

St Matthew's Newsletter 4th October 2026

Message from the Vicar

Dear friends,

Harvest Festival is an occasion that always triggers a fair amount of nostalgia for me. One of my earliest memories of primary school is sitting on the assembly hall floor during a wet autumn morning, singing '*We Plough the Fields and Scatter*'. Likewise, every year the whole school would walk to the local parish church for a Harvest Festival service, each of us armed with tins of beans, packets of rice, and other items of non-perishable food.

Food banks as we know them today didn't really exist back then. My school used to donate to a drop-in centre called The Green Hut, which operated out of a church in Swindon. However, since the financial crisis of 2008, the need for emergency food provision has sky-rocketed. Here in Birmingham, there is a substantial and growing need. The Birmingham City-Wide Food Aid Count recorded 22,367 visits to food banks and other food-aid projects during its 2025 survey period, a 64% increase on previous figures. Perry Barr accounted for 12% of food-aid projects, the second-highest proportion of any ward in the city.

Harvest Festival, therefore, is not just about childhood nostalgia, or even about giving thanks for our food – as important as this is, the agricultural process can seem rather remote in urban areas such as our own. However, what is not remote is the scale of the need on our doorstep. Harvest is a reminder of our Christian duty to share what we have with those who are in need. In the Old Testament, God commands his people to 'open your hand to the poor and needy neighbour in your land' (Deuteronomy 15:11). And in the Gospel, Jesus reminds us that when we feed the hungry, we are serving him too.

May this Harvest Festival inspire us not only to give thanks for the food we have received, but to keep our hands and our hearts open to our neighbours in need.

With my prayers,
Father George

This week's Services

Sunday 4th October 18th Sunday after Trinity

10 am Harvest Festival

Followed by a Bring and Share Lunch after the Service.

Monday

1:30 pm to 3:30 pm Bereavement & Friendship Group

Tuesday

7:30 pm Phone-in Service

Wednesday

7 pm: Mass in the Chapel

Thursday

9:15am Morning Prayer

10 am Mass in the Chapel

Friday

9:15am Morning Prayer

10 am Mass in the Chapel

Sunday 11th October – 19th Sunday after Trinity

10am: Parish Mass and Sunday School

All are welcome to tea, coffee and biscuits in the lounge after the service

CONTACT DETAILS:

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Dates for your Diary

Friday Coffee Mornings

All are welcome for Coffee/Tea and Cake in The Lounge. This week's donations will go towards the Macmillan Coffee mornings appeal.

Every Friday 11am – 1pm

Bereavement and Friendship Group

If you've suffered a bereavement or are feeling isolated and lonely come and meet other who know how you are feeling. Every Monday, 1:30 to 3:30 pm in The Lounge.

Book Club.

The next meeting of the Book Club is on Wednesday 7th October. The book for September is "Ink Blood Sister Scribe" by Emma Törzs. If you love reading and would like to join us over a cup of tea/coffee you are warmly invited to our next meeting.

Guest Preachers

We are delighted to be welcoming a series of guest preachers at our 10am Parish mass during the season of Autumn and Advent. For further details see notices in church or the Web Site.

Dates for your Diary

October 4th will be St. Matthew's Harvest Festival, followed by a Bring and Share lunch

On Saturday 10th October there will be a Parish Planning Day in the church hall from 11am-2pm. This is an opportunity to discuss the future of St Matthew's together and to think and pray about possible plans. All church members are invited to come along.

Early notice of a new date for St. Matthews Christmas Fair. This year it will be moving to Saturday 5th December

NOTICES

A reminder that we welcome contributions towards the cost of flowers, perhaps in memory of a loved one. Please place any donations in the pot on the table.

Contributions of food for the **FOODBANK** are always welcome. Please give as generously as you can and place any items in the basket by the door.

Our church relies on the generosity of visitors and worshippers. If you would like to make a contribution to the ministry and mission of St Matthew's but don't have any cash, there is a contactless card reader on the table by the front door.

Please put your request for prayers during the intercessions on the sheet on the table.

If you could offer a lift to someone to Church, please let us know.

We are buying a memorial stone to commemorate Fr Michael Westlake's time at St. Matthew's. Contribution towards the cost of this would be gratefully received

Scripture Readings for This Week

Sunday 4th Oct (18th Sunday after Trinity)

	Matthew 21.33–end
Monday 5th Oct	Luke 10.25–37
Tuesday 6th Oct	Luke 10.38–end
Wednesday 7th Oct	Luke 11.1–4
Thursday 8th Oct	Luke 11.5–13
Friday 9th Oct	Luke 11.15–26
Saturday 10th Oct	Luke 11.27–28

A Collect for Sunday 4th October

Almighty and everlasting God,
increase in us your gift of faith
that, forsaking what lies behind
and reaching out to that which is before,
we may run the way of your commandments
and win the crown of everlasting joy;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

St. Matthew's Prayer List,

Please Pray for The Sick and Those in Need:

Please contact Margaret Cox if you would like to add anyone to our prayer list.

Sat: Barbara Linley, Andrew & Gail Walker, John Hope, Barbara Hayward
Mon: Fr Barry Smart, Revd Frank and Margaret Finch, Bali Dhugga, John Duncombe, Pam Millard
Tue: Jayne Middleton, Loretta Charles, Bernadette O'Sullivan, Lorna Wild, Barrie Greenwood, Graham Staton, Rachel & Fay.
Wed: Shirley Woodley, Eileen Eveson, Jean Hayes, Irene Roberts
Thu: Dai & Lal Gravell, Shirley and Ray Hollins, Mark Hawkins Ann Edwards, Mark and Roger Furnell
Fri: David & Anne Gadd, Barbara Dring, Sue & Tony Kyte, Henry Cole

