



St John The Evangelist

Berry Lane, Rickmansworth, WD3 7HG
<https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/millend/>



Our Lady Help of Christians

5 Park Road, Rickmansworth, WD3 1HU
<http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/rickmansworth>



St John Fisher

Hill Cottage, Shire Lane, Chorleywood, WD3 5NH
<http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/chorleywood>

ENCOUNTERING JESUS, SERVING OTHERS

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

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 @ChessValleyRC

 ChessValleyParishes

 ChessValleyParishes

Livestreaming:

<https://www.churchservices.tv/rickmansworth>

SAFEGUARDING REPS.

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YOUTH MINISTRY

Margaret Simon - Youth Ministry

Leadership Team:

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Youth Choir Director:

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SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (YEAR A) 7TH DECEMBER 2025

Mary: Icon of Hope

Today, on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the Gospel tells us about one of the most important, most beautiful moments in the history of humanity: the Annunciation (cf. *Lk* 26-38), when Mary's "yes" to the Archangel Gabriel permitted the Incarnation of the Son of God, Jesus. It is a scene that inspires the greatest wonder and emotion because God, the Most High, the Omnipotent, by means of the Angel converses with a young girl from Nazareth, asking for her collaboration for His plan of salvation. If today you find a little time, look in the Gospel of Saint Luke and read this scene. I assure you that it will do you good, a lot of good!

As in the scene of the creation of Adam, painted by Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel, where the finger of the heavenly Father touches the finger of the man; thus here too the human and the divine encounter each other, at the beginning of our Redemption, they meet with a wonderful delicacy, in the blessed instant in which the Virgin Mary utters her "yes". She is a woman in a small peripheral village and is called for ever to the centre of history: on her answer depends the fate of humanity, which can smile and hope again, because its destiny has been placed in good hands. She will be the one to bear the Saviour, conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Mary, then, as the Archangel Gabriel greets her, is "full of grace" (*Lk* 1:28), the Immaculate, entirely at the service of the Word of God, always with the Lord, to whom she entrusts herself completely. In her, there is nothing that resists His will, nothing that opposes truth and charity. Here is her blessedness, which all generations will sing. Let us also rejoice because the Immaculate has given us Jesus, who is our salvation!

Brothers and sisters, contemplating this mystery we can ask ourselves: in our time, ravaged by wars and bent on the effort to possess and dominate, where do I place my hope? In strength, in money, in powerful friends? Do I place my hope there? Or in God's infinite mercy? And in the face of the shiny false models circulating in the media and on the internet, where do I look for my happiness? Where is the treasure of my heart? Is it in the fact that God loves me freely, that His love always goes before me, and is ready to forgive me when I return repentant to Him? In that filial hope in God's love? Or am I deluding myself in trying to assert my ego and my will at all costs?

Brothers and sisters, let us open the doors of the heart and the mind to the Lord. He is born of Mary Immaculate: let us implore the intercession of Mary.

*Pope Francis Angelus Address
8th December 2024*

*O God, who by the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin
prepared a worthy dwelling for your Son,
grant, we pray,
that, as you preserved her from every stain
by the virtue of the Death of your Son, which you foresaw,
so through her intercession,
we too, may be cleansed and admitted to your presence.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Collect Prayer for Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, 8th December

FROM THE PARISH DIARIES

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|--|
| SUN 7TH DECEMBER | 11.30am | Tea & Coffee - Hall | St John the Evangelist |
| TUE 9TH DECEMBER | 3.30pm 7.00pm | Youth Choir Advent Evening Mass | St John the Evangelist Our Lady Help of Christians |
| THU 11TH DECEMBER | 2.00pm 8.00pm | SVP Warm Winter Space - Hall Life in the Spirit Prayer Group - Hall | St John the Evangelist Our Lady Help of Christians |
| SAT 13TH DECEMBER | 9.30am | GIFT Family Session | Our Lady Help of Christians |
| SUN 14TH DECEMBER | 11.30am 12.30pm 3.00pm | Tea & Coffee - Hall SVP Community Lunch - Hall Christmas Carol Service in the church followed by refreshments in the hall | St John the Evangelist St John the Evangelist St John the Evangelist |

MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

| | Our Lady Help of Christians | St John the Evangelist | St John Fisher |
|--|---|---|--|
| SATURDAY 6 TH DECEMBER | 9.30am Julia Naughton RIP (1 st Anniv.) | 6pm For the People of the Parishes | |
| SUNDAY 7 TH DECEMBER <i>SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT</i> | 8.30am Christopher, Margaret, Dora & Michael Conway RIP (Anniv.) 11am Alison McKenna RIP 6pm Tim O'Connor RIP (1 st Anniv.) | 10.30am John Smith RIP | 9am For the People of the Parishes |
| MONDAY 8TH DECEMBER <i>THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY</i> | 9.30am Holy Souls (B.B.) | | |
| TUESDAY 9 TH DECEMBER | 9.30am Holy Souls (B.B.) 7pm For the Sick and Housebound of the Parishes | | 9.30am Holy Souls |
| WEDNESDAY 10 TH DECEMBER | 10.30am Funeral - John Smith RIP | 9.30am Holy Souls | |
| THURSDAY 11 TH DECEMBER | 9.30am Ina Murphy RIP (Anniv.) | | |
| FRIDAY 12 TH DECEMBER | 9.30am Beta Netto RIP | | |
| SAT 13TH DECEMBER <i>ST LUCY, VIRGIN</i> | 9.30am Special Intention | 6pm For the People of the Parishes | |
| SUNDAY 14 TH DECEMBER <i>THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT</i> | 8.30am Tim O'Connor RIP (1 st Anniv.) 11am Pauline Harrison RIP 6pm Ann Murphy RIP (Anniv.) | 10.30am Pauline Harrison RIP | 9am Derek Treanor RIP |
| EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AND CONFESSION | Sundays 5pm - 5.40pm | Saturdays 5pm - 5.40pm | Confessions on request and by appointment |

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK OF OUR PARISHES

Our Lady Help of Christians: Kathleen Collins, Neville Mathews, Ginny Goodgol, Maria Wallis, Henry Cutting, Nalene Nixon, Maureen Douglas, Michael Gaukroger, Leslie Edwards, Pauline Williams, Gloria Warmington, Veronica Finnegan, Mark & Janet Kirwan, Ann Aldridge, Judy Gordon and Sean.

St John the Evangelist: Paul O'Connor, Louise Borg, Sandie Tew and Grace Haddad

St John Fisher: Nora O'Toole, Francis De Souza, Georgina Kelham, Pete Murray, Steve Kibbey, Matthew Leone, Jean-Pierre Roche, Angela Hoy, Anne Trenchard, Paul Kennett, Julian Harris, Edith Moid and Sue Treanor.

NOTICES FOR ALL THREE PARISHES

JOHN SMITH RIP

The funeral of John Smith will take place at Our Lady Help of Christians at 10.30am on Wednesday 10th December, followed by committal at Woodcock Hill Cemetery. We commend him to the love and mercy of the Lord and pray for his family at this sad and difficult time.

ALPHA

Thank you to all those who took part and supported our season of Alpha over the last few months. It was wonderful to have so many taking part and we are blessed with an incredible team who lead it, who provide refreshments and support the journey in prayer. Alpha will return in 2026 so if you haven't given it a try yet, keep an eye for further details!

YOUTH GROUP

Congratulations to our Youth Group whose artwork that they submitted to the Westminster Youth Ministry competition in this Year of Hope came runner-up from entries across the diocese. The artwork will be going on tour over the coming weeks across our parishes so everyone can see what talented young people we have in our parishes.

ALTAR SERVERS

Congratulations to all of our Altar Servers who received St Stephen Medals and were awarded with new coloured cords for their service during our Youth Mass on Sunday 30th November. There were 19 Altar Servers serving at that Mass, and we now have 30 serving across our parishes. Thank you to all of you for your service and to your parents their support.

YOUTH CHOIR DIRECTOR

Are you passionate about music and working with young people? Do you have the vision and energy to lead and develop our choir of boys and girls aged 7 and above. This is a unique opportunity to inspire the next generation through music and worship. The parishes are currently advertising for a new Director of our Youth Choir, to take up the position in the new year. For further information please go to <https://jobs.rcdow.org.uk/>

CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

Our joint parishes Carol Service will take place at 3pm on Sunday 14th December at St John the Evangelist, Mill End. Contributions from musicians across the parishes, as well as the singing of Carols and reflection on readings will be followed by refreshments in the hall.

FAITH & FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Faith and Friendship group will meet at 2.15pm in the small hall on Wednesday 17th December. Please join us to make new friends in the parish and to follow a DVD about getting to know the Bible.

CAFOD CHRISTMAS FUN RUN RETURNS!

Come and join us to work off some of the Christmas indulgences and raise money for CAFOD by running or walking 5km on Monday 29th December, meeting at Our Lady's at 10am. Warmth and refreshments will be available in the hall afterwards. For more info and donations visit <https://www.justgiving.com/page/chessvalleyparishes> or contact Jane Irwin 07590 010902 or Ana Ingles 07872 580058.

THE HISTORY OF SALVATION - TALKS

Sometimes life poses challenges which we don't know how to tackle. You may feel crushed or oppressed, and alone in it. But God sees the sufferings of his people, and comes to save them by his powerful Word. Come to a journey through the Bible, and find that it speaks about your life, too! The course will be led by Fr Dom, and it will take place over 11 weeks on Sundays at 7pm, beginning on January 11th, in Our Lady's Parish Hall.

THINKING ABOUT BECOMING A CATHOLIC?

Have you, or someone you know, been thinking about becoming a catholic? Are you a baptised catholic but have never received the Sacrament of Confirmation and would now like to complete your initiation? If the answer to either of these questions is 'yes', please drop an email to Fr Andrew to have a chat about what is involved and how our parishes can help you to take the next step.

GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER (GIFT)

Our family catechesis for all those with children aged 5-11 takes place once a month. The sessions are engaging, spirit filled and fun, and they are for all the family. We celebrate Mass, enjoy a time of fellowship before sharing catechesis and activities on a different theme each month. **GIFT Parents** As part of GIFT we also hold Faith Formation for parents on one evening each month online (Zoom). These sessions are designed to help all our parents grow in their own faith, enabling them to lead their family on their journey of faith. **In our parishes participation in GIFT is a gateway to discerning with you the readiness of your children to begin preparation for the Sacraments.** One parent has recently fed back *"Participating in GIFT has been the best decision not only for my child but for me as a Catholic"*. If your family would like to sign up for GIFT then please register via our parish website under 'Parish Life' or contact the parish office.

MASS INTENTIONS

At the Altar the priest offers Mass for the good of the whole Church and for a particular intention. Do you want a Mass offered for a particular intention? Perhaps you would like a deceased friend or relative remembered, or you would like a Mass said for someone who is sick or for your own intention. For Mass to be offered it is the tradition that a stipend is donated to contribute to the upkeep of your priests. Please contact the parish office if you would like a Mass offered over the coming weeks.

DIOCESAN NOTICES

ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Reception 2026 intake Open Morning will be on Thursday 11th December. Please register your interest: admin@stjohns705.herts.sch.uk or 01923 774004

THE 4TH ANNUAL ST LUKE'S ADVENT MORNING OF RECOLLECTION ON SATURDAY 13TH DECEMBER

This year we welcome Clement Harrold, a contributor and partner of the St. Paul Center, USA, who will help us reflect on the deeper meaning of this Christmas season: "The Greatest History Ever Told: Advent Hope for a Hurting World". Talks begin at 11.30am in the church, to conclude at 1.15pm. A light lunch, coffee and tea will be served in the Parish Centre at the break.

NOTICES FOR ALL THREE PARISHES

REGISTRATION

We encourage all parishioners to register for the parish using the Churchsuite system, available via the website under 'Register with the parishes'. As part of the registration system you will also be sent an updated skills audit. Please do complete this to help us find a way that you can invest in your parish using your gifts and in the time available to you.

6TH RICKMANSWORTH SEA SCOUT GROUP

Members of our Parish Cubs and Scouts were very pleased to once again support the work of the SVP by making up 200 Vinnie Packs ready for distribution to homeless people. We were pleased to hear that some of these have already gone out to major towns and cities around the Country. As far north as Preston, as far south as Cornwall and across to Wales. An excellent opportunity for our young people to put their Scout Promise 'to help others' into action.

SVP VINNIE PACKS

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 £4.10 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."

FROM CHESS VALLEY SVP - Helping Sudanese refugees

Because of security and corruption issues the SVP cannot donate directly to Sudan to help deal with their appalling refugee crisis. However the UNHCR is one of the few agencies which can operate there to help with shelter, clean water and food. Please consider donating via this link: <https://donate.unrefugees.org.uk/general/~my-donation>

SVP TWINNING - Annual appeal for South Sudan

Please consider helping the SVP with their projects of vocational training for young adults, provision of a home for young boys, meals for infants and free healthcare for rural families. These life-saving projects need your help against a backdrop of continuous conflict, food insecurity and a growing humanitarian crisis. To donate please go to <https://fundraising.svp.org.uk/SouthSudan>

DECEMBER SVP COMMUNITY LUNCH

The Chess Valley Community Lunch will take place a week earlier than usual on Sunday 14th December. We look forward to welcoming our regular guests and parishioners from across the three parishes. We hope you can join us.

WARM WINTER SPACE

Chess Valley SVP will once again be providing a Warm Winter Space in the church hall at St John the Evangelist, Mill End, every Thursday afternoon between 2 to 4pm. Hot drinks, cakes and biscuits will be provided. Please let those you feel would benefit from this know. For further information, please email chessvalleysvp@gmail.com

URGENTLY NEEDED – MILL END FOOD BANK

There is a current shortage of tinned soup, tinned vegetables, tinned custard/rice pudding, tinned meat e.g. casseroles/ mince (not corned beef), baked beans, tinned tomatoes, pasta sauce, snacks e.g. cup of soup/pot noodles/cereal bars, long life juice/squash, tea, coffee. **Please ensure that food items donated are not out of date.** Non food items: shampoo, shower gel, laundry products, deodorant, toothpaste – adult and children's. Items can be placed in the boxes provided at the back of each church.

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS - NOTICES

COFFEE MORNING - CANCELLED

Unfortunately the Coffee Morning after Mass on Sunday 7th December has had to be cancelled.

200 CLUB

Congratulations to Chris Doran (£40), John Steele (£24.00) and Annie Kent (£16.00).

STAMPS FOR THE MISSIONS

Thank you for saving your stamps for the Missions, the box is in the church porch. Please remember to save your Christmas card and parcel stamps too! Thank you, *Sheila H*

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST - NOTICES

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST'S ADVENT FAIR

Thank you to everyone for supporting our Advent Fair last Sunday. Big thanks to all those who helped make it happen, especially Jo Rodrigues.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY

Children's liturgy this term will take place on the following dates: 7th December. 24th December 5.30pm Christmas Eve Mass, Children are invited to participate in the Story of the Nativity (costumes provided, no speaking parts required).

COFFEE AND TEA AFTER 10.30AM MASS

Tea and coffee is available in the parish hall after the 10.30am Mass each Sunday. Do please come and join us for a cuppa and a chat.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday 14th December 3pm - Joint Parishes Christmas Carol Service at St John the Evangelist Church

Monday 29th December 10am - CAFOD Fun Run (meeting at Our Lady's Hall)