

## REGULAR SOCIAL EVENTS FROM ST MATTHEW'S:

### **Soup Café**

Every Monday 12.30–2pm at Whitehill Village Hall  
Homemade soups served with crusty bread, followed by tea or coffee. This relies entirely on donations.

### **Donkey Group**

Meets every Thursday at 7.30pm at Eveley Corner Cottage. Mostly a social gathering, though we do help if needed. Contact Jilly for more information

### **Drop-in**

Every Friday 9.30am at Whitehill Village Hall  
Homemade cakes, toast and marmalade, tea or coffee. This relies entirely on donations.

### **House Group**

Meets once a month.  
Lively discussions and refreshments.  
Contact Gavin Thomas on 01420 487554

Upcoming events: Contact us for details, or see the website

17<sup>th</sup> June - Murder Mystery Evening

8<sup>th</sup> July - Open garden & 10<sup>th</sup> birthday party of Dolly the Donkey

30<sup>th</sup> September - Concert by the Quiristers

## CONTACT US

[WWW.STMATTHEWSFRIENDS.ORG](http://WWW.STMATTHEWSFRIENDS.ORG)

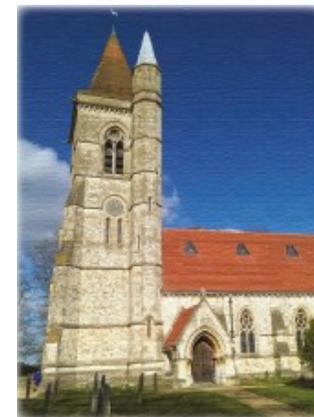
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Rev'd Dom Clarke <b>Vicar</b>	01420 473548 dom@st-matthews.org
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## FRIENDS OF ST MATTHEW'S CHURCH

BLACKMOOR AND WHITEHILL

### Newsletter

Issue 5



[WWW.STMATTHEWSFRIENDS.ORG](http://WWW.STMATTHEWSFRIENDS.ORG)

What a delight to see Spring arrive and the churchyard filled with wildflowers again. The enhanced beauty of both our lovely country church and its grounds, set in their wooded environment, lifts the spirit with thoughts of long summer days to come.

Spring was the theme of our recent Cantique Chamber Choir concert at the end of April. About seventy people filled the Church for music and feasting. There were folk songs from home and abroad, Victorian songs and twentieth century jazz standards, and some pieces newly written; in between were three amusing readings to vary the tone. Wine flowed from the outset and the whole experience was completed by a seemingly endless buffet. Much needed funds towards the upkeep of the Church were raised in the sum of over £850.

Do please join us for future events to keep the Church and its fabric available for future generations to appreciate.

*Malcolm Cooper, Vice Chairman*



## THE CHOIR AT ST MATTHEW'S CHURCH

The formation of the "Friends of St. Matthew's" is a great step forward in our mission to serve the people of this parish long into the future. Although we must look to the future it is worth remembering that new growth is supported by strong roots and that is just as much the case with the Church as with anything else. Church buildings dating from Saxon times share the heritage with those of mediaeval, Victorian and modern buildings, all incorporated into the living whole. The dignity of liturgy too places us in the long lineage of worship to God in this land. So it is with the church's music. St. Matthew's choir sings modern worship songs alongside Victorian hymns and anthems dating back to the very beginning of the Church of England in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, sometimes singing Plainsong which has its roots as far back as the 6<sup>th</sup> Century. A particular feature of Anglican church music is the chanting of Psalms in four part harmony. This has been a part of our worship from the beginning and is a regular feature of our services of choral Evensong. My friend Peter Kirk is custodian of the National Archive of Anglican Chant and, over the last thirty years or so has amassed over 17,000 examples!

Our church, as I'm sure you know was consecrated in 1869, at the height of the Victorian wave of church building in the wake of the Oxford Movement. It was this movement that shaped what we regard as "traditional worship" in the Church of England, most notably in the provision of an organ and a robed, four part choir on the cathedral model in most village churches as well as the new ones. I can't unequivocally say that there was a choir here from the very beginning, though I think it highly likely. In any event I have eye-witness testimony to the existence of a choir here since 1931.

Tastes and fashions change of course, but I believe that the best church music transcends passing trends because of its numinous quality that reaches deeply beyond where words can go. Our ministry as a choir is to offer that transcendent vision of the glory of God through our skills as musicians and the talent of generations of great church composers to the present generation, in obedience to offer the best that we can to God "in the beauty of holiness".

We sing at each Choral Eucharist and a full Choral Evensong or other choral evening service once a month, except July and August. If you have not experienced a cathedral style choral service in a while or don't want to travel as far as Portsmouth, Winchester or Guildford, why not join us on the third Sunday evening of the month? Better still, if you can sing, come and join the choir!

*Robin Helliwell - Choirmaster*

## FAITH AND FORTITUDE BY REV'D WENDY MALLAS



It's nearly thirty years since I first came to St Matthew's Church through an invitation dropped at my house in the form of a Christmas card. We had moved from Guildford a few months before and we were looking for a Church where we could worship.

Immediately I entered St Matthew's, I felt the peaceful atmosphere and sense of prayer which announced the holiness of the space inside. The aisle drew me to the altar, the holy heart of the building, a sacred space with wooden carvings and scenes in stained glass all pointing to the Christian teachings about God.

Churches can contain many beautiful and amazing images and symbols which can have the power to touch us at a depth that words do not. But more than that, I found love and fellowship at St Matthew's as I was welcomed very warmly into this community where my faith has been nurtured and grown over the years. However, there have been several times during those years that I have struggled with bereavement and stress.

Some recent research has discovered that over 70% of working adults have suffered from some form of stress in the last three years. Significantly, nearly half of those who experienced stress at work reported that this had worsened in the past year. In all walks of life, the relentless drive for efficiency, the setting of targets, the reality that all are expendable in business - these have all contributed to the intensifying of pressure in the workplace. Add to this the strains created by bereavement, divorce or marital problems, financial worry - and a cumulative burden of stress builds up in many of our lives today.

Consequently, to what sources can we turn when we are so burdened? As well as being fed spiritually during Sunday services, I have found great solace in coming to St Matthew's during the week and sitting quietly on my own. The Church is open during the day so anyone can come inside. My special place is sitting in front of the stained-glass windows showing the figures of Faith and Fortitude. From quietly sitting there, gazing at the beautiful depiction of Faith, I believe that through faith in Jesus Christ, his love will guide us and help us to share this love through our decisions and in all aspects of our lives. The figure of Fortitude represents the power of endurance and is one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Over the years, I have found that God has been my refuge and has given me the strength of mind to bear pain and adversity through some very difficult times. So, do drop in to St Matthew's and find out how this beautiful Church speaks to you.