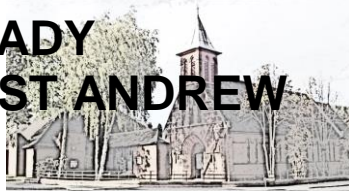




CHURCH OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE AND ST ANDREW

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 2088

24th February – 2nd March 2024 – SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT - 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 Gen 22:1-2.9-13.15-18, Rom 8:31-34, Mark 9:2-10

Entrance Antiphon: Of you my heart has spoken: Seek his face. It is your face, O Lord, that I seek; hide not your face from me.

Psalm: I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

Intercession: Lord in your Mercy

Response: Hear our Prayer!

Next Week: Ex 20:1-17, Cor 1:22-25, John 2:13-25


Ramblings We live in a time when people are becoming disillusioned with politics when politicians only seem to fight over who should govern the country; it is a fight for power not the *common good*. The wars in Ukraine and Gaza are horrendous and are worsening. Our time cries out loudly for a transfiguration as a sign of hope that love of neighbour will become the foremost thought in everyone's mind, most especially world leaders and leaders of countries. In response Pope Francis has called the coming Jubilee Year in 2025 a year of HOPE; and don't we need it! Transfiguration is not just about seeing things differently; it is about seeing the true identity and reality of what we are doing to ourselves. In that light-transforming moment on Mount Tabor, Peter James and John saw Jesus completely differently, as someone filled with the light of the Divine; something impossible to put into words.

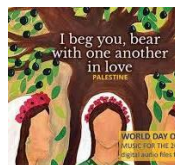
St John of Damascus wrote:

Christ is transfigured, not by putting on some quality He did not possess previously, nor by changing into something He never was before, but by revealing to His disciples what He truly was, in opening their eyes and in giving sight to those who were blind. For while remaining identical to what He had been before, He appeared to the disciples in His splendour; He is indeed the true light, the radiance of glory.

The transfiguration invites us to look more carefully at those around us in an effort to look beyond the familiar image we have of them to something far deeper yet hidden from us; the glory of the Divine living within them. In this way what we see in them will transform our understanding of their lives and also of ours. What we see in others is always a reflection of what lies within us; this applies both to goodness as well as faults and failings!

Diary Dates

| |
|---|
| Sun 25 February |
|  Coffee Morning after 8.30am and 10.30am will be provided by the The Osteoporosis Society . All are welcome. |
| Mon 26 February |
| 9.30am Parent & Toddlers Hall ***** |
| 6pm & 7.15pm Beavers/Cubs – Scout Hall |
| Tue 27 February |
| 10.30am “Tuesday Chat” Hall ***** |
| 2pm Craft Circle LCR ***** |
| 7pm Scouts – Scout Hall ***** |
| 7pm FHC Session 10 Hall |
| Weds 28 February |
| 4.30pm FHC Non Faith Schools Hall ***** |
| 6pm Feed Up Warm Up Scout Hall |
| Thurs 29 February |
| 10.45 – 12.15 Lent Group with Fr Tom LCR ***** |
| 1pm Italian Club Hall ***** |
| 6.30pm Brownies – Scout Hall |
| Fri 1 March |
| 10am FHC Session 11 Hall ***** |
| 2.30pm Scripture Fr Andrew Christopher House |
| Sat 2 March |
| 10.45 – 12.15 Lent Group with Fr Tom LCR ***** |
| 1-3pm Hitchin Pantry Scout Hall |



This Friday March 1st 2024 at 1pm World Day of Prayer service. The service this year has been prepared by Christian women in Palestine so its theme of *I beg you, bear with one another in love* has a particular poignancy. Our Hitchin service will be led by women from different CTH churches - all are invited to share in this significant time of devotion.

Prayer diary

Opportunities for communal prayer

Tuesday 11.30am **Meditation** Emmanuel Centre
7pm **Eucharistic Service** Church
To Zoom click on [Eucharistic Service](#)

Wednesday 9.30am **Rosary** Church
12pm **Charismatic Prayer** UCR

Thursday 6.30pm **Meditation** Emmanuel Centre
7 – 8pm **Exposition** Church

Friday 10.30am **Stations of the Cross** Church
All are welcome for private prayer at any time in the church which is open 8.30am - 8pm

Please note that during Lent the **Sacrament of Reconciliation** will be offered after every weekday and Sunday Mass. Please go into the Sacristy after Mass to let the Priest know you wish to have the Sacrament.

Thank you to all who came and supported the Coffee Morning in aid of The One World/Live Simply Group. A total of **£136** was raised for Garden House Hospice. The CAFOD collection raised **£411.59**. Thank you for your continued generosity.



We welcome into the Family of the Parish, through the Sacrament of Baptism, **Olivia Doran**; we pray for her family as they continue on their faith journey.

Sunday 3rd March 2.30pm our next **Healing and Wholeness service**
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. If you cannot attend please let [Trish](#) know any names you want prayer for.



Change to intercessions – the decision was taken to transfer the names of those who are sick and in need of prayer and those who have died and whose anniversaries are that week to the newsletter to give parishioners the opportunity to continue to pray for those people during the week. They are now in our block of information and prayers at the end of the newsletter. The prayers that will be included in the bidding prayers are as follows:

We pray for all those going through illness, pain and discomfort who are listed in our newsletter. May they have hope and reassurance for better days ahead.

We pray for all our deceased parishioners and those who have their anniversaries this week who are listed in our newsletter.

We will add in any additional names of those we have been asked to pray for or who have died in that week.



Monday 25th March 7.30pm
Passover Meal in the Church Hall.

To celebrate Passover is to do what Jesus did with his disciples at the Last Supper. It is a chance for us to understand more deeply our Jewish roots and our Christian Eucharist. The Passover Meal is a family occasion and children form an integral part of the proceedings, so all are very welcome. You need to bring a number of things with you: a **baked potato for each person, cooked and wrapped in foil (to keep warm), sufficient wine for 4 toasts, soft drinks/water, cutlery, plates and glasses for each person.** Roast lamb is provided. (You can bring salad and toppings for the potatoes as well – to share with those around you, if you wish.)

It is a wonderful way to begin Holy Week. All ages welcome. **Please sign up on the board in the porch** as we need to know numbers by **18th March** so that we can order the meat.

We have been asked as a deanery to consider the following questions for a deanery meeting in March:

1. How do we witness as a Parish and proclaim our faith to:
 - a. those who have never heard of Christ
 - b. those who have ceased walking with Christ
 - c. those with whom we Christ (those who go to church)?
2. How should we organise ourselves as a parish to do this more effectively?
3. What concrete steps / formation opportunities would help us begin to witness and proclaim our faith more effectively?
4. What structures may need to change? How might we need to develop the way we are organised currently?

We also would like representatives from our parish to take our responses to a meeting on Sunday 3rd March at 7pm at St Hilda's in Stevenage. Two representatives from that meeting (involving all the parishes) will then be asked to attend the Dean's meeting on Wednesday 6th March.

Please can you send any comments you would like to make to [Trish Bonnett](#) or leave your comments in the parish office by **Friday 1st March.**

If you are willing to be a representative to report comment to the meeting please let Trish know.

Two messages from our new Sacramental co-ordinator Ciara O'Reilly.

① **Applications for the Confirmation 2024 programme are now open.** Young people who are in Year 9 and above are invited to apply to take part in the Confirmation Programme this year. The purpose of the programme is to provide young people with a time of formation and discernment so that at the end of the programme they can decide for themselves whether or not they want to be confirmed members of the Catholic Church.

This programme will begin with an induction session on Tuesday 12th March 2024 at the Church. The session will begin with Mass at 18:30 and finish by 20:30 (timings will be confirmed closer to the date).

The induction session, as all other sessions, **are mandatory to complete the programme** as it is not possible for a young person to 'catch up' at home if sessions are missed. Sessions will take place on a Tuesday evening. The full timetable of sessions will be released within the next fortnight.

If at any point during the Confirmation Programme your young person decides that they do not wish to be confirmed that is absolutely fine. Confirmation is a personal choice and should be received free from any pressure.

If there is a young person in your household who wishes to be part of the Confirmation Programme for 2024 please click on Confirmation and download, complete and return the application form to Ciara by email or bringing it to the Parish Office, by Monday 4th March 2024. Please note: as part of the application process, you will need to provide a copy of your Baptism Certificate if you were not baptised here at Our Lady's.

The Confirmation programme aims to provide a space for the candidates to explore and challenge their faith in a safe environment. This is done by following the Sycamore series; the format of this is a short video on an aspect of the Catholic faith and has three elements throughout: input, discussion and views. The input is by Fr Stephen Wang a Catholic Priest of our diocese who is Rector of the Venerable English College in Rome. After a time of input, the candidates are posed a question for discussion. They spend time discussing the issue in pods with their catechist(s). The catechist is there to encourage discussion and offer their thoughts as another person also on a faith journey.

② **Are you looking for a meaningful way to deepen your faith and serve our community?** We invite you to consider volunteering as a catechist for our **Confirmation Programme!** This

vital role offers you the opportunity to inspire and guide our youth on their journey of faith as they prepare to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.

As a catechist, you'll have the privilege of sharing your knowledge, experiences, and love for Christ with our young members. Your dedication will help shape their understanding of Catholic teachings, foster spiritual growth, and nurture a lifelong relationship with God.



No prior teaching experience is required—just a heart filled with passion for our faith and a desire to make a difference in the lives of our youth. Training and support will be provided to ensure you feel equipped and confident in your role.

Join us in this fulfilling mission of faith formation and watch as you play a pivotal role in shaping the future of our parish community. Together, let's inspire, educate, and empower the next generation of Catholic leaders.

To volunteer or learn more about this rewarding opportunity, please email Ciara at by 29th February.

Other dates

13th March 7.30pm 28th Annual General Meeting of Helping Herts Homeless (formerly North Herts Sanctuary) at The Barn, The Victoria Public House, 1 Ickleford Rd, Hitchin, SG5 1TJ and held remotely on Teams. Please contact Owain.Lister@helpinghertshomeless.org.uk for the Teams invite if you wish to join virtually.

The business of the AGM will include the presentation of the trustees' reports, election of commissioners and discussion.

The meeting will include a guest speaker from OneYMCA and an opportunity to meet others informally at the end of the formal business. We anticipate finishing the formal meeting by 9 pm.

Other items of interest



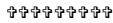
Our Lady School have started a petition to get a zebra crossing placed outside the school and reduce the speed limit to 20mph. Our safety crossing officer (lollypop man) is leaving next week and this raises a huge concern about the safety of our pupils.

Please would you consider signing this petition? Click on [Zebra Crossing petition](#)

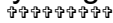
The school know this isn't going to be a quick process and they are raising money to fund a sign which they will place outside the school at drop off and pick up



times. They hope this will prevent parents from parking directly outside the school and provide some safe spaces for our children to cross the road. If you wish to contribute to this please email [Mrs Snowball](mailto:Mrs.Snowball) or ring the school **01462 622555** .



If you can, please show your support for the Cardinal's Lenten Appeal. All funds raised go towards projects across our Diocese. Each year, the Diocese uses donations to the support the work of our services, such as Marriage and Family Life; Youth Ministry and Education. Funds are also used to support the work of Caritas Westminster, who work for and with some of the most vulnerable people in our Diocese. His Eminence, Cardinal Nichols, has expressed his gratitude to everyone who supports the Appeal, with whatever they can afford. So please take a donation envelope today, for more information. You can use the QR code to make your donation online. There is also a box on the wall by the Porch doors marked up "Lenten Alms". Thank you for your generosity.



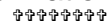
UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM **Participate in Our Research Project**

We have been contacted by researchers from the University of Birmingham (friends of a parishioner's daughter) conducting a research project examining the social impact of new aviation and transport technologies. They are very keen to hear from people living in rural areas about their experiences of using public transport and hopes

they might have about how they would like to use it in the future. They also wish to learn about how it impacts their lives currently. They're looking for people to participate in a research project by taking part in semi-structured interviews. These interviews will focus on your own experiences of using public transport – there are no right or wrong answers to our questions and you do *not* need to have any prior knowledge of transport technology. The interviews can be conducted online, by telephone or in-person and will take between 1-1.5 hours. Your responses will be anonymised, and your involvement will be confidential.

You'll be compensated for your time with £25 of supermarket vouchers.

If you're interested in participating, please contact us at a.j.carter@bham.ac.uk or let Trish know who has some further information.



The **Laudamus Award 2024**. This award, presented by Christian Art, will be a



beacon of encouragement for sacred art in our contemporary world. The Laudamus Award is not just a competition; it is a call to artists to express their faith and spirituality through their creative works. Whether you are a brush-wielding professional or an enthusiastic amateur, this is your chance to showcase your interpretation of Christian themes, stories, symbols, or saints across a variety of mediums. For details of what is involved go to [Laudamus](#).



Prayers for our intercession *We pray for people suffering from illness especially:* Mary O'Carroll, Sandra Massey, Betty Duncan, William O'Reilly, Pauline Lanaway, the Fennell & Conetta families, Stella Patterson, Maria Victoria Lahitte-Martins, Regine Hallinan, Evie Roberts, Niall Heffron, David Laing, Ann Milner and Antoinette Fernandes.

We pray for those whose anniversary is about now: Monica Myles Gordon, Sr Rose, Patricia Duffy, Brendan Nelson, Gyula Szanto, Theodor Kern, Maria Vasquez, Antonietta Liguori, Maria Comparetto, Gerardo Follarno and Alexei Navalny.

If you have a need for prayer you can also contact **Mary** on **07759195487** with your prayer intentions



I am truly sorry for Christians who do not pray. They are depriving themselves of a source of enormous strength, of help from on high, and of that supernatural power which comes from God. (Fr d'Alzon reflections)



Amoris Laetitia the joy of love 373 *Pastoral Perspectives - Preparing Engaged Couples for Marriage*
The Synod Fathers spoke of the need for marriage preparation aimed at giving couples a genuine experience of ecclesial (church life) and an introduction to aspects of family life.

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**

Parish Priest Fr Justin Kasereka 07438 793351

Asst Priest Fr Adams Tatsidjodoung 07438 408350

Retired Priest Fr Tom O'Brien 07547 171570

E-mail: hitchin@rcdow.org.uk

Website:

<https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/hitchin>

Parish Tel no 01462 459126

| | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|--|----------------|---------|
| Administrator | Cheryl Saunders | cherylsaunders@rcdow.org.uk | } 01462 459126 | press 2 |
| Pastoral Assistants | Ciara O'Reilly | ciaraoreilly@rcdow.org.uk | | press 5 |
| | Trish Bonnett | trishbonnett@rcdow.org.uk | | press 5 |