

# Parish Magazine

£1



## October/November 2017

Chichester Road, Croydon

[www.stmatthew.org.uk](http://www.stmatthew.org.uk)

Registered Charity No: 1132508

## **Services at St Matthew's**

### **Sunday Morning Services**

**1st 3rd 4th and 5th Sundays**

**8.30 am Eucharist (Said)**

**10.00 am Parish Eucharist with Choir and Children's Groups  
followed by tea and coffee in the foyer**

**2nd Sunday**

**8.30 am Eucharist (Said)**

**10.00am All Age Service**

### **Sunday Evening Service**

**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday 5.00pm Healing Service with Prayers**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday 6.00pm as announced**

### **Morning Prayer**

**Monday to Thursday 7.45 am**

**Tuesday**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday 3.30pm**



**Wednesday**

**10.00 am Holy Communion (Said)**

**Baptisms, Weddings and Banns of Marriage  
By arrangement with the Vicar**

### ***St Matthew's Vision***

***'Celebrating God's love throughout the whole  
community***

***By what we believe and do'.***

## The Vicar Writes...

Dear Friend,

Once again, there has been a mass shooting in the USA. We have family who live in South San Francisco and on a trip there many years ago, we visited Las Vegas. It's impossible to comprehend the scale of suffering, to imagine what it must have been like to be there, one moment enjoying the music and the next fleeing for one's life.

We may never know what turned Stephen Paddock into a mass murderer. What is certain is that at times when the darkness of evil seems overwhelming, the light of goodness, truth and self-sacrifice shines even more brightly. Acts of heroism, small and great, and the greatest act of love, a husband dying as he shielded his wife from the bullets, speak much louder than the terrifying sound of an automatic weapon. Goodness will always overcome evil; darkness must give way.

The month of September saw natural disasters befalling nations in an unprecedented way - storms, floods, hurricanes, an earthquake and a threatened volcanic eruption. In response to disasters and suffering - natural and man-made - people often ask "Where is God?". A better question to ask might be "Where are you, in relation to God?" As we recognize our fragility and mortality in the face of the awesome power of nature, let us also recognise the even more awesome power of our Creator God. Let us "awake out of sleep" and see the signs that our salvation is drawing nearer (Romans 13). Let us seek a fresh understanding of what it means to live in the fear of the Lord. The Bible describes this fear as the beginning of wisdom; which is another way of saying that it drives us into the arms of God as we turn away from everything in our lives that displeases him, and seek first his kingdom and righteousness.

The western world is moving ever further away from the purposes of God, pursuing a secular agenda and ignoring God's word. There has to be a willingness to change direction - the biblical word is repent - but the signs are not encouraging. The biggest problem this world is facing is not the threat of terror or global warming; what threatens our future more than anything else is the hardness of human hearts. An unwillingness to acknowledge God's sovereign power that is above all else seen in the weakness of the cross. Nothing has really changed since our ancestors took the decision to listen to the voice of the serpent rather than the Lord. The consequences of that are being played out in the drama of our existence to this day. Our response needs to be the same as it always has been: to raise our voices in prayer to the throne of God that his mercy might



yet prevail, that his word might yet be heeded and the course of this nation might yet be brought back to its God-fearing heritage and the many blessings that flowed from our rootedness in the Christian faith, based as it is on love, forgiveness and grace.

It is all too easy to fall into despair, but it is not inevitable. Let us keep our faith alive, our hope strong, and above all let us respond to death and destruction, however that may come, with a love that flows from God's Father heart seeking to draw this wayward world back to himself and his paths of peace.

With my love and prayers.

*Simon*



### CHORAL EVENSONG

On Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> October at 6.00pm there will be a service of Choral Evensong.  
Everyone is very welcome.

### QUIZ NIGHT

On Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> October at 6.30pm for 7.00pm we will be holding another Quiz Night with a Fish and Chip Supper. Tickets are £10.00 per person. Please come either on your own or as a team with your friends for an evening of guaranteed good food, good fun and good fellowship!

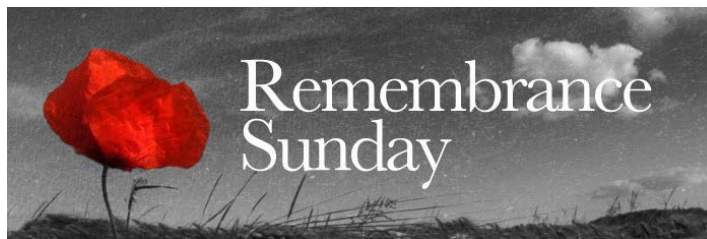


## ALL SOULS' SERVICE

On Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October at 4.00pm we will be holding a memorial service to remember and give thanks for those who have died. If you want a loved one remembered by name at this service, please let Simon or Terry in the office have the details. The service will be followed by refreshments in the hall. Everyone is warmly invited.

## SENIOR PARISHIONER'S LUNCH

On Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November we are having a lunch for Senior Parishioners. This will be a two-course meal, including a glass of wine, and will begin at 12.30pm. The cost will be £6. If you consider yourself to be a "Senior Parishioner" and would like to come, please contact Terry in the church office (020 8681 3147) for further details. Lifts are available.



Remembrance Sunday this year is on 12<sup>th</sup> November, when we shall have a special Service of Remembrance at 10.00am.

## CAKE SALE

We shall be holding a bring and buy cake sale after the Remembrance Sunday service to raise money for our December Toy Service. Please bring a cake to sell on that day. Thank you.



## TAIZÉ SERVICE

On Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November there will be a Taize style service at church at 6.00pm. Lots of candles and gentle singing and time for silent reflection - come and unwind!

## CAROL SINGING

I know, it's far too soon to be thinking about Christmas! But as this issue covers two months, here is advance notice that on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December we will be singing carols at East Croydon station from 5.00pm to 7.00pm to raise money for the homeless. I'm sure the choir would welcome anyone who enjoys singing carols to come and join them. Last year we were joined briefly by the new Archdeacon of Reigate!

## What are Kingdom Values? (A reflection)

Each month I receive an update from Issachar Ministries. This reflection in their latest issue is so relevant and challenging that I have been given permission by the author, Mrs Monica Hill, to include it in our magazine.

There has been a lot of talk recently in the media about “British values,” but there is no agreement on what are British values. It is surely time for Christians to join in this debate because historically the values of our nation have been derived from the Bible. This is overlooked by the media and



ignored by our politicians. A recent letter from an MP sent to our office listed Christian values as: “responsibility, hard work, charity, compassion, humility, tolerance and love” adding moral leadership and a sense of community. The Home

Secretary, Amber Rudd, recently defined British values as “tolerance, respect of democracy, individuality and the rule of law.” Few of these can be recognised as coming from the Bible. But kingdom values, as we have discovered by examining the Beatitudes, turn the values of the world upside down. The teaching of Jesus contrasted secular values with the values of the kingdom.

## What do we know of the Kingdom?

When we introduced this series in September 2016 we looked to see if there was any difference between the Kingdom of God (used 68 times by Luke) and the Kingdom of Heaven (used 32 times by Matthew) and agreed that they were most likely synonymous terms. But each contains the heart of Christ’s message. We pray the Lord’s Prayer and “your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6 v10) and we are encouraged to seek first the Kingdom of God. Matthew 6 tells us: So do not worry, saying, “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?” For the pagans run after all these things and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well (verses 31-33).

## Entering the Kingdom

We enter the kingdom by changing our mind-set; we think differently and turn our thinking to God and away from the world. We change direction and this invariably involves repentance and turning. John the Baptist’s message rings true for all ages “The time has come,” he said.” The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1 v 15).



Metanoia is a transliteration of the Greek, and can be defined as “a transformative change of heart; especially a spiritual conversion.” We then begin to see things through God’s eyes and our lives will change as Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.” When we accept the Good News the whole direction of our life changes. Jesus told Nicodemus about the need for a spiritual rebirth when he was asked the way into the Kingdom. “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, “You must be born again.” (John 3 v 5-7) We then become Children of God. “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.” (John 1 v 12 & 13)

### The Requirements of Jesus

First we must seek the Kingdom and God’s righteousness. “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Matthew 6 v 33) Then with God’s help we are called to be God’s ambassadors even preaching the Gospel wherever we go as Paul did. But we are not alone “for we are fellow worker’s in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building (I Corinthians 3 v 9)- we are co-workers with Christ. We prepare for the Kingdom by living according to the values of the Kingdom now.

### Anomalies and Paradoxes

When we think “Kingdomly” and willingly change our values to Kingdom values, we find there are many anomalies and paradoxes which we need to understand such as “For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.”(Matthew 16 v 25). Jesus’s teaching summed up many of these in his parables and there are others:

- As we are weakened we are made strong in him.
- We are in the world yet not of the world.
- Some of us suffer and are persecuted and murdered, yet we are more than conquerors.
- All things, even bad things in our life, work together for the good of those called to God’s purposes.

The mission statement of Issachar Ministries is, “Bringing the unchanging word of God to a changing world.” (Google their website)

## Praying for Croydon

### Emergency Services

*We have assured our emergency services that the Church in Croydon will pray for them.*

Our emergency crews perform a vital service to the community which is often taken for granted. They are on call 24 hours a day, in all weathers, and have to take risks and face devastating scenes which most of us will hopefully never have to encounter. The London Ambulance Service is co-ordinated centrally but the police and fire services each appoint a Borough Commander to oversee their work in Croydon.



Please pray:

1. For balancing speed of response with safety on the road.
2. For quick thinking and skill.
3. For professionalism, patience and sensitivity towards different cultures.
4. For good communication between services at times when they are required to work together.
5. For adequate pastoral care.
6. For our Borough Commanders in their leadership roles as they endeavour to manage budgets and oversee resources.





## **The Persecuted Church -for our prayers**

**For each magazine issue I provide information with a snapshot of reports from various charities working with the Persecuted Church. For the last issue I included some material which was particularly depressing, so here I've provided some "good news stories" from the Barnabas Fund.**

### **Maize seeds bring harvest for 3,300 hungry families**

I am now able to eat without stress but with joy and hope in my heart, knowing that you love me even though you didn't yet meet me (Mrs S Moyo( age 88).

Barnabas Fund gave Mrs Moyo 2kg of seeds and 5kg of lime fertiliser, from which she grew enough maize to feed her eight dependents (including orphan grandchildren) from

May to August. Then, they will have to rely again on food aid until the next harvest. After the worst drought in living memory, rains fell earlier this year and there was a harvest. But for many people it was not a very big one. BF has worked through local churches in Zimbabwe, distributing seeds and fertiliser to 3,319 families. They are continuing to provide desperately needed food aid. Project Joseph is currently providing a million meals a month in Zimbabwe.



### **Rising from the ruins – 10 new church buildings for Nepal communities**

"You don't know us, and you have never seen us, yet you gave because we believe in the same God."(A church leader, Nepal)



The terrible earthquakes of 2015 left 8,700 people dead and over 750, 000 homes destroyed or damaged. At least 783 churches across the country required rebuilding or repairs but government assessors ignored these. Barnabas has joined with the rebuilding effort, one project being the construction of ten churches in a mountainous district. All ten churches,

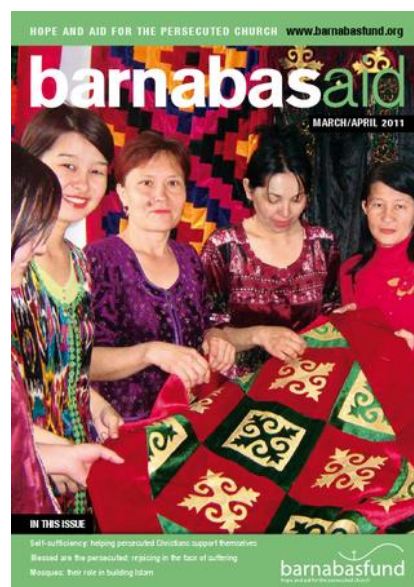
earthquake- resilient and doubling- up as community halls has now finished. Toilets and water storage will be added soon.

It has been quite a feat. Building materials had to be transported on foot over rugged terrain, and monsoon conditions hampered construction efforts. Until these were completed, believers met for worship in tents. Now, with solar powered lighting, night time meetings are possible.

### **Lives transformed at women's sewing and literacy centre**

"I was worried that I would have to work as a maid with my mother, as I belong to a poor and illiterate family, but I'm very grateful to the Lord who provided a great opportunity to learn stitching dresses, reading and writing," said Kinza to Barnabas Fund. "By the grace of God, my life has been transformed. Now I am a skilful lady, I have stitched more than 400 dresses till today, therefore I am able to earn for my family and for my better future." Poverty had deprived Kinza of an education; her father cleans sewers and her mother is a maid, work that carries a high risk of abuse for Christian women in Pakistan.

Now, she is one of 15-20 Christians blessed each year through a church- run sewing and literacy centre for women. The centre also provides Bible studies (Kinza has memorised several Psalms) and hygiene classes. Kinza's new skills have changed her life and Bible study has strengthened her faith. Each woman receives a sewing machine and a Bible when they complete their training.



### **Convert families' tractor boosts income generation**

**BF has enabled four Christian families – 19 people- to buy a second hand tractor and farm implements. The stony terrain of the 8.6 hectares they rent proved too difficult to work productively without machinery; now, they can farm efficiently, generate an income and even help their neighbours too.**

**The population of Kyrgyzstan is about 80% Muslim and discrimination against converts from Islam makes jobs extra hard to come by. A local project leader told Barnabas, "It is very difficult to find people to help Christians ...people regard us as betrayers of Islam." However, the four families now generate an income through farming together, and the stronger church is an example to the wider community. "Neighbours look at us and see that we work hard and have love and communication with each other.**

## Quotes/ reflections

Because of God's grace, failure is never final.

We never do anything so secretly but that it is in the presence of two witnesses: God and our own conscience.

Eternal life does not begin with death, it begins with faith. (Sam Shoemaker)

All that Jesus was and taught and did is but a revealing of the eternal God.

Life without God is like an unsharpened pencil- it has no point.

I have found the paradox that if I love till it hurts, then there is no hurt, but only much love. (Mother Teresa)

Religions are man's search for God; Christianity is God's search for man.

It is not the parts of Scripture that I don't understand that worry me, it is the parts that I do! (Mark Twain)

There are many ways of defining what a Christian is. The best one is this; a Christian is one who takes orders from Jesus Christ as Lord.

(David L. Edwards formerly Dean of Kings College Cambridge)

A Chinese man who read the Bible for the first time was astonished into declaring, "Whoever made this book made me; it knows everything that is in my heart." This is certainly true of the saying of Jesus. It is ancient, yet modern; it cuts through the centuries and applies to modern lives in the modern world.

"Take Lord, into Thyself, my sense of self, and let it vanish utterly. Take Lord, my life, live Thou Thy life through me. I live no longer, Lord, but in me now, Thou livest. Between Thee and me, my God, there is no longer room for I and mine." (From the Oxford Book of Prayers and quoted by one of the contributors in the current York Course, "Tough Talk, Hard Sayings of Jesus", which some home groups are currently studying)

Constantly choose rather to want less than to have more. (Thomas A Kempis)

Keeping up appearances is the most expensive thing in the world.

Luxury: something you don't really need and can't do without.

Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind. (Dr Seuss)



## Story behind the hymn “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”

Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning, great is Your faithfulness. “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, ‘Therefore I hope in Him!’ Lamentations 3:22-24



You don’t need to be rescued from life-threatening danger or see God’s miraculous provision in the direst of financial crises to truly know the faithfulness of the Lord. God remains faithful day in and day out in the largest and smallest of circumstances. Thomas Chisholm (1866- 1960) wrote “*Great Is Thy Faithfulness*” as a testament to God’s faithfulness through his very ordinary life.

Born in a log cabin in Franklin, Kentucky, Chisholm became a Christian when he was twenty-seven and entered the ministry when he was thirty-six, though poor health forced him to retire after just one year. During the rest of his life, Chisholm spent many years living in New Jersey and working as a life insurance agent. Still, even with a desk job, he wrote nearly 1,200 poems throughout his life, including several published hymns. Chisholm explained toward the end of his life, “My income has not been large at any time due to impaired health in the earlier years which has followed me on until now. Although I must not fail to record here the unfailing faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God and that He has given me many wonderful displays of His providing care, for which I am filled with astonishing gratefulness.”

Great Is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father!  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not  
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

### Refrain:

Great Is Thy faithfulness,  
Great Is Thy faithfulness,  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided  
Great is Thy Faithfulness, Lord unto me!

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,  
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above,  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

## The Grecian Chorus by Barney Powell

Who wants to be King/Leader of a country? Not many in the West, where the rulers are accountable to the people – a situation in which the frailties of the democratic system are ruthlessly exposed. It's different in autocratic states where the people are unquestionably accountable to the rulers. The difference, as Alan Coren pointed out, is with democracy you get to choose your dictators after they've told you what you think it is you want to hear, whereas with more robust, enlightened regimes, the bigger brothers realise that most people prefer firm instructions. Under autocratic rule, performance feedback is neither expected nor encouraged – it is much more likely to be suppressed. In democracies, performance feedback is constantly overwhelming from all sides. It's not just the press railing from multiple partisan positions; it's the orchestration of the rulers' spoken words by an expanding Grecian Chorus of commentators – in the UK this is instantly forthcoming from several fully licensed guards of our elected guardians of the law and finance – in the ominous tradition of classical tragedy and satire.



The guards have a certain protected status and go by righteous and magniloquent names such as The Office of Budgetary Responsibility, The Institute of Fiscal Studies, The National Audit Office, The Serious Fraud Office, the Centre for Policy Studies, The Centre for Social Justice and The Church of England (often derided by government as 'Our Lady of Perpetual Interference' rather than 'The Conscience of the Nation'). Most of these are held in medium esteem and their pronouncements command rather more



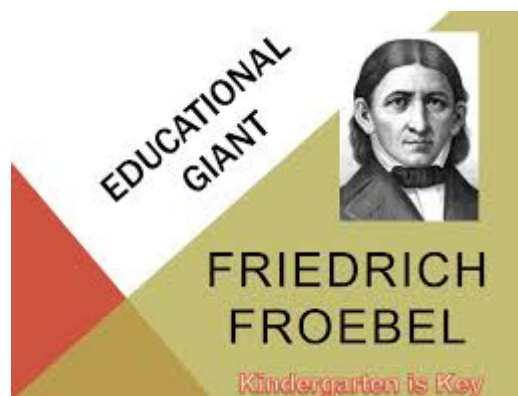
attention than those of the 'noble lies' and 'pious fictions' with which our politicians are daily forced to resolve their often impossible dilemmas.

Which brings us ineluctably to the great philosophical question of the age: where does true authority lie? Whence is it derived? And how is it conferred? The answer to the first two parts of the question is relatively straightforward: in democracies, it is lent; in autocracies, it is taken. The answer to the last part is somewhat more problematic. Part of the answer is



that authority is conferred by mandate – but by whom and on whom? In democracies, by the will of the majority of the people on its elected representatives; in autocracies, by usurpers of power and control over subject people on themselves. Somehow, amidst the current clamour from The

Commentariat, the sovereign self intuits that authority cannot be parted with, that power should never speak too stridently to truth.



Friedrich Froebel knew this and

I knew it first in kindergarten  
Planted by this uncle of games  
In a circle of chanting and dancing

There was a natural order of celebration,  
When I fell to listening and then rehearsing  
Rhymes and minting shape and colour of new words,

Flung up with laughter's understanding  
Like a brick or ball to bounce or fall  
Into the way of knowledge and discovery,

Freedom to develop such an early anarchy  
That each of us would come to be  
His and her own entire authority.

This kindly uncle was the pedagogue of play,  
Who sharpened wits with song and drove  
The train of thought exultantly along.

## Some observations/ reflections about science & the Bible from the current edition of United Christian Broadcasters (UCB) “Word for Today.”

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1 v 1)

### The Bible tells us that the earth floats in space.

There was a time when people thought it sat on a large animal of giant. But 1500 years before Christ, the patriarch Job said, “He ...hangeth the earth upon nothing” (Job 26 v 7). Science didn’t discover that the earth hangs upon nothing until 1650 AD.

### The Bible tells us that the earth is composed of atoms.

“By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen are not made of things which are visible” (Hebrews 11 v 3). In recent years science discovered that everything we see is composed of things we can’t see – namely invisible atoms.

### The Bible tells us that the earth is round.

He .... sits above the circle of the earth”. (Isaiah 40 v 22) The word *circle* comes from a Hebrew word which can also be translated as “circuit.” The book of Isaiah was written about 700 years before the birth of Christ. That’s



at least 300 years before Aristotle suggested in his book *On the Heavens* that the earth might be a sphere. It was another 2000 years later, at a time when science believed the earth was flat, that Scripture inspired Christopher Columbus to sail around the world. He wrote: “It was the Lord who put it into my mind ...I could feel His hand upon me ...There is no question the inspiration came from the Holy Scriptures.” (from his diary, in reference to the discovery of the New World)

### The Bible teaches oceanography

In the nineteenth century, Matthew Fontaine Maury, who is called the “Father of Modern Oceanography and Naval Meteorology,” read the words of David describing paths of the sea” (Psalm 8 v 8). He said, “If God said there are paths in the sea, I am going to find them.” Today we are indebted to his discovery of the warm and cold ocean currents. His book on oceanography remains a basic text on the subject and is still used in universities.

## Christians who have had a huge impact on society

### Florence Nightingale

Florence Nightingale was born in Florence, Italy, on May 12, 1820. Part of a wealthy family, Nightingale defied the expectations of the time and pursued what she saw as her God-given calling of nursing.



Her greatest achievement was to transform nursing into a respectable profession for women and in 1860, she established the first professional training school for nurses, the Nightingale Training School at St Thomas' Hospital. She campaigned tirelessly to improve health standards, publishing over 200 books, reports and pamphlets on hospital planning and organisation which are still widely read and respected today, including her most famous work *Notes on Nursing: What It Is and*

*What It Is Not.*

Florence's influence on today's nursing ranges from her ward designs (known as Nightingale Wards), which were developed in response to her realisation that hospital buildings themselves could affect the health and recovery of patients, through to pioneering infection control measures and the championing of a healthy diet as a key factor for recovery. Florence also believed in the need for specialist midwifery nurses and established a School of Midwifery nursing at King's College Hospital which became a model for the country.

Florence is also credited with inventing the pie chart and was the first woman to be elected to the Royal Statistical Society. She was also the first woman to be awarded the Freedom of the City of London, which she received in 1909. She inspired the founding of the International Red Cross which still awards the Florence Nightingale Medal for nurses who have given exceptional care to the sick and wounded in war or peace.

Born in an era when middle-class women were expected to simply make a good marriage and raise a family, Florence sensed a 'calling' from God at an early age and believed she was destined to do something greater with her life. As a child, she was very academic and particularly interested in mathematics. Her religion gave her a strong sense of moral duty to help the poor and, over time, she held a growing belief that nursing was her God-given vocation. She was also perhaps set to follow the family tradition of reform mindedness, such as the example set by her maternal grandfather who was an anti-slavery campaigner.

Paid nursing suffered a reputation as a job for poor, often elderly women, and the popular image was one of drunkenness, bad language and a

casual attitude to patients. Despite parental concern, she persisted in her ambition, reading anything she could about health and hospitals. Eventually she persuaded them to allow her to take three months' nursing training at an inspirational hospital and school in Dusseldorf. Aged 33, she then became superintendent of a hospital for 'gentlewomen' in Harley Street, London.

### The Crimean War

In March 1854, reports flooded in about the dreadful conditions and lack of medical supplies suffered by injured soldiers fighting the Crimean War. The Minister of War, a social acquaintance, invited Florence to oversee the introduction of female nurses into the military hospitals in Turkey. With a party of 38 nurses, Florence arrived in Scutari that November and set about organising the hospitals to improve supplies of food, blankets and beds, as well as the general conditions and cleanliness. The comforting sight of her checking all was well at night earned her the name 'Lady of the Lamp', along with the undying respect of the British soldiers.



The introduction of female nurses to the military hospitals was deemed an outstanding success, Florence returned to Britain a heroine, and donations poured in to the Nightingale Fund. The money collected enabled Florence to continue her reform of nursing in the civil hospitals of Britain after the war. Determined that the medical mistakes of the two-year long war were never repeated, she vividly communicated the needs for medical reform using statistical charts which showed that more men had died from disease than from their wounds. She then instigated a Royal Commission into the health of the army which led to a large number of improvements and saved the lives of many.

Despite often being confined to her sick bed, by what we now believe was a bacterial infection known as brucellosis, Florence continued as a driving force behind the scenes, writing some 13000 letters as part of her campaigns. She met Queen Victoria on many occasions and exchanged correspondence for over thirty years. Florence was awarded the Royal Red Cross in 1883. Then in 1907 she was the first woman to receive the Order of Merit, Britain's highest civilian decoration.

Florence died aged 90, on 13th August 1910, and was buried alongside the graves of other family members in East Wellow, Hampshire.



## **“Non-believers outnumber the faithful by the widest margin yet”**

I read this piece in “The Times” early September. I’ve edited it and then added some of my thoughts at the end. At a recent home group Bible study we discussed how the secular-humanist agenda which pervades all strata of our society is now extremely powerful, insidious and persuasive; and how Christians are becoming increasingly marginalised and ridiculed.

People with religious faith are outnumbered in Britain by a record number of non-believers. If one can believe statistics the proportion of Britons declaring that they have no religion has risen from 48% in 2015 to 53% the British Social Attitudes survey has found. It is only the second time religious people have found themselves in the minority and is the widest gap recorded by the annual study. In 1983, when the survey of about 3000 people was first conducted by the National Centre for Social Research, 69% declared a religious faith. This dipped to 49% in 2009 before recovering to 54% in 2011, but is now at a record low of 47%.

The fall has been driven by young people. In 2015, 62% of those aged between 18 and 24 said they had no religion; this increased to 71% last year. The figures make difficult reading for the Church of England. The proportion describing themselves as Anglican has dropped from 30% in 2000 to 15% last year. This falls to just 3% of 18-24 year olds.

In 1983, 67% of Britons considered themselves Christians; this is now 41%. More than 40% of those brought up by Christian parents have no faith by adulthood. Roger Harding, head of public attitudes at the National Centre for Social Research, said: “With so many younger people not having a religion it’s hard to see this change abating anytime soon.” He added that the figures “should cause all religious leaders pause for thought.”

- We mustn’t despair. Jesus said that in the time preceding His return we must be “salt and light” (“Sermon on the Mount” Matthew 5 ).
- Pray for our church leaders, clergy in the South Croydon/ Addiscombe Group of churches, and National church leaders.
- Encourage each other as we journey through life.
- **Deepen our relationship with the Lord through (more) prayer and Bible Study; a wide range of daily Bible reading notes is available.**
- **Be a blessing to someone each day and make a difference wherever God has placed you.**



## **“In the wake of the Grenfell Tower tragedy” by Revd Richard Bewes.**

“...or those who died...do you think they were more guilty than all the others? (Luke 13 v 4) It can be earthquakes... floods...terrorism, or – as in the case of London so tragically on June 12<sup>th</sup> – a terrible fire disaster at Grenfell tower block. The question “Why?” is inevitably on our minds. My own mind goes back to another account of a tower disaster, recorded in the Bible. 18 people had died when Jerusalem’s Tower of Siloam had fallen on them. This tragedy-following the wicked killing of other innocents under the despotic Pontius Pilate –was causing citizens in Jerusalem to come to Jesus, with the same question- “Why?”

The Lord’s answer to His questioners does not lessen our distress at calamities here in London. But- though deeply grieved- we are not so shocked that we are completely devoid of understanding. For Scripture teaches us that adversity is firmly built into a Christian view of life on this earth:

1. We are all living in a fallen world. Our present world- order is not as originally created. Basically, we became a race of rebels, fallen from our custodianship over Creation- so bringing both ourselves and the Creation itself into the frustration of “bondage to decay“(Romans 8v 18-23). Even the ground was affected (Genesis 3 v 17 & 18). In our imperfection, judgements are faulty. Mistakes are made. Accidents take place, in which innocent people are both hurt and killed.
2. We are all living in a temporary home. When questioned in the face of Jerusalem’s tower disaster, Jesus explained that those killed were no more “guilty” to die, than anyone else. But **His words give the warning: whenever and however it happens, it is inevitable that all of us will die one day. We should give thought to that, and prepare ourselves in all humility.**
3. We are all living on borrowed time. Jesus went on to speak of a fruitless fig tree (Luke 13 v 6-9). Should it be cut down? No, give it a **year’s reprieve. The lesson was clear. None of us can consider that this life is ours forever. We are all living, if you like, under a reprieve. We do not know when our particular time will come to an end. We need to consider how best to use the life we have now.**
4. We are all living as debtors to love. People hung on Jesus’ words because they knew He had solid answers for this world’s sorrows. Indeed, He was the answer, for at the cross we meet the love of the suffering God Himself. One prayer must be that, out of the trauma of London’s present troubles, there will be both helpers and sufferers themselves who experience this, and respond.

## Bible themed references – “Guidance”

“Show me your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; on you I wait all the day.” (Psalm 25 v 4 & 5)

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” (Proverbs 3 v 3 – 6)

“Fear not for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41 v 10)

“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” (Deuteronomy 29 v 29)

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.” (James 1 v 5 & 6)

For “who has known the mind of Christ that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2 v 16)

**“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He , the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.” (John 16 v 12 & 13)**



## The Devon Diary

Late summer greetings from South Devon – although our recent sunny Septembers seem to have been consigned to history!



We keep abreast of what is happening at St Matthews and in Croydon through the Parish Magazine and contacts with a number of friends from Park Hill who kindly visit us. We are always pleased to see old faces so if you are coming this way, please get in touch.

This year has been very much a Tale of Two Gardens which in the end has worked out very well albeit being a lot of hard work. In our Newton Ferrers house the back garden was taken over by builders on January 2 and they were working there full time until May. Being a steeply sloping garden overlooking the water meant that retaining walls were needed and Molly bought a JCB excavator for the works but wasn't allowed to drive it. We lost count of the number of plants we put in but it was over 400.

In Yelverton we agreed to open our garden for St Luke's Hospice in May together with our 2 neighbours. We had no real idea how many visitors to expect but in the end more than 450 turned up together with a good number of children and assorted dogs. On the day, looking out of the window before breakfast we could see a lot of bees flying around – one hive had decided to swarm that day. Fortunately they settled on a tree and stayed there during the day and proved an added attraction but we could have done without it. With another friend doing the refreshments altogether we raised around £3,500 on the day.

Talking of bees, ours are on their final warning! In addition to swarming the weather was not kind during a lot of the summer so no honey this year – it is just as well we have a fair amount left from last year. We have continued to be pretty busy with the local churches helping with gardening, cleaning, flag flying PCC and choir. One of the churches in our benefice is starting 'Champing', overnight camping rather akin to 'glamping'. It will be interesting to see if it works- it has engendered quite a lot of interest in the local press! We continue to enjoy our regular days out and have managed to find a number of new and interesting places to visit as well as visiting some of our well regarded restaurants. Anno domini means that we are not quite as active as we used to be but we still do a lot of walking as well as gardening and the odd game of tennis.

Very best wishes from us all

Molly, John and David Stratford (former members of St Matthew's)

## Framework for generosity

At last year's Christmas house party at Pilgrim Hall (Uckfield) which I attended with my daughter, Caroline, each guest received a different pocket devotional book by Selwyn Hughes whose reflections/meditations I often include in the church magazine. Caroline was given one entitled "Perfect Peace" but, sadly, she didn't have the chance to peruse it because (as most readers know) she died in my arms from heart failure the morning we were due to leave. This book (which I'm now reading) is a compilation of Selwyn's notes and meditations on many aspects of the book of Proverbs which formed the basis of several editions of the bi-monthly reading notes entitled "Every Day with Jesus" – now reprinted after his death ten years ago. I have edited this item but, nonetheless, I hope you find it challenging?

First, decide that nothing you possess is your own but that everything you have belongs to God. You are now ready to manage His possessions, not as you like but as He likes. Second, go over your life and see what can be classed as your needs and what merely constitutes your wants. Beyond your needs, what you have belongs to the needs of others. How do you decide what can be classed as your needs? Go over your life item by item and ask the Lord for directions, not forgetting the need of savings! Third, fix it as an axiom in your mind that you will be generous to people not to get a blessing but to be a blessing.

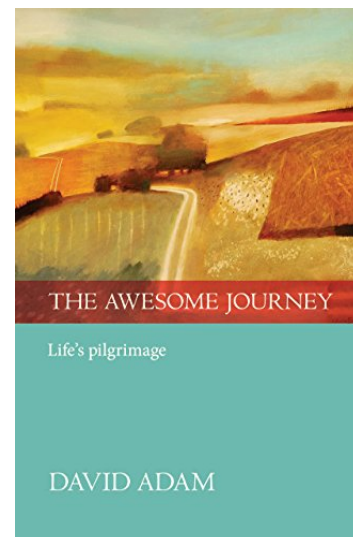
My fourth suggestion is this; give at least a tenth of your earnings to God's work. The giving of a tithe is seen by many as legalistic, but the tithe is really an acknowledgement that all that we have, including the remaining nine-tenths, belongs to God. Fifth, make your Will under God's direction and maintain a balance between responsibility for your family and the continuing work of God. Sixth, remember that the principle of generosity applies not only to your treasure but also to your talents and your time. Seventh, accept the smallest



opportunity to be generous as a training ground for faithfulness. Why does the Bible make so much of generosity? Because the truly generous are truly wise. One person has defined generosity as "giving with a warm hand." Who likes to receive anything from a cold hand? The opposite of generosity is selfishness and just as generosity is a facet of wisdom so selfishness is a facet of foolishness.

## **“The Awesome Journey- Life’s pilgrimage” by David Adams**

A friend recommended this book and it is the best one that I’ve ever read (now twice) about life’s journey with all its joys, trials, sadness, challenges etc. I wanted to give a detailed review but space doesn’t permit it; instead, I’ve included some excellent quotes for reflection. You are welcome to borrow my copy or check on Amazon for cheap copies?



**David Adams is one of the best- loved figures in Celtic spirituality. The author of many successful books, he was for 13 years Vicar of the Holy Island of Lindisfarne. He continues to lecture, speak and act as a spiritual director. He draws on a lifetime of Christian pilgrimage and reflects on Biblical encounters with the divine and offers profound insights eg on grief and glory, emptiness and fulfilment, repentance and forgiveness etc that will transform the way we live and relate to God here and now.**

**The question addressed to Adam and Eve, “Where are you (Genesis 3 v 9)? is primarily about humankind’s relationship to God. He calls us by name.”**

**“Our awareness of God most often comes through a deeper perception of what is around us. When we open our eyes to the beauty and diversity of our world and our hearts to the mystery of our being, we become aware of a “beyond” in our midst. I (Adams) often think of the opening lines of Gerard Manley Hopkins’s poem “God’s Grandeur.”**

**The world is charged with the grandeur of God  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil.**

**“Our journey should lead us to know that we are loved and are loved with an everlasting love. Righteousness, or right relatedness, is not about being perfect or about what we may achieve, but about living in a right relationship with God through His grace. This can only happen because he calls us to himself.”**

**“It is not that God is absent from where we are; it is we who are absent from God. We need to attend to him wholeheartedly.”**

**“God is with you. God never leaves you. In all your journeys God is present. Speak to God as you would to a friend. Enjoy his presence. Every time your mind wanders, affirm, “You Lord are here; you are with me.” Seek to wait upon God, as God has waited upon you.”**



## Our fascinating history and language (Part 2)

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food, causing lead poisoning and death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.

# Upper Crust

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or "The Upper Crust".

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up.



Hence "Holding a Wake".

England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people, so they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a bone-house and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realised they had been burying people alive. So they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, thread it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the graveyard shift) to listen for the bell; thus someone could be,

"Saved by the Bell" or was considered a "Dead Ringer".



# St Matthew's Church Christmas Tree Festival

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November  
with our Christmas Fair  
to Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2017  
concluding with Carol Concert**

Come and see our wonderful display of  
Christmas Trees with a musical theme  
by local community groups

Opening Times	
Saturdays	10.00 - 3.00pm
Sundays	12.00 - 2.00pm, 4.30pm - 6.00pm
Weekdays	1.30 - 3.00pm

Chichester Road, Croydon, CR0 5NQ

## Jubilate Choir 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Christmas Concert

*World Premiere of Ubi Caritas by Paul Carr*

(Composed to mark the Choir's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

*Handel: Chandos Anthem No. 1 and Hallelujah Chorus from Messiah  
Including Festive Christmas Music*

Conductor: Janet Haney

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2017 at 7.30pm

St Matthew's Church, Chichester Road, Croydon, CR0 5NQ

Tickets at the door:

Adults £12, Children (16 and under) £3

Tel: 07973 208546

[www.jubilatechoir.co.uk](http://www.jubilatechoir.co.uk)

[info@jubilatechoir.co.uk](mailto:info@jubilatechoir.co.uk)



**CROYDON BACH CHOIR**

*Come and Sing!*

Music Director : Tim Horton  
Accompanist: William Munks

A one-day workshop for singers

Sir Edward Elgar

**The Kingdom**

10:00 am until 6:00 pm  
Saturday, 11th November 2017

Places are strictly limited so pre-booking is essential. See overleaf for details.

St Matthew's Church  
Chichester Road  
Croydon  
CR0 5NQ

[www.croydonbachchoir.org](http://www.croydonbachchoir.org)



There was a clergyman who was an avid golfer. One Sunday was a picture- perfect day for golf, and the Vicar could not resist the temptation. He rang his curate and told him that he was too ill to attend church. Then he packed up the car, and drove three hours to a golf course where no one would



recognise him. Happily, he began to play the course. But an angel up above was watching the minister and was quite perturbed. He went to God and said , “Look at the vicar, he should be punished for what he’s doing.” God nodded in agreement .The vicar teed up on the first hole. He swung and the ball sailed effortlessly through the air and landed right in the cup three hundred and fifty yards away; a perfect hole- in- one. The vicar was amazed and overjoyed. The angel was a little shocked and, turning to God said, “begging your pardon, but I thought you were going to punish him?” and God smiled. “Think about it, who can he tell!?”

### Signs and notices that say it all

Sign on a door: Push. If that doesn’t work. Pull. If that doesn’t work, we’re closed.

In front of a church: Don’t give up. Moses was once a basket case.

Notice on a health food shop window: Closed due to illness.

In an office: After tea break, staff should empty the teapot and stand upside down on the draining board.

At an optometrist’s office: if you don’t see what you’re looking for, you’ve come to the right place.

Note that the forthcoming Fasting and Prayer Conference includes meals.

The prayers for peace this month have been cancelled because of the arrival shortly of the new Rector.

- An elderly woman died last month. Having never married, she requested that there be no pallbearers. In her handwritten instructions for her memorial service, she wrote; “They wouldn’t take me out while I was alive, so I don’t want them to take me out when I’m dead.”
- The oldest computer can be traced back to Adam and Eve. Not surprisingly, it was an Apple. But it had an extremely limited memory; just one byte and everything crashed.

## **The Parish Church of St Matthew**

(a member of Churches Together in Addiscombe)

<b>Church Address</b>	Chichester Road Croydon CR0 5NQ	8681 3147
<b>Parish Office Email Address</b>	churchadmin@stmatthew.org.uk	
<b>Website</b>	www.stmatthew.org.uk	
<b>Parish Administrator</b>	Terry Mitchell	8681 3147
<b>Hall Bookings</b>	Contact Parish Administrator	
<b>Vicar</b>	Revd Simon Foster revsimon@stmatthew.org.uk	8688 5055
<b>Readers</b>	Paul Parmenter Alison Radford	8689 5874
<b>Director of Music &amp; Choir</b>	Michael Strange	
<b>Southwark Pastoral</b>	Carolyn Tweed	
<b>Auxiliaries</b>	Sue Collins	
<b>Churchwardens</b>	Stephen Collingwood Dr Rohini Abhayaratne	8686 2815
<b>PCC Secretary</b>	David Williams	8768 3599
<b>Treasurer</b>	Terry Mitchell	
<b>Gift Aid Recorder</b>	Terry Mitchell	
<b>Sacristan</b>	Gillian Bridger	
<b>Assistant Sacristan</b>	Jerry Savage	
<b>Electoral Roll Officer</b>	David Williams	
<b>Magazine Editor</b>	Steve Tucker stephen.tucker123@btinternet.com	8681 6872

### **Parish Committees and Organisations**

<b>Young Church (Sunday 10am)</b>	Judith Spencer-Gregson	8688 6640
<b>Fundraising Team</b>	Jane Passfield	
<b>Fellowship Team</b>	Lucasta Grayson	
<b>Communications Team</b>	Revd Simon Foster	
<b>Fabric Team</b>	Peter Mulrenan	8688 2753
<b>Finance Team</b>	Richard Tweed	
<b>Pastoral Team</b>	Revd Simon Foster	

### **Youth Groups and Clubs**

<b>Rainbow Guides (Wednesday 6.10-7.30)</b>	Zoë Sheehan	07855 779458
<b>Brownies (Wednesday 6.30-8.00pm)</b>	Laura Easton	
<b>Ten O'Clock Club (Tuesday 10-12noon)</b>		
<b>Cubs (Tuesday 7-8.30pm)</b>	Michael Smaldon	
<b>Scouts (Tuesday 7.30-9.00pm)</b>	Chris Iouannou	07729 303130
<b>Guides (Wednesday 6.45-8.30pm)</b>	Zoë Sheehan	07855 779458
<b>Beavers (Friday 6-7.15pm)</b>		

For details of other activities taking place at church during the week that include Aerobics, Bach Choir, Philharmonic Choir, Breathe Easy, Children's Ballet, Children's Drama and U3A Groups. Please contact the organisers direct. Details from the Parish Office which is usually open Monday to Friday 9.30am -12.30pm.