

On this Fourth Sunday of Advent, on our Advent Wreath, we light the candle for Mary, who bore Jesus in her womb, to complete the picture of those who prepared for the coming of Christ. We begun with 'The Patriarchs' which naturally focused on Abraham, our father in faith, and David, the ancestor in whose city Jesus was born. This was followed by 'The Prophets' which gave an opportunity to reflect on the way the birth of the Messiah was 'foretold'. Then last week, it was John, who proclaimed the Saviour.

*Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, merciful and gentle:
to you be praise and glory for ever.*

*Your light has shone in our darkened world
through the child-bearing of blessed Mary;
grant that we who have seen your glory
may daily be renewed in your image
and prepared like her for the coming of your Son,
who is the Lord and Saviour of all.*

As we pray for peace in the Holy Land and in other places of conflict around the world, I commend *this prayer and appeal from the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem, The Most Revd. Hosam Naoum:*

O God of all justice and peace, we cry out to you in the midst of the pain and trauma of violence and fear which prevails in the Holy Land.

Be with those who need you in these days of suffering; we pray for people of all faiths-Jews, Muslims and Christians and for all people of the land.

While we pray to you, O Lord, for an end to violence and the establishment of peace, we also call for you to bring justice and equity to the peoples.

Guide us into your kingdom where all people are treated with dignity and honour as your children - for to all of us you are our Heavenly Father.
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

For every card sent, a donation will be made to the Archbishops of Jerusalem and Canterbury's joint appeal for the Al Ahli Arab Anglican Hospital providing life-saving medical care for all the citizens of Gaza.

*If you wish to make your own donation you can do so via:
www.jmeca.org.uk/get-involved/donate/current-appeals-0/al-ahli-hospital-gaza-appeal*

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

This evening at 11pm, we meet at St Mark for our annual Joint Christmas Eve Midnight Mass.

Tomorrow, ***25th December, Christmas Day***, we meet at ***St Mark at 8am*** for BCP Mass; then we meet at ***10am at Holy Innocents*** for the Parish Mass; and from ***12.30pm, in St. Mark's Hall, we host Christmas Dinner*** for those in our community who do not wish to spend Christmas on their own.

Thursday, 28th December, 10am at Holy Innocents, we commemorate the Festival of the Holy Innocents.

Sunday, 31st December, 11pm, Watch Night Mass at Holy Innocents. The Eucharist will be followed by drinks and nibbles in the Church – as we say Farewell to Mother Roxanne as she prepares to leave the United Benefice to take up a new Diocesan role.

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

Sharing God's grace and love in our community



24th December 2023

Vicar: The Revd. Canon Roxanne F. Eversley
Priest (PTO): Mtr. Susan Wheeler-Kiley TSSF
Reader (PTO): Mrs. Cicelyn Hinds

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8.00am BCP Mass (St. Mark)

10am Parish Mass (Both Parishes)

*2 Samuel 7.1-11, 16 * Psalm 89 * Romans 16.25-27 * Luke 1.26-38*

Access online worship via

www.youtube.com/c/StMarksSouthNorwood

CHURCH NOTICES

Pastoral Care: Mother Roxanne is usually available on Tel. 020 8916 1830 or 07723 038215 or at mtrroxanne@gmail.com but N/A on Mondays. Mother Susan is contactable on 07890 780572; and she's not available on Fridays.

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 of The Episcopal Church in the Philippines.

For all who cannot share the joy of Christmas and for all those facing their first Christmas alone.

For the sick – Richard, Jennifer & Reuben, Rose, Caroline, Susan, Sigi, Marie-Gabrielle, Colin (Castle), Carmen, Marina, Linda, Fred, Peter, Kay, Simon, Alec, Naomi, Michael, Rudolph, Malik, Dionne, Roy, Mick and Norman.

The bereaved – the Appiah, Gaisey, Robinson, Powell, Dempster and Brown families.

The recently departed – George Kojo Appiah; Ruth Robinson; Lee Powell, Ron Dempster and Donna Brown (whose Funeral takes place at St Mark's Church on Friday, 29th December at 11.30am). **Years Mind.**

A huge Thank You to all those who have provided sandwiches (or assisted in the provision thereof) to Night Watch during November and December 2023, our last provision being next Friday – very grateful to Norma, Ann, Sylvina and Evro, Margarets (Zebedee and Hall), Curlette, Marlene, Maureen, Marcia Knight, Patricia and Theresa; and to Marina.

Who knows, perhaps next year, the Croydon Churches Floating Shelter may return to hosting the homeless in Church Halls during the Winter months. Should this happen, one or two people will be required to take the lead and co-ordinate the Shelter usually held at Holy Innocents Church Hall. **Thank you All very much!**