**Sunday 21st September 2025**

**Again, there are alternative readings & collects (Trinity 14 / St Matthew the Apostle and Evangelist), followed by general prayers.**

**FEAST OF ST MATTHEW THE APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST (red)**

**COLLECT**

O Almighty God, whose blessed Son called Matthew the tax collector to be an apostle and evangelist: give us grace to forsake the selfish pursuit of gain and the possessive love of riches that we may follow in the way of your Son Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

**READINGS**

**Proverbs 3:13-18**

Happy are those who find wisdom,  
and those who get understanding,  
for her income is better than silver,  
and her revenue better than gold.  
She is more precious than jewels,  
and nothing you desire can compare with her.  
Long life is in her right hand;  
in her left hand are riches and honour.  
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,  
and all her paths are peace.  
She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her;  
those who hold her fast are called happy.

**2 Corinthians 4:1-6**

Therefore, since it is by God’s mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God’s word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake. For it is the God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

**Matthew 9:1-13**

And after getting into a boat he crossed the sea and came to his own town. And just then some people were carrying a paralysed man lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.” Then some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and walk’? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” —he then said to the paralytic—’stand up, take your bed and go to your home.” And he stood up and went to his home. When the crowds saw it, they were filled with awe, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings.

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up and followed him. And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” But when he heard this, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.”

**FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (green)**

**COLLECT**

Almighty God, whose only Son has opened for us a new and living way into your presence: give us pure hearts and steadfast wills to worship you in spirit and in 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. Amen

**READINGS**

**Jeremiah 8:18-9:1**

The word of the Lord through the prophet: My joy is gone, grief is upon me, my heart is sick. Hark, the cry of my poor people from far and wide in the land: “Is the Lord not in Zion? Is her King not in her?” (“Why have they provoked me to anger with their images, with their foreign idols?”) “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.” For the hurt of my poor people I am hurt, I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of my poor people not been restored?

O that my head were a spring of water, and my eyes a fountain of tears, so that I might weep day and night for the slain of my poor people!

**1 Timothy 2:1-7**

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all—this was attested at the right time. For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

**Luke 16:1-13**

Then Jesus said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. So he summoned him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.’ Then the manager said to himself, ‘What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.’ So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ He answered, ‘A hundred jugs of olive oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.’ Then he asked another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He replied, ‘A hundred containers of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill and make it eighty.’ And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes. “Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

**PRAYERS**

O God, the creator and preserver of all people, we pray for people of every race, and in every kind of need: make your ways known on earth, your saving power among all nations.

* On St Matthew’s Day, Lord, we give thanks for his willingness to give up everything to follow Jesus. Grant us grace to forsake all covetous desires and inordinate love of riches, that we may find our fulfilment in the rich benefits of following your Son Jesus Christ and knowing Him as our Friend and Saviour. May we recognise that all we have comes from you and live lives which reflect the abundance of your generous love towards us.
* God of wisdom, St. Matthew was chosen from an unlikely path to become a pillar of the Church, and so we pray for those discerning their vocation. May they hear the voice of Jesus saying, 'Follow me,' and respond with faith and joy. May each one of us in our daily lives listen for your voice of wisdom and guidance and seek to follow you in all that we do and say.
* Thank you, Father, for the love which forgives again, and again, and is prepared to trust us with the care of your people, even after we have let you down many times. Teach us to minister to one another’s needs with compassion, sensitivity and discipline, so that all are affirmed and encouraged
* We cannot pray for those who suffer without being conscious of our own responsibility for some part of that suffering.

Lord, as we listen and watch the events unfolding in our world, especially in Gaza, Ukraine, and Sudan, but, sadly, in many other places too, we know our own failure as a nation and as a community of nations to prevent the violence and the starvation and the forced expulsion from their homes of so many of our human family. Bring us to the point where we demand of our leaders that they put peace and justice and the care of the weakest first, so that we can help others to hold up their heads as people who are cared about, just as Jesus went to the poor and the helpless and the outcast of the world. We ask it for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. *(Christopher Avon Lamb from The SPCK Book of Christian Prayer (2003)*

* We commend to your loving care all who are anxious or distressed in mind or body and we hold before you at this time those known to us personally who are in especial need ………. Comfort and relieve them, Lord; give them patience in their sufferings, fill them with your healing love and reassurance.
* Lord, as our Area Dean retires next week and leaves another gap in leadership and ministerial provision locally, and as we struggle with the uncertainty of the effect which the establishment of a Minster Community in our area will have, we pray that you will give us courage to face the future, that you will guide us in our decision making and reassure us that whatever the future may hold you will be with us. Dispel our fears Lord and fill us with the joy of knowing you and your salvation.
* Thank you, Father, for disturbing our complacency, and challenging us to move forward with you, assured of your company and your love.

Amen