



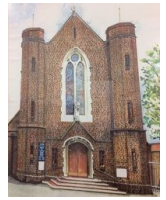
# St Joseph's Catholic Church

Champion Road, Upminster

Parish Priest: Fr Matthew Bemand-Qureshi

Parish Secretary: Rachel Hayward

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## PARISH NEWSLETTER

2ND / 3RD DECEMBER 2023

**FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT (B) - Mass Book Pg 28**

(Isaiah 40:1-5.9-11, 2 Peter 3:8-14, Mark 1:1-8)

Today we begin the season of Advent, and thus we also begin a new church year. Advent is a time of preparation: preparation for the 'advent' or 'coming' of Christ. Christ has of course already come among us in history: we are preparing to celebrate the beginning of his life among us at the great feast of Christmas. And our faith tells us – with certainty founded on the promises of Christ himself – that he will one day come again, this time in unmistakable glory, in order to inaugurate a new heaven and a new earth where all things will be brought to completion in him. So this season also a kind of 'wake up' call, to help us prepare for that moment when we come face to face with him. Linking the past and future 'comings' of Christ is our experience of his closeness to us in the present, here and now. He is present in the community gathered for prayer; he is present in the proclamation of the scriptures (for he is the Word made flesh); he is present in those we serve, as last week's gospel so powerfully reminded us; he is present through the sacramental and pastoral ministry of his priests; and he is present in a unique way in the sacrament of his body and blood. Above all, then, this season reminds us that Christ must be at the centre of everything. As we come to know and love Christ better, we will long for him with ever greater eagerness; we will delight in our closeness to him in the present, and we will eagerly await that even closer union with him that is to come. Of course, the reality is that many things distract us from being truly Christ-centred. That is why we need to keep coming back to him. There are all sorts of reasons why we might put off spending time with him in prayer, or getting to know him better through the scriptures. We might occasionally avert our eyes from someone in need or avoid getting involved because it will be too much trouble. As we juggle our busy lives and many commitments, we might find ourselves occasionally prioritising other things over our gathering for Mass. So, in the spirit of new years resolutions, I invite you to make the most of this season by making a real effort to put Christ more consciously in the centre of your life. Families have a special opportunity to put Christ firmly in the centre of our homes as well and you might like to do something extra, such as reading the Sunday gospel together during the week, making an Advent wreath and lighting the candles each week, or using a religious Advent calendar alongside the chocolate one! See the notices below for another idea.

As our centenary year draws to a close, I would like to highlight a number of ways in which I hope we can continue to grow closer to each other and to Christ, taking forward some of the renewed energy and joy many of us experienced during the mission week:

**Eucharistic adoration:** Christ's presence in the eucharist is an extension of his living among us as man, so any opportunity to spend time in eucharistic adoration helps us deepen our friendship with him. If we are eucharist-centred, we will be Christ-centred and vice-versa. I'm pleased to say I've noticed a much more prayerful atmosphere in church during the period of adoration before the Saturday evening Mass. We now have opportunities to pray before the Blessed Sacrament five days out of seven (half an hour after Mass on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, as well as the Wednesday lunchtime and Saturday evening holy hours).

**Opportunities to socialise, pray and be formed in the faith together:** on Tuesday there will be an Advent evening of prayer, fellowship and formation based on the pattern which proved successful during the mission week (see notice below for more details). I hope this will be something we can do a number of times during the year.

**Supporting our young people:** Following a successful event during the mission week for those in the first couple of years of secondary school, there will be an event during the school holidays for those in years 7-9 (see notice below), and again I hope this is something that will evolve into a regular youth group.

**Prayer ministry:** as a praying community, and a community of individuals who carry all sorts of wounds from the past, spiritual, mental as well as physical, we can and should support and pray for one another. Some of our parish have been trained in offering prayer ministry, and this is going to be offered regularly, after each Mass on the first weekend of the month, starting this weekend. As I explained in last week's newsletter, they are not counsellors, nor do they have special healing powers, but they are people who feel called to pray for others in this particular way. They will listen to anything you choose to tell them and keep it in confidence, and they will pray with and for you, or for another person who you wish to pray for. Whilst this ministry is being offered, I will be available to offer the sacrament of reconciliation and/or anointing of the sick.

May you have a blessed Advent,

God bless, Fr Matthew.

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**ADVENT GET-TOGETHER:** Inspired by the success of our Mission evenings, there will be an Advent evening of fellowship, formation and prayer this Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December. The programme will be Mass 6.30pm, Cheese & biscuits, mince pies & mulled wine in the Social Centre from 7pm, and an Advent talk from 7.45pm. The talk will be about half an hour, concluding with half an hour of eucharistic adoration with the opportunity for confessions during or after.

**OUR CATHOLIC FAITH:** There is no meeting this Thursday. The next session is on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December.

**BLESSING OF THE HOLY CHILD:** On the fourth Sunday of Advent (23<sup>rd</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> December), you are encouraged to bring the figure of the baby Jesus from your home nativity set to Mass on Saturday evening or Sunday morning, for a special blessing.

**ADVENT ESCAPE ROOM:** Families are invited to take this fun activity pack which will help you celebrate the season of Advent together. See Fr Matthew if there are no copies left in the porch.

**CALLING ALL YOUNG PEOPLE:** There will be a St Joseph's 'youth club' event for all those in years 7-9 in the first week of the holidays, provisionally on the afternoon of Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December. Save the date! More details and sign-up link to follow next week.

**CWL LUNCH CLUB:** The last CWL lunch club for this year is on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup>, December. We will be having fish and chips on this date. If you would like fish and chips please bring your deposit £6 into the social club next Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup>, December. We will reopen on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup>, January 2024. The committee would like to wish everyone a merry Christmas, good health and happiness for the new year.

**ST JOSEPH'S KNITTING & CRAFT GROUP:** The next group meeting will be on 4<sup>th</sup> December and not 11<sup>th</sup> December as previously arranged. There will be a Christmas buffet to celebrate our years work. I would like to thank all parishioners who have donated wool etc., to enable us to continue with our charity work, it is most appreciated. Yvonne Dickens 01708 228087

**CANNING TOWN & CUSTOM HOUSE/ROYAL DOCKS: CHRISTMAS** Our traditional annual collection for these two parishes will take place at all Masses on 9th/10th December. The parish priests will distribute the money raised where the need is greatest. You may use your Gift Aid envelopes. (Last Christmas the Gift Aid tax refunded added some £300 to the collection.) As in past years, both parish priests really appreciate your generosity to support their families in greater need at Christmas.

**A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE STAFF AND TRUSTEES OF BRENTWOOD CATHOLIC CHILDREN'S SOCIETY:** We would like to wish everyone across Brentwood Diocese a very happy and blessed Christmas. As we prepare to celebrate our 40th year in 2024, we would like to thank everyone who has supported our work by making a donation at one of the parish crib scenes across the Diocese since the charity was formed. This steadfast support has allowed us to give hope to thousands of children, young people and families by offering them the specialist care they need. Thank you all.

**ST JOSEPHS PRIMARY SCHOOL—RELIEF MIDDAYS:** St Joseph's School are looking to recruit a number of relief middays. To view the details please following the link: [Havering Schools \(jgp.co.uk\)](http://Havering Schools (jgp.co.uk))

**ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR:** Come and support our school: Saturday 9th December, 12-3pm

**BISHOP'S CERTIFICATE IN CATECHESIS AND YOUTH MINISTRY:** This is an online course designed to be an entry level qualification to help in the ongoing formation of adults involved in sacramental preparation (First Holy Communion and/or Confirmation) or youth ministry in the Diocese of Brentwood. For more information or to register your interest please email [clairebailey@brcdt.org](mailto:clairebailey@brcdt.org)

**CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES:** Sunday 24th: 5pm (early vigil Mass), 6.30pm (family vigil Mass), 11pm ('Midnight' Mass with the choir, carols from 10.30pm). Monday 25th: 8am (said Mass of Dawn) and 10am (Sung Mass). Weekend Masses as usual for the Fourth Sunday of Advent (23rd/24th).

## MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

<b>Sat 2nd Dec</b> <b>5.30pm—6.15pm</b> <b>6.30pm</b>	<b>ST FRANCIS, XAVIER, PR</b> <b>ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS</b> Alex Hendry RIP Anniv. (Joan)
<b>Sun 3rd Dec</b> <b>9.00am</b> <b>11.00am</b>	<b>SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b> Len Jones RIP Birthday (Jones/Carter) People of the parish
<b>Mon 4th Dec</b> <b>9.15am</b>	Grace Robinson RIP B'day (Rachel, Hannah & James)
<b>Tues 5th Dec</b> <b>9.15am</b> <b>6.30pm</b>	Wilma & Patrick Nicholls Int. (With our Year 3 children) For the intention of vocations
<b>Wed 6th Dec</b> <b>9.15am</b> <b>12 noon—1pm</b>	<b>ST AMBROSE, BP, D</b> Rev Fr Ken Payne (Northampton) RIP <b>ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS</b>
<b>Thur 7th Dec</b>  <b>9.15am</b>	<b>IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY</b> Fr Henry Young (Westminster) RIP
<b>Frid 8th Dec</b> <b>9.15am</b>	Eileen Coombs RIP Anniv. (Quinlan)
<b>Sat 9th Dec</b> <b>5.30pm—6.15pm</b> <b>6.30pm</b>	<b>ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS</b> People of the parish
<b>Sun 10th Dec</b> <b>9.00am</b> <b>11.00am</b>	<b>THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b> Jenny Maplesden RIP B'Day (Paul) Fr Matthew's birthday intentions (Lucy)

### USEFUL INFORMATION

**EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION & CONFESSIONS:** Saturday evening 5.30-6.15pm and Wednesday 12 noon-1pm. Confessions also available on request when Fr Matthew is available or by appointment.

**PARISH OFFICE HOURS:** Mon-Fri 9am-12.30pm (except Wednesdays).

**Fr Matthew (emergencies—voice only):** 020 3332 0486

**St Joseph's School** - School office 01708-220277

**Sacred Heart of Mary School** - School office 01708-222660

**Baptisms & weddings** - please speak to Fr Matthew after Mass

**Repository:** Saturdays before & after Mass, and Sundays after the 9am Mass until 10.55am

**Queen's Hospital:** If someone staying in the hospital would like Holy Communion, please contact the lay chaplaincy coordinator Helen Miranda on 01708 477890. In an emergency ask the ward staff to request the on-call Catholic priest via switchboard.

**Facebook:** [stjosephschurchupminster](https://www.facebook.com/stjosephschurchupminster) **Web:** [www.stjosephschurchupminster.com](http://www.stjosephschurchupminster.com)

**PLEASE ENSURE YOU ARE AWARE OF THE POSITION OF THE EMERGENCY FIRE EXIT DOORS IN THE CHURCH, AND PLEASE ENSURE THAT ALL MOBILE TELEPHONES ARE SILENCED BEFORE THE SERVICE BEGINS**