



# 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 1818

22<sup>nd</sup> December – 29<sup>th</sup> December 2018 – Fourth 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:** Drop down dew from above, you heavens; and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a saviour.

**Psalm:** God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved

**Intercession** God, look down from heaven

**Response:** Lord, come to our help!

**Readings:** Micah 5:1-4, Heb 10:5-10, Luke 1:39-44

**Ramblings for Reflection:** How is it that a single life-changing event can radically affect the way we see things? All the old traditions take on new meaning. Yet, all too easily, we respond to the change negatively. Nothing will ever be the same again. From now on, it is all downhill. Everything is more challenging; enthusiasm is harder to muster; the desire to stop weighs heavily! Well, it is true: nothing will ever be the same again, but it does not have to be negative. Pentecost changed the lives of the disciples. Mary's YES to the angel changed the whole course of her life - and ours. With the birth of her child, as with every birth, all future choices are made with reference to the child: how to live, how to nurture and develop the child, how to teach the important values that will help shape his/her life for the better. Everything takes on new meaning and comes into sharper focus. Life's colours appear brighter. Life is enriched and every element is valued and appreciated much more. Despite the road ahead being uncertain, it leads us along paths we never thought possible. Yet, far from creating fear, we feel positively challenged in a way that strengthens and develops our trust and courage. Sharing a future with others makes all the difference. By his birth, Christ wants to share our journey. Come Lord Jesus, come! Come be our light. Deepen our hope and trust in you. Help us see that our departed loved ones continue to walk with us, and that their presence increases the value of all that we do for the glory of God.

overwhelms. How one man - Fr Michael - can touch so many hearts and lives is truly the work of God. But these last two/three weeks have shown what a saintly parish this is and a saintly town, too. On behalf of my fellow Assumptionists, I cannot thank you enough for all the cards and words of support, love, prayers and goodness you have showered upon us. Not only is Fr Michael my brother but you have all become true brothers and sisters to me, to us. Now more than ever, I feel deeply honoured and privileged to be able to serve you. You make it a service of joy and inspiration, of wonder and so rich in grace. I do not have the words to thank you enough but know that God will do that on our behalf. May all your deepest dreams and hopes be met this Christmas. Not wishing to mention names, because the celebrations of Fr Michael's life were revelatory, heartfelt and moving - revealing how much God loves us. A very special thanks to all those who provided the help needed to make the celebrations so rich and welcoming. A very special thanks to all who gave their time in preparing everything behind the scenes, the names of whom are too many to mention. But if your names begins with a letter from the alphabet that includes you. (Although the letter T was just outstanding!!) You are the best family ever. Happy Christmas!

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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

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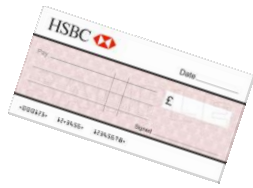
**A message from Fr Tom 'How do I say thank you?'** The ways of God are full of wonder and mystery, full of grace, of goodness and love that

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 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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**Fr Michael RIP** had asked for donations to the mission of the Assumptionist Parish of Hitchin. Donations may be made through Chenery Funeral Directors or directly to the Parish. Please ensure cheques are made payable to Our Lady’s Church. Many thanks.

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Thank you all for your kind donations to CAFOD last weekend. A total of £244.12 was raised.

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As in previous years, all Crib donations will go to the Children’s Society. There are also Gift Aid envelopes in the porch. Thank you all for all your support.

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**Caring for Our Common Home Calendar**

We have some calendars available from the Westminster J&P Group which include a beautiful picture of Fr Michael receiving the livesimply award of which he was very proud. Indeed we are the only parish to have two photos of our livesimply work in the calendar. In addition there are quotations from Laudato Si for each week - a perfect present for anyone wishing to live simply. Calendars available from the office, £2 each.

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**Recycling good news alert:**

In this season of goodwill we bring you glad tidings of many more opportunities to reduce our plastic footprint on Earth. There are now set-up in this parish 8 separate recycling schemes that will help us raise funds for various charities. Please see the newly edited and attached sheet.



But, there are more schemes we are not set-up to offer at our church. Anyone interested in working out what else can be recycled in the UK with Terracycle, can follow the link:

<https://www.terracycle.co.uk/en-GB/brigades>

Michael and Deolinda Eltringham wish to thank the parish for all support over the years and wish

all a green, sustainable, healthy, and blessed Christmas tide and New Year

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**Scout Hut Replacement - Vision, Benefits, Objectives. Status Report for the Parish**

The aim is to replace the present scout hut with a multipurpose building that would offer more space, be substantially less costly to run and maintain, and make it easier for the parish to run extra pastoral programmes, which are at present hindered because of lack of availability of space. It offers insurance against a future that promises to provide less income through the offertory plate and be able to continue to pay not only current staff a fair wage but the extra salaries that will be needed to maintain the premises. It also seems certain that the percentage of the collection paid in assessment to the Diocese will increase in future years as the value of normal income decreases. The existing Scout Hut is way beyond economic repair and is an unacceptable health and safety liability. The proposed building has been designed as two-storey to take advantage of the low marginal cost of adding an extra storey compared to the benefits of providing additional space for Parish and rental use. The design will provide better facilities for the smaller parish groups that use the hall at present and therefore be more cost effective. It will also have solar panels which will not only show our seriousness of living more simply but help reduce running costs. The provisional design offers a large downstairs space that could be divided into two rooms by a sliding partition. The upper floor would be big enough to free up the Church Hall, making it more available for parish use. Note that the revenue from room lettings pays a large part of parish running costs. Parish use would be given priority. A historical legal covenant prevents building in the same location or beside Christopher House. While there will never be enough parking, the new location gives a modest increase in car park spaces and a significant access improvement for hearses, wedding cars and everyday users. It is proposed to remove the existing hut before building the new one - this will maintain parking - but also means accommodating hut users in other, temporary locations during the build.

Herts Council are willing to make a significant grant contribution to the cost of the new build if the business plan shows how it will benefit the community at large. The new build would house the Foodbank, offer support for trafficked people and other Caritas projects being considered, the various scouting movements, and AA etc.

Preliminary estimates suggest a cost in the order of £500K. Part of the feasibility study shows the project can be funded from a combination of Parish reserves, grants and fund-raising helped by the diocese fund-raising team. Importantly, there would be no impact on funding of other Parish projects already in the pipeline.

Fr Tom and Team

### Diary Dates

<b>Sun 23 Dec</b>	
Coffee Morning – OLSSG ††††††††††	
<b>6.15pm Carol Service</b> – please come join with the readings and carols led by our younger readers and supported by the choir. Mince pies and mulled wine to follow!	
<b>Mon 24 Dec</b>	
Christian Meditation Grp 11.30am EC	
<b>4pm Children's crib service</b> this is not a Mass but a lovely way for the family to prepare for Christmas <b>Nativity Gifts are required</b> for the North Herts Food bank. Please bring them unwrapped to this Nativity Service or leave in the Link area.	
<b>9pm Vigil Mass</b>	
<b>Tues 25 Dec Happy Christmas!</b>	
<b>8.30 &amp; 10.30 Mass</b> no 5pm	
<b>Wed 26 Dec</b>	
Rosary Church 9.30am	No RCIA
<b>10am St Stephen's Day</b> Guild of Altar servers Mass. All servers are encouraged to attend this special feast day where a variety of medals for service will be presented. ††††††††††	
<b>6.30pm CC Street Food Scout Hut</b>	
<b>Thurs 27 Dec</b>	
Italian Club Hall 1pm	Christian Meditation Group 6.30pm
<b>Sun 30 Dec</b>	
Coffee Morning – Diapalante	

### Future Dates

**31 December 10.30pm** There will be a Healing Mass to usher in the New Year in Hatfield. Please join us in a vigil of prayer and praise at St. Peter's Church, Bishop's Rise AL10 9HN. All are very welcome

### Other items of interest

**Reach Out North Herts and Stevenage** is a new scheme in Hertfordshire which is looking for volunteers.



It links up local people who are home from hospital and lonely with volunteers who can offer a friendly face and a chat.

Just giving a small amount of your time can make a huge difference.

Loneliness and social isolation affects people of all ages. Older people are especially vulnerable and it can have a serious effect on their health. Reach Out works closely with the Hospital Discharge and Community Navigator teams in North Herts and Stevenage, as they know who might need a hello from someone local.

From a cuppa and companionship, to picking up a prescription or making sure there's milk in the fridge, all you need to do is register your willingness to help. You can give as much or as little time as you would like to fit around your schedule. And if you just want to volunteer for a few weeks, that's great too.

To volunteer, you need to register via the Ami website here <https://www.withami.co.uk/> and complete all the usual checks so that we can get you started and match you with someone local to you. Thank you for making a difference.

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### Text Giving

A new way to support Our Lady's is now available to us - through text giving on your mobile phone !! Just text Parish HITCH to 70800 to donate £5. This amount will be added to your phone bill and the Parish will receive 97p for every pound donated. This is not intended to be an alternative to giving by Standing Order or Envelopes or the Loose Plate even but rather to provide an easy way to make an extra donation to top-up your regular giving or to give if you have no cash to hand or to give if you are just visiting the Parish. At the moment, only donations in multiples of £5 per text are available and the donation cannot be Gift Aided. Thank you in advance for your support of this new scheme but please do not text during Mass !!

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**Church Cleaning** We have an urgent need for more people to help keep our church clean on Mondays. Teams of 2-3 people can co-ordinate their time to suit themselves. If you can give an 1½ hours once a month to keep our church beautiful please speak to or email Trish



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**Choir members needed** If you are willing to sing in praise of Our Lord come and join us. You need to be available at 8-9pm on a Thursday evening for





the practices and the first Sunday of the month at the 10.30 Mass. We have a particular need for male bass voices. If you think you could help the parish in this way and have some great fun at the same time please speak to Trish or Samantha Wilkins or email [trishbonnett@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:trishbonnett@rcdow.org.uk)

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Don't forget that whenever you buy anything online - from your weekly shop to your annual holiday - you could be raising a free donation for Our Lady's RC Church Hitchin. You may not be able to increase your weekly offering and here is a way to help raise income for the church at NO extra cost to you. There are nearly 3,000 retailers including Amazon, John Lewis, Aviva, the train line and Sainsbury's, who will donate a percentage of the amount you spend to Our Lady's RC Church Hitchin to say thank you for shopping with them.

It's really simple, and doesn't cost you anything.

All you have to do is:

1. Go to

<http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/ourlady srchitchin>

2. Sign up for free

3. Get shopping- your donations will be collected by Easyfundraising and automatically sent to our Lady's RC Church Hitchin. Go onto parish website for further details. Thank you for your support!

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**Lister Hospital Chaplaincy volunteers:** The Chaplaincy really need some Sunday volunteers.... Is there anyone who could give up one Sunday morning a month to go round the wards, tell patients there is a service (or ask if they would like to see a chaplain) and then go

back and collect them for the service? You'd be occupied from 9-12, once a month. Patients are SO grateful...and it might be you (or one of yours) in that bed, wondering how to cope...If you are at all interested, please contact Maeve Green [maeve@heavenlycakes.co.uk](mailto:maeve@heavenlycakes.co.uk)

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**Masters of Ceremony (MC) at Mass** We need more adults (young and old) to help with the Mass and support the Priest in setting things up before Mass and helping our altar server team during the Masses. Full training is available. Please do think about helping in this way. Please speak to a pastoral assistant, Priest or MC after Mass if you want to find out more.

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**Meeting needs at Christchurch** is a project run from Christchurch which aims to re-locate good quality items that are no longer needed to families in need who would be able to use them. If anyone can help please call me on 01462 816658 or email [stephaniefkirby@hotmail.com](mailto:stephaniefkirby@hotmail.com)

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**Garden help needed.** You will have seen the appeals in the newsletter for helpers to meet up on a Saturday morning to keep the church gardens under control and they will continue but there is an ongoing need for people to just pop in and do an hour or so whenever they feel like it. We have a garden manual which shows the various areas of the church grounds and what needs to be done when. If you can give an hour or two even monthly then please let Helen Bailey know on 07771 552058 who will show you where the sheets and gardening equipment is kept. This is important work which makes our church grounds look lovely and also helps keep our costs down by not having to employ a gardener.



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

**Faith Development Helpline**

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

**AMORIS LAETITIA - THE JOY OF LOVE 108**

*Our Daily Love - Love is Generous* Loving ourselves is



important as a psychological prerequisite for being able to love others: "If a man is mean to himself, to whom will he be generous? No

one is meaner than the man who is grudging to himself" (Sir 14.5-6).

**Contacts** for email details see <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/hitchin/contact/>

<b>Parish Priest</b> Fr Tom O'Brien 07547 171570	<b>Assistant Priest</b> Fr Euloge Kasine 07424 004647
<b>Parish Administrator</b> Cheryl Saunders <b>Pastoral Assistants</b> Susanna Hawksley Trish Bonnett	<b>Parish no</b> E-mail: <a href="mailto:hitchin@rcdow.org.uk">hitchin@rcdow.org.uk</a> <b>01462</b> Website: <a href="https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/hitchin/">https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/hitchin/</a> <b>459126</b>

This week's counting teams:  
**Sunday Team: 3 Monday Team: 4**



If you are going into hospital please notify the Chaplain on Tel: **01438 285519** or Email: [spiritualcare.enh-tr@nhs.net](mailto:spiritualcare.enh-tr@nhs.net)