

Sunday 29th November Advent I

St Mary Magdalene
Munster Square, NW1

Happy New
(Liturgical) Year!

Contact

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This Week

Date	Saint/ Celebration	Service/ Event
Monday 30 th November	<i>Andrew, Apostle</i>	
Tuesday 1 st December		
Wednesday 2 nd December		• Rosary on Zoom 7pm
Thursday 3 rd December		
Friday 4 th December	<i>John of Damascus, Monk c749</i>	
Saturday 5 th December		
Sunday 6 th December	<i>Advent 2</i>	• Mass 11am

Notices

Mthr Sally on Retreat

This week Mthr Sally will be on retreat from Mon-Thurs. As this is a week of prayer and reading, she will not be checking emails as often as usual so there may be a delay in replying.

Christmas Parcels -

We are putting gifts together for residents of Esther Randell, families from Christ Church Primary and others we know who would appreciate a little Christmas cheer from the church.

Please start considering what you can give : food, toiletries, socks/ slippers etc.

ALSO, please think about who may appreciate receiving a parcel and tell Joanne or Mthr Sally.

Advent Book

This Advent you are invited to join in reading and discussing 'Frequencies of God' by Carys Walsh which offers a poem a day from the Welsh priest and poet RS Thomas.

This will take place on Zoom and people from the parishes of St James & St Mary, Emmanuel, St Cuthbert's West Hampstead, St Martin's Gospel Oak and St Mary Magdalene Munster Square.

Everyone is welcome to join.

Mondays 7 - 8.30pm:

Dec 7: Week 1 - Waiting

Dec 14: Week 2 - Accepting

Dec 21: Week 3 - Journeying

Jan 14: Weeks 4 & 5 - Birthing & Seeing

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7789238302?pwd=THZjdmlVeGgreS9ZZDBkU2IKdktVZz09>

Services resume

As Lockdown 2.0 comes to an end, services are allowed to resume again. Our first Mass will be Sunday 6th December at 11am.

The service will follow the same pattern as it did before lockdown, with masks being required unless medically exempt, hand sanitiser as you enter and before receiving communion, no congregational singing and communion in one kind (bread).

Tuesday Takeaway

Fitzrovia Youth in Action are working out of the Bengali Workers Association providing cooked, hot meals every Tuesday for individuals or families. They are delivered to your door. If you live on the estate and would like to receive one, please let Mthr Sally know. They are also in need of more volunteers to deliver items. Likewise, let Mthr Sally know.

Prayer for the Advent Wreath

God of Abraham and Sarah, and all the patriarchs of old,
you are our Father too.

Your love is revealed to us in Jesus Christ,
Son of God and Son of David.

Help us in preparing to celebrate his birth
to make our hearts ready for your Holy Spirit
to make his home among us.

We ask this through Jesus Christ,
the light who is coming into the world.

Collect

Almighty God,
give us grace to cast away the works of darkness
and to put on the armour of light,
now in the time of this mortal life,
in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;
that on the last day,
when he shall come again in his glorious majesty
to judge the living and the dead,
we may rise to the life immortal;
through him who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Readings

A reading from Isaiah 64. 1-9

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence— as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil— to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity for ever. Now consider, we are all your people.

Psalm 80

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you that led Joseph like a flock;

Shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim,
before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh.

Stir up your mighty strength
and come to our salvation.

*Turn us again, O God;
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.*

O Lord God of hosts,
how long will you be angry at your people's prayer?

You feed them with the bread of tears;
you give them abundance of tears to drink.

You have made us the derision of our neighbours,
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

*Turn us again, O God of hosts;
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.*

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to St Mark (13. 24-end)

'But in those days, after that suffering,
the sun will be darkened,

and the moon will not give its light,
and the stars will be falling from heaven,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in clouds" with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

'From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

'But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.'

For Reflection

In today's first reading, the people of Israel compare themselves to the withered leaves of a tree, ready to be blown away at the first strong wind. There is a recognition that they are far from being the people that God wants them to be.

There can be times in our own lives when we feel a little like withered leaves. We sense that we are not as alive with the life of the Spirit as we could be. On Pentecost Sunday we pray to the Holy Spirit, 'On our dryness pour thy dew; wash the stains of guilt away'. We can sometimes feel that our spiritual sap has dried up somewhat. Yet, in that first reading, the people's sense of themselves as withered leaves did not leave them despondent. They knew that the Lord can always breathe new life into them.

The reading concludes with the hopeful image of God as the potter, 'we the clay, you are our potter, we are all the work of your hand'. Just as a potter sitting at their potter's wheel can make something beautiful out of what at first seems shapeless, the Lord can take our lives as they are, and reshape them through the power of the Spirit. We are always a work in progress and the Lord is always working on us.

Advent is a season when we invite the Lord to come afresh into our lives to bring to life what has become withered in us, to moisten what has dried up and to reshape us according to his loving purpose for our lives.

In the gospels Jesus often says 'Come' to people, 'Come and see', 'Come, follow me'. Advent is the season when the focus is more on our saying 'Come' to the Lord.

The primary Advent prayer is 'Maranatha, come, Lord, Jesus'. We pray this prayer out of a sense of our need for the Lord's coming, just as in that first reading the people of Israel spoke out of a strong sense of their need for the Lord's coming.

Advent is a very short season and it can easily get overshadowed by the approaching feast of Christmas. Yet, it is worth holding on to that Advent mood, entering into it, because it is one of the core moods of the life of faith. That mood is beautifully expressed in psalm 63, 'my soul thirsts for you, like a dry, weary, land without water'. Advent is a season when we are invited to rediscover our spiritual thirst, our longing for the one who can truly satisfy our deepest thirst.

The Advent prayer, 'Maranatha, come, Lord, Jesus', gives expression to that spiritual longing within us. It is a prayer that also expresses a sense of waiting. We invite the Lord to come afresh into our lives, and we wait for his coming. It is not a passive waiting, a kind of hanging around for the Lord. It is an alert, attentive, waiting that reaches towards the one for whom we wait. It is like the waiting of the father for his son in the parable of the prodigal son. That alert waiting is what Jesus refers to in the gospel reading when he calls on his disciples to 'Be on your guard, stay awake'.

One of the ways we give expression to this wakefulness, this alert waiting, is through prayer. Advent is a very prayerful season. It is not necessarily a season when we say more prayers than we usually do, but it is a season when we try to become more prayerful people. It is a season when we are invited to find a space to give expression to our longing for the Lord's coming. It is a time to pray, 'Maranatha, come, Lord, Jesus' with all our heart and soul.

If we enter into that deep spiritual longing within us for the Lord's coming, the Lord will not disappoint us. In response to our prayerful longing for the Lord, he will fan into a living flame the gifts of the Holy Spirit that we have already received. Then in the power of the Spirit we will be able to attend faithfully to whatever tasks the Lord is giving us, like the faithful servant in the gospel reading.

In our prayers this week

- For our Bishops Sarah & Rob
- For our PM Boris Johnson & our MP Keir Starmer
- For those affected by COVID-19
- For those researching and testing vaccine
- For those who are lonely, depressed or struggling with lockdown
- For trade talks related to Brexit

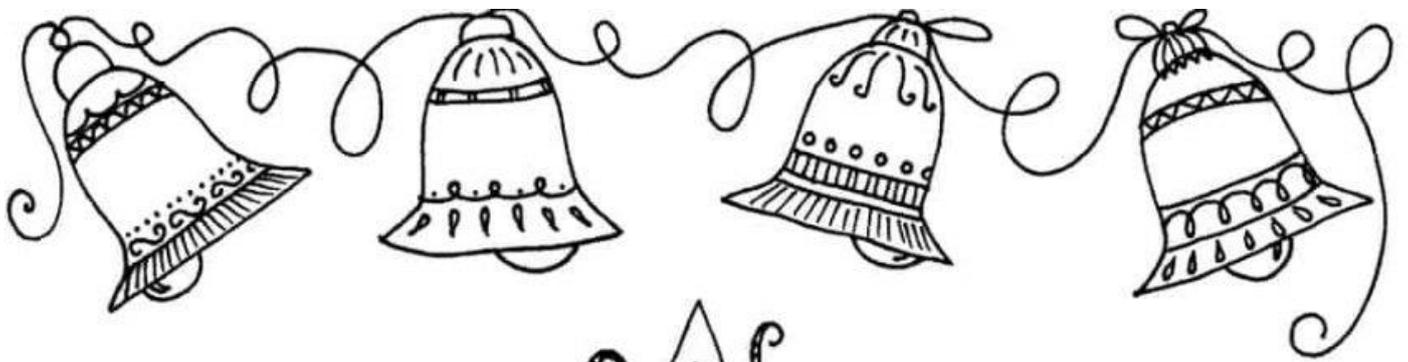
For those who are sick or in need at this time: Joanne Brewer, Terry Currie, Jean Watt, Carole Ridley, Kenneth Deacon, Bailey Walters-Lawrence, Stuart Morton, Joan Sayers, Carol Speirs, Simon Williams.

For those who have died recently:

Roy Barlow

For those whose anniversary of death falls at this time including: William Pratt, Victor Huguet, Floyd Teskey, Rita Day, Marie Nockells, Michael Perryman, Florence Nicholson, Reginald Brady, Catherine Currie, Jim Roberts,





Arise, shine, for your light has come!

Mandy Groce '12

ministry-to-children.com

ON MY WAY TO BETHLEHEM

