



# Newsletter

A light of hope shines in the darkness



For the salvation of the whole world

December 2020

30p

# December Calendar

Public worship resumes from 2 December, and Masses for that week are:  
Wed 2<sup>nd</sup>, 11.30am; Thu 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10am; Fri 4<sup>th</sup>, 11am; Sat 5<sup>th</sup>, 10am.

The Mass obligation remains suspended so no-one has to attend the Mass and you MUST NOT attend church if you are unwell in any way. Attendance at all Sunday Masses must be pre-booked with Father Dane.

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## 6 Second Sunday of Advent

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Weekday Masses at the usual times this week.

8 Tues	<b>IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF OUR LADY</b>	Mass, 7pm
12 Sat	<b>FEAST OF DEDICATION</b>	Mass, 10am

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## 13 Third Sunday of Advent

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Weekday Masses at the usual times this week.

17 Thu	<i>O Sapientia</i>	Mass, 10am
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## 20 Fourth Sunday of Advent

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Alterations to Mass timings this week. NATIVITY STORY SERVICE, FIRST MASS OF CHRISTMAS & CHRISTMAS DAY MUST ALL BE PRE-BOOKED WITH FATHER DANE.

22 Tue		Mass, 7pm
23 Wed		Mass, 11.30am
24 Thu	<b>Christmas Eve</b>	Mass of the Day, 10am
	PRE-BOOKED NATIVITY STORY CHILDREN'S SERVICE	4.30pm
	PRE-BOOKED FIRST MASS OF CHRISTMAS	9.30pm, with music
25 Fri	<b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b>	10am, with music
26 Sat	<b>St Stephen</b>	Mass, 10.30am

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## 27 The Holy Family

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Weekday Masses are at the holiday of time of 10.30am.

28 Mon	<b>The Holy Innocents</b>	Mass, 10.30am
29 Tue	<b>S Thomas Becket</b>	Mass, 10.30am
30 Wed	6 <sup>th</sup> Day of Christmas Octave	Mass, 10.30am
31 Thu	7 <sup>th</sup> Day of Christmas Octave	Mass, 10.30am
1 Fri	<b>MARY, MOTHER OF GOD</b>	Mass, 10.30am
2 Sat	<i>Ss Basil the Great &amp; Gregory Nazianzen</i>	Mass, 10.30am

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## 3 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas

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Weekday Masses resume their usual pattern.

# Services Resume after Lockdown

St Mary's will resume public worship on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December, with a Mass at 11.30am. The daily Mass will be restored at its usual times.

On Sundays, we will resume the pre-Lockdown pattern with the Saturday afternoon Mass for children at 4.30pm, and the Masses at 11am and 4.30pm on the Sunday.

Pre-booking is NOT required for weekday Masses.

Pre-booking is ESSENTIAL for the Sunday Masses and you can ring, email or Facebook Father Dane to book a place from the Wednesday before.

## The hall & toilets remain closed.

**Even if you have keys, you may not access any part of the building for the moment, except as part of public worship in the nave of the church.**



**CASH  
PRIZES**

**£150,  
£50, £25  
plus**

*win a voucher for a Christmas Hamper  
to be delivered to your door!*

If you're worried that with no Christmas Fair, you won't be able to help St Mary's then we have the answer for you!

A Christmas Grand Draw with cash prizes plus the opportunity to win a hamper voucher for delivery to your door. Tickets will be available soon and the draw will be after the 4.30pm Mass on 6 December.

# People News

Congratulations to **Rose Ellis** who was received as a postulant by the Benedictine congregation of the House of Initia Nova at the beginning of November. You can read more about her journey later on in this Newsletter. Rose has taken the name Sarah-Teresa

**George Darroch** has returned home after a lengthy stay in Darent Valley Hospital. At the moment he's 'confined to barracks' but we hope he's soon able to be out and

about again as he's looking forward to a return to his usual routine.

Big congratulations to **Emily Foxcroft** who passed her Eleven-plus! Not that it's a surprise to the rest of us. She appears to have enjoyed the chocolate bar she received as a result.

We won't be organizing a Christmas card exchange this year, we hope to return to it in 2021.



## RIP "JP"

When we got the news that **John "JP" Voller** was poorly and the doctors were not offering further treatment, it was a shock, after all, he'd done so well for so long.

But the rapidity with which he then deteriorated was even more shocking, and sadly he died on 16<sup>th</sup> November. His funeral is in early December and we shall remember him and pray for him and for Sian, Nathan and all JP's family and friends. Always forthright and never one to leave you in any doubt if you asked his view, JP was a regular supporter of St Mary's in all sorts of ways: fairs (like the Summer Fair in 2017 from which the picture above comes), dressing up in a tux for Ladies Night, coming to the Stations of the Cross and—of course—his support for coffee morning. May he rest in peace.



# CHRISTMAS 2020



## A Very "Different" Year!

There's no doubt that none of us predicted in 2019 that we would face the year in 2020 that we have nor that we would be arranging a Christmas 2020 which is so different from anything we've known.

We need to keep a sense of perspective: people are dying from a horrible disease. Our medics are working in hugely stressful conditions. Our NHS needs as few extra calls on its resources as possible.

That's why we're giving things up and going without.

**We will not have a Midnight Mass at Christmas.** Instead, there will be a First Mass of Christmas at 9.30pm, for which everyone who wants to attend will need to pre-book. Our service will include music but we are still not permitted to sing. By putting our Mass at 9.30am we are making sure that everyone can get home in plenty of time so that they can watch a televised or livestreamed service where they can sing all the carols at whatever volume their neighbours are content not to complain about. The vicar accepts no responsibility....

We're not able to have a Crib Service in our usual form: that's because we can't mix households and we can't provide costumes and we can't sing. So, instead for families we're offering a **PRE-BOOKED ONLY Nativity Service** at 4.30pm on Christmas Eve. There will be the telling of the Nativity story and each family will be on their own table with their own colouring resources. Father Dane will tell a bit of the story, then there will be colouring and at the end the children will be able to take home the nativity scene they have created. It will be different! But it's possible the children's answers will be much as usual.....

As you will have read, opposite, we will not be doing a **Christmas card exchange table** as we must not encourage people to linger, loiter or mingle. For this year, you'll need to rely on posting, semaphore, telephone or other means to offer our Christmas greetings. We will hope and pray to be back to normal next year—and not just with regard to cards but in respect of our whole Christmas!

# Sponsorships

A big “thank you” to everyone who has co-operated so brilliantly as we re-establish our sponsorships: Sandra Merrick is sorting them out for the moment and she welcomes anyone who wants to get in touch so she can let them know what is available and when. The longer the notice she has, the better! That’s partly because she has to pass all the details on to Bob so that what goes in the Mass Book is a fair reflection of what she’s been told, so please book well ahead and let her know in good time of any changes our updates to what you’ve said.

## Always something to do...

We had an unpleasant surprise in November, when the hall was awash with rainwater! Some slates had come off a high point and smashed into the wired glass part of the hall ceiling. Enough damage was caused to open up a channel for water to flood into the hall and it did!

Thankfully Matt Reeve was able to get up there and do some tidying up for us and then the roofing contractor who came to sort out the Sacristy roof was able to effect a temporary repair on the hall, whilst we work out the long-term repair. The Sacristy roof repair which they did seems to be working fine and we no longer have dripping walls—which is comforting.

We’re still investigating the water supply problem to the tap but it does work intermittently.

We might all pray for a quiet 2021 on the building front.....?

# Sunday Mass Pattern

**All services in church and the churchyard are currently subject to an attendance limit of 30.**

Our present Sunday pattern is:

**4.30pm, Saturday: Children's Mass, First Mass of the Sunday**

Adults are welcome, but the focus is on our young people!

**11am, Sunday: Parish Mass**

With music accompaniment.

**4.30pm, Sunday: Parish Mass**

A quiet and reflective unaccompanied Sunday afternoon Mass.

*You can reserve your place for these Masses any time from the Wednesday before by phone, text, email or Facebook message.*

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) will meet on  
Weds 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 & Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021  
*via Zoom at 7.30pm*

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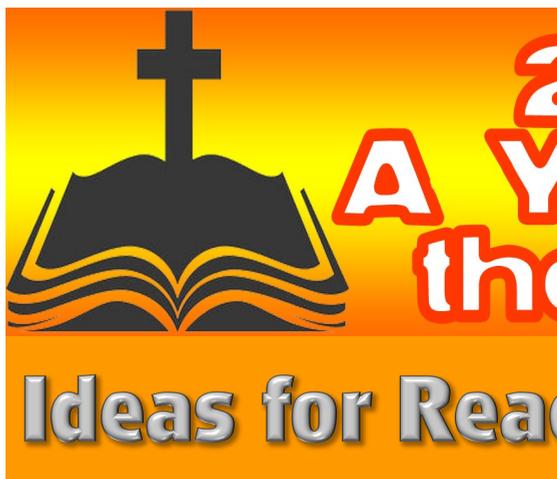
ICAEW  
CHARTERED  
ACCOUNTANTS



Back in January, at the very start of this series, it was suggested that there are people—a very few people—who start reading at Genesis and work their way right through to the Apocalypse. Most start with the very best of intentions and fall by the wayside or find themselves mired in the detail and that it's all a bit confusing.

You can buy Bibles laid out for reading over a two-year or one-year cycle. Biblical preacher and teacher Nicky Gumbel has produced a commentary which has rave reviews for his online offering but there has been a more lukewarm reception for the printed version but that has more to do with the quality of the physical book as the content is of the same engaging standard as the screen version. It was Gumbel who developed the world-famous Alpha course, and although his low-church Evangelical roots make for a different approach from the Catholic perspective used here at St Mary's, his experience and ability shine through and many people have found it helpful and stimulating.

One approach which some have found useful to reading the Bible is start with something



which interests you! Mark is the shortest Gospel and in many ways (use of language and sentence structure among them) the simplest account of our Lord's life. John's Gospel is the most mystical of the four whilst Matthew includes a wealth of detail and a reliance on ancient Biblical themes. Luke's Gospel begins a two-part work (of which the Acts of the Apostles is the second) concentrating on the formation of the Church. The Apocalypse (or Revelation) is a wonderful weaving together of visions and dreams which it is almost impossible for us to get our heads around entirely because the detail is so rich and what is depicted so difficult to fully comprehend.

So, perhaps start with

# 2020 Year for the Bible

## Reading the Bible

something which you can easily understand, of which you've always thought might repay further study or of which you've only heard snippets and thought you might like to explore some more.

In the Old Testament, Genesis is an awe-inspiring and deep work which no many how times it is explored never ceases to offer new insights to the committed student. Daniel is a same type of literature as the Apocalypse with dreams and visions and stories to provoke thought. The Psalms, Israel's song-book, contain almost every human emotion in ways which have inspired countless musicians and preachers over the centuries. Isaiah covers a huge swathe of the history of the nations of Israel and Judah

covering the loss of the nation-state and depicting the entire nation as an unfaithful and resentful rejector of God's ways. There are ups and downs and—much in-between.

In the apocrypha, the Book of Wisdom contains much food for thought as it challenges us to recognize our unfaithfulness to God and to change our ways.

Returning to the New Testament, the epistles are divided between those written by St Paul, St Peter, St John, St James and other authors. Some are longish works whilst others are very short: they are often best read with the help of a Biblical Commentary to guide us. That does mean it can take three times as long to read: once to read the text, then to read the commentary, and finally to return to the text and see it in its context. Like all Biblical study, this is hard work but can be very rewarding.

This series has explored the background of our Scriptures, described books and offered reflections, all to help us engage with the foundation of our faith—our Bible.

# A Year of Change

**Rose Ellis** reflects on a transition and a new name

I think it is fair to say that since March 2020 has been the strongest year any of us have ever experienced.

For some it has been a challenging and upsetting time causing fear, anxiety and uncertainty.

I think I'd be lying if I said I had not had any of those emotions and I also think you'd all find me a little strange but I have also tried to see the positives. One thing it has given me a chance to do is deepen my faith.

Some of you may be aware that a few years ago I tested my vocation with the sisters in Walsingham. It was a very challenging time both personally and for the community and it just was not meant at that time.

Over the following years I have continued to worship mainly at St Mary's Swanley (my "home") parish and also on occasion at St Michaels Abbey Wood. When lockdown happened I must admit I felt rather lost not being able to attend Mass - it didn't

feel right to me. I did maintain my faith by developing a pattern of morning and evening prayer and attending live streamed masses.

Around the same time I was in touch with a good priest friend of mine who is a brother with the House of Initia Nova - a dispersed Benedictine order which is mainly based in the USA and was founded in 2000. They are a modern forward-thinking community who are in the process of building a community over here in the UK.



I was invited to join one of their Zoom prayer meetings one Sunday evening and from that moment began to feel drawn to find out more about the

community. Abba leads us in prayer at the beginning of the meeting then we usually have some form of teaching or theological discussion. As the weeks went on I felt drawn to want to become more involved with the community and so started the process of discerning and applying to become a postulant. And was accepted!

Postulancy is the first step to becoming a life professed brother or in my case sister of a community and I can now tell you that on the evening of Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November I was officially received as a postulant and took the name sister Sarah Teresa. We change our names as a symbol of new beginnings. I had to submit 3 names and did not know until the point of reception which was to be used.

Originally we should have been on retreat at Ascot Priory but due to restrictions it had to be done by Zoom which was a first for the community but still a lovely occasion and I was able to have Fr Dane, my parents and 2 close friends join to witness it. 3 of us were received, me being the only female.

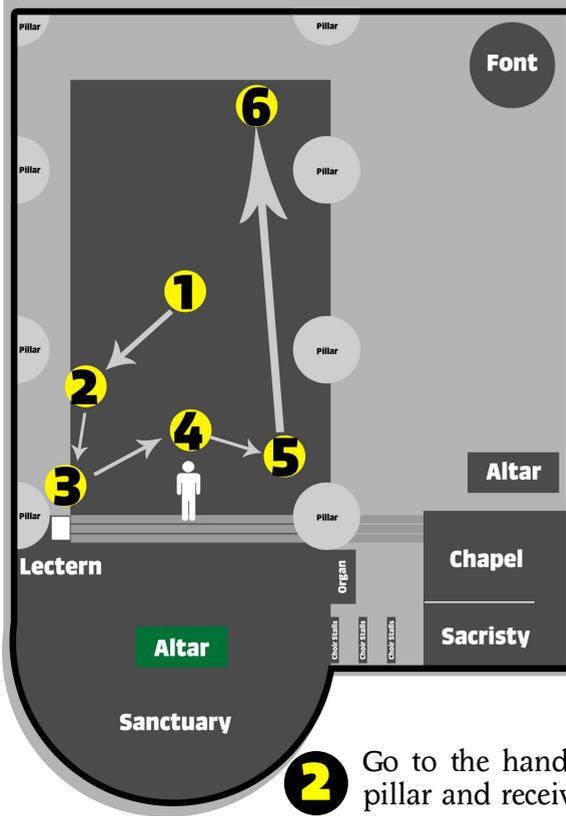
Being part of a dispersed community means that I am able to continue working in the role I love counselling children

and young people. I will continue to live at home and will continue to attend Mass as always. But I will have a far deeper commitment to the community. We follow a 4-fold prayer office which consists of morning prayer, midday office, vespers and compline. This is set from the Divine Office. We also are expected to read part of the rule of St Benedict daily - readings are set for us. And we are also expected to find some time each day for *lectio divina* which is a form of spiritual reading. We meet every Sunday on Zoom with the whole community across the world (one of our brothers is in Australia) so it is quite interesting with time differences etc. Here in the UK we meet once a month either in person or via Zoom and every Friday lunchtime to share midday prayer together.

I will also have a habit which has not arrived yet but once it arrives the vicar won't be the only one swanning around in a black dress on a Sunday!

But in all seriousness I wanted to share with you all my positive response to lockdown and if I may would like to ask prayers as I start my new life and continue to discern if this is where God is leading me.

# Receiving Holy Communion During the Pandemic



We are administering Communion in a rather different way from usual, so that we keep people safe.

The main point is that you receive your Communion and leave, don't go back to your seat.

It may look a bit complicated but in fact it's fairly easy to follow and we'll soon get into the habit.

**1** Collect all your belongings: coat, bags, etc so you don't return to your seat. Then remove your mask.

**2** Go to the hand sanitizer station by the pillar and receive one squirt of sanitizer.

**3** Move to the lectern, where the strip of fabric hangs, and rub your hands together until the sanitizer has gone. Don't worry if it takes a long time, just keep going till your hands are dry!

**4** Move to where the priest is standing: he will give you the Host: **he won't say anything and you won't say anything.** Move then to the statue of Our Lady.

**5** Once at the statue of Our Lady, you consume the Host.

**6** As soon as you have consumed the Host, go to the main door, sanitize your hands and go straight out to the car park.

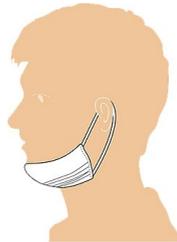
## Protecting Children & Vulnerable Adults

The lockdown doesn't mean changing our focus on protecting the most vulnerable members of God's beloved creation. There is still a wealth of opportunities for training and information on the web. The Diocese of Rochester is using video-conferencing to keep training up to date and the Church nationally is providing new material to ensure that the safeguarding message is widely and accurately shared across dioceses and parishes. Contact details for those engaged in safeguarding are available on our website or from [www.rochester.anglican.org](http://www.rochester.anglican.org) and follow the safeguarding links.

## Face-coverings Compulsory for all Services in Churches



A face-covering is required at Public Worship unless you are exempt, as defined by law. It must be sealed above the nose, below the mouth and the sides.



A visor may be worn by someone who is exempt but is not a substitute for a face-covering for anyone who is not exempt.



## A Prayer for times when we are uncertain

O most loving Father, whose will is that we should all be united in love of you through Christ: hear us, we humbly ask, in our prayers for your strength and comfort. May we find joy in our lives and grace through the gift of the Spirit. Inspire us to see your work all around us and to take delight in it. Help us to see the vision of your glory and to work towards it with all our heart, mind and strength. In the name of Jesus, the Lord. Amen.

# December Anniversaries

- 2 Sean Bull, Michael Brundle, Pr  
3 Sarah Ridgewell  
4 Frances Moon  
5 Henry Cairncross, Rose Excell,  
Lionel Harrison, Ernest Bishop,  
Malcolm Brundle,  
Dennis Gathern  
6 Emma Moon, Edith Stevens  
7 Annie Grubb, Phyllis Trevor  
8 Naomi Hayes  
9 Clara Clarke  
10 Robert Moody  
11 John Heron  
12 Mabel Hards  
13 Jane Page  
14 Elsie Hood, Jack Merrick  
15 Kenneth Turner,  
Dorothy Smith  
16 Sidney Moon, Peter Ralph,  
Walter Frenay, Sidney Fordham  
17 Louis Lewis  
20 Anna Lester, Mary Alsop,  
Cyril Spice, Elva O'Reilly,  
Eileen Peterken  
21 Edward Quinton,  
Philip Johnson  
22 Ethel Webb  
23 Rose Lane, Margery Barter,  
George Hutt  
24 Edward Sloper, Michael Carr,  
Carmella Hobden  
25 Jackie Alexandra, Eliza Foster,  
Albert Firmager  
26 Walter Davis, David Allen,  
Maud Begg, Charles Bassett,  
Dorothy Hill, Bill Marygold  
27 Edwin Grubb, Donald Puplett  
28 James Jarrett, Christine Dabell,  
Ronald Wapshott, John Rich  
29 Joe Salmon  
30 Grace Taylor, Margaret Pittman  
31 Walter Bassett, Jack Ackerman

REST ETERNAL GRANT TO THEM,  
O LORD, AND LET LIGHT  
PERPETUAL SHINE UPON THEM.

*“May they rest in peace  
and rise in glory.”*

The Church of England is offering a limited funeral service, with a maximum number of 30 mourners or a service at a Crematorium in accordance with their regulations.

*Arrangements for Requiem  
Masses and memorial  
services in church  
with a larger number of  
mourners will be made  
once regulations permit.*

## November Funeral

27<sup>th</sup> November

**Helen Doreen Berwick**

*St Mary's Church & Churchyard*



**ST MARY THE VIRGIN,  
SWANLEY**

*is in the*

**Diocese of  
Rochester**  
the **Archdeaconry of  
Rochester**  
and the **Deanery of  
Dartford**

We are a  
Forward in Faith  
parish under the care of  
The Right Reverend  
Norman Banks  
Bishop of Richborough

The right to present a priest to  
be our Vicar when there is a  
vacancy is held by the parish  
patron, the Guild of All Souls.

## Hall Hire

No hirings at the moment but  
for full details of price,  
availability and facilities call  
Nicky on 07821 005632. We're  
grateful to her for all she does.

## Baptisms

There is no charge for Baptism.

Here at S Mary's we baptize  
those who live in our parish -  
and will even baptize those from  
outside with their parish priest's  
permission.

## Who's Who

### Vicar

Father Dane Batley-Gladden  
Saint Mary's Vicarage,  
London Road,  
Swanley, BR8 7AQ.  
01322 662201  
vicar@swanleyparish.org.uk

### Churchwardens

Kevin Merrick  
*(also PCC Vice Chair)*  
Christine Parkes

### Hon Secretary

Holly Attwood

### Hon Treasurer

Sandra Merrick

### Hall Lettings

Nicky Reeve

### Servers

Kevin Merrick

### Organist

Doug Blew

### Choir

Ann Parkes

### Safeguarding Officer

*(Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection)*  
Toni Roast

### Weekly Mass Booklets

Bob Jones

## Finding St Mary's



**St  
Mary's**

St Mary's Church car park is available to those attending our church services.

## Giving To Church

WE ARE COMPLETELY DEPENDENT ON YOUR GIVING. ALTHOUGH SERVICES ARE LIMITED OUR BILLS GO ON IN FULL: water rates, electricity and gas all have a standing charge. We still have to pay for our priest. We still have to pay for the central church functions which are supporting us even now.

Online, you can go to [www.justgiving.com/stmarys-swanley](http://www.justgiving.com/stmarys-swanley) to give by credit or debit card.

*All these allow you to enhance your donation with Gift Aid if you wish.*

To offer your usual donation by standing order or BACS please contact Fr Dane and he'll arrange for

## The Week

### Sunday

#### PANDEMIC PATTERN

*Sunday Masses must be pre-booked. Weekday Masses do not usually need pre-booking.*

**Sat, 4.30pm: Children's Mass**

**Sun, 11am: Mass**

**Sun, 4.30pm: Mass**

### Monday

No Mass

### Tuesday

Mass, 7pm

### Wednesday

Mass, 11.30am

### Thursday

Mass, 10am

### Friday

Mass, 11am

### Saturday

Mass, 10am



### Our website:

[www.swanleyparish.org.uk](http://www.swanleyparish.org.uk)

*where you will find a lot of information, news & much more!*

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