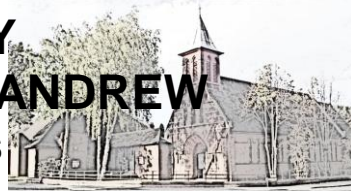




CHURCH OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE AND ST ANDREW

16 Nightingale Road, HITCHIN, SG5 1QS

(In the care of the Augustinians of the Assumption)



Newsletter No 1922



19th – 26th December 2020 – 4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT Year B the gospel according to Mark

Parish Prayer: Lord Jesus, as the world copes with coronavirus, help us to remember that you are always with us. Grant wisdom to decision makers and bless all health workers. Bring healing to the sick; give peace to the anxious and comfort those who are sad. Stir us to show your love and mercy most especially to the poor and weak. This we ask in your name. Amen.

Readings: This week 7:1-5.8-12.14.16, Rom 16:25-27, Luke 1:26-38

Psalm: I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord.

Next week: Gen 15:1-6.21:1-3, Heb 11:8.11-12.17-19, Lk 2:22-40

Ramblings And so, the circle of light is complete and our expectations grow in intensity and urgency. The circle of light raises the question: what happens next? Are we expected to enter the circle or are we waiting for something or someone to emerge? A sense of mystery and wonder fills the air; there was something missing before the circle was complete. This evergreen wreath clearly represents us as we await the new birth and shows us how important it is that we be together. We wait together in a circle all bearing the light we received in baptism, the light of Christ. Our lights, our faith, is waiting, even desiring to be recharged and renewed, so that they will shine more brightly, with more energy, with greater hope and with an enriched love that radiates forth. The theme of this Sunday is LOVE. It is love that gave us Jesus in the first place. Love is why Jesus came to us; why he desired to come to us; why he wanted to be one of us and one with us. This Sunday we remember that the angel Gabriel came to Mary and asked her to be the mother of Jesus. The Angel Gabriel comes to you and asks you to welcome Jesus birth into your lives. Saying YES will let the Holy Spirit cover you with its shadow so that this Christmas will be a birth of great Joy, of blessing, of songs of glory and praise; of the greatest LOVE that the earth has ever known.

***With every passing day, as sunlight disappears,
the dusk descends and prayers ascend for strength to calm our fears.
Uncertain is this time when rancour seems to reign;
and illness leaves within its wake such sadness, grief, and pain.
Yet soon a star will shine. Look up! Keep watch and wait.
Then hear within a new-born's cry the love that conquers hate.***

That love, whose light becomes the dawn of God's new day

When peace and justice will prevail and sorrows flee away.

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<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tier-4-stay-at-home>

Communal worship and life events

You can leave home to attend a place of worship for communal worship, a funeral or a related event for someone who has died, or to visit a burial ground or a remembrance garden, or to attend a wedding - but funerals, linked events and weddings are all subject to limits on the numbers that can attend (see below).

Places of worship

You can attend places of worship for a service. However, you must not mingle with anyone outside of your household or support bubble.

You should follow the [national guidance on the safe use of places of worship](#).

Bishop John Sherrington wrote to all priests *"The news that London and Hertfordshire are among those areas placed into Tier 4 is of course disappointing, not least for those who have made plans for Christmas and will now be unable to see their loved ones.*

You and your parishioners have worked hard to ensure that our churches are places of safety, and it is testament to that good work that we are now permitted to continue to celebrate Mass and the sacraments."

So the good news is we can attend Mass tomorrow, everyday and at Christmas.

However we should not underplay the seriousness of the situation that we are in. There should be no mixing of household groups in pews and there is absolutely no socialising in the church or outside of it. This means that the


casual chats that occasionally take place really have to be discontinued. We do not want to do anything that could stop us gathering to worship together.

The Carol service will take place tomorrow at 3pm but we can no longer have the singing outside of the church.

We hope that people will come to church throughout this difficult period but more than understand if you decide that is not right for you. All Masses and the Carol service will be live streamed as usual.

Please follow all the government guidance and stay safe.

Diary Dates

Sun 20 December
3pm Carol service in the church and live streamed at Livestream Mass . No live singing is now permitted outside the church.

Sun 20 December – Thursday 24 December
10am Mass in the church.
Wed 23 December
6pm – Feed Up Warm Up – Scout Hall
Thurs 24 December Christmas Eve
6pm Children's Christmas Mass ††††††††††
9pm Vigil Christmas Mass
Fri 25 December Christmas Day
9am Christmas Mass ††††††††††
11am Christmas Mass
Sat 26 December St Stephen
10am Mass in the church. A Mass specially dedicated to our Guild of St Stephen Altar servers. Please do come for this special occasion.



Masses at Christmas – how to book

We have arranged the following Masses for Christmas:

- Christmas eve Children's Mass **now full**.
- Christmas eve vigil at 9pm (**quite full**)
- Christmas day 9am (space available)
- Christmas day 11am (space available)

To book a Mass please go to the survey link here [Christmas Mass Booking](#) and complete fully with

the information required. **All Masses will be live streamed for those who opt to watch at home.**

We will do our best to give you your first choice and will contact you to confirm the time allocated. If you are not able to do an online booking please ring Cheryl in the parish office on **01462 459126** and let her know your choice and she will log it manually. Please give her your telephone number so we can confirm your Mass. We will confirm the Mass you are at on Monday 21st December. Please remember to dress warmly when you come to Mass and also wear a face mask.

Please note that we still need some vital people to ensure these masses can run smoothly.

6pm Christmas eve 3 Eucharistic Ministers
9am Christmas day 2 Eucharistic Ministers
11am Christmas day 3 Eucharistic Ministers

If you can help with this please let Trish know as soon as possible.

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PLEASE NOTE – DO NOT LEAVE CHRISTMAS CARDS IN THE PORCH FOR ANYONE OTHER THAN THE PRIESTS. We cannot distribute them safely this year. If you leave any cards they will go into recycling.

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Churches Together Screen in the Square Watch out for the large Churches Together screen among the stalls in Market on **Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th December.**

Place

Sunday 20th December.

About 30 minutes of Christmas music by school children and church choirs and messages from local church leaders will be played in a loop from 10am to 5pm each day. We hope that this will bring the real Christmas message of joy, hope, love and peace to the town in this holy season.

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We are sad to announce that Samantha Wilkins, who has led our choir for many years and developed the music ministry in our church, has decided to stand down as the leader. The good news is that Sam will still come and sing with us which is wonderful as her voice is a joy to hear. We are very grateful that Catherine Muncaster has offered to co-ordinate things in the choir in the meantime so we will still be recording music for use in our Masses. Sam was presented with a gift from the choir and one on behalf of the parish and she was overwhelmed by both. Please watch for the appeal for new members to join us.





Today is **Sea Sunday** (Apostleship of the Sea)

Our chaplains are busy preparing for the winter season. Cold weather

supplies such as hats, socks, gloves, and scarves will soon be in great demand amongst the seafarers and fishers whom we support. Our chaplains are on hand to make sure that they are prepared for the harsh weather that can sometimes be found on our shores. Please visit the Stella Maris online shop where you can make a donation and/or find information about some lovely Christmas gifts that are available to buy in the online shop www.stellamaris.org.uk/shop/

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The **St Vincent de Paul Society** has assembled nearly 12,000 packs for the homeless and has distributed them throughout England and Wales. Each Vinnie Pack contains a thermal hat, thermal gloves two pairs of thermal socks, toothpaste, toothbrush, wet wipes, Pavement magazine, pen and information sheet and 5,000 of the packs have a reusable face mask included. The contents of each Vinnie Pack costs around £3.50 and donations to sponsor packs would be most welcome. Donations can be transferred to SVP Vinnie Packs, a/c 46088237 sort code 60-60-04 or cheques made out to SVP can be sent to Vinnie Packs, PO Box 72264, London SW1P 9EZ. Any assistance is really appreciated.

Our Lady's Parish

Faith Development Helpline

Problems or doubts about your faith?
Are you feeling a bit lost?

Try ringing

07398 821315

Tues, Weds, Thurs
8pm – 10pm

This is a confidential service and follows Parish Safeguarding Policies



Fr Emmanuel d'Alzon founded the Assumptionists 175 years ago at the Christmas midnight mass (1845). We invite you to join us in thanksgiving and in prayer for our Congregation in twenty countries across the world today

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 209

Growing in Conjugal Love - Dialogue Do not be rushed, put aside your own needs and worries and make space. Often the other spouse does not need a solution to his or her problems, but simply to be heard, to feel someone has acknowledged their pain, their disappointment, their fear, their anger, their hopes and their dreams.



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

Parish Priest	Fr Tom O'Brien 07547 171570	Assistant Priest	Fr Euloge Kasine 07424 004647	Parish 01462 459126 E-mail: hitchin@rcdow.org.uk Website: https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/hitchin/
Parish Administrator	Cheryl Saunders	cherylsaunders@rcdow.org.uk }		
Pastoral Assistants	Robert Hitchcock	roberthitchcock@rcdow.org.uk }		
	Trish Bonnett	trishbonnett@rcdow.org.uk }		



This week's counting teams:

Sunday Team: Monday Team:



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