



Widcombe

ST THOMAS & ST MATT'S



Letter from the Vicar

As we arrive in December, for many towns and high streets shimmering Christmas lights have been sparkling out into the darkness for weeks already. The “switching on” of these lights marks the official beginning of the season with crowds gathering to “ooh” and “aah” as the countdown reaches zero and the big red button is pushed by the latest winner of Bake Off, or X factor or Joey Essex (if you don’t know – don’t ask!)

For me, Christmas lights have always been magical; transforming a tree, a garden, a house or indeed a street into a place of warmth, light and joy. Which reminds me of a quote I once read from an Italian politician, Antonio Martino, who, confirming all my experiences of having driven in Naples, once famously said, “In Milan, traffic lights are instructions; in Rome, they are suggestions; in Naples, they are Christmas decorations.”

But for us in Widcombe, instead of traffic lights being Christmas decorations, how about Christmas decorations becoming traffic lights? Not literally of course, but in the sense that we allow Christmas lights to make us stop, think, and recognise the need for light in what often feels an overwhelmingly dark world.

My hope for those outside the church family – as much as for ourselves – is that this Christmas may be a time to pause, and reconsider the story of God’s love breaking into the world in the form of a Son, given in love as the greatest gift – light in the darkness, hope for the hopeless. Perhaps having paused and encountered afresh the wonder of the Christmas truth, we may all then move forward again, handbrake off, into a new year with a new sense of purpose and direction.

I’m fortunate that, from my earliest memories, Christmas has always been a season of excitement, expectation and exceedingly good food. Of course, for many in our community and city that isn’t the case – Christmas and indeed the whole Winter season can be a time of darkness and uncertainty. Let’s not forget either that amidst the joy of the long-awaited Messiah’s arrival on that first Christmas, the story is marked by long, uncomfortable journeys, over-packed housing, strange unexpected visitors and, finally, Joseph and Mary fleeing as refugees, babe in arms, under intense threat and persecution.

So this year, whether through the spectacle of our extraordinary Carols by Laserlight service, our timelessly beautiful service of Nine Lessons and Carols or our first ever live re-enactment of the Christmas story with sheep, Kings, Angels and Shetland camels(!) – may all who hear the good news of “Immanuel”, God with us – personally experience and finally understand the truth of the prophet Isaiah who declared to all:

“The people walking in darkness, have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.
For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.”

Have a glorious, sparkingly light-filled Christmas. Love Tim, Sarah, Ellie, Sam & Jo x

Christmas Services 2017

3rd December	10.30am	Advent Sunday Sung Eucharist	<i>St Thomas</i>
	5pm	Contemporary Service with baptism Refreshments before, from 4.30pm	<i>St Matt's</i>
6th December	7.30pm	Christmas Pastorate	<i>St Matt's</i>
10th December	8am	Holy Communion (BCP)	<i>St Thomas</i>
	10.30am	Family Worship with baptism	<i>St Thomas</i>
	5pm	Carols by Laserlight A contemporary carol service for all the family: lights, music and action! Refreshments afterwards.	<i>St Matt's</i>
17th December	10.30am	Holy Communion	<i>St Thomas</i>
	5pm	Live Nativity Starting at St Matt's and progressing to St Thomas à Becket. Refreshments from 4.30pm.	
24th December	8am	Holy Communion (BCP)	<i>St Thomas</i>
	10.30am	Service of Nine Lessons & Carols Our wonderfully traditional carol service, rescheduled for Christmas Eve morning.	<i>St Thomas</i>
	11.30pm	Midnight Mass First Communion of Christmas - very popular, so please come early.	<i>St Thomas</i>
25th December	10am	Family Celebration	<i>St Thomas</i>
	10.45am	Christmas Communion	<i>St Thomas</i>
31st December	10.30am	Team Service	<i>St Thomas</i>
	Evening	No service at St Matt's	

Collections from our carol services will go to Bath Carers' Centre and Haven House, Kandy, Sri Lanka, and the collection at our Christmas Day services will be for parish funds.

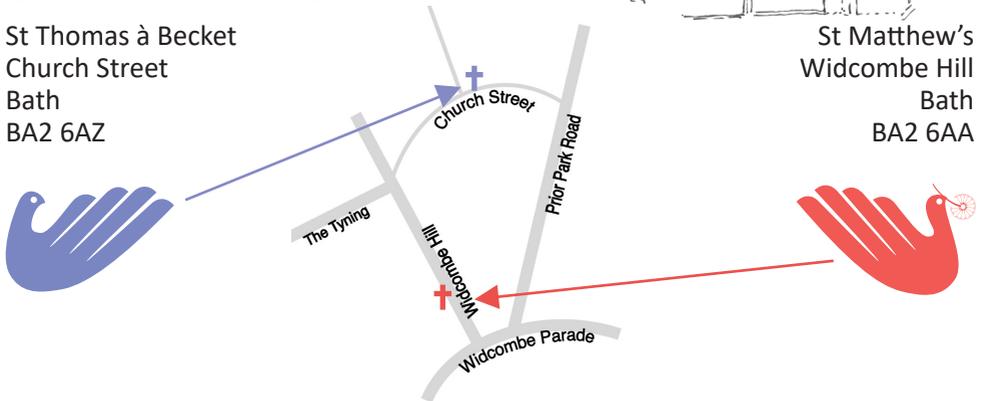
OUR CHURCHES



St Thomas à Becket
Church Street
Bath
BA2 6AZ



St Matthew's
Widcombe Hill
Bath
BA2 6AA



Contact us

If you have any queries about services, opening times, or any other issues, please see our website www.widcombe.church

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

Curate: Revd Jenny Buckler 01225 612244 (curate@widcombe.church)

Churchwardens St Thomas à Becket: Angela Frith & Sian Lewis

Chapelwardens St Matthew's: Andrew Udale-Smith & Bill James

Treasurer: Mark Nish (finance@widcombe.church)

Parish Administrator: Mary Udale-Smith (admin@widcombe.church)

Community Administrator: Tamsin McMaster (community@widcombe.church)

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