

On the third Sunday of Advent, the third, rose coloured candle is lit for "Gaudete Sunday" expressing the joy of anticipation at the approach of the Christmas celebration.

We pray for Ginnie and her family as she is baptised today and welcomed in the family and household of faith.

Dear Friends,

The Third Sunday of Advent is also known as Gaudete Sunday, from the Latin 'rejoice.' We are reminded that Advent is the season in which we ready ourselves to welcome the joy at the heart of our faith. This is welcome after a year of much misery and darkness. Yet, we must take care. There are false joys (which are no joys at all). There is the counterfeit joy that is naively optimistic and insensitive to the suffering of others. There is also a tyranny to some forms of joy. Knowing you are expected to be joyful can carry a dread born of the denial of freedom. This takes on a sinister note in social, political or religious contexts which demand joy as a sign of loyalty. By contrast, today – embedded as it is in Advent when we wait for Christ's coming both as a vulnerable child and in glory to judge all things in mercy and justice – points to how true joy is not something we control. It comes as divine gift. We receive it from beyond ourselves. And such joy grows by being shared in acts of generosity that open and nourish human hearts. Amid the watching and waiting of this season, Gaudete reminds us that the light of true joy, revealed in Jesus Christ, is not a function of our manipulation or effort but breaks into our human existence from beyond us to enliven us from within, much like the dawning sun casting its rays to give warmth and life.

This is symbolised by Advent's varied liturgical colours. Advent is mostly set to the colour violet, echoing Lent's penitential palette. Yet today, we will light the rose candle on our Advent wreath. Rose, a hue lighter than violet, unearths how joy's generosity lies deeper than the shadows of our struggles. There is a life-giving sacrifice that belongs to the act of joy that exceeds our suffering and transforms it. This is how God's light breaks into our world as Christ born, crucified, risen, and returning in glory – signified on the wreath by the central white candle.

In everyday speech, we remark that those who only see the pleasant things of life, and refuse to acknowledge the difficult, wear rose-tinted spectacles. Gaudete's rose-coloured light opposes any such delusion. As followers of Christ, called to full humanity, we are not to ignore the difficult but are given eyes to see our world as rooted in a joy out of which we respond to suffering creatively, without denial or despair, but with hope, compassion, courage and generosity. We dare to hope in joy because joy's excess is part of the fabric of a world made and remade by the God who rejoices over human beings. Indeed, the Advent wreath, with its evergreen leaves, evokes precisely the everlasting joy at the heart of all things and whose light shines out to us with a special intensity amid disaster and deprivation. As an Advent people, amid our brushes with death and destruction, we are called to paint the world with all the colours of this true joy as we look for Christ's coming.

With my prayers and blessings,
Fr Angus

Advent and Christmas Dates (in addition to regular Sunday services):

18 December – 4pm Parish Carol Service – A service featuring well-known carols, beautiful choral music, and readings proclaiming the birth of Christ.

20 December – 7pm Carol Singing – All are welcome to come along and sing Christmas Carols at locations around the parish. Minced pies and hot beverages supplied.

24 December – 3pm Carols around the Crib (for families and young children) – Through song, story and actions, take part in the wonder and joy of the nativity.

24 December – 11pm Midnight Mass – The Light shines in the darkness; the Word becomes flesh. Experience the mystery of Christ's Incarnation with choral music and the blessing of the crib.

25 December – 10am Choral Mass – With great joy and thanksgiving, we celebrate the birth of Jesus at our main Sunday Parish Mass. All are welcome

Wednesday Compline/Night Prayer – There will be a contemplative service of night prayer every Wednesday during Advent 7:30pm in the Lady Chapel. The service will be contemplative, have a sung element and a period of silence.

It is now possible to donate to St George's using your smartphone by scanning the QR Code shown on the right. If you are unsure on how to use it, please seek advice from our Treasurer, Alison Davis, or Fr Angus.



This Week's Diary

Monday 12th December -- St George's Tots in the Centre – 10:30am to 12:00pm

Tuesday 13th – WRAP Community Choir Concert - 7.30pm [see note below]

Wednesday 14th - Said Mass in the Lady Chapel - 11.30am

Compline in the Lady Chapel 7.30pm

Thursday 15th -- Said Mass in the Lady Chapel - 9.30am

Advent Reflection Course in the Rectory - 1.30pm – 3.00pm

Sunday 18th - Advent 4 - Parish Mass 10.00 am

Thursday afternoon Advent Reflection Group – each Thursday during Advent - 1:30pm-3:00pm in the Rectory.– Prayer and reflection with Scripture, Art and Music.” Course materials will be supplied and simple refreshments served. There is a sign-up sheet from Sunday to gauge interest and availability.

Carol singing in the parish, 7pm Tuesday 20 December –You are invited to join a group of songsters, drawn from our choir and congregation, to go out singing carols in the local community. No previous experience required! The proposal is to begin at the Amphitheatre and then, singing on the way, to Royal Close, off York Road. The hope is that mince pies and hot drinks will be served along the route. Please speak to Sue Howell-Evans or Fr Angus if you are interested. A sign-up sheet is available at the back of church.

The **Wrap Community Choir Concert** is back after a two year break, to be held next Tuesday 13th December @ 7.30pm in the church. Entry is free with a donation basket at the end for two local charities – Children on the Edge and CONTACT 88. Please do come and support St George's community choir.

We at St George's continue to support the **Chichester District Foodbank**, a project founded ten years ago by local churches and community groups to alleviate food poverty in the Chichester district. Maggie Saffery is part of the team at the Foodbank. She said: *“For the first time in ten years the Foodbank is running out of food. We are experiencing hungry people: children and adults coming to the Distribution Centre. Many have turned off their power, so great is the fear that they will not be able to pay their rent.”* She explained that the majority of Foodbank users are in work, some with more than one job; but wages are low and the cost of living is skyrocketing and that they regularly see junior nurses and teachers. Any contributions for the Foodbank may be left in the boxes provided at the rear of the Church and will be taken to the Distribution Centre by Tom and Sue

WRAP-CHAT – Thank you to everyone who made last Wednesday's event such a great success, whether you were involved in the organising, behind the scenes, out front, or as attendees. To those who provided such a wonderful spread of fingerbite food and the donations for the raffle table. Thank you! Sincere thanks must also go to Yuriko Luc and Sue Howell Evans for the musical entertainment, Yuriko welcoming us at the beginning, and Sue later encouraging us all to sing with gusto.. We look forward to our January meeting, on the 4th when we will indulge in a Beetle Drive. Please look for the list of future monthly meetings at the back of church.

Services at the Cathedral – Changes to regular schedule of Sunday Services as follows:

8am – Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel. 9.15am – Children, Families.

10.15am – Choral Mattins. 11.15am – Sung Eucharist. 3pm – Evensong.

Carol Services open to all, please book in advance for free tickets: Tuesday 20th @ 6.30pm.

Wednesday 21st @ 6.30pm. Thursday 22nd @ 3pm. Thursday 22nd @ 6.30pm

Contact details:

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