



CATHOLIC CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY & ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY



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Third Sunday of Advent

14th December 2025

Gaudete Sunday



What is special about the Third Sunday of Advent? For much of the Church's history, this Sunday had a special name: "*Gaudete*" Sunday. The traditions surrounding this Sunday go back as far as the fourth or fifth century, as does the season of Advent itself. Advent, our preparation for Christmas, was originally a forty-day penitential season like Lent. In fact, since it used to begin on November 12 (just after the Memorial of St. Martin of Tours), it was called "St. Martin's Lent." "Gaudete Sunday" was the Advent counterpart to "Laetare Sunday," which marks the midpoint in Lent.

On Gaudete Sunday, the season of Advent shifts its focus. For the first two weeks of Advent, the focus can be summed up in the phrase, "The Lord is coming." But beginning with Gaudete Sunday, the summary might be, "The Lord is near." This shift is marked by a lighter mood and a heightened sense of joyous anticipation.

Liturgically, the colours lighten as well. The priest usually wears rose-colored vestments, a hue seen only on Gaudete Sunday and Laetare Sunday. On this day, we light the third candle of the Advent wreath, which is also rose-colored, or if you prefer, pink.

The word "Gaudete" is Latin for "Rejoice." In times when the focus of our anticipation is often on the negative and fearful, this celebration is a reminder that God who loves us is still in charge and that we await his coming not with fear, but with tremendous joy.

Scripture Readings

In today's Gospel John questions Jesus from prison - for his disciples' sake and for ours. He knows that Jesus is doing "the works of the Messiah," foretold in today's First Reading and Psalm. But John wants his disciples - and us - to know that the Judge is at the gate, that in Jesus our God has come to save us. The Liturgy of Advent takes us out into the desert to see and hear the marvellous works and words of God - the lame leaping like a stag, the dead raised, the good news preached to the poor.

John did not complain. He did not lose faith. Even in chains in his prison cell, he was still sending his disciples - and us - to our Saviour.

We come to Him again now in the Eucharist.

Already He has caused the desert to bloom, the burning sands to become springs of living water. He has opened our ears to hear the words of the sacred book, freed our tongue to fill the air with songs of thanksgiving.

The Liturgy does this to give us courage, to strengthen our feeble hands and make firm our weak knees. Our hearts can easily become frightened and weighed down by the hardships we face. We can lose patience in our sufferings as we await the coming of the Lord.

Christmas Services

CHRISTMAS EVE - Wednesday 24th December

4.30pm - Vigil Mass of Christmas, Family Mass
(*children are invited to dress in Nativity costumes*)

8.40pm - Carols and Readings

9pm - The Mass of the Nativity of the Lord

CHRISTMAS DAY - Thursday 25th December

9.30am - Mass

ST STEPHENS DAY - Friday 26th December

10am - Mass

NEW YEAR'S DAY - Thursday 1st January

(Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God)

10. am - Mass

Weekend Masses will be at the same times.

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for December

2025: For Christians in Areas of Conflict.

Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation and hope.

Sunday Reading: Parish Mass Page 88

The Big Christmas Clean This year's big clean will be on Tuesday 23rd December at 11am. It would be good to try & get as many volunteers as possible to help prepare the church for the Christmas celebrations. If you're not a regular cleaner but would still like to help please come along. Tea/coffee & refreshments will be served.

Flowers for Christmas We would be very grateful for donations towards the cost of Christmas flowers for our church. Please put any donations, no matter how small, into the black money box at the back of the church near the newsletter tray. Thank you.

Repository A wonderful selection of Christmas cards, Advent calendars, candles and other items are now on sale, all at very good prices.

Craft & Chat Our next meeting is on Friday 2nd January, 9.30am to 11.00am in the Parish Rooms. All adult crafters are welcome.

The Letchworth Foodbank Are in urgent need of the following items:

Tinned ham and salmon, Selection box of chocolates, Small and medium Christmas cakes, Festive biscuits, UHT Milk, Long life fruit juice, Size 6 nappies, Shampoo, Conditioner, Deodorant. For more details and where to drop off your donations, please look at their website: letchworth.foodbank.org.uk

Marriage Preparation Those couples wishing to be married in our Church should contact Fr Denis 6 months before your planned wedding via the parish office.

Your Prayers Are Asked For:

We pray for the sick and housebound in the parish, especially *Fr. Philip, Rita Fletcher, Tony Galvin, Tara Ferrissey, Liz McCaul* and for those who care for and support them. We remember those who have died recently, especially *Joan Burke* and all those whose anniversaries occur about this time:

Jane Buckley, Josephine Cornish, Jennifer Windebank, Mary Craster, Francis Horohan, Martin Geraghty, Joseph Sicheri, John Walsh, Henrietta Knights, Ruth Cannon, Leon Sicheri, Mary Diana Norton, Mary Postlethwaite, Rebecca Hegarty, Mary Teresa Smith, Eileen Moynihan, Maggie Tuthill, Dennis King.



Mass Times and Intentions

Sat 13 th	6.30pm	<i>Francesco & Raffaella Picillo - RIP</i>
Sun 14 th	8.30am	<i>Winfred Crossland & Kathleen Hirst - RIP</i>
	10.30am	<i>Joan Burke - RIP</i>
Mon 15 th	10.00am	<i>Liz McCaul</i>
Tue 16 th	10.00am	<i>Repose Soul Anthony Targett</i>
Wed 17 th	10.00am	<i>Dennis King -RIP</i>
Thu 18 th	10.00am	<i>Peter Bobbin - RIP</i>
Fri 19 th	No Mass	

Please note that mass intentions as set out above may not always be read out, but the intention is offered.

Holy Hour: Saturday 5.15 - 6.15 pm

Confessions: Saturday 5.45 - 6.15 pm

Or by appointment with Fr. Denis.

Children's Liturgy: Takes place during the 10.30am Mass except on the First Sunday of the Month (Family Mass) and during school holidays.

The Vigil Mass (6.30pm) and the Sunday Mass (10.30am) can be watched online via the Parish Facebook Page: *Catholic Church of the Holy Trinity and St Augustine of Canterbury.*

Contacts

Parish Safeguarding Officers have responsibility for promoting good and safe practices in all activities involving children, young people, and adults at risk within the Parish.

Patricia Cusack: Baldocksg2@safeguardrcdow.org.uk
Colette Murphy: Baldocksg3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk

Our Catholic Schools

St. John's Catholic Primary School, Baldock
T: 01462 892478 W: stjohns4.herts.sch.uk
The Saint John Henry Newman School, Stevenage, T: 01438 314643 W: jhn.herts.sch.uk

John O'Neil is the Lister Hospital RC Chaplain
Mob: 07876 526935 or T: 01438 285518

Baptisms, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, Weddings and Funerals for further details please speak to Fr. Denis, look at the website or contact the parish office.

Church Hall Bookings the church hall is available to be booked for groups or celebrations. Please contact the parish office for more details.

Baldock Catholic Scout Group for boys & girls aged 6-14. Contact: enquiries@2ndbaldockscouts.org.uk

To receive an email copy of the Newsletter, please visit our website: parish.rcdow.org.uk/baldock and click on 'Subscribe to Alerts' at the bottom of the page.