



**ST JAMES THE GREAT**  
*Catholic Church in Petts Wood*

# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



*St James – A shining light in Petts Wood*

## IN THIS EDITION | **December 2024**

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## FOLLOW US & FIND OUT MORE

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 <https://stjamespettswood.weebly.com>

# Advent and Christmas 2024

## St James The Great

**Christmas Offerings** - The collection at the Masses over the Christmas period are your personal offerings for your Parish Priest.

**Parish Office: Christmas Opening** - Please note that the parish office will be closed from Thursday 19th December, re-opening on Monday 6th January 2025. Emails sent during this period may not be read until 6th January, however we will do everything we can to respond to any urgent emails.

**Christmas Crib – Poinsettias Needed** - If you would like to donate some poinsettias for the crib this Christmas, they would be gratefully received. Please drop them off in the church or at the Parish Office by the 13th December.

**Christmas cards are now on sale** - Christmas cards and the like are now on sale in the repository.

**Christmas Day Lunch with Fr. David!** - Fr David would like to invite you to Christmas lunch if you will be on your own this year. Please contact the Parish Office if you would like to come. Volunteers Are Needed to Help Prepare Christmas Lunch with Fr. David on Wednesday 25th December!

Would you like to help organise Christmas lunch for Fr. David and his parish guests in the Community Centre this year? If you have ideas and would like to help please email the Parish Office: [pettswood@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:pettswood@rcaos.org.uk)

**Gifts for Christmas** - This year St James is supporting Demelza Hospice care for Children. At all Christmas Masses you are invited to bring a gift of a brand-new toy to put around the Christmas tree, or, if you prefer, to the parish office (281A Crescent Drive) Gifts can be for a child up to the age of 16. Demelza have prepared a wish list, which you are welcome to look at [https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/3HFQG8AWOIFL6?ref=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/3HFQG8AWOIFL6?ref=wl_share). Please DO NOT wrap the gift.

# Advent and Christmas Services

## St James the Great

**Sunday 1st December 3.00pm** Prayer Taize Style

**Wednesday 3rd December 7.30pm** Benedictine Spiritualit for today

**Wednesday 18th December 5.00pm** Petts Wood Churches together Carol Singing – Petts Wood Train Station Bridge

**Thursday 19th December 7.00pm** Christmas Mediation and Adoration in Community Centre

**Sunday 22nd December 4.00pm** Advent Carol Service

**Monday 23rd December 7.30pm** Advent Reconciliation Service

**Tuesday 24th December 6.00pm** Christmas Eve Mass

**Tuesday 24th December 11.30pm** Midnight Mass

**Wednesday 25th December 9.15am** Christmas Family Mass

**Wednesday 25th December 11.00am** Christmas Day Mass

**Thursday 26th December 10.00am** Boxing Day – Altar Servers

**Wednesday 1st January 2025 11.00am** New Year's Day

# Chair of the PPC - St James, Petts Wood

Dear Parishioners,

As we enter the season of Advent, I wanted to reflect on the incredible work happening across our parish community and share my heartfelt appreciation for the many individuals whose dedication makes St James a truly special place. Serving as Chair of the Parish Pastoral Council is both an honour and a joy, and my passion for our parish continues to grow with every opportunity to witness the depth of faith, compassion, and commitment within our community.

One of the remarkable qualities of St James is our ability to embrace tradition while looking forward with hope and purpose. Under Father David's visionary leadership, we are building a vibrant model of twenty-first-century Catholicism: one that is inclusive, welcoming, and dynamic. We have made strategic decisions this year, such as our recent stewardship drive, which has not only bolstered our resources but also strengthened our collective sense of responsibility and commitment to our mission. This support allows us to enhance our services, outreach, and worship, ensuring that St James continues to thrive as a place of welcome and connection.

Our pastoral team is a shining example of the care and empathy that defines our parish. From visiting the sick to supporting those facing challenges, their dedication brings the love of our faith into the lives of so many. The warmth and understanding they offer embody the very essence of what it means to be a part of this community.

Equally, our talented music ministry brings so much to our worship each week, with music that uplifts, inspires, and unites us. Led by a gifted and devoted music team, the ministry enhances our worship experience and brings joy to our congregation, whether through traditional hymns or more contemporary songs that resonate across all ages.

I would also like to recognise the invaluable work done by our Children's Liturgy team, who guide our youngest parishioners in their first steps of faith. This ministry provides a nurturing environment where children can explore and grow in their faith, helping to sow the seeds for the next generation of our community.

I know there are so many more who contribute to the life of our parish, from those who help with hospitality and catechesis to the tireless efforts of our parish administration and all the volunteers who give their time behind the scenes. Although it is impossible to mention everyone in one article, please know that every contribution is deeply valued and appreciated.

St James, Petts Wood, truly stands out as one of the most inclusive, dynamic, and special parishes within our Diocese, and I am grateful every day to be a part of this wonderful community. As we move forward together, the PPC remains committed to supporting Father David's vision, helping St James flourish as a beacon of faith and friendship.

Wishing you all a blessed Advent and a peaceful Christmas.



# Pastoral Care Pillar

*For it is in giving that we receive*

**St Francis of Assisi**

## Autism Awareness Session

A member of our team arranged this session open to parishioners and non parishioners to raise awareness of families, children and young adults dealing with the difficulties of day to day living.

Our guest Yvonne Newbold was excellent. The presentation on the subject of neurodiversity was informative, insightful and emotive. The Q&A was honest and down to earth giving examples of coping strategies that were based on Yvonne's own expert – by –experience. Yvonne has founded a charity Newbold Hope and her book "The Special Parent's Handbook" is an Amazon number one bestseller.

The following websites may be helpful

[www.newboldhope.com/about-yvonne](http://www.newboldhope.com/about-yvonne)

[www.caspabromley.org.uk/](http://www.caspabromley.org.uk/) [www.bromlymenacap.org.uk/support-and-services/children-family-services/specialist-autism-family-support-service](http://www.bromlymenacap.org.uk/support-and-services/children-family-services/specialist-autism-family-support-service)

## Mass for Deceased Clergy of the Deanery

Fr. David asked our team to support him with this annual service which took place here at St. James this year. A total of fifteen priests, retired priests and deacons attended and the names of all the deceased clergy in the Deanery were read out and recognised with a votive candle placed on the Sanctuary at regular intervals.

After the Mass we all went to the Community Centre for a light lunch. The Clergy really enjoyed relaxing and chatting together and our efforts to make everyone welcome were greatly appreciated.

## Memorial Service

On Sunday **10th November** we held our annual Mass for Deceased Relatives and Friends. First we remembered our parishioners who had their funerals at St James in the last year then we remembered close relatives and friends of our parishioners whose funerals took place elsewhere again in the last year. Finally we remembered all those who have died in previous years.

The Mass this year was very well attended and most of the congregation went to the Community Centre afterwards for light refreshments.

The organisation behind this Mass is very involved and the PCT would like to thank both Caroline and Suzanne for all their help and support in the preparation. The Musicians were amazing, poignant, thoughtful and reflective. Just perfect thank you. A big thank you to the CWL who quietly and so efficiently, behind the scenes, dealt with the refreshments in the Community Centre.

Finally, a sincere and heartfelt thank you to Fr. David for always ensuring that every Mass is meaningful especially the Memorial Mass.

## White Christmas Tree

The PCT will place all the Gold Stars on this tree during December and the lights will be switched on during the Carol Concert on Sunday **22nd December**.



On that note we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Peaceful.

## Memorial Book

If you would like the name of a deceased family member put into the memorial book, please email the parish office with their name and date they passed away.



# Finance Pillar



## **Congratulations to the November Winners**

£100 Helen Wright Number 20

£50 Hilary Teare Number 15

£25 Brendan Wright Number 95

£25 Joseph Jagger Number 171

The 200 Club continues to flourish and at present there are five vacancies available. Subscriptions are £5 per month payable on the first day of each month. Alternatively subscriptions can be paid annually online or by cheque for £60 payable to St James the Great 200 Club. Details are as follows:

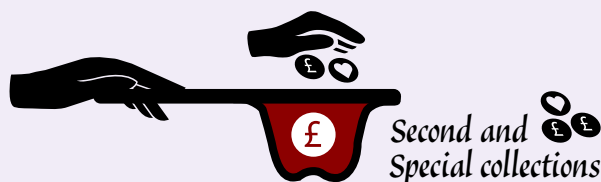
### **Natwest Orpington**

**Sort Code** 60 16 03

**Account Number** 77878736

**Account Name** St JamesChurch 200 Club.

Anyone wishing to join please contact Ken Evans telephone 01689 851793 or the Parish Office 01689 827100.



## **Second collections in December**

**1st December - JPIC**

**8th December- Building/Maintenance Fund**

**25th December - Christmas Offering**

If payments to these second collections are being made by Bankers Order, please show the following payment references:

**JPIC Project** - JPIC/Gift Aid Number/ Surname

**Maintenance Fund** - Buildfund/Gift Aid Number/ Surname

**Christmas Offering** - Xmas/Gift Aid Number/ Surname

**We take this opportunity to thank you all for your generous support of St James' parish especially during the past difficult years and we pray those conditions do not repeat themselves.**

### **Did you know ?**

- If you are a tax payer and you would like to register for Gift Aid it is easy to do so using the card readers in the church porch. The first time you use the reader you will have to enter your name and address but after that your card will be recognised and the gift aid will be added automatically.

- If you are a gift aider, your payments are credited on the date when they are received. So if you are away and want to make up for missed contributions you don't need to use separate envelopes for the dates you have missed. Just put your donation into one envelope !

- Each month there is a second collection for the parish building fund and gift aiders can use the small envelopes which are available in the church porch. Please do not use these envelopes if you are not a gift aider – it costs the parish money and makes extra work for the volunteers who count the collection.

The parish is very grateful for your continued generosity – thank you very much.



# Evangelisation Pillar

## **Eucharist Adoration – Be Still in the Presence of the Lord**

Time set aside in your hectic life – wasting time in silence with God, takes place for an hour each Wednesday shortly after the Morning Mass and the Wednesday Café, starting at 10.45am and finishing with Benediction at 11.15am and on the first Friday of the month from 5pm till 7pm. The next will be on Friday **6th December**. All are welcome for all or part of this time of Adoration ending with Benediction.

## **Pondering the Word (Lectio Divina)**

A quiet reflective look at the following Sunday's Gospel. **Mondays 11am-12 noon**, except for Bank Holidays, meetings are via zoom. Please contact the parish office who will arrange the zoom link to be sent to you. All are welcome

## **Prayer Meetings on Thursdays**

Charism Thursdays exists to establish a weekly spiritual hour of rest and worship, open to anyone who is interested in deepening their connection with the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

During charismatic worship songs, each member is encouraged to participate and share their spiritual gifts from a place of liberty and freedom. Rest and contemplation in the Agape love of God is primary, contributions in scripture reading, words of encouragement, pictures and prayer etc is secondary.

Along with the main focus of group singing, we focus on practices of meditation and circling.

These types of practices help to facilitate transformative experiences through the work of the Holy Spirit.

We have already enjoyed our first few meetings with a good response.

Everyone is welcome to participate in the **weekly event, starting at 7pm** in the church.

## **Advent 'Keep Watch and Pray' Taize Service - Sunday 1st December at 4 pm in the church.**

Before the onset of the Christmas festivities, come and spend some time in quiet meditative prayer with Taize chants to prepare spiritually for the season of Advent.

## **Parish Retreat to Worth Abbey**

A Personal Perspective by Joanna Longhurst

Over half-term a group of twenty something of us headed off to Worth Abbey to spend a weekend On Retreat. I had had my misgivings. How were the dynamics going to work out? Was this an individual retreat? A joint retreat? A group retreat? I needn't have worried. We were free to follow our instincts.

The theme was 'Come away and rest for a while' (Mk 6:31) and Worth Abbey, set in glorious Sussex countryside, was just the place to do precisely that. Amidst the backdrop of the Divine Office we reflected upon the story of Martha and Mary, enjoyed an entertaining and insightful talk by Dom Peter on the subject of Benedictine Spirituality, and celebrated a wonderfully intimate Eucharist in St Bruno's Guesthouse. By contrast, on the Sunday, we joined Monks and Parishioners for a theatrically choreographed, formal Eucharist, in the magnificent setting of the Abbey Church itself.

At the heart of this Retreat was the challenge of balance in our lives; balance between the contemplative and the active, between prayer and work, or, as the Benedictines would say, 'Ora et Labora'. Key Benedictine emphases, which struck a chord with me, also included Building Community and the need for Continual Conversion.

Moments of solitude could be found in the Abbey Church, open around the clock, in the Guesthouse Library turned cosy Oratory, or in the Quiet Garden a short walk away. Had time permitted, longer walks around the extensive grounds were also an option.

Mealtimes provided the perfect opportunity for convivial conversation, and the food was delicious, varied and plentiful!

I found the Retreat very uplifting. There was time and space for personal reflection, and also for communal discernment. I know I am not alone when I say that one of the things I appreciated most, was the chance to spend quality time with fellow Parishioners, in this deeply spiritual setting. Sincere thanks go to all who were involved in making this happen.

## **St Benedict**

We are scheduling a workshop about St Benedict and his Rule on Wednesday **4th December** between 7.30pm-9.00pm in the Community Centre.

Why St Benedict?

Because: "[...] Benedictine spirituality is the [...] the spirituality of the open heart."

The workshop will include an initial handout about St Benedict and will be followed by a discussion.

If you would like to join us, please reserve your place by contacting the Parish Office by email to [pettswood@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:pettswood@rcaos.org.uk).

Wisdom Distilled From the Daily, page 24, Sr Joan Chittister, O.S.B, published by HarperOne.



# Evangelisation Pillar

## Assisted Suicide: Update and Fast Facts

By Esther Theodore



*A snow dog trail is currently in Buxton raising money for and awareness of our local hospice Blythe House. Perfect timing for this topic.*

Assisted Suicide is back on the political and media agenda. We need to respond!

"In early September 2024, Our Lead Bishop for Life Issues, Bishop John Sherrington, called for Catholics to unite in prayer and compassionate action. That call is renewed now as on Wednesday, 16 October, the House of Commons heard the first reading of a new bill on assisted suicide tabled by Labour MP Kim Leadbeater.

This is another attempt to legalise assisted suicide and we need you to contact your MP to voice your opposition"

Bishops conference.

### Arise, shine out, stand up and be counted!

As you will know, MPs will be voting on the Assisted Suicide Bill on 29 November 2024. This will be the most significant vote on life issues in a generation.

It is imperative that we urgently write to our MPs, and urge family and friends to also consider doing so, to express our view on this polarised debate, especially given the pressure on MPs from the multi-million pound "Dignity"-in-Dying lobby.

If you're short on time, use this link, which takes you to a pre written letter, you just need to put in your postcode (so it will send to the right MP). It is best if you can personalise the letter, but don't let that stop you!

#### 1. Some may feel they want control over their own death

Arguing from a faith position, the intrinsic value and sanctity of human life from cradle to grave must be respected and protected at all costs.

Variations of the Hippocratic Oath sworn by (the majority of) doctors in the UK\* convey a promise along the lines of the original Oath: "I will use my power to help the sick to the best of my ability and judgement;

I will abstain from harming or wronging any man by it" - it orders doctors to do their best professionally and not use their skill or knowledge to harm or kill their patients.

*\*70% of UK medical schools report using the Oath*

#### 2. Some may be convinced assisted suicide is what is needed in the UK

There are extremely troubling stories and statistics from other countries which have brought in assisted suicide, pointing to large scale abuses of vulnerable people, for example, in Canada:

- army veterans with PTSD being offered 'Medical Assistance In Dying' (MAID)
- patients citing poverty or housing uncertainty as their main reason for seeking to end their lives through 'MAID'
- numbers spiralling out of control: in 2016 when 'MAID' was introduced, there were just over 1,000 cases but by 2022 this escalated to 13,241 deaths, accounting for 4.1% of all deaths in Canada.
- Canada is now on the verge of introducing euthanasia and assisted suicide for people with mental health issues, with this change in the law coming into effect in March 2027. (source: Right to Life)

As Sonia Sodha writes in The Observer, "An over-simple bill on a complex matter like assisted dying will fail to protect those who are most at risk... a reform which appeared nowhere in Labour's manifesto but which Starmer has made clear he personally supports nowhere near enough work done on what sufficient safeguards would look like, and how we would monitor whether or not they were working... Two of the most thoughtful members of his cabinet, Shabana Mahmood and Wes Streeting, have expressed serious reservations."

#### 3. Some may fear suffering in pain at the end of life

Hospice care performs a vital function in easing the physical and emotional pain of death and dying. However, the hospice sector currently faces an estimated shortfall of £60 million in the current financial year. Hospices are crying out for funding to help them serve all those in need in their local communities. This ill thought through Bill must not be rushed through into law and more funding and resources should instead be directed towards vital palliative care services.

My friend, Fr Hugh McKenzie, shares a beautiful and moving perspective here: Assisted dying?: A hospital chaplain's opposition - Diocese of Westminster.

We pray for all those who are dying, for those working in end-of-life care, and for MPs and policy makers who are making decisions which will affect so many vulnerable people for generations to come. ODWR.

**In your coming and your going God is with you, always by your side.**





# Evangelisation Pillar



21-22 February:

**Bishop Barron in the UK**

**Evangelisation & Culture Conference**

To proclaim Christ in the culture, we must know Christ; and to know Christ, we must know Scripture. As St. Jerome observed, "Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ."

But to uncover the spiritual and theological meaning of the Bible, we need to take a genuinely Catholic approach: reading it within the context of the great and beautiful chorus of voices from across the centuries of the Church's tradition.

The event will be held at the London ExCeL centre, 1 Western Gateway, London E16 1XL

Join a group from St James parish that have already booked to go by booking your place on the Word on Fire website. You can do this by scanning the QR code below with your mobile phone or use the website link to book your place.

<https://events.wordonfire.org/the-bible-event>



## Greener and Cleaner Hub

The leaflet below is from the Greener and Cleaner community-powered hub which is located upstairs on the upper mall of The Glades shopping centre, Bromley, next door to Waterstones, HMV and opposite The Entertainer.

\*Furoshiki is the Japanese art of wrapping presents in fabric rather than paper. [2]

The Hub is an exciting space for people to come and learn more about how they can make a positive difference from the comfort of their homes, schools, businesses and wider communities.

Regular mending and puncture repair workshops take place every week as well as a wide range of workshops, crafts and talks. Keep up to date with all the events – there are lots! See Events - [Greener and Cleaner web page](#).

The hub is open 10am-6pm Monday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and 11am-5pm on Sunday. The hub is closed on Tuesday and Wednesday.





# Evangelisation Pillar

## Taizé Prayer



### Waiting, Watching, Praying

#### **Taizé Prayer Service**

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December at 4pm St**

**James The Great Church**

**283 Crescent Drive,**

**Petts Wood**

Join us in a beautiful ecumenical  
reflective service as we prepare to  
look forward to the birth of our Lord  
and Saviour Jesus Christ.

**All are welcome!**

Foto: <https://the-ravellid-sleave.blogspot.com/2023/12/first-sunday-of-advent-2023-hope.html>



# Evangelisation Pillar

Organisations across Bromley are working together to make change on issues they care about. Join us as we discuss setting up Bromley Citizens. Our aim is to get 30 organisations working together across Bromley for a common good. The evening will look at how you and your organisation can get involved, what issues we might tackle and how we can build power and win change across our borough.

## BROMLEY CITIZENS

6-8pm Dec 3rd: Bromley College, Rookery Ln, Bromley BR2 8HE

**DEC | 3<sup>RD</sup> | 2024**

[www.citizensuk.org](http://www.citizensuk.org)

**citizens** uk

## Certificate of Thanks

This Certificate is presented to all those who have donated to Bromley Borough Foodbank:	<b>St James the Great, Petts Wood</b>
Date of donations:	<b>July-October 2024</b>
Total donations given to help support the work of Bromley Borough Foodbank:	<b>311.15kg</b>

*With our Grateful Thanks*



### The current needs are for:

- Sweets
- Adult Toothbrushes
- Adult Toothpaste
- Ladies Deodorant
- Long Life Dessert

There are two baskets available for your donations: both are in the main church entrance



The Foodbank warehouse **cannot accept**: baby formula, fresh, out of date, chilled or frozen food.

Financial donations are still very much appreciated and there are several ways you can donate:

- Post cash, cheques or supermarket vouchers through the Parish Office letterbox. Cheques should be payable to "Bromley Borough Foodbank".
- By direct transfer to the Foodbank's bank account
 

*Bank NatWest  
Sort code 60-16-03  
Account name Bromley Borough Foodbank  
Account number 77879007  
Reference STJAMESPW*
- £5 gift vouchers for Tesco and Sainsbury's are very useful to the Foodbank

Like most volunteer run charities, our Foodbank needs monetary donations. If possible you might consider setting up a standing order to help this vital work. Bank details above.

Thank you from the Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation Group.





# Liturgy Pillar

## A Message From Jane Clark The Children Liturgy Lead

Dear Parents,

It continues to be a pleasure for us to run the Children's Liturgy on a Sunday. The children are well behaved, engaged and insightful- they are a credit to you all.

We are, however, worried that the Liturgy may not be able to continue on a weekly basis. We are at our lowest ever number of Liturgy teachers and helpers. We are considering running the Liturgy on a bi-weekly basis unless we can recruit parents from our Parish who can become part of our team.

You do not need to be a teacher to be one of our Liturgy leaders!

Please feel free to message if you'd like to know more about either becoming a leader or a helper. There is a rota in place and with optimum numbers, the load is spread evenly and fairly.

The Children's Liturgy has always been possible due to the generosity of parents giving their time.

Without fresh volunteers every year, numbers continue to deplete (often as children either leave for secondary or move into upper KS2).

Please help to keep this wonderful group going and let us know if you're interested in being involved by contacting the Parish Office.

All the best

The Children's Liturgy team



# Communication Pillar

## Supervision of children in hall toilets

It has come to our notice that there have been incidents of the toilets in the hall being misused. Items have been dropped in the toilet bowls and the liquid soap containers emptied onto the floor. We seek your assistance in ensuring there are no further incidents of this kind. Please be reminded you are responsible for your children at all times.

## Supervision of children in the church around the candle stands

Please ensure that all children are assisted by an adult in the lady chapel area when lighting candles.

## St James Repository

The Repository in church is open after Saturday evening and Sunday morning Masses throughout the year. There is a good selection of Religious articles always available, including Bibles, Prayer Books, Sunday Missals, Children's Books, Rosaries, Statues, Mass cards and cards for most other occasions.

## Piano Tuition

Sara Skyrme MSc CRCO with ABRSM Pianoforte Grade 8  
07785 912713 or [saraskyrme@btinternet.com](mailto:saraskyrme@btinternet.com)

## What is ChurchSuite and how do we use it in the Parish



ChurchSuite is an established software package that we use to manage parish administration. The software and parishioners' data are held securely online and comply with all data protection rules. Nothing is stored on any user's individual computer and nobody outside of the parish

office has access to parishioners' data. ChurchSuite works on all personal computers including MacBooks as well as iPads and Smartphones.

There is a link on the website home page for new and existing parishioners to add/update their own details and contact preferences to ChurchSuite. It would be a great help to the Parish Office if all parishioners could re-enter their details so that the parish office can communicate more effectively with parishioners .

You can also enter a photograph to help identification.

## Parish Monthly Newsletter Survey

It's hard to believe that it's been nearly two years since we launched our Monthly Newsletter and revamped Weekly Briefly. Your thoughts and feedback have always been invaluable to us, and we would love to hear from you again.

Do you find our newsletters relevant and helpful? Are there any changes or additions you'd like to see? Your insights can help us improve and better serve our community.

Please take a moment to complete the survey -

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VJH88LF> the link can also be found on the Parish website.

Your input will make a big difference!

## Scam Emails

I am writing to bring to your attention a concerning rise in scam emails targeting our parishioners. These emails impersonate the parish priest, often using a similar email name and masking the real email address. They typically request the recipient to purchase Amazon or other gift cards as gifts for the priest.

Unfortunately, we have received reports of parishioners falling victim to these scams, with some individuals losing up to £600 to the fraudsters.

Please never purchase gift cards as gifts for the parish priest, based on an email request, unless they have verified the request directly in person or through a trusted means.

Please double-check any suspicious email by directly contacting the parish office.

Avoid sharing personal or financial information in response to unsolicited emails.

If you encounter these emails, please report them as spam and inform the parish office immediately.



# Communication Pillar

## Film Review by Alan Pavelin

During the 1940s the director Michael Powell, along with screenwriter Emeric Pressburger, made some of the most imaginative, colourful, and critically acclaimed British films ever produced, such as *The Red Shoes* and *Black Narcissus*. Prominent among them was *A Matter of Life and Death* (1946), set during the Second World War, with its highly original view of Heaven (referred to in the film as “the other world”). The film was retitled in America as *Stairway to Heaven*.

David Niven plays a wartime pilot, Peter Carter, who jumps out of his burning plane without a parachute. Finding himself wandering on land, he encounters a messenger from “the other world” who has come to collect him but was delayed by fog (the film is in some respects a comedy-fantasy).

Peter sees the opportunity to argue that he should continue to live, and is taken up to “the other world” (shot in black-and-white, unlike the rest of the film) to plead his case. Meanwhile, in the “real world”, he is having a major operation to save his life.

Peter’s case to be allowed to live is made before a “heavenly court”, on the grounds that he has fallen in love with an American girl he spoke with on the phone before jumping out of his plane.

His trial is argued out, amid a lot of British-American banter, the verdict depending on whether or not his real-world operation is successful.

I first saw this film at about age 12 in our school film society (Michael Powell was a former pupil) and didn’t fully understand it. A later viewing clarified the story and the film became an established classic.

There is of course no suggestion that the representation of “heaven” should be taken as anything other than fantasy; it could not be otherwise, and films on the subject have generally been comedies or fantasies. At the time of writing, the film is to be shown shortly on the BBC so will be available on iplayer.

Alan Pavelin



# Social Pillar

## Wednesday Lunches

The next Wednesday lunch is scheduled for **Wednesday, 11th December**.

## The Companions Afternoon Club

Who are we? What do we do?

We meet in the Church Community Centre every week. We play scrabble, Triominos, indoor curling, table tennis and we hope to start Line-dancing. Maybe you have ideas as to what you may like to do? So do come and join us in the Community Centre at 1.30pm to 4.30pm on the first two Wednesdays and the second two Tuesdays of the month. Here is a chance to get to know some really lovely people!

December dates for The Companions Afternoon Club:

**Wednesday 4th and 11th**

**Tuesday 17th**

Doors open **1.30pm**. All welcome.

## Book Club

Book Club continues to meet once a month at 7.30pm in the Community Centre. We welcome anyone who wishes to join us, even if its just for one session.... the more the merrier.

11th December - A Man called Ove -By Fredrik Backman

8 January 2025

12 February

12 March

14 May

11 June

9 July

## Petts Wood CWL News

Petts Wood CWL would like to thank everyone for their support at the recent Quiz. Over £800 was raised for CWL charities and cheques have been given to PACT, Aid to the Church in Need and our own parish. Members will now vote on which other charities should receive donations in time for Christmas.

Our next CWL meeting will be held on Wednesday 29th January, 1 - 3 pm in the Community Centre.

PACT remains the national CWL charity and in the New Year we will be organising more backpacks for prisoners as they are released from prison..

PACT Award CWL were nominated and won the St Dismas Award at the PACT Volunteering Award ceremony in October in London where Princess Anne was in attendance. The wonderful work with the Cross in My Pocket and PACT Packs is much appreciated. The National President and

National Secretary were asked to go along to accept the certificate and glass trophy. Irene Webb has been busy sewing the Petts Wood donations of crosses.

However, there is also a new initiative and we would welcome your input.

PACT Projects The next stage of our PACT project is to put together a booklet that will be distributed within prisons. We need prayers, poems and stories you have written, drawings or paintings you have produced and testimonies that might inspire those serving a sentence to keep believing that they can turn their lives around. It would be lovely to have children's stories that they can read to their children on visits as well.

In order to allow enough time for proof-reading, editing and the production process, it would be good to have all submissions by the end of January. Your submission could really make a difference to the life of someone who needs hope. Please email CWL via the Parish Office and your submissions will be passed on to the CWL National Executive Team.

## CWL Plant Sale 2025

Please keep your small empty flower pots ready for our seedlings in the Spring.



# Social Pillar

## December Film Night

First of all a big thank you to everyone who attended our November Film Night. Your generous donations raised £84 thereby adding a further contribution towards the cost of a hearing loop for the Community Centre. This brings the amount currently being held in abeyance to a fantastic £276.22!

Our film on **14 December** will be the highly-acclaimed 2023 Christmas comedy-drama **“The Holdovers”**. The focus is on an unpopular, pompous teacher at a New England prep school who, with no family of his own, remains on campus during the 1970 Christmas break to supervise students unable to travel home. He soon forms an unlikely bond with one of them, Angus - a brainy but damaged troublemaker - & also with the school’s head cook, Mary, whose son has recently died in the Vietnam War.

The story unfolds over two snowy weeks, bringing three very different & unlikely individuals together who end up spending the time sharing comic misadventures. If you are curious to know more, please do come along!

To mark the festive season everyone will be greeted on arrival with a mini mince pie & warming mulled wine - either alcoholic or non!

For anyone who prefers something different, the Bar will be open as usual from **7pm**.

The film will begin at **7.30pm** & the running time is 133 minutes.

**Donations raised will be passed to the Bromley Foodbank to help purchase essential items that are in higher demand during the Christmas period.**

Our first Film Night in 2025 will be on **11 January** featuring Danny Boyle’s **“Millions”**.

Further details will be included in the next Parish Newsletter.

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## Young Helpers Aged 13-25

Can you volunteer and help out at the Christmas Fair on Sunday 8th December? There’ll be a few games stalls for younger children, the bake sale stall and the Karaoke Korner to help run. We will also be setting up the hall on Saturday 7th, if you’re free to help - Santa’s Grotto with Christmas trees to put up and decorate, pop-up gazebos to put up in the hall and tables to put out and decorate, too. Please text or WhatsApp “I can help Christmas Fair” to 07541 759163.

There’s pizza lunch for Saturday helpers, and pastries and hot chocolate breakfast for early Sunday morning helpers! Your help is needed on **Saturday 7th Dec 12-3pm or 3-6pm / Sunday 8th Dec 9-11am, 11am-2.30pm.**





## Social Pillar

### Christmas Fair 8th December – Bake-Off!

Bake, decorate and delight! All entries of festively decorated cupcakes, brownies gingerbread figures and more, will be judged by Fr David and a panel of distinguished judges. The winning entry will be announced at 1pm and Big Cakes will be auctioned from 1pm, so let the baking begin! Bring your bakes to the fair on Sunday by 12.30pm and don't forget to label your entry with name (and age if you're under 18). We want to showcase our parish baking excellence, so adults are welcome to enter too. Donations of shop-bought goodies are always welcome but will not be entered into the bake-off or auction. Thank you.





## Social Pillar

### New Years Eve 31st December

Celebrating 60 Years of St James the Great, let's bring in the new year together at Sixties Night! All the 60s tracks are lined up and ready, and we'll be joined by singing sensation Sarah Flotel! Complimentary Prosecco on arrival with a sensational Hog Roast dinner - SK Hog Roast also provide vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free burgers and sausages, with sides, so there's something for everyone! Dress to impress or come as you are, but do not miss a New Year's Eve to remember! Tickets are £13 Adult, £7 Child, £35 Family of 4 – all on sale after weekend Masses, payable in Cash or Contactless.



Join us to ring in the New Year at St James The Great Community Centre

Arrive: 7:00 PM to enjoy a complimentary glass of Prosecco or soft drink.

Tickets available after weekend Masses or at the Parish Office.

Prices: Adult: £13 / Child: £7 / Family (2 adults + 2 children): £35 (Contactless or cash)

Please purchase your tickets ASAP to help us plan.

Vegetarian, vegan & Gluten-free option? Text your name to 07541 759 163.

Thank you, and we can't wait to celebrate with you!



# Youth Matter

Hello from Youth Pillar!

Well done to everyone who's just finished their mock exams and continued prayers for those sitting ongoing mock A'levels. It's been a busy month with the Feasts of All Saints and All Souls, Remembrance and the Feast of Christ The King. You'll be excited for Advent and Christmas, we know. We hope you'll enjoy this month's bulletin.

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## Urgent Appeal for Help

If you're free, please consider helping us to set-up the Grotto for the Christmas Fair which is on Sunday 8th December. Text Lolly 07541759163 if you can pop in to **lend a helping hand on Sat 7th Dec any time 10am-1pm** – your help would be hugely appreciated and you'll be repaid in lunch time pizza!

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## Are you a Star Baker?

We need your cakes! Bake a cake and give it some festive decorations, then bring it along on **Sunday 8th Dec** to enter into the Christmas Fair Big Cake Bake-Off. An Amazon Voucher for the Bake-Off winner and very Big Cake will be auctioned off! Ready, steady, **BAKE!!!**

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## Christ The King

Thanks to everyone who joined the Bromley Deanery Youth Day to celebrate the Feast Day of Christ The King, at St Joseph's church, last Saturday. We celebrated Jesus as King of Heaven and Earth to honour Christ as Lord over all creation. Following a morning reflection of what Christ means to each of us and why we should celebrate Him now, at this time of year, everyone got stuck into the various activities. As a group, we concluded that in the final week of the liturgical year, we can prepare our hearts for Advent by acknowledging the amazing gift that Christ is, in our lives today. Our expression of love and gratitude for Jesus is seen in the group painting all the young people helped to make. The image was created through inputting a sentence into ChatGPT4.0, requesting AI to generate this image of Christ, which was then projected onto a canvas. The image was then carefully painted over. It really was a team effort and an a true expression of the joy that is felt in being a friend of Jesus.

At the Youth Mass, Fr Saju thanked the young people for arranging the Mass and spoke about the importance of events like this to foster faith and fellowship in young people's lives. In December, the painting is up for auction and the proceeds will go to [CAFOD World Gifts](https://www.cafod.org.uk/) so all the young people can experience the true spirit of Christmas giving. Please email [lollybell@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:lollybell@rcaos.org.uk) with your bid for the painting, by Friday **6th Dec 2024**. Next year, this Solemnity will be 100 years old since it was established by Pope Pius XI in 1925 and we look forward to bringing this youth day celebration to St James the Great!



*Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year!*



# Youth Matters

**FLAME2025 15.03.25**



It's back and registration is open!

**Saturday 15th March**, OVO Arena Wembley - themed: UNSTOPPABLE!

A national Catholic Youth Congress, organised by CYMFed (Catholic Youth Ministry Federation, in England & Wales) in an 10,000-seat arena setting, filled with faith focused music performances, inspirational guest speakers and presenters.

This event is for young people aged 13 & over (younger children are welcome but must be accompanied by a parent/carer)

Early Bird Tickets are £20.00 each until 30th November 2024 (£29.00 thereafter); includes return coach journey to/from OVO Arena Wembley 8.30am-8.00pm; bring a packed lunch, snacks and water!

Watch our Deanery Promo Video here <https://bit.ly/Flame2025Promo>

For more information and to Register Now visit this link <https://bit.ly/Flame2025>

or scan the QR code



Payment details come in an automated reply, after you register.

The event is ideal for Confirmation and post-Confirmation groups. It is a vibrant experience of young Church, concluding with Adoration led by Bishops of England and Wales; the whole day really opens the young people's horizons about what the Church is, and their part in it.

You can visit the CYMFed Website to learn more about Flame2025 by clicking <https://cymfed.org.uk/flame/>

*With every blessing, until next month,*

*Youth Pillar*



# Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Luke chapter 2 verses 1-7

The Roman Empire charged the countries it had invaded taxes, based on the number of people and what they earned.

Emperor Augustus gave orders that all people in the Empire were to be registered so they could be taxed.



This census was before Quirinius became Governor of Syria\* (\*whose own census started riots - Acts 5:37)



When the order came, Mary and Joseph were living in Nazareth.

But Joseph was descended from King David, who had been born in Bethlehem...



so Joseph took Mary to Bethlehem to stay with his family.

Come and meet everyone!



A normal home in Bethlehem.



Stable with mangers

Animals were kept inside at night

Everyone lived and slept in the living room.

Room added for guests and visitors

While they were staying there, Mary's baby was born.



There was no space in the guest room to put a new baby!

So they made a snug bed for Jesus in one of the mangers.





### Mouse Makes

"Jesus said,  
I am the \_\_\_ Y  
and the \_\_\_ U \_\_\_  
and the \_\_\_ I \_\_\_.  
No one comes to the Father  
except through me."  
*John 14:6*

"The child to be born  
will be called  
H \_\_\_ , the  
\_\_\_ of \_\_\_"  
*Luke 1:35*

"For unto you is born  
this day a  
S \_\_\_  
who is  
\_\_\_ R \_\_\_  
the \_\_\_ R \_\_\_"  
*Luke 2:11*

### THE GREATEST GIFT

"She will bear a son,  
and shall call his name  
\_\_\_  
for he will save his  
people from their sins."  
*Matthew 1:21*

"Jesus said,  
I am the  
\_\_\_  
and the life."  
*John 11:25*

B L I G H T L O  
R A Y W O J J R  
E M M A N U E L  
A B Y J E S O  
D S A V I O U R  
S A V R J S D

O H O L Y O R C R T U  
S O N O F M A N H A R T  
N L S H E P H E R D U  
O Y A E P E R G I F T G  
C H R I S T M A S T H S  
R E S U R R E C T I O N

**JESUS**  
—  
**THE**  
**GREATEST**  
**GIFT**  
**OF ALL!**

P R O P H E T I  
R E D E E M E R  
I E M I L I G  
E M E S S I A H  
S R M E G F T  
T E A C H E R E

E V E R L A S T I N G  
K I N G O F K I N G S  
I N K I G W F D O U  
S E S O N O F G O D D  
S E W O C O U W O R D  
C O U N S E L L O R U

EMMANUEL • MESSIAH REDEEMER • KING OF KINGS • WORD  
SON OF MAN • EVERLASTING • SHEPHERD • PRIEST • PROPHET • TEACHER  
LIGHT • BREAD • VINE • DOOR • LAMB • COUNSELLOR • CHRISTMAS • GIFT

Find the words from the Bible verses too!

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Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
						1
2	3 2pm <b>Memory cafe</b> 7pm - 7.45pm <b>Firm Believers</b> 8pm <b>Table Tennis</b>	4 1.30pm <b>Companion Club</b> 7.30pm <b>Presentation about St Benedict</b>	5 4.30pm to 9pm <b>Girlguiding Meetings</b>	6 5pm to 9.30pm <b>Scouting meeting2</b>	7	8 <b>Christmas Fair after 9.15am &amp; 11am Masses</b>
9	10 2pm <b>Memory cafe</b> 7pm - 7.45pm <b>Firm Believers</b> 8pm <b>Table Tennis</b>	11 11.45am <b>Wednesday lunches</b> 1.30pm <b>Companion Club</b> 7pm <b>Book Club</b>	12 6pm <b>Loretto Thursday Worship</b>	13 5pm to 9.30pm <b>Scouting meetings</b>	14 9.45am <b>Dad and Me</b> 7pm <b>Film Night</b>	15
16 7.30pm <b>Knights Meeting</b>	17 1.30pm <b>Companion Club</b> 7pm - 7.45pm <b>Firm Believers</b> 8pm <b>Table Tennis</b>	18 8pm <b>Catenians Meeting</b>	19	20 5pm to 9.30pm <b>Scouting meetings</b>	21 7pm <b>Youth Choir</b>	22 4pm <b>Advent Carol Service</b>
23 7.30pm <b>Advent Reconciliation Service</b>	24 6pm <b>Christmas Eve Mass</b> 11.30pm <b>Midnight Mass</b>	25 9.15am & 11am <b>Christmas Day Masses</b>	26 10am <b>Boxing Day Mass</b>	27	28	29
30	31 7pm <b>New Years Eve 60's Night</b>					



**ST JAMES THE GREAT**  
*Catholic Church in Pets Wood*



**Father David, Bishop Pat,  
Suzanne and Caroline would like to wish you all a  
Peaceful Christmas and a Happy 2025.**