



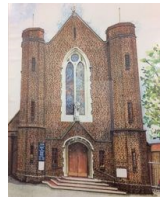
St Joseph's Catholic Church

Champion Road, Upminster

Parish Priest: Fr Matthew Bemand-Qureshi

Parish Secretary: Rachel Hayward

upminster@brcdt.org / 01708 222432



PARISH NEWSLETTER

7TH / 8TH DECEMBER 2024

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (C) - Mass Book Pg 84

(Baruch 5:1-9, Phillipians 1:3-6;8-11, Luke 3:1-6)

During this season of Advent preparation, we are prompted to reflect on God's own preparation of his people for the coming of his son into the world. There are two figures in particular who stand out for us. One is John the Baptist, the last in a line of prophets who appears in this week and next week's gospels. The other is Mary, whose crucial 'yes' to all that God asks of her is the beginning of Our Lord's hidden nine months before his birth – the focus of the fourth Sunday. Mary is free to say 'yes' because of something that is usually celebrated on 8th December but this year, coinciding with the second Sunday of Advent, is celebrated on Monday 9th instead: the mystery of the Immaculate Conception.

By a special grace Mary was preserved, from the first moment of her existence in her mother's womb, from the effects of Adam and Eve's original act of disobedience. Namely, the distance opened up between humanity and God which makes it harder for us to trust God, harder for us to live in that harmonious alignment with his will which leads to our true fulfilment.

Freedom is an essential element of our human dignity. If love is to have any meaning, it must be a free act of the will. God did not make us as robots or playthings to be manipulated by him. He gave us genuine freedom, knowing that we might exercise this freedom in a way that leads us away from him and from our happiness. We tend to construe freedom in terms of being able to do what I want. In practice, however, our choices are shaped by a multitude of influences, including what our culture tells us we should want or what should make us feel successful. At the heart of this is the elevation of autonomy as the highest good - the ability to make all the rules for myself. And the greatest fear: being dependent on or subservient to someone else. That is why, to many, the Christian faith - especially in its Catholic version - seems unappealing: being told what to do and what to believe by an authoritarian institution. Religion with a clipboard and a high-viz jacket.

This is a distortion of authentic religion: the boundaries set by a loving parent (mother church, and ultimately God) who wants the best for their children. And it is a distortion of true freedom, which is the freedom to flourish, the freedom to become who are meant and made to be. Free from the baggage of false values and expectations, and the cords that pull us in opposite directions. This is the freedom that Mary was graced with, so that she could authentically say 'yes' to God with her whole heart. Why doesn't God grant this freedom to everyone? Well, he did in the

beginning, and he has restored it to us through the redemptive sacrifice of his son, and personally through the grace of baptism. Mary's freedom is also a fruit of her son's victory, applied to her in a special way in view of her unique vocation. We are still pulled in different directions, but gradually we can learn to trust in God and seek his will more completely. And we know that when we make the mistakes that we are free to make, God will always stand ready to forgive us and put us back on the right path. The best thing we can do in Advent is 'to make a straight path for the Lord' by asking him to do the heavy lifting and remove the obstacles in our hearts, so that we may be truly free once more. And the best way to do *that* is the sacrament of reconciliation.

God bless, Fr Matthew.

WELCOME: You should have a purple 'Parish Mass Book' which contains the order of Mass and the readings for today, and a green Laudate hymn book. Please ask the welcomers if you would find a large print Parish Mass Book helpful, or if you need any other assistance. If you are new to the parish or visiting do say 'hello' on your way out. Most Sundays we have coffee in the Social Centre on St Mary's Lane between the morning Masses.

ADVENT RECONCILIATION: Our partner parish St Mary's is holding an Advent Reconciliation Service on Tuesday 17th December at 7pm, at which Fr Matthew will be assisting with other local clergy. There is a similar opportunity at Brentwood Cathedral on Monday 16th at 7.30pm.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION GROUP: A reminder that there will be a talk for parents in church on Monday 9th at 6.15pm.

DIOCESAN DIRECTORIES & PARISH DIARIES: These are now available in the porch, priced at £3.20 (directories) and 50p (diaries). You can pay at the repository when open, or use the payment screen (minimum £1) or papers wall slot.

PARISH CHRISTMAS CARDS: Please take a card for yourself and a handful to give to family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. The Christmas Mass times are listed on the card as well as below.

CHRISTMAS MASSES: On Christmas Eve we have two evening Masses at 5pm and 6.30pm. The 'Midnight Mass' with the parish choir starts at 11pm, preceded by carols from 10.30pm. On Christmas Day we have the quiet 'dawn' Mass at 8am then a sung Mass at 10am.

ROME & ASSISI OCTOBER 2025: We are gradually filling the spaces for our parish pilgrimage to Assisi and Rome but there are still a few places available. We depart on Sunday 26th October 2025 for 5 nights, at a basic price of £1299 per person. The brochure and booking form is available in the porch or online at https://www.tailored-travel.co.uk/stjosephs_rome_2025. Please return the completed form to the parish office with your deposit (card details or cheque payable to the agent) as soon as possible.

LIVE STREAM: Visit [is.gd/sjuptv](https://www.gd/sjuptv) in any web browser to access live streamed and recorded Masses. Visit our website for more information.

SPENDING CHRISTMAS DAY ALONE? The New Windmill Hall will be providing Christmas dinner, live entertainment, carol singing and much more. Travel can be provided. For more information and to book please call 01708220242.

RIP NOTICES: Please pray for the repose of the souls of Joan Garnier and Margaret Munnely who died recently. Joan's funeral will be held here on Thursday 12th December at 10am. Margaret's funeral will be held here on Tuesday 7th January at 10.30am. Her body will be received into the church on Monday 6th January at 4pm. May Joan and Margaret rest in the eternal peace of Christ.

"VOICES FOR CHRISTMAS": The Hornchurch Passion Play presents the Nativity story told by the people who were there! Monologues written and directed by Kevin Walsh, this year performed by different actors, with popular carols for all to sing. Wednesday 18th December at 8:00pm. In the North Street Halls, Hornchurch RM11 1QX. Tickets on the door @ £8 including complimentary festive refreshment. All profits support Hornchurch Passion Play Reg. charity no. 1169216.

CANNING TOWN AND ROYAL DOCKS: Our traditional second collection will be held after all Masses this weekend of 9th /10th December for those in particular need in Canning Town and Royal Docks parishes, to enable them to have more at Christmas.

CWL LUNCH CLUB: The last lunch club for 2024 will be Wednesday 11th, December. We will reopen on Wednesday 8th, January 2025. A big thank you to everyone who has supported us the past year. We wish everyone a merry Christmas and a healthy and blessed 2025.

CAFOD-DEC MIDDLE EAST HUMANITARIAN APPEAL: The conflict in the Middle East is getting worse and the families affected need our help. Please donate today to the CAFOD-DEC Middle East Humanitarian Appeal and support our local Caritas partners in Gaza and Lebanon as they continue to provide essential food, water and shelter: //cafod.org.uk/give

CAN YOU VOLUNTEER AT THE ST JOHN BOSCO CHILDREN'S CAMP NEXT SUMMER? Applications are now open for anyone aged 17+ to volunteer for a week at the end of July 2025. From helping in the kitchen to running sports and other activities, your skills will mean that 100 children have a wonderful holiday. For most of the children, it is their only summer holiday. The Camp is a special work of Caritas Brentwood. More information - including training date and DBS requirements, along with volunteering FAQs - can all be found at www.boscocamp.co.uk. Applications for children to come to Camp will open in the spring.

TREE OF ANGELS: 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

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Sat 7th Dec 5.30pm—6.15pm 6.30pm	ST AMBROSE, BP, D ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS Fr John Tuohy's Golden Jubilee Intentions
Sun 8th Dec 9.00am 11.00am	SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT People of the parish Margaret De St Jorre RIP Birthday (Family)
Mon 9th Dec 9.15am	THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY Jenny Maplesden RIP B'day (Paul)
Tues 10th Dec 9.15am	TUESDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT Paddy Brady RIP (Green) (With our year 3 children)
Wed 11th Dec 9.15am 12 noon—1pm	WEDNESDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT Barney O'Neill RIP (Scully) ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS
Thur 12th Dec 10.00am	THURSDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT Funeral Mass—Joan Garnier
Frid 13th Dec 9.15am	ST LUCY, V, M Fr Frank Kerrigan RIP (Williamson)
Sat 14th Dec 5.30pm—6.15pm 6.30pm	ST JOHN OF THE CROSS, PR, D ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS People of the parish
Sun 15th Dec 9.00am 11.00am	THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT Clare Argent-Hall RIP Anniv. (Dominic) Deceased members of the Earley Family (Early)

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

**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**