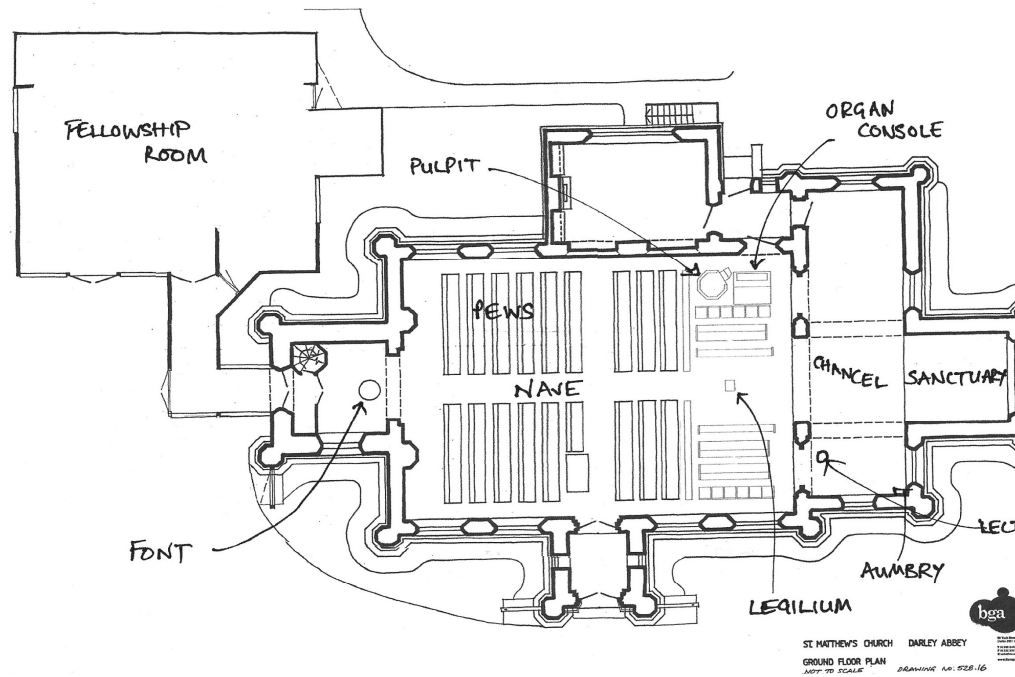




## **What should I look for in the church?**

Welcome to St Matthew's. We hope this booklet will help you to learn about the layout of the church and some of the things that you can find in it. Please ask us if you have any questions.

# Layout of the church



## The Font

The font is at the back of the church, near the rear door. It is a kind of bowl, on a stand, which is used to hold water used for baptisms (sometimes called christenings). Special prayers are said over the water in the font before it is used. The position of the font near the door symbolises that this is where the Christian life and journey of the person being baptised begins.



## The Nave

The largest section of the inside of the church, where the people sit, is called the nave. The wooden seats are called pews. The rectangular cushions are called hassocks and people kneel on them whilst praying. In St Matthew's the church choir sits at the front of the nave, on the movable pews arranged facing each other.



## The Pulpit

The pulpit is the place from which the priest or preacher gives a talk or “sermon” based on the Bible during a service. The pulpit is raised up to improve sound and vision. The front of the pulpit usually has a fabric hanging on it in a colour which

indicates the church season (see “Colours used in church”).

## The Organ

The organ is the instrument mostly used to provide music for church services. The sound is produced from the organ pipes, which you can see if you look up on the wall



at the back of the church. However, the instrument is played from a separate cabinet found behind the pulpit, with keyboards and controls (similar to a piano). This is called the organ console, and it can be moved.

preparation for the festival that is about to come, when Christians repent – say sorry for their mistakes.

**Green** is used when none of the others colours applies, sometimes called “ordinary time”.

**White** is used both at Christmas and Easter and immediately afterwards, times representing special festivals.

**Red** is used at Pentecost (sometimes called Whitsun).

## St Matthew

Most Christian churches are dedicated to, and named after, a saint. Our church is Saint Matthew’s. He was the man said to have written the Gospel of St Matthew in the Bible. Wherever there are symbols for all four gospel writers (Evangelists), Matthew’s symbol is a man, because his Gospel is thought particularly to show Jesus’ humanity. Matthew may also be represented by bags of money, because before he followed Jesus his job was as a tax collector.



The six-pointed star is an ancient symbol of creation. Also, because it is made up of two equilateral triangles (having three sides of equal length), it is a sign of the three equal parts of the

Trinity - a Christian understanding of God as being Father, Son (Jesus) and Holy Spirit.

## The Aumbry

This is a small cupboard in the sanctuary in which consecrated bread and wine - bread and wine which have been made holy by the priest for use in the Holy Communion service - are kept, ready for if they are needed to give Holy Communion to somebody outside the church service, for example to sick people. When the bread and wine are present, a white light is kept lit nearby.

## Colours used in church

Christian churches have a tradition of using particular colours for the fabrics and hangings within them at certain times of the year. This is a kind of code to show what part of the church year it is. The main colours used are:

**Purple** is used in Lent (the period just before Easter) and Advent (just before Christmas). These are times of



## The Lectern

The brass stand in the shape of an eagle standing on a globe is called the lectern. The lectern holds a large Bible, and Bible readings during church services are traditionally made from here (although sometimes we use a smaller wooden desk instead). The globe represents the world, and the Bible being on the

eagle's back represents the Gospel (God's good news in the Bible) being carried around the world.

## The Legilium

This is made of wood and is used for reading from – rather like the lectern – but is smaller and moveable.

## The Chancel and Choir Stalls

In front of the nave is part of the church called the chancel. This contains seats where the choir would traditionally sit, called choir stalls.

## The Bishop's Chair

This large wooden chair is found in the chancel. It is traditionally used by the Bishop when he is in church, for example to lead a Confirmation service.



## The Sanctuary

This is the part of the church at the very front. It is regarded as the most holy part of the church. Hanging in the sanctuary is a sanctuary lamp, the light of which reminds us of God's presence. The high altar stands here.

## The High Altar and Altar



The table standing by the wall in the sanctuary, covered by a cloth, is the High Altar. An altar is used for one of the most important church services, called Holy Communion.

Some churches, including St Matthew's, have a second altar in the chancel.

## The Reredos

The ornate stone panel above the high altar is called the reredos. On it you can see a number of symbols:

**AΩ** There is a symbol made up of the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, alpha and omega, representing the beginning and the end. This symbol reminds Christians that Jesus is the beginning and end of all things.

**IHS** This represents Jesus. It is a Latin version of the similar Greek IHC, taken from the beginning of the name of Jesus in Greek.