

As February arrives, with news of Presidential elections, refugee deportation, global upheaval and international uncertainty swirling all around us, strangely I found myself humming an old tune from the very first album I bought as a teenager back in 1987 by Wet, Wet, Wet. The tune, ironically, was from their 15-week number 1 hit "Love is all around us". It's a wonderful sentiment and a very catchy tune, but in these days of uncertainty and global strife, I wonder whether anyone now could get away with releasing a song with those lyrics. The world can be a very confusing place; in the past we've all seen and maybe even enjoyed participating in Mexican waves - but now it seems instead we've moved rather to Mexican walls.

February the 14<sup>th</sup>, of course, is globally celebrated as Valentine's day – "The Day of Love", which is second only to Christmas in popularity for the sending of cards, with approximately 1 billion exchanged yearly in the U.S. alone. This day, however, is so much more than just an excuse to send cards of fluffy hamsters hugging a heart and, whilst it is widely celebrated, most people are unaware of its origins.

In the 3rd century, the Roman Empire was ruled by Emperor Claudius II Gothicus, known to many as 'Claudius the Cruel', who was engaged in so many conflicts and wars that he began struggling to recruit adequate numbers of soldiers. Believing that Roman men were unwilling to leave loved ones behind, Claudius cancelled all marriages and engagements in Rome. Thousands of couples saw their hopes of matrimony dashed by the single act of this tyrant.

It was into this context that a simple Christian Priest named Valentine stepped forward and stood up for love and truth, challenging the status quo and secretly marrying soldiers before they went off to war. In 269 A.D., Emperor Claudius found out about the secret ceremonies and had Valentine arrested, imprisoned and beaten before being finally killed with clubs and stones and ultimately beheaded.

In our self-indulgent world, a love so evidentially sacrificial and selfless may sound like some impossible ideal – some unreachable gold standard of what love should be – but Valentine's great sacrifice was born out of his uncrushable certainty and personal experience of the greatest love ever shown this world.

*"By this we know love, that Jesus laid down his life for us." (1 John 3:16)*

C. S. Lewis, Christian writer of a profound book entitled *The Four Loves*, explains that, Biblically speaking, there are four different kinds of love: storge (affection between family or acquaintances), phileo (friendship), eros (intimate/romantic) and agape (the deep love of God). These four loves are all beautiful expressions of what it means to be human, created in the image of God – to love and to know love.

The great news for us and for our world is again found in some consoling words of truth spoken by Jesus which ends with an imperative plea from the Lord.

*"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Dwell in my love." (John 15.9)*

In these shifting days, may you experience the deep rivers of God's love and find space to rest in that love.



Widcombe

ST THOMAS & ST MATT'S

[www.widcombe.church](http://www.widcombe.church)

### APCM

This year's **Annual Parochial Church Meeting** will be held on Tuesday, 25th April at 7.30 at St Thomas. We will need volunteers to replace those whose term of office on the PCC is coming to an end, so if you feel that you would like to help shape the life of our churches and would be prepared to stand as a **churchwarden** or **PCC member**, please contact Angie Frith (447005).

We will also be looking for assistant **churchwardens** and **sides-people** for St Thomas. The responsibility of running our churches is lessened when it is shared so please do give thought to whether you could volunteer this year.



St. Matt's

Pastorate  
&  
Life Hubs

Life Hubs will not be meeting on Wednesdays in February because of Alpha. Contact your group leaders to find out other group activities.



St Thomas  
à Becket

Parish Communion

Thursday 12noon  
2nd & 16th February

### OPPORTUNITIES

**Coffee Morning Wednesday 10am-noon**  
Parish Hall, St Matthew's. Drop in for tea, coffee, biscuits and a chat. All welcome!

**Lunch and Natter - 12noon Parish Hall, St Matthew's, Wednesday 1st February and 8th March 2017**

An informal and friendly lunch, followed by a talk or film (for those who would like to stay!) Lunch is served at 12.30pm. Contributions of £5 are invited. Bring a friend for free! To secure your place, to arrange transport or more information, call Trudy on 07732 626986 or Hayley on 01225 938482.

### **LENT COURSE**

Tim is planning to run an informal Lent course commencing with an Ash Wednesday lunchtime service, but in subsequent weeks meeting each Thursday at noon at St Thomas à Becket through March up to Easter which will incorporate the regular Thursday Parish Communions.

Please do chat to Tim if you are interested - it will be a drop-in session to which all will be welcome.

More details nearer the time!

### **Alpha @ St Matt's**

Meal & discussion  
7.30pm Wednesdays  
11 Jan-22 Feb @ St Matt's  
1 March @ Widcombe  
Social Club

My  
greatest  
adventure



Alpha

Got questions about life?

## Sunday Services February 2017

Date	Time	Service		Venue
<b>5th February</b>	10.30am	Sung Eucharist (CW)	Rev'd Tim Buckley	 St Thomas à Becket
4th before Lent	5-7pm	Contemporary service (Toast café from 4.30pm)		 St. Matt's
<b>12th February</b>	8am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Rev'd Tim Buckley	 St Thomas à Becket
	10.30am	Family Worship		
	3rd before Lent	5-7pm	Contemporary service (Toast café from 4.30pm)	
<b>19th February</b>	10.30am	Holy Communion (CW)	Rev'd Tim Buckley	 St Thomas à Becket
	2nd before Lent	5-7pm	Contemporary service (Toast café from 4.30pm)	
<b>26th February</b>	8am	Holy Communion (CW)	Rev'd Caroline O'Neill	 St Thomas à Becket
	10.30am	Morning Prayer (BCP)	Team Service	
	Next before Lent	5-7pm	Contemporary service (Toast café from 4.30pm)	

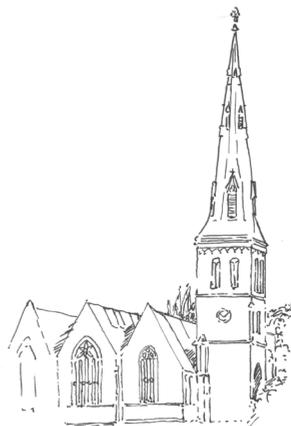
Join us for tea and coffee after the 10.30am service every Sunday

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## OUR CHURCHES



St Thomas à Becket  
Church Street  
Bath  
BA2 6AZ



St Matthew's  
Widcombe Hill  
Bath  
BA2 6AA

### **Contact us**

If you have any general queries about services, opening times, or any other matters, please see our website [www.widcombe.church](http://www.widcombe.church)

Vicar: Revd Tim Buckley 07810 543209 ([vicar@widcombe.church](mailto:vicar@widcombe.church))

Churchwardens St Thomas à Becket: Angela Frith & Sian Lewis  
Chapelwardens St Matthew's: Andrew Udale-Smith & Bill James

***To book our buildings or for information about getting married, baptisms or to make donations, please contact the office:***

Parish Administrator: Mary Udale-Smith

Church Office, St Matthew's Church, Widcombe Hill, Bath, BA2 6AA

Email: [admin@widcombe.church](mailto:admin@widcombe.church)

Phone: 01225 465065 (answer service out of hours)



We extend a warm welcome to the Orthodox and Lutheran congregations who also meet in our Widcombe churches

### **The Orthodox Parish of Saint John of Kronstadt**

Services at St Matthew's:

Saturday Vigil 5pm

Sunday Divine Liturgy 10.30am.

[www.bath-orthodox.org.uk](http://www.bath-orthodox.org.uk)

### **The German Lutheran Church**

Occasional services at St Thomas à Becket

The next services will be on 5 February and 5 March.

[www.evsynode.org.uk/bristol.html](http://www.evsynode.org.uk/bristol.html)

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