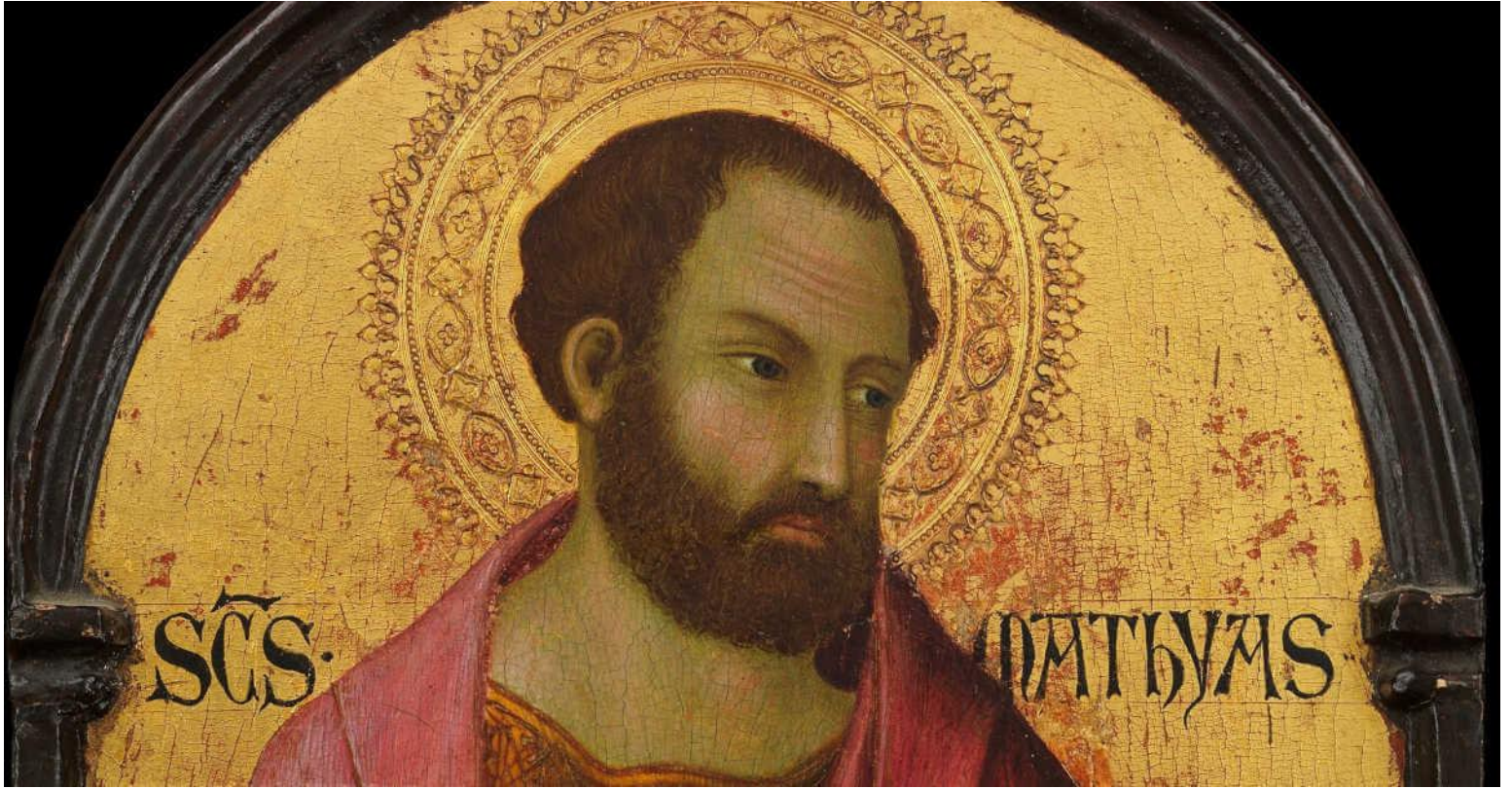


**Tuesday 14 May 2024**

# St Matthias the Apostle



After Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus, the apostles brought their number back to twelve by choosing Matthias to replace him. He was chosen by lot from amongst the disciples.

The author of the Acts of the Apostles sees apostleship differently from St Paul and seems to prefer the understanding of the gospel of Luke. The number had to be restored so that they might 'sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel'. It was conditional that they had to have been with Jesus during his earthly ministry and had witnessed the resurrection. (The point of being chosen by lot, rather than by some democratic method, indicated the election or choosing by God, rather than by mortals.)

**Sermon** © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

**Prayers of intercession** © [LayAnglicana](#) (adapted).

**Liturgy** © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

**Bible readings** © The publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration are included at the end.

The hymn can be accessed via a YouTube link. Please click on the links.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,

<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

## The welcome

**HYMN** [When the saints go marching in](#) (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

**All Amen.**

The Lord be with you

**All And also with you.**

## The Preparation

**All Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,

with all your soul, with all your mind,

and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**All Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

Christ calls us to share the heavenly banquet of his love with all the saints in earth and heaven. Therefore, knowing our unworthiness and sin, let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**All** Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
we have sinned against you  
and against our neighbour  
in thought and word and deed,  
through negligence, through weakness,  
through our own deliberate fault.  
We are truly sorry  
and repent of all our sins.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
who died for us,  
forgive us all that is past  
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life  
to the glory of your name.  
Amen.

Almighty God,  
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,  
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in life eternal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All** Amen.

## **The Gloria**

**All** Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.  
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:

receive our prayer.

**For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.**

### **The Collect for St Matthias**

Almighty God,  
who in the place of the traitor Judas  
chose your faithful servant Matthias  
to be of the number of the Twelve:  
preserve your Church from false apostles  
and, by the ministry of faithful pastors and teachers,  
keep us steadfast in your truth;  
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.

**All Amen.**

### **First reading**

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred and twenty persons) and said, 'Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus—for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.' (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. This became known to all the residents of Jerusalem, so that the field was

called in their language *Hakeldama*, that is, 'Field of Blood'.) 'For it is written in the book of Psalms, "Let his homestead become desolate, and let there be no one to live in it"; and "Let another take his position of overseer." So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection.'

So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. Then they prayed and said, 'Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.' And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles. *Acts 1:15-26*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## Second reading

A reading from the St Paul's First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself. I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgement before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God. I have applied all this to Apollos and myself for your benefit, brothers and sisters, so that you may learn through us the meaning of the saying, 'Nothing beyond what is written,' so that none of you will be puffed up in favour of one against another. For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift? *1 Corinthians 4:1-7*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 2 O the bitter shame and sorry**

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)



## Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

**All**    **Glory to you O Lord.**

Jesus said to his disciples, 'As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.'

*John 15:9-17*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All**    **Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

Today our worship remembers St Matthias, the apostle who replaced Judas after his suicide. To the Jews, the idea of *twelve* disciples was important, for it supplied important echoes of the twelve tribes of Israel or the twelve minor prophets. Losing Judas was awful, for a many formerly a friend had become the instrument of Jesus' betrayal, but his death meant they also lost the sense of wholeness the number twelve offered.

Although Matthias was not appointed an apostle until after Christ's death, he was clearly a close friend of Jesus before. Tradition suggests that his own Christian discipleship began quite early in Jesus' ministry, when he first followed Jesus, then made a commitment, which he followed with baptised. He had faith in Jesus just as we do.

Matthias was chosen by lot which, to our modern minds, is a method that sounds uncomfortably close to gambling. In fact, the passage in Acts is saturated with the idea of the disciples praying intensely beforehand, but, nevertheless, no modern church would choose or elect using such a method; we would probably discuss then vote.

Jesus speaks into the discomfort we feel about the story from Acts when he says, 'You did not choose me but I chose you.' He suggests an element of divine control here: we may think we're doing things because we follow our own decisions but, in fact, he implanted the divine desires that underpinned the choice(s) we make.

All of us need to make choices ... and do so all the time. Many of those choices are trivial: 'What do I eat for breakfast; do I wear a blue shirt today or a white one?' and so on. Other choices may be important but most do not bear a great weight of consequence. In fact, our largest and most important choices generally involve relationships because it is that way we share our lives. We choose the people whom we trust; we decide to whom we give time and, most importantly, we must choose the people whom we love.

Love is the best lens through which to make decisions because it involves God and 'God is love' (1 John 4:16). That's why, if Jesus is God, then inevitably when he chose us, the choice would have involved love.

'Choosing in love' is *not* the same as operating on the level of emotion. The Bible is very clear that love is always more about doing than feeling.

'Choosing in love' may seem a strange concept but is usually quite simple in practice. It requires that every decision starts with a series of short questions, 'What does God want?' and 'What would love look like in this situation?' If that questioning is difficult, try reciting St Paul's hymn to love from 1 Corinthians 13:

Love is patient;

love is kind;

love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude.

It does not insist on its own way;

it is not irritable or resentful;

it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.

It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends.            *1Corinthians 13:4-8*

then, against each decision, ask questions like, 'Which choice will result in a person who is more patient?' or 'Which choice will make me more kind?' or 'Am I even considering this choice because I'm starting from a position of envy; will the result be something I can boast about; will it make me more arrogant or lead to my being / seeming rude?' The actual questions will of course vary according to context, but the general idea is obvious enough.

We will have choices today, tomorrow, and every day. In all these ways, and against every choice, start by wanting to be Godly and, as a means to that end, consider what entails love.

## Prayers of intercession

### The Church of Christ

Lord, we pray for all who lead worship in your Church, for all those ordained as bishops, priests, or deacons. We also pray for those who have not felt your call to be ministers in your Church but who yet have the desire to share their love for you outwardly during worship.

Draw from your disciples in the congregation a steady stream of those able to assist in any way, all of it underpinned by prayer. And may they find that, as they grow more involved in the outward celebration of your presence, in fact they grow also in your inward and spiritual grace.

Lord, help us like Matthias to serve you in the way you most desire from us:

**All** In your mercy, hear our prayer.

### Creation, human society, the Sovereign and those in authority

Lord, who are the honoured guests in your tent? Who may commune with those who are lovingly embraced as the union of friends? Help us to be numbered among those who speak the truth from our hearts and do not slander with our tongues; among those who give their word to their neighbour and do not go back on their promises; among those who recognise the outcast as the one whom they need, who forgive to seventy times seven; those who depend on the mercy of God and live the highest law that is love.

Lord, help us like Matthias to serve you in the way you most desire from us:

**All** In your mercy, hear our prayer.

### The local community

Lord, when we think there is no one in our community able to carry out a certain task, give us the grace to look again. Give us the inspiration to look at our neighbours in a new light, and to see in them the possibilities that you see. And then if the task is in accordance with your will, we ask you to inspire them, the overlooked, to offer themselves up for service.

Lord, help us like Matthias to serve you in the way you most desire from us:

**All** In your mercy, hear our prayer.



**Those who suffer**

Lord, let us not fear the suffering that may come with giving ourselves to you and acknowledging that fact to the world. We bring before you all those martyrs in the past, who suffered for their faith. We bring before you most urgently the plight of Christians in countries where they are now being persecuted to the point of violence. We ask you both to fortify them and also to soften the hearts of their enemies against them.

Lord, help us like Matthias to serve you in the way you most desire from us:

**All** In your mercy, hear our prayer.

**The communion of saints**

Lord, we thank you for all your saints of every time and place. May we be filled with the Spirit that blessed them, so that, having shared their faith on earth, we may also know their peace in your kingdom.

Lord, help us like Matthias to serve you in the way you most desire from us:

**All** In your mercy, hear our prayer.

Merciful Father,

**All** accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

**The peace**

May the God of peace sanctify you:  
may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness  
that you may be blameless before him  
at the coming of our Lord Jesus with his saints.

The peace of the Lord be always with you:

**All** And also with you.

**HYMN 3** O Lord, your tenderness

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

**HYMN 4** Only by grace can we enter

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

# The Dismissal

May Christ who makes saints of sinners,  
who has transformed those we remember today,  
raise and strengthen you that you may transform the world;  
and the blessing of God the Almighty:  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with you now and remain with you always.

**All**    **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**All**    **In the name of Christ.**

**Amen.**

## The Liturgy of the Sacrament

### Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

**All and also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**All We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All It is right to give thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy  
that we should always sing of your glory,  
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.  
For you are the hope of the nations,  
the builder of the city that is to come.  
Your love made visible in Jesus Christ  
brings home the lost,  
restores the sinner and gives dignity to the despised.  
In his face your light shines out,  
flooding lives with goodness and truth,  
gathering into one in your kingdom  
a divided and broken humanity.  
Therefore with all who can give voice in your creation  
we glorify your name,  
for ever praising you and saying,

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
and as we obey his command,  
send your Holy Spirit,  
that broken bread and wine outpoured  
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends  
and, taking bread, he praised you.  
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:  
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.  
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:  
Drink this, all of you;  
this is my blood of the new covenant,  
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,  
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.  
Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,  
we proclaim his death and resurrection  
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**All Christ has died.**  
**Christ is risen.**  
**Christ will come again.**

Lord of all life,  
help us to work together for that day  
when your kingdom comes  
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,  
gather us in your loving arms  
and bring us with St Matthias and all the saints  
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,  
for ever and ever.

**All Amen.**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**

## **Breaking of the Bread**

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,  
because we all share in one bread.**

**All**     **Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.  
Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ  
which he gave for you,  
and his blood which he shed for you.  
Eat and drink  
in remembrance that he died for you,  
and feed on him in your hearts  
by faith with thanksgiving.

**All**     **We do not presume  
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,  
trusting in our own righteousness,  
but in your manifold and great mercies.  
We are not worthy  
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.  
But you are the same Lord  
whose nature is always to have mercy.  
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,  
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ  
and to drink his blood,  
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body  
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,  
and that we may evermore dwell in him,  
and he in us.  
Amen.**



Communion is distributed.

## Prayer after Communion

Almighty God,  
who on the day of Pentecost  
sent your Holy Spirit to the apostles  
with the wind from heaven and in tongues of flame,  
filling them with joy and boldness to preach the gospel:  
by the power of the same Spirit  
strengthen us to witness to your truth  
and to draw everyone to the fire of your love;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All     Amen**

**All     Almighty God,  
we thank you for feeding us  
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.  
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies  
to be a living sacrifice.  
Send us out  
in the power of your Spirit  
to live and work  
to your praise and glory.  
Amen.**