

## CHRIST THE KING & ST. COLMAN (Bitterne) OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION (Hedge End) ST. BRIGID (West End)

Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth

Registered Charity number 1199568

Parish Priest: Fr. Elijah Fru Nde (emergency use phone number 0777 466 7010)

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3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent: Year B, Cycle II (Gaudete Sunday)

17<sup>th</sup> December 2023

### Rejoice always! Again, I say, always rejoice!

Some of us have so much pain in our hearts. There's so much of imbedded grief, cares, and worries. The prevailing coronavirus pandemic and its boomerang effects has killed our loved ones, crippled jobs, brought poverty and plunged many into debts. Daily, our pain and difficulties seem to be on the rise rather than decline. There seems to be ever coming sadness and misery than moments of joy or occasions for merry making. The raging wars in Ukraine and the Middle East leaves agony in its trail. Life is frozen to misery. Yet today, our Lord calls us amidst all these to Rejoice, to be happy, to look beyond the horizon of suffering to the rising sun, Christ the Lord, who is about to come into the world. All is not gloomy. There is still much to be happy about: our lives, our health, the opportunity to see and greet one another, etc.

Today, the third Sunday of Advent is referred to as Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete is a Latin word meaning rejoice. Today's entrance antiphon drawn from Philippians 4:4-5: echoes this strongly when it says: "Rejoice in the Lord always: again, I say, rejoice! The Lord is near." Having come thus far in our Advent journey, the Church says to us as the prophet Nehemiah said to the Israelites: "Go and enjoy...Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength" (Neh. 8, 10). With Christmas in sight, we are exhorted to remain hopeful in joy for the Lord's coming will not be long; for the Lord's coming is certain.

Last week, St. Mark introduced the ministry of John the Baptist who came to alert all humanity to prepare a way for the coming of Christ. Today, however, we read the gospel of John who takes on the same theme as of last week – the person and ministry of John the Baptist (John 1:6-8, 19-28), only that this time, typical of the dialectics between light and darkness, John portrays the personality and witness of John the Baptist as one who "was sent by God...as a witness to speak for the light." His voice rang out from the wilderness and was a force of attraction to all Judea and the whole people of Jerusalem who crowded around him. The surge of this crowd to John the Baptist did not go unnoticed by the Scribes and Pharisees who sent emissaries to ask him several questions, primarily, "who are you?"

To underscore the importance of this identity-question

– "who are you?" – Jesus took it on. His response came when he appeared in the synagogue early in his ministry. His answer is extracted from our 1st reading of today from the prophet Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11. "The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for the Lord has anointed me to..." This is a song of joy and satisfaction of an empowered person. He recounts what God has done in his life, and concluded the passage by making a startling claim: "This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen" (Luke 4:18-19). He is the Messiah who comes to bring good news, proclaim liberty, and announce God's favour upon us – and that's why we rejoice.

Our second reading is an explicit exaltation from St. Paul to us especially on this great and joy-filled Sunday of Advent: "Be happy at all times, pray constantly, and for all things give thanks to God..." In this brief exaltation, we find a wonderful progression. First, it is an exaltation to be happy, joyful and cheerful because our journey so far has been so good. Second, it is an exaltation to "Pray constantly," to be vigilant. Therefore, for Gaudete Sunday to be truly meaningful, it must provoke a great feeling of joy and thankfulness, while still strongly preserving, and keeping us focused on our journey and duty this glorious season of Advent.

Once again, today our gospel revolves round the prophecy and clarion call of the "Prophet of Prophets," John the Baptist. The major difference between today's gospel and that of last week rests simply on the fact that they are accounts from different writers Mark and John. The message remains functionally and ontologically the same. It is still from: "The voice that cries in the wilderness, make a straight way for the Lord."

Why is this reading and call being repeated this joyful Sunday? It is for the purpose of emphasis. It is to remind us that, though we are given a little time to relax and rejoice today, the clarion call is still there: "Make a straight way for the Lord." In other words, our preparation continues. So, it is a way of keeping us alert so that we do not lose focus of where we are going to: "It is NOT Christmas yet!" The joy of this Sunday foreshadows the fullness of joy that Christmas brings.

Rejoice always! Again, I say rejoice!

*Fr Elijah*

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent – 17<sup>th</sup> December 2023

- 9.15am **Our Lady of the Assumption** (Hedge End)  
*Thanksgiving for Donald Hedges for his service as an altar server*
- 11.00am **Christ the King & St Colman** (Bitterne)  
*For quick recovery of Kenny Johnson and safe surgery on his finger*
- 5.30pm **St. Brigid** (West End)  
*For the people*
- 6.00pm **Christ the King & St Colman** (Bitterne)  
*Polish Mass*

### Weekday Mass Times (19<sup>th</sup> Dec – 24<sup>th</sup> Dec)

**OLA** – Our Lady of the Assumption (Hedge End)

**CKSC** – Christ the King & St. Colman (Bitterne)

**SB** – St Brigid (West End)

- Tue 19<sup>th</sup> 10.00am **OLA**
- Wed 20<sup>th</sup> 10.00am **SB**
- Thu 21<sup>st</sup> 10.00am **CKSC** Alan Hood (*Foundation Mass*)
- Fri 22<sup>nd</sup> 10.00am **OLA**
- Sat 23<sup>rd</sup> 10.00am **CKSC** David John Miller
- Sun 24<sup>th</sup> 9.15am **OLA**  
11.00am **CKSC** Francis Bernard & Catherine Anne Murphy

**Exposition & Rosary at 9.30am before Mass (Tues – Fri)**  
**Sacrament of Confession is available on request**

We are all encouraged to offer Mass Intentions  
for our families and friends  
(contact Fr. Elijah or Parish Office)

### Entrance Antiphon

*Ps 25 (24): 1-3*

To you, I lift up my soul, O my God.  
In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame.  
Nor let my enemies exult over me;  
and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

### Communion Antiphon

*Ps 85 (84): 13*

The Lord will bestow his bounty,  
and our earth shall yield its increase.

### Bible Timeline Course

The Bible Timeline course is taking a break and will restart on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7.15pm.

### Our Lady of the Assumption - Quiz Night - 26th January 2024

A great date to start off your 2024 Diary/calendar ! :-)  
The date of the **OLA New Year Quiz Night** is **Friday 26th January 2024**.  
Full details and tickets will be on sale after Christmas.  
In the meantime, wishing our whole Parish Family a Joyful Christmas. God Bless.

### Continuing Support of the Church

Please consider setting up a **standing order**.

For Christ the King & St Colman:

**Account Name:** CDP Christ the King & St Colman

**Sort code:** 30-93-04

**Account Number:** 00887553

For Our Lady of the Assumption and St Brigid:

**Account Name:** CDP Hedge End Our Lady

**Sort code:** 30-93-04

**Account Number:** 00879747

Please use your surname as a reference.

Make out cheques for Fr Elijah to Rev Fru N Elijah

Thank you for your support.

### Christmas Masses

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent (Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> December)

- 9.15am **Our Lady of the Assumption** (Hedge End)
- 11.00am **Christ the King & St Colman** (Bitterne)
- 5.30pm **NO MASS** at St. Brigid

#### Christmas Eve (Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> December)

- 7.00pm **Christ the King & St Colman** (Bitterne)  
*7pm Carols followed by Mass at 7.30pm*
- 10.00pm **Our Lady of the Assumption** (Hedge End)  
*10pm Carols followed by Mass at 10.30pm*

#### Christmas Day (Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> December)

- 9.00am **St. Brigid** (West End)  
*9am Carols followed by Mass at 9:15am*
- 9.00am **Christ the King & St Colman** (Bitterne)  
*Polish Mass*
- 11.00am **Christ the King & St Colman** (Bitterne)  
*Morning Mass*

#### Christmas Mass Times in Woolston & Netley

##### Christmas Eve

- 4.00pm Family Mass - St Patrick's Church, Woolston
- 8.00pm Vigil Mass - St Patrick's Church, Woolston

##### Christmas Day

- 10.00am Mass - Annunciation Church, Netley
- 11.00am Mass - St Patrick's Church, Woolston

### Indian Snacks

On Sunday 7th January 2024 Mothers' Charity will be serving Indian snacks in CKSC Hall after 11 o'clock Mass. Entry as usual will be by Donation, and Tea and Coffee will be served alongside. Please support this initiative to raise funds.

### Faith on Fire

Faith on Fire will not meet during December. The next meeting will be on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024

### Parish office closed from Christmas to New Year

Please note, the parish office will be closed from Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec 2023 to Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> Jan 2024.

## CKSCOLASB Calendar of Events

**OLA** – Our Lady of the Assumption (Hedge End)

**CKSC** – Christ the King & St. Colman (Bitterne)

**SB** – St Brigid (West End)

Sun 17<sup>th</sup> 12.30-2pm **Youth Meeting** (CKSC)

Mon 18<sup>th</sup> **7.00pm Penitential Service at St Edmunds**

Tue 19<sup>th</sup> 9.30am-12pm **Table Tennis** (OLA Hall)

**7.00pm Penitential Service at Immaculate Conception**

7.30-9pm **Growing in Faith** (OLA)

Wed 20<sup>th</sup> 7.00-8:30pm **Carers Group** (OLA)

Thu 21<sup>st</sup> 10.30am-12pm **Prayer Group** (CKSC)

Thu 21<sup>st</sup> **5pm-7pm PENITENTIAL SERVICE** (CKSC)

Sun 24<sup>th</sup> 12.30-2pm **Youth Meeting** (CKSC)

## Recurring Events

**Our Lady of The Assumption** (Hedge End)

- **Tea Coffee, Biscuits, Friendly Chat** (and often cake) in the hall every Sunday after Holy Mass
- **Children's Liturgy** during Mass every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the Month (except in July/August)
- **Carers Group** on third Wednesday of every Month from 7.00pm to 8.30pm
- **Growing in Faith** every Tuesday evening 7:30-9pm
- **Table Tennis** every Tuesday from 9.30am to 12pm
- **Open Church** Thursday from 11am to 1pm (OLA)

**Christ the King & St. Colman** (Bitterne)

- **Prayer Group** every Thursday 10.30am-12 noon
- **Children's Liturgy** for 4 to 7-year-olds every Sunday
- **Faith on Fire** 8-9pm last Wednesday of every month – except December
- **Young Meetings** 12:30 -14:00 -2nd and 4th Sundays of every month
- **Tea, Coffee, Biscuits & friendly chat** in the hall every 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month

If you would like a future event to be included in the Calendar of Events, kindly advise the Parish office.

## Christmas Flowers

Once again, we are looking to collect any donations towards the flowers to decorate Our Lady of the Assumption over the Christmas period. Any donation would be greatly appreciated. Please put any donations in the basket at the back of the church. Thank you

## Poinsettias for Christmas at CKSC

Once again, we are asking for poinsettias to decorate the Church for Christmas. Please can they be brought into the Church between now and Christmas Eve. Thank you.

## Fr. Elijah's Project in Bamenda The Reconstruction of the Catholic Nursery and Primary School in Ntambeng, Makon

You may already have heard of the school reconstruction project which is being sponsored by Fr. Elijah.

If not, you can go to the GoFundMe page at <https://gofund.me/4f57b2b0> (or you can scan the QR code below) to see a video which shows the urgent repairs which are needed.



Please consider making a donation.

This would be a great Christmas present for Fr. Elijah.

## CKSC Giving tree - Stella Maris Christmas Chocolate appeal 2023

Can you help us give Christmas chocolates to Seafarers this December?

There will be about 400,000 Seafarers working over Christmas, separated from their families and friends. Theirs is a tough, relentless life, long hours, boring, noisy, extreme temperatures, dangerous and exhausting. Stella Maris meets and supports seafarers around the world. We want to show them that they are not forgotten this Christmas, so **we're planning to collect hundreds of chocolate Christmas presents** for seafarers visiting our Southern Region ports in the days before Christmas. We need to prepare now.

**Can you help us by donating chocolate gifts?**

Please put your gifts under our giving tree at Christ the King & St Colman's church by 17<sup>th</sup> December. Thank You.

## CKSC – Youth Meetings

In CKSC, youth meetings will run on the 2nd and 4th Sundays every month from 12:30 -14:00.

We encourage parents to lead their children to belong. For more information, email the office or speak to Uju Cummings.

## Please note: Our Lady of the Assumption No OPEN CHURCH on 21<sup>st</sup> Dec and 28<sup>th</sup> Dec

There will be no OPEN CHURCH at Our Lady of the Assumption Church on 21<sup>st</sup> Dec and 28<sup>th</sup> Dec.

OPEN CHURCH will resume on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> Jan as usual from 11am to 1pm for private prayer.

If you are able to join the rota, please contact Pauline or Jane.

### Flowers at CKSC

Due to health reasons and Rosemary's family commitments, I am unable to continue decorating the church with flowers each week. I would be very happy if someone could take my place.

Flowers are not used during Advent but there will be a need at Christmas. Please think about this ministry and ask me any questions or for any information that is needed.

Thank you in anticipation - Maureen Sim

### Confirmation Programme 2024

The programme for young people who wish to explore the sacrament of confirmation will start in the new year. If you're interested, please register with the office. You have nothing to lose but SO much to gain!

### St Brigid's Giving Tree

The St. Brigid's Giving Tree charity this year is The Southampton Sunday Lunch Project. Please bring your wrapped gift (with label attached) to the church by Wednesday 20th December latest. Thank you for your support for this worthy charity, which provides a hot meal & company each Sunday for those in need locally.

### Retrouvaille: Help Your Marriage

Retrouvaille is a programme to support couples who have difficulties in their marriage. The programme helps spouses uncover or re-awaken the love, trust and commitment that originally brought them together. It helps them through difficult times. There is no group therapy or group work. For confidential information about 'Retrouvaille' or to register for the next programme commencing with a Virtual weekend on 8 - 11 February 2024 or a Face to Face weekend in Welwyn Garden City on 14-16 June 2024,

Call or text 07887 296983 or 07973 380443 or email [retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com](mailto:retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com) - or visit [www.retrouvaille.org.uk](http://www.retrouvaille.org.uk)

### Christmas Collection

The Christmas Collection is an opportunity for us to say thank you to Fr Elijah for his dedication and hard work. In addition to the usual ways of giving, donations may be made online by clicking the links below.

For OLA & SB click [here](#)

For CKSC click [here](#)

### Keep in touch with Portsmouth Diocese

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Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth

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<https://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/>

If you have news to share with the Diocese, contact: [communications@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:communications@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

### End of the Year Retreat - 28<sup>th</sup> Dec to 1<sup>st</sup> Jan

The Verbum Dei Community is leading a retreat at its Isle of Wight Centre to help explore and deepen the joy that our faith in Christ brings us, and prepare ourselves for the year to come.

For more information, please contact Sr.Emiliana 07426 000213 or [verbumdei.iow@gmail.com](mailto:verbumdei.iow@gmail.com).

Verbum Dei Retreat Centre  
Nunnery Lane,  
Carisbrooke, Isle of Wight  
PO301YR

END OF THE YEAR SILENT RETREAT

*Joy to the world, our Saviour has come!*

28 DEC. - 1 JAN.

[verbumdei.iow@gmail.com](mailto:verbumdei.iow@gmail.com)



### CAFOD Israeli-Palestinian Crisis Appeal

Donate to CAFOD's Israeli-Palestinian Crisis Appeal at [cafod.org.uk/ipc](http://cafod.org.uk/ipc) or call 0303 303 3030 to support those affected and get funds to local trusted experts in Gaza and southern Israel who have been working alongside communities helping those most in need. Your donation will help support aid workers providing urgent humanitarian aid including food, water and emergency shelter to those in need.

### Christmas Day Lunch

This year Sholing Salvation Army are delivering hot Christmas Day lunches to people who will be homebound and unable to join in with any in-person festive activities.

If you are on your own on Christmas Day and would like a Christmas meal delivered to you, let us know! Please call 023 80438713, leave your details and someone will call you back.

Please could all requests be with us before Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023. - Thanks

### Parish Web Pages on Diocesan Website

Parish web pages are on the diocesan website at:

- [Christ the King & St Colman](#)
- [Our Lady of the Assumption](#)
- [St Brigid](#)

They can also be selected from

[www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/parishes/](http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/parishes/)

Sunday's Readings – [here](#)

Diocesan eNews: – [here](#)

Daily Readings – [here](#)

Reflections – [here](#)

UK Catholic Newspapers – [here](#)