

WELWYN GARDEN CITY



ST. BONAVENTURE



**OUR LADY,
QUEEN OF APOSTLES**



HOLY FAMILY

*Parish Priest: Fr. Norbert Fernandes Assistant Priest: Fr. Tony Thomas
Parish Secretary: Kathryn Hubbard*

First Sunday of Advent 29th November November 2020

Today we light the First Candle on the Advent Wreath. A new year in the Church's life begins. St. Mark's Gospel will be our focus on many Sundays. This Advent will be like no other! We are still in the midst of lockdown and will emerge later on in the week into the tier system with ourselves in Tier 2. The rules are strict and the need to keep everyone safe and healthy is paramount. Public Masses will restart in Welwyn Garden City this Thursday and we will keep to the same schedule as before with Holy Family and Our Lady's been used as the churches for the people of our three parishes. Many people had started venturing back to church before the second lockdown. However, I know it just is not the same when you cannot greet friends and parishioners, lingering with them in conversation, when you cannot sing at Mass, when the structure of the celebration is suffused with COVID-19 restrictions. Given everything, it is still possible to feel Christ's love and be caught up with him in the worship of God our Father, to be immersed in his Passion, Death and Resurrection.

Advent is a season of HOPE and JOYFUL EXPECTATION! The Lord is on his way! Just as the Son of God came to be in our midst at the Incarnation and remains with us in a myriad of ways, so he will return in glory at the end of time. Our preparation is essential, personally, as households, as community and as humanity; we want to - and should be - ready for his arrival. We are bound together and he truly desires to bring us so much. This year we have decided in our churches to have some of the decorative features in place much earlier on...to give you a boost, a sense of where we are heading, and of LIFE. So, Christmas Trees decorated have now been put up, the Cribs (waiting for the Christ Child) are assembled and stars shine out as signs to the community. We still have three more Sundays to go! Nevertheless, may the decoration in all its forms lift up your hearts and open them wider for the gift of Christ himself.

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Jesus says a number of times in today's Gospel from St. Mark, 'Stay awake!' What does that mean for you? Are you tired and weighed down? Are you alert and on the lookout? What or who should you see? Advent is a time when many people think about those less fortunate and long to share with them a taste of the joy of celebration; so charitable giving becomes a priority. In Advent we call to mind loved ones, including those far away or who have gone before us; memories and presents become expressions of gratitude. Have you ever had an Advent when you weren't busy?! Find a moment, a few minutes, a large parcel of time and give it to God, as a sign of your trust in him and to refresh your whole being.

Let us make this Advent journey together: the Lord is heading towards us and we are looking out for him. The eventual encounter will be wonderful!

Fr. Tony and I continue to pray for you. Stay well and God bless you and your loved ones. With much love, *Fr. Norbert*

PUBLIC CELEBRATION OF MASS IN WELWYN GARDEN CITY

Mass will start again this Thursday and follow the schedule which has been in operation since first lockdown. Our aim is to accommodate as many people as possible in church safely following all the regulations with sanitising, distancing and so on. Sadly, this means we still are not in a position to celebrate Mass in St. Bonaventure's. Bishop Paul McAleenan celebrates Mass every day in St. Bonaventure's, so it is being used for sacred worship.

Saturday

10am Mass at Holy Family

6pm Mass at Our Lady's

Sunday

10am Mass at Our Lady's

6pm Mass at Holy Family

Monday

7pm Mass at Our Lady's

Tuesday

9.30am Mass at Holy Family

Thursday

9.30am Mass at Holy Family

Friday

7pm Mass at Our Lady's

As you arrive there are stewards outside to make sure people respect distancing and to take contact details (name and phone number which will be held securely for 21 days). For those who have downloaded the Government Covid-19 App, please use the QR Code which has been created (one for each church). Stewards sanitise hands on entry. Face masks are mandatory. More stewards lead you to places. People must sit in their 'bubbles', that is as couples, families or households. We have single chairs for individuals. We ask that you only sit or stand in your place and do not use the kneeler. Once the church has reached its capacity, we are not be allowed to admit any more. Parents are asked to keep a watchful eye on their children at all times. Remember toilets are not available. There are no Mass-books or printed newsletters. You do not have to 'book' to come, but please arrive EARLY!

The structure of the Mass has been simplified so that people are not in an enclosed place for longer than 30 minutes: no singing or music, no 2nd Reading or Bidding Prayers, no Gloria or Creed, no collection, Offertory procession or Sign of Peace, no Communion from the Chalice, no altar servers, no lighting of votive candles. At the time of Holy Communion, the priest says to the whole congregation 'The Body of Christ' to which you all respond 'Amen'. Only the priest receives at that point. After the Blessing and Dismissal, stewards guide people from their benches to the front of the sanctuary, keeping distance at all times. Those who wish to receive Holy Communion may only receive in the hand with no words uttered by priest or communicant and then you leave the church - in Holy Family by the doors either side of the sanctuary, and in Our Lady's by the side door on the left and by the 'Holy Door' at the back on the right. Even those not receiving Holy Communion must follow this flow. As you exit the church, the stewards sanitise your hands.

We have been reminded by our Bishops that people should not gather outside church in a social way before or after Mass as this may be a source of further contagion. We ask you to respect the stewards who are your fellow parishioners and are doing their best to facilitate the whole process.

Only the priest prepares the vessels for Mass and the ciboria (with hosts) have their lids on until Holy Communion is distributed at the end.

After each Mass the stewards sanitise everything which has had human contact and prepare the church for the next Mass. Any property left behind has to be disposed of. We have purchased masks, plastic aprons and gloves for stewards/cleaners as well as sufficient sanitising and cleaning materials.

Some of you may not feel ready to return because of health issues or because you care for someone who is vulnerable. Others might still be afraid and this is totally understandable.

If you think you have the virus, please do NOT come and put others at risk. COVID 19 symptoms: a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature), a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual), a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

WE CALL OUR STEWARDS BACK INTO ACTION!! Their ministry has made such a difference and we will continue to need their service.

CONFESSION On the days when public Mass is celebrated, Fr. Tony and Fr. Norbert will NOT be able to hear Confessions before or after Mass. However, ring Fr. Tony on 01707 327434 or Fr. Norbert on 01707 323234 if you would like to make an appointment for Confession. The Sacrament will be outside the church building with priest and penitent standing; every attempt will be made to keep distance and reduce the risk of infection either way, while respecting the confidentiality of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The church will NOT be open for prayer after.

CHRISTMAS MASSES

We have been thinking long and hard about Mass at Christmas in our churches, especially given the numbers usually attending and the restrictions of the pandemic. Unfortunately, because of its size, it is not possible to have large gatherings in St. Bonaventure's. The Children's Masses and the Carols before the 'Midnight' Masses cannot happen in the usual way. We will do our best, given the tight regulations, to ensure that Christmas in church will be a holy and happy experience where we all will feel God's Love-in-Jesus so intimately close.

Masses on Christmas Eve

OUR LADY'S 3pm, 5pm and 9pm.

HOLY FAMILY 4pm, 6.30pm and 10pm

Masses on Christmas Day

HOLY FAMILY 8am and 10am

OUR LADY'S 9am and 11am

There will not be a booking system. It is imperative that you give yourself time to arrive early and give details to the stewards. When the church is full to capacity, you may have to stand outside.

Please would stewards let us know their availability at Christmas. Thank you.

STREAMED MASS

[youtube.com/c/WelwynGardenCityCatholicChurches](https://www.youtube.com/c/WelwynGardenCityCatholicChurches)

We continue to stream **Mass on Sunday at 10am**

FACEBOOK PAGE

<https://www.facebook.com/Welwyn-Garden-City-Catholic-Churches-113038463699672/>

There will be a 'Facebook' Mass this Wednesday at 9.30am

Also, Gospel reflections, the latest news, live rosaries and so on.

MASS ON RADIO

If you are aware of someone not on the internet who would like to follow Mass, RTE Radio broadcasts Mass on 252 Longwave. For those who have a digital radio, Radio Maria broadcasts in London on DAB+ and in the Cambridge area on DAB.

MASS INTENTIONS Fr. Norbert and Fr. Tony are celebrating the Mass Intentions week by week. If anyone wants Mass offered for a particular intention, please let Fr. Norbert or Fr. Tony know. Donations for the Masses can be made at a later stage. The intentions will be published in the newsletter as below.

This week Masses have been celebrated for: Jo Parlow RIP, Hannah Byrne RIP, Ena Richardson RIP 1st Anniv, Carl Hanifan RIP, Deceased Members of CWL, Peter Richardson 90th Birthday Int, Lizzie Gilhooly RIP, William Sylvester RIP Anniv, Irene MacCausland RIP, Richard Best RIP, Margaret Walsh RIP 2nd Anniv, Ann Grace (McEvoy) RIP

LATELY DEAD Please pray for the repose of the souls of Albert (Matt) Matthews, Chris and Sonia Leonard's mother, Jacqueline, Keith Kerrison, Edna Bichard and Olive Barry (Kelly Donkor's grandmother) who died recently.

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.

CALENDARS Luke will be selling Calendars again this year using photos from within the three churches. All profits going to CAFOD. Due to lockdown they will be sold online from his website www.lukesphotography.co.uk/shop [1] and will be delivered to your home.

Please call 07710 097122 if you would like a calendar but do not have online access.

SACRAMENTS

We return back to the norms as they were before the second lockdown.

Baptism is permitted with only **6** present, including the child.

Weddings are possible with **15** present.

Funerals can take place with **30** mourners maximum.

Confirmation. We will contact the young people and their families to suggest new dates in 2021.

Preparation for Sacraments in 2021 will be published in the New Year. Don't worry. You and/or your children will not miss out!

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF OUR PARISHES The financial support of parish life is crucial and needed. Please consider using the Virgin Money Giving links on the parish website. There are standing order forms available to download on the website too. We realise that things are very challenging financially at present and do not want to put any extra burden on you. However, for those in a position to contribute to our churches, we ask you to find the best way of giving. Our thanks to you for your generosity and co-operation.

SIGNED MASSES On the first Sunday of the month at 4.30pm, there will be a signed Mass streamed with a split screen: Shell Roca, Director of the Deaf Service, will respond in sign as Fr. Norbert celebrates the Mass in sign. This will be in place of the monthly Mass from the Cathedral. All welcome to follow and please give the details to any deaf or hard of hearing people you know. *Next one Sunday 6th December*

PRIEST'S REFERENCE FORMS Parents who will need a 'Certificate of Catholicity' for Reception class or Nursery should download the form on this website called 'Request for a Certificate of Catholicity'. Fill it in and return to Fr. Norbert who will then contact each family to arrange for a Certificate to be issued.

LEARNING FROM THE PANDEMIC Westminster Social Justice and Peace Forum on Saturday 5th December 11am – 1.30pm. Zoom online event for the whole Diocese of Westminster. A time of reflection on the experience of the pandemic so far and conversation about the journey that now lies ahead. Speakers helping to facilitate the Forum include Anna Gavurin (Caritas Food Collective), Fr Richard Nesbitt (Parish Priest, White City) and Dr Pat Jones (Theologian). Chair: Fr Dominic Robinson SJ (Chair of Westminster Justice & Peace). Hosted by Bishop Nicholas Hudson and Bishop Paul McAleenan. Co-sponsored by Caritas Westminster & Westminster Justice & Peace. Please register in advance to receive the Zoom link. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/127452079601>

METANOIA On Thursday we had the seventh session in our online course 'Metanoia'. The theme was 'Jesus calls and empowers'.

Summary: Jesus took on flesh out of love for the world, but his love for everyone is personal and individual. Jesus loves each person and calls them each by name. He desires to be in relationship with every person. Jesus' love is always personal. He knows every person's name and continually chooses them, despite their sins and failings. Jesus' call empowers us. Like he did for Lazarus, Jesus calls each person out of their tomb — out of what binds them and into a fuller life. He calls them because he loves them.

Reflection: Come, Holy Spirit. God loves you with a personal love. Reflect on John 3:16, but substitute it with your own name, "For God so loved _____ that he gave his only Son, that _____ should not perish but have eternal life." Meditate on this for awhile and ask to feel God's personal love for you.

A HUGE 'THANK YOU' FROM FR. TONY 'On Friday I completed a half-marathon at Stanborough Park. It was not easy reaching that point and it has made me realise I am not as young as I used to be! The fantastic news is that through the generosity of so many parishioners, over £2,300 has been raised through sponsorship (at the time of writing). This money will go to our local SVP branch, and will help them support 60+ clients locally in Welwyn Garden City. This is a tremendous effort in difficult times and I would like to thank every one of you who has contributed. God bless,

Fr Tony.'

There is still time to support him by going to JustGiving page:
<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/tony-thomas-876>

MISSIO RED BOXES At present it is not possible for your Red Box to be collected or taken to church as normal. The suggestion is to count your money and :

Send a cheque payable to Missio-Mill Hill to Red Box, 23 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1NU

Give on-line to [missio.org.uk/redbox](https://www.missio.org.uk/redbox)

Give via text. Text REDBOX 5 (to donate £5) or REDBOX 10 (to donate £10) to 70085

By phone on 020 7821 9755 (in office hours)

Bank transfer Account: Missio Sort code: 16-00-16 Account number: 10824230

Reference: RB + your postcode

This money supports missionaries who share God's love and the communities they serve.

ADVENT SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP on BBC Radio 4 Sunday 6th December at 0810 from St. John's, Digswell, celebrating the Centenary of Welwyn Garden City. With the Rev Dr Rob Marshall, Rector of Digswell, Welwyn Garden City. Reading: Revelation 21: 22 - 22:5.

THE HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL are seeking to appoint a new Foundation Governor. An opportunity for you to support our Catholic primary school has arisen. Governors have oversight of the curriculum and the appointment of staff and are accountable for the performance of the school. They have a strategic role to play as well as acting as a critical friend to the Head teacher. More information about the role is available on <https://education.rcdow.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/2.-being-a-foundation-governor-booklet.pdf>

Also, <https://holyfamilyschoolwelwyn.secure-primariesite.net/topic/governors>

If you are interested in supporting our school, please speak to Fr Norbert, our Chair of Governors for more details and contact Jackie Willcocks in the school office 01707375518. Thank you.

‘GIVING TREE 2020’ This year, more than ever, there are a number of families in real need in our parish. Due to the pandemic we can't hold our usual 'Giving Tree' mass at Holy Family Church, where we usually collect Christmas gifts for such families. This year it has been suggested we provide vouchers for supermarkets, which is a Covid-friendly solution, and allows families to buy food, toys or clothes - depending on what is most needed. We would like to support around 60 families with a £10 voucher if possible, through charities including 'HomeStart' and 'For Baby's Sake'. So if you feel you can help, please put your donation in a sealed envelope labelled 'Giving Tree' and put it through the door of the Presbytery at either Holy Family or Our Lady's by 6th December. Cheques should be made payable to 'Our Lady's, Welwyn Garden City'. For further information please contact suzanne.meenan@btinternet.com. Thank you.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING
29TH NOVEMBER**

Saturday 28th November

Apocalypse 22:1-7 The City of God

Luke 21:34-36 'Watch...stay awake...pray!'

Sunday 29th November FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 63:16-17, 64:1,3-8 'Tear the heavens open and come down!'

1 Corinthians 1:3-9 About waiting for Christ

Mark 13:33-37 'Stay awake!'

Monday 30th November ST. ANDREW *Apostle and Patron Saint of Scotland and many other lands*

Romans 10:9-18 The preacher of Good News

Matthew 4:18-22 The calling by the Sea of Galilee

Tuesday 1st December

Isaiah 11:1-10 The One on whom the Spirit of the Lord rests.

Luke 10:21-24 Jesus is filled with joy by the Holy Spirit

Wednesday 2nd December

Isaiah 25:6-10 'See, this our God in we hoped.'

Matthew 15:29-37 Jesus says 'I feel sorry for these people.'

Thursday 3rd December St. Francis Xavier (1506 - 1552) *Jesuit. Great missionary to the East*

Isaiah 26:1-6 'Trust in the Lord for ever!'

Matthew 7:21, 24-27 The person who does the will of God

Friday 4th December

Isaiah 29:17-24 The deaf will hear. The blind will see. Matthew 9:27-31 Two blind people are healed by Jesus