



CHURCH OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE AND ST ANDREW



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

Mass Times
Saturday 6pm
Sunday 8.30am, 10.30am & 5pm
Monday – Saturday 10am
Exposition Thursday 7pm-8pm
Reconciliation Saturday 10.30am
during Exposition

Newsletter No 1815

1st December – 8th December 2018 – First Sunday of Advent – Year C

Parish Prayer Bless this parish, Lord. Let our community reflect your own communion of love. Help us to live peacefully and humbly, attending to the call of your Spirit and mindful of our duty to everything you have created. Strengthen the bonds of our families and friendships with patience and kindness. Make us joyful messengers of your kingdom and a source of comfort for those in need.

Entrance Antiphon To you, I lift up my soul, O my God. In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame. Nor let my enemies exult over me and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

Psalm: To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul

Intercession: Lord, increase our love

Response **Keep us faithful to you!**

Next week: Bar 5:1-9, Phil 1:3-6.8-11, Luke 3:1-68

Ramblings for Reflection: We all need more Honesty, Integrity and Confidence (*Jeremiah*). In what way do they challenge us? Are our hearts holy and blameless (*1 Thess*)? Fortunately, God's saving help is always on hand. Jesus tells us to have confidence, to stand erect and hold our heads high. He calls us to stay awake, praying at all times and we know that **prayer is the raising up of the mind and heart to God**. If the catastrophes spoken about at the end of the world happen, I can guarantee that your minds will be totally focused on God!! However, the danger is that we spend the time regretting our lapses in honesty, our failures in integrity, our lack of holiness and the hurts we have caused others. Because so much in our world is compared to a benchmark: education, efficiency of machines, cars etc., we believe that we will be judged against a Christian Benchmark. Sorry to disappoint you, but that is not the case. We will be judged by how lovingly we have used the gifts and graces with which God blessed us. Since we are each unique, so too will be our judgement. We are called to love God and our neighbour, not what we think about ourselves. At the end time, our prayer to God should be focused on how we can best help those around us in need – the lost – the lonely – the neglected, since this will express the true measure of our honesty and integrity and these are the people with whom we will share heaven!

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Please pray for Fr Michael. For those not on email or who have not heard in other ways, Fr Michael was hit by a car in Nightingale road on Wednesday evening and is in the ITU at the Lister Hospital. His condition is not good as he has suffered a bleed on the brain and is sedated and in a coma on life support. Only Fr Tom, as next of kin, is able to make enquiries and visit him. Please

do come to our services over this weekend to join in prayer with the parish for our dear Priest.

We will give daily updates on his condition. **Please do not ring the Lister Hospital ITU** as you will not be given any information and it distracts the staff from their main business of caring for those in vital need.



Fr Tom, Fr Andrew and Fr Euloge are very grateful for all the messages of support and offers of help. We know that everyone is keen to do something.

① The first task we have in supporting the priests, is to help feed them at weekends. Fr Tom cooks at the weekend but we can assist him.

How many of us can offer a weekend VEGETARIAN or FISH meal on either a Saturday or Sunday lunchtime for Fr Tom, Fr Euloge and Fr Andrew to share?

If there were twelve offers, it would mean that each person would only have to provide a meal once every six weeks etc.

If you feel that this is something with which you could reliably help, please email Catherine Muncaster (perrymuncaster@yahoo.co.uk) or Zoe Lavery (zoe.f.jones@googlemail.com) who will be able to give you more details and ask you about which dates you would be available. They will then put together a rota.

② Fr Michael has always spent a great deal of time visiting parishioners in their homes or care facilities and taking them communion - providing a vital link between the parish and those who are unable to come to church. We need to support his ministry while he is unable to do it. Those of you

who want to help in this way by visiting and/or taking communion to housebound parishioners please let Trish know. We will be running a new Eucharistic minister training course in the new year.

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We pray for Graham Dann whose funeral is here at Our Lady's Church on **Fri 7 Dec 12 noon**. May he rest in peace and rise in glory and may the Lord comfort his family.

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The CONFIRMATION Programme for 2019 will begin in January. If you are in Year 9 or above and wish to prepare for this sacrament, **please sign up on the sheet** on the noticeboard in the Link (down the steps toward the hall), where you will also find an **application form**, which needs to be filled in and submitted by 30th December 2018. Application forms are also available on the website and may be submitted by emailing me on susannahawksley@rcdow.org.uk. You can find the dates of the sessions on the website under Sacramental Preparation/Confirmation and a sheet of dates is also on the noticeboard.

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Cheques for Christmas Collections:

It would be appreciated if cheques for the Christmas collections are made out to the Parish, i.e., Our Lady's Church and not to the Order. This will make accounting more straightforward. Please be assured that all such donations will end up in the right place!

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GIFT AID TAX REBATE 2018 = £22,344.36

A big "THANK YOU" to everyone who has signed up to Gift Aid their Mass Offerings and other donations to the Parish. We have now received the Gift Aid tax rebate for offerings and donations made in the last tax year and this came to an amazing total of £22,344.36 with a further £2,000 due on account. The return reflects really really well on the fact that so many of you have signed up to Gift Aid your Offertory donations and choose to Gift Aid your other donations, including Mass Stipends, all of which make a valuable 25p in the £1.00 addition to our claim. Income from the Gift Aid tax rebate plays a very important part in financing the work of the Parish and, if you haven't signed already up to Gift Aid your offerings, it is never too late to do so – all we need is a signature and there's nothing else you need do; moreover, all is done in confidence and you don't need to commit to making an offering AND IT WON'T COST YOU A PENNY MORE !! To sign-up or to check whether or not you have already signed up or to get more information, please contact David,

our Planned Giving & Gift Aid Organiser, either through the Parish Office or by email through the Parish Account: hitchin@rcdow.org.uk


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Thank you to everyone for confirming dates for the coffee mornings 2019. We have one date left – 3 March. If anyone would like to book this, please let Cheryl know in the office. Many thanks.

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The Passage is raising funds through the Big Give from 12 noon Tues 27 Nov – 12 noon Tues 4 Dec to support its work with homeless people this winter. Double your Donation, Double your impact. This is a matched giving scheme for online donations. If someone (can be company, individual or trust) gave £10 online, matched giving of £10 would bring the Gift up to £20 (and for individuals to £22.50 with Gift Aid. With higher rate tax relief it may cost the donor less than £10). For more information ring Andrew Hollingsworth 020 75921856 andrew.h@passage.org.uk

Diary Dates

Sun 2 Dec			
Coffee Morning – Bethany Club ††††††††††			
2.30pm Healing and Wholeness Service including exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.			
		Parishioners who feel the need for these gifts are invited to share in this time of prayer, during which the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing will be celebrated. This will give our parish another chance to continue our prayer for Fr Michael.	
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6.15pm Advent Service. Quiet prayer in the presence of Our Lord. We hope that you will join us for this service when once again as a community we can pray for Fr Michael			
Mon 3 Dec			
Parents & Toddlers	9.30am Hall	Beavers Scout Hall	6pm
Christian Meditation Grp	11.30am EC	Cubs Scout Hall	7.15pm
2.30pm Mass at Gosmore - All are welcome			
Tues 4 Dec			
Morning Prayer Church	9.30am	Scouts Scout Hall	7pm
Bethany Club Hall	10.30am -3pm	Eucharistic Service	7.15pm
7.30pm Reconciliation Session no.2 in Hall (Parents only)			
NO UCM			

Wed 5 Dec			
Rosary Church	9.30am	RCIA EC	7.30pm
11am Mass at Elmside - All are welcome			
4.30pm RE Session in LCR ††††††††††			
6.30pm CC Street Food Scout Hut			
Thurs 6 Dec			
Italian Club Hall	1pm	Brownies Scout Hall	6.30pm
Christian Meditation Group	6.30pm EC	Choir Practice Church	8pm
10.35am St Pio LCR ††††††††††			
7.30pm Finance Committee LCR			
Fri 7 Dec			
Parents & Toddlers	9.30am Hall	Lectio Divina EC	2pm
Sat 8 Dec			
<p>Morning of Reflection for Eucharistic ministers and those considering taking up the Ministry . The Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. You are invited to join a prayerful and quiet time to reflect on the wonder of the Ministry that we share. The morning will begin with the Parish Mass at 10am and finish at 1pm with a shared packed lunch. ††††††††††</p> <p> 7.30pm: The Orpheus Choir Christmas Concert in our church. Get into the musical mood for Christmas. Tickets £5 after Mass or from the Parish office 01462 459126.</p>			
11.15am Funeral Reception Graham Dann in Hall			
Sun 9 Dec			
Coffee Morning – KISS ††††††††††			
<p>2-4pm: Bereavement Reflection afternoon: You are invited to our afternoon of reflection, prayer and activity in our parish hall. This is for all who have been bereaved, their family and friends. Many who have come to these afternoons take comfort from the prayers and activities and the chance to talk to others who really do understand what it is to experience bereavement. We will be offering refreshments including mince pies and mulled wine. ††††††††††</p> <p>6pm Benediction for Advent. Quiet prayer in the presence of Our Lord. We hope that you will join us for this service when once again as a community we can pray for Fr Michael.</p>			

Future Dates

Sun 9 Dec, 4pm: Carols in the Market Place. The carols will be introduced by the newly-

appointed Chair of Churches Together in Hitchin, and will be accompanied by Hitchin Band. All are welcome - bring friends and neighbours with you!

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Sun 9 Dec, 6.30pm: AN ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS CONCERT WITH JO BOYCE & FRIENDS At St Joseph's Church, Bedwell, Stevenage, SG1 1NJ. To reserve Tickets please contact Sue Coy on 01438 234387 Email suemcoy@ntlworld.com £8.00 per ticket.

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Our Lady Catholic Primary School will be holding **Open Visit Days on Wed 12 Dec, 9.30am, Thurs 13 Dec, 2.00pm, Tues 8 Jan, 2.00pm and Wednesday 9th January at 9.30am.** If you have a child who was born between 1 September 2014 and 31 August 2015 and they will be starting reception class in the academic year 2019/20, please contact the school to book your place on one of these tours. Tel:01462 622 555 or email admin@ourladys.herts.sch.uk

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Wed 12 Dec -The Day of the Virgin of Guadalupe (Día de la Virgen de Guadalupe) is a popular **Catholic** feast that celebrates the belief that a man encountered the Virgin Mary, Mexico's patron saint, in Mexico City on Dec 9 and 12, 1531. Leticia Kay will speak more about this feast day after Mass.

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Fri 14 Dec, 4-7pm: Our Lady's School Christmas Fayre - at Our Lady Catholic Primary School, Old Hale Way, Hitchin. Please visit the school at its annual Christmas Fayre for gift stalls, raffles, games and lots more.... Father Christmas will be there! Everyone is welcome.

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10.45am Fri 14 Dec: Your help is needed for the construction of our crib. We need as many

people as possible to help with this. Please let Trish know if you are able to help even for a short while. Please bring **evergreen** fir and yew – quite sizable pieces which we can cut down if necessary. Please the leave foliage in

the garden in front of the parish office by Thursday 20th Dec.

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Sun 23 Dec, 6.15pm: Carols and Readings for preparing for the great day of our Saviour's birth, led by our Young Ministers of the Word and choir. Mince pies and mulled wine to follow. Please do join us. The figures will be put into the crib during this service.



Other items of interest

A parishioner who has no sight is in need of some paid morning care to support her as her husband (who was her carer) has just died. Ideally a job share with 3 days each. If you are interested please contact Trish in the first instance to register your interest.

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Our Advent tree is a tree with a difference. The baubles hanging on the tree are little Christmas stories and we invite the children to take one off the tree and take it home and read



it over the coming weeks before Christmas.

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Once again the Zeo Church (formerly Hitchin Christian Centre) are helping to put together 100 Christmas Hampers for those who otherwise would not be able to



afford a good Christmas meal. We have been asked to provide chocolate logs once again for these hampers. Your response last year was brilliant. Could you please add a chocolate log to your shopping trolley when you next shop and then drop into the church porch in the box provided by 21st December. **Please check the date when you buy them.** We need them to have a use by date after 26th December.




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Living simply & sustainably:

Electric kettle use: measure the water you need (mug or measuring jug) and only boil that. Many kettles have a minimum fill mark greater than the amount you want to boil. Keep a small thermos flask by the kettle and pour any unused hot water into it for later use. Some kettles can be set for 80C for instant coffee (100C for tea).

If you have a need for prayer, please contact Mary on 07759195487 and let her know your prayer intentions		AMORIS LAETITIA - THE JOY OF LOVE 105	
<p align="center">Faith Development Helpline</p> <p>If you (or someone you know) needs to chat about your faith or have been feeling lost ring 07398821315 Tues/Wed/Thurs 8pm-10pm. Confidential service provided. No need to identify yourself</p>		<p><i>Our Daily Love - Love is not rude</i> Antisocial persons think others exist for the satisfaction of their own needs. Consequently, there is no room for the gentleness of love and its expression. Those who love are capable of speaking words of comfort, strength, consolation and encouragement.</p> 	
Contacts for email details see https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/hitchin/contact/			
Parish Priest Fr Tom O'Brien 07547 171570	Assistant Priest Fr Euloge Kasine 07424 004647	Counselling Support Fr Michael Lambert 07958 575442	
Parish Administrator Cheryl Saunders Pastoral Assistants Susanna Hawksley Trish Bonnett		Parish no 01462 459126	E-mail: hitchin@rcdow.org.uk Website: www.parish.rcdow.org.uk/hitchin
 <p>This week's counting teams: Sunday Team: 7 Monday Team: 1</p>		 <p>Hospital</p>	If you are going into hospital please notify the Chaplain on Tel: 01438 285519 or Email: spiritualcare.enh-tr@nhs.net