

## 8 front windows



Luke and Matthew wrote first-hand accounts of Jesus in the Bible. Matthew is facing Jesus in the central window as we expect, but Luke is facing away. That is because the window on the right was moved over from the left to restore symmetry after two windows were damaged. They portrayed Mark and John, the other gospel writers, until June 1940 when a bomb destroyed 6 houses in Vicarage Terrace. Olive Unwin lived there but went ahead



with her wedding at St Matthew's the following Saturday in a borrowed dress. The unaffected window includes St Matthew's words: "be ye also ready" stressing that no-one knows how soon they might face Christ, like the nine who died so tragically and suddenly because of that bomb. Christ's death is portrayed centrally because it is crucial. The words on the window, "it is finished" were said by Jesus as he died. He had completed the penalty for the sins of the world.

## 9 organ

The lower notes sound from pipes near St Matthew's Street while higher notes sound from above the stage, the original organ position. The organ is played on Sundays from a console adjacent to a platform where there is also a band for contemporary



songs. It was rebuilt in 1965 to mark the centenary, using parts of the original, under the oversight of the vicar Victor Dixon. His son Michael is a church member. The finance came partly from a gift in the will of Mrs Sidgwick in 1911 who also donated a house next to the building.

## 10 wall tablets

Nine tablets attached to the walls mention a sample of church members over the 150 year history. Loved ones are those who "fell asleep." Jesus spoke that way to indicate that death is temporary, believers wake again. It is striking that Emily Sarah Brown was a Sunday school teacher for as many as 63 years. She must have believed the bible text on several plaques, "their works follow them".

## 11 hall

The church hall was added in 1888 with a plaque commemorating William Beamont. The committee record that, "it was mainly by his untiring zeal that St. Matthew's Church was built." He gave up a prestigious academic career to start new churches in deprived areas. Beamont preached at the first services, but died before work was finished or debts paid. The day after his funeral the committee record that "the deep sense of gratitude they entertain for his labour for Christ's flock impel them to complete the Church forthwith." They paid the debts themselves within a month.

## 12 lantern window

The ceiling rises 40 feet to a lantern shaped window, lit up when it is dark with the help of light sensors. Matthew records Jesus saying, "you are the light of the world." The building was sited at the end of a lane known as "Devil's Row", described as having "many of the worst features of physical destitution and moral degradation." The custom of placing coins on the foundation stone was abandoned in case it tempted thieves. Few expected local people to come to church. Nevertheless a small congregation was formed and grew quickly until by 1900 two more churches had been formed from it. Christians subsidised medical insurance and supported new mothers at York Street, which has since become the local GP surgery. A plaque in the waiting room commends their faith. Others started schools and set up the "band of hope" to help with alcohol addiction. The St Matthew's name spread from the church to the park, local primary school and several local streets.

## 13 office

In 2010 the church office was added. From there a second preacher, a youth and student worker, a children's worker and an administrator run a busy programme.

**Please take a programme card from the entrance or check the website for details. All activities are open to visitors of all faiths or none**

[www.stmatthews.uk](http://www.stmatthews.uk)

St Matthew's Church Office, St Matthew's Street, Cambridge CB1 2LT  
01223 363545 office@stmatthews.uk registered charity 1129835

# stmatthew'schurch

## ▶▶▶ A guide to the church building

St Matthew's was planted in 1866. The founder chose the text "we preach Christ crucified". The congregation grew and planted two churches, changing the area with schools and medical care. Justin Welby was one of hundreds who joined during a time of renewal in the 1970s. In 2008 a "church graft" from St Andrew the Great saw 100 people join us. We have been reshaping our building and ourselves to better share the news about Jesus. It is too good to keep to ourselves .

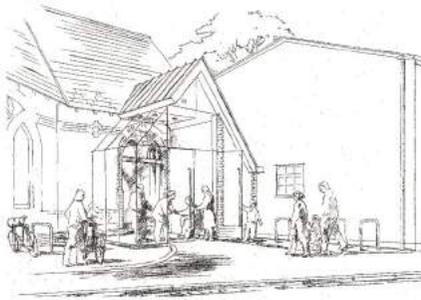


## ▶▶▶ Come and look round

## 1 entrance

The entrance porch was added in 2015 using the arch of a window. The original side door now leads into a quiet room. The wide entrance and level flooring makes the building

accessible for wheelchairs and buggies. Church members donated almost 90% of the funds. They felt that the good news of Jesus is so important, that no-one should be excluded from hearing it.



## 2 side windows

The stained glass includes the architect's family coat of arms. Richard Reynolds Rowe was the designer of the Cambridge Corn Exchange. The left window was donated in memory of Elizabeth Sewell, appointed in 1893 to work with local women and girls. The right window remembers Emelia Wisken, a Sunday school leader until her early death in 1889. The annual report stated, "We trust that it may serve to keep alive her memory for many years, though her greater memorial will be in the lives of those whom she lovingly taught and guided." By 1900 more than a thousand children attended these bible classes. Still today St Matthew's offers children and youth activities for the local community.

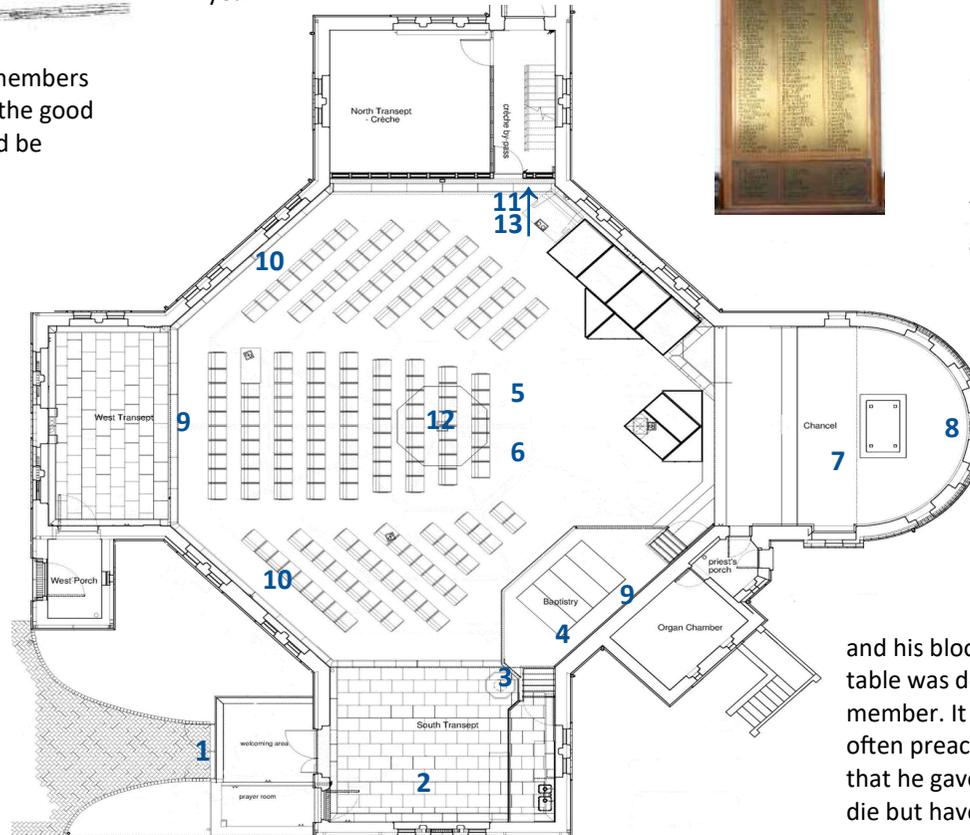
## 3 font and stage

The font was donated in 1895 by All Saints Church and was recently moved to be near the new entrance, because baptism is a sign of entering the church community, by being cleansed of sin through faith in Christ. Many become convinced later in life and are baptised by full immersion. A section of the carpeted stage floor can be removed to reveal a baptism pool, filled to waist depth. This was added by current architect and church member, David Joy. He also designed the entrance, the crèche and office on the opposite side of the room, the smaller hall, toilets and kitchen, and the vicarage.



## 4 war memorial

Brass plates on the wall above the stage list local people who died in the two world wars. They mention Charlie Lucas, one of 10 children of a brickie's labourer in a small house in New Street. He was baptised in the font below the war memorial and died aged 19 in 1918. The memorial states, "they made the supreme sacrifice." Many were inspired by the sacrifice of Christ who died on the cross to save others. St Matthew's Church remembers them each year.



## 5 seating area

The 8 sided centre is unusual. The Pevsner architectural guide to England comments: "It has a spectacular interior, the skylit octagon being faced with vigorous timber panelling - a kind of pitch-pine chapter house.

As a preaching house, it is a case of an original alternative to the Oxford Movement." The founders rejected designs where congregations watch from a distance as a priest faces away, making an offering to God on their behalf. They understood that Christ's death is "once for all" so no further offering is needed, anyone can be forgiven simply by hearing and believing. The current congregation followed that logic, replacing forward-facing pews with chairs arranged around the preacher, matching the shape of the room.

## 6 ceiling

The wood darkened over many years and so two lighting coronas were added in 2015 and coloured to match the organ pipes. The vertical wooden beams still show traces of painted patterns. The ceiling was sky blue (which inspired the blue external paintwork and signs) with gold and white stars and 33 bible verses. However, the lantern ventilation let in rain and quickly ruined it. The building was reopened in 1896 by the evangelical bishop Handley Moule, first principal of Ridley Hall clergy training college. He chose John 1:16 which speaks of great undeserved blessings through Christ.



## 7 communion area at front

The engraving of the ten commandments on the left wall can no longer be read so it is covered with a modern translation. It reminds those who receive communion that all have disobeyed. The bible text reads "holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty", to show that God is all powerful and pure, so all deserve death and eternal separation from God. The wall banners were prepared in the 1980s to assure believers that Christ's body was broken like bread

and his blood was poured out like wine, "for us". The Bible on the table was donated in memory of the father of Pam Harper, a current member. It is open at John 3:16, a firm favourite of Sidney Sims who often preached from it in the 1970s. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son so that whoever believes in him might not die but have eternal life."