

St Clement's Chapel

This chapel has been situated on the north side of the nave since 1468 and was laid out as a war memorial in the early 1920's. St Clement is the patron saint of tanners. The mediaeval-style altar (1920) is by C Bateman. Look closely at the panelling around the walls—how many different animals you can spot?

St Catherine's Chapel

This chapel was dedicated to St Catherine in 1502. In 1974/75, the chapel was fitted with a screen and a beautiful modern stained glass-window. There is an impressive memorial to Sergeant Major William Purvis, a survivor of the Charge of the Light Brigade.

The Bell Tower and Bells

The earliest known restoration of the 170 ft. church spire was carried out in 1669. The spire developed such a twist that it had to be replaced in 1779 and was last rebuilt in 1951. The tower clock, installed in 1865, is the latest clock beginning with a chiming clock in 1446. The peal of twelve bells includes some bells dating from before 1553. Joseph Smith of Edgbaston recast the 'great bell' in 1731. By 1775 there were eight bells and they were all recast by Thomas Rudhall. Further bells were added in 1863, 1928 and 1981.

Stained Glass

The oldest stained glass in the church is the upper part of the great west window, dating from 1819-21. The chancel stained glass was installed between 1880-1908; created by Burlison & Grylls and Clayton & Bell. The south aisle, St Catherine's chapel window and 'Sir Valiant' in the inner porch are by Goddard & Gibbs, and date between 1960-1974.

The crypt, beneath the chancel, is normally closed. It can be visited on church open days and by arrangement with the church office.

Information is based from The Parish Church of St Matthew, Walsall: an illustrated guide and history (2011) by the late David F. Vodden. Copies are available for sale in church if you would like to know more about the history of St Matthew's.

Sunday Services

8.00am: Book of Common Prayer
9.00am: Parish Communion
10.45am: Morning Praise
4.00pm: Asian Congregation
6.30pm: Church Hill Praise

Social Media

Facebook: St Matthew's Walsall
Twitter: @StMattsWalsall
Instagram: @stmattswalsall

www.stmatthewswalsall.co.uk

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History



St. Matthew's Parish Church, Walsall.

The church has been known as St Matthew's since the 18th century. Christians have worshipped here for at least 800 years. The earliest surviving record dates from 1200. The first Rector, Serlo de Sunning, was presented in 1210. In the 1460's the church was rebuilt to provide room for the growing population of Walsall. The nave was extended and rebuilt with galleries, so that the church could hold over 2,000 people. Chapels were added to both north and south in 1819-21.

The church exterior

When walking around the church you can see the contrast between the sandstone of the chancel, and the creamier Bath stone which provides cladding for the nave and tower walls. The 15th century chancel was built using stone from quarries at Brewood and Sutton Coldfield. The archway under the east end of the church was built when the chancel was extended in the 1460's, and allowed access to both north and south sides of the churchyard. The archway used to be taller; the ground level has been built up over the centuries.

The lych gate was built as a memorial to George and Catharine S. Gill in 1927, with the text above "I am the Resurrection and the Life".



South Porch

This is the usual entrance to the church. On either side of the glass doors there are lists of rectors from 1211 to the present day. The small ceramic and large cast iron plaque both mark the rebuilding of the nave in 1819-21.

The Nave

The nave was rebuilt by the architect Francis Goodwin on the 'footprint' of the medieval church nave, which was largely demolished. The nave seating was also reorganised with new 'box pews' which were largely replaced with chairs in 1880.

The font is decorated with the coats of arms of influential local families, and the earls of Warwick. The alabaster rim and lead lining were added in 1712; the initials are those of churchwardens Richard Burrows and Samuel Craddock. The third initials may be those of the maker, Nathaniel Short, a plumber. The gothic font cover is Victorian.

Rood Screen

This was set up in 1915 as the result of a bequest. A fine example of the Arts & Crafts style, it was designed by C. E. Bateman and was carved by Joseph Phillips, who was responsible for woodcarving in the Anglican Cathedral in Liverpool. Its slender columns were designed so that the congregation could see into the chancel. Directly above the screen and the chancel arch are four stained glass windows, also of 1915, by Harvey & Ashby, representing the archangels Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and Uriel.

Chancel

The chancel was rebuilt to its present size in the 1460's, and was restored in 1879-80 by the architect Euan Christian. The reredos (decoration behind the altar), by Whitefriars Glass, represents the Supper of Emmaus. The misericords in the back rows of the choir stalls comprise one of the great treasures of the church, and probably belong to the period of re-building and re-furnishing of the late 15th century.

The organ was built in 1773 by Samuel Green of London, who was the outstanding organ builder of the time. It was rebuilt and enlarged in 1952-3, and had a major refurbishment in 1999-2000.

The Crypt

The crypt is the oldest part of the church, and consists of two rooms. The smaller room dates from between 1150-1250 and has a fine vaulted roof with sandstone ribs, two medieval lancet windows, and the remains of an aumbry (a small cupboard or safe). The larger outer room dates to the rebuilding of the chancel in the 1460's and has a barrel-vaulted roof. On the north side a spiral staircase, now blocked, led up to the chancel; and led out to the archway.

