

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY SEVENOAKS

Sunday Mass times:

Saturday
6:00pm

Sunday
8:00am (Latin)
9:15am (Children's Liturgy of Word)
11:15am
6:00pm

Adoration:

Monday 8:30am - 9:30am
Tuesday 6:00pm - 7:00pm

Weekday Mass times:

Monday 8:00am
Tuesday 9:30am
Wednesday 8:00am
Thursday 12:00noon
Friday 8:00am
Saturday 9:30am

Sacrament of Reconciliation:

Saturday
10:00am - 10:30am
5:15pm - 5:45pm

Fathers' day off:

Fr Vipin: **Monday**
Fr Piotr: **Tuesday**



Granville Road,
Sevenoaks TN13 1ER

Parish Office: Magdalena Wiacek
Mon. Wed. Thurs. Fri.
8:30am - 12:15pm
Tuesday closed
Tel: 01732 454177
sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk
www.sevrcparish.org.uk



High Street, Otford
TN14 5PH

MOST HOLY TRINITY OTFORD

Mass times: Sunday 9:30am
(with Children's Liturgy of the Word)
Wednesday 10:00am
Holy Days of Obligation 10:00am
Adoration: Thursday 7:30pm - 8:30pm
Friday 11:00am - 12:00noon

Church contact:

Barry Authers
Tel: 01959 524362
sevenoaksmht@rcaos.org.uk



Western Rd, Borough Green
TN15 8AG

ST JOSEPH'S BOROUGH GREEN

Mass times: Sunday 9:30am
(with Children's Liturgy of the Word)
Thursday 10:00am
Holy Days of Obligation 6:00pm

Church contact:

Antoni Offert
Tel: 07513 041075
sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk



Fawkham Rd, West Kingsdown
TN15 6JP

ST BERNADETTE'S WEST KINGSDOWN

Mass times: Sunday 11:00am
Friday 10:00am
Holy Days of Obligation 11:00am
Adoration: Wed 12:00noon- 1:00pm

Church contacts:

Jill & John Gobel
Tel: 01474 853676
sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk



ST THOMAS' CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

South Park,
Sevenoaks, TN13 1EH
www.saintthomas.co.uk

Headteacher:
Ms Geraldine Leahy
Tel: 01732 453921

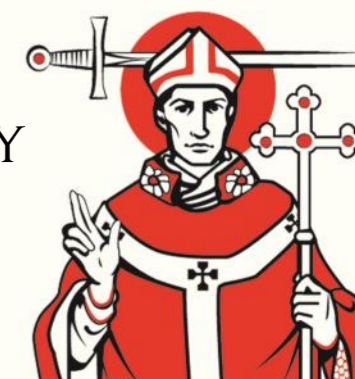
GIVE A LITTLE GIFT AID FORM



Archdiocese of
Southwark

PARISH OF ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY SEVENOAKS

CHURCHES IN SEVENOAKS, OTFORD,
BOROUGH GREEN AND WEST KINGSDOWN



Parish Newsletter

3rd December 2023

As the wet and cold days of an English winter envelop us, we embark on a spiritual journey of deep significance – the season of Advent. This time, revered by Christians worldwide, transcends the mere anticipation of Christmas. It is a period rich in reflection, waiting, and spiritual growth. Advent, from the Latin 'adventus' meaning 'coming', is a call to prepare our hearts for the arrival of Christ, our Light in the darkness. In the midst of winter's chill and the festive season's hustle, the light of the Advent wreath guides us towards the true meaning of Christmas.

THE ADVENT WREATH is made up of a circle of evergreen (representing time and eternity) into which four candles are inserted; one for each week of Advent (the candles can all be red, although many churches use 3 purple and 1 rose: the liturgical colours of Advent). A white candle is placed in the middle and is lit on Christmas day and throughout the Christmas season to show that Christ the light of the world has come. Each candle lit, week by week, is a symbol of the divine virtues Christ brings to our world - hope, peace, joy, and love. Their growing light is a poignant metaphor for the divine light piercing through the darkness of our world, and the personal shadows we each face. It represents a call to brighten the Christ-light within us, dispelling the gloom of uncertainty and despair. As the weeks of Advent go by the light increases to show that Christ's coming conquers the darkness of this world.

As we prepare to welcome our Lord we pray that he may enlighten us. Make the lighting of the candles a focus of prayer each evening [one candle first week, two the next and so on].

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR PRAYER:

1) **Start with the sign of the cross and say together:** *Come Lord Jesus, may your light dawn in our hearts and dispel the darkness in our lives.*

2) Then reflect on the theme of week/day [see the article on page 7]. As we await the coming of Jesus the Light of the World & Word of God we ask that prayer and works of charity will be the centre of our Christmas celebration.

3) Bring your prayer intentions before the Lord, pray for the grace to prepare for a truly Christian celebration of Christmas and conclude with this prayer:

Father of all creation, Lord of Light, prepare us to receive your Son who draws near as a radiant light to shine upon those lost in the darkness of selfishness and sin. Fill us with hope at his coming and bless us, so that our hearts may reflect the light of these candles, that Christmas may find us joyfully ready to receive our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

A verse of the popular carol too. 'O little town of Bethlehem' makes a very good daily Advent prayer:

O Holy Child of Bethlehem Descend to us we pray:

Cast out our sin and enter in, Be born in us today.

We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell.

O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel.



CONTACTS & ORGANISATIONS

Parish of St Thomas of Canterbury, Sevenoaks

Presbytery and Parish Office: 12 Granville Road, Sevenoaks, TN13 1ER

Website: www.sevrparish.org.uk **Tel:** 01732 454177

Parish Priest: Fr Peter Kucharski piotrku@rcaos.org.uk

Assistant Priest: Fr Vipin James, vipin@rcaos.org.uk

Parish Deacon: Rev'd Neil Philipson neilphilipson@rcaos.org.uk

Parish Secretary: Mrs Magdalena Wiacek sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk

Parish Office hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 8:30am - 12:15pm, **Tuesday - closed**

Safeguarding Rep: Ken Baines sevenoakssgl@safeguardrcaos.org.uk

The Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator can be contacted on 020 7261 1606; in an emergency dial 999

Adoration

Barry Authers: sevenoaksadoration@rcaos.org.uk

Altar Servers (St Thomas's)

Catherine Ingram: ingramfamily15@yahoo.com

Catenians

Social club for Catholic men

Aiden O'Mahony: aidan.omahony@btinternet.com

Children's Liturgy of the Word, Sunday Mass

Sevenoaks, 9:15am Mass:

Mark O'Prey: sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk

Oxford, 9:30am Mass:

Catherine Bennett: sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk

Borough Green, 9:30am Mass:

Fiona Newton: fionanewton321@btinternet.com

Choirs

Music Group:

Lonnie Christophers lonniechr@hotmail.com

Traditional Choir: Barbara Page 01732 454729

Borough Green: Chris Hurlll chris.hurll@outlook.com

Church Cleaning (St Thomas's)

James McSharry: jamesmcsharry@hotmail.com

Church Flowers (St Thomas's)

Kate Travers: katetravers521@hotmail.com

Confirmation Programme

Gabrielle Ellis: sevenoaksconfirmation@rcaos.org.uk

Parish Finance Committee

Secretary: Mary Scott - 3maryscott@gmail.com

First Holy Communion & Reconciliation Programme

Catherine Tan: sevenoaksfhc@rcaos.org.uk

Gift Aid:

Sean Corrigan: sevenoaksgac@rcaos.org.uk

Holy Trinity Committee

Secretary: Barry Authers - sevenoaksmht@rcaos.org.uk

Lectio Divina

Kathie Gonzalez 01732 761253

Listening to you (Bereavement Support)

Third Monday, 10:30am in Parish Room

Ronnie Campbell 01732 452988, Sarah Harrison 01959

522357, Kate Travers katetravers521@hotmail.com

Loaves and Fishes Foodbank

Isabelle Mercer: h.imercer@btopenworld.com

Mothers' Prayers

Mondays, 11:30am at Star House, Star Hill Road

01959 532505

Parent & Toddlers Group

Tuesdays 10:00am - 12:00noon, Parish Centre

Mary Hunt 07890 229794

RACET (Rural Africa Children's Education Trust)

MaryAnn Perasso 01959 522337, www.racet.org

Readers, Ministers & Welcomers Rota (St Thomas's)

Andrew Pembroke: st.thomas.rota@gmail.com

Repository

Open after Mass on Sunday: 8:00 am & 11:15am

RCIA

For adults becoming Catholic:

Andrew Wilkinson: sevenoaksrcia@rcaos.org.uk

Retreats

Catherine Roger: c.rodger@btinternet.com

St Bernadette's Committee

Secretary: Jill Gobel - jill.gobel@btinternet.com

St Joseph's Committee

Secretary: John Foley - johnandmariefoley@gmail.com

The Pilgrims

For retired parishioners

Jackie Pembroke 01732 450197

Scripture Fellowship

Reading a Gospel together

Andrew Wilkinson: andrewwilkos@gmail.com

St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP)

Can help financially, practically, and through visits to the

isolated or housebound. Contact Paul Boyle 07796564018 or

Kathie Gonzalez sevenoakssvp@gmail.com

Union of Catholic Mothers (UCM) (West Kingsdown)

Monica Biggs: mmdbiggs@outlook.com

Webmaster

Barry Authers: sevenoakswebmaster@rcaos.org.uk

THEMES FOR PRAYER IN ADVENT

Advent should not be seen as simply a warm up period for Christmas; but a time of prayerful preparation for the Advent (coming) of Christ. The Liturgy and traditions of the Church remind us that we are not only thinking of the historical event of our Lord's birth in Bethlehem, but also of his future coming in glory and most urgently his desire to be born in our hearts now. So Advent is concerned with Our Lord's coming in the past (in flesh & weakness), in the future (in power & glory) and in the present (in spirit & mystery).

During Advent we spiritually re-live the hopes and expectations of the Old Testament; awaiting the coming Messiah. Many of the ancient prayers of the season start with the invocation 'Excita Domine!' literally "Stir up O Lord"; they are an alarm call to awaken us from the sleep of apathy and indifference; a summons to reform and to focus our lives. Advent is a time then of prayer and penance to help us welcome Christ who desires to be born in our hearts. One text from St Paul's Letter to the Romans constantly resounds through Advent (Romans 13:11-12): "It is now the hour for you to rise from sleep, the night is far advanced; the day draws near. Let us cast off the deeds of darkness and put on the amour of light."

Three heralds lead us through Advent: the Prophet Isaiah, St John the Baptist and Our Lady; ask them to be your guides, to help you respond to the Lord's call as they did.

Maybe you could consider the following themes for your prayer time over the Advent season:

WEEK ONE - Isaiah and the prophets are heralds of hope and expectation, looking forward to God's deliverance of his people; pray during this week for a sense of longing in your heart for the light which Christ brings and pray that the peace and justice of God's Kingdom may become a reality in our world today. "Come Lord Jesus, hope of the prophets; prepare our hearts for your coming and fulfil the longing in our heart!"

WEEK TWO - John the Baptist is the bridge between the Old and New Testaments, who announces the fulfilment of the prophets' hopes. He is a herald of repentance and purification, calling out to us: "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" If we truly desire to welcome Christ then we must turn away from sin and grow in holiness. "Come Lord Jesus, heralded by John; purify our hearts that we may be prepared to receive you!"

WEEK THREE - The Blessed Virgin Mary is the herald of joy and union with God; her life was completely open to God's grace. She was a worthy temple to receive the Lord and the means through which he became 'Emmanuel' (God with us). Mary accepted God's will in joyful obedience: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word." She is the personification of the purpose and goal of Advent: to be united with Christ and become sharers in his divine life. "Come Lord Jesus, Son of Mary come to our hearts, be born in us anew!"

DURING THE LAST DAYS OF ADVENT the Church invokes her Lord with greater intensity; the Great 'O' Antiphons, used in the Evening Prayer of the Church, consist mainly of passages from the scriptures, and express the urgent need of humanity for their Saviour, Jesus Christ. Make them part of your prayer as we approach the feast of our Lord's birth.

17th December: O WISDOM you come forth from the mouth of the Most High. You fill the universe and hold all things together in a strong but gentle manner. Come and teach us the way of truth

18th December: O ADONAI [LORD] and Leader of Israel, you appeared to Moses in a burning bush and you gave the Law on Sinai. O Come and save us with your mighty power.

19th December: O STOCK OF JESSE, you stand as a signal for the nations. Kings fall silent before you whom the people acclaim. O Come, deliver us and do not delay.

20th December: O KEY OF DAVID and sceptre of Israel what you open no-one can close again: what you close no one can open. Come to lead the captive from prison; free those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

21st December: O RISING SUN, you are the splendour of eternal light and the Sun of Justice. O Come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

22nd December: O KING whom all the peoples desire, you are the cornerstone that makes all one. O Come and save mankind whom you have made of clay.

23rd December: O EMMANUEL, you are our King and Judge, the one whom the peoples await and their Saviour. O Come and save us, Lord our God.

24th December: Know that today the Lord will come, and in the morning you will see his glory.

PARISH AND OTHER NOTICES

ADVENT This Sunday we will begin the holy season of Advent. Advent is not just a countdown to Christmas, but an active waiting and deepening our faith.

ADVENT SEPCIALS

- Find time for private reflections and sign up for Southwark Advent Reflections 2023 at www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/news-events/news/southwark-advent-reflections/
- Come and spent time with Jesus at the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: we continue with our regular Adoration times at St Thomas, Sevenoaks on Mondays (8.30-9.30am) and Tuesdays (6.00-7.00pm), and additional session on Saturdays (10.00-11.00am), or at The Most Holy Trinity, Otford on Thursdays 7.30–8.30pm and Fridays 11.00am – 12.00noon, St Bernadette’s, West Kingsdown on Wednesdays 12–1pm.
- Sacrament of Reconciliation: as usual on Saturdays 10.00-11.00am & 5.15-5.45pm. There will be some extra opportunities for reconciliation with a priest available on Monday 18th December (8.30-9.30am), Tuesday 19th December (6.00-7.00pm), and with two priests available on Saturday 23rd December (10.00- 11.00am).
- RORATE CANDLE MASS: On Wednesday 20th December at 7.30pm, we will hold a special Rorate Caeli Mass. This traditional Advent Mass, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, is celebrated by candlelight, symbolizing Mary’s role in bringing the Light of the World into our darkness. The Mass will include a reflection on the meaning of the Christmas Season. These special events are designed to help us prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. We warmly invite each one of you to join in these moments of prayer, reflection, and reconciliation, as we journey together towards the joyous celebration of Christmas.

SECOND COLLECTION FOR CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

At Masses next weekend (9/10th December) the Second Collection at each church will be for Christmas flowers for that church. We thank the flower arrangers in advance.

ST THOMAS’S CHURCH PRE-CHRISTMAS CLEAN

On 14th December from 10 - 11 am could you spare just one hour to ensure ‘Our Lord’s House’ looks its best for Christmas? If so, just turn up on the day; no experience or cleaning materials required. For details contact James McSharry (jamesmcsharry@hotmail.com 07917 032024).

KEEP THE CHRISTIAN SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS. While the festive lights and decorations are delightful, we must remember that the heart of Christmas is the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. In our celebrations, let’s not forget to incorporate Christian symbols, such as the Christmas Crib,

which beautifully depicts the Nativity scene, guiding us back to the true essence of Christmas.

Beyond our decorations, there are other meaningful ways to express our faith during this season. Sending Christian Christmas cards and using religious-themed postage stamps available at post offices and some shops are simple yet powerful ways to share the message of Christ’s birth. Additionally, supporting local businesses and institutions that display a crib in their window is a wonderful way to encourage the wider community to keep Christ at the centre of Christmas. A special thank you to all the shops for their support in our annual crusade to put a crib on display in public places, especially Sugarloaf on Dartford Road, Sevenoaks Art Shop & Francis Chappell & Sons Funeral Directors on London Road, Ibbett Mosely, Bill Skinner, Marco, Nonna, Francis Jones on High Street, and Denise Thompson Designer Florist in Otford. If any other business or institution would like to join this initiative, please contact us.

As we prepare for Christmas, let us also focus on spiritual readiness through Advent services, prayer, and acts of charity.

CHRISTMAS EVE ‘CRIB SERVICE’

We are hoping to lead the short Liturgy for children before the Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve at St Thomas’s, but we are desperate for some parents to help organise it as well as children to participate. Please contact Magda in the Parish Office if you can help.

ST THOMAS’S REPOSITORY

We are seeking dedicated volunteers to help manage the repository at St Thomas’ church. This is a wonderful opportunity to serve our church community and ensure the smooth running of our repository between Masses. If you are interested or would like more information, please speak to Fr Peter, or Magda in the office.

ALTAR SERVERS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the altar servers and parents who attended the gathering on 24th November. A big thanks to everyone for your resilience and support. As we approach the joyous celebration of Christmas, we recognize the vital role that our altar servers play in enhancing the liturgy. Your dedication is truly valued. To prepare for the upcoming Christmas Holy Mass, we cordially invite all altar servers to a rehearsal on the 22nd of December (Friday) at 7:00pm in the church. Your presence and participation are crucial to the success of this celebration. We look forward to seeing you at the rehearsal.

MASS INTENTIONS

ALL MASSES ARE AT ST THOMAS’S CHURCH UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED

SUNDAY 3rd December

- 6:00pm (Sat)
- 8:00am (Latin)
- 9:15am
- 11:15am
- 6:00pm
- 9:30am *Otford*
- 9:30am *Borough Green*
- 11:00am *West Kingsdown*

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- Suzi Elliot RIP
- John O’Halloren RIP
- Private Intention
- John O’Halloren RIP
- Judy West RIP
- People of the Parish
- John Lobo RIP
- Patrick O’Grady RIP

Monday 4th Feria

- 8:00am Joseph & Josephine Brown RIP

Tuesday 5th Feria

- 9:30am Kenneth D’Souza RIP (anniversary)

Wednesday 6th Feria

- 8:00am Canon Philip Donnelly RIP
- 10:00am *Otford* Anthony Gibbons RIP and the comfort of his family

Thursday 7th Saint Ambrose, Bishop & Doctor of the Church

- 10:00am *Borough Green* John Bailey RIP (birthday)
- 12:00noon Paul Edwards RIP

Friday 8th December The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

- 8:00am Special Intention
- 10:00am *West Kingsdown* Victor Peter Johnson RIP

Saturday 9th Feria

- 9:30am Maguy Gregoire (90th birthday)

SUNDAY 10th December

- 6:00pm (Sat)
- 8:00am (Latin)
- 9:15am
- 11:15am
- 6:00pm
- 9:30am *Otford*
- 9:30am *Borough Green*
- 11:00am *West Kingsdown*

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- Canon Anthony Ford RIP
- Fr Joe Andradi
- People of the Parish
- Good health for Rosemary Taylor
- John Perkins RIP
- Sheila Ahrens RIP
- Canon Philip Donnelly RIP
- Kathleen & John Doyle RIP

FOR YOUR PRAYERS

THE SICK

Sue Spilstead, Valerie Dias, Gwen Farrell, Elizabeth Sherratt, Philip Hardaker, Paulina Andrea, Zamora Hernandez, Mavis Mitchell Lambert, Tony Barrett, Frank Easterbrook, Lynne Stanley, Veronica Williams, Yvonne Bollen, Peter Ringham, Ann Steven, Lilian Spragg, Mary & Chris Scott, Sean Cloke, Ann Farren and all in care and nursing homes in the Parish.

ANNIVERSARIES IN DECEMBER

Norah Leahy, Tim Leahy, Bert Spokes, Deidre Thomas, Gabriel Nye, Kathleen Smith, Robert Angibault, Tony Stevenson, Maureen Hanton, Molly Suwala, Edward Hibling, Sr Margaret Colson, Hazel Molloy, Rowland Connolly, Ignace Van Kan, Bernard Molland, Theresa Hart, Augustus Schnorr, Canon Donnelly, Annie Berry, John Horgan, Mark Otto, Margaret Salt, William Sherratt, Dolly de Havilland, Eileen Mackey, Martin Williams, Norah Salt, John Gerelli.

LATIN ANTIPHONS

Entrance:

Ad te levávi ánimam meam, Deus meus, in te confído, non erubéscam. Neque irrídeant me inimíci mei, étenim univérsi qui te expéctant non confundéntur.

Communion:

Dóminus dabit benignitátem, et terra nostra dabit fructum suum.