

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*

First Sunday of Advent 27th November 2022

A new year begins with Advent AND it is the longest Advent possible with four full weeks! More time to prepare or to worry? Longer to wait or deeper, lasting anticipation? Joy and fruitfulness or panic and despondency? We go through so many different kinds of emotion in this season; our batteries may be drained as we attempt to meet the expectations of so many!

Last Thursday I had an opportunity to go to a pre-Advent Retreat Day with other Diocesan priests. It was led by the Ukranian Eparch (Bishop) Kenneth Nowakowski and it took place at the Ukranian Cathedral of the Holy Family which is just off Oxford Street in London. What a day I had! Firstly, coming off the busyness of Oxford Street with its many shoppers and Christmas lights and entering a building which once was a Congregational Church built in Romanesque style, now decorated with icons. I was with priests from a host of nations working in our Diocese, some of whom I had never met before. Bishop Kenneth explained to us that as an Eastern-Rite bishop he operates with the Julian Calendar in the Ukranian Church and with the Gregorian Calendar in other Churches. So, TWO Christmas Days (7th January 2023 AND 25th December 2022) and two sets of 'Advent'! I was starting to feel discombobulated as I imagined life with two Christmases!! On Thursday I was able to enjoy times of silence and moments of being together, amazing Ukranian food, and a chance to ponder the huge crisis that nation is facing. I was in another world and learning so much!

As we begin our Advent journey, the Church reminds us of Christ's Second Coming - his Parousia - when he will return in glory to complete all things and bring time to its conclusion. No one knows the day or the hour and we are implored to prepare well and to get things in order in our personal lives. The world also must get ready and we are signposts of what it is to come. It is very easy to fall into the trap of operating on autopilot in this season and to coast along. The danger is that we might miss the very Lord we are awaiting! By moving out of our comfort zones, we can be open to fresh experiences and new ways of letting him in. The diversity of approaches will surely enrich us and lead to an even more blessed encounter with him when we reach our destination. Who is waiting for our help? How does the Lord want to use us in Advent 2022? What are we afraid of as we try to respond to the Lord's call?

I wish you and your loved ones every blessing on this path we have undertaken. Let's support one another in prayer. With much love, ***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 will be running an Advent reflection group on the four Friday evenings of Advent beginning on Friday 2nd December. This will take place 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 will begin at 7.45pm and finish at 9pm. Refreshments will be served from 7.15pm onwards. All welcome!~

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!

WGC Catholic Churches Christmas Hampers 2022 'Once again we will be delivering Christmas Hampers to the elderly and housebound of the Parish. Packing will take place on Friday Dec 16th and delivery will be on Saturday Dec 17th. We are unable to use the Parish Room at HF this year so will be packing the hampers at my home. If you would like to get involved with the packing please contact me and I will give the location details. If you would like to deliver hampers on the Saturday morning then please contact me and 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 I know 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.' Sally Kee (07870 402510/sallyamkee@gmail.com)

SENIOR CITIZENS CHRISTMAS TEA PARTIES Friday 9th December 12.30pm at Nicholas Breakspear School, St. Albans. RSVP by 2nd December 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.

CAROLS IN THE CLOISTERS - Friday 16th December 7.15pm You are warmly invited to celebrate the Christmas season singing carols with our friends and neighbours in the The Cloisters AL8 6DX, followed by refreshments and more carols at the Focolare Centre for Unity, 69 Parkway AL8 6JG (next to St Bonaventure's). Festive contributions of drinks and light finger food most welcome. Bring a torch! (Meet in the car park, entrance via The Cloisters, or in the Centre if raining)

STREAMED MASS [youtube.com/c/WelwynGardenCityCatholicChurches](https://www.youtube.com/c/WelwynGardenCityCatholicChurches) Each week we will inform you of the timings. This Sunday (27th) 11.30am at Our Lady's. Next Sunday (4th) 10.30am from St. Bonaventure's.

FIRST FRIDAY Next 6.30am Mass is this Friday 2nd December at St. Bonaventure's followed by breakfast in the hall. All welcome.

TRINITY HALL We are delighted to announce that the Trinity Hall is now available for hire. After what has been quite the journey. From electing the Hall as our Growing in Faith project, to construction, delays through COVID and then preparing the hall for opening with our test event we have finally arrived. 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. *Once the Hall is up and running, we will need help with volunteers to form a 'Hall Committee' and we have loan of £350k to pay off over the coming years. Please chat to Fr. Norbert if you would like to help in some way. Thank you!*

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 Wednesday 7th December at 7pm at Our Lady's for one hour. It would be great to have a good number coming!

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.

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

CONFIRMATION Enrolment for young people for Confirmation will be this Sunday 27th November at 7pm in Holy Family Church. Bishop Paul McAleenan has given us Friday 9th June 2023 as the date for Confirmation here in Welwyn Garden City. Young people need to be at least in Year 9 at school and should come with their parent/s to the meeting which will last around 40 minutes. Dates for preparation will be given that day.

RCIA The Rite of the Christian Initiation of Adults for adults who would like to join the Catholic Church meets on Monday 28th November at 7.30pm in the Sacristy of Our Lady's. This is also a great way for adults, who missed out on Confirmation when they were younger, to prepare for Confirmation. In some countries you cannot get married in the Catholic Church if not confirmed. It is not too late to join! You would be very welcome.

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 Diocese is requesting that Disclosing and Barring rechecks are completed on all holders of a DBS, that was completed more than 3 years ago (unless you signed up for automatic rechecks at the time). The Parish Safeguarding Representatives ask that you make contact with one of them to start this process.

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

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

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

Sending one of them an email, will allow them to add you to the system and start the process off. They will then meet with you, to confirm your identity documents. **This is essential and so your cooperation is appreciated...Thank you!**

SINGING FOR PLEASURE will be performing their Christmas concert in Howlands Baptist Church, the Commons, Welwyn Garden City AL7 4RS on Saturday, December 10th at 7:30pm. Tickets £5.00 each, under 13 free. Proceeds to Watchlytes Parents and Staff Association. Email sfpwgc80@gmail.com or ring 07717329921 for information and tickets.

Parish Priest

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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. The following items are especially asked for: Tinned items: ham, corned beef, vegetables, fruit, fish, beans. Cereals, long life milk, squash, jam, tea, coffee, toilet rolls, washing up liquid, bleach, clothes washing products, toiletries (shampoo, deodorant), kitchen and bathroom cleaner, ladies' sanitary items, toothbrushes & toothpaste and in the run up to Christmas anything Christmassy to bring joy to families. It is also possible to donate fresh fruit and vegetables (but make sure these don't go off before the Wednesday!) **THANK YOU!**

CAFOD World Gifts: Give a gift of hope this Christmas. In Advent, let's share the promise of hope that has been made to us with our sisters and brothers around the world. You can buy CAFOD's World Gifts for family and friends this Christmas online at <https://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk/> or pick up a catalogue at the back of the church. World Gifts such as "super soup kitchens", "trees for life", or "water for a family" will help transform lives in a world filled with challenges.

MASS TIMES

26 Saturday	6pm	Our Lady	Holy Souls in Purgatory (Brand family)
27 Sunday	8am	St. Bonaventure	Anna Scott (R.I.P.)
	9.30am	Holy Family	Michael Cade (Intentions)
	10.30am	St. Bonaventure	Theresa Burke (R.I.P.)
	11.30am	Our Lady	Eithne McShane (R.I.P. Anniversary)
	6pm	Holy Family	George Robinson (R.I.P.)
28 Monday	9.30am	Our Lady	McHale family (deceased members)
29 Tuesday	9.30am	St. Bonaventure	Holy Souls
	7pm	Our Lady	Antoni Dycha R.I.P. & Zbigniew Lyson R.I.P,
30 Wednesday	9.30am	Holy Family	Family and friends of the Hall and McManus families
01 Thursday	9.30am	Holy Family	John Wallace (R.I.P.)
02 Friday	6.30am	St. Bonaventure	Kellie and Brian McNamara
	9.30am	St. Bonaventure	Holy Souls
	7pm	Our Lady	Tracey Laycock (R.I.P. anniversary)
03 Saturday	10am	St. Bonaventure	Peter Peck (R.I.P. anniversary)
	6pm	Our Lady	Intentions of Robi Brand