



OUR LADY OF LOURDES HARPENDEN

14TH DECEMBER 2025

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A)

GAUDETE SUNDAY



© Chloe Le Tissier

Parish Priest Canon Anthony Dwyer

Presbytery: 1, Kirkwick Avenue, Harpenden AL5 2QH Tel: 01582 712245

Email: anthonydwyer@rcdow.org.uk

Office Administrator & Bookkeeper Mrs Melanie Armitage

The Parish Office is open Monday to Thursday 9.30am to 12.30pm.

Telephone: 01582 712245 or email: harpenden@rcdow.org.uk

Website: www.catholicchurchharpenden.org.uk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OLoLHarpenden>

Parish Safeguarding Representative Mrs Brigid Brennan

Email: harpdensg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk Tel: 07881 785 299

Parish Pastoral Council ppc@catholicchurchharpenden.org.uk

Communications Team: comms@catholicchurchharpenden.org.uk

The Third Sunday of Advent is known as *Gaudete Sunday* – *Rejoice!* In the midst of Advent's quiet preparation, the liturgy invites us to lift our eyes and recognise that the Lord is very near. The rose-coloured candle and vestments give us a glimpse of Christmas joy breaking into our waiting.

In the first reading, the prophet Isaiah speaks to a discouraged people and promises that God will transform their desert places. The wilderness will bloom, hands will be strengthened, fears calmed, and the lame will leap for joy. Isaiah's vision is not wishful thinking but a reminder that God is always at work bringing life where we least expect it. For many of us, December can feel like a desert of its own – hectic, demanding, and emotionally draining. Isaiah tells us that even there, God's grace is quietly blossoming.

In the Gospel, John the Baptist sends his disciples to ask Jesus, "*Are you the one who is to come?*" Jesus replies not with theories but with signs: the blind see, the deaf hear, the Good News is proclaimed to the poor. Jesus' answer shows that God's presence is recognised in deeds of compassion, healing, and hope.

Advent invites us to look again at our lives through this lens. Where are we noticing small signs of God's nearness – a word of kindness, a moment of peace, an unexpected encouragement? Where might we ourselves become signs of Christ's presence for others?

Gaudete Sunday reassures us that joy is not something we manufacture; it is a gift that grows when we make room for the Lord. As Christmas approaches, may we hold fast to Isaiah's promise and Jesus' signs, and rejoice that God is indeed very close.

IN CHURCH AT CHRISTMAS



Some of you will already have had delivered to your home, by your local 'Good Neighbour', details of what is happening in church over Christmas and new year.

If you haven't yet received one of the leaflets, they can be found in the church porch. Please take a copy so that you know what is happening in church over the Christmas season.

PENITENTIAL SERVICE

The Parish Penitential Service takes place on **Thursday 18th December, at 7.30pm. Please note this is different to the date noted in the Advent/Christmas leaflet.** Celebrating Reconciliation, going to Confession, is an essential part of our preparation for Christmas. In the midst of all the other tasks on our to-do lists, Confession needs to occupy an important place, if we are to be ready to welcome the Lord at Christmas.

THANK YOU!

A big 'thank you' to everyone who helped with, and supported, the Parish Christmas Fair in any way last Saturday. The fair was a great success, and raised £2940, 50% of which will go the Parish Building Fund, and the balance to Caritas Bakhita House, which is a safe house for women who have been trafficked, enslaved or exploited, run by the Diocese of Westminster. Thank you to everyone who donated items, and to those who helped set up, clear up, and assisted on the different stalls. An enjoyable, and successful, parish event! And a particular 'thank you' also, to Marva Hall, who after 25 years of organising the Bazaar, is now handing on the reigns to others. We're very grateful to Marva, for all her good work over the years.



CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE



The Parish Christmas Carol Service will take place next Sunday, 21st December at 6.00pm. Amid the busyness of the season, it offers a welcome opportunity to pause

and reflect anew on the Christmas message through words and music. No matter how busy you may be, do make time to come and re-acquaint yourself with this lovely story. Afterwards there will be mulled wine and mince pies in the Undercroft.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS



Thank you to everyone who contributed to the collection for the Christmas flowers last weekend. If you didn't have an opportunity to contribute, last

Sunday, there is another opportunity today. There will be a collection after each Mass, and you can also donate by using the Card Machine, select Christmas Flowers. Or scan the QR code. Thank you as always for your generosity.



ADVENT 'GIVING' TREE

This Advent, help tackle hygiene poverty.



Many people in our community are forced to choose between essentials like shampoo, period products, or food, because they cannot afford them all...this is hygiene poverty. Our *Giving Tree*, located at the back of the church, next to the Repository, supports the local Hygiene Bank in providing these vital items. Pick a gift label from the tree, purchase the NEW and UNUSED item listed, and place your donation in the boxes beside the tree. **Please pop the gift label back on the tree.** Every item goes directly to local people in need,

including those supported by the Foodbank, King's Pantry, Keystage, NOAH, baby banks, women's refuges and other charities. For more information, email harpenden@thehygienebank.com. The Hygiene Bank is a volunteer-run charity (No. 1181267).

LiveSimply Quote

"If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation. There is a clear link between peacebuilding and the stewardship of creation: 'The pursuit of peace by all men and women of good will certainly be facilitated by a common acknowledgement of the inseparable relationship that exists between God, human beings, and the whole of creation.'" Pope Leo XIV

FOR THE YOUTH OF THE PARISH YOUTH FRIENDLY MASSES:

This Saturday 13th December at 6pm

The 6.00pm Mass this, Saturday, evening, is a 'Youth-Friendly' Mass. Young people are especially welcome, and are invited to participate in one of the ministries of the Mass.



LOL YOUTH GROUP:

**This Saturday 13th December
after the Youth Mass**

After the 'Youth-Friendly' Mass this evening the youth group will be meeting in the Undercroft. Those in the Confirmation Group, and in year 10, and above, are welcome for some food, some fun and some faith sharing time together.

**WEAR YOUR CHRISTMAS JUMPER OR
ACCESSORIES FOR A FESTIVE YOUTH
GROUP**

CHRISTMAS WITH YOUR PARISH FRIENDS

60 people have already booked for **A CHRISTMAS WITH PARISH FRIENDS** on 17 December at Harpenden Golf Club, Redbourn Lane. Dara Fernandez will play his saxophone before we sit down for dinner at 7:30pm to enjoy a two-course Christmas meal with wine followed by mince pies. Afterwards the 15 strong Monday Choir will perform and then lead the carol singing. There will take be a raffle to support the purchase of a new church defibrillator. Tickets: £40. Dress code: Smart casual. It will be a great night, and a warm welcome is assured, so book one or more tickets by emailing straight away to dennis@denniscooper.uk

CHILDREN'S NATIVITY 5PM CHRISTMAS EVE

This service will be at 5.00pm on Christmas Eve, and is a lovely reminder to the children about the reasons for celebrating this great feast. This year we are dramatising the story "Child of Bethlehem" which will be read by an adult, but we do need a cast of many - (shepherds, angels, wisemen, townsfolk etc.) So, if you would like your child to take part please come to the rehearsal in church on Tuesday 23rd December at 10:00am to 12.30pm, when we will be reading the story to the children and asking for them to take various parts (There are no speaking parts!) Your child does need to be at this rehearsal to take part on Christmas Eve. We have some costumes, but if you have anything suitable then they would be most useful. The children need to be primary school age and if they are taking part in the nativity they will need to be in church at 4.30pm on Christmas Eve. Please let us know as soon as possible if they would like to take part, in the Nativity Service contact Ginny St John Glew, 01582 620322 or email ginny.sjg@gmail.com



NB: Please remember to send your child with a drink and a nut-free biscuit when they attend the rehearsal on Tuesday, 23rd December.

ALTAR SERVERS

As usual, we will need Altar Servers for the various Christmas Masses. To indicate your availability please sign the sheet in the Sacristy. Don't forget that on December 26th, Mass is celebrated at 10.00am, in honour of St Stephen, patron saint of Altar Servers.

CHRISTMAS DAY FAMILY MASS

The Christmas Family Mass, on Christmas Day, at 9.45am, children are

invited to come to Mass dressed as nativity characters. For those without nativity outfits,

there will be paper crowns

available, on arrival. The children will also be invited to stand on the Sanctuary steps to sing Away in a Manger. If your child would like to be involved in the Mass (reading, acting, helping in some way), please contact Marion on 07751504083.



THANK YOU!

Thank you very much for your recent contributions, for the Sick and Retired Priests of our Diocese. £2,030 has been donated. If you haven't yet made a contribution, but wish to do so, it is not too late. Contributions can be handed into the Parish Office. If you wish to 'Gift-Aid' your contribution, please use a donation envelope. Your support for this fund is greatly appreciated, and is very important, as it helps to provide care for the 73 retired priests, which last year cost £1,270,000.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY

The purpose of Children's Liturgy of the Word, is twofold, it is for the benefit of both children and parents. It's purpose is to communicate the Gospel Readings to

children, of school age, at a level appropriate to them, and also to allow the parents, to remain in church, in order that they can participate in the Mass, as fully as possible. Therefore, we ask that:

- Only children in Reception Class, and above, participate in the Children's liturgy.
- Parents remain in church, to participate in the Mass, while the children are adequately cared for by the Catechists.

SWITCH OFF!

We're fortunate that phones rarely ring during Mass—most people remember to switch off, and it's appreciated. But it's still distracting when someone leaves to take a call and then returns. It gives the impression that the caller is more important than the God we've come to worship. Mass lasts less than an hour a week; let's keep our priorities in order.

CHRISTMAS IN THE REPOSITORY



CHRISTMAS IN THE REPOSITORY

Thank you to everyone that has supported the Repository over the last year, there are still a few Christmas items for those last-minute shoppers, do pop in and have a look.

We have now re stocked with more beautiful Nativity Cribs & figures and a wide selection of Christmas cards, before you go to the High Street, come and see what we have to offer.

CHRISTMAS DONATIONS NEEDED FOR NOAH & KEYSTAGE HOUSING

From November 22nd to December 13th, we kindly ask for donations to support the residents of Keystage Housing and Noah. Please consider donating any of the following items:

- Women's and Men's Socks (new)
- Winter Hats and Gloves
- Winter Jackets
- Sleeping Bags
- Toiletries such as deodorant and shaving items
- Chocolate Orange or a small box of Maltesers

Our Parish Youth Group will be wrapping all donated items on 13th December.

Please leave your donations in the yellow bin in the church courtyard. Thank you in advance for your generosity and kindness.

ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

is delighted to share that we are recruiting for Clerks at two of our schools, St Dominic in Harpenden and St Bernadette in London Colney. This is an excellent opportunity for professional development and to support your local Catholic community, in a role that offers flexibility. If you are interested taking on either one or both of the roles, please see information using the link below or contact the Director of Governance and Compliance, Christina Reffold, at governance@ascat.co.uk <https://www.eteach.com/careers/ascatonline/>

ST DOMINIC'S RECEPTION ADMISSIONS The Admissions process for Reception places for September 2026 will open soon. If you would like a tour of the school for entry into Reception 2026, please contact the school office on 01582 760047.

For more information please see the school website <https://www.stdominic.herts.sch.uk> **Canon Dwyer will be available to discuss the possibility of signing form Monday 8th**

December. Please call the Parish Office to book an appointment.

PLACES AVAILABLE AT ST DOMINIC'S

St Dominic Catholic Primary School has spaces available in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 classes for the current academic year and welcomes enquiries from parents of children who are interested in a rounded catholic education that includes academic, religious and social skills. St Dominic's has **recently been assessed by OFSTED and rated as OUTSTANDING. Please contact school office on 01582 760047 to arrange visit.**

NEW PARISHIONERS

If you are new to the Parish You Are Very WELCOME. If you would like to register with us please click on the link and complete the registration form

<https://www.catholicchurchharpenden.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Parishioners-Registration-Form-2025.pdf>

Completed forms can be emailed or posted into the Parish Office.

harpenden@rcdow.org.uk



FROM THE PARISH OFFICE

Any notices for the Newsletter please email the Parish office by lunchtime on Wednesday Thank You.



"JOIN IN WITH THE FINAL HYMN!"



Children at the 9:45am Family Mass are welcome to join the music group for the final hymn. Make your way to the back of the church after the announcements with your hymn book and helpers will be handing out percussion instruments. Children there for a First Holy Communion meeting please stay at your seats with the catechists and sing extra loudly! We also welcome singers and

instrumentalists to help on an ad hoc or regular basis. Please come and speak to us after Mass or contact Catherine Roche on catherine2.roche@gmail.com for more details."

GETTING MARRIED?

Couples intending to marry are required by the Diocese to give at least six months' notice. Pre-marriage preparation offers an important opportunity to reflect not only on the wedding day itself, but on the lifelong commitment of marriage, as well as to look at the other necessary arrangements. Anyone hoping to marry within the next year should contact Canon Dwyer as soon as possible. If you know of any couples planning to marry in the coming year, please draw their attention to this notice.



THE HARDYNGE CHOIR

MONDAY, 15TH DECEMBER, 8PM AT ST JOHN'S CHURCH, HARPENDEN

The Hardyng Choir celebrate Christmas with a selection of carols for Choir and Audience, followed by seasonal refreshments in the Church Hall.

Adults £18, Students £9, Under-16's free
Supporting Earthworks St Albans.

LIVING IN AN AI WORLD

Do you want to know more about how AI will affect you in the coming years.? If so come and listen to a talk by Canon Tim Ball, a lively and interesting speaker, who will be giving this talk at Ss Alban and Stephen's Church Hall, 14 Beaconsfield Road, Saturday January 17th at 11.00am. Organised by the Herts Circle of the Newman Association
Contact Janet Evers if you need a lift on janet.evers1938@gmail.com

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 13th December 6pm

Youth Friendly Mass & Youth Group

Thursday 18th December

Advent Penitential Service at 7.30pm

Sunday 21st December 6pm

Carols by Candlelight

Tuesday 23rd December

Rehearsal for the children's Nativity
10am – 12.30pm in Church

Wednesday 24th December

Children's Nativity Play at 5pm

**Season of Advent & Christmas
Details in the Advent & Christmas
Leaflet**

MASS INTENTIONS		
<div>Sat 13th Dec</div> <div>Youth Friendly Mass</div> <div>Vigil Mass 6.00pm</div>	<div>Saint Lucy, Virgin & Martyr</div> <div>THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A)</div> <div>Gaudete Sunday</div> <div>Confirmation Enrolment Mass</div> <div>Patsy McGee RIP (Recently Deceased)</div>	<div>PLEASE PRAY FOR:</div> <div>Recently Deceased</div> <div>Patsy McGee RIP</div> <div>Elizabeth Grimes RIP</div> <div>Sr Lucia Rei OP RIP</div> <div>RIP Anniversaries</div> <div>Agnes Kelly RIP</div> <div>Prayer for the Faithful Departed</div> <div>Loving God,</div> <div>we remember those who have died.</div> <div>Grant them the peace of Christ,</div> <div>and let Your perpetual light shine upon them.</div> <div>Comfort all who mourn</div> <div>and strengthen our hope in the resurrection.</div> <div>Amen.</div>
<div>Sun 14th Dec</div> <div>8.30am</div> <div>9.45am</div> <div>11.30am</div>	<div>Jim Feeney RIP</div> <div>People of the Parish</div> <div>Teresa Metcalfe RIP</div> <div>Zoom Code 883 7014 5568</div>	
<div>Mon 15th Dec</div> <div>9.15am</div>	<div>Advent Feria</div> <div>Mary Cannon (Special Intentions)</div>	
<div>Tues 16th Dec</div> <div>9.15am</div>	<div>Advent Feria</div> <div>Elizabeth Grimes RIP (Recently Deceased)</div>	
<div>Wed 17th Dec</div> <div>9.15am</div>	<div>Advent Feria</div> <div>Sr. Lucia Rei OP RIP (Recently Deceased)</div>	
<div>Thur 18th Dec</div> <div>11.00am</div>	<div>Advent Feria</div> <div>Agnes Kelly RIP (Anniversary)</div>	
<div>Fri 19th Dec</div>	<div>Advent Feria</div>	
<div>Sat 20th Dec</div> <div>Vigil Mass 6.00pm</div>	<div>Advent Feria</div> <div>FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A)</div> <div>Deceased members of the Kelly Family RIP</div>	
<div>Sun 21st Dec</div> <div>8.30am</div> <div>9.45am</div> <div>11.30am</div>	<div>People of the Parish</div> <div>Bernard St John Glew RIP</div> <div>Kathleen Porter RIP (Anniversary)</div> <div>Zoom Code 883 7014 5568</div>	
<div>CONFESSIONS</div> <div>SATURDAYS 10.30AM – 11.00AM & AFTER THE 6.00PM VIGIL MASS</div>		