

Second Sunday before Lent

Our Gospel reading expresses the great mystery which is at the heart of our faith: that God became human. The reading from Proverbs is full of light, beauty and joy as the voice of Wisdom talks about rejoicing in the world at the very beginning of creation. One version of the Bible uses the word “playing” and speaks of Wisdom being God’s darling and delight. It speaks of a new creation where everything is as it should be and anything is possible. Things are no longer as they were at the beginning, unspoiled, but the Gospel message is that even in our battered world the light of life and beauty still shines – the darkness has not overcome it. God still delights in the human race, in each one of us. And if God delights in us then surely it matters to him how we respond.

No darkness in our lives can overcome that light but sometimes it does seem as if the darkness is all there is and that’s when we need each other. Our own light may go out for a while leaving us lost in the darkness. But being part of the body of Christ means that someone else nearby is carrying a light and can hold that up for us until our darkness passes. Then it may be our turn to hold the Christ light for someone else. There is darkness around us: in the damage we have done to our world; in the tragedies and disasters we hear about daily; in our own lives and in the lives of others. But in that darkness a light shines and refuses to be overcome. A light which offers us new hope, new strength, new courage and new starts. God delights in us: there is no darkness that can overcome that light.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday 7th February, an invitation from Khaleel Miyan <khaleel.miyana@gmx.co.uk> of the Ahmaddiyya Muslim community to an interfaith meeting, 7 pm, at St Stephen’s Church, Warwick Road, Thornton Heath. The subject will be Justice, Faith and Harmony. Food will be served afterwards. Please reply to Khaleel if you wish to be there.

Lent is fast approaching, and our **Mass for Ash Wednesday** with the Imposition of Ashes, will be held at St Mark’s Church on **14th February** at 8 pm.

Croydon Episcopal Area Lay Conference on **Saturday 2nd March** 9.30 am – 4 pm at St Bede’s School, Redhill. The Lay Conference is a day to celebrate all that lay people do beyond the walls of their churches. Bishop Rosemarie will open the conference and Dr Elaine Storkey will unpack the outpouring of praise from Mary about the mercy and goodness of God, and reflect on how Christians might act on that in the light of the challenges of our own day. There will be 19 workshops on a variety of topics led by lay people from Croydon and other parts of the Diocese. Tickets are £10 at [From Praise to Passionate Action: Croydon Episcopal Area Lay Conference Tickets, Sat 2 Mar 2024 at 09:30 | Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/from-praise-to-passionate-action-croydon-episcopal-area-lay-conference-tickets-sat-2-mar-2024-at-09-30-17404447497)

Welcome to the United Benefice of Holy Innocents and St. Mark, South Norwood

Sharing God’s grace and love in our community



4th February 2024

Vicar: Vacant

Priest (PTO): Revd. Mother Susan Wheeler-Kiley, TSSF, SCP

Reader (PTO): Mrs. Cicelyn Hinds,

SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE LENT

8.00am BCP Mass (St. Mark)

10am Parish Mass (Both Parishes)

*Proverbs 8.1.22-31 * Psalm 104 * Colossians 1.15-20 * John 1.1-14*

*Today at Holy Innocents we welcome **Mahalia McKoy**, her parents and god parents, into the family of Christ, as she comes for her baptism this morning. **Mother Barbara Gentilella** is presiding and preaching at St Mark.*

Access online worship via

www.youtube.com/c/StMarksSouthNorwood

CHURCH NOTICES

Pastoral Care: Funerals, baptisms, weddings, please contact Mother Susan 07890 780572, fs.kiley@btinternet.com or Cicelyn Hinds 07484 677951. Please note that Mother Susan’s day off is Friday.

The Benefice is now in vacancy. For Parish matters, please contact in the first instance, the respective church wardens, St Mark – Donald Ferguson (mr.dferguson@hotmail.com) Holy Innocents – John Gaisey (johngaisey1975@gmail.com) and Laurél Hird (lhird@btinternet.com)

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We pray: for Archbishops Justin and Stephen; for the Bishops in this diocese, Christopher, Rosemarie and Martin. **For** the Bishops, priests, deacons and people in our link Dioceses of Zimbabwe and *The Anglican Church of South America.*

Pray for the **St Mary Magdalen w St Olave, St John & St Luke, Bermondsey** Charles Moore (Rector) Peter Welby (Assistant Curate) Mark Fyffe (London City Missioner) Boutcher CofE Primary School Estates Outreach – Southwark.

For the sick – Marina, Richard, Alec, Malik, Simon, Curlette, Caroline, Susan, Norman, and Sacha.

The bereaved – John and the Appiah family and Sarah and the Cromwell-Price family.

The recently departed – Kyria Cromwell and George Kojo Appiah **Years Mind**