

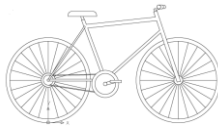


St Matthew's Newsletter – Spring 2023



'But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour' 2 Peter 3:18

We became convinced as we looked together (in Bible Hour) at Peter's second letter that the thing he wanted for the Christians he was writing to was that they continued to *grow* in faith. The best analogy here is the bicycle. The faster you go the stabler you become. And so too in faith. If you reduce to a snail's pace you are very likely to fall over. Peter's letter is full of all sorts of speed-increasing-thoughts, straight from the Holy Spirit of God. Why not read it this Lent (it is only three chapters long). And why not also consider carefully what might be slowing you down in faith – where are the brakes rubbing, where is the chain slipping, where are the pedals grinding? Lent is such a great opportunity. Do use it!



Dates for your Diary

(For Easter Dates see
overleaf)

Thursday April 27th
7pm
Coronation Ceilidh

Sunday May 14,
11.30am
APCM

St Matthew's News

- **Welcome** - We were very pleased late last year to welcome Stacy to the small staff team at St Matthew's. Stacy is our new bookkeeper and administrator and is in charge of the millions of small but important things that keep the show on the road. She has been a member of St Matthew's since 2017, is married to David, and they have twins, Aidan and Ava, who are 6 years old. We are already hugely appreciating all that Stacy is doing!
- **Grants** – It has been wonderful to receive two significant grants recently. The first (£5,000) was given to us via our neighbours at the St Sophia Greek Cathedral. The second we were invited to apply for from the Julia and Hans Rausing Trust for our foodbank. They agreed to give us £13,250 to be used at the foodbank. We are rejoicing!
- **A Curate** – It would be very good to have another ordained person to help with the theological and pastoral work at St Matthew's. Will and the PCC are seeking to make this happen. It is quite complex! Please do pray that the right person might join us starting this summer, ideally.
- **Confirmation** – Youngyee Cho will be confirmed at St Paul's Cathedral on Easter eve, 8 April at 6pm. It would be great if some from St Matthew's can come to support her. Do come if you are free.

Will Writes

I recently attended a two-day Mental Health First Aid course. Apart from learning helpful skills I was struck (I think we all were) by how much mental ill-health there was. I guess, like many, I had assumed that the increased prevalence of mental health problems was simply because we had widened the net of what was included and certainly there is some truth in this. However, there is clearly a greater prevalence of tangible mental health problems beyond simply low-mood etc. As Christians we would do well to pay attention to this, for I left the course convinced that helping people with mental health was a ministry St Matthew's (indeed the wider church) would do well to step into. Not least the NHS is failing, sometimes spectacularly, to meet needs here.

Our faith contains a great deal of powerful anti-depressants (of which confidence in the pill variety is increasingly waning). Easter is the pinnacle of our Hope. The apex of an already amazing story, when the worst thing imaginable – death – is decisively overcome. The power of Christ seen here, says St Paul, is at work in every Christian (see Ephesians 1:18-20).

Might we, Christians entrusted with this powerful medicine of the soul, be able to give ourselves to the increasing mental health needs in our nation. I suspect so. Might you be willing to come on a Mental Health First Aid Course if we ran it at St Matthew's?

In the meantime, and in any case, keep the eyes of your soul on Christ's Easter victory. For the light and life which flows truly brings healing, again and again. He did it friends! And nothing can change this!

With love Will, Liz, Thomas and Olivia

Coronation Ceilidh – Thursday 27 April, 7pm

You are cordially invited to get on your dancing shoes and join us at 7pm for an evening of fun and dancing. Entry cost £10 per person (any profits to St Matthew's) and will include John Henderson's fabulous 'Panic at the Ceilidh' band. **No Scottish dancing experience necessary.** There will be drinks and light bites. Friends, neighbours, colleagues and children are all very welcome! The more the merrier!



Living in Love and Faith (LLF)

After eight hours of debate and discussion on General Synod (the Church of England's equivalent to Parliament), 'prayers of blessing' were approved to be used for same sex couples who wished to have their relationship blessed. At the same time, it was explicitly proposed (and then re-affirmed more strongly via an amendment) that nothing being proposed changed the churches (doctrinal) understanding of marriage i.e. man and woman for life. The St Matthew's PCC has discussed LLF on a number of occasions. As Vicar of St Matthew's, Will holds the view that the only place for sexual expression is within a heterosexual marriage and he could not in good conscience use any form of prayer to bless those in sexually active relationships (whether heterosexual or homosexual). However, at the same time, and as we discussed on PCC, these matters are inherently pastoral and Will would, naturally, want to meet with any couples seeking blessing to discuss what this might mean for them; these matters are deeply personal. Overall, the Church of England remains deeply divided on these matters and it is good to acknowledge this.

Please do not hesitate to speak with Will if you have questions, concerns or comments.

Easter 2023

Maundy Thursday (6th)
8pm at St Matthew's

Good Friday (7th)
Children's Craft at 10am
Meditation 12-2pm

Easter Day, 9th April
10.30am for Family
Communion followed by 'the great egg hunt'

Sundays in Lent

The Resurrection
True? Who? Important? Results?

St Matthew's
BAYSWATER

Midweek online

'Why Jesus?'
Mark 11-15
Wednesdays on Zoom. 8pm.

And Finally....

