



CHURCH OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE AND ST ANDREW

16 Nightingale Road, HITCHIN, SG5 1QS
(In the care of the Augustinians of the Assumption)



Newsletter No 1608

6th – 13th December, 2014 Second Sunday of Advent (Year B)

Mass Times
Saturday anticipating 6pm
Sunday 8.30am, 10.30am and 5pm
Monday – Saturday 10am
Reconciliation Saturday 10.30am

Contacts	
Parish Priest Fr Michael Lambert	E-mail: michaellambert@rcdow.org.uk
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Parish Safeguarding Representative Trish Bonnett Telephone: 01462 459126 (Parish)	



If you are going into hospital please take a copy of the leaflet in the church porch and notify the RC Chaplain on **07884 187463** directly, as the Hospital is not able to pass on the information to them. If you are in Pinehill Hospital, please contact the parish directly. When you come out of hospital or if you are ill and housebound please ring the parish office so we can minister to your needs if required.



If you have a need for prayer, please contact Mary on 07759195487 and let her know your prayer intentions.



Parish Prayer Heavenly Father, we offer you our Parish of Our Lady and St Andrew. May all who seek love, solace and security in our midst find them through the Christ who is in us. May His Spirit move us to proclaim the Gospel joyously: in our homes, in our town, in our country and to our world. May Your Spirit guide and inspire us in all that we do to promote your kingdom every day. Amen.



If someone close to you has died our Bereavement Team is specially trained to help. You can contact them through the Parish Office on 01462 459126.

Diary

Sunday 7th	Coffee Morning – Friends of Gainsford House Confirmation Hall 6pm
Monday 8th	Parent & Toddler Group Hall 9.30 – 11am Meditation Group LCR 12 – 1.30pm Meditation for Immaculate Conception Church 7pm
Tuesday 9th	Morning Prayer Church 9.30am Bethany Club Hall 10.30am Eucharistic Service Church 7.15pm Union of Catholic Mothers Shefford 8pm
Wednesday 10th	Rosary Group for All (Small babies welcome) Hall 9.30am Praise Group LCR after Mass Sacramental Preparation LCR 4.30pm RCIA Pastoral Office 7.30pm
Thursday 11th	St Pio Group Church and Hall after Mass Italian Club Hall 1pm Meditation Group UCR 6.30pm Choir Church 7.30pm
Friday 12th	Parent & Toddler Group Hall 9.30 – 11am Rosary Group – Our Lady of Guadalupe – LCR after Mass Lectio Divina Pastoral Office 2pm
Sunday 14th	Coffee Morning - KISS

Readings: Is 40:1-5.9-11, 2 Peter 3:8-14, Mark 1:1-8

Entrance antiphon: O people of Sion, behold, the Lord will come to save the nations, and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your heart.

Psalm: **Let us see, O Lord, your mercy and give us your saving help.**

Intercessions: Let us pray to the Lord.....

Response: Lord, hear our prayer!

Next week: Is 61:1-2.10-11, Thess 5:16-24, John 1:6-8.19-28

Faith Development Helpline

If you (or someone you know) needs to chat about your faith or have been feeling lost ring

07582 648433

Tues/Wed/Thurs 8pm-10pm.

Confidential service provided. No need to identify yourself

This Weekend: Sunday 3pm: our Quarterly Service of Healing All are welcome, we shall offer the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing, for those who wish to avail themselves of the Lord's love for us in these ways.



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GIFT AID TAX REBATE – your Christmas present to our parish

A big “thank you” to everyone who makes their offerings to the Parish under the Gift Aid scheme. We have now received the tax rebate for offerings made in the last tax year and this came to an amazing total of:



£22,649.56

This is one of the largest tax rebates we have ever received and reflects the fact that many of you signed up to Gift Aid your offerings during the Appeal we held last year; it also includes the rebate on those donations and Mass Offerings which were Gift Aided and these form an important and welcome addition to our return.

It is important to remember that this is all “free money” – it didn't cost you or the Parish anything to recover from the Government this most valuable contribution towards the cost of running the Parish. If you haven't signed up to Gift Aid your offerings to the Parish, it is never too late to do so and, as it stands, we can backdate our claim by 4 years although the Revenue have reduced this from 6 years and are threatening to take it away all-together so don't delay!

To sign-up or to get more information, please contact David Wilson our Planned Giving & Gift Aid Organiser on tel: 01462-627784 or email him via the Parish at hitchin@rcdow.org.uk

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Christmas Collections The offerings at the Christmas Masses go to our Priests. It would be appreciated if cheques for the Easter and Christmas collections are made out to the Parish, and not to the Order. These offerings can also be gift aided, envelopes are available in the porch for this. This will make accounting more straightforward. Please be assured that all such donations will end up in the right place !

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FLOWERS IN THE CHURCH FOR CHRISTMAS

As we prepare for Christmas it would be good to ensure our Crib is well stocked with Poinsettias. We would be delighted to

recieve them in the coming days. Many thanks!

Calling all parishioners about children's liturgy. We have a shortage of people to support the children's liturgy at the 10.30 Mass and we need 4 people on each of the the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Sundays of the month. We need enough people so ideally you do it once every six weeks. If we do not have enough people to cover we will not be able to run the liturgy which would be a great shame as children do enjoy having their own time. Materials are provided and training will be given. You do not need to be an expert in the catechism or the bible, you just need to be willing to talk to the children about your faith. Please do consider this and let Trish know if you can help or the liturgy will have to be suspended at the end of December until we have enough people for the teams. A Disclosure and Barring service check will be required and will be arranged through the Diocese. Thanks in anticipation

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Eucharistic Ministry rota is now available in the porch for those who have not received it by email. If you are not able to minister when it is your turn please send an email out to the group and ask for cover. For ministers who are due to minister please do arrive at Mass in time to be able to slide a door across on the EM board to indicate you are there.



This enables other ministers in the church to know if they need to help cover. Many thanks for your continued service to our parish. Hope to see you at the reflection morning on 13th December. Please remember to email teresahyde@btopenworld.com if you are coming.

If you are Baptised and Confirmed, please consider coming forward for three training sessions for **Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist in our Parish.**

Training for this very special Ministry will be on
Saturday 10th January 2015 - 4.30pm till 5.30pm
Saturday 17th January 2015 - 4.30pm till 5.30pm
Saturday 24th January 2015 - 4.30pm till 5.30pm

Fr Michael or Fr Tom will be happy to discuss with you any concerns you may have with making a decision.

Carol Service Sunday 21st December 6.15pm. You are invited to join us as our young readers proclaim the Advent and Christmas readings and we respond with the carols that we love singing at this time of year. We will also be completing our Crib throughout the service as we place the figures in and around the stable during the readings. Mince pies and mulled wine will follow.

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Help needed to put up our crib. On **Thursday 18th December at 11am** we need as much help as you can offer to put up our crib. Help is needed in two forms:



① Foliage for the crib – we need **evergreen** fir, holly and yew – quite sizable pieces which we can cut down if necessary. Please bring leave foliage in the garden

behind the parish office by Wednesday 17th Dec.

② Help assembling crib on the day. If enough people turn up it can be done within a couple of hours. Please let Trish or William Warren know if you are able to help in this way.

Diary

Monday 8 December

10am Mass for The Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, the Principal Patron of our Church. Let us make this a time of prayer for our Parish and all who work or are part of it.

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11am Mass at Sue Ryder Chapel, Stagenhoe celebrated by Fr Michael Doherty from St Hilda's. If you need a lift please be in the church car park at 10.35. Trish can take 3 people.

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7pm Meditation on Our Lady in the church to celebrate her feast day. A chance to reflect on her love of God through pictures and music

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7.30pm - London: Pax Christi Advent Peace Service. At St Aloysius Church, Phoenix Road, London NW1 1TA...All Welcome. Come and join our annual Advent Peace Service which will be followed by our 'alternative' Christmas market with gifts from Palestine, Peru, Africa and fair trade goods too.

For more information call: 0208 203 4884

Tuesday 9 December

11am Priests' Deanery Meeting at Welwyn Garden City, please pray for our priests and the work that they carry out for the People of God in this part of our Diocese.

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7.15pm Advent Eucharistic Meal in church. Reflect on the word of God and pray for your needs and those of others.



8pm: Our UCM will join Shefford UCM for their Advent Candle Service. If you are unable to make it please contact your car driver and let her know.

Wednesday 10 December

11am: the Cardinal is meeting with the Priests of the county, to introduce his plans for the future life and work of the Diocese and for responding further to the Synod on Family Life, held in Rome in October

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2pm Mass at Foxholes on the Pirton Road. This is the first Mass to be celebrated by Fr Tom for the residents of Foxholes, which was associated with the Assumptionist community for many years. Parishioners are welcome to attend. Mass will be in the library. There will be a monthly Mass celebrated here in future. Grateful thanks to Fr Tom for his ministry to our parishioners in residential care.

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6.30pm: Finance Committee Meeting: to finalise the Budget for the coming year and look ahead as to how we can implement our Parish Project, supported by the "Growing in Faith" campaign.

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7.30pm Liturgy committee meeting in Lower Committee Room

Thursday 11 December

10am The Saint Pio Prayer Meeting on will include Holy Mass for our members followed by the Rosary, tea and biscuits in the hall and meditations for Advent. All welcome.

Friday 12 December

After 10am Mass, a special meeting of the Rosary Group in honour of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Lower Committee Room. All are welcome.



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Christmas Tree Festival Holy Saviour Church, Radcliffe Rd, Hitchin. Christmas Tree Festival Preview and Concert of seasonal music, from 6.30pm-9pm (concert starts 7.45pm). Admission by ticket (includes mulled wine) £10 from Tory Kitchiner. 01462 712212,

Saturday 13 December

10am EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS Time of Prayer and Reflection for Eucharistic Ministers, starting with the Mass and ending with a shared lunch at 1.00pm, in the Hall. Any Eucharistic Minister, or anyone considering this special Ministry, who plans to attend the morning of quiet reflection, please notify Teresa Lawrence-Hyde by e-mail to

teresahyde@btopenworld.com or text message to 07751 886525.

Future Dates:

Dec 14

Carols in the Market Place Churches Together in Hitchin and Hitchin Band are once again leading Carols in the Market Place as part of the town's Christmas weekend. The singing will be at 4.00 pm on Sunday 14 December and it will be led this year by the Rev Melanie Crowley of St Faith's Church and the Rev Nigel Williams of the New Testament Church of God. All are welcome at this lovely event - do come along and invite family and friends to come with you!

Dec 16

2pm Mass at Milford Lodge behind the Three Moorhens. Parishioners welcome (the space is limited).

Dec 31

Watch Night Service There will be a joint watch night service at Walsworth Road Baptist Church on 31 December, 2014. The service is organised by Pastor Nigel - New Testament Church, Pastor Grant - Church of God of Prophecy and Minister Andrew, Walsworth Road Baptist Church. Service time 10:00 pm to midnight . . . and perhaps a little after. All are invited. Last year was the first one and it was well supported.

31st Dec-Thurs 1st Jan - Pray and Fast for the Climate: Films, Mass, New Year celebration, All night vigil for the Climate. See www.ourvoices.net and www.prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk At St John Vianney Church and Parish Centre: Films 10pm. Mass 11pm. Celebration 12.00-1am. Vigil 1-7am

Jan 24

11am to 4.30pm *Housing and Energy – Fairness for all?* at St Aloysius Church, 20 Phoenix Road, London NW1 1TA (nr Euston station) Free – but donations on the day welcome. Booking is essential as space is limited. Deadline 17 January. To book a place e-mail tony@christian-ecology.org.uk Or book through Eventbrite. <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/housing-energy-fairness-for-all-tickets-13897974215?aff=es2&rank=4>

Other Items of Interest:

Two concerts for you to enjoy at WRBC On Thursday 11 December, **Funky Strings and Phat Sax** are returning to Walsworth Road Baptist Church for a concert starting 7.00pm. Admission £10. Tickets from Chris Pyne on 01462 431206 or chris@pink-champagne.co.uk

Chris calls it “music to warm your heart” and, based on last year’s super concert, it should certainly do that.

Then at 6.30pm on Sunday 14 December, we are hosting the annual concert given by the Stagecoach Drama Group – always a very enjoyable evening. This year it is called “Peace and Joy” and the programme includes readings as well as music.

The latest news on our Re-cycling Campaign:

As the month of December is now upon us, the parish should soon receive a cheque from Terracycle for the recycling collected and sent to them since the end of April this year.

For the 6 months of May to end of October we have raised **£320.18** divided as follows:

£117.18 will this time be paid directly to the N.H.Sanctuary (from the writing instruments) £203.00 that should be paid to the parish, including all other recycling items, to be shared as follows: **£ 185.72** to Fr Jean-Marie's Congo project (from all the coffee packaging and Tassimo discs) **£ 17.28** to the Parish Hardship Fund (from biscuit wrappers)

In total with the previous payment last June of **£213.56** and the combined payments now of **£320.18** gives a grand total of **£533.74** raised since January 2013.

We have also raised another £70 already towards the next payment due in June 2015. So may the recycling continue!

I'm dreaming of a green Christmas: A natural remedy for festive fever has been prepared by A Rocha UK in the form of a ‘green’ on-line Advent Calendar: <http://arocha.org.uk/advent/#.VH5pPcmzFu8> with daily doses of environmental advice to settle those seasonal challenges. Each calendar window opens on a practical plan to soothe the stress on both pocket and planet. You can sign up for reminders on Facebook and Twitter too. ‘We’re concerned that households are clogged up with consumerism at Christmas,’ said A Rocha UK’s Churches and Theology Director Dr Ruth Valerio, ‘and it’s all at the expense of our immediate and wider environment.’ Operation Noah has some further ideas for how to reclaim Christmas in your community, see: <http://operationnoah.org/resources/reclaim-christmas-community/>