

NEWSLETTER Catholic Parish of St Swithun Wells

www.stswithunwellsparish.org.uk
Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth Registered Charity No. 1199568



Our Vision is a Person, Our Vision is Jesus Christ

11th January 2026: THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

WITH GREAT GIFT COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY

A generation longing for belonging. If someone asked me to describe today's youth - the so-called Gen Z - in a nutshell, those are the words I would use.

During my recent travels across Europe to visit the missions of our Fraternity, I encountered many young adults. From Norway to Spain, and from the Czech Republic to Germany and the United Kingdom, they all seem to share the same deep need to feel connected, accepted, and part of a community. It is a powerful desire for relationship, purpose, and an identity beyond oneself - a longing felt most acutely during times of isolation or transition. Perhaps this is the fruit of a generation that spent its formative teenage years in the shadow of COVID-19. It is a yearning that drives them to seek inclusion, but one that can also lead to deep loneliness or anxiety if it remains unmet.

One of the greatest gifts the Catholic Church can offer a human being is Baptism. This gift directly addresses that longing for belonging. Through Baptism, God offers a promise: no matter what happens, no matter what job you hold or where you live, you will always have a place to call home: the Church. It is home, because it is the place where love and truth meet.

I was baptised when I was only four months old. Looking back forty-three years later, I see that this promise has been fulfilled. I have lived in Italy and England, spent time in Austria, and stayed for a month in Brazil. My travels take me across Europe to many different countries, yet I have never felt homeless. Wherever I have gone, whether for a short stay or a long season, a community of believers was already there, waiting for me. They offered the kind of love and truth my heart was made for - not a cheap imitation, but a truth that is deep, profound, and thought-provoking, and a love that is transforming, selfless, and truly satisfying.

When we celebrate a Baptism, there is a moment that always fills me with wonder: the lighting of the small candle from the great Paschal candle. The Paschal candle is large because it represents the long line of people who believed in Christ before us. Their light shines brightly because they are not truly gone; they represent a community that stretches back to the first companions Jesus chose - the twelve apostles - and continues through the centuries to us today. By lighting that small candle, godparents accept both the gift and the responsibility of this belonging. It is as if they are saying: "We say yes to the invitation to belong to a community greater than ourselves - one that will never abandon us".

We, too, hold the responsibility not to break this holy chain. We are the ones to whom this light has been entrusted. We must keep it burning brightly so that future generations might find, through our witness, a community that leads them to the One who alone can fill the restless heart.

Fr Luca

GEM OF THE WEEK

Letter on the close of the Holy Year by Bishop Philip

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
14th January 2026, please email your messages/notices to: office@stswithunwellsparish.org.uk

If you wish to make a donation to our parish please go to: <https://www.stswithunwellsparish.org.uk/financesdonations>

LITURGICAL INDICATIONS



Sunday 11th January 2026: YEAR A - YEAR 2 - PSALTER WEEK 1

PSALM RESPONSE: THE LORD WILL BLESS HIS PEOPLE WITH PEACE.

1st reading Isaiah 42:1-4,6-7 Psalm 29 (28) 2nd reading Acts 10:34-38 Gospel Matthew 3:13-17

Sunday 18th January 2026 YEAR A - YEAR 2 - PSALTER WEEK 2

PSALM RESPONSE: BEHOLD, I HAVE COME, LORD, TO DO YOUR WILL.

1st Reading Isaiah 49:3,5-6 Psalm 40 (39) 2nd Reading Corinthians 1:1-3 Gospel John 1:29-34

PARISH GROUPS



Communion & Liberation Groups

Our Schools of Community will restart their weekly meetings in **Holy Cross** every **Wednesday at 8pm** (contact Fr Pietro) and at **St Edward's** every **Thursday at 8pm** (contact Fr Raffaele). For more information please click the link on the homepage of our website. All are welcome!

School of Christianity in Bishop's Waltham - A course about the basis of the faith using the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Next meetings will be **Fridays 16th January and 30th January at 6pm in the hall of Our Lady Queen of Apostles Church.**

The Little Flowers Baby & Toddler Group

Meet on **Wednesdays** during term time from **10am in Holy Cross Resource Centre**. The group is for 0-4 years and their families. More information is on the website or you can email: littleflowers.sswp@gmail.com

Voice of Praise - Catholic Charismatic Prayer Group

Join us every **Thursday evening, 8.15pm - 9.15pm**, at the **Holy Cross Resource Centre** for an hour of lively prayer, music, Scripture, and fellowship. Our charism is evangelisation: sharing the joy of the Gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit. Whether you are new or experienced in charismatic prayer, all are warmly welcome! For info please email:

voiceofpraise.sswp@gmail.com

Awake My Soul - A group for young adults (aged 18-25) in the parish. We meet every other **Wednesday from 7pm to 9.30pm in the presbytery of Holy Cross (53 Leigh Road, Eastleigh - the house next to the church)**. We start with dinner together, followed by a discussion on how our faith relates to our daily lives. Next meeting: **Wednesday 14th January**. If you would like to participate, please email Fr Matteo:

mpagani@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

MESSAGES



Rimini Meeting - there will be a trip to Italy for young people aged 18 to 25 from **20th to 27th August 2026** to visit the Rimini Meeting, a cultural event organised by the Catholic Movement of Communion and Liberation. It is a week of conferences, exhibitions, etc; on different topics. All organised by volunteers. We will also be visiting Rome. The final cost will be £700 which includes: flight, accommodations, minibus hire and health insurance. Meals are not included. I would ask you to let us know by **Sunday 11th January 2026** if you will be coming and to pay a deposit of £350. For further information please contact Fr Matteo

mpagani@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Thank you - to everyone for your Christmas greetings, prayers, cards and thoughts expressed in so many different ways. We are also very grateful for your generosity shown through the Christmas offerings which we really do appreciate. Thank you to all the many people who helped ensure our Christmas liturgies were well prepared and joyfully celebrated. **Frs Raffaele, Luca, Mario, Matteo and Pietro.**

Presentation of 'At the Origin of the Christian Claim' by Fr Giussani - Thursday 15th January 2026 at 8pm in **St Edward's Cloister**. In this book, Luigi Giussani examines Christ's claim to identify himself with God, the ultimate answer to our search for the meaning of existence. *At the Origin of the Christian Claim* presents an intriguing argument supported with ample documentation from the gospels and other theological writings. A Zoom connection will be available for those who can't attend in person. You can request the link by emailing soc.sswp@gmail.com

Pilgrimage to Portugal (Lisbon and Fatima)

This will be from **Thursday 30th April to Monday 4th May 2026** and will cost £995. For more information, visit our website, pick up a leaflet in the welcoming area or please email caroline.bubien@gmail.com We already have 30 people booked and we would like to reach 40. Please come along. **The new deadline for booking is 15th January 2026.**

MESSAGES CONTINUED

Come and work in our Catholic schools! - Are you a Catholic currently teaching in a non-Catholic school? Have you considered applying for a post in one of our schools but are unsure how they are different and whether your application would be welcomed? Find out the answers to these questions and any others you may have about working in a Catholic school by attending our online webinar, 'Come to work in our Catholic schools' being held on **Tuesday 13th January 2026 at 7pm**. The webinar will be led by Catherine Hobbs, Diocesan Director for Education and Robert Dare, Diocesan Schools Support Officer, and will last about one hour. Please visit St Swithun Wells parish website to register your interest.

Upcoming funeral - Please pray for the repose of the soul of Diana Clancy and for her family. Diana's funeral Mass will take place on **Thursday 15th January at 10.30am at St Andrews** and will be followed by cremation at Test Valley Crematorium, Romsey.

Eucharistic Ministers Retreat - Saturday 17th January at 2.30pm - 4pm in St Edward's for all Eucharistic Ministers of the parish.

Readers Retreats - All readers and all those wishing to become readers are invited to the Readers' Retreats on **Saturday 31st January**. Retreats are located in the following churches:

- **OLQA 10.30am-12noon.** For readers at OLQA.
- **St Andrew 10.30am-12noon.** For readers at St Andrew and St Joseph.
- **Holy Cross 2.30-4pm.** For readers at Holy Cross, St Edward's and St Swithun Wells.

Volunteers Needed for Coffee Stop at Holy Cross - We have lost eight volunteers last year and are seeking new people. Are you able to help us on a Thursday morning after Mass at Holy Cross Resource Centre? If you can, please contact Karen on 07809 596831 or jakeman1966@hotmail.co.uk.

Parish Get2Gether - Sunday 1st February 1-4pm Pavilion in the Park. An event for all of the parish, especially families.

Christian Unity Eastleigh - As part of the week of prayer for Christian Unity, Churches Together in Eastleigh are joining together to read the bible. **From Monday 19th to Friday 23rd** we will be reading through the entire Bible from 8am - 9pm each day. **On Saturday 24th January we will be gathering in Eastleigh Town Centre** to read the Gospels. This is a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate the unity we all have in knowing Jesus as Lord and Saviour as revealed through the holy scriptures. We would love people from every church to take part. You can sign up for as many slots as you like. Each slot is one hour and up to 4 people at a time can book in so no one has to read for the full hour. Please visit the St Swithun Wells parish website to sign up.

Christian Unity Chandlers Ford - 'Church visits' will take place on **Sunday 18th January**. The aim of this tradition is to experience different types of worship and to appreciate a little of what is happening in other churches, as well as meeting other local Christians. St Edwards will be visited by St Francis Church. Deacon Paul Owen is arranging a visit to Chandlers Ford Parish.

Christian Unity Romsey - There will be a Christian Unity service on **Sunday 25th January at 6.30pm in the Abbey**. Everyone welcome.

Good Companions - Our next gathering is at **12noon on Friday 23 January in St Edward's Cloister**. Everyone is welcome to join us for friendly company and delicious food. The school choir will entertain us with their excellent singing. Please ring Tony Wilson on 023 80266617 if you wish to come along.

Shop at Holy Cross Church - There are still a few 2026 calendars and diaries available to purchase at half price. The shop is open every Sunday after morning Mass.

Voices from the Parish - We are looking for parish volunteers to share a few words and photos about the wonderful work they do in the parish, to be shared on our social media and website, with a different volunteer being featured each week. If you would like to share your experiences and encourage others to get involved, please send no more than 100 words describing your role/a story and at least one photo to: events@stswithunwellsparish.org.uk

New parish blog - We now have a blog on our website. We are also on Facebook and Instagram and you can follow us at [@stswithunwellsparish](https://www.instagram.com/stswithunwellsparish) for all the latest news and events in the parish.

PAMIS, ChurchSuite & Parish Census - We're moving our parishioner database from PAMIS to ChurchSuite. ChurchSuite is a market leader and has good data protection measures. To begin with accurate records, we'll hold a parish census this month. More details will follow. For queries, please contact Christina at accounts@stswithunwellsparish.org.uk

Online Gift Card Fraud - Gift card fraud is an increasingly common way of tricking victims into purchasing gift cards and sharing their details, leading to financial loss. Please be aware that there have been scam messages circulating which appear to come from priests or diocesan staff, asking people to buy gift cards or provide financial help urgently. **The diocese and its clergy will never ask for money, gift cards, vouchers, or personal details by email, text message or social media.** If you receive a message of this kind, do not respond and do not send any money. Please report it to the parish office, so that we can alert others. Thank you for your vigilance and for helping to protect our parish communities.

MASS TIMES FOR OUR CHURCH COMMUNITIES

DATE	TIME	CHURCH	MASS INTENTION
Sat 10th January	9.30am 5.00pm 6.00pm 6.00pm 6.30pm	Holy Cross St Swithun Wells OLQA St Joseph St Edward	Michael Lane RIP FM People of the Parish Beppie Marsh RIP (Anniversary) Blaine Pressacco RIP
Sun 11th Jan <i>The Baptism of the Lord</i>	8.30am 9.00am 9.00am 9.30am 11.00am 11.00am 5.30pm	Holy Cross St Edward St Andrew OLQA Holy Cross (& livestreamed) St Joseph Holy Cross	<i>Polska Msza Święta</i> Mark Herbich RIP Anniversary Sheila Keefe RIP Pasquale Marucci RIP (5th Anniversary) Sr Maureen (Wellbeing)
Mon 12th January	9.30am	Holy Cross	Helen Baxter RIP Anniversary
Tues 13th January	10.00am 6.00pm	St Andrew St Edward	
Weds 14th January	9.30am 10.00am	Holy Cross St Edward	Gualteri Smyth FM
Thurs 15th January	9.30am <u>10.30am</u> 12 Noon 6.00pm	Holy Cross <u>St Andrew</u> OLQA St Joseph	Catherine Mary Robinson FM <u>Funeral Mass for Diana Clancy RIP</u>
Fri 16th January	10.00am 10.00am 12 Noon	St Joseph St Edward OLQA	Sr Eileen (Wellbeing) Jean & Peter O'Brien RIP
Sat 17th January <i>St Anthony of Egypt</i>	9.30am 5.00pm 6.00pm 6.00pm 6.30pm	Holy Cross St Swithun Wells OLQA St Joseph St Edward	Special Intention for Maureen Burnett Ann Ryan (Wellbeing) People of the Parish
Sun 18th January <i>Second Sunday in Ordinary Time</i>	8.30am 9.00am 9.00am 9.30am 11.00am 11.00am 5.30pm	Holy Cross St Edward St Andrew OLQA Holy Cross (& livestreamed) St Joseph Holy Cross	<i>Polska Msza Święta</i> Ramon & Nelita Hechanova RIP Anniversaries Tomasz Michalski (Birthday) Norma McCarthy RIP Anniversary

CLERGY & PARISH OFFICE

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Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri 9.30am - 5.30pm; Wed 9.30am - 2.30pm

Parish Administrator:

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Events & Communications Co-ordinator: Faye Harris

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Safeguarding: Please see Safeguarding posters in each of our churches for details of the Parish Safeguarding Reps. Diocesan Safeguarding: Ruth Attfield rattfield@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk