

CATHEDRAL OF ST MARY & ST HELEN HOLY CROSS AND ALL SAINTS

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FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A) JUBILEE YEAR - 'Pilgrims of Hope'

Sunday, 30 November 2025

Spiritual Reflection:

Advent is a Season of Light. It is a time in which the light of Christ shines forth into our lives and into our world, and we receive a great gift; 'to us a child is born, to us a Son is given'. In John's Gospel, Christ says of himself: 'I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness'.



The Advent season has its roots in the pagan festival of the winter solstice. The word 'solstice' is derived from the Latin word *sol* (sun) and *sister* (to stand still). The pagan world hungered for light and worshipped the sun god *Sol Invictus*, who was invoked each day at sunrise. As bright and as powerful as the sun is, we know it cannot cast its light on the greatest mysteries of our existence or penetrate the darkness of sin and death. The prophet Isaiah declared hundreds of years before the birth of Christ: 'The people who walked in the darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness. On them has light shined'.

Advent then is an opportunity for us to come into this light, see with the light of Christ and walk our pilgrim way such that we let our light shine.



"Come, Lord
Jesus, bring your
light into the
winter darkness!
Help us to see
the goodness in
others."

Advent literally means 'coming' and the church has always sought to remind us during this holy season of the three comings of Christ: his first at his birth, his second at his return to earth in glory, and his third when he comes into each of our lives. The work of the Spirit in our lives is twofold: he compels us

to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father, and moves us to pray with heartfelt longing, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come.'

Jesus is the meaning of Christmas. He is the meaning of human existence. The baby born in the stable, in poverty and helplessness as God made man, is our light and hope. We lift up our hearts in praise and thanksgiving for Jesus who is the Light of the World, the light which darkness could not extinguish or overcome.

MARANATHA, COME LORD JESUS!

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,



DEATH OF BISHOP THOMAS McMAHON RIP: It is with great sadness that I announce the death of Bishop Thomas McMahon, Emeritus Bishop of the Diocese of Brentwood for 34 years. Bishop Thomas was a Priest of Diocese when he was called to the Episcopacy in 1980, replacing Bishop Patrick Casey who retired. He served the Diocese faithfully during those years, working ecumenically with many

Christian Churches. His Pastoral visitations were always a time of great joy in parishes, and he would spend a great deal of time with the Priests and People. He loved the Liturgy and always advocated good liturgy and music in our parishes. One of his greatest achievements was the building of the present Brentwood Cathedral, which he was very proud of. And it will be at the Cathedral that his Requiem Mass will be celebrated by His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Bishop Alan Williams, many of the Bishops of England & Wales, Priests & People of the Diocese of Brentwood.

On Monday, 15th December at 5.00pm Bishop Thomas's Body will be received into the Cathedral, and Vespers will be celebrated, to which parishioners are welcome.

On **Tuesday, 16th December at 11.30am**, Requiem Mass will be celebrated followed by interment in the Parish Cemetery.

Please see insert for a Biography of Bishop Thomas McMahon RIP

CATHEDRAL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR & GRAND DRAW
SATURDAY, 6TH DECEMBER 2025, 11.00am - 3.00pm

ONLY ONE WEEK TO GO: Next ***Saturday, 6th December***. This is a final call to all parishioners to continue in your response for gifts and items for all the various stalls. Anything you may think will sell will be welcomed, you can drop off all items in the Narthex, or during the week at Clergy House. New and nearly new items are good. Please do not drop off clothing unless it is new. New baby clothes are always welcome. A Bazaar is not a Jumble Sale, so please think carefully about what you're donating. Thanking you all in anticipation of your generosity. My experience of Bazaars is that they are truly a wonderful social occasion for the whole parish community. Lots of parishioners can get involved. **There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex of the Cathedral if you can help in any way the day before *Friday, 5th December* in setting up, and *Saturday, 6th December* at the Bazaar itself, and afterwards in the grand clear up.**



GIFTS AND ITEMS FOR VARIOUS STALLS: - One of the most successful stalls at a Bazaar is the 'BOTTLE STALL' - I would appeal to the parish for about 300 bottles of wine and spirits. If every parishioner brought one bottle, we would achieve our goal. **LOTS MORE BOTTLES PLEASE!** Toiletries are always popular. Children's toys & cuddly toys, which

are in good condition. Fancy goods; and good Bric-a Brac. Knitted goods. Various Gift Cards. On the day there will be refreshments, a home baked cakes stall, jams & preserves. Various sweets and chocolates, Christmas chocolate stockings, candy canes. Good quality toys and new toys. Small children's gifts for Santa's Grotto. NO CLOTHING (Except brand new).

SWEETS, CHOCOLATES, BOTTLES, FANCY GOODS, TOILETRIES, ALL ITEMS

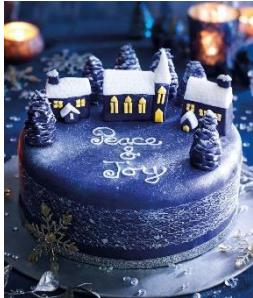
Please continue donating now!
You can drop off at Clergy House during the week.

CHRISTMAS GRAND DRAW PRIZES: We would like to request various Grand Draw Prizes to be donated please, all brand-new items please: A Colour Television Flat Screen, Wii, X BOX, I Pods, Air Fryer. Any other new electrical goods. Various Christmas Hampers, Crate of Wine, Restaurant Vouchers, Theatre Vouchers, Hotel Vouchers, National Trust Membership, Or Spa Vouchers, Crystal Glass Sets, M & S Vouchers for Christmas, Fitbit Watch, Beats Headphones, Fortnum & Mason or M & S Hampers, Large Christmas Cake. Bottle of Champagne. & Other Prizes. **PLEASE DONATE NOW.** Would there be any parishioners who would be willing to donate some Money Grand Draw Prizes £200, 100, & £50. This can also be Gift Aided if we have your GA Number.



PLEASE KINDLY RETURN GRAND DRAW TICKETS BY SATURDAY, 6TH DECEMBER 2025.

FINANCIAL MONEY DONATION: If anyone would like to make a money donation to the Bazaar this year, it will be very welcomed. Also, if you belong to the Parish Gift Aid Scheme, please quote your Gift Aid Number, so we can claim back the Tax. Thank you!

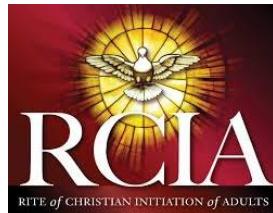


SPECIAL NOTE TO BAKERS: Baking hats on this week! If anyone is good at making Christmas Cakes, please put on your baking hats. Last year there was a demand for Christmas Cakes, and we ran out very quickly. This could be your contribution to the Bazaar. Also, Cupcakes and Fairy Cakes, Bread Pudding, Flap Jacks, Rice Crispy Cakes, Apple Pies, Fruit Cakes, Sponge Cakes. To all our bakers, please ensure you itemise your ingredients in all your cakes, as some people suffer with various allergies. Thank you! Cakes can be dropped off on Friday, afternoon 5th December & Saturday morning 6th December from 10.00am

MATCHED GIVING: COULD WE MAKE A SPECIAL APPEAL FOR MATCHED GIVING? Can anyone help with Matched Giving from your Firm or Bank? Many companies do employ a Matched Giving facility; all you need to do is ask your place of employment; this truly would be of great benefit to us. If you work at the bazaar on a particular stall, whatever is raised is often matched by the company or bank. Please investigate it!

JOURNEY OF FAITH PROGRAMME - RCIA:

Continues next Thursday, 27th November. Please keep all our enquirers in your thoughts and prayers as they continue in their faith journey. Theme: The Sacrament of Reconciliation. If you know of anyone who may be interested in learning more about the Roman Catholic Faith, please contact Fr John at Clergy House Tel No: 01277 265235



WALK WITH ME - ADVENT REFLECTIONS: This little book of reflections for all the days of Advent up to Christmas & the New Year is available from the Narthex. They cost £1.50 This is a wonderful way to prepare during the Advent Season for the Coming of Our Saviour once again into our lives this Christmas.

CHAPTER MASS: *Monday, 1st December 2025.* Will be celebrated by Bishop Alan Williams at 10.30am. At this Mass Fr Jean-Laurent Marie will be inducted as a new Canon of the Chapter. Sincere congratulations to Canon Jean-Laurent. The Canons of the Diocese are chosen from among the senior priests and are also the Bishop's College of Consultors. There will not be a 9.15am Mass that day.



ADVENT PARISH PENITENTIAL SERVICE: In preparation for Christmas, it is customary for all Roman Catholics to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This Advent our Reconciliation Service will take place on *Monday, 15th December at 7.30pm.* Bishop

Thomas McMahon's Body will have been received into the Cathedral at 5.00pm with Sung Vespers. There will be several Priests available to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I strongly urge all Catholic Parishioners to avail themselves of the Sacrament before Christmas.

CREDIT CARD PAYMENT TERMINAL - While the credit card terminal is being repaired, I would ask that you please use the QR codes (which are posted on the noticeboard in the Narthex) to make your donations. Thank you.

COFFEE AFTER 9.30 MASS will be hosted by the St. Helen's Ladies Group and next week will be the turn of the Love in Action Group. Please do join us.

MISSIO If you have not yet returned your Missio box, could you please do so, urgently, either to the narthex or Clergy House. Thank you.

NEW CTS SUNDAY MISSAL There are still some copies available from the Narthex at a cost of **£10.00 each**. The Missals run from this Sunday - The first Sunday of Advent 2025 to Christ the King 2026.

DIOCESAN DIRECTORY 2025 Copies of this are available for purchase from the narthex - **£3.20 each**. Please place money in the wall safe marked "Publications / Booklets". Many thanks.

FOODBANK COLLECTION - Please consider making a contribution to the parish food bank collection this weekend ***29th/30th November***. All the donations go to the Brentwood Food Bank to help local people in need. Donations of non-perishable items such as tinned meat/vegetables/fruit as well as dried goods, toiletries and treats will be gratefully received. If you wish to donate money instead, these can be Gift aided. Please place cash in an envelope clearly marked with 'Brentwood Foodbank Donation' or make cheques payable to Brentwood Foodbank.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS - Would anyone be available to help the flower ladies decorate The Cathedral on Christmas Eve? We start at 10.30am. If you are able to assist, please contact Roisin Cassels in advance on 07845 120 310, so she knows how many helpers to expect. Don't forget, the crib and tree also need to be decorated! **There will be a second collection for Christmas Flowers on the weekend of 13th/14th December**. Thank you.

STEPHEN KING We acknowledge with deep gratitude the outstanding work and contribution to the Cathedral, Cathedral Parish and Diocese of Stephen King, who will be retiring from the post of Cathedral Organist at the end of December. Stephen has worked here since 1992; through his hard work, tireless and reliable service, outstanding musicianship and professionalism, he has greatly contributed to the building up of the music department to what it is today. He has additionally done so much to link us to local and national music organisations. In recognition of this he has been appointed to the honorary title Organist Emeritus of Brentwood Cathedral.

He will be continuing with his many freelance musical activities in Brentwood and elsewhere but we look forward to seeing him from time to time! We offer him every good wish.

May God bless you all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr John", is written over a horizontal line.

MASS TIMES in the Cathedral:

SATURDAY VIGIL MASS at 6.30 p.m.

SUNDAY: 8.00 a.m. / 9.30 a.m. / 11.30 a.m. & 6.30 p.m.

WEEKDAY MASSES Monday to Friday at 9.15 a.m.

SATURDAY: 9.15 a.m.

THE HOLY HOUR of prayer and adoration before the Blessed Sacrament takes place on a **Monday evening from 6.30 - 7.30pm.** and will be preceded by the **ROSARY** for Ukraine and peace in our world at 6.10 p.m.

PILGRIMS OF HOPE PRAYER GROUP - for this special jubilee year why not join the parish Pilgrims of Hope prayer group? It couldn't be easier. The group pray **every Monday evening at 8.00pm.** Prayers and reflections are shared on a WhatsApp group with each person praying privately wherever they find themselves. If you'd like to join the WhatsApp group then please give your mobile number and name to the parish secretary.

SICK AND HOUSEBOUND PARISHIONERS If you know anyone who is unable to come to Mass but would still like to receive Holy Communion in their home, contact Clergy House so we can put them on our Sick Communion list.

THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK is available to anyone who is gravely ill or about to have an operation, so if you know someone who should receive this important sacrament then please speak to a member of the clergy or ring the parish office on 265235.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION is available in the Cathedral on Saturdays from 10.00 - 11.00am. Confessions in Italian are also offered.

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR SICK and housebound parishioners and friends, including: Sylvia Allum, Merle Anderson, Suzie Anderson, Alistair Bailey, Yvonne Ball, Hermine Bayley, Heidi Brenke, Eda Bright, Roisin Cassels, Esmeralda Chester, Keith Chester, Dermot Dalton, David, Iris Davis, Patricia Decup, Sheila Deed, Charlotte Donnelly, Margaret F, Rebecca Florendo, Angela Gavin, Julian Goode, Deacon Nicholas Holmes, Wong Su Hwa, Jess, Lisa Landy, Suzie Law, Lawrence, Peter Madden, Romek Matyszczyk, Tony Maule, John McCarthy, Carmel Micallef, Stephanie Murray, Harry Newman, Barney O'Driscoll, Joe O'Herlihy, Steven Poole, Margaret Ross, Geraldine Sheehan, Robin Shenton, David Spring, Mary Stretch, Tim, TCT, Siobhan Vaughan, Michael Wilson, Kalcho Yankov and all our sick

THE MARILLAC is looking for musicians to accompany the congregation at the 10.00am Sunday morning Mass, as the current organist will be away for the next few months. Are there any musicians who would be able to help? If so, please contact Sister Kathleen on 01277 220276.

ST HELEN'S CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL Is delighted to announce that from September 2026, they will educate children from 3 years to 7 years old. This means that they will be opening a school-based nursery for 3-4-year-olds in September.

VACANCIES - ST. PETER'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, BILLERICAY - MIDDAY ASSISTANT

<https://www.essexschoolsjobs.co.uk/Vacancies/Details.aspx?VacancyId=114935>

Closing date is ***Midday on Wednesday, 3rd December 2025***

URSULINE PREPARATORY SCHOOL - EYFS TEACHING ASSISTANT

The Ursuline Preparatory School based in Warley, Brentwood seeking to appoint an EYFS experienced Teacher Assistant at our thriving Prep. School from January.

The successful candidate for the full-time EYFS Teacher Assistant position will be expected to support the teacher and children within the class.

Salary offered will be dependent on knowledge and experience. Please apply in writing with accompanying CV to Mrs. Wilson, Headteacher by post to Ursuline Preparatory School, Great Ropers Lane, Warley, Brentwood, CM13 3JW or via e-mail:secretary@ursulineprepwarley.co.uk

Closing date for application is ***Friday, 12th December 2025***

ST. PETER'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, ROMFORD - HEADTEACHER

Deadline for applications: ***12.00 Noon on Tuesday, 6th January 2025***

HOLY FAMILY PRIMARY SCHOOL - BENFLEET - HEADTEACHER

Deadline for applications: ***09:00, Wednesday, 28th January 2026***

EDUCATION SUPPORT ADMINISTRATOR - CATHEDRAL HOUSE

A vacancy has arisen to provide administrative and general departmental support to School Advisors across the Education Department of the Diocese. The post will be part-time - 22 hours per week - 4 days per week working from 9.00am - 3.00pm with half an hour for lunch. Term time only. Salary £14.50 per hour

The closing date for applications is **5.00pm on Friday, 5th December 2025**

If you have any queries or if you would like to apply, please send your CV by email to hr@brcdt.org

WALSINGHAM HOUSE TEAM 26/27 - Applications are now open for the Walsingham House Team 26/27. Being on the team is a wonderful opportunity to work with young people from across the diocese, live in community and to share and deepen our faith. Applications are open to those aged 18-23 (current Year 13 and above).

For more information including the application form please see the website <https://bcys.net/whabbotswick/be-on-team/> or email michaelkearns@brcdt.org. Applications close on **Friday, 16th January 2026**.

PLEASE REGISTER TODAY AS A CATHEDRAL PARISHIONER: It is very simple. Each adult parishioner should either go to “Parish Census” at www.cathedralbrentwood.org or use the QR code below:

COMPLETE THE
FORM ONLINE



For those of you who cannot complete the registration form online, forms are available in the narthex of the Cathedral. Once you have filled in the form, please return it to Clergy House.

GENERAL NEWS

CAFOD: RESPONSE IN GAZA Your donations to Gaza since the start of the conflict have been a vital lifeline. Right now, CAFOD's partner, Caritas Jerusalem, is delivering essential medical treatment to displaced people and providing medicines to treat chronic illnesses. We have helped 1,400 households with cash to buy supplies in the last month and we are currently feeding 2,000 people with new stocks of flour and rice. Despite the restrictions on aid coming into Gaza, CAFOD's local partners are working tirelessly to help people. And with your ongoing support, they will do all in their power to keep doing so. You can find out more about how you can make a difference in Gaza at cafod.org.uk. Thank you for backing our work through holding collections for our Family Fast Day appeals and for continuing to [pray for peace](#) in the Middle East.

QR CODES and CONTACTLESS GIVING A new online donation system has been set up so that parishioners and visitors are now able to donate by using a QR code directly to the Parish; donations can be made either with or without gift aid using the QR codes below or by scanning those displayed around the Cathedral:

giftaid it

Please treat as gift aid donation, all qualifying gifts of money made from the date of this declaration. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that, if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Donate £3.00	Donate £5.00	Donate £10.00	Donate £20.00
			

Donate without Giftaid-it

If you are unable to donate with Giftaid-it then please use the codes below.

Donate £3.00	Donate £5.00	Donate £10.00	Donate £20.00
			