

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*

Christmas Newsletter up to 22nd January 2023

I write this newsletter just before Christmas Eve. We are the parishes of St. Bonaventure, Our Lady Queen of Apostles and Holy Family. By the time many read this newsletter in 2023, we will be ONE PARISH - Welwyn Garden City! The 1st January is always a new beginning; this year it will have a greater significance for us as the canonical merger is effected. There is still much to be ironed out and some fresh ways of operating; gradually we will find the right pathway. Across the Diocese there are parishes looking to us to see how we are faring and wanting to learn from all that we are aspiring to do and be. I am so grateful to you, the parishioners, for your encouragement, loyalty and prayers.

Christmas is such a wonderful time - it seems to be anticipated for weeks on end! Often it is sheer exhaustion which comes with the arrival of the Baby! And then everything is put away in a matter of days. This Child is what our celebrations are about. Jesus Christ IS GOD in our midst. He is Love in its perfection made manifest. He is our salvation and redemption, our hope and our destiny. He is with us! This is worth treasuring and cherishing not only for the Christmas Days but always. This year we will be focussing especially on St. Matthew's Gospel in which God's presence is highlighted. Make sure that in these days of joy, you look out for him, welcome him and share him with others. Remember the star which guided the Magi, the Wise Men, to Bethlehem and take time to delight in the stars in your own life who/which point you to the Christ Child. On 15th January we will dip into St. John's Gospel and see John the Baptist pointing to Jesus and saying: 'Look, there is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.' We must point out the Lord to others!

When a New Year begins, we reflect on the passage of time drawing to a close. It has not been easy with war and injustice in so many lands, especially Ukraine. There have been climate catastrophes here and there. The financial crisis has impacted on thousands and continues to cause distress. We want to leave this all behind in the old year and step into a new life. Let us do so with Christ allowing his love to be radiated to those in need, his peace to draw peoples together and his light to shine out dispelling darkness. It is not wishful thinking or the waving of a magic wand; ultimately this comes from the belief that the God of time and space is with us and our loving trust is in him.

Finally, with Fr. William, I wish you and your loved ones a Happy and Holy Christmas and a New Year filled with blessings! As lots of you now know, I have been appointed a Canon of Westminster Cathedral with the installation in February. I need your prayers very much in this new role and your constant support in carrying out the extra responsibilities. Be assured that I pray for you all!

With much love, *Fr. Norbert*

CHRISTMAS THANKS Fr. William and Fr. Norbert would like to say a huge 'THANK YOU!' to everyone who has helped prepare our churches for Christmas with cleaning, decorating, flower-arranging as well as the cribs and Christmas trees. Our Masses have been enriched with the music and singing of so many, the exercise of ministries of serving, reading, welcoming and distributing Holy Communion. There are myriads of people who work behind the scenes to keep things going. Our thanks to all of you! The priests are very grateful for the cards, gifts and good wishes as well as the Christmas offerings which are much appreciated. We also recognise the hard work of Kathryn Hubbard our Parish Secretary not only at this time but over several decades. Hopefully a well-earned rest will be possible for all.

ST. STEPHEN'S DAY St. Stephen is the Patron Saint of Altar Servers. There will be Mass in Our Lady's at 10am on Monday 26th December.

HOLY FAMILY The feast of the Holy Family falls on Friday 30th December. Mass will be at Holy Family Church at 10am followed by refreshments in the Parish Room. All welcome.

NEW YEAR'S EVE There will be 10am Mass at St. Bonaventure's and 6pm Saturday Evening Mass at Our Lady's.

NEW YEAR'S DAY Please note the Mass times: 9am St. Bonaventure's, 10am Holy Family and 11am Our Lady's. No evening Mass.

BANK HOLIDAY 2nd Jan being a Bank Holiday, morning Mass at Our Lady's will be at 10am.

EPIPHANY OF THE LORD on Friday 6th January. This is a Holy Day of Obligation when the Church asks Catholics to attend Mass. There will be the early morning First Friday Mass at 6.30 at St. Bonaventure's with a celebratory breakfast afterwards in the hall! (This Mass will be livestreamed.) The other Masses will be at 9.30am Holy Family, 12 noon St. Bonaventure's and 7pm Our Lady's.

CHURCH CLEANING at Our Lady's will be on Saturday 7th January at 10am. The outdoor crib will also be taken down. Please come to lend a hand if free. Thanks.

BISHOP PAUL McALEENAN will celebrate 9.30 Mass at Our Lady's on Monday 9th January; then 9.30am Mass at Holy Family and 11.30am Mass at Our Lady's on Sunday 15th January. Canon Michael Munnely will celebrate 9.30 Mass at Our Lady's on Monday 16th January. We thank them for their help.

FINANCE COMMITTEES Our Lady's Finance Committee will review the accounts for 2022 on Thursday 19th January at 7.45pm, St. Bonaventure's Finance Committee will do so on Wednesday 1st February at 10.30am and Holy Family's Finance Committee on 1st Feb at 5pm.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY The main Service of Prayer will be in Our Lady's Church on Sunday 22nd January at 4pm. It is the first time in a number of years that the Service will be in a Catholic Church. It would be great to have lots of you there! Afterwards there will be tea and cake in the Trinity Hall. Christians from many churches and their ministers will be with us. We need help with parishioners to make cakes and serve tea and coffee and generally to make everyone, especially our guests, feel most welcome. Anne Keller has kindly agreed to coordinate the tea. Please email her on anne.keller@ntlworld.co.uk if you can help. The Service will last 50 minutes and the tea half an hour or so. The Mayor, Councillor Barbara Fitzsimon has kindly agreed to attend. Please come if you can.

FR. NORBERT'S INSTALLATION AS CANON will take place at Westminster Cathedral on Tuesday 7th February during Vespers (Evening Prayer) at 4.45pm. Afterwards there will be Mass at 5.30pm. Everyone is most welcome! There will be a Parish Celebration on Saturday 11th February with Mass at 6pm and a Reception in the Trinity Hall at 7.15pm. Ann Chappell has kindly agreed to coordinate the party. Please contact her on ahchappell@aol.com if you can offer help in any way. Fr. Norbert continues as Parish Priest of WGC and Dean of Stevenage.

COMMONSWOOD SCHOOL will have a concert in Our Lady's Church on Thursday 26th January, postponed because of the snow in December.

Parish website wgc-catholics.org.uk

THANK YOU! In the run up to Christmas there were many generous acts of kindness and opportunities for us to be together; some have taken place quietly and in hidden ways, others up front. Carols in Howard Centre raised £1500 for the Food Bank. Hampers for Elderly were gratefully received having been prepared and delivered with love. The Signed Mass raised deaf awareness and added another dimension to our experience of the Eucharist. The Filipino Mass reminded us of the international nature of our community. Food and drink allowed the celebration to continue as well as dancing and karaoke! The Giving Tree raised over £500 to support local families in need. The constant stream of goods for the Food Bank gives support to so many. We are indebted to the countless people who have worked so hard to make things happen. We are grateful to the musicians and singers who have shared their talents too!

LOOKING AHEAD The Mayor's Civic Service will be in Our Lady's on Sunday 26th February at 3pm. There will be a Day Out to Ely organised by the Christian Churches on Saturday 10th June. There will be a Polish-English Mass at 6pm on Saturday 17th June with a reception afterwards. The Filipino Community will lead 6pm Mass on Saturday 24th June with a party afterwards. The annual African Mass will be on Sunday 2nd July at 11.30 with a celebration afterwards. Please put these dates in your diaries and come!

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](https://www.youtube.com/c/WelwynGardenCityCatholicChurches) Christmas Mass will be available from 8.30pm on Christmas Eve. There will be a Signed Mass for Christmas streamed at 8pm on Christmas Eve <https://youtu.be/EB3-h4ltpUs> On New Year's Day 9am Mass from St. Bonaventure's will be livestreamed. On Epiphany 6th January Mass will be livestreamed at 6.30am. The times for the following Sundays will be advertised on the parish website.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION Any couples wanting to marry in 2023/2024 either in WGC or elsewhere should contact Fr. Norbert to organise the paperwork. The Preparation Day will be on Saturday 18th February. It will be the whole day and end with a Blessing of Engaged Couples at 6pm Mass. Please let Fr. Norbert know if you would like to attend. Thank you.

BAPTISMS Please contact Fr. Norbert or Fr. William if you wish to arrange the Baptism of your child and they will organise all that is needed.

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.

FIRST CONFESSION & FIRST HOLY COMMUNION The first session for parents and their children is on 29th January in Our Lady's Church 3.30 - 5.00pm.

CONFIRMATION The first session for the young people will be in the Focolare Centre (Parkway) on Sunday 22nd January 3 - 5pm.

RCIA The next meeting will be in Our Lady's Church on Monday 23rd January at 7.30pm.

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.

CHAPEL at Our Lady's is closed for the holidays and will reopen on Monday 16th January. safeguarding and health and safety guidelines will be followed.

FOOD BANK Baskets are at the back of our churches for donations.

Fr. Norbert Fernandes 01707 323234
norbertfernandes@rcdow.org.uk
Our Lady's Church

Fr. William Johnstone 01707 327434
williamjohnstone@rcdow.org.uk
Holy Family Church

MASS INTENTIONS

26 Monday	10am	Our Lady	Paula Feeney (R.I.P.)
27 Tuesday	10am	St. Bonaventure	Christina O'Brien (intentions)
28 Wednesday	10am	Holy Family	Michael Donnelly
29 Thursday	10am	Holy Family	Mary Christiansen (R.I.P.)
30 Friday	10am	<u>Holy Family</u>	People of the Parishes
31 Saturday	10am	St. Bonaventure	Mary Kate Murray (intentions)
	6pm	Our Lady	James McIntyre (R.I.P.)
01 Sunday	9am	St. Bonaventure	Diana Attard (R.I.P. 5 th anniversary)
	10am	Holy Family	People of the Parish
	11am	Our Lady	People of the Parish
02 Monday	10am	Our Lady	Houlihan intentions
03 Tuesday	9.30am	St. Bonaventure	Diana Attard (R.I.P. 5 th anniversary)
	7pm	Our Lady	Tracey Laycock (R.I.P.)
04 Wednesday	9.30am	Holy Family	Rev. John Callan (R.I.P.)
05 Thursday	9.30am	Holy Family	Delaney family
06 Friday	6.30am	St. Bonaventure	
	9.30am	Holy Family	Sue Greenwood intentions
	12noon	St. Bonaventure	Diana Attard (R.I.P. 5 th anniversary)
	7pm	Our Lady	Mary Ryan (R.I.P.)
07 Saturday	10am	St. Bonaventure	William (Liam Gray) (R.I.P.)
	6pm	Our Lady	Brian Davidson (R.I.P.)
08 Sunday	8am	St. Bonaventure	Mary Frost and John Frost (R.I.P.)
	9.30am	Holy Family	Ann Grace McEvoy (R.I.P.)
	10.30am	St. Bonaventure	Prudence Finlay (R.I.P.)
	11.30am	Our Lady	Brain Sturt (R.I.P. anniversary)
	6pm	Holy Family	John Flynn (R.I.P. anniversary)
09 Monday	9.30am	Our Lady	Maurice Regan
10 Tuesday	9.30am	St. Bonaventure	Philomena Tobin (intentions)
	7pm	Our Lady	James Haughian (R.I.P.)
11 Wednesday	9.30am	Holy Family	Alice and Joe Phelan (R.I.P.)
12 Thursday	9.30am	Holy Family	Alice and Joe Phelan (R.I.P.)
13 Friday	9.30am	St. Bonaventure	
	7pm	Our Lady	Barbara Wilson (R.I.P.)
14 Saturday	10am	St. Bonaventure	Sean and Kathleen Kennedy
	6pm	Our Lady	Kathy and Edie Rand (R.I.P.)
15 Sunday	8am	St. Bonaventure	People of the Parish
	9.30am	Holy Family	Patrick McEvoy (R.I.P.)
	10.30am	St. Bonaventure	Denis O'Brien (R.I.P.)
	11.30am	Our Lady	Gerry and Rosemary Lyons and family
	6pm	Holy Family	James Dempsey (R.I.P.)
16 Monday	9.30am	Our Lady	Intentions of Susan Martin
17 Tuesday	9.30am	St. Bonaventure	
	7pm	Our Lady	Nieddu family intentions
18 Wednesday	9.30am	Holy Family	Thanksgiving to St. Jude
19 Thursday	9.30am	Holy Family	Maurice Regan
20 Friday	9.30am	St. Bonaventure	
	7pm	Our Lady	Chris Wilson (R.I.P.)
21 Saturday	10am	St. Bonaventure	Alan and Margaret Staples (intentions)
	6pm	Our Lady	Jo Neumann R.I.P. anniversary)