



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

Parish Priest:

Fr Andrew Gallagher
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Assistant Priest:

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Parish Administrator:

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 @ChessValleyRC

 ChessValleyParishes

 ChessValleyParishes

Livestreaming:

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

SAFEGUARDING REPS.

Rickmansworth Parish

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Mill End Parish

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Chorleywood Parish

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Diocesan Safeguarding

Coordinator 0207 798 9356

YOUTH MINISTRY

Margaret Simon - Youth Ministry
Leadership Team:

rickmansworth@rcdow.org.uk

Youth Choir Director:

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THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (YEAR A) 14TH DECEMBER 2025

Discover the History of Salvation

I often hear people say that the New Testament and Jesus resonate with them, they can understand the teachings which are beautiful and inspiring; but the Old Testament is a completely different matter: filled with funny names, odd stories, cruel wars and dubious messages. It almost appears as though the Old and New Testaments speak about two different Gods.

‘Dei Verbum’, a document of the Second Vatican Council, says this:

“In carefully planning and preparing the salvation of the whole human race the God of infinite love, by a special dispensation, chose for Himself a people to whom He would entrust His promises. First, He entered into a covenant with Abraham and, through Moses, with the people of Israel. To this people which He had acquired for Himself, He so manifested Himself through words and deeds as the one true and living God that Israel came to know by experience the ways of God with men. Then too, when God Himself spoke to them through the mouth of the prophets, Israel daily gained a deeper and clearer understanding of His ways and made them more widely known among the nations. The plan of salvation foretold by the sacred authors, recounted and explained by them, is found as the true word of God in the books of the Old Testament: these books, therefore, written under divine inspiration, remain permanently valuable. “For all that was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Rom. 15:4)” (Dei Verbum, n.14).

The Old Testament was indeed written a long time ago. It was written in languages, cultures and places very different from the modern western society. But God has truly spoken through it, and those writings are also for us today. From the beginning of creation, through the patriarchs, Egypt, Exodus, Moses, judges, prophets, kings and many other events in the history of Israel, these books, filled with the Word of God, tell us of a God who is teaching his people little by little, making them more and more capable to receive Him - who is coming to save the world.

Moreover, the story of Jesus, who he is, why he does everything he does etc. – cannot be understood correctly unless it is seen through the lens of the Old Testament: *“God, the inspirer and author of both Testaments, wisely arranged that the New Testament be hidden in the Old and the Old be made manifest in the New. For, though Christ established the new covenant in His blood, still the books of the Old Testament with all their parts, caught up into the proclamation of the Gospel, acquire and show forth their full meaning in the New Testament and in turn shed light on it and explain it.” (Dei Verbum, n.16).*

I am not sure how to call this series on the History of Salvation: Catechesis? Talks? Course? Whatever it may be called, I hope it will be a possibility for our parishes to come together as a community, a people of God. Also, the aim of it is not merely for us to end up knowing more than we knew beforehand. Instead, the Word of God is unlike any other book, it *“is alive and active, it cuts more finely than any double-edged sword, it can slip between the soul and the spirit, the bones and the marrow.” (Heb 4:12).* The Word of God, when proclaimed, can truly transform us. God created the World by speaking his Word, and is set to do it again in these, our times.

Beginning on January 11th, Sundays from 7.00pm in Our Lady’s Parish Hall, I invite you to come and be immersed in the History of Salvation.

Fr Dom

FROM THE PARISH DIARIES

SUN 14TH DECEMBER	10.00am 11.30am 12.30pm 3.00pm	Tea & Coffee Tea & Coffee - Hall SVP Community Lunch - Hall Christmas Carol Service in the church followed by refreshments in the hall	St John Fisher St John the Evangelist St John the Evangelist St John the Evangelist
MON 15TH DECEMBER	8.00pm	Young Adults Group - Hall	Our Lady Help of Christians
TUE 16TH DECEMBER	10.00am 6.30pm 7.00pm	Advent Holy Hour & Confessions Confirmation Parents Evening - Hall Advent Mass & Holy Hour & Confessions	St John Fisher Our Lady Help of Christians Our Lady Help of Christians
WED 17TH DECEMBER	10.00am 2.15pm 7.00pm	Advent Holy Hour & Confessions Faith & Friendship Group - Hall RCIA - Hall	St John the Evangelist Our Lady Help of Christians Our Lady Help of Christians
THU 18TH 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 20TH DECEMBER	10.00am	Advent Holy Hour & Confessions	Our Lady Help of Christians
SUN 21ST DECEMBER	11.30am	Tea & Coffee - Hall	St John the Evangelist

MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

	Our Lady Help of Christians	St John the Evangelist	St John Fisher
SAT 13TH DECEMBER <i>ST LUCY, VIRGIN</i>	9.30am Special Intention	6pm For the People of the Parishes	
SUNDAY 14TH 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
MONDAY 15TH DECEMBER	9.30am Alphonsus 'Al' Culkin RIP		
TUESDAY 16TH DECEMBER	9.30am Ola & Adam Budzysnki RIP 7pm Holy Souls		9.30am Holy Souls
WEDNESDAY 17TH DECEMBER	9.30am Elizabeth Gahan RIP (30 th Anniv.)	9.30am Susan O'Connell (Ints.)	
THURSDAY 18TH DECEMBER	9.30am Peg & Andy Murphy RIP, Mairead Casey RIP, Michael & Bridget Casey RIP		
FRIDAY 19TH DECEMBER	9.30am Peter Moss RIP (16 th Anniv.)		
SATURDAY 20TH DECEMBER	9.30am Holy Souls	6pm John Smith RIP	
SUNDAY 21ST DECEMBER <i>FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT</i>	8.30am John Philips RIP (Anniv.) 11am Justin Quinn RIP 6pm Jack & Kathleen Crossan RIP (Anniv.)	10.30am Pascal Rock RIP (Anniv.)	9am For the People of the Parishes
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, Alec Ray 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

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. A retiring collection will be held towards Aid to the Church in Need.

YOUNG ADULTS GROUP

The next meeting of the Young Adults Group, for anyone aged 18 to roughly 35 in our parishes, will be this Monday 15th December at 8.00pm in the parish hall at Our Lady's. For further details contact Ben at +44 7704 049263.

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.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING

The offerings at the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses are your personal gift to your priests. The Christmas and Easter offerings, together with the stole fees and Mass stipends form the personal income paid by the parishes to Fr Andrew and Fr Dom. If you wish to make a Christmas offering, you can do so via BACS using your respective parish bank details (please reference your gift as Christmas Offering). If you use Planned Giving Envelopes please use the one marked Christmas Offering. There are also blue one-off gift aid envelopes available. Thank you

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/>

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.

SPONSORED SANCTUARY LAMPS

In each of our churches 2 sanctuary lamp candles burn throughout the week – one by the tabernacle indicating the Lord's presence, and the other by the statue of Our Lady. Would you like one of these to burn in memory of a loved one, or for a particular intention? If so, we are asking for a donation of £10 per week, for your intention to be remembered and recorded in the weekly newsletter. Please hand your donation into the Parish Office or to one of the priests marked 'Sanctuary Lamp Donation', together with a note stating your particular intention, and the Church and the location of the lamp that you would like to burn for that intention.

SAFEGUARDING

Being alert to matters of Safeguarding (ensuring the care and welfare of children and vulnerable adults) is something to which are all invited to attend. There are information posters at the back of church - including warning signs to look out for, contact numbers and websites for information and support.

DIOCESAN NOTICES

VISIO DIVINA: PRAYING WITH ART - Fr Patrick van der Vorst Thursday 15 January, 7.30pm - 9.00pm

Part of the 'Continuing the Journey' series for new Catholics to feed and deepen their relationship with Christ. Fr Patrick will guide us in using the medium of art to pray. Booking in advance is essential. Scan the QR code or email catadmin@rcdow.org.uk



WESTMINSTER DIOCESE JOB VACANCIES

Please visit our website at <https://jobs.rcdow.org.uk/> where you can view the latest vacancies.

NOTICES FOR ALL THREE PARISHES

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 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

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 very much to all parishioners who attended our Advent Fair. It was such a lovely atmosphere and great to see people from all three parishes. We raised just under £700 profit, which will go towards the running of the Church. Many thanks for your generosity. Huge thank you to everyone who helped to organise and run the stalls.

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

ST JOHN FISHER - NOTICES

TEA AND COFFEE

Tea and coffee will be served in the lounge after Mass this morning.

MISSIO/APF/RED BOX DONORS

So many thanks to our small but very generous group who give each quarter to our hard working Missionaries around the world. Remaining totals for 2025 - December: £161.56; for the Year £661.91 plus 25% of Gift Aid £103. Grand total £764.91. New donors very welcome. Blessings to all, Mary 07795276728

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)