

Fourth Sunday of Advent – 22nd December 2024

CHRISTMASTIDE

With great joy we celebrate that in Bethlehem a Great Light has appeared – “ the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light” - and we pray that that Light will shine with an ever greater intensity of illumination in our own hearts and souls and penetrate the darkness of the world in which we live – “ whoever follows me, will have the light of life” says Jesus. May we have the grace to throw open the doors of our hearts to receive Him in all His glory and majesty as we await His Coming on the clouds of heaven. I wish you all a joyful and holy Christmastide – a full twelve days of rejoicing and celebration!

Mass Intentions this Sunday (22nd December – Fourth of Advent) Saturday 4-00 p.m. (St. John Kemble) Parish & People; 6-00 p.m. (St. Joseph’s)William Burke (RIP) (Brendan O’Grady); 10-30 a.m. George Johnson (RIP) (Joan & Ioan). **6-00 p.m. Lessons & Carols** – followed by refreshments in the Hall.

Lessons & Carols We begin this Christmas Week with a traditional service of Lessons & Carols at 6-00 p.m. followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the hall afterwards. Bring a friend!

Mass Times this Christmas Week

Christmas Eve (Tuesday 24th) St. John Kemble 3-30 p.m. Carols 4-00 p.m. Vigil Mass; St. Joseph’s – 6-00 p.m. Vigil Mass; **10-00 p.m.** “Midnight Mass “.

Christmas Day (Wednesday 25th) St. Joseph’s 10-30 a.m. Christmas Day Mass

St Stephen’s Day (Boxing Day Thursday 26th) St. Joseph’s 9-30 a.m.

Christmas Crib Collection This year to be divided between Youth Ministry in Cardiff-Menevia and Aid to the Friends of the Holy Land.

Mass Intentions next Sunday (29th December – The Holy Family) **Saturday** 4-00 p.m. (St. John Kemble) Parish & People; 6-00 p.m. (St. Joseph’s) Yolanda Jones (RIP) (Nantlais); **Sunday** 10-30 a.m. Bernard Allen (RIP) (The Family).

Readers: This Sunday (22nd) 6-00 p.m. Ceri McAteer; 10-30 a.m. Bethan Lee. Next Sunday (29th) 6-00 p.m. Gerald Smith; 10-30 a.m. Tommy Parel.

Readers Please come early so that you have the opportunity before Mass to look at the readings beforehand. If you are unable to keep your place on the rota please arrange for someone to take your place (!!).

Candles: Sacred Heart – Sheila Penry (RIP) ; Our Lady – Special Intention (C.M.); St. Joseph – Fr. Neil (Sp. Int)

Anniversaries Jaqueline Joseph (2006); Ena Hynes (2005); Grace Phillips (2006); Vernon Doyle (2006); Lilian Lowry (2015); Maureen Pitt (2021). Sheila Penry (2023); Carol Curnow (2023); Yolanda Jones (2023); *Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.*

Christmas Parties Many thanks to everyone involved in the organisation of our two Christmas parties, at St. Joseph’s last Sunday morning and at St. John Kemble on Wednesday. A great time was had by all and we are very grateful for all the work – often carried out behind the scenes – and look forward to future parish community events!

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Many thanks to Dennis for his generous donation of chocolates to us – to the SVP, Altar Servers, Clergy, the Christmas Party, the Thursday coffee morning, our Christmas Masses and to the School – as we celebrate with thanksgiving the Birth of Jesus at this joyful time of year. Many thanks.

Christmas Raffle Prizes There were forty (!) raffle prizes – and many thanks to all those who so generously donated the prizes – the magnificent sum of £1,180 was raised for church funds. The list of winners is on the notice board at the back of the church and prizes can be collected from the sacristy. Once again, many thanks to Peter for organising the production and sale of tickets and organising the collection and distribution of the prizes. The SVP “**Guess the weight of the Christmas Cake**” (2lb 13oz) was jointly won by both Clare Parker and Robert Jelly.

Confirmation and First Holy Communion in 2025. Forms will be available in the New Year for those wishing to be considered for either of these two Sacraments. Regular attendance at Mass is an essential part of preparation for receiving these sacraments.

.New Boiler in the Church Hall We are very grateful to Eric Collier & Son for the installation of the new gas boiler in the hall. Please (!) – **no unauthorised tampering with the control panel** (!!) (All donations gratefully received)

Last Sunday's Collection: £332-78 (plus Direct Debits). St.John Kemble - £94-00. Many thanks.

Christmas Flowers Donations toward the cost of decorating the church at Christmas gratefully received. Please see Chris, Babs or Paula. Also, at St. John Kemble donations please to Bella. We are very grateful to our flower arrangers in both churches for so beautifully decorating the church each Sunday. Many thanks.

The Church Hall is available for private heir. If anyone is interested in booking the venue please contct Angela Healey on 01792 424168 or 07708105147

Thursday Coffee Morning resumes on Thursday 9th January.

The Sick and Housebound Please continue to remember in your prayers all those who are sick and housebound, those in hospital and in our local care homes. Especially at this time, Bridie Johnson, Julie, Stephen & Jason Saunders, Elizabeth Fluck, Lorna and Joe O'Brien, Margaret Jeffrey, Marion Brocksopp., Marlene John, Pat Day, Daniel John, David and Nora Reynolds, Adrian Macpherson-Jones, Roger Horton, Kath Davies, Susan Evans, Paul Leaker, Sid Leaker. If you would like others to be remembered in this prayer list (with their permission) please supply their names.

The Sick & Housebound If you know of someone who (at their request) would appreciate contact with the church through a home visit from the S.V.P. please contact Anne Guest, the Secretary on 07741283098 or Pat O'Connell for a visit from the Legion of Mary.

FOOD BANK - PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING to the Neath Food Bank at the back of the church - the products Food Banks need most: Tinned veg (peas and sweetcorn); tinned tuna and mackerel; brown, basmati and long grain rice; pulses (eg: kidney beans and chickpeas); grains (eg: couscous); easy cook noodles; tinned fruit (eg: pineapple slices); wholegrain cereals (eg: wheat biscuits); oat drinks and UHT milk. **THANK YOU**

“ Renew Your wonders in this our day, as by a New Pentecost. Grant to Your Church that, being of one mind and steadfast in prayer with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and following the lead of blessed Peter, it may advance the reign of our Divine Saviour, the reign of truth and justice, the reign of love and peace. Come Holy Spirit, in Your power and might to renew the face of the earth”. (Pope St.John XXIII).

PRAYER AFTER MASS *St.Michael, the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our defence against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do Thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all other evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.*

TO CONTACT THE PARISH/FATHER NEIL - The Presbytery, Hillside Lane, Neath, SA11 1TG. 01639 643323 Parish Website – **www.catholicchurchneath.org.uk**

