

WELWYN GARDEN CITY



ST. BONAVENTURE



**OUR LADY,
QUEEN OF APOSTLES**



HOLY FAMILY

*Parish Priest: Fr. Norbert Fernandes Assistant Priest: Fr. William Johnstone
Parish Secretary: Kathryn Hubbard*

Second Sunday of Advent 4th December 2022

Last Monday I received in the post a letter from the Cardinal with the decree merging the three parishes of Welwyn Garden City into one parish with me as the parish priest of this new parish. The Cardinal has asked that the decree should be published (and there are copies at the doors of our churches for you to take away) and will become effective from 1st January 2023. In one sense, this is an historic moment for our three parishes with the creation of one entity; and, in another sense, very little will seem different. The following day the Vicar General sent a missive by email to every parish of the Diocese of Westminster stating my appointment as a 'new' parish priest! Psychologically I must give up being PP of St. Bonaventure, PP of Holy Family and PP of Our Lady's, and adapt to a new appointment - my fifth as a priest of the Diocese - as PP of One WGC parish. The Cardinal is aware of the trust you have put in me over the years. So, THANK YOU! In the years to come, I hope that future generations will look back at this moment and always be grateful for the sacrifices made, the adjustments offered and the love poured out to interweave three histories and traditions into a fresh tapestry of faith and outreach in this community.

Today in our Gospel reading from St. Matthew, John the Baptist bursts on the scene - the Evangelist makes sure we all notice him! Primarily John is a herald, bearing witness to the Christ who is to come. John uses water for a baptism of repentance; he knows that the one to come will baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire. As Matthew quotes from the prophecy of Isaiah, PREPARE is a key word John embodies in the wilderness of Judaea. St. Matthew tells us that everyone is approaching John and the latter questions the motivation of some. Our world still needs John the Baptist figures; there are countless people who are desperate for a word of hope, direction and certainty. The Lord looks to us to be the present-day heralds of Good News who are bold enough to listen to the Word of God and change ourselves; then in our turn, to radiate a power and a passion so strong that the message of Christ becomes irresistible. Are you ready and willing? In these weeks of watching and waiting, who is looking to you for example, light and conviction? John's witness eventually cost him his life but he had carried out his calling. What about us?

May God bless your endeavours this week. May God bless you and your loved ones.
With love and prayers, ***Fr. Norbert***

ADVENT SERENITY! There will be Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for 30 minutes after Mass on Mondays at Our Lady's 10.00-10.30am, on Thursdays at Holy Family 10.00-10.30am and on Fridays at St. Bonaventure's 10.00-10.30. Spend some quiet and peaceful time in the Lord's Presence as you journey through this busy season.

ADVENT GROUP Fr. William writes: 'We are running an Advent reflection group on Friday evenings in Advent in the Parish Room at Holy Family Church. It is an opportunity to meet other people, share ideas, explore your faith and think about questions that really matter. The sessions begins at 7.45pm and finishes at 9pm. Refreshments are served from 7.15pm onwards. All welcome!'

NEWSLETTER Next weekend's newsletter will cover the Third and Fourth Sundays of Advent. The newsletter for Christmas, published on 24th/25th December, will cover three weeks. So please get any information to Fr. Norbert for these newsletters. Thank you.

CHRISTMAS PREPARATIONS Our thanks to the generous donors who have provided each of our churches with Christmas trees and to the volunteers who will be decorating them. The outdoor Crib is up, reminding the wider world of the fact that Christ is coming. All the Christmas Masses will have musical accompaniment; we are grateful to the musicians and singers who support the Liturgy in this way.

CHILDREN'S MASS FOR CHRISTMAS The children of our three churches are invited to take part in the Children's Mass for Christmas which will be at 5pm on Christmas Eve at Our Lady's. There will be a one-hour practice in Our Lady's Church on Saturday 17th December at 10am. Parents are asked to stay with their children at the practice. Everyone is most welcome to take part.

ALTAR SERVERS are asked to sign up for Christmas Masses on lists in each sacristy. St. Stephen's Day is on Monday 26th December and Mass will be at 10am in Our Lady's. Altar servers from our three churches are very welcome to serve at this Mass on the feast day of their Patron Saint.

CAROLS IN THE HOWARD CENTRE On Saturday 10th December 2-4pm, we have the privilege of joining with other churches in the town in singing Christmas carols in The Howard Centre. In previous years people have commented on how special it has been to hear carols while shopping, and others have even stopped and joined in. This year we'll also be raising money for the Foodbank based at New Zion Church. This is a great opportunity to bless the town and share something of God's love with others. Just turn up any time between 2-4pm outside Boots (south side), grab yourself a carol sheet, and sing along! The Mayor, Councillor Barbara Fitzsimon will be joining us.

WGC Catholic Churches Christmas Hampers 2022 Once again Christmas Hampers will be delivered to the elderly and housebound of the Parish. Packing will take place at 7pm on Friday Dec 16th and delivery will be on Saturday Dec 17th. This will take place in Sally Kee's home. Please contact Sally if you are able to help on 07870 402510/sallyamkee@gmail.com If you would like to deliver hampers on the Saturday morning, then please let Sally know; collection will be from HF Parish Room between 10.00am and 10.30am. Your generosity of time and spirit to the now traditional hamper deliveries is always really heart-warming and the hamper recipients are always truly grateful not only to receive a hamper but also to know that we are all thinking about them in what can be a very lonely time of year. Thanks in advance for your continued support.

SCHOOLS Birchwood School from Hatfield visited St. Bonaventure's last Friday afternoon. On Monday 12th December Commonswood School will have its Christmas Concert in Our Lady's Church. Fr. Norbert will be leading Christmas assembly in Swallow Dell School on Monday 5th December. Holy Family School and Our Lady School will each have their Carol Services the evening of Thursday 15th December.

SENIOR CITIZENS CHRISTMAS TEA PARTIES Friday 9th December 12.30pm at Nicholas Breakspear School, St. Albans. RSVP as soon as possible 01727 860079 or admin@nbs.herts.sch.uk Friday 16th December, from 10am - 11.30am at St. John Henry Newman School, Stevenage. RSVP to Mrs A Berwick 01438 314 643 or email BerwickA@jhn.herts.sch.uk

HOLY FAMILY SCHOOL (Crookhams AL7 1PG) is raising funds for new playground equipment and would like to invite the Parish Community to join them at their Christmas Fayre on Saturday 10th December 12 - 3pm. There will be a Santa's Grotto, games, arts and crafts, tombolas and a raffle with over £500 worth of prizes. Please come and enjoy the fun whilst supporting the school. www.facebook.com/holyfamilyfriends

FILIPINO MASS in Our Lady's Church on Sunday 18th December at 11.30am. The Filipino Community is leading the celebration for EVERYONE. Afterwards there will be an afternoon of festive singing, dancing and traditional food sharing in Trinity Hall. There will be disco dancing until 5pm! All welcome.

TRINITY HALL is now available for hire. Bookings and enquiries can be made through the www.wgc-catholics.org.uk website, which contains the terms and conditions of hire, suggested donations for hirers as well as a live diary showing bookings and time available for hire. Please enjoy this wonderful resource and spread the word amongst friends and family who may be looking for a Hall to hire.

STREAMED MASS youtube.com/c/WelwynGardenCityCatholicChurches Each week we will inform you of the timings. This Sunday (4th) 10.30am at St. Bonaventure's. Next Sunday (11th) 9.30am from Holy Family.

FIRST CONFESSION & FIRST HOLY COMMUNION Children should be at least in Year 3 at school. If any parents missed the enrolment meeting, please arrange to see Fr. Norbert to talk through all that is involved. Thank you.

CONFIRMATION Enrolment for young people for Confirmation took place last Sunday evening. If any young people (at least in Year 9) missed the meeting, please make contact with Fr. William so he can take them through the dates and expectations of the course.

RCIA The Rite of the Christian Initiation of Adults for adults who would like to join the Catholic Church next meets on Monday 5th December at 7.30pm in the Sacristy of Our Lady's. Adults, who missed out on Confirmation when they were younger, can prepare for Confirmation too. It is not too late to join! You would be very welcome.

FIRST FRIDAY Next 6.30am Mass will be on Friday 6th January, the Epiphany of the Lord, followed by a celebratory breakfast in the Hall at St. Bonaventure's. All welcome.

SIGNED MASS The Diocesan Deaf Service will be here in WGC at 6pm Mass at Our Lady's on Saturday 17th December. If anyone would like to help with signing hymns and helping on the day, please let Fr. Norbert know. A practice has been set for this Wednesday (7th December) at 7pm in the Sacristy at Our Lady's for one hour. It would be great to have a good number coming! For anyone interested, it is a chance to learn some sign language! The Mayor will attend the Signed Mass.

CHAPEL at Our Lady's is open Monday to Friday from 7.30am until 6pm. It's a quiet and peaceful place to pray before the Blessed Sacrament and light a candle. The Chapel will close for the Christmas holidays from Saturday 17th December and reopen on Monday 16th January.

TRANSPORT TO MASS If any parishioners need a lift to Mass the Transport to Mass Group is there! If anyone can offer a lift, please contact Kay Mason on 01707 335633. All necessary safeguarding and health and safety guidelines will be followed. If you can offer the occasional lift to 10.30am Mass please contact Kay. Thank you.

ST ALBANS The Catholic Mass at St. Albans Cathedral takes place at 12 noon every Friday in the Lady Chapel, All are welcome.

SAFEGUARDING The rechecks which were requested are still needed. We are sorry that a couple of the email addresses were incorrect! Please retry with the following. Thanks.

Ann Chappell (wgcdigswellsg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk) Holy Family,

Mary Stephenson (wgceastsg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk) Our Lady's

Cathy Staniforth (wgcsg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk) St Bonaventure's

Parish Priest

Fr. Norbert Fernandes 01707 323234

norbertfernandes@rcdow.org.uk

Our Lady's Church

141 Woodhall Lane AL7 3TP

Parish Secretary

Kathryn Hubbard 01707 322579

parishsec@stbonaventure.org.uk

St. Bonaventure's Church

81 Parkway AL8 6JF

Assistant Priest

Fr. William Johnstone 01707 327434

williamjohnstone@rcdow.org.uk

Holy Family Church

194 Knightsfield AL8 7RQ

CONFESSIONS

Saturdays 5pm-5.30pm Our Lady

Thursdays 10am - 10.30am Holy Family

Saturdays 10.30am - 11am St. Bonaventure

Website wgc-catholics.org.uk

FOOD BANK New Zion Christian Fellowship continues its Food Bank every Wednesday 9 - 11am. If you are able to drop off non-perishable food for the needy members of our community, New Zion is happy to receive contributions from 8am on a Wednesday. The address is 140 Cole Green Lane AL7 3JE. If anyone would like to make a financial contribution to the Food Bank, please email foodbank@newzioncf.net and you will be given details as to how to make a donation. The Food Bank Baskets will be at the back of our churches and so items may be left in them.

CHURCH CLEANING St. Bonaventure's this Tuesday after Mass. All welcome to help.

CAFOD group will be hosting a Christmas goods sale on Sunday after the 9.30 Mass at Holy Family as well as a coffee morning in the parish room.

The CAFOD group will meet on Tuesday 6th Dec at 2 pm in the parish room at Holy Family. Monday 5 December 2022

INTERFAITH Monday 5 December 2022

CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES 8.00p.m. – 9.15p.m. Speaker: Philip Harvey

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84888958761?pwd=ZFM0d2tVNh4UU5DSUxIcFhtUlp0dz09>

Meeting ID: 848 8895 8761 Passcode: 197709 (Zoom)

We recognize that Christmas is a Christian festival celebrating the birth of Jesus but where do some of the traditions we associate with it come from? Philip Harvey will explore the origins of these and there will be a chance to hear from others who celebrate Christmas in different ways.

MARRIAGE AND BAPTISIM Please speak to Fr. Norbert or Fr. William.

MASS TIMES

| | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|--|
| 03 Saturday | 6pm | Our Lady | Intentions of Robi Brand |
| 04 Sunday | 8am | St. Bonaventure | People of the Parish |
| | 9.30am | Holy Family | Mary Kate Casey (R.I.P.) |
| | 10.30am | St. Bonaventure | Agnes and Alexander Kennoy (R.I.P.) |
| | 11.30am | Our Lady | Mary Donoghue (R.I.P. 1 st Anniversary) |
| | 6pm | Holy Family | People of the Parish |
| 05 Monday | 9.30am | Our Lady | CWL intentions |
| 06 Tuesday | 9.30am | St. Bonaventure | CWL intentions |
| | 7pm | Our Lady | Rafael Velho Pereira (R.I.P.) |
| 07 Wednesday | 9.30am | Holy Family | Intentions of Catholic Women's League |
| 08 Thursday | 9.30am | Holy Family | Intentions of Catholic Women's League |
| 09 Friday | 9.30am | St. Bonaventure | |
| | 7pm | Our Lady | Liam Fernandes (1 st Birthday) |
| 10 Saturday | 10am | St. Bonaventure | Private intention |
| | 6pm | Our Lady | Derek Relph (R.I.P.) and Deborah Martin R.I.P. |