

# WELWYN GARDEN CITY



**ST. BONAVENTURE**



**OUR LADY,  
QUEEN OF APOSTLES**



**HOLY FAMILY**

*Parish Priest: Fr. Norbert Fernandes Assistant Priest: Fr. Tom Montgomery  
Parish Secretary: Kathryn Hubbard*

## ***Third and Fourth Sundays of Advent 16th/23rd December pages 87/90***

‘Rejoice!’ is the cry of the Church today on the Third Sunday of Advent. What will your cry be the next Sunday?! We are well over the half-way mark of Advent and Christmas is imminent. Those who come to visit John the Baptist keep asking what they should do. Next Sunday Mary’s visit to her cousin Elizabeth results in praise, thanksgiving and song. In our own country recently it feels as if we have been on a roller-coaster not sure as each weekend draws to a close what the next week will bring. Hopefully Christmas will give a period of stability and hope so we can step back from the day to day and consider what - and especially who - really matters in our lives.

Firstly, I think each of us must take time today to reflect on what it is we are grateful to God for, what it is that leads us to rejoice. Mary kept focusing on what God had done for her and her song - the Magnificat - anticipated all that God would still accomplish, turning things around, with grace and mercy realising what might have been unexpected. As you think back over your life, have there been sad, dark moments which were transformed through someone’s kindness, an act of love or a willingness to be open to one’s neighbour? Has a disaster paradoxically turned on its head and been a source of blessing beyond measure? We have to be very patient; we must be ready to learn.

Next, let us ponder what God is asking us to do in the remaining days of Advent. Each day is a gift from God offering us an encounter with him. Each day offers us moments to let the Lord’s heart come close to ours bringing healing, forgiveness and life. Sometimes what appears to be very hard to do changes because we discover we are not on our own: God is there in Jesus, he is bringing people our way to share the load. Thanks be to God!

I pray that you and your loved ones have a unique experience of God’s love in Jesus this Christmas. May your preparations and celebrations put you in touch with Divine Love. If you are going away, travel safely and come back refreshed for 2019! Visitors to Welwyn Garden City, may this be a time of blessing for you in our community as we proclaim the Birth of the Saviour of the world.

***Fr. Norbert***

**ADVENT** On Monday 17th at Our Lady's, Thursday 20th at Holy Family and Friday 21st at St. Bonaventure's, there will be half an hour of silent prayer before the Blessed Sacrament - a time of peace and refreshment. (No Exposition on Monday 24th!)

**ADVENT RECONCILIATION SERVICE** This Tuesday (18th) at 8pm in Our Lady's Church, come and share in the wonderful gift of God's forgiving love celebrated in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. There will be a number of priests helping with Confessions. It will be a time of peace and reflection getting us ready for Christmas.

**ALTAR SERVERS** are asked to sign up for Christmas Masses on the sheets in the sacristies of our churches. Don't forget the Feast of St. Stephen, Patron Saint of Altar Servers! Mass will be at 10am at Holy Family on Wednesday 26th December. Servers from our three churches are invited to bring their albs and cinctures and serve at the Mass.

**EITHNE McSHANE RIP** Eithne's Funeral Mass will be at Our Lady's on Monday 17th December at 12.30pm.

**FR. MICHAEL LAMBERT RIP** Fr. Michael was Parish Priest of Hitchin and Dean of Stevenage for many years. His Funeral Mass will be at Our Lady Immaculate and St. Andrew Church in Hitchin on Monday 17th December at 11am and his body will be received into the church on the Sunday at 4.30pm with Mass at 5pm.

**FR. MICHAEL LAMBERT RIP** Fr. Michael was Parish Priest of Hitchin and Dean of Stevenage for many years. His Funeral Mass will be at Our Lady Immaculate and St. Andrew Church in Hitchin on Monday 17th at 11am and his body will be received into the church today (Sunday) at 4.30pm with Mass at 5pm.

**PARISH ADVISORY COUNCIL** Minutes of last month's meeting are available at the back of our churches.

**RCIA** Final session before Christmas on Monday 17th at 7.30pm in Our Lady's sacristy. Next meeting on Monday 21st January at 7.30pm.

**CONFIRMATION** The next session will be after Christmas on Sunday 27th January at 7.15pm in Holy Family Church.

**FIRST HOLY COMMUNION** If anyone missed enrolment meetings at Our Lady's or Holy Family, please see Fr. Norbert.

**MARRIAGE PREPARATION** Any couples wishing to get married in Welwyn Garden City or elsewhere should speak to Fr. Norbert so that the necessary preparations can be made. The Marriage Preparation Day will be on Saturday 23rd March 2019.

**NATIVITY PLAY AND CAROL SERVICE AT ST. BONAVENTURE'S** This Sunday 16th December at 4pm. Followed by a 'bring and share tea'.

**CRIB SERVICE** Come along with your children to a short and informal Crib Service at St. Bonaventure's this Tuesday 18th December at 3.45pm. Come and see our new Nativity figures and stable which will be blessed today, have a story and then decorate the Christmas tree. We will also have a short practice for those who will be at our Children's Christmas Mass (at 6pm on Christmas Eve).

**HOLY FAMILY CHRISTMAS EVE CHILDREN'S MASS** There is a list the back of the church for children to sign up to if they want to take part There will be one rehearsal on Sunday 23rd December after the 9.30 Mass after which costumes will be handed out.

**OUR LADY'S CHILDREN'S MASS** for Christmas will be at 5pm on Christmas Eve. Children who wish to take part are asked to come to a practice on Saturday 22nd December at 11am in the church.

**CERTIFICATE OF CATHOLIC PRACTICE** Parents applying to Catholic Primary Schools for entry into Nursery and Reception class will need this certificate. Parents are asked to contact Kathryn Hubbard on 01707 322579 to make a 5-minute appointment at Our Lady's Church with Fr. Norbert. At the back of our churches is an additional form which parents are asked to fill out beforehand and bring with them to the meeting together with their child. Please wait in the church and Fr. Norbert will call you. The remaining date is Wednesday 19th December 3.30 - 5pm.

**CAROL SERVICES** Commonswood Primary School will have theirs in Our Lady's Church on Monday 17th at 6pm. Our Lady School has theirs in Our Lady's Church on Wednesday 19th at 6pm and Holy Family School has theirs in Holy Family Church on Thursday 21st at 6pm. The Christian Churches will have the annual Christmas Service outside the Howard Centre on Thursday 21st December at 6.30pm.

**CHARITY CHRISTMAS CARDS** Luke Kelly would like to thank everyone who purchased Christmas cards. He sold all of the 400 cards he made, raising £161 for Holy Family Church CAFOD group. He wishes everyone a very Merry Christmas.

**The AFRICAN COMMUNITY** will be meeting on Sunday, 16 December after 11.30am Mass at Our Lady's. The meeting will be held at Our Lady's Sacristy and all African parishioners are invited to attend.

**CHRISTMAS HAMPERS FOR THE ELDERLY AND HOUSEBOUND** Hamper packing will take place in Holy Family Parish Room this Friday at 7pm and delivery the following day (hampers to be collected at 10am). If you would like to help with the hampers by packing or delivering (or if you know of anyone who would benefit from receiving a hamper) please contact Sally Kee 07870 402510, Caroline Sherar 07929 709901, Ann Power 07732 974780 or Joss Innocent Landers 07757 753426. Your response in previous years has been amazing and we're hoping this year will be the same as the recipients are always truly delighted to receive their hamper but also to know that we as a parish are thinking of them at this sometimes lonely time of year is the best gift of all.

**CHURCH CLEANING FOR CHRISTMAS** Holy Family Church are having church cleaning on Thursday 20th December from 12noon. All welcome to help clean the church ready for the Christmas celebrations. Refreshments provided. **St. Bonaventure's** are also having a final clean on Thursday 20th D at 10am. **Our Lady's** Christmas cleaning is on Saturday 22nd December at 10am for ONE hour. All welcome to come along and help.

**DO YOU KNOW** anyone who would like to attend Mass but cannot manage the journey? We have experienced volunteer drivers willing to provide door to door transport. Please telephone Kay on 01707 335633 or Desi on 01707 371399.

**LOURDES 2019 DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE** – Next year's pilgrimage dates are Saturday 20th July – Friday 26th July. We are still waiting for the details of the cost to be sent out, but if you are interested in going then contact Fr Tom.

**NEWSLETTER** The next newsletter will be a Christmas newsletter from 25th December up to Sunday 13th January - the Baptism of the Lord - which concludes the Christmas Season. Please think about what needs to be in the newsletter for this period and send it in by the **Thursday morning** of 20th December at the latest. Thank you. (The newsletter after the Christmas one will be out on 20th/21st January)

**Fr. Norbert 01707 323234**  
**welwyngdncityeast@rcdow.org.uk**  
 Our Lady's Church  
 141 Woodhall Lane AL7 3TP

**Kathryn Hubbard 01707 322579**  
**parishsec@stbonaventure.org.uk**  
 St. Bonaventure's Church  
 81 Parkway AL8 6J

**Fr. Tom 01707 327434**  
**welwyngdncitydigs@rcdow.org.uk**  
 Holy Family Church  
 194 Knightsfield AL8 7RQ

**Website for our 3 parishes**  
**www.wgc-catholics.org.uk**

**CONFESSIONS**

Holy Family: Thursday **10am**  
 St. Bonaventure: Saturday **10.30am -11am**  
 Our Lady's: Saturday **5pm -5.30pm.**

**ST ALBANS** Every Friday at St. Albans Abbey-Cathedral a Catholic Mass is celebrated at 12 noon. You are all welcome.

**MASS TIMES**

|                                |         |              |                 |              |
|--------------------------------|---------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 17 Monday                      | 9.30am  | Mass         | Our Lady's      | Advent feria |
|                                | 12.30pm | Funeral Mass | Our Lady's      |              |
| 18 Tuesday                     | 9.30am  | Mass         | St. Bonaventure | Advent feria |
|                                | 7pm     | Mass         | Our Lady's      |              |
| 19 Wednesday                   | 9.30am  | Mass         | Holy Family     | Advent feria |
| 20 Thursday                    | 9.30am  | Mass         | Holy Family     | Advent feria |
| 21 Friday                      | 9.30am  | Mass         | St. Bonaventure | Advent feria |
|                                | 7pm     | Mass         | Our Lady's      |              |
| 22 Saturday                    | 10am    | Mass         | St. Bonaventure | Advent feria |
| <b>Fourth Sunday of Advent</b> |         |              |                 |              |
| 22 Saturday                    | 6pm     | Mass         | Our Lady's      |              |
| 23 Sunday                      | 8am     | Mass         | St. Bonaventure |              |
|                                | 9.30am  | Mass         | Holy Family     |              |
|                                | 10.30am | Mass         | St. Bonaventure |              |
|                                | 11.30am | Mass         | Our Lady's      |              |
|                                | 6pm     | Mass         | Holy Family     |              |



**Nativity of the Lord**

**Children's Vigil Masses**

**5pm** Our Lady's  
**6pm** St. Bonaventure  
**6.30pm** Holy Family

**Mass of the Nativity**

**9pm** Our Lady's  
**10pm** Holy Family  
**11pm** St. Bonaventure

**Mass with Carols**

**9am** St. Bonaventure  
**10am** Holy Family  
**11am** Our Lady's



**Christmas Eve**



**Tuesday 25th December**