

# ST AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH

## ADVENT 2018



### Pause for Thought



In the months and weeks leading up to Christmas Eve we are bombarded with things we MUST do or MUST buy in order to have a 'perfect' Christmas. A perfect family Christmas is held up as the 'ideal' we should strive to achieve. This year, why not hit the PAUSE button  and take a break from all this busyness and hype.

Come along to one or all of our late afternoon Advent services which start at 4 pm. They don't last very long, usually about 30 minutes or so. The church will be dimly lit, with candles providing a gentle light. Sit back and listen to timeless readings and sing beautiful Advent carols. Reflect and focus on what is TRULY important at this time – preparing ourselves for the coming of Christ.

Each service is organised by a different group and is outlined in this booklet. They each have a different focus. But one thing they have in common is that all three services will soothe your soul, still your mind and help you prepare for the birth of Christ. Why not put the dates in your diary and join us?

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent – 2<sup>nd</sup> December

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent – 9<sup>th</sup> December

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent – 16<sup>th</sup> December

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent the Parish Reconciliation Service is at 7.15pm.

After the afternoon services there's time for refreshments and a chat with your fellow parishioners in the Hall.



### Holding Hands with God

The readings of Isaiah are so moving during Advent, calling us to consider our relationship with God in new ways. Isaiah invites us to consider a relationship with God on a very deep and personal level, to feel comforted, loved and protected. Isaiah offers us a God who rejoices in us and celebrates us with banquets of rich wines and choice food. There is a constant exhortation not to be afraid.

*I am the LORD, your God,  
who grasp your right hand;  
It is I who say to you, "Fear not,  
I will help you." Isaiah 41:13*

I have read these words every Advent for years, focused on the words, "Fear not." But one morning as I looked at this passage, I noticed the beginning of it: "*I am the Lord, your God who grasp your right hand.*" It was fairly specific. Not that I was reaching out to God, but that God was reaching out to me - and grasping me by my right hand. How wonderful. I relaxed into that image and tried to picture that. What would it be like to have God hold my right hand? Terrible! I couldn't do anything!

I am right-handed and if God is holding onto it, how would I get all of my things done? I am a busy, busy person (sometimes so busy that I am coming and going at the same time). With my right hand un-usable, I couldn't drive, use the computer or grab my mobile phone. If I really ponder the image of the Lord grasping my right hand, it takes me several minutes to get beyond, "I can't get anything done!" Then I pause in my mental distress and hold this dilemma up to God as an offering: "What now, God?" *I am the LORD, your God, who grasp your right hand ... I will help you.*

I can see that the passage means that I can't do it all *alone*. I am strong, busy, independent and apparently somewhat arrogant. I want to do it all myself. How do I share my life and my work with a God who at the moment seems to be hampering my progress? That's where the Isaiah reading adds, "*It is I who say to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'*" I really, really don't have to do it alone. I can step off my self-imposed pedestal and join the rest of the human race in asking for help.

I can ask God every morning to open my heart in new ways for the freedom to accept what God wants for me - not what I want for me. I can realize that God stands ready, cherishing me every moment, holding my hand and offering me a banquet.

By Maureen M. Waldron. Taken from Creighton University's Online Ministries' Praying Advent web site, used with permission.  
<http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Advent/>

# The First Sunday of Advent at St. Augustine's

by Matthew Donnelly

4.00 pm Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> December



The most memorable moments of joy, elation and delight are always those we least expect. They harbour that quality of the divine which brings with it awe and wonder. Indeed, our happiness abounds when we are surprised by good news; news that is unexpected and least anticipated, especially when it breaks through the monotony of the mundane and gloomy.

Without realising it, our faith all too often takes the form of a stoic resilience to an over-demanding and oppressive world and yet we are called to joy as Jesus reminds us, "I tell you these things so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete." (John 15:11)

The season of advent is both penitential and joyful. It aims at turning our prejudices inside out by reforming hearts and minds, so that we can better appreciate and enjoy the unexpected news that God embodies our humanity in Jesus; to console and save His people by inhabiting this world, and to be with us in sharing our human experience to the point of being born in a stable and dying for us on the cross.

We get the feeling that we should be experiencing joy but it doesn't come naturally. Indeed, Joy is a gift to ask for in prayer, it is essential to our spiritual well being, and its deepest manifestation is that abiding consolation of the truth that we are loved and that God is near, indeed, abiding within our very selves and especially through the Eucharist and through the sacrament of reconciliation.

It is the supreme paradox of our faith that true joy coexists with redemptive suffering, that when we suffer alongside Christ in the trials of life and the burden of our fallen nature, we experience an explicable joy, an unexpected and consoling peace that the world cannot give. (John 14:27)

*Lord increase our faith in your abiding presence even in the midst of suffering, the faith that brings joy, the experience of joy at your birth, even though we find it in the squalor, poverty and gloom of the stable.*



## **Come, Lord Jesus**

Advent is a time to recognize both our holy longing and the healing love God has for us, despite the many barriers we put up between ourselves and God. We can start simply and just rest at the edge of our beds in the mornings, open our hands and whisper, "**Come, Lord Jesus!**" If we let ourselves feel what is in our hearts, we know they are filled with love. We can carry that experience with us as we go through even the busiest of our days. We may not know exactly where to begin or how to fill this longing in our hearts but it is simple. God waits with infinite love and with arms outstretched to meet us. The words we say don't matter. We can speak as if God is a friend we have not seen in a long time, but one with whom we can sit in a comfortable silence.

It's just about taking the first step. Even if we are fearful about this next step, we can say to God what is in our hearts. In this Advent season, it's time to risk, to make the first step, to find our way back home.

Loving God, I don't have the right words. I'm not sure where to begin, but I know you are the hope and promise of the peace to come in my life. Be with me this day. Let me look at my life and my day today and open my heart completely as I begin, "**Come, Lord Jesus.**"

Taken from Creighton University's Online Ministries' Praying Advent web site, used with permission. <http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Advent/>

## **A PRAYER FOR ADVENT**

May this eternal truth be always on our hearts.

That the God who breathed this world into being.

Placed stars into the heavens.

And designed a butterfly's wing.

Is the God who entrusted his life to the care of ordinary people

became vulnerable that we might know how strong is the power of Love.

A mystery so deep it is impossible to grasp.

A mystery so beautiful it is impossible to ignore.

Read more at:

<http://www.faithandworship.com>

## **Take some time to reflect this Advent**



Advent is a very special season of the year – and yet it can sometimes pass us by, because we're so busy preparing for Christmas. For the past couple of years, our diocesan Spirituality Commission has produced a series of short daily emails, to help us focus on the true meaning of Advent. These have been very well received, so we would like to make more people aware of them. To sign up, please visit [www.southwarkdsc.org.uk](http://www.southwarkdsc.org.uk)

## Second Sunday of Advent - Cloth for the Cradle

by Nick Pointer

4.00 pm Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> December



I have to confess that I'm not given to rush. I like to take my time over matters. It's not that I am particularly lazy, lethargic or indecisive, but swimming around the shallow end of my gene pool is a large DNA shoal of patience. This allows me to ponder and mull, reflect and consider. I am aware that certain individuals consider this trait exasperating, and, although it's hard to believe, find me, at times, frustrating. However, it is probably the reason why Advent sits so comfortably in my heart and soul.

Advent, a period of time where we are asked to be patient; to prepare, and to wait. The object behind these series of Advent Liturgies is to halt the rush towards Christmas and give us that time to ponder, mull, reflect and consider.

'Cloth for the Cradle', an Advent Liturgy for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent, will echo and resound with the central theme of waiting. Waiting for Christ to come, waiting for Christ to come again. Containing a series of contemporary readings, intercessions, prayer and song, 'Cloth for the Cradle' concludes with a symbolic action that prepares a makeshift crib for the Christ-child : ' O Come, O Come, Emmanuel...'



## Third Sunday of Advent, Rejoice, Gaudete Sunday

by The Evangelisation Team

4.00 pm Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> December



In Advent, the third Sunday is called "Gaudete" Sunday, Gaudete means "Rejoice". After the penitential focus of the first few weeks, the theme of the readings is one of celebration as we anticipate the birth of Jesus. Therefore on Gaudete Sunday we rejoice in anticipation of the coming of Christ. The colour during the weeks of Advent is purple except for the third Sunday. When we light the third candle of the Advent wreath it is the only Rose coloured one. Celebrant vestments for this day are also Rose coloured.

In this service, we celebrate the richness of our faith through recitations of the O Antiphons. These Antiphons were written by monks in the seventh century and each one would be sung on a different day to herald the coming of Christ. They are:

O Sapientia (O Wisdom)  
O Adonai (O Lord)  
O Radix Jesse (O Root of Jesse)  
O Clavis David (O Key of David)  
O Oriens (O Dayspring)  
O Rex Gentium (O King of the nations)  
O Emmanuel (O With Us is God)

A curious feature of these antiphons is that the first letter of each invocation may be taken from the Latin to form an acrostic in reverse. So the first letters of Sapientia, Adonai, Radix, Clavis, Oriens, Rex, and Emmanuel, provide the Latin words: ERO CRAS . The phrase spells out the response of Christ himself to the heartfelt prayer of his people: "Tomorrow I will be there".

As with previous years a pictorial representation of the Antiphon will be presented and a candle will be lit before the Antiphon recitation. The Antiphons will be read and then they will be repeated by the congregation. This is followed by a Scripture reading and reflection. We urge you to come along and take this opportunity to celebrate together with your fellow parishioners and build upon one of the church's richest traditions.

We would especially welcome any children who would like to be involved – as in previous years they would lead the procession into the church and assist in carrying candles during the service. If you would like your child to take part please either give details to the office or email [jpaullambert@virginmedia.com](mailto:jpaullambert@virginmedia.com).

Come, Lord Jesus! Come and visit your people.

We await your coming. Come, O Lord.

# Fourth Sunday of Advent - Parish Reconciliation Service by Jo Storr

7.15 pm Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> December



Could you do with a divine pick me up, a close encounter with God to help you prepare for Christmas? If you're a bit wary and not sure you could actually admit your failings to anyone, never mind a priest..... because what will they think of me.....? Would it help if you knew that they were simply filled with a deep joy: You have come humbly to tell Jesus about the things that bother you, asking trustfully for his forgiveness. A perfect way to use the gifts the Christ Child brought us at his birth. Forget decorating your home with cheery Father Christmases; just say yes to engaging with the new life he brings us.

You haven't celebrated this beautiful, tender Sacrament for a while? Then you might find it easier to come to the special Reconciliation Service at St Augustine's on Sunday December 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7.15 pm. About six priests attend, making it possible to choose one you don't know, and doesn't know you! Finally, don't worry about remembering the right prayers or formula either because you will be guided through.

It will be so good if you can come along -hope to see you there!



## ADVENT LITURGIES

**SUNDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec - 1st Sunday of Advent**

4.00 pm Advent Liturgy

**SUNDAY 9<sup>th</sup> Dec - 2nd Sunday of Advent**

4.00 pm Cloth for the Cradle

**SUNDAY 16<sup>th</sup> Dec - 3rd Sunday of Advent**

4.00 pm Gaudete Sunday

## RECONCILIATION

**SATURDAY 15<sup>th</sup> Dec - Reconciliation (Usual times)**

10.30 am - 11.30 pm & 4.30 pm - 5.15 pm

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec, extended times for reconciliation from 10.30 am - 11.45 p.m. and from 4 to 5 pm**

**SUNDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> Dec 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent**

7.15 pm Service of Reconciliation with several priests available.

All Mass times for Christmas are displayed in the next column.

Please note that weekday Mass will only be celebrated at 10 am between Christmas & New Year.

**NO EARLY MORNING MASS UNTIL Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> JANUARY.**

The Church will open shortly before Mass and the office will be open for an hour after Mass.

Adoration ends Friday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2018, restarts Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2019.

## CHRISTMAS MASSES

**MONDAY 24<sup>th</sup>**

5.30 pm

9.30 pm

10.00 pm

**Christmas Eve**

**First Mass of Christmas with carols**

**Carols and Readings before**

**Mass with carols**

Children at all Masses celebrated on Christmas Eve will be asked to bring the infant Jesus from their cribs for blessing

**TUESDAY 25<sup>th</sup>**

8.00 am

9.30 am

11.30 am

6.30 pm

7.30 pm

**Christmas Day**

**Mass**

**Family Mass**

**Mass with carols**

**Confessions in Polish**

**Mass in Polish**

**MSZA SW godz 19.30**

**WEDNESDAY 26<sup>th</sup>**

11.00 am

**St Stephen**

**Servers' Mass to welcome new servers and rededicate our current servers. All parishioners welcome**

**SATURDAY 29<sup>th</sup>**

10.00 am

5.30 pm

**No Reconciliation today**

**Mass**

**Vigil Mass**

**SUNDAY 30<sup>th</sup>**

8.00 am

9.30 am

11.15 am

5.45 pm

**Mass**

**Family Mass**

**Sung Mass**

**Mass**

**TUESDAY 1<sup>st</sup> Jan**

11.00 am

2.00 pm

**Mary, Mother of God**

**Mass (no early morning Mass)**

**Filipino Sta Nino Thanksgiving Mass & Fatima Service. All Welcome.**

## CONTACTS

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**Please take me home  
and keep me for  
Christmas**

