



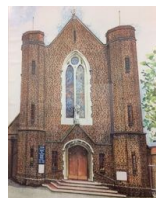
St Joseph's Catholic Church

Champion Road, Upminster

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PARISH NEWSLETTER

18TH / 19TH OCTOBER 2025

TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (C) - Mass Book Pg 152

(Exodus 17:8-13, 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2, Luke 18:1-8)

25TH / 26TH OCTOBER 2025

THIRTIETH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (C) - Mass Book Pg 155

(Sirach 35:15b-17, 20-22b, 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18, Luke 18:9-14)

This newsletter covers two weeks. In the Gospels for these two weeks, we continue to explore those aspects of our relationship with God expressed in the three phrases, 'thank you', 'please' and 'sorry'.

The gospel of the Persistent Widow is meant to teach us something about prayer, specifically those prayers we make asking God for something. We shouldn't look for exact parallels with our relationship with God. God is not like the unjust judge, any more than he is like the master of the dishonest steward we heard about a couple of weeks ago, but this parable teaches us to be persistent, to persevere in prayer. Why? It is not a matter of trying to change God's mind. Instead, prayer more often works by changing us.

God wants to use our prayer as a means of bringing about the good which he intends for us. By praying for something over a period of time, we become more ready to receive it and more aware of exactly what it is we are asking for and what we truly need. When we pray for other people, we are connected to them more deeply. Our prayer allows us in some way to be part of the solution. When we pray for world peace and an end to hunger and injustice, we might wonder why God doesn't act instantly to bring those things about. But change has to begin with each one of us, and by praying in this way, our wills become more fully aligned with God's will. We are slowly transformed into the image of divine love that we are called to become.

Recently, the leader of the opposition remarked that a big stumbling block to faith for her was the idea that she could be asking God to grant relatively trivial things such as success in her exams, whilst ignoring all the prayers that went up for much more serious things. Of course, it's not an either/or. Instead of an image of God as a great benefactor doling out rewards to those he chooses, we might imagine him as a loving father, and us his children, sitting on his knee, telling him everything that is on our hearts, however, big or small, however close to us or far away. God wants to hear what is on our hearts and then wants to help us to become the saints he wants us to be.

In the gospel for the second weekend covered by this newsletter we have the contrast between the proud Pharisee, and the tax collector who is aware of his need of God's mercy. Jesus tells us that it was the tax collector who went home at rights with God that day. Sorry is supposed to be the hardest word to say. But it is utterly essential that we recognise our need of God's forgiveness in order to unlock the mercy that flows bountifully from his heart. We become aware of our shortcomings when we consider what we are called to be. The church's apparent obsession with sin is not about making us feel guilty and ashamed of what might be considered trivial things. It is about receiving that great gift of divine mercy. Not settling for mediocrity, but allowing God's grace to transform us and help us to become more and more that best version of ourselves. We open our hearts to the forgiveness that is on offer freely to all who know their need of it, especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Confession is meant to set us free from the burden of guilt, so we can become who we are meant to be.

Let us keep praying that we may become the saints God wants us to be, and if that prayer seems too much, simply pray that we may want with all our hearts what God wants for us. And don't stop asking!

God bless, Fr Matthew.

THIS FORTNIGHT: Many thanks to Fr Gerald Gostling and the Missionaries of La Salette who are celebrating Mass here over the next two weeks. If you need a priest in an emergency please contact one of our neighbouring parishes (Fr Matthew will not answer his parish mobile number while away). Please note there is no Wednesday lunchtime Holy Hour on 22nd or 28th October, or 5th November, and no Saturday Holy Hour on 18th or 25th October.

CONFIRMATION: Bishop Alan intends to visit the parish on the eve of St Joseph's Day, Wednesday 18th March, to celebrate the sacrament of confirmation. Registration is open for those in year 10 or above who want the gifts of the Holy Spirit to help live out their faith: tinyurl.com/stjconfirm26 – *please do not delay as the programme will begin soon.*

SUNDAY MORNING COFFEE: Do come to the Social Centre for coffee or tea after the 9am Mass or before the 11am Mass. Sunday coffee will continue through half term, hosted by Mother's Prayers, the CWL and SVP.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY: The team will take a half-term break on Sunday 26th October.

RIP: Please pray for the repose of the souls of Josephine Turrell and Michael Cahill, and for their families.

BECOMING A CATHOLIC: Those who expressed interest in joining the church as adults should have received an email with details of the RCIA programme beginning next month. If you haven't, or if you are interested but haven't signed up, please email the parish office. No commitment at this stage!

BRENTWOOD URSULINE CONVENT HIGH SCHOOL SIXTH FORM OPEN

EVENING: Thursday 6th November 2025 6.30pm—8.30pm. Headteacher's talk at 6.30pm.

CWL WEDNESDAY LUNCH CLUB: will be closed for one week only on Wednesday 29th, October, this coincides with the children's October half term. We will reopen on Wednesday 5th, November.

PARISH FINANCE UPDATE 2024-5

Dear Parishioners,

My intention is always that we should be open and transparent about the financial affairs of the parish. This annual report on the previous financial year comes out later than I intended – *mea culpa* – but I hope it will give you a sense of where the money in the offertory bags (and standing orders and card donations) goes, and why your giving is as important as ever. First, though, I would like to thank you all for your financial support for the parish, as well as our team of counters, finance committee and our parish finance and gift aid officer.

I often hear people say that the church has lots of money. Pope Francis was well known for saying that he wanted a poor church for the poor. Pope Leo has recently published an Apostolic Exhortation, begun by his predecessor, rooting our approach to helping those who are living in poverty in the gospel precept of love. The church has a long tradition of almsgiving; this is something separate from our shared support for the church itself – both are aspects of discipleship. The Catholic church is a custodian of great artistic and architectural heritage, but at every level its day-to-day costs are borne by the generosity of its members. Contrary to what some people imagine, money flows upwards rather than downwards – that is to say, a portion of our parish income is passed on to the diocese, each diocese makes a contribution to the costs of the national Bishops' Conference, and also to the costs of the universal church. The church receives no state funding either, except for the significant benefit of being able to claim Gift Aid on donations made by UK taxpayers. Nevertheless, following the principal of subsidiarity, the majority of our income remains with the parish, to enable us to cover everything from insurance to utility bills and the cost of having a full-time priest in residence.

The church itself was built by the generosity of parishioners, and we should give thanks for this great legacy of which we are both beneficiaries and stewards. As you will be aware (please read my September letter to the parish if not) we are contemplating spending a very significant sum of money (more in fact that it cost to build the church in the 1930s, even adjusting for inflation) on a new parish centre that will not only benefit us, but hopefully generations to come. A large portion of the cost will hopefully come from the sale of St Peter's Catholic Centre in Cranham, which is itself part of that legacy from past generations that will now benefit us in a different way. I am not going to say any more about the project in this update, but hope to have something to share next month.

PARISH FINANCES: HEADLINES

- Our total income for the financial year to April 2025 was **£161,910**.
- Our outgoings for the year were **£177,543**.
- This means we ended the year with an in-year deficit of **£15,633**.

However there is more to this than meets the eye. In fact we are due to receive approximately £16,500 (notably more than the deficit!) in a delayed repayment of a Gift Aid claim, which would have been expected during the 2024-25 financial year, and which we are still waiting for at the time of writing. Moreover, the past year saw significant increases in utility bills, as well as the completion of our centenary project to install a new tower bell

(mostly funded by donations, but included in the above income and expenditure). Other maintenance projects included repaving the side entrance to the church, repairs to the church heating (hopefully the last such expense for a while now) and costly repairs to buried pipework in the social centre.

Had we received our Gift Aid income during the usual timeframe, the above headline figures would in fact have shown an in-year surplus of nearly £1,000 despite these additional outgoings. It is good to know that we are living within our means, able to cover our regular outgoings including maintenance both planned and unplanned. There may be new areas of expenditure in the future if, for example, plans for a partnership youth worker get off the ground, but there has been little progress so far on that.

We have a financial reserve of approximately £300,000 which means we are fortunate in not having to worry about cash flow when expected income is delayed. As well as a useful safety net should we have to deal with something unexpected, this reserve is useful at this point in time when we are dealing with initial expenses relating to the new building project. However we are not in a position where we can be complacent or live off our savings.

INCOME	2024-25	2023-24
Total income	161,910	168,221
<i>Highlights:</i>		
Offertory	98,334	94,302
Gift Aid received from HMRC	2,000	16,767
Rental Income	40,449	34,076
EXPENDITURE	2024-25	2023-24
Total expenditure	177,543	165,413
Surplus/(deficit)	(15,633)	2,808
<i>Highlights:</i>		
Diocesan Quota	30,447	29,865
Priests' salary & housekeeping	11,293	11,043
Supply priests	3,048	2,449
Salaries & pension (lay employees)	21,958	19,145
Gas & electricity (all buildings)	24,129	15,251
Council Tax, water rates & insurance	7,179	7,930
Presbytery maintenance	3,087	4,755
Church maintenance	20,258	10,141
Social Centre maintenance	10,941	5,862
St Peter's maintenance	12,549	12,000
Office & communications	9,166	11,544
Liturgy & Catechesis	8,108	7,601

The tables above show the main areas of income and expenditure. This doesn't include special collections for external causes, which are accounted for separately. It is worth noting that individual parish accounts are looked at closely by the diocesan finance department and transactions randomly selected for scrutiny by the external diocesan auditors.

Regular Giving and Gift Aid

You will see in the table that our main source of income is simply what people give, week in week out. Thank you for this. There are various ways to give, and in recent years we introduced offertory tokens, so that those who use other means of giving can put something in the collection bag that will be brought to the altar. Although we will never say no to cash donations, it is worth bearing in mind that branch closures mean we have to pay cash in at the Post Office who limit what we can pay in (especially coins). All forms of payment, including cash, have bank charges attached, but (perhaps surprisingly) paying cash in at the Post Office attracts the highest fees. In order of efficiency, therefore, the best method from our point of view is monthly standing order, followed by weekly standing order, credit cards, cheques and cash. If you do not already have a standing order set up then I do ask you to consider this, and if you do, please do review the level of giving from time to time. Last year approximately 70% of giving was via standing order, envelopes or card, vs 30% loose cash.

As mentioned already, a significant portion of our income each year comes from the Gift Aid scheme (or will come, eventually). Churches in this country do not receive any state funding other than what we can claim under this scheme. Without it, our bottom line looks very different. If all our giving was gift-aided we would have been due a further £4,300 – clearly there will always be some non-gift-aid donations, but let's make sure we get as much as we can! If you pay income tax then the most helpful thing you can do if you haven't already is to register for Gift Aid, and use a means of giving that identifies your donations - standing order, card, or envelopes. We are able to claim back the equivalent of the basic rate of tax from your donations, provided it doesn't exceed the total amount of tax you have paid. If you give £20, we claim an extra £5 from HMRC. If you are a higher rate taxpayer, then you can also claim the difference between basic and higher rate via your tax return. To sign up, please contact the Parish Office or download the Gift Aid form from our website <https://stjosephschurchupminster.com/giving/>. Many thanks to those who already help make this difference.

Supporting other charitable works

Although we do not include this in our main income and expenditure accounts, our parish community has contributed significantly to a number of collections over the past year for a range of causes. Over the course of the year members of the parish contributed nearly £18,000 to the various appeals, with a further £3,000 added through Gift Aid. Additionally, groups within the parish community have collected and fundraised for a range of good causes, and we have continued to support local foodbanks with material goods and the cash donations. It is worth noting that St Joseph's Catholic Club (whose accounts are entirely separate, as a registered company) has also made significant donations to our schools and other local charities, as well as making an annual donation to the parish and a further donation to support young people travelling to Lourdes.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

We are now half-way through a new financial year. Although our day-to-day income and expenditure is in line with trends of recent years, next year's report will no doubt contain some very different figures. Not only are we expecting two year's worth of Gift Aid rebates, but as our building project gets underway, we are committed to significant expenditure in the form of architects and planning application and other professional fees. We are also in the process of selling the St Peter's site in Cranham, which, all being well, should make a major contribution to the building costs. In the coming months we will be launching a parish fundraising campaign, and begin applying for grants.

Please do read my September letter, if you haven't done so, in order that you may be fully informed of what is happening and what we are committing to, for the benefit of our parish community. This is the biggest project we have undertaken since the building of the church itself! Visit <https://stjosephschurchupminster.com/our-future/> to read the September letter, as well as previous updates on the project – more information will be added when we have something to share.

FINAL THOUGHT: LEGACIES

As we are approaching the month of Holy Souls I thought I would finish with a brief word on the subject of legacies. This isn't a subject I discuss often as I don't want to come across as pushing people to favour the church over other causes, though perhaps I should be less reticent: other charities are often quite upfront about encouraging people to remember them in their will.

Many of us will want to leave most of what we own to our families. If our estate is big enough the state will also get a slice in the form of inheritance tax, and potentially the whole lot if we die intestate. Whilst the country no doubt has need of it, it is worth bearing in mind that charitable bequests reduce the amount of an estate which is subject to inheritance tax, and can even lower the rate applicable to the remainder. Of course, this is something you should take proper advice on. But if you are in a position to support the parish in your will it would make a real difference to the parish, especially in view of our new building project. Bequests are technically made to the diocese (which is the registered charity) rather than the parish, with a request (always honoured) that it is applied for the benefit of the parish or a particular project. The diocese publishes a form of words that should be used by whoever drafts the will – this can be found in the diocesan directory, and can be provided on request.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and for supporting the parish in all the ways you do, not least through your giving.

Fr Matthew

Scan QR code for information on the building project >>>



CARITAS BRENTWOOD: All parishioners are warmly invited to join Caritas Brentwood on Saturday, 15th November 2025, for a morning dedicated to celebrating and exploring our shared call to care for our common home. The event will include engaging discussions, refreshments, and an opportunity to explore the hosting parish church and its grounds. We will be joined by inspiring speakers from The Ecological Conversion Group and Laudato Si' Animators, who will help us reflect on how we can live out our faith through care for creation. To find out more and register, please visit: <https://CARITAS-ENV-25.eventbrite.co.uk>

CHRISTMAS CHOIR: Do you enjoy singing? Have you ever wanted to sing as part of a group? Then why not join St Joseph's Church Choir. We come together twice a year and rehearse for about ten weeks before singing at the Christmas and Easter Masses. We are always looking for new members to swell our numbers, and singers of all abilities are welcome. Our rehearsals for Christmas will be in the Church on Mondays at 7.30pm, starting on **Monday 13 October**. If you are interested, please contact Mark on 07763 210946 or mark142857@hotmail.com for more details.

CAMPION CHARITY FUNDRAISER: at Campion School on **Friday, 31st October**. Harry Cambridge, well-known for his breathtaking celebration of Luther Vandross, will perform to raise money for charity CRY (Cardiac Risk in the Young) and the James Patterson Memorial.

USED STAMPS ST FRANCIS HOSPICE: The hospice continues to collect used stamps to raise funds and has been very grateful to the parishioners of St Joseph's for collecting them for many years. Please continue to save your used stamps and leave them in the porch or give them to Sr Rosemary. When taking the stamps from the envelopes, please leave at least a half inch margin around the stamps. Thank you.

BRENTWOOD CATHOLIC YOUTH SERVICE – CATECHIST TRAINING & RESOURCES DAY 2025, Saturday 8th November 2025: Open to all confirmation and first holy communion catechists, youth leaders, and children's liturgy coordinators in the Diocese of Brentwood. The day offers formation, practical workshops, inspiring speakers, and networking to support First Holy Communion and Confirmation programmes. Open to adults and young leaders (16+); full details and booking at www.bcys.net/events/catechists2025

USEFUL INFORMATION

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

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

Fr Matthew (emergencies/pastoral need): 07356 292542

Baptisms & weddings - please speak to Fr Matthew after Mass

St Joseph's Pre-School: (available 7.30am-6pm) 07983 859090 / 07807 700900

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

MASS INTENTIONS THIS FORTNIGHT

Sat 18th Oct 5.30pm—6.15pm 6.30pm	ST LUKE, EV NO ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS People of the parish
Sun 19th Oct 9.00am 11.00am	TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR John Street & Marie Pearce RIP Anniv. (Street) Robin Clist RIP (Family)
Mon 20th Oct 9.15am	John Fowley RIP (Pavitt)
Tues 21st Oct 9.15am	Vocations to the priesthood and religious life
Wed 22nd Oct 9.15am 12 noon—1pm	John Fowley RIP (Blake) NO ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS
Thur 23rd Oct 9.15am	Joe Newman's Intentions (with our year 1 children)
Frid 24th Oct 9.15am	John Fowley RIP (Matton)
Sat 25th Oct 5.30pm—6.15pm 6.30pm	NO ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS James Owens RIP (Margaret)
Sun 26th Oct 9.00am 11.00am	THIRTIETH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR People of the parish Maureen Baillache RIP Anniv. (Claude)
Mon 27th Oct 9.15am	Maureen Springham RIP (Brian)
Tues 28th Oct 9.15am	SS SIMON AND JUDE, APP Bridge Moyles RIP (Bridget)
Wed 29th Oct 9.15am 12 noon—1pm	Bee Bee O'Boyle RIP (Bridget) NO ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS
Thur 30th Oct 9.15am	Nann Byrne RIP (John & Betty)
Frid 31st Oct 9.15am	Carmel Armstrong RIP (McCarthy)
Sat 1st Nov 5.30pm—6.15pm 6.30pm	ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS Eileen Newman RIP (Keefe)
Sun 2nd Nov 9.00am 11.00am	ALL SAINTS (HOLYDAY OF OBLIGATION) People of the parish Daniel Corrigan RIP Anniv. (Corrigan)