

# LOVE ACTUALLY

In 'normal times' there would be, by now, a plethora of school nativity plays being prepared to share with family - who knows what **this** December will bring?

In a now quite dated film, 'Love Actually', the child of a principal character needs a costume to be the 'second lobster' at the crib in the school nativity. Perhaps 'first lobster' had some lines to say?

The Christmas story in many schools, if taught or shared, is frequently interpreted well beyond the central biblical characters and story: usually to facilitate involvement of all the children so that even lobsters [and 'second turkeys'?] can be gathered round the crib. Those who are quite young have even been heard to say they're a Christmas *fairy*— when they actually are an *angel*!

The REAL Christmas story is also often wrongly depicted on 'religious' Christmas cards with a composite version of S.Matthew and S.Luke's gospel accounts of Jesus' birth. The Shepherds only appear in S.Luke and this is read at Midnight Mass. The Wise Men only appear in S.Matthew which it is read on Epiphany, January 6<sup>th</sup>, the end of the (traditional) 12 days of Christmas. On Christmas morning however, at the principal mass, we hear S.John's account of the **mystery** of the Christmas message.

The mystery is not any details about a baby, stable, angels, sheep, shepherds nor wise men. S.John starts: '*In the beginning was the Word: and the Word was with God: and the Word was God*' <sup>1.1</sup> moving on to tell us: '*the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.*' <sup>1.14</sup> So Christmas is about the activity of God-made-flesh who shares fully in both our lives and our world. Creator and re-Creator John tells us that by the Word - '*All things were made by him: and without him was made nothing that was made.*' <sup>1.3</sup>

So I suppose anything from his creation present at the crib, and indeed what we eat at Christmas, might be appropriate as we celebrate the birth of the Immanuel, God-Among-Us; as long as we actually remember that: that it is *his* party!

There is a lot of anxiety about what sort of Christmas people are going to have this year. It's a very important social part of our national Christmas day - but for the Christian it is NOT the be all and end all. Our FOCUS, whether it is in lockdown or we are allowed in Church, as a CHRISTIAN will surely be to celebrate the beginnings of our redemption and re-creation when God entered this world that first Christmas. Now THAT was, is, and remains forever - '*God's Love Actually*'.

Father James

# The Bridge

Monthly Magazine of the Parish of Higham (Ss. John & Mary) with Merston

## S.JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH - WORSHIP

**Most MASSES also provided via Zoom**  
**All others are held subject to the current Government guidelines.**

Monday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday MORNINGS 9.30 am  
Tuesday and Thursday EVENINGS 7.30 pm

**Sunday Mass** in Church only ) MORNING 9.30 am  
*Please contact **Pat Merrison** by text -07842336907 or email  
p.merrison@btinternet.com if you wish to join us as numbers are  
limited*

Sunday Mass in Church and via Zoom 11.00 am  
Sunday evening Mass in Church (only on request) 6.30 pm

Private Prayer daily - 9 am - 6 pm - times published in the Bulletin each week – available on the Home page of the website.

**FUNERALS MAY BE HELD IN CHURCH – ATTENDANCE IS LIMITED by the number of people permitted at the time. WEDDINGS are not until after 2<sup>nd</sup> December subject to the latest guidelines. Check news for up-to-date information**

**FUNERALS ARE ALSO HELD AT CREMATORIA.**

Baptisms / Confession / Anointing Contact Fr. James

In an emergency please contact him at any time or, if he is not available, one of the Churchwardens (details below).



PARISH The Rev'd. Canon James F. Southward

PRIEST The Vicarage, Hermitage Rd Higham, Kent, ME3 7NE.

Telephone 01634-717360 Email [saintjohn.higham@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:saintjohn.higham@yahoo.co.uk)

**PLEASE NOTE: FATHER JAMES IS NOT NORMALLY AVAILABLE ON THURSDAY**

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THE

Mrs Teresa Joblin Hill Cottage Telegraph Hill, Higham

Tel: 01474-823186

CHURCHWARDENS

Mrs Helen Walker 11 S. John's Road, Higham

\* Tel: 01474-396569

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\* Evening calls only on these numbers please

# December 2020 at S.John's, Higham

## Calendar and Mass Intentions

**SUNDAY MASSES**                      *Weekday* ) Mon. 9.30am; Tu. 7.30pm; Wed. 9.30am.  
**9.30am & 11am [zoomed]**            *masses* ) Th. 7.30pm; Fri. 9.30am; Sat. 9.30am.

**EXCEPT for changes of time as noted below**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>CELEBRATION</b>		<b>INTENTION</b>
Tue	1st	Advent Feria		Those with HIV/Aids
Wed	2nd	Advent Feria		The Hungry and homeless
Th.	3rd	S.Francis Xavier <i>Priest, Missionary</i>	(m)	Migrants and refugees
Fri	4th	S.John Damascene <i>Priest, Teacher</i>		Church in the Biblelands
Sat	5th	Advent Feria		Church schools
<b>SUN</b>	<b>6TH</b>	<b>ADVENT – 2ND SUNDAY</b>	<b>(+)</b>	<b>THE PARISH</b>
Mon	7th	S.Ambrose <i>Bishop, Teacher</i>		Openness to God's Word
<b>TUE</b>	<b>8TH</b>	<b>IMMACULATE CONCEPTION</b>	<b>(S)</b>	<b>Walsingham</b>
Wed	9th	Advent Feria		Victims of addiction
Th.	10th	Advent Feria		All Religious Orders
Fri	11th	Advent Feria <i>Enthroned–11.12.10</i>		The Bishop of Rochester
Sat	12th	Our Lady of Guadalupe	(m)	Church in Central America
<b>SUN</b>	<b>13TH</b>	<b>ADVENT – 3RD SUNDAY</b>	<b>(+)</b>	<b>THE PARISH</b>
Mon	14th	S.John of the Cross <i>Priest, Teacher</i>	(m)	Society of the Holy Cross
Tue	15th	Advent Feria		+ RIP's & Anniversaries
Wed	16th	Advent Feria		Penitents & Confessors
Th.	17th	Advent Feria - <i>O Sapientia</i>		Jewish Christian Dialogue
Fri	18th	Advent Feria - <i>O Adonai</i>		Step-family relationships
Sat	19th	Advent Feria - <i>O Radix</i>		Childless couples
<b>SUN</b>	<b>20TH</b>	<b>ADVENT – 4TH SUNDAY - O Clavis</b>	<b>(+)</b>	<b>THE PARISH</b>
Mon	21st	Advent Feria - <i>O Oriens</i>		Expectant mothers
Tue	22nd	Advent Feria - <i>O Rex</i>		The lonely or unloved
Wed	23rd	Advent Feria - <i>O Emmanuel</i>		Young Christian families
Th.	24th	Advent Feria - <i>Xmas Eve</i>	<b>9.30am</b>	Servers & musicians
<b>FRI.</b>	<b>25th</b>	<b>THE NATIVITY</b>	<i>Midnight</i>	<b>(+)</b> <b>THE PARISH</b>
<i>Christmas</i>		<b>OF OUR LORD</b>	<i>10am</i>	Our Families & Relations
Sat	26th	<b>S.Stephen</b>	<b>10am</b>	(f) The world's destitute
<b>SUN</b>	<b>27<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>S.JOHN EVANGELIST</b>	<b>10AM</b>	<b>(S)</b> <b>THE PARISH</b>
		<i>Feast of title of the Parish Church, Co-Patron of the Parish</i>		
Mon	28th	<b>The Holy Innocents</b> <i>Martyrs</i>	<b>10am</b>	(f) Save the Children
Tue	29th	<b>S.Thomas Beckett</b> <i>Martyr, Bishop</i>	<b>10am</b>	(f) English Parish Clergy
Wed	30th	<b>The Holy Family</b> <i>Martyrs</i>	<b>10am</b>	(f) The widowed & bereaved
Th.	31st	Of the Christmas octave	<b>10am</b>	(f) The emergency services

**KEY:** (+) *Holy Day of Obligation*; (S) *Solemnity*; (f) *Feast*; (m) *Memoria* (v) *Votive mass*

# THE DECEMBER 'REQUIEM'

is on TUESDAY 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 7.30pm

*The recently departed (and those named below) will be prayed for at this Mass.  
Those named below are remembered on the Sunday before and the actual date itself.*

2nd	David Richard Argent	19th	Michael Houghton <i>BISHOP</i>
	Michael Brundle <i>PRIEST</i>	20th	John Harris
3rd	Reginald Stanley Merrison		Doris Lily Parkinson
4th	Kathleen Patricia Cole		Stephen Jeffrey Aspinall
8th	Frank Graffin		Joan Kent
	Violet Constance Eliz <sup>bth</sup> . Barber	21st	Ivy Wootton
9th	Ruth Hensman		Lily Agnes Pearce
10th	Walter Tom Anders	23rd	Joseph Hindle <i>PRIEST</i> *
	James Roxburgh <i>BISHOP</i>		Matthias George Barker <i>CHILD</i>
12th	William Southward	24th	John Henry Newton
13th	Denis John Jones	26th	Janet Gomme
14th	John Moore	28th	John Rich
15th	Marilyn Wendy Peters		Nora Annie Maude Mahy
16th	Molly Allen		Mary Annie Glendinning
	Michael Penton Shields <i>PRIEST</i>	29th	Charles Robert Townsend
17th	Reecey Bridgeman	30th	Marion Iris Rootes
	David George Bate		Isabel Violet ('Babs') Whittaker
18th	Rosina Ellen George	31st	Monica Hanna Maria Harris
	Peter Horne		Betty Vera Argent

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\* = *This priest was a Vicar of Higham and the founder of S.John's Church in 1862*

*PLEASE NOTE: Except for previous Incumbents of the parish (and where it is known that someone attends the requiem mass and prays for them) the names of those deceased more than 20 years have been removed from the list.*

*However, should someone attend the requiem AND request the inclusion of additional names these will be included in the list of those for whom we pray.*

We proclaim your Death O Lord, and profess your Resurrection,  
Until you come again!

## ~ DAILY BIBLE READINGS ~

ONLY A FEW MINUTES A DAY following the readings used at Daily Mass in Church - even if you can't be there. Choose one or both readings. (There are three on Sundays and special holy days)

### **The Church's year began on ADVENT 1 Sunday readings Cycle B (S.Mark)**

T <sup>u</sup> Isaiah 11.1-10	Luke 10.21-24
W Isaiah 25.6-10	Matthew 15.29-37
T <sup>h</sup> Isaiah 26.1-6	Matthew 7.21.24-27
F Isaiah 29.17-24	Matthew 9.27-31
S Isaiah 30.19-26	Matt. 9.35-10.1,6-8

**ADVENT - 2ND SUNDAY DEC. 6th**  
 Isaiah 40.1-5, 9-11      2 Peter 3.8-14  
 Mark 1.1-8

M Isaiah 35.1-10      Luke 5.17-26

**T<sup>u</sup> IMMACULATE CONCEPTION DEC. 8th**  
 Genesis 3.9-15,20      Ephes. 1.3-6,11-12  
 Luke 1.26-38

W Isaiah 40. 25-31	Matthew 11.28-30
T <sup>h</sup> Isaiah 41.13-20	Matthew 11.11-15
F Isaiah 48.17-19	Matthew 11.16-19
S Eccl'cus 48.1-4,9-11	Matt 17.10-13

**ADVENT – 3RD SUNDAY DEC. 13th**  
 Isaiah 61.1-2,10-11      1 Thess 5.16-24  
 John 1.6-8, 19-28

M Numbers 24.2-7.	Matt. 21.23-27,5-17
T <sup>u</sup> Zephaniah 3.1-2, 9-13.	Matt. 21.28-32
W Isaiah 45.6-8,18,21-26	Luke 7.19-23

### **Advent part II begins on 17th December with special readings leading up to the Lord's Nativity on Dec 25th**

T <sup>h</sup> Genesis 49.2,8-10	Matthew 1.1-17
F Jeremiah 23.5-8	Matthew 1.18-24

S Judges 13. 2-7,21-25      Luke 1.5-25

**ADVENT – 4TH SUNDAY DEC. 20th**  
 Isaiah 7.10-14      Romans 1.1-7  
 Matthew 1.18-24

M Song of Songs 2.8-14	Luke 1.39-45
<i>or</i> Zephaniah 3.14-18	Luke 1.39-45
T <sup>u</sup> 1 Samuel 1.24-28	Luke 1.46-56
W Malachi 3.1-4,23-24	Luke 1.57-66
T <sup>h</sup> 2 Samuel 7.1-5,8-16	Luke 1.67-79

### **FRIDAY DEC 25TH**

#### **THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD**

##### At Midnight Mass      On Christmas Day

Isaiah 9.1-7	Isaiah 52.7-10
Titus 2.11-14	Hebrews 1.1-6
Luke 2.1-14	John 1.1-18

**S S.STEPHEN, PROTO-MARTYR DEC. 26<sup>TH</sup>**  
 Acts 6.8-10; 7.54-59      Matth. 10.17-22

### **SUNDAY – S.JOHN EVANGELIST DEC. 27th** PATRON OF THE PARISH CHURCH

Exodus 33.12-end      1 John 1.1-4  
 John 20.2-8

**M THE HOLY INNOCENTS DEC. 28<sup>TH</sup>**  
 John 1.5-2.2      Matthew 2.13-18

**T<sup>u</sup> S.THOMAS BECKET DEC 29<sup>TH</sup>**  
 Colossians 1.24-29      Luke 22.24-30

**W THE HOLY FAMILY DEC. 30<sup>TH</sup>**  
 Genesis 15.1-6, 21.1-3      Luke 2.22-40  
*or* Hebr. 11.8,11-12,17-19      Luke 2.22-40

T<sup>h</sup> 1 John 2.18-21      John 1.1-18

*End by using the Sunday Bulletin 'Opening Prayer' or this 'Prayer after Reading Scripture'*

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy scriptures to be written for our learning: help us so to hear them, to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word, we may embrace and for ever hold fast the hope of everlasting life which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

## CHILDREN'S NEW PLAY AREA

October 2020

Higham Parish Council are pleased to announce that the long-awaited new children's play area situated on the recreation ground is now complete and open for use.



The old play area was tired and uninviting, but following discussions at Parish council meetings it was agreed to put plans in place to bring it up to date and make it more attractive. Vice Chair,



Councillor Amanda Mendzil, took on the challenge with support from other councillors and began the task of looking into designs, costings and for financial assistance to make the project happen. The Parish Council considered that some of the new equipment should be accessible and this has been accomplished in the design. Grant applications were made in several directions and the Parish Council were delighted to receive financial support from the National Lottery, Kent County Council, Gravesham Borough Council and from donations from local groups, including Higham Quilters, along with funds from the Parish Council.

However, the lockdown situation caused a delay to starting the work but as soon as restrictions were eased the work began and was quickly and efficiently carried out by Playground Projects Ltd of South Wigston.

Higham Parish Council is very grateful to Councillor Mendzil and others who have given their time, ideas and donations towards the completion of the play area, which is already being enjoyed by the children, parents and carers.

The Mayor of Gravesham, Councillor John Caller and other invited guests, officially opened the play area on Tuesday, *November 3, 2020*.

*Liz Jeffery*



*Martin received the latest Christmas coronavirus regulations from the diocesan office.*



*"Nice idea, Amelia, but I don't think that the Angel of the Lord Zooming with the shepherds would have the same dramatic effect."*

The editors of The Bridge Magazine disclaim any responsibility for inaccuracies submitted in advertisements, announcements and articles in this voluntary run magazine. All information is received in good faith and if a reader should find a problem, they are asked to approach the responsible subscriber directly. We reserve the right to refuse items sent to us and any written complaints received by the editors will be considered public property and publication will be dependent on the discretion of the editors.

## THE FUTURE OF THE BRIDGE IS IN YOUR HANDS

# ***URGENT* - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO HELP WITH the PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE BRIDGE!**

The Bridge is dedicated to communications between St John's Church and the village through articles and advertisements. Its production also raises vital funds which enables the church to continue to carry out its work in the community.

If you have some spare time and would like to help then the Bridge production team would be grateful for your assistance.

We have a great team of people who distribute the Bridge around the village and who also collect the subscriptions once a year. Are you able to help them occasionally as the team is getting smaller!. This dedicated team also needs someone to co-ordinate their efforts. Can you help? Do you have expertise in computer graphics/Photoshop to work with the advertisers? Or you may be able to spare a few hours to carry out the photocopying of each edition. This takes place 10 times a year.

## **WITHOUT MORE HELP THERE IS A DANGER THAT THE BRIDGE WILL NO LONGER BE A VIABLE PRINTED COMMUNICATION**

Please contact for further information by email:  
[bridge@highamparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:bridge@highamparishchurch.org.uk), the Editor on 07811 028803.

**There are still a few unpaid subscriptions.** Please make every effort to pay these at 12 Villa Road before 13th December as we are unable to continue to print copies which have not been paid for. Cheques should be made out to Higham with Merston PCC.

Thank you

*Liz Croker*  
Editor



## HIGHAM IN 1887

The parish tea in January was so well attended, 240, that there had to be two sittings and afterwards they were treated to a magic lantern show. The children's event had been in December for 161 children and 24 teachers. The usual 3 entertainments during the winter were not just to be social but with a concert and sale of work later in the year to make money for various good causes. The government school inspection resulted in a good report. The clothing club was prosperous, the coal club less so and unless more members could be attracted the horticulture society would have to close.

Of church reports there were 44 baptisms and 21 burials of which 6 were babies, 2 of men drowned in a boating accident in the river and of the total only 3 were of people over the age of 70 years. There were big changes in St Johns. The organ was found to be in bad repair due to damp and the decision was made to move it and the pulpit to its present position which meant enlargement of the vestry and rearrangement of some seats. There is no indication of where the organ was originally placed.



1155950 www.fotosearch.com

The main events of the year were the festivities for Queen Victoria's jubilee. Almost 400 children marched, accompanied by the Fife and drum band, to Mr Stunts' Meadow where after a short service they had tea and each given a medal. Widows and people over 65 also had tea,

entertained by the brass band and the day ended with races and other sports. The permanent memorial in the village was the paving of the schoolyard. The women of England subscribed to a present to the Queen part of which was for a statue of Prince Albert £4 10s 4d being sent from Higham.

*Barbara Manley*

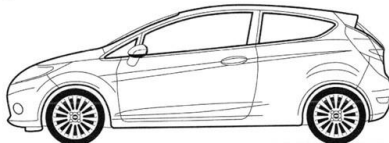
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October 2020



We have heard the sad news that Roy Foster has passed away after a spell in hospital, our thoughts go out to his family.

The Coronavirus continues we are now seeing cases increase greatly and are now seeing local lockdowns in more areas of the country. There are more restrictions being brought in by the government meaning that only six people can now meet from two households indoors and outdoors. We hope that everyone stays safe in these unsettling times.

## Monthly Message from our Chairperson Liz Jeffery

I am attempting to write this report without mentioning – you know what!

On October 16, I had the pleasure to meet The Mayor of Gravesham, Councillor, John Caller and Denise, Manager of the Alzheimer's and Dementia Support Services, at the ADSS Safeharbour Café in Northfleet, where the Mayor presented our donation cheque for £500.00 to the charity. Denise was delighted to receive this and thanked all our members for their kind efforts in raising the donation. The Mayor expressed his thanks to our club for all their fundraising efforts, he didn't realise so much went on at our meetings and how much they are enjoyed and needed by the community. The ADSS are currently having major improvement work done and are looking forward to the time when they can reopen.



## **Bags 2 Church Need to declutter?**



Have you been meaning to clear some space in your wardrobe and drawers?

Well now is the chance to do it:-

However due to lack of storage, St John's will gladly receive your unwanted clothes, shoes, bags or soft toys - place items in a **clear** bag which will be available from the Church Porch.

**Details regarding where the bags should be left will be made available nearer the time.**

These bags will be collected

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January**

and in return the church will receive up to £300 a tonne.

**Please note we still **cannot** take  
DUVETS, PILLOWS, MATTRESS COVERS.**

**We are able to accept  
TOWELS, BEDDING (Sheets, blankets or duvet covers/pillowcases) or CURTAINS.**

For more information contact  
Cheryl Robins 01474 822461

# ***CHRISTMAS 2020***

*The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ*



***Friday 25th December 2020***

A Holy Day of Obligation for Christ's faithful to give thanks to God for his gift to us of His Son as our Saviour and Redeemer.

---

**MIDNIGHT MASS - 12 midnight**

*with the blessing of the Crib*

AND

**MASS OF THE DAY – 10am**

( PLEASE NOTE CHANGE FROM USUAL TIME )



~ + ~ **CHRISTMASTIDE** ~ + ~

FROM: Thursday ~ 24<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2020

24th Dec.

**CHRISTMASS EVE**

THURSDAY

5.00pm ~ **THE CRIB SERVICE**

6.30pm ~ **Evening Prayer I of Christmas**

*Confessions - After Evening Prayer or by appointment anytime in the Season*

25th Dec.

**NATIVITY OF THE LORD**

FRIDAY

*Commonly called CHRISTMASS*

12.Midnight ~ **MASS OF MIDNIGHT**

9.15am ~ **Morning Prayer**

10.00am ~ **MASS OF THE DAY - Zoomed**

6.00pm ~ **Evening Prayer II of Christmas**

**IN THE CHRISTMAS OCTAVE**

SATURDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2020 TO FRIDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY 2021

**ALL SERVICE TIMES CHANGED FOR THE WEEK AS FOLLOWS**

Sat.	26th Dec.	<b>S.Stephen's Day</b>	)	
SUN.	27th Dec.	<b><u>S.JOHN'S DAY</u></b>	)	<b>Morning Prayer - 9.15am</b>
Mon	28th Dec.	<b>The Holy Innocents</b>	)	+
Tue	29th Dec.	<b>S.Thomas Becket</b>	)	<b>MASS IS AT 10AM ONLY</b>
Wed	30th Dec.	<b>HOLY FAMILY SUNDAY</b>	)	+
Th.	31st Dec.	<b>of the Christmas Octave</b>	)	<b>Evening Prayer - 6.00pm</b>
Fri	1st JAN.	<b>MARY, MOTHER OF GOD</b>	)	

**For SUNDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> Dec. = see box below**

27th Dec.

**S.JOHN the EVANGELIST**

SUNDAY

**Feast of Title of the Parish Church, Co-Patron of Higham**

9.15am ~ **Morning Prayer**

10am ~ **Parish Mass - Zoomed**

6.00pm ~ **Evening Prayer**

1st JAN '21

**MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD**

FRIDAY

*see Christmas Octave details above*

~ + ~ **S. JOHN'S CHURCH** ~ + ~

TO: Sunday ~ 9<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2021

**CHRISTMASTIDE WEEKDAYS**

**SATURDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> JANUARY TO SUNDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY**

**WEEKDAY SERVICE TIMES ARE AS FOR NORMAL WEEKDAY  
WITH VARIATIONS ON EPIPHANY 6<sup>TH</sup> JAN.**

**Morning Prayer: 9.00am**

**Evening Prayer: 6.00pm (Tu. & Th: 7pm )**

**DAILY MASS TIMES:**

**Monday 9.30pm;**

**Tuesday 7.30pm;**

**Wednesday 9.30am**

**Thursday 7.30pm;**

**Friday 9.30am;**

**Saturday 9.30am**

**3rd Jan. 2021**

**2nd Sunday of Christmastide**

**SUNDAY**

**8.45am ~ Morning Prayer**

**9.30am ~ PARISH MASS**

**11.00am ~ Said Mass -zoomed**

**6.00pm ~ Evening Prayer**

**6th Jan. 2020**

**EPIPHANY OF THE LORD**

**Wednesday**

*(Feast of the Visitation of the Wise Men)*

**9.00am ~ Morning Prayer**

**9.30am ~ Said Mass**

**6.45pm ~ Evening Prayer**

**7.30pm ~ Parish Mass - Zoomed**

**10th Jan. '21**

**BAPTISM OF THE LORD**

**SUNDAY**

**The Last day of the Christmastide – Service times as for The Epiphany**

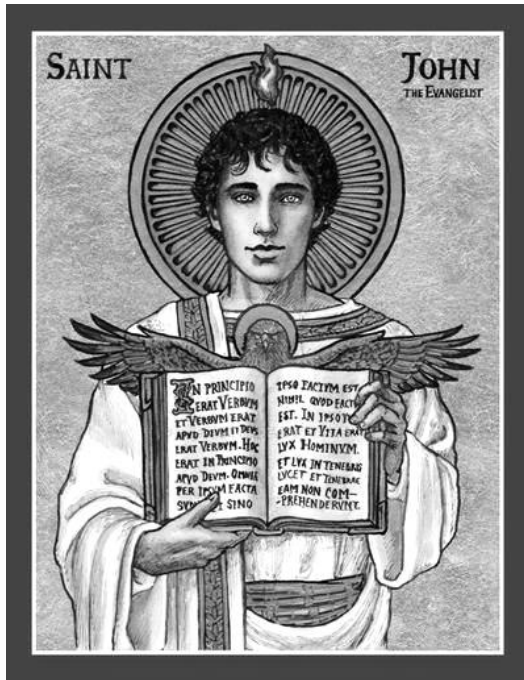
**8.45am ~ Morning Prayer**

**9.30am ~ PARISH MASS**

**11.00am ~ Said Mass -zoomed**

**6.00pm ~ Evening Prayer**

***THE SOLEMNITY OF S. JOHN***  
***Apostle and Evangelist***



***SUNDAY 27th December 2020***

Celebrating the patronage and prayers of our patron saint.

---

**Morning Prayer - 9.15am**

**The PARISH MASS – 10AM**

*No other Mass today – Seat Reservation required*

**Evening Prayer – 6.00pm**

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## HIGHAM VILLAGE WEBSITE

To see the latest village news, Annual Parish Newsletters, What's On and Parish Council go to [www.higham-kent-pc.gov.uk](http://www.higham-kent-pc.gov.uk)

If your group or society plans an event or meeting and you want more advertising, just let me know so that it can be added to the village website to spread the word. Club and society contact details are always needed to update and extend the online list of groups. If your society has a website, then we can list this as well and link back to you.

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Robert Gilby, Webmaster

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Dear friends

How quickly the world Covid19 pandemic has come to dominate our lives in so many ways. It suddenly came upon us and is not going to go away soon, bringing so many tragic deaths, bereavements and loss of jobs and income. While, like a fire, it flares up among us, it is too early to assess what has happened and how it was dealt with. So many people in all walks of life and in the media have set themselves up as experts and contributors to the cacophony of commentators and critics. Those who love whingeing have had a field day! It is only when it is effectively over that we shall be able to evaluate the pandemic and see what we can learn from the experience and prepare ourselves in case it ever happens again. In the meantime, we have to work together protect ourselves and look after all whose livelihoods are diminished by the pandemic.

### the 10 Plagues



There have been plagues smaller and bigger than the present one throughout history (they occur several times in the Bible). In 1349 the Black Death ravaged Europe. It is estimated that between a half and a third of the population of the British Isles died within a year. Many communities

and families simply disappeared. There were no overall plans to combat it and no remedies or care for those who caught it. It took the countryside and farming a hundred years to recover. The labour market was different. Suddenly the farm labourers who had survived were in great demand and found themselves in a much stronger position (which in due course led to the Peasants' rebellion in 1381 (very strong in Kent). The real lesson from the past is that 'plagues' appear, reek their havoc and then die away. There is always recovery, painful as it may be, and a return to stability.

When the disruption is over and we feel safe again we can look at the core values of our society. The pandemic has brought out a lot of good in people in the way in which we have tried to help each other. Many

organisations have been very ingenious in the ways in which they have managed to rearrange things in order to keep going (the Last Night of the Proms, and services at St John's). It has also exposed cracks in the understanding of belonging to a 'common people' where everybody is equally valued. What will society be like when the pandemic is finally over?

Britain has always been labelled a Christian society. We are officially Christian because it derives from a time when Church and State were one. The head of state is a Christian monarch. Parliament includes bishops as members of the House of Lords (Lords Spiritual). We still have an established Church (ours). Many people are nominally members of the C of E and have no idea of what that means. Society now includes many people of other faiths who wonder why we are so careless about ours. Much recent legislation has undermined traditional precepts of marriage, family life and moral behaviour. Secular understanding appears to be pushing Christian views away from the centre to the margins of society. Interestingly Tom Holland in his (excellent) book 'Dominion' argues that although outward practice of the faith has declined, a Christian understanding of morality and individual freedom still dictates thinking and legislation. What does this mean nowadays?

There is no easy or straightforward answer. However, there are several worrying points to consider about the way things are moving generally. First, what is a secular society? If it is one in which religion is not allowed to have a voice in public life, then that doesn't mean very much positive. France at the moment is reaping the whirlwind of its aggressive secular policies. Secondly, the current lack of respect for the institutions of state, such as parliament and politicians, undermines people's sense of trust in our society as a whole. The cause may be our stress on the rights of the individual or small minority groups. It could be the failures of those involved to maintain the standards expected of them. It might be the constant sensationalism of the press and media, constantly whipping up public opinion and hysteria. Any minority opinion or dissent is rubbished and shouted down. Thirdly, issues suddenly arise and are blown out of all proportion with national knee-jerk reactions. Rather than a careful



consideration and thoughtful response, public figures and institutions are vilified and expected to apologise for past wrongs. You can deeply regret what may have happened in the past and endeavour to ensure that it doesn't happen again. You cannot meaningfully apologise for something you were not party too.

Whatever our condition we are all part of society, held together as though we were in a ball of knitting wool. The tension of the wool needs to be just right to keep us all together. If it's too tight we are squashed together and suffocate. If it's made too loose, by the sort of negative things outlined above, the tension is lost and people begin to fall out and no longer feel part of their society.



Although it is still October as I write, in this issue we turn our attention to Advent and Christmas. In Advent we particularly look to the prophecies foretelling the coming of Jesus. The whole of the Old Testament is a path leading from the very beginning of creation to the birth at Bethlehem. The Prophets in particular call from their time to our time to announce the coming

saviour and demand justice and integrity by nations and individuals. Isaiah pleads and the Church echoes his voice in the Advent Liturgy:

**Drop down ye heavens from above and let the skies pour forth righteousness.. (45:8).**

Of the coming Saviour he says:

**He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth: (11:3-4)**

Whatever is happening in the world, we believe that God is always in our midst and with his people. It's tempting to lose faith when things all around are in turmoil. On the other hand, when all is going well, we often forget that God is the source of all that is good and enriches our lives.

Advent is an opportunity to be still and listen to the voices, both old and new, calling us to awareness of God's presence. Isaiah is clear about the response required from those who welcome the Lord:

**If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom shall be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually...Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt and you shall raise up the foundations of many generations... (58:9-12).**

When eventually we are able to look back on the effect of the pandemic and move on from it we will have the opportunity to renew our society and learn from what has happened. We who believe in the loving purpose of God and his Kingdom must witness to what is truly needful for a just and moral society. Christmas may be more sombre and quieter than usual this year, but the real celebration of Christ's birth will not be diminished by this. The New Year parties may not happen but the spirit of hope and opportunity will not be dampened by that. Tennyson's poem for the New Year 'Ring out, wild bells' always seems to me capture the right tone of intensity and hope for a world that is both old and new, especially this extract:

**Ring out the grief that saps the mind  
For those that here we see no more;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.  
Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.  
Ring out old shapes of foul disease;  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.**

As I write (in October) this Advent and Christmas still seem a long way off. Whatever may happen between now and then, their proclamation of Christ's coming and peace and joy of his kingdom will always be good news and the best way forward.

With best wishes and constant prayer

*fr Andrew*



# ***THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD***

*The Feast of the Visitation of the Wise Men*



***Wednesday, 6th January 2021***

**A Holy Day of Obligation for the faithful in thanksgiving  
for the revelation of the Messiah to all nations.**

---

Morning Prayer – 8.45am

**Said Mass - 9.30am**

Evening Prayer – 6.45pm

**Parish Mass - 7.30pm**

---

*Holy Communion may be brought to the sick and housebound  
upon request to Fr James.*



## Let's hear it for the Christmas card!

A folded piece of Christmas cheer  
Came through the post today!  
I love it when those cards appear  
I love the things they say!

And at this busy Christmas time  
I'm always glad to see  
The Christmas scene or Christmas  
rhyme  
That you have sent to me.

The trouble that good people take  
Is really, really kind –  
Some people even sit and make  
A card for me to find!



And in our virtual world of text  
And pictures on a screen  
These bits and bytes leave me perplexed  
If you know what I mean?

And so I think that it is fine  
To see your kind regard  
I can admire this Christmas time

Your real Christmas card!

*By Nigel Beeton  
Source Parish Pump*

## Submitting Articles or Items to The Bridge

**Editors:** Liz Croker  
Chris Hanson

**Email:** [bridge@highamparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:bridge@highamparishchurch.org.uk)

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## HIGHAM VILLAGE CLUB (CIU)



33 Hermitage Road, Higham, Rochester, Kent, ME3 7DD  
Tel 01474 822456

*The Club is currently closed as we are following Government guidelines, we are hoping to open 4th July.*

*Please check our Club website or telephone the Club*

**Join our Website for up to the minute news on all events**

**[www.highamvillageclub.co.uk](http://www.highamvillageclub.co.uk)**

*The club has a hall which can be hired out for  
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**[www.highamvillageclub.co.uk](http://www.highamvillageclub.co.uk)**

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<p><b>Spring in Paignton</b> Palace Hotel 16 March £299 Nil Single Sup 5 Days HB</p>		<p><b>Warner</b> Bembridge I.O.W 30 March Sig £375 Std £335 Nil Single Sup 5 Days HB</p>
<p><b>Bournemouth</b> Suncliffe Hotel 16 March £259 Nil Single Sup 5 Days All Inclusive</p>	<p><b>Vale of Evesham &amp; Blossom Tour</b> Stourport Manor 13 April £335 £80 Single Sup 5 Days HB</p>	<p><b>English Riviera</b> Queens Hotel 6 April £299 Nil Single Sup 5 Days HB</p>
<p><b>Spring in Scotland</b> Winnock Hotel 23 March £435 £90 Single Sup 6 Days All Inclusive</p>	<p><b>01474 334434</b></p>	<p><b>Theatre Trips</b>  Tina Turner Mary Poppins Great Coral Classics Beautiful-Carol King please call for details</p>

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# DECEMBER 2020 Donation Guide

The next collection dates are Saturday and Sundays 9 am to 6 pm  
28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> November and 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> December

**PLEASE NOTE: FOR THE NEXT COLLECTIONS THEY HAVE SPECIALLY REQUESTED THAT WE GIVE PRIORITY TO THE HIGHLIGHTED ITEMS BELOW**

- ✓ Instant noodles
- ✓ Hot and cold meats
- ✓ Tinned pies
- ✓ Tinned potatoes & smash
- ✓ Macaroni cheese
- ✓ Tinned rice pudding & custard
- ✓ Hot puddings
- ✓ Small bottles of squash
- ✓ Cereal bars & crisps

- ✓ Hot Chocolate
- ✓ Christmas treats

### Toiletries

- ✓ Bio laundry tablets
- ✓ Washing up liquid
- ✓ Toilet rolls

### Also required:

- Meat pies
  - UHT whole and semi skimmed milk
- 
- Tin spaghetti and sausages
  - Instant packets of cup of soup

- 
- Juice
  - Tinned vegetables
  - Instant packets of cous cous
  - Spreads – jam and peanut butter marmite

- 
- Vegetarian foods
  - Coffee, tea, hot chocolate, sugar.
  - Jars of pasta sauce
  - Cereals, sweet & chocolate biscuits
  - Jars of pasta sauce
  - Cereals, sweet & chocolate biscuits

- Tinned fruit, sponge puddings
- Pasta and rice

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