



Our Vision is a Person, Our Vision is Jesus Christ

24th DECEMBER 2023: FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

This Newsletter Covers Sunday 24th & Sunday 31st December 2023

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

The Season of Advent poses for me an interesting question. How can we expect the unexpected? We are called to be ready and watchful for when Jesus comes again BUT we are told that we do not know the day or the hour when this is to happen. My thoughts may not be of interest to those who have resolved this problem but I would like to share with you how I have resolved it. I have realised that I must not separate Advent from Christmas and accept that God is a God of Surprises! How so, you may ask? Well, it is with the birth of Jesus that the greatest surprise of all occurs - God comes to earth and is born as one of us. There is more. As Jesus encounters people from Disciples to the "Woman at the Well", he surprises them by what he offers. Not jumping out from behind a rock and shouting BOO!! But giving them a beautiful present of his generous love and forgiveness. Our giving of surprise parcels and packages at Christmas is a good symbol of the generosity and loving-kindness of God in Jesus as well as combining the surprise of his revelation.

At Christmas I can now be more sensitive, because of Advent, to my encounter with God which so often leads to a surprise. Unexpectedly, I may be led from one thing to another; it may be a word spoken by someone which resonates deep within; it could simply be the unconditional love shown in families and friends or even through a stranger. Be prepared. With the God who surprises me with His wonder, I now find that my meditation on the crib scene becomes more enjoyable and exciting. I ask the God of Surprises to surprise me more and more in my life. If you haven't got a crib in your house then get one and invite family and friends to pray with you around it that they too, may be surprised by the JOY I am trying to convey to you. It will be cynicism and other blocks to our God which will blind us to the miracles which surround us in this beautiful world of surprises.

A story is told of a young lad of 10, the son of a local farmer, who was seen by his parish priest hanging around the statue of Mary late into the evening. The priest was suspicious and imagined that he was up to no good and shooed him out of the church. He also checked the candle money. On several occasions leading up to Christmas the boy was back standing in front of the statue and again the priest ordered him out of the church. During the week after Christmas the priest walked into the church to see the boy with the statue of Mary in a wheel-barrow walking up the aisle towards the front door. He was furious and caught hold of the child and gave him a good telling off. The priest then said, "Why did you do this dreadful thing?" The boy made this reply. "Father I prayed so hard for Mary to give me a special present for Christmas. I asked that she would give me a new wheel-barrow so that I could help my father on the farm. I promised her that if this would happen I would give her the first ride in it. This is what I was doing when you came in."

May the God of Surprises bring you his wonderful presence this Christmas and always.

Fr Bruce

GEM OF THE WEEK



This week's GEM is the "Christmas Videoposter by Communion and Liberation" - you can find this on our homepage. If anyone has suggestions for GEMs please contact website.sswp@gmail.com

For the next Newsletter, items should be received into the Parish Office by **10am on Wednesday 3rd January 2024**, please email your messages/notices to: office@stswithunwellsparish.org.uk

LITURGICAL INDICATIONS



Sunday 24th December 2023: Year B - Year 2 - Psalter Week: 4

PSALM RESPONSE: I WILL SING FOR EVER OF YOUR LOVE, O LORD.

1st reading Samuel 7:1-5,8b-12,14a,16 **Psalm 88** **2nd reading** Romans 16:25-27 **Gospel** Luke 1:26-38

Sunday 31st December 2023: Year B - Year 2 - Psalter Week: Office Proper

PSALM RESPONSE: HE, THE LORD, IS OUR GOD. HE REMEMBERS HIS COVENANT FOR EVER.

1st reading Genesis 15:1-6;21:1-3 **Psalm 104** **2nd reading** Colossians 3:12-21 **Gospel** Luke 2:22-40

Sunday 7th January 2024: Year B - Year 2 - Psalter Week: Office Proper

PSALM RESPONSE: ALL NATIONS SHALL FALL PROSTRATE BEFORE YOU, O LORD.

1st reading Isaiah 60:1-6 **Psalm 71** **2nd reading** Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6 **Gospel** Matthew 2:1-12

Growing In Faith Together Group

We are currently on our Christmas break, recommencing 2nd January 2024.

Tuesdays 10.15am to approx. 11.45am in the Holy Cross Resource Centre. All are welcome!

Fellowship Group - The next meeting will be on **Wednesday 10th January**. We will have a New Year Liturgy starting at 7pm in **St Swithun Wells**

PARISH GROUPS



Church. Everyone is welcome. If you wish to join on Zoom, please contact Peter Baggott on Peterbaggott@aol.com for the link.

Afternoon Club - **St. Joseph's Parish Centre, 26A Abbey Water, first Tuesday in the month at 2pm.** Come and join us for tea, games and good fun. Next Meeting: 2nd January 2024.

Christmas Collection

Our Christmas Collection celebrates and gives thanks to our Parish priests and all the dedication, guidance and care they give across our Parish. For your convenience there are several ways to make an offering:

- Loose cash or cheques in the collection basket;
- Cheques made out to **CDP St Swithun Wells** with **Christmas** on the back;
- Bank transfer into the main parish account sort code **30-93-04**; a/c **01786599** using the reference **Christmas**;
- Click on the green '**donate**' button on the Homepage of our website and then click '**Clergy Christmas Collection 2023**'. This will take you to a Give as You live page:
<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/st-swithun-wells-catholic-parish-christmas-collection-2023>
- If you are a tax payer and wish to gift aid your offering you can use the yellow envelopes provided in the reception area of each church. Ensure all relevant information is included so we can reclaim the gift aid on your behalf. **Please write "Christmas Offering" on the envelope** - this can be placed in any collection between now and Christmas.

Christmas Crib Offerings 2023 - This year our Christmas Crib offerings will go to Friends of the Holy Land. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

Upcoming Funerals - Please pray for the repose of the soul of Briony Burch, a former teacher at St Swithun Wells Primary School, who has died. Briony's Funeral Mass will take place at **St Theresa's, Totton on Thursday 4th January at 11.15am.**

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Danny Munro and for his family. Danny's Funeral Mass takes place in **St Edward's on Friday 12th January at 11.30am.**

MESSAGES



Mass of Healing at OLQA, Bishop's Waltham
Monday 1st January, 12 Noon

With laying on of hands and anointing. All are welcome!

Upcoming Parish Retreats

There will be a Eucharistic Minister Retreat on **Saturday 13th January, 2.30pm-4.30pm in St Edward the Confessor, Chandler's Ford** for all Eucharistic Ministers of the Parish.

There will be a Readers Retreat on **Sat 3rd February**. For Readers at St Andrew's & St Joseph the retreat is at St Andrew's from 2.30pm to 4.30pm, whereas Readers at Holy Cross, St Swithun Wells and St Edward's the retreat is at Holy Cross from 2.30pm-4.30pm.

Holy Cross Right of Way

Annually we have to bar access through our car park for at least 24 hours to prevent it becoming a public right of way. The main Leigh road gate will be closed from **4pm on Thursday 28th December and it will re-open at 4pm on Friday 29th December**. The barrier and pedestrian gate will remain operational.

Parish Office Closures over the Christmas period

The Office will be closed on the following days: Mon 25th, Tues 26th, Wed 27th, Fri 29th, Sat 30th, Sun 31st December, Mon 1st & Tues 2nd Jan. Fiona will be in the office on Thursday 28th December and a volunteer will come in to check voicemails on Tuesday 2nd Jan. For any urgent enquiries over the festive period please contact the priests on 02380 612430.

Parish Newsletter - the next newsletter to be published after the 24th December two week edition will be for the 7th January 2024.

MESSAGES CONTINUED



New Year Afternoon Tea

for all our Senior Parishioners across the Parish on **Sunday 14th January at 2.30pm at St Swithun Wells Church, Fair Oak.** If you consider yourself to be a Senior Citizen then come along and enjoy delicious food, raffle and entertainment. Places are limited to 60 people and need to be booked in advance. To book a place please contact Pat Baggott by phone, text or email, details below. We do not make a charge for this event but would ask for donations on the day to help cover expenses. We also need volunteers to make scones and cakes if you are able to help out in this way please contact Pat to discuss.
Contact details: Pat Baggott 07801 454400 or email baggott.pm@gmail.com.

Message from the Parish Office

We would like to wish all of our parishioners peace, joy, health & happiness over the Christmas period and throughout 2024!

Best wishes,
Fiona & Sarah



ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Tues: St Edward - after Mass (6.30pm-7.30pm)
Wednesday: Holy Cross - after Mass (10.00am-11.00am)
Thursday: St Joseph - before Mass (5.30pm-6.00pm)

CONFESSION (SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION)

Tuesday:	6.30pm-7.30pm (after Mass)	St Edward
Tuesday:	9.30am-10.00am (before Mass)	St Andrew
Saturday:	10.00am-10.30am (after Mass)	Holy Cross
	10am or by appointment	OLQA
	1.30pm-2.30pm & 5.30pm-6pm	St Joseph
Sunday:	8.30am-9.00am (before Mass)	St Edward
	8.30am-9.00am (before Mass)	St Andrew

TIMES A PRIEST WILL BE AVAILABLE TO MEET

Tuesdays: *Fr Raffaele not on 26th Dec or 2nd Jan*, 3.30pm-5.30pm, Holy Cross Resource Centre, Eastleigh
Wednesdays: *Fr Luca not on 3rd Jan*, 3.30pm-5.30pm, Holy Cross Resource Centre, Eastleigh
Saturdays: *Fr Mario*, 2.30pm-4.30pm, Romsey Parish Office (26 Abbey Water), Romsey

MASS TIMES FOR OUR CHURCH COMMUNITIES

DATE	TIME	CHURCH	MASS INTENTION
Saturday 23rd December	9.30am	Holy Cross	Antonio Cicu FM
	5.00pm	St Swithun Wells	Ronnie Castelino RIP
	6.00pm	OLQA	
	6.00pm	St Joseph	For Jean Prescott's family, living and deceased
	6.30pm	St Edward	Sheila & Tony Walker RIP and their deceased family
Sunday 24th December <i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i> <i>The Nativity of the Lord (Vigil)</i>	9.00am	St Edward	Husband & family of Moira Knapman
	9.00am	St Andrew	Simere Anakwenze (Birthday Intentions)
	9.30am	OLQA	
	11.00am	Holy Cross (also livestreamed)	Elizabeth Nash (Special Intention)
	11.00am	St Joseph	People of the Parish
	<u>6.00pm</u>	<u>St Swithun Wells</u>	Magdalen Sleeman RIP
	<u>6.00pm (carols from 5.30pm)</u>	<u>St Edward</u>	Marie Gray (Wellbeing)
	<u>7.00pm</u>	<u>St Andrew</u>	For Justice & Peace in the World
	<u>7.00pm</u>	<u>Holy Cross</u>	<i>Polska Msza Święta</i>
	<u>8.00pm</u>	<u>OLQA</u>	
<u>11.00pm (carols from 10.30pm)</u>	<u>St Joseph</u>	John Gare RIP	
<u>12 Midnight (carols from 11.30pm)</u>	<u>Holy Cross</u>	Edvardas Numsedis RIP	
Monday 25th December <i>The Nativity of the Lord</i>	<u>9.00am</u>	<u>St Edward</u>	Mrs Edward Christian FM
	<u>9.00am</u>	<u>St Andrew</u>	Daniel Smith RIP
	<u>9.30am</u>	<u>OLQA</u>	
	<u>11.00am</u>	<u>Holy Cross</u> (also livestreamed)	Andy Breen RIP
	<u>11.00am</u>	<u>St Joseph</u>	Peter Penrose & Family (Wellbeing)
Tuesday 26th December <i>St Stephen</i>	8.30am	Holy Cross	<i>Polska Msza Święta</i>
	10.00am	St Andrew	
	6.00pm	St Edward	Thomas Noel RIP

MASS TIMES FOR OUR CHURCH COMMUNITIES (CONTINUED)

DATE	TIME	CHURCH	MASS INTENTION
Wed 27th <i>St John</i>	9.30am <u>10.00am</u> 10.00am	Holy Cross <u>OLOA</u> St Edward	Margarita, Cedric & Charles Harris FM Peace in Israel & Palestine
Thurs 28th <i>The Holy Innocents</i>	9.30am <u>10.00am</u> 6.00pm	Holy Cross <u>OLOA</u> St Joseph	Raymond Harrison & Keith Clark RIP Sr Philomena Allen (Wellbeing)
Friday 29th December <i>St Thomas of Canterbury</i>	<u>10.00am</u> 10.00am 10.00am	<u>OLOA</u> St Joseph St Edward	Bridie Firhurst (Wellbeing) George, Gertrude & Mary Lawton RIP Anniversary
Saturday 30th December	9.30am 5.00pm 6.00pm 6.00pm 6.30pm	Holy Cross St Swithun Wells OLOA St Joseph St Edward	Thomas Thomas RIP 1st Anniversary Bernadette Packer RIP Robert Twigg RIP Anniversary Mrs Edward Christian FM
Sunday 31st December <i>The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph</i>	8.30am 9.00am 9.00am 9.30am 11.00am 11.00am	Holy Cross St Edward St Andrew OLOA Holy Cross (also livestreamed) St Joseph	<i>Polska Msza Święta</i> Eric & Roslyn Lasker and family RIP Anniversary Harry Roydon RIP Anniversary Pasqualina Marucci RIP
Mon 1st Jan <i>Mary, The Holy Mother of God</i>	9.30am <u>12 Noon</u>	Holy Cross <u>OLOA</u>	Fraternity of St Charles Canon John Doran FM <u>Mass of Healing</u>
Tuesday 2nd January <i>Ss Basil the Great & Gregory Nazianzen</i>	10.00am 6.00pm	St Andrew St Edward	Anthraper Family (In Thanksgiving)
Wednesday 3rd Jan	9.30am 9.30am 10.00am	Holy Cross OLOA St Edward	Children of Palestine Keith Small RIP
Thursday 4th January	9.30am 12 Noon 6.00pm	Holy Cross OLOA St Joseph	Private Intention Andrew Russell-Smith RIP
Friday 5th January	9.30am 10.00am 10.00am	OLOA St Joseph St Edward	Sr Kurian & Council DW (Wellbeing) Anne Eyston RIP
Saturday 6th January	9.30am 5.00pm 6.00pm 6.00pm 6.30pm	Holy Cross St Swithun Wells OLOA St Joseph St Edward	Mike Walsh RIP (Birthday Anniversary) People of the Parish Deceased Members of the Roddy Family RIP FM Albert James Boaden FM
Sunday 7th January <i>The Epiphany of the Lord</i>	8.30am 9.00am 9.00am 9.30am 11.00am 11.00am	Holy Cross St Edward St Andrew OLOA Holy Cross (also livestreamed) St Joseph	<i>Polska Msza Święta</i> Mrs Edward Christian FM Family of Margaret Allan Gary Leah & Thomas Leah RIP