



**PRAY  
FOR  
THE  
SICK**

**Anniversaries:**

Arthur Finch, Patrick White, Margaret Allcorn, Johanna (Judy) Gilmartin, Alicia Grover, Henry Hughes, Raymond Hynes, Eleanor O'Sullivan, Charles Kairis, Sr. Marie Murphy, Victoria Thompson, John Mill, Ivy White, Rosalind Burton, May Tudisca, Ellen Coyle, Virginia Crook, Doris L'Estrange, Reginald Allen, Augustinho DeFreitas, Edmund Jarman, Gemma McManus

**Supporting Carers & others  
in our Community**

**Monday 16th December  
11—1pm**

Please join us for Coffee, mince pies and a friendly chat in the Henrietta Suite. All Welcome



**Girls Guides at St  
Thomas'  
Need your help to continue**

Our Brownies (ages 7 to 10) meet on Tuesdays and our Guides (Ages 10-14) on Fridays. **Without a new leader** one of these groups will close next April. As a unit leader, you'll run the unit, lead a team of volunteers, and plan and deliver a programme of activities. You will be supported and receive training on everything from planning activities to child safety. If you have the skills to help girls achieve whatever they want and would like more information please email [15thbrownieswoodford@gmail.com](mailto:15thbrownieswoodford@gmail.com)

**Christmas Masses**



**24th December**  
*3pm, 6pm 10pm at St Thomas*  
*9pm Chigwell*

**25th December**  
*8.30am, 10am & 11.30am St Thomas*  
*10am Chigwell*

The collections at all the masses during Christmas will be for the Friars, if you wish your donation to be gift aided, please collect an envelope from the back of the Church

Health and Safety of church goers is an important parish ministry. This involves the prevention of over-crowding and ensuring fire and evacuation routes are kept clear during all Masses. Last Christmas at the 3pm Mass we had to manage over attendance asking people not to block exits while working hard not to prevent people from attending the Mass. We wish to make Christmas Mass attendance a safe and comfortable experience and that is why there is availability of 8 different masses for you to choose from.

Please also consider walking to Church as the car park is likely to be very busy

**Reconciliation Service 17th December**  
will take place at St Thomas' at 7.30pm



**ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY**  
Woodford Green  
A FAIRTRADE PARISH



Parish Office: 020 8504 1686 Website: [www.stthomaswoodford.org](http://www.stthomaswoodford.org)  
Friary: 020 8504 1688 Facebook: @STOCWoodford  
Email: [parishoffice@stthomaswoodford.org](mailto:parishoffice@stthomaswoodford.org) Twitter: @STOCWoodford



**Third Sunday of Advent (C)**  
**15th December 2024**

Please note the nearest Fire Exit to you whilst you are in the Church

We are reminded by Saint Paul that "The Lord is very near". As pilgrims, hopefully awaiting his coming in the incarnation, we gather to celebrate the Eucharist, praying that the peace of God will guard our hearts in Christ Jesus.

**First Reading** Zephaniah 3:14-18

The day of the Lord's coming is a day of great rejoicing that will see evil expelled and the world renewed in the presence of the Lord.

**Second Reading** Philippians 4:4-7

The early Christian Church is encouraged to live model lives as they immanently await with hope the Lord's return.

**Gospel** Luke 3:1-18

With hopeful expectation, John guides the people to prepare themselves by putting aside the passing world.



**Responsorial Psalm**

Shout aloud and sing praise, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel

## JOHN THE BAPTIST AND THE LIFE OF PRAYER

In the coming of Jubilee, we will be asked to renew prayer in our lives. The late Pope Benedict holds up John the Baptist as man of prayer:-  
John the Baptist did not limit himself to teaching repentance or conversion. Instead, in recognizing Jesus as the "Lamb of God" who came to take away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29), he had the profound humility to hold up Jesus as the One sent by God, drawing back so that he might take the lead, and be heard and followed. As his last act the Baptist witnessed with his blood to faithfulness to God's commandments, without giving in or withdrawing, carrying out his mission to the very end. In the 9th century the Venerable Bede says in one of his Homilies: "St John gave his life for [Christ]. He was not ordered to deny Jesus Christ, but was ordered to keep silent about the truth" (cf. *Homily 23*: CCL 122, 354). And he did not keep silent about the truth and thus died for Christ who is the Truth. Precisely for love of the truth he did not stoop to compromises and did not fear to address strong words to anyone who had strayed from God's path. We see this great figure, this force in the Passion, in resistance to the powerful. We wonder: what gave birth to this life, to this interiority so strong, so upright, so consistent, spent so totally for God in preparing the way for Jesus? The answer is simple: it was born from the relationship with God, from prayer, which was the thread that guided him throughout his existence. John was the divine gift for which his parents Zechariah and Elizabeth had been praying for so many years (cf. Lk 1:13); a great gift, humanly impossible to hope for, because they were both advanced in years and Elizabeth was barren (cf. Lk 1:7); yet nothing is impossible to God (cf. Lk 1:36).

The announcement of this birth happened precisely in the place of prayer, in the temple of Jerusalem, indeed it happened when Zechariah had the great privilege of entering the holiest place in the temple to offer incense to the Lord (cf. Lk 1:8-20). John the Baptist's birth was also marked by prayer: the *Benedictus*, the hymn of joy, praise and thanksgiving which Zechariah raises to the Lord and which we recite every morning in Lauds, exalts God's action in history and prophetically indicates the mission of their son John: to go before the Son of God made flesh to prepare his ways (cf. Lk 1:67-79).  
The entire existence of the Forerunner of Jesus was nourished by his relationship with God, particularly the period he spent in desert regions (cf. Lk 1:80). The desert regions are places of temptation but also where man acquires a sense of his own poverty because once deprived of material support and security, he understands that the only steadfast reference point is God himself. John the Baptist, however, is not only a man of prayer, in permanent contact with God, but also a guide in this relationship. The Evangelist Luke, recalling the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples, the *Our Father*, notes that the request was formulated by the disciples in these words: "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his own disciples" (cf. Lk 11:1).

### Sundays Ecumenical Service

This was a very good act of worship which was well prepared and carried out with dignity. People commented on the warm welcome and despite Darragh's effort to keep us indoors, there was a good turnout. The retiring collection raised £900 for Mary's Meals & Malachi Place. Well done everyone



## Mass Intentions

### Sunday 15th December

8.30 Mrs Maureen Porter RIP  
10 Sally & Norman Picton  
wedding anniversary  
11.30 Anniversaries of Lopez family  
Chigwell Nellie McCarthy

### Monday 16th December

Josephine Mbuagbaw, Irene Chisey  
Craig Lobo anniversary  
Vanessa Regressado birthday

### Tuesday 17th December

Donald Raecke RIP  
Angela Byrne RIP  
Luke Santini RIP

### Wednesday 18th December

Nellie McCarthy  
Paul Trim RIP  
Elizabeth & James Sheehan in memory

### Thursday 19th December

Maureen Dalton RIP  
Larry & Judy Murphy RIP  
Hazel Haliburn surgery

### Friday 20th December

Stephen Aherne anniversary  
Intentions E Musonza  
Bro Raymond anniversary  
Brian Correya

### Saturday 21st December

10 am Mary Gaffney sick  
6 pm Mary Loughran

### Sunday 22nd December

8.30 Jane Brandon intentions  
10 Mary Ndoping, Patience Ndi  
11.30 Yvonne & Paul Crighton  
Chigwell Michael Kilkenny

**Church Cleaning**  
**Saturday 21st December at 10.30am**  
Bernie Siggins, Rachel Woolf &  
Kathleen Mahoney

### The Young Vinnies (SVP)

Got together on Tuesday afternoon after school bringing items that they had bought with their own money to provide Christmas gifts for not so well off people. The Clare room looked a right mess with scattered gifts but with hard work the young people sorted it all into attractive packages. They would also like to thank the parish for a wonderful response to the appeal for Christmas gifts for families in Redbridge in need. The Young Vinnies packaged them and gave them to The Redbridge Salvation Army and the Orchard Children's centre for distribution, thank you!

### Christmas Fayre

We are pleased to report that the fayre raised over £2900.00. It was a great day enjoyed by all. Thank you once again.

### Christmas Masses

Many thanks to all who offered their services last weekend, especially those who offered to help out at more than one mass. The provisional rotas are on the table at the back of the church. We still need a lot of help across all the masses, these are highlighted in red on the rota (there is an awful lot of red on the 10am Christmas Day mass!). If you can help with any of these "vacancies" please add your name to the rota. We are very keen to involve our children at both the 3pm and 10am masses and we are looking for young readers (year 4 and above), if you would like to be considered, please add your name to the separate sheet also located on the table.