



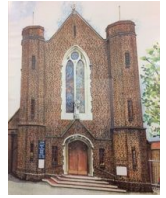
St Joseph's Catholic Church

Champion Road, Upminster

Parish Priest: Fr Matthew Bemand-Qureshi

Parish Secretary: Rachel Hayward

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PARISH NEWSLETTER

4TH / 5TH JANUARY 2025

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD (C) - Mass Book Pg 115

(Isiah 60:1-6, Ephesians 3:2-6, Matthew 2:1-12)

This weekend we celebrate the Solemnity of the Epiphany. The word means 'revelation' or 'manifestation', and our focus is on the magi, mysterious wise men from the east who travel to Bethlehem bringing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to honour the newborn King. This is not just the last chapter of the Christmas story: these gifts carry deep prophetic symbolism that point us to the culmination of Christ's saving work on the cross and the empty tomb. The visit of the magi represents the next step in a progressive manifestation of the Christ to the world which began with the shepherds. Their journey from distant lands tells us that Christ has come as saviour of all peoples. This 'epiphany' opens us up to the final mystery of the Christmas season, some thirty years later: Our Lord's Baptism in the River Jordan, at the beginning of his adult ministry. This is followed by the first miracle at Cana, which we will hear about on our first 'green' Sunday in two weeks' time, traditionally counted as a third 'epiphany'.



The Solemnity of the Epiphany thus stands at the threshold of the year in more ways than one, and this is reflected in a couple of traditions associated with this feast day. One is the proclamation of the date of Easter and other movable feasts: harking back to a time when printed diaries let alone online calendars were not readily to hand. As we hear these dates sung according to an ancient chant (which echoes the proclamation of the resurrection sung at the Easter Vigil), we don't need to make a note of them, but we should consider that, though we cannot know what a new year will hold, the saving work of God is a certainty. Another custom, originating in north-eastern Europe, is the blessing of chalk which is used to invoke God's blessing on our homes. This reminds us that the eternal one has entered our time in the incarnation, and we should entrust all our temporal activities to the one who has made us for eternity. The initials of the Magi, also standing for the Latin invocation 'Christ bless this house', is a reminder that our homes should be a place of welcome and hospitality to visitors, as well as a place of protection and rest for our families. Every time we pass through the door we are reminded, moreover, that our hearts must also be a place of welcome to the Lord who transforms us by his presence.

Thus we begin a new year. We customarily refer to the years as 'Anno Domini' – the 'Year of Our Lord' – in recognition not only that we count our years from the central event in human history, the birth of Christ, but also recognising that each year is a gift from the Lord and a season of his grace. The new year of grace that we have begun

is a Jubilee Year in the church. Established in 1300 and now ordinarily celebrated every 25 years, each of us may reasonably expect to experience three or four such years in our lifetime. The theme for the Jubilee Year 2025 is 'Pilgrims of Hope'. We are called to be people of hope: people whose hope rests on the knowledge that we are loved by God, that he has come among us to transform our lives by his grace, and that we are made for eternal life in him. Hope leads us onwards, which is why we are called to be pilgrims of hope, our whole lives ordered towards the goal of heaven. It is notable that the only person without hope in the Christmas story is Herod – coincidentally the only person not to go on a journey. May we journey onwards in hope, and may we be signs of hope to the world, so that the whole world may find reason to hope in the one who leads us to the fullness of life.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude for the many generous gifts and contributions to the Christmas offering, as well as the many Christmas cards I and my family have received. Though it is not possible to thank everyone individually, it is much appreciated. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our hard-working team of counters, along with all who have enriched our liturgy in various ways over the past few weeks.

May God grant you every blessing in the coming year.

God bless, Fr Matthew.

JUBILEE PILGRIMAGE TO ROME AND ASSISI: We would like to fill the last remaining places on our parish pilgrimage for the jubilee year. Once flight bookings are confirmed by the tour operator in the next couple of weeks, any further places on the pilgrimage will be subject to availability of flights. 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.

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.

RIP NOTICES: Please pray for the repose of the souls of Margaret Munnely, Maggie (Margaret) Ollington, June Corrigan, Frances Bethell grandmother of Thibault and Corentin who attended St Josephs, Pat Ives who in recent years moved away from the parish to be near family, and Juliana Skelter, who all died recently. Margaret Munnely'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 and June's funeral will be held on Wednesday 15th January 2025 at South Essex Crematorium. May Margaret, Maggie, June, Frances, Pat and Juliana rest in the eternal peace of Christ.

PRAYER MINISTRY: Members of our parish prayer ministry team will be available after all Masses this weekend listen to and pray with anyone who wishes to receive this support.

EPIPHANY CHALK: Blessed chalk together with instructions on using it to bless our homes will be left by the crib after this each Mass this weekend.

'HEARING CHRIST'S VOICE': Copies of a little book by Bishop Hugh Gilbert introducing the new lectionary are available from the Repository for £4.

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

CWL LUNCH CLUB: The Wednesday lunch club re-opens at 12 noon on Wednesday 8th January—welcome back everyone.

CHRISTMAS THANK YOU FROM RACHEL: Thank you for the lovely gifts, card and heartfelt messages given to me over the Christmas period. It was very kind and much appreciated.

BCYS SUMMER LOURDES YOUTH PILGRIMAGE – July 2024: (exact dates TBC in due course) Bookings are now open online for the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service pilgrimage to Lourdes in July. The week is spent serving the main Diocesan pilgrimage, assisting the elderly and infirm, alongside times of retreat, reconciliation, visiting the baths, taking part in the beautiful Processions, an afternoon in the mountains, party and social nights - all with other young Catholics from around our Diocese. The pilgrimage is open to all those in school year 10 – 13, with all those of school leaver age (18+) invited to join us as young leaders (subject to attending a training weekend). All details and applications can be found on the website www.bcys.net/events/sl24

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 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

WORD ON FIRE UK BIBLE CONFERENCE: Join Bishop Robert Barron and thousands of other Catholics from across the UK for Evangelisation & Culture: The Bible. Come to the Excel Centre in East London this February to gain a deeper appreciation of the Sacred Scriptures and their relevance to the Church's mission today. Date: Friday 21st - Saturday 22nd February 2025 at the Excel Centre, East London. Speakers Include: Bishop Robert Barron, N.T. Wright, Professor Tracey Rowland and more. For more information and to register, please visit: [// wordonfire.org/the-bible-event](http://wordonfire.org/the-bible-event).

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.

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Sat 4th Jan 5.30pm—6.15pm 6.30pm	ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS Joan Turner RIP (Moira Parker)
Sun 5th Jan 9.00am 11.00am	EPIPHANY OF THE LORD People of the Parish Maureen & Thomas Holt RIP Anniv (O'Donnell)
Mon 6th Jan 9.15am 4pm	Corinne Hennigan Int (Regan family) Reception of the body of Margaret Munnelly
Tues 7th Jan 9.15am 10.30am	Joshua Goldstone RIP (Smith family) Funeral Mass—Margaret Munnelly
Wed 8th Jan 9.15am 12 noon—1pm	Bridget Hill RIP (Bemand-Qureshi) ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS
Thur 9th Jan 9.15am	Frank Lawrenson RIP (Mason)
Frid 10th Jan 9.15am	Patrick Logue RIP (Etchells)
Sat 11th Jan 5.30pm—6.15pm 6.30pm	ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS Alex Henry RIP (Joan)
Sun 12th Jan 9.00am 11.00am	People of the Parish Martin Campbell RIP (Campbell family)

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* **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**