

The Catholic Parish of Ongar & Doddinghurst



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FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (C)

Sunday 22nd December, 2024

This Newsletter also covers

The Holy Family - Sunday 29th December, 2024 (see overleaf)

Micah 5.1–4 Psalm 79 Hebrews 10.5–10 Luke 1.39–45

Christmas is just a few days away to arrive at the promised birth in the spirit of the Gospel. We need to hold back Christmas flowers, keep Christmas tree lights off. Our scriptures ask us to look forward to comings, to future visitations, not to anticipate things.

For Micah, the ruler of Israel will come from little Bethlehem to shepherd the flock in the strength of the Lord, to be their peace.

The psalm calls on the God of Hosts to come and visit this vine to protect it so that we may be saved.

Hebrews tells us that Christ comes into the world to do God's will, echoing Mary's own willing agreement to the angel's message. Mary then goes with haste to visit Elizabeth, to share what she can. Elizabeth responds to her coming by praising God for the great things he has done for her in her child and in the visit of the mother of her Lord.

Both women are to give birth soon, living in a time of expectancy, each waiting for own unique child. Mary waits by caring for Elizabeth, Elizabeth by proclaiming the good news. The unborn child waits leaping for joy at Jesus' presence in Mary's womb. We need to hold these moments of scripture before us in the next few days. Let us put ourselves into the moment of the Visitation and try to share the feelings of Mary and Elizabeth, their concern for the birth of their children, what the future will hold for them and the world. Let us wait with them until Christmas comes once more. The Angelus reminds that the birth to celebrate is a prelude to Christ enduring his passion and cross which will allow us to share the glory of his - resurrection, putting Christmas into perspective. *Fr Emile*

Communion Antiphons:

Fourth Sunday of Advent Sunday 22nd December

‘Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.’ (Psalm 18 or Luke 1:46-55)

Christmas Midnight Vigil Mass Tuesday 24th December

‘The glory of the Lord will be revealed,
and all flesh will see the salvation of our God.’ (Psalm 23)

Christmas Day The Nativity of the Lord

‘All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.’ (Psalm 97)

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph Sunday 29th December

‘Our God has appeared on the earth, and lived among us.’ (Psalm 97)

Sunday 29 December 2024 The Holy Family

1 Samuel 1.20–22, 24–28 Psalm 83 1 John 3.1–2, 21–24 Luke 2.41–52

The Holy Family did not have an easy time. Jesus was born in a manger. His first visitors are from the margins of his society and the ends of the earth. Against that background, today’s Gospel jumps twelve years. We know very little of what intervened.

In the Gospel, Mary and Joseph as Jesus’ parents face the worst of fears, losing a child who has stretched their capacity to understand and caused them distress

Jesus has begun his mission in the Temple, which will later be a place for more heated debate. It is his Father’s business indeed, but that does not lessen the worry of anxious parents. He agrees to return to family life where, submissive to them, he increases in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man. It will be reassuring for many parents to know that not everything goes to plan even in the Holy Family. Many families will recognise echoes of similar distress, confusion and challenge.

For some families, the resolution will not be so positive. Today we ask how we support families in a challenging world, helping them to flourish and how as a community to any family in need can turn to our community for help.

While everyone has been born of a family, today’s feast needs to find space for those who for so many different reasons are not part of a stable relationship. As John says, we need to celebrate how the Father has lavished love on each of us so that we know and are known as a daughter or son of God. Pray that we will imitate the shining example of the Holy Family by practising the virtues of family life and the bonds of charity. Let us remember this as Christmas fades into the distance.

Fr Emile Nkumu

CHRISTMAS SERVICES 2024



TUESDAY 24TH DECEMBER

5.30pm Children of the Parish
10.00pm Christmas Midnight Mass

Christmas Eve
St. Helen's
St. Helen's

WEDNESDAY 25TH DECEMBER

8.45am St. Helen's
10.30am St. Margaret's

Feast of the Nativity

THURSDAY 26TH DECEMBER

9.00am St. Helen's

Feast of St. Stephen

FRIDAY 27TH DECEMBER

9.00am St. Helen's

SATURDAY 28TH DECEMBER

5.30pm St. Helen's

Vigil Mass

SUNDAY 29TH DECEMBER

8.45am St. Helen's
10.30am St. Margaret's

Advent Reconciliation Service

You are invited to attend our next Advent Reconciliation Service at 4.30pm on Saturday 21st December at St Helens. Prepare spiritually for Christmas. Come and experience the mercy and healing of God.

Christmas Blessing from Fr. Emile Nkumu

I would like to thank all the people of the parish for all your kind thoughts, prayers, gifts and cards sent to me especially in my 40th Ruby Anniversary of Ordination Year 2024. I hope you all have a very happy, healthy Christmas and a Happy New Year 2025. Christmas Blessings for you and your families and may you find peace, to understand love and to give it.

Parish Office Christmas Closing: Please note that Kelly Love, parish administrator, will be on annual leave finishing Friday 20th December and will return to the Parish Office on Thursday 2nd January, 2025.

Advent 2024 We began this Advent with a new translation of the Scriptures in our liturgy. The Jerusalem Bible or the Revised Standard Version and the Grail Psalms have been our translation for decades. From 1st December, we all moved to the English Standard Version and the Abbey Psalms. Much will be familiar, but there will also be many differences of style and vocabulary. Those changes may strike us and so help us to think afresh the meaning of the sacred text. Let us pray that we will embrace this as the Word of God that is always alive and active.

Mass books won't be able to be replaced at this time though more copies of the Mass cards have been made available and the Communion Antiphon will be printed as above in the newsletter each week.

You may wish to purchase your own missal from the Catholic Truth Society website where they offer various versions of the New Sunday Missal 2025. Another option is the Day by Day books, kindly organised by Margaret Payne, which contain the readings and psalms for every day of each month. We do appreciate the generosity already shown in this parish by parishioners but replacing the Lectionaries for both churches has been very expensive and we would be very grateful for any donations towards the cost. Thank you very much for all those who have donated already.

SVP Christmas Doddy Drop In Your SVP would like to thank all those who supported the Christmas drop-in on 10th December. We had guests from three local care homes, parishioners from Ongar and Doddinghurst, and friends from All Saints, Doddinghurst. The music supplied by Graeme and Clara Greenaway's band, 'The Dodgy Jammers' was great and had everyone singing along. It was a very enjoyable afternoon. We were able to hold this free event thanks to donations to SVP from parishioners. Photos can be found on our newsletter email or in our website photo gallery.

Islam Study Day In 2025 we mark sixty years since the promulgation of Nostra Aetate, the inter-faith document of Vatican II. We are delighted to welcome Sidra Naeem, distinguished teacher and chair of Havering Interfaith, who will speak about Islam. The talk will take place on Saturday 18th January 2025 from 11.00 (11.00 GMT) in the hall at the Catholic Church of Christ the Eternal High Priest, in Gidea Park. The talk will also be available by livestream free of charge at www.whatgoodnews.org and will be available subsequently on the same website. The church is close to Gidea Park station (Elizabeth Line). Please bring a packed lunch. Coffee available from 10.30.

NINE LESSONS & CAROLS SUNDAY 22nd December at 4pm lasting about an hour and a half in **Brentwood Cathedral** for our annual SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS & CAROLS. This is a most beautiful Service of Music and Readings for Advent and Christmas and perhaps the high point of the Cathedral Choir's Choral Year. There will be mulled wine and mince pies in the cathedral hall afterwards. It is always very popular and well attended. In addition to the Choir Carols there are also popular Carols for everyone to sing. The Choir will be accompanied by Stephen King, the Cathedral Organist. Meanwhile, on behalf of Andrew our Director of Music and the Music Department, I should like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and thank you for your continued support. We will be back with some lovely Recitals in the New Year !!

Our Christmas Maranatha at The Sion Community, Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood, CM15 9BX, is on Thursday 18th December. The evening begins with Mass at 7pm followed by Prayer and Praise and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Our Celebrant is Fr. Paschal Uche and everyone is very welcome.

New Diocesan Directories: The new Diocesan Directories are now available for purchase at a price of £3.20 each.

Christmas Offerings

As is the custom, your offerings at the Christmas Masses are your personal gift to the Parish Priest. Offerings may be made at Mass or posted through the door of the Presbytery marked "Christmas" with Gift Aid number or you can use your Christmas envelopes if you have them. Cheques should be made payable to **Catholic Church Ongar St Helens** and will be dealt with by the Parish Office. Alternatively a bank transfer can be made - Please call the Parish Office for details. **Please note due to finance regulations any standing order contributions cannot be part of this collection unless specifically stated 'Christmas'.** Thank you.

Mass Attendance: **Dec 14/15** Sat 5.30pm: **24** Sun 8.45am: **20** 10.30am: **32**

Offertory Collection 08.12.24: £342.09

Offertory Collection 15.12.24: £240.13

Please make cheques payable to: 'Catholic Church Ongar St Helens'

Please contact Kelly Love if you require bank transfer details.

For Gift Aid/Envelopes please contact Bernard Adams 01277 823511

Thank you for your continued selfless generosity and support.

Please consider remembering the parish in your will. Thank you.

MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS

SATURDAY **St H 4.30pm** **Advent Reconciliation Service**
St H 5.30pm Mary Raftery

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (C) **(Day of Prayer for Expectant Mothers)**

22nd Dec 2024 **St H 8.45am** Owen McGuinness RIP (Lillie & Family)
St M 10.30am Martena O'Sullivan Family

MONDAY Ilford 9.30am Breda Shelly
Kathleen Buckley Int.
Jim & Betty Dixon int.,
Mary Gaffney Int.
Jim Hennessey Int.
Annie Dooley Int.
Patsy & Nancy Int.

TUESDAY **St H 5.30pm** **CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY MASS**
Victoria Thomas 25.12 Birthday
St H 10.00pm **CHRISTMAS EVE MIDNIGHT MASS**
John Scott RIP (Fr. Emile and St. Helen)

WEDNESDAY **St H 8.45am** **THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (C)**
Solemnity
Lally, Frank & Maria Falco (Paul Falco)
St M 10.30am Josie John & Sinead Byrne Int.

THURSDAY **St H 9.00am** **ST STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR**
Feast
Roy Fox Christmas blessing

FRIDAY **St H 9.00am** **ST JOHN, Ap, Ev** **Feast**
McNamara Family

SATURDAY **St H 5.30pm** **THE HOLY INNOCENTS, Mm** **Feast**
Corbett Family

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH (C) **Feast**

29th Dec 2024 **St H 8.45am** Catharine Cullen (Lillie & Family)
St M 10.30am Ann and Graham's Parents - Bill and Mary
RIP

MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS cont.

MONDAY	Ilford 9.30am	Mr & Mrs Bannis and families Warren John-Lewis & family Catherine Lawlor, int. (M Dixon) Mr +Mrs John Lewis Margaret Thomas Kathleen Cadam Riordan Family int. Eileen Reade int.
TUESDAY	St H 9.00am	Carmel Garvey RIP
WEDNESDAY	St H 9.00am	SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD (C) Solemnity Ilford Lane Int.
THURSDAY	St H 9.00am	Ss Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bpp, Dd Wilson Family
FRIDAY	St H 9.00am	Sister Fidelma Dixon Int.
SATURDAY	St H 5.30pm	John Scott RIP (Fr. Emile and St. Helen)
THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD (C)		Solemnity
5th Jan 2025	St H 8.45am	Mrs Pat Baldwin RIP (Kathy Jeffery)
	St M 10.30am	Ron Scott RIP Birthday (Kathy Scott) John Scott RIP (Fr. Emile and St. Margaret)

Prayer List: Please pray for all our parishioners who are sick and need the benefit of our love and prayers: Alan Chapman, Maureen Hamilton, Lucy Gay, Susan Corbin and family, Sue Potter, Philip Denton, Ivy Denton, Douglas Jordan, John Varellas, Bruno Vassallo, Fr. Emile Nkumu, Brian Kellaher, William Readman, Richard Denton, Theresa Aikin

Brentwood Catholic Children's Society is pleased to re-launch their virtual Tree of Angels which will allow you to light up a symbolic angel on a virtual Christmas tree in memory of a loved one who has died while making a donation to the work of BCCS. Please visit www.bccs.org.uk and click on the Christmas tab where you will see 'Tree of Angels'. You can read more about this initiative and can click onto the Tree of Angels portal to make your dedication and secure donation. If you have any questions about lighting an angel, please contact Damian ddillon@bccs.org.uk.

Walsingham House Team 25/26: applications are now open for the volunteer retreat team at Walsingham House. If you are in Yr13 or finishing university and enjoy working with young people then a year on the retreat team could be the perfect next step. Live and work as part of a young Catholic Christian community, sharing your faith and helping to run retreats for the young people of Brentwood diocese. For more information then please see the website: www.bcys.net/whabbotswick/be-on-team/ or email clairebailey@brcdt.org

REPOSITORY We have cards and gifts for Christmas, First Holy Communion's, Baptisms, Mass Intention Cards and other occasions for sale in the Repository in the porch at St Helen's at very reasonable prices. Please pay using the card box on the wall in the porch or get in touch with Ann Jackson if anything else required. Thank you.

Whatsapp Group: If anyone would like to join the parish Whatsapp Group please contact Denise Terry-Roberts at d.terryroberts@btinternet.com or on 07545 240064 for her to add your mobile number.

St. Margaret's Hall Hire St. Margaret's is available for hire for private functions and parties, children's parties, fitness classes, local groups and events holding up to 100 people at reasonable rates. If you would like more information or to make a booking please contact Kelly Love on 01277 362645, ongar@brcdt.org or whatsapp/msg 07929241350 (last minute bookings only)
Hall Usage Calendar <https://catholicparishongar.org/hall-usage-calendar/>
Parish Events Diary <https://catholicparishongar.org/parish-events-calendar/>

May the spirit of Christmas give you peace;
may the warmth of Christmas grant you love;
may the gladness of Christmas give you joy
and the blessings of Christ give you hope today and always.