



Joseph of the House of David



Mary, Mother of the City



A HOPE-FILLED ADVENT, A JOY-FILLED CHRISTMAS, & A PEACEFUL, JUSTICE-FILLED 2024 TO ALL !

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE : <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/bunhillrow/>

ST. JOSEPH'S WEEKEND MASSES : SATURDAY, 18.00; SUNDAY, 11.30.

Weekday Services: Wednesday Masses at St. Joseph's -12.05; Holydays: 12.05 & 19.00

Fridays, 12.00-15.00 - The church is open for personal prayer.

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS MASSES: The 4th Sunday of Advent, 24 December, 11.30 Mass; Christmas Eve Children's & Family Mass, 18.00; Christmas Night Mass, 22.00, followed by Mulled Wine & Mince Pies; Christmas Morning, 25 December, 10.00 Mass with Carols.

Clergy: Fr. Chris Vipers, Canon Stuart Wilson

Parish Administrator - Ingrid Bowie

St Mary Moorfields, 4 - 5 Eldon St.

London EC2M 7LS

e-mail: moorfields@rcdow.org.uk bunhillrow@rcdow.org.uk

Tel. 020 7247 8390

**DECEMBER 2023
NEWSLETTER**

A Reflection from Canon Stuart: "The Advent of our God with eager hearts we greet !" So goes the first line of one of my favourite Advent hymns. I think I have sung this hymn every Advent for the last 65 years. Advent hymns are very special to me and I am so glad we are beginning this Holy Season again. What we sing tells us so much about the truth of the coming of Jesus as a baby at Christmas. Besides our singing, our sacred Advent actions are also highly significant. The first believers heard the words of the Lord but also experienced his presence. In our church, in this Holy Season of Advent, we shall hear again His word but also experience His presence in a wonderful way. The four candles of the Advent Wreath also have a message to proclaim. Each week a candle will be lit and each week we shall be asked to experience what that lighting signifies. As we light the candle on the **FIRST SUNDAY, OF ADVENT** we are asked to remember that the message of the Prophets assures us that our **HOPE** in our Messiah, Jesus is well founded. This candle is sometimes referred to as the Prophecy Candle in remembrance of the message of Hope brought to us by the prophets of the Old Testament especially the Prophet Isaiah. They had no doubt that the Messiah would come and save God's people. When we light the next candle on the **SECOND SUNDAY, OF ADVENT** we should bring to mind the amazing gift of **PEACE**. A gift of peace in the midst of turmoil. Remember that for Mary and Joseph the Journey to Bethlehem, the place of the Holy Birth, was not easy but at the manger, they found a PEACE beyond all telling. They held Jesus in their arms. They held Peace in their arms. Quite often, this candle is referred to as the Bethlehem Candle. So we reach our **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT** and there is a dramatic colour change. So far, our Candles have been Purple- the colour of Advent - the colour of preparation. However; on the Third Sunday, we will light a Rose Pink Candle, which signifies **JOY**. This Sunday is often known by the Latin name for Joy - Gaudete. This Sunday brings to our minds the joy that is about to dawn with the birth of Jesus. As we think of this truth, many of us experience a sense of Joy in our hearts and souls. The colour of Rose Pink signifies that joyful feeling. The birth of Jesus changed our lives. His coming brings

“Joy the World”. On the **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**, we light yet another candle. This candle should bring to our hearts a sense of gratitude and a sense of **LOVE**. The last of our four candles is a purple one and it marks the final week of prayer and penance, which is our Christian way of preparing for the Birth of the Saviour. I read that sometimes this candle goes by the name “The Angels’ Candle” as it symbolises the love which the Angels proclaimed when they sang: “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to people of good will”. A candle is lit each Sunday as the Mass begins so make sure you are there to experience that happening. Together, as one family, let our presence as well as our voices help us prepare for the message of Christmas; a message that proclaims that the baby born in the manger is our source of **Hope**, our source of **Peace**, our source of **Joy** and our source of **Love**. He is Christ the Lord !



OUR SYNODAL PATHWAY CONTINUES – The October 2023 Synod Assembly in Rome ended, 29 October 2023, not with a Final Report but with a summary of all the round-table discernment and reflection, offering us a road-map towards a 2nd Synod Assembly, October 2024. This gives us the foundations to consider more practical proposals such as the ordination of women in the permanent diaconate, a globally more welcoming ministry with LGBT+ Catholics such as we have in Westminster Diocese, the possibilities of occasional sharing the Eucharist with other Christians, among many other considerations. The Synod’s October 2023 Synthesis Report can be found here:

https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/assembly/synthesis/english/2023.10.28-ENG-Synthesis-Report_IMP.pdf

Let’s pray for, and encourage the Bishops of England & Wales to welcome a more Synodal Church with greater enthusiasm : **The Tablet Editorial, 25 NOVEMBER 2023**

THE SYNOD AND THE BISHOPS OF ENGLAND AND WALES

A VIEW OF REVELATION FROZEN IN TIME

There is a distinct lack of enthusiasm for the synodal reform process initiated by Pope Francis in the response of the Catholic bishops of England and Wales. It seems, to use a vernacular phrase, they “didn’t get the memo” setting out why the process was necessary. They do not seem to share the Pope’s desire to cure the disease of clericalism. Do they even grasp the diagnosis? Do they not see its relevance to the Catholic Church’s dismal record regarding the sexual abuse of children? We can no longer see that as an accumulation of individual failures by the priests guilty of it and the bishops striving to contain the damage they had done. The abuse crisis was at root a failure of culture. Measured against the demands of the Gospel, this failure calls into question the Church’s internal life, asking of each of its component parts and functions not only: Is it fit for purpose? but, more fundamentally: What is that purpose?

A useful analogy would be with English constitutional history. The senior representative of the English and Welsh bishops at the recent Rome synod was Archbishop John Wilson of Southwark. His reflection on what he saw and heard had a defensive tone. He opposed the notion that the laity had any role in the development of doctrine, let alone a part to play in church governance. It was an essentially 1950s view of revelation as a series of propositions, a “deposit of faith” frozen in time and of bishops as successors of the Apostles, guardians of this immobile catechism and absolute monarchs in their own territory. Only grudgingly did the

sovereign rulers of England come to see that their subjects were citizens with rights as well as duties. “Constitutional monarchy” evolved accordingly, albeit sometimes turbulently. Left to the Crown alone, it would never have happened.

Since the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic world has embarked on a journey to find a way to be the People of God that is rooted in the Gospel and tradition but responds to the needs of the age. The destination is not clear, even to Pope Francis himself. Bishops will always have a central role in the life of the Church, but that role must be refreshed if the Gospel is to keep its missionary vigour. Can lay participation ever be real when dioceses are as huge as they usually are, both in population and geographic area? In an era when clergy numbers are shrinking, often dramatically, what is the future of the parish, with or without its own parish priest, also traditionally an absolute monarch in his own domain? Is the idea of a parish run by a solitary priest divinely ordained, or a medieval pattern that has lost its usefulness?

The next 10 months, before the Synod reconvenes in Rome next October, are vital to the success of the synodal transformation Pope Francis has initiated. The synod process demands a synodal response. That in turn demands instruments and structures through which the wisdom and expertise of bishops, priests and laity can be nourished and shared. It could start by asking whether the bishops’ conference of England and Wales exists by divine right or by accident of history. Is it time for something different?

Farm Street Jesuit Church has a useful Synod Page on its website:

<https://www.farmstreet.org.uk/synod-on-synodality>

St. Joseph's Pastoral Council (SJPC) met, 19 September 2023. Our first **OPEN PARISH MEETING & CONVERSATION**, was held after Mass, **Sunday, 25 June 2023**, with a Bring-&-Share Lunch and around 40 people taking part - **new voices and new ideas ! A Full Report coming shortly ...**

WE GATHER AGAIN, SUNDAY, 17 DECEMBER, AFTER MASS, FOR A PRE-CHRISTMAS, BRING-&-SHARE LUNCH AND TO REVIEW WHAT WE HAVE PLANNED TO DO - PUT IT IN YOUR DIARY, NOW !

The latest St. Joseph's Pastoral Council Minutes are on the Porch Noticeboard. **We are beginning to consider exciting plans for a new church space and parish hall – see initial designs and plans.** Further information - Fr. Chris or Martin Pendergast, SJPC Secretary, phone/e-mail - 020 8986 0807 – martinjpendergast@gmail.com

St. Joseph's Quiet Garden is now closed until Easter 2024. We are grateful to Richard Drennan for opening it regularly from Easter until 1 November, also Derya, our gardener, who tends it carefully, now with help from Bernadette.



St. Joseph's Icon Greeting Cards featuring, **Joseph of the House of David, & Mary, Mother of the City**, made by the Carmelite Sisters at Ware Carmel, £1.50 each. These are suitable as Mass Cards for those who have died, as well as for other intentions. Please ask Sylvia or Martin if you would like to buy. **Access for all !** The Lift operates every time the Church is open for Mass: **Saturday evenings, Sunday mornings, Wednesday lunchtimes, & 1ST Saturdays**, for **CARMEL-IN-THE-CITY**. It's very simple to use - you just need to keep your finger on the button if going down to the church (G-level), up to the Hall (2-level), or to the Car-Park area (1-level). **Children must be accompanied if using the lift.**

ST. JOSEPH'S - A community generous in its giving - Planned-giving envelopes are available along with Gift Aid and Standing Order forms for those who would like to give to the parish in this way, PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU HAVE NOW CHANGED TO ONLINE GIVING. **WHY NOT MAKE THIS A NEW COMMITMENT TO THE PARISH ?**

WE WELCOME MORE PEOPLE TO JOIN THE READERS' ROTA - READING AT SATURDAY & SUNDAY MASSES AND ON OTHER OCCASIONS. IF YOU CAN HELP, PLEASE SPEAK TO FR. CHRIS.

Liturgy at St. Joseph's: WE NEED YOU ! If you have received your 1st Communion, then girls and boys are welcomed as altar-servers, not just on Sundays, but on other important Feast-days. We'd be delighted to have more young people reading at Mass from time to time, and we'd love to have more people to ensure the quality of our liturgies, including help with singing, reading, being Eucharistic ministers. Visitors often complement us on the welcome they receive, and the dignified Masses we celebrate. Age is no barrier, young or old, and we'd love to have people who represent the rich diversity of this community. **So think about it**, and speak to **Fr. Chris** or **Martin** after Sunday Mass. Please contact Martin Pendergast for more details - 020 8986 0807.

ALL ARE WELCOME HERE ! In Calais, and across the Mediterranean, there is still great need. For updates, please see www.seekingsanctuary.weebly.com or email Ben Bano at migrantssupport@aol.com about delivering goods. Also check out: Westminster Justice & Peace & www.calaid.co.uk Contact the J&P Office at Vaughan House, Westminster - **Colette Joyce, Coordinator** - 020 7798 9009 or bring to St. Joseph's. The Catholic Worker Community, whom we support, welcomes volunteers. Take goods to their Haringey centre: Giuseppe Conlon House: 49 Mattison Rd, Haringay, London N4 1BG **Phone: 020 8348 8212** - <https://www.londoncatholicworker.org/> Through the work of **Caritas Westminster WE CAN HELP WITH ACCESSING EMERGENCY GRANTS** to help with Cost of Living and other needs.

This overlaps to some extent with what we do in **ISLINGTON CITIZENS** - www.londoncitizens.org.uk - We are a member-institution of Citizens UK - Islington & North London Citizens. This helps us to see how local people can

have a voice on things that matter to them, how we can respond to local needs and work for justice. **Froilan Legaspi & Olivia Blanning** are Islington Citizens Organisers - Olivia: 0739 958 4866 Olivia.Blanning@citizensuk.org OR Froilan.Legaspi@citizensuk.org - 0793 956 5863 - **CONTACT MARTIN FOR MORE INFORMATION - 020 8986 0807** The Government's so-called National Living Wage for over 25's is **NOT** a Living Wage but an increased Minimum Wage, institutionalising inequality for younger workers under 25. **St. Joseph's is accredited as a local Living Wage Employer as is Westminster Diocese, and 9 out of 10 London's Catholic schools are as well! The REAL 2021/22 London Living Wage is £13.15**; outside London - **£12.00**. <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/what-real-living-wage> If you are low-paid, are you being paid the London Living Wage, not just a minimum wage, or so-called National Living Wage, only for over-25's? This is far below the Real Living Wage. Islington Council, the City of London Corporation and the Barbican, and many other local businesses, are all Living Wage Employers.

Carmel-in-the-City - Check out the website for details - **NEXT GATHERING: SATURDAY, 6 JANUARY 2024** - 11.30, Quiet Prayer; **12.00 NOON Mass - Afternoon Session:** ends at 15.30 following a brief session of **Lectio Divina.**, Newsletters and 2024 Programme : www.carmelinthecity.org.uk - Details from Sylvia Lucas: **0788 943 6165** sylvia_lucas@btinternet.com

Growth in faith for Children & Adults: Infant Baptism, 1st Communion, Adult Baptism, Reception into Full Communion, and Confirmation - Please speak to Fr. Chris or Jennylyn Williams for more information. If you wish to prepare for **Marriage**, please speak to Fr. Chris. **Are you a parent of younger children - would you like to help with Sunday morning Children's Liturgy? If so, speak to Jennylyn or Maria**

Ecumenical activities are at the heart of the life of St. Joseph's Church

... doing together what we do not need to do separately ...

www.stgilescripplegate.com + www.wesleyschapel.org.uk + www.capeljewin.org

An Ecumenical Partnership between Jewin Welsh Church, St. Giles Cripplegate, St. Joseph's Catholic Church, and Wesley's Chapel

Introduction: This Partnership, reviewed by the respective ministers and agreed by each Church's Council, makes explicit the ecumenical commitment shared for the past 17 years. A formal Partnership ensures that our ecumenical journey is established beyond the individual interest of any particular minister and has reason to continue after any minister moves from the area.

Drawn together in one baptism, confessing our faith in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, we are inspired by the Holy Spirit to hear his Good News and pledged to share it, and so we commit ourselves to:

- Promote reflection on the Christian Church, its mission and its proclamation of God's reign in our midst;
- Take time to listen, try to understand and respond to each other and to the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the people of our time and place;
- Value each person, rejoicing in their gifts, and celebrating our rich human diversity;
- Support those seeking to recognise Christ in their own lives;
- Enjoy each other's company as we worship, study, and journey together as God's pilgrim people.

Where possible this will be done through:

- * The sharing of occasional worship, especially during Advent, Lent, and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity;
- * collaboration in planning and holding regular adult faith education programmes;
- * going on pilgrimage together;
- * supporting action for justice and peace initiatives in one another's churches.

We give thanks for the many years of growing unity and friendship which we have shared together and which has brought us to this time of grace, and we regret our continuing divisions. We undertake to promote understanding, respect and dialogue with people of good will as we work for the common good of all. We affirm our intent to work, pray, and study together for that unity which is Christ's will for the Church and so formalise this commitment in this present Partnership agreement.

THIS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT, SIGNED BY EACH OF OUR CLERGY, IS NOW DISPLAYED IN ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH

CITY EVENTS - The Friends of City Churches - <https://www.london-city-churches.org.uk/cityevents.html>

The Friends of the City Churches' volunteer Church Watchers usually help to keep City churches open to visitors and worshippers on a regular basis.



Next St. Joseph's Newsletter due 7 January 2024 - Deadline for information, events: 4/01/2024