny lights people put up inside and outside their homes which take our focus off the darkness and onto the light.

The deep darkness Isaiah is referring to is not the darkness of night, but the darkness of life; the lack of love, kindness, and hope, where dark deeds of violence, cruelty, greed, and injustice occur daily across the world.

But into this deep darkness Isaiah says a light has dawned. Just one light – a small child (one single small bulb), that would ultimately bring light in the form of love to every corner of the deep darkness of this world.

This Sunday we will light the 4<sup>th</sup> Advent Candle which signifies God's endless love for us. A love that is seen through the birth, life, death and resurrection of his Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

You may be feeling deep darkness in your life right now, and the joy of Christmas may seem impossible to grasp, however please do try to come along (or listen online) to one of our Christmas services.

Whilst joy may feel difficult to find right now, being reminded of God's deep love for you through Jesus may allow a light to dawn in your heart and guide you into 2026.

## Notices

**This Sunday we have two of our Christmas services** - something for everyone!



**At 10am this Sunday is our Christmas Nativity.** This will be in church only (not online) so that everyone who wants to be on stage can be.

Any children who want to be involved in the nativity can just turn up on Sunday morning, choose a costume, and get ready to join in! We suggest getting to church a bit early to choose your costume - maybe about 9.45am. We will have tea and coffee before and after the service as usual, and lots of our favourite carols!

**Then at 7pm on Sunday we have our Christmas Carol Service.** This service will be in church and online, and we will have mulled wine and mince pies afterwards. It's a lovely service to bring friends and family to. Matt will be speaking and we will have everything you expect of our carol service - readings, carols on the organ, a small choir and even handbells!

**Looking forward to Christmas Eve,** we have our **Christingle Service at 4pm** (in church only) and then **Midnight Communion starting at 11.15pm** and seeing in Christmas Day.

**On Christmas Day, we will get together at 10am for a Family Christmas Celebration.** This will be a short, fun service to celebrate the joy of Jesus' birth! We won't be serving drinks on Christmas Day, so bring your own if you need one!

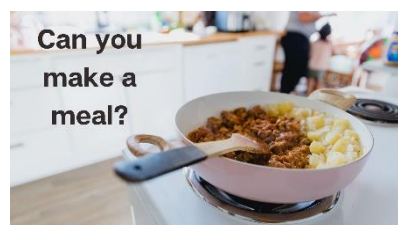
And finally, there will be a **family service on Sunday 28th December at 10am** - thank you to Katy and Mike for leading and speaking at this service for us.

**Thank you to everyone who is involved in all of these services,** and to all of you who have stepped up to welcome and serve drinks following my email this week. It is all definitely a team effort and we appreciate everyone's involvement, whatever that looks like!



**The church office will be closed from Christmas Eve until 2nd January.** I will be off and Brian will be trying to stay away from church things!

If you have an emergency, you can call David on 07802 720072, otherwise send an email or leave an answerphone message and I will get to it once I'm back in the office.



We would like to provide some **meals for Suzy and Badger in January**, when Badger goes back to work. Gill is kindly going to co-ordinate this for me as I won't be in the office. If you are able to make a meal for the week of 5th Jan, please let Gill know. Thanks.

### **New Home Group in the New Year**

Dee Harper is starting a new Home Group in January 2026. Date to be decided.

It will meet fortnightly initially, at Dee's home in Pembury, on a Wednesday evening at 7.45pm for an 8pm start.

Please contact Hannah in the church office if you would be interested in joining this group.

This will be the last newsletter this year, so if we don't see you over Christmas we wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas, and a wonderful start to the new year!