



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
Reconciliation Saturday 10.30am
during Exposition. All Masses are
livestreamed [Livestream Mass](#)

Newsletter No 2077

9th – 16th December 2023 – 2nd Sunday Advent - Year B



Prayer for those seeking sanctuary

Lord Jesus, we pray for those members of God's family who come here to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, violence, and war. Let them not meet with fear, doubt or suspicion from the local population. May those seeking sanctuary in our country receive a warm and generous welcome as they settle-in and commence their new life. Joyfully, we welcome the many gifts they bring to us. We make this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

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.

Intercession: Lord in your Mercy

Response: Hear our Prayer!

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

Ramblings Who doesn't like a challenge?? Well, one that is not too hard?? Our challenge word this week is **repent!**

Repentance shows that we realise our need for God's help, so much so that we cannot truly live without it. By acknowledging our wrongs and failures we are expressing our needs to God; the help we require and our thirst for God's love, forgiveness and a mercy that heals and sets us free from the self-harm caused by sin. Our inner yearning for God lies in a heartfelt desire to become God's faithful, loyal, trustworthy and loving servant. So, of course we want to repent. Oscar Romero said: *"The Christian knows that Christ has been working in humanity for twenty centuries and that the person that is converted to Christ is the new human being that society needs to organize a world according to God's heart."* Having challenged us to repent, John the Baptist shows that we do not have to convert people, we have only to *prepare the way for Christ* just as he did.

Tommy Walker wrote these words about the cry of John the Baptist:

*Prepare ye the way for the Lord,
make a highway straight for our God.*

*Prepare ye the way for the Lord, every valley
raised up and mountain made low.*

*Let's make way in your hearts for the Lord,
turn from the dark and walk in the light,
let's all make a way for the Lord.*

*And His glory will shine, it will be shown to all
mankind and we shall behold our Saviour come
with His reward.*

*Prepare ye the way, make a way for the Lord.
Strengthen your weary hands and feet,
walk on the path of holiness.*

*Take heart and do not fear our God will soon be
here and He'll crown our heads with everlasting
songs of joy.*

Make a way, way for the Lord!

Diary Dates

Sun 10 December



Coffee Morning after 8.30am and 10.30am will be provided by **KISS**. All are welcome.

Mon 11 December

9.30am Parent & Toddlers Hall

6pm & 7.15pm Beavers/Cubs – Scout Hall

Tue 12 December **Our Lady of Guadalupe**

After 10.30 Mass Presentation on Our Lady of Guadalupe in the church (20 mins)

10.30am "Tuesday Chat" Hall

2pm Craft Circle LCR

7pm Scouts - Scout Hall

Weds 13 December **St Lucy**

10.30am Praise Group Hall

11am OLS Reception Nativity Church All welcome

4.30pm FHC Non-Faith Schools Hall

6pm Feed Up Warm Up Scout Hall

7pm RCIA EC

Thurs 14 December **St John of the Cross**

1pm Italian Club Hall

2.30 – 3.30 Faith Sharing Group with Fr Tom on The Year of the Council. LCR

6.30pm Brownies - Scout Hall

Friday 15 December

2-4pm Hitchin Pantry Scout Hall

Sat 16 December

2-4pm Hitchin Pantry Scout Hall

Many thanks to all those who supported Diapalante's recent coffee morning £148 was raised for our education centre in Senegal.


 **Prayer diary** 

Opportunities for communal prayer

- Tuesday 11.30am Meditation** Emmanuel Centre
- Wednesday 9.30am Rosary** Church
- 12pm Charismatic Prayer** UCR
- Thursday 6.30pm Meditation** Emmanuel Centre
- 7 – 8pm Exposition** Church

All are welcome for private prayer at any time in the church which is open 8.30am - 7pm

On Saturday 9th December between 12 noon and 3 pm one of our Ukrainian friends will be holding a Christmas decoration workshop in the Church Hall. Drinks will be available from Hitchin Pantry. You are invited to come along with your children to participate and have the opportunity to meet some of the families supported by the Pantry. There is no charge and materials will be provided.


 We welcome into the Family of the Parish at 10.30 Mass this weekend, through the Sacrament of Baptism, **Reece Onesi**; we pray for his Family as they start this important time in their lives – the life of Faith.

CAFOD Next weekend (16/17th December) there will be a collection for CAFOD after all masses. Giftaid envelopes will be available from the collectors.

Fr Andrew's next Scripture session will be on Friday January 5th at 2.30pm in his flat. All are welcome to attend.

The next Tuesday Eucharistic service will be on Tuesday 2nd January at 7pm in the church. Available face to face or via Zoom

We pray for **Brian Harrington-Spier** whose funeral is on **Monday 11 Dec 2023 at 12 noon**. May he rest in peace and rise in glory and may the Lord comfort his family.

 It is with great sadness we pray for **Michael Hill** who died on 3rd December peacefully at his home. Michael and his wife Anne were great supporters of this parish and we remember them for their great love and generosity. Michael's funeral Mass will be at Pirton Church on 18th December at 1pm celebrated by Fr Denis from Baldock parish.

Children's Christmas Mass 5pm on 24th December will have the gospel acted out by children in the parish and they need more children to be involved. They need Shepherds, Innkeepers and Sheep. If your child would



like to help at that Mass please can you contact Maria at mmaurello85@googlemail.com who will give you details of rehearsal dates and times.



Vigil Mass 9pm we also need an older male and a younger female to act as Joseph and Mary during the reading of the gospel. May be ideal for a Father and daughter. If you are planning to attend that Mass and are willing to help please let [Trish](#) know.



Crib assembly will take place at 11am on Tuesday 19th Dec. If you are able to help with this please turn up on the day. We also need **greenery** to decorate the back drop – please bring **fir tree greenery** to the back door of the presbytery by Monday 18th December.



Friday 22nd Dec 6.30pm Service of Carols and readings for Christmas. This will be followed by mince pies and mulled wine in the hall and

a celebration to say goodbye to Rob Hitchcock as he leaves our parish. The leaving card for Rob is available to sign in the porch this weekend after Masses. Donations to a leaving gift can be left in the parish office in an envelope saying Rob leaving.

Update on the situation regarding Scout hut replacement building. We have just had approval from the Diocese for the expenditure to fund the next stage of our rebuild process. This stage is the Request to the North Herts Planning Team for full Planning Permission. This stage will be carried out by our architects CHQ based in Baldock. We have to carry out a Land Survey of the Parish Estate to establish the correct area for the new building. When this is completed, full drawings of our ideas will be put on paper and sent to planning for approval. When this is completed we can move to the next phase, the cost of the building and going out for tender.

The cost of the votive candles in the Church has remained the same for some time. With the ever increases in costs in general, it has been necessary to implement a small increase to **50p** per candle. Thank you as always for your continued support and generosity.

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 !

The Coffee Morning Rota for 2024 has been drawn up and distributed to the Groups. We do have the following slots available. 26 May, 30 June, 28 July, 22 September, 29 September and 29 December. Please let Cheryl in the Office if you wish to book any of these. Many thanks.

The Hitchin Foodbank Distribution Centre is moving from Our Ladys Scout Hall on the 4th January 2024. From then it will be based in the Westmill Centre, John Barker Place, Hitchin, SG5 2PG. The Foodbank is very grateful to everyone at Our Ladys Church for all the help and donations received over the last 10 years. We hope to continue to receive your help at our new venue.

Terracycle recycling funds raised for charity 1st November 2023 - 30th April 2023: Total = £ 443.72

Biscuit&Cakes/Bakery and Wax Wrap: **£85**
(Parish Hardship Fund)

Pens /Colgate: **£ 168.50**

(Herts. Homeless Help / Sanctuary)

Pringles /KP Crisps & Nuts: **£130**

(Marine Conservation Society)

Coffee/ Marigold Gloves/ Sistema: **£60** (Phase)

A BIG Thank You to everyone that have shared this recycling journey with us, and contribute their packaging to be recycled, to be re-purposed, and kept out of landfill sites or an incineration fate. Please also be aware that Nestlé recently withdrew support for the Confectionery wrappers program, and we are no longer collecting them, for all those wishing to continue to recycle their sweets and chocolates wrappers/packaging we advise the use the soft plastics recycling facilities now also available at some supermarkets. However all products containing some form of cake or biscuits in them, can continue to be recycled in our current McVities scheme for Biscuit and Cake wrappers.

Sign up to support Our Lady Immaculate and St Andrew Church - Hitchin on



#easyfundraising and raise FREE donations for us with your Christmas shopping. There are over 8,000 brands, including M&S, Argos, John Lewis and Tesco that will donate to us for free! Plus, once you've raised your first £5, easyfundraising will double it! Sign up here: Easy Fundraising.

Other items of interest

The SVP are distributing over 10,000 Vinnie Packs containing cold weather essentials to the homeless this winter. Please could you consider sponsoring packs at a suggested donation of £4.20 per pack? Donations can be sent to Vinnie Packs, PO Box 72264, London SW1P 9EZ with cheques made out to SVP or by bank transfer to Nat West sort code 60-60-04, account no. 4608 8237 . Thank you so much for your support.

Escorted Pilgrimage to Knock & Co Mayo, 10th March 2024. £899.00 pps. Price includes flight, 10kg hold luggage, 5 nights' in 4* Castlecourt Hotel, Westport with Dinner, Bed & Breakfast. Lunch on three days. All entertainment, excursions and transport included. Visit Knock, Galway City, Kylemore Abbey, Croagh Patrick & Ashford Castle. Single supplement on Enquiry. Contact Patricia or Natali on 01268 762 278 or 07740 175557 or email knockpilgrimages@gmail.com.

Crib Offering to support the Catholic Children's Society

The Catholic Children's Society (CCS) is helping local families in crisis who are struggling to put food on the table, keep warm and provide a safe home for their children. Recently CCS helped a mother and her two young sons who were evicted from their home when the landlord sold the property. They were moved into Local Authority housing but the flat was completely empty, cold and drafty. Their previous home was furnished and they had no money to buy even a bed – the mother and children slept on her coat on the bare floor. Both children had asthma and their health quickly deteriorated in the cold flat. CCS provided a grant to help them buy beds, warm fleece bedding, thick duvets and rugs to keep the family warm through winter. The mother said:

"I cannot believe the difference this has made. I can tuck my children into their very own beds at night and keep them warm and cosy. Thank you for caring about us".

There are many more vulnerable families in need of support and our parish will be donating our Crib Offering to support this important work. You can donate at the Crib or via the CCS website www.cathchild.org.uk/crib

Other dates

The Hitchin Christmas Tree Festival 2023

Holy Saviour Church
Radcliffe Road Hitchin SG5 1QG

Friday, 8th December
2.30pm - 6.30pm

Saturday, 9th December
Sunday, 10th December
11.45am - 6pm

Admission £5
Accompanied children FREE

Lunch and teas available

www.holysaviourhitchin.org.uk
Facebook: HitchinChristmasTreeFestival



JHN students would like to invite Seniors and Older Adults to their school on **15th Dec 10am - 11.30am** for a morning of refreshments and festive cakes, seasonal music and entertainment. RSVP to Mrs A Berwick Tel: 01438 314 643 or email BerwickA@jhn.herts.sch.uk

Experience the Christmas story

Discover the true meaning of Christmas with an unforgettable event for all the family. It's a Nativity like no other, placing you in the middle of an immersive theatre experience.

Stand with the shepherds, walk with Mary, Joseph and the donkey, journey with Roman soldiers and enter the stable to watch the miracle unfold.

It's the perfect festive event for kids, parents and grandparents.

Book your tickets today, before they sell out. **THE 18TH OF DECEMBER AT 2PM IS SOLD OUT.**

"A refreshing antidote to the rampant glitz"

The Guardian


"An absorbing and delightful reminder of what Christmas is really all about"


Surrey Life

"A powerful, unreconstructed telling of the Christmas story"


The Times

To book go to <https://www.wintershall.org.uk/nativity-journey-0>

 Assumption Eastern Mission (Eastern Europe) Romania. Today there are two communities in Romania. A Christian Study Centre at Bucharest and a parish at Margineni. Russia. There is a small community in Moscow. For many years the chaplain at the American Embassy was always an Assumptionist.

 **Amoris Laetitia the joy of love 363** Pastoral Perspectives - Proclaiming the Gospel of the Family Today
Pastoral care of families can include the help of teachers, counsellors, physicians, social workers, juvenile and family advocates.

We are a Safeguarding parish EduCare (now part of Tes) safeguarding leaflets can be downloaded from our website at <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/hitchin/diocese/safeguarding-in-our-parishes/>
Safeguarding representatives: Trish Bonnett and Maria Greene via 01462 459126

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

Parish Priest	Fr Justin Kasereka 07438 793351	E-mail: hitchin@rcdow.org.uk
Asst Priest	Fr Adams Tatsidjoudoung 07438 408350	Website: https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/hitchin
Retired Priest	Fr Tom O'Brien 07547 171570	Parish Tel no 01462 459126
Administrator	Cheryl Saunders	cherylsaunders@rcdow.org.uk } press 2
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