



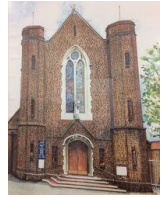
St Joseph's Catholic Church

Champion Road, Upminster

Parish Priest: Fr Matthew Bemand-Qureshi

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PARISH NEWSLETTER

21ST / 22ND DECEMBER 2024 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT Mass book page 90

24TH DECEMBER 2024 CHRISTMAS EVE Mass book page 97

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28TH /29TH DECEMBER 2024 THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH, Mass book page 105

Christmas is almost here, and on the last Sunday of Advent our focus turns to the one chosen by God to be the mother of his Son, and the child in her womb whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. This year the gospel for the fourth Sunday of Advent tells us of the meeting between two mothers – Mary and her cousin Elizabeth – and their unborn children. Even in their mothers' wombs they carry out their God-given tasks: Jesus sanctifying John and Elizabeth, and John proclaiming the presence of the Saviour.

By the time Christmas Day comes, many people are partied-out and maybe thinking of taking the decorations down ready for New Year. The period between Christmas Day and New Year's Day has been dubbed Twixmas (from 'betwixt', and old word for between). The church has a much simpler name for this period and the early part of January. It is, simply, Christmas! Let us make the most of these days, which give much-needed time for rest or time to spend with family and friends, and rejoice in our Saviour's birth for the whole of this wonderful season. This newsletter takes us to the second weekend of Christmastide, when we celebrate the visit of the wise men – the Epiphany. This concludes the traditional 12 days of Christmas, though the church celebrates for another week, concluding the Christmas season with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. We will keep the crib in church for a longer period, the 40 days up to Candlemas, to remind us that even as the world gets back to normal life, the world is transformed by the presence of its God, who has truly become one of us, becoming little for our sake.

If you have already read the Christmas message on our website you can skip to the notices at this point. But I know that not everyone likes to scan QR codes or read things online! I'm sure we all agree that our church always looks splendid when decorated for Christmas by our talented team of flower arrangers and decorators. This is why I've chosen a picture of the church in full Christmas splendour for the front of this year's parish Christmas card – hopefully you have one but if not there should be some left in the porch.

Yet what is still more wonderful to see is the church full of people who have come to worship God, who comes close to us not only at Christmas but every time we celebrate Mass. I'm reminded of the story of the patron of our neighbours over the road, St Lawrence, who as a deacon of the church of Rome acted as its treasurer. When compelled by the emperor to hand over the treasures of the church, he rounded up the poor and the lame and presented them as the true treasure. It is you, the people of God, who by bringing yourselves to Mass become an offering pleasing to God and adorn the church more wonderfully than any precious ornaments. And the feast of the saviour's nativity – his taking of our poor human nature to himself – reminds us that each and every person is of infinite worth and dignity God's sight.

It is a curious thing that people should come together in great numbers, in churches up and down the land and all around the globe, to honour the birth of a child two millennia ago. No other human child is honoured in this way, because no other human child is the Son of God. No other child can be said to have come down from heaven, sharing our mortality in order to raise us up to heaven and give us a share in his immortality. No other child is born so that he might reconcile the human race to God by dying, and by rising from the dead conquer death on behalf of us all. At Christmas we tell the great story of our faith, a plan of salvation unfolding from the beginning of time, God's love for his people revealed through the witness of patriarchs and prophets and finally a young couple, willing to say yes to all that God asks of them. It is, mind you, no fairy story, myth or legend that brings us together year by year, week by week – that would be absurd and pointless – but the truth of God's love for us made visible in a particular place and time, for all people in every place and time.

I hope you will be among those who adorn our church for our Christmas services. If you are travelling over Christmas then perhaps your presence will adorn another church! For those members of our parish family who are unable to be physically present at Mass, I hope you will never think you are forgotten; and know that your prayers will adorn the

church in a different way. Most of our Christmas Masses will be live streamed – if you have a tablet, computer or smart TV all you need to do is follow the link from our website or type **is.gd/sjuptv** into the address bar of your web browser.

I wish you a joyful Christmas and blessings for the year ahead. May the infant Christ bring light, joy and peace to all, especially those who find this time of year difficult.

God bless, Fr Matthew

WELCOME: You should have a purple 'Parish Mass Book' which contains the order of Mass and the readings for today (see the page number for the appropriate week on the front of the newsletter), 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.

LOOKING TO OUR FUTURE: In September we held an open Parish Meeting to discuss plans for the future of our parish, including a desire to appoint a youth worker for our parish partnership (Upminster, Hornchurch and Elm Park) and to make plans to replacing our Social Centre on St Mary's Lane with a new two-storey building. The presentation is still available on the News section of our website. In the New Year there will be a further meeting to share progress and officially launch our new building fund. We have already started to receive donations towards this significant project, and any contributions, whether one-off or by standing order, can be made with our usual bank details and will be allocated to the building fund. Please specify 'Building fund' and include Gift Aid details if applicable.

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.

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

TREE RECYCLING: Saint Francis Hospice are once again running their Christmas tree recycling scheme in Havering. Trees will be collected from 9th January. Register and make a donation online.

RIP NOTICES: Please pray for the repose of the souls of Martin Ortisejafor, Margaret Munnelly, and Maggie (Margaret) Ollington who died recently. Martin's funeral will be held here on Monday 30th December at 11.30am. Margaret Munnelly's funeral will be held here on Tuesday 7th January at 10.30am and her body will be received into the church on Monday 6th January at 4pm. Maggie's funeral will be held at Upminster Cemetery Chapel on Thursday 9th January at 11am. May Margaret, Martin and Maggie rest in the eternal peace of Christ.

CHRISTMAS CARDS AND POSTERS: Two ways we can share our faith are giving someone a parish Christmas Card as an invitation to join us for Mass, and displaying a 'Keep Christ in Christmas' poster in your window. Both are available in the porch.

THANK YOU: On behalf of us all, a big thank you to all those who assist our worship and parish life throughout the year and have been working especially hard to enhance our Christmas celebrations: welcomes, readers, servers, musicians, ministers of holy communion, those who clean the church and launder albs and linens, and last but not least the flower team and all involved with decorating the church.

HOLY HOUR: There will not be a lunchtime holy hour on Christmas Day or New Year's Day. The church will be open for prayer as usual each day during the Christmas period. Fr Matthew will be happy to hear confessions after any Mass, or at other times when available.

BCYS SUMMER LOURDES: Saturday 19th July - Saturday 26th July 2025 for those in year 10 or above. Registration and more information at <https://bcys.net/events/sl25/> This is a fantastic opportunity to enrich your faith, make friends, and serve others. There will be funding from the parish and elsewhere.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING: By long established custom the Christmas offering is a gift to the parish priest, and is much appreciated as a significant part of his income for the year. Your gift can be gift-aided in the usual way, as it has to go through the parish accounts like any collection. To avoid any confusion, the collection taken up at the normal Sunday Masses this weekend, as well as standing orders and online/contactless donations for parish funds all go towards the running costs of the parish in the usual way. Anything placed in the collection taken up at the Masses on Christmas Eve (5pm onwards) or Christmas Day, as well as anything marked Christmas Offering passed on by other means, will be counted as part of the Christmas Offering for Fr Matthew.

CRIB COLLECTION: You are invited to make an offering when you visit the crib to support the work of Brentwood Catholic Children's Society, a charity which provides various forms of support for children and their families. You can also give using the self-service screen in the porch. For more information, to give online or become a supporter please visit bccc.org.uk.

THE DIOCESAN LOURDES PILGRIMAGE: Will be led by Bp Alan, will be from Friday 18 July – Friday 25 July 2025. The flights will be Southend to Lourdes. Details, including how to book, will follow. We hope you will join us.

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.

ADMISSIONS TO ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL SEPTEMBER 2025: The initial window for applications to Reception in September 2025 is open until 15th January 2025. Please encourage friends and family with children in this age cohort to apply. Applications no longer require a 'Certificate of Practice' (often thought of as a priest reference) which had previously deterred families from applying, especially from Catholic non-practicing families. Applications can be made by anyone, regardless of faith or address and we warmly welcome families from a range of backgrounds. Queries can be sent to admissions@st-josephs.havering.sch.uk There is an open day tour date left on 8th January – contact the address above to book a space.

THE NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS SERVICE: Will take place in the Cathedral **Sunday 22nd December at 4.00 p.m.** A celebration of prayers, readings and carols presided over by Bishop Alan Williams. With music by the Brentwood Cathedral Choir. Please do join us for this very special celebration.

READINGS FOR THE SEASON OF ADVENT Fr Adrian Gaffy, parish priest of Gidea Park and member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, has prepared reflections on all the Mass readings for the Season of Advent. To access these readings, go to www.whatgoodnews.org and click on 'Scripture Readings' and then 'Advent Readings'.

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. Do join us.

HOLY YEAR 2025 – PILGRIMS OF HOPE On Christmas Eve our Holy Father, Pope Francis, will open the Holy Year Door in St Peter's Basilica, marking the beginning of the Holy Year 2025. The concept of a Holy Year has deep roots in the history of the Catholic Church, and is centred around pilgrimage to Rome, spiritual renewal and the forgiveness of sins. This tradition originated in ancient Jewish custom and was revived for Christian communities in the Middle Ages by Pope Boniface VIII in 1300. The theme will be Pilgrims of Hope.

MENS' SPIRITUAL EXERCISES: A 5-day version of the Ignatian Exercises offered specifically for men (whether lay or ordained) **31 March – 5 April 2025**; this retreat will be preached by the Benedictine Monks of St Joseph's Abbey, France. Founded in 1988, this community has retained its charism of a specific apostolate to men and of engaging them through a shortened version of the Ignatian Exercises. One-to-one direction will be offered alongside the talks. Priests are welcome to attend and concelebrate or celebrate their own Mass. Information or to book visit: <https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/mens-spiritual-exercises/>

VACANCIES IN DIOCESAN SCHOOLS: <https://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/departments/education/vacancies/school-vacancies/>

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR SICK: Michael Coady, Reuben Jack Dodd (Lacey), Emilia Gunn, Deborah & Paul Bussutil, Christopher Noel Ashford, Joan Spoor, Margaret Munnely, Liam O'Byrne, Tom Martin, Maureen Peek, Frances Oskis, Maggie Ollington, Maureen Springham, Joseph Furzer, Martyn Oliver, James Nickelson, Len Rawlings, Stella Rogers, Wenda Cordell, Irene Stubbings, Janet Martin, Tony White, Nora Delor, Maureen Pain, Ian Laidlaw, Julie Cordell, Stella Owen, Patrick Rodgers, Mary Smith, Frank Hamilton, Christine Sejas, Anna Gawlik, Maureen Anderson, Patricia Mylod, Lisa Bostock, Jason Hamilton-Ramm and Pat Danagher.

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES: William Smith, Alex Hendry, Laurence O'Brien, Magdalene McGhie, Rosemary Underwood, Catherine Dupree, Geoffrey Marshall, Julia Farrier, John Redfern, Henry Jarvis, Gladys Morgan, Herbert Joyce, John Winn, James Cavanagh, Patrick O'Malley, Fr Drea, Desmond Sheridan, Fr Healy, John Young, Nora Fleming, Fred McCardle, Julia Walsh, Philip Broughton, Marion Abdilla, Katlyn Donovan, Julia Rix, James Sena, Albert Wills, Ron Panzavecchia, Nellie Durey, Joseph Cosgrave, Derek Cox, James Balfe, Bernard John Barrett, Diane Romano, Frances Rose Edwards, Ron Howard, Fr Frank Kerrigan, Ellen Biggs, Tom Connolly, Mary Cosgrave, Ellen Lockey, Honora Ferriter, Jean Rover, Mary Willsmer, Joseph McEnnerney, John Garwood, Thomas McKenzie, Mary Allistone, Patrick Ruane, Aida Kidd, Marion Lamont, Wilfred Mowat, Ellen Davis, Anthony Januszka, Kathleen Connolly, Stanley Armstrong, Denis Scott, John Coppin, Joanne Cozens, John McKeown, Louis Precieux, Peter Watson, Eva Furze, Irene Roberts, Mary Bardwell, Edna Stanley, Ruby Cullen, Mignon (Mitzi) Williams, Margaret Newman, Mary Cagney, Mary Parsons, Pamela Martin, George Kinghorn, Mary Clarke, Rosie Stacey, Eileen Milne, Mary Harkins, Michael & Bridie Tuohy, Elizabeth Loughead, Paddy Keating, Nevill Mattis, Denis Healy, Vittoria Maria Rossi, Mary Lacey, Wiktor Wojtecki, Reginald Harvey, Doris Skinner, Bridget Sutherland, Florence Burt, Maria Seddon, Hannah Eustace, Emily Haran, Jennifer Browning, Christopher Pennell, Anthony Brady, Nellie Murphy, Ben Archer, Frank & Marion Dearson, Clare Argent-Hall, John Foy, Joan Henderson, Gerry Collins, Patricia Burwood, Margaret Coleman, Margaret Main & Sylvia Sarson. May they all rest in the eternal peace of Christ.

MASS INTENTIONS FOR NEXT WEEK

Mon 30th Dec

9.15am

SIXTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY

Phil Scannell's Intentions (Redmond Family)

Tues 31st Dec

9.15am

SEVENTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY

Joan Sullivan & Anne McMahon RIP (Sullivan)

Wed 1st Jan

10am

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

Enid & John Mangham RIP (Tsocos)

Thur 2nd Jan

9.15am

SS BASIL THE GREAT AND GREGORY NAZIANZEN, BPP

Noreen Dennehy RIP Anniv. (Regan Family)

Frid 3rd Jan

9.15am

The Clinton Family's Intentions (Regan Family)

Sat 4th Jan

5.30pm—6.15pm

6.30pm

ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS

Joan Turner RIP (Moirra Parker)

Sun 5th Jan

9.00am

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

People of the parish

11.00am

Maureen & Thomas Holt RIP Anniv. (O'Donnell)

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Sat 21st Dec

5.30pm—6.15pm

6.30pm

ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS

Perry Southgate RIP (Larner)

Sun 22nd Dec

9.00am

11.00am

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Mitzi Williams RIP (Anniv) Cunningham)

People of the parish

Mon 23rd Dec

9.15am

Loretta Ives Intentions (Regan Family)

Tues 24th Dec

9.15am

5pm

6.30pm

11pm

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

For those who have lost children

Mon & Noel Lynch RIP (Keefe)

People of the Holy Land

Charles Cantwell RIP (Pauline)

Wed 25th Dec

8am

10am

CHRISTMAS DAY

Private Intention

People of the parish

Thur 26th Dec

10am

ST STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR

Irene & Ronald Robinsons Intentions (Christine)

Frid 27th Dec

10am

ST JOHN, AP, EV

Gerry & Barbara Collins RIP (Pavitt)

Sat 28th Dec

5.30pm—6.15pm

6.30pm

Sunday 29th Dec

9am

11am

THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MM

ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS

People of the parish

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH

Catherine Sweeney RIP (Jane)

Raymond Watson (Watson)

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.

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