

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*

Fourth Sunday of Advent 19th December 2021

Our Advent journey has almost reached its end! Today the Church presents us with the powerful image of Our Lady on the move. She had received the Angel's message and believed what was said to her. Now she just has to be with her cousin Elizabeth and this involves a long, tiring journey south to Judaea. Mary would have had plenty of time to think about her calling, the impact of what was being asked of her and the path she would have to take. Her heart was filled with joy at the way God had worked in her life and so, upon arriving at Elizabeth's home and greeting the older one, there is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit as the child leaps for joy in Elizabeth's womb. What was Christ's reaction in his Mother's womb? Both women experience the power of God's presence and are inspired with prophetic words. What an encounter!

Maybe you are feeling the fatigue of the long Advent journey with the challenges of Covid and restrictions which have to be implemented? Perhaps some of the traditions you were looking forward to at home, school or work have been curtailed? The Christmas celebration in church still is not 'back to normal'. It is draining having to keep responding and find just the right way. Ponder Our Lady and keep her image before you. She is determined to do the right thing. She is humble of heart. She is the receptacle bearing God's Son within her. Our call is to do right by God and to admit we do not always know everything. Christmas is the reminder that God made his home in our midst and shares our joys and sorrows, our doubts and fears, our hopes and dreams; talk to him and find a moment to hear his response.

Will you be on the move this week? Visiting family or friends? Are you a visitor who has arrived in Welwyn Garden City? Are you still reflecting on what it means to be caught up in a pandemic or wondering when we will be able to say with conviction that it is over? May Christmas be a time of encounter especially with Christ, Emmanuel/God-with-us; he carries burdens for and with us, loving us into life. The Cross is in our midst and the Light of Resurrection shines out even more deeply with radiance!

Have a wonderful Christmas. My God watch over you and your loved ones.

With much love, ***Fr. Norbert***

THANK YOU to all who have helped (and will help) with preparing our churches for Christmas with the Christmas trees and outdoor decorations, with cleaning the churches, polishing silver and brass and putting up the Cribs. We're nearly ready!

CHILDREN'S VIRTUAL NATIVITY This year we will be recording a 'virtual' Nativity Play to be streamed on Christmas Eve at 12 noon. If you would like to join the Zoom gathering, please contact either Sarah Cafferty on david.cafferty@ntlworld.com or Eddy Gallucci on eddyandreka@hotmail.co.uk. Safeguarding guidelines are to be followed at all times.

CHRISTMAS MASSES Please note that there will be morning Mass at St. Bonaventure's on Christmas Eve (Friday) at 9.30.

In terms of the various Masses the following will be the case:

Christmas Eve 5pm, 6pm, 7pm will be the 'Vigil Mass' of Christmas with St. Matthew's account of Christ's Birth (1:18-25)

Christmas Eve 9pm, 10pm, 11pm will be 'Midnight Mass' with St. Luke's account of Christ's Birth (2:1-14)

Christmas Day 9am will be the 'Dawn Mass' with the St. Luke's account of the shepherds going to Bethlehem (2:15-20)

Christmas Day 10am, 11am will be 'Mass during the Day' with St. John's account of the Word who became Flesh (1:1-18)

Carols will be sung at all the Masses.

NEWSLETTER There will be a printed newsletter available on Christmas Day which will take us to, and include, the Baptism of the Lord (8th/9th January). The online newsletter will be refreshed and updated in time for 8th/9th January. If anyone has items for the newsletter, please send them to Fr. Norbert by Tuesday 21st December.

VISITOR Monsignor John Kallarackal who works at the Apostolic Nunciature in Wimbledon has family here in Welwyn Garden City and has asked to join us for some of the Christmas Masses. We are delighted to be able to welcome him to our churches and to offer him our hospitality albeit for a few days. Nowadays whenever a priest comes in this way, a testimonial is required to satisfy Church and Safeguarding guidelines. The Papal Nuncio has given the appropriate documentation and the Vicar General has concurred. We look forward to Fr. John's arrival!

MASS IN WGC The times of weekday and weekend Masses have now returned to the usual schedule in our three churches. Mass intentions can be booked in all three churches. **The safety and security of all people is important** which means that **distancing** in the benches and going up to Holy Communion is respected, **face coverings** are now required in law and the **sanitising** of hands continues. Please note space is at a premium in St. Bonaventure's because of its size.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF OUR PARISHES Please consider setting up a standing order for the church you attend; this will guarantee income to support all that happens. There are forms for each parish; these can be used even if you are not a tax-payer. Just to be clear: YOU set up the standing order with your bank (right hand part of form) and return the left-hand side to us so that we can claim back GiftAid if tax is paid.

*Any day now a contactless payment machine called **DONA** will arrive and be installed in each of our churches. It should be possible to GiftAid your donation. We are so grateful to you for your generosity in giving to our parishes especially in the time of pandemic. Not having to worry about money makes a huge difference to Fr. Norbert as your Parish Priest!!!*

Now Accepting Contactless Donations

You will find our new DIGITAL COLLECTION PLATE, contactless terminal in the church. Just use your contactless debit/credit card or smart phone/ device to make a donation.

Simply choose the amount you wish to donate and hold your card onto the reader.

You can also opt-in for Gift Aid to increase your donation by 25%. If you are a UK taxpayer then donating with Gift Aid means that we can claim an extra 25p for every £1 received.

Contactless donations are simple to administer, secure and convenient.



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATION On the parish website wgc-catholics.org.uk there are forms for parents to download to enrol children and young people for these Sacraments. First Communion children should be at least in Year 3 at school and Confirmation candidates in at least Year 9. Preparation will begin after the February half-term in 2022 with the Sacraments being celebrated next summer. The enrolment forms will help us to know how many are involved and to plan the respective preparation courses.

ADULTS WHO WISH TO JOIN THE CHURCH (RCIA) Please contact Fr. Norbert on 01707 323234 in the first place. 4 people have made contact ; so, in January we will start the sessions of the RCIA journeying towards Easter. If anyone else is interested in joining the Catholic Church or if you are an adult who missed out on Confirmation when younger, please call Fr. Norbert as soon as possible!

MASS INTENTIONS Fr. Norbert and Fr. William are celebrating the Mass Intentions week by week. If anyone wants Mass offered for a particular intention, please let them know. Donations for the Masses should be put in an envelope and given to Fr. Norbert or Fr. William or popped through the letterbox of one of the presbyteries. The intentions celebrated will be published in the newsletter as below. This week Masses have been celebrated for: The People of the Parishes, In thanksgiving to St. Jude, The Brand Family, Jacqueline Gauchard RIP Anniv, Derek Relph RIP & Deborah Martin RIP, Patrick O'Reilly RIP Anniv, Kathleen Lordon RIP, Margaret Coyle RIP, John D'Cunha Special Intention, Danny Kennoy RIP.. Josie Bell R.I.P.. Tuesday's intention is for Mary Dolby R.I.P. whose 70th anniversary occurs. Her daughter Ann was 8 years old when her mother died (she thought some parishioners might remember her).

DAILY MASSES THIS WEEK

Monday	9.30am	Mass	Our Lady's
Tuesday	9.30am	Mass	St. Bonaventure
	7pm	Mass	Our Lady's
Wednesday	9.30am	Mass	Holy Family
Thursday	9.30am	Mass	Holy Family
Friday	9.30am	Mass	St. Bonaventure

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/>

Gospel reflections, the latest news, 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.

OUR LADY'S CHAPEL looks out onto the car park of the new Parish Hall which means that people can come to the windows and look into the Chapel and see the Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady's statue.

ST ALBANS The Catholic Mass at St. Albans Cathedral takes place at 12 noon every Friday. It is back in the Lady Chapel and all are welcome.

MARY'S MEALS is a charity which provides meals for children across the world so that they do not go to school hungry. At the moment there is match-funding for any donations received. Why not double your giving at no extra cost? marysmeals.org.uk/donate or 0800 6981212

RED BOXES/MISSIO Any money collected or which you wish to donate can be sent by cheque payable to Missio-Mill Hill to Red Box, 23 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1NU or online missio.org.uk/redbox

Or by text REDBOX 5 (to donate £5) or REDBOX 10 (to donate £10) to 70085

Or by phone 020 7821 9755 (office hours)

Or by Bank Transfer: Account Name Missio, Sort Code 16-00-16, Account number 10824230

*Your generosity has made such a difference and supports the work of the Missions.
Thank you!*

WGC CATHOLIC CHURCHES CHRISTMAS HAMPERS 2021 Our thanks to Sally and all who have helped with this great act of service. *It is about to happen as newsletter goes online, so gratitude expressed in anticipation.*

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.

GIFTS FOR LOCAL REFUGEE FAMILIES Suzanne Meenan writes: 'A very big THANK YOU to all those parishioners who contributed to the collection for the Giving Tree this year. We raised a total of £430 worth of donations, which has been converted into vouchers for local supermarkets. These will be distributed to 25 families who are recent refugees from Afghanistan. I'm sure they'll be very appreciative.' *Our thanks to Suzanne for co-ordinating everything.*

SACRAMENTS

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals can all take place.

Baptisms If you are thinking about the Baptism of your child, contact Fr. Norbert or Fr. William to arrange a date.

Weddings If you are planning to get married this year or next in WGC or beyond, please let Fr. Norbert know so that the necessary preparation and paperwork can be organised.

Funerals No limits on numbers.

CERTIFICATE OF CATHOLIC PRACTICE On the parish website wgc-catholics.org.uk there is form to download requesting a Certificate of Catholic Practice. Please fill it out and return to Fr. Norbert at Our Lady's and he will prepare the document and return to the family. Thank you.

If you need a Baptismal Certificate for your child, please contact Kathryn Hubbard on 01707 322579.

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. New Zion is very grateful for the financial support being received.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE WEEK
BEGINNING 19TH DECEMBER**

Saturday 18th December

Jeremiah 23:5-8 He will reign as true king and be wise, practising honesty and integrity
Matthew 1:18-24 Annunciation to Joseph

Sunday 19th December FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Micah 5:1-4 From Bethlehem will come the one who is to rule
Hebrews 10:5-10 'God, here I am...to obey your will!'
Luke 1:39-45 The Visitation: Our Lady meets Elizabeth and John the Baptist recognises Christ in Mary's womb

Monday 20th December

Isaiah 7:10-14 The sign: the maiden with child
Luke 1:26-38 The Annunciation to Our Lady and Mary says: 'Yes!'

Tuesday 21st December

Song of Songs 2:8-14 'Let me hear your voice!'
Luke 1:39-45 The Visitation

Wednesday 22nd December

1 Samuel 24-28 The birth of Samuel
Luke 1:46-56 Mary's Song of Thanksgiving (Magnificat)

Thursday 23rd December

Malachi 3:1-4,23-24 'Look, I am going to send my messenger to prepare a way before me.'
Luke 1:57-66 John's birth. Zechariah's speech is restored. People wondered about this child.

Friday 24th December

2 Samuel 7:1-5,8-12,14,16 David's House and line.
Luke 1:67-79 Zechariah prophesies about John, that he will be called Prophet of the Most High and will go before the Lord