

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

ST MICHAEL'S SERVICE OF RECONCILIATION

WITH PERSONAL CONFESSION

This Monday 16th December, 7pm

ADVENT REFLECTION

The final reflection led by Deacon Brian will be this Thursday 19th December at 7pm in Church

The Nativity through the eyes of Matthew, Luke and John. What about Mark?

Do come and join in as we prepare for Christmas
If you have a Bible or New Testament please do bring it with you.

MASS OF THANKSGIVING

On the 12th January at 10.30am we will have a Mass of thanksgiving for Fr Michael Sharkey's pastoral care of our parish.

Please save the date.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY.

St Michael's will be hosting next year's Unity Service for the local Christian community at 6pm, Sunday 19th January.

YOUTH MASS

Every third Sunday of the month during term time

ST MARTIN'S CAROL SERVICE WILL NOW BE HELD AT ST MARTIN'S

2025 PARISH QUIZ WITH FISH AND CHIP SUPPER

Date to be confirmed

CHRISTMAS MASS CARDS

with details of all Services over the Christmas period
are available now at the back of Church

Thought for the week Third Sunday of Advent 15th December, 2024

Christmas approaches. The season of Advent is short, and we are already more than halfway through. Blink and it will be Boxing Day. So let's not blink, but continue to make progress slowly through what remains of Advent, with eyes wide open, as Fr Michael urged us on the first Sunday of the season.

Life is fast enough. We don't need more speed. Christmas is busy, and there's always so much to do to prepare – shopping, sending cards, baking, buying the Christmas tree, wrapping presents, filling stockings. When it comes to the material preparation we are well drilled – we know what to do and how to do it; even if it all seems to be a bit last minute.

But what about the non-material preparation? How should we prepare our hearts to receive the Word with simplicity and joy? How can we best prepare to experience Christmas, the coming of Jesus, in a childlike way, open to the gifts only He can bestow?

The figure of John the Baptist is unsettling and perhaps a bit too counter-cultural for us to relate to. The picture history presents - wild hair, torn clothes, ageing sandals and fiery preaching – is off putting. His message is stark and uncompromising. Repent or face God's wrath. Quite a contrast with the spend-your-way-to-happiness-this-Christmas images which surround us on the High Street and on social media.

Somewhere between these two extremes we still have time to create the space, in our hearts, in our homes, in the parish, and elsewhere, for a balanced and generous-hearted approach to our final week of preparation: honouring John's call to prepare our hearts to receive the Jesus who comes among us, and opening ourselves up, amidst all the pain and suffering of our world, to the possibility of experiencing childlike joy in all the simple pleasures we hope to enjoy, wherever we find ourselves, this Christmas.

Today is Gaudete Sunday so let's rejoice because, as Zephaniah, Paul and John all say in their different ways: '*the Lord is near*'.

A Parishioner



We ask you please, to pray for the following people who need your prayers:

Please pray for Rogan, (Peter Halter's sister Jean's great grandson) whose Leukaemia has returned and very sadly they say nothing more can be done. Prayers are needed more than ever now. Please also pray for Jean herself who has macular degeneration.

Please pray for Mary Edwards who is awaiting knee surgery and for her son Ian who is unwell.

Thank you for your continued prayers for Robert Brooks who is now undergoing chemotherapy and awaiting further blood test results

Thank you for all your prayers for Joe Bunton who is transitioning into a care home and continues to need our prayers as he lives with Tuberous Sclerosis, Epilepsy and Autism with Severe learning difficulties. These conditions present huge challenges to his life.

Please Pray for Maria McNamara's niece who is undergoing chemotherapy. Her name is Alison Flynn née McNamara.

Please pray for Savanna Clark (aged 3 with eye trouble).

Please pray for Isobel Messenger (Vera Bird's great granddaughter) she has now had her operation to improve her hearing.

Please pray for Mary Hagger.

Please pray for Vivien Kear (Krissie's friend) who has cancer.

Please pray for Vera Bird's Great, Great Grandson Harry.

Prayers please for Antonita's nephew Peppin who has long covid.

Please pray for the children and staff at St Martin's school

Please pray for our parishioners in St Luke's and Abbeycrest Nursing Homes



Please also remember in your prayers those whose anniversaries occur at this time including;

Albert Eeckelaers, Lesley Farquhar, Margaret Hall, Reg Adams, Margaret Allison, Mr Wojciech Motyka, Simon Barrow, Bill Condon, Agnes Creighton, Alfred May, Barbara Small, Peter Ellison, Bridget Mullaniff, George Raynard, Sheila Wright, Abigail Gonzalez, Eamonn and Nancey Keogh, Nan and Lawrence Maxwell