

Advent

*a season of
hope and expectation*

*Celebrating Advent 2024
in the Catholic Parish of
St Edward the Confessor, Romford*

Including
the **introduction of the new Lectionary** –
fresh translations of the readings at Mass
and
preparation for the **Jubilee of Hope**



An Advent of peace and hope

It may already have felt like Advent for several weeks! Decorations were up in many places even before Remembrance Sunday, and there were Christmas chocolates on sale in October. The Church does have a genius and wisdom in our cycles of preparation. The four weeks of Advent is long enough to reflect, and build expectation – but not too long. Start preparing in October and by the time Christmas comes you might be fed up with it.

So these four precious weeks, this year beginning on December 1st, give us a pathway to Christmas Day – a pathway of hope, peace, joy, and love. And these things are so desperately needed in the town we serve, and in the world. Dive deeply into Advent – in amongst the carols and the decorations, the charitable actions and the prayer, this is the time to prepare our hearts like a little stable, awaiting the arrival of Jesus. Thank God, that does not mean perfection – the stable is full of grit and mess. It does mean deepening our attitude – our attitude precisely of hope, peace, joy and love. I hope you have a blessed Advent journey, and I hope the opportunities and ideas in this little leaflet are a good support along the way.

With Advent Blessings, Fr Dominic

From the First Sunday in Advent, you may notice something different about the readings you hear at Mass. The Church across England and Wales are using a new translation from the original



Hebrew and Greek, a translation designed to help us get a fuller sense of the original wording. It may mean that you hear things in fresh ways – listen out for the changes, and for the fresh emphasis. Go to www.universalis.com to look at the readings online – and Universalis is also an App; a great resource for preparation for Mass, and for daily prayer. Or if you prefer a book, then buy one of the new Missals from the repository – just £15 for all the Sunday readings, for many years to come.



On 24th December the Church across the world begins the Jubilee Year of Hope, with the theme chosen by Pope Francis: “Pilgrims of Hope.” It is a rather poignant theme, at a time when the world needs renewed hope in so many ways – hope rooted in the love and tenderness of Jesus Christ, born in the apparently hopeless setting of a stable. Rediscover and renew hope, throughout 2025.

Advent Carols – three beautiful events

On Saturday 7th December at 3.00pm join our magnificent choir (who usually sing on a Sunday at 11.30am) and enjoy an hour of wonderful Christmas music; a mix of choir pieces, and choral favourites for you to join in with. Hopefully this is an ideal time for those who may find it hard to get to evening events – and it will be followed by mince pies, tea, coffee and mulled wine in the parish centre. A truly lovely Advent moment.

On Thursday 12th December at 7.00pm join Year 6 at St Peter's (Dorset Avenue, RM1 4JA) for an hour of joyful carols and music telling the Christmas story; refreshments afterwards.

On Wednesday 18th December at 6.30pm all are welcome to the Campion school (Wingletye Lane, Hornchurch RM11 3BX), where the tremendous *Schola cantorum* will present an evening of Christmas carols. Just a week before Christmas, this is a prayerful and blessed way to prepare for the birth of Jesus.

Reconciliation Services

At St Edward the Confessor: Wednesday 18th December, 11.00am

At Corpus Christi, Collier Row: Thursday 19th December, 7.00pm

All are very welcome. It may be years since you have been to confession – come and rediscover this beautiful and precious Sacrament, full of grace.

As usual, Fr Dominic is available for Reconciliation **each Saturday evening, 5.45 – 6.15pm**

Fair Trade Products and an eco-friendly Christmas



Look for the Fair Trade mark – especially on chocolate, wine, tea, coffee and sugar. With an Internet search you will find Fair Trade footballs, trainers, and cotton clothing. By buying Fair Trade you are supporting companies that make sure workers are paid fairly and have decent working conditions. The parish is very close to achieving the nationally recognised **LiveSimply Award**. For the environment, the key is **reduce, reuse, recycle**. Could you buy and use less? Could you re-gift (use the January Bring and Buy sale!). Could you use less plastic? Wrap presents in cloths that you can use again?

Supporting those in greatest need at Christmas

Continuing to donate to the Food Bank

Take a copy of the new version of the “**reverse Advent calendar**” – buy an item a day. Food Bank donations can be offered at any time the church is open, in the side chapel.

“Gifts under the tree” – during the whole of Advent

With our new buildings, our trees will look a bit different this year! But to get us started we will have a tiny tree throughout Advent, and encourage gifts of toys, chocolate and toiletries. This will mean we can get them to families who we know are in need, including via S.M.I.L.E. and to those at the women's refuge, so they have them before Christmas Day. Items given on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are still very welcome, of course, and these will be given where they are most needed in the New Year.

Please do not wrap gifts but simply leave them unwrapped, or in gift bags.

Alternative Christmas Gifts

“Alternative Gifts” make amazing presents. Rather than another box of chocolates, or pair of socks, give a gift that does immense good in another part of the world. In many cases these gifts also help sustain the environment – God’s creation – in precious and beautiful ways. Bees, goats, trees, seeds, school books, toilets and much more! The Cafod “World Gifts” leaflet is at the back of the church, or info from a range of charities is on the website:

<https://www.caritasbrentwood.org/advent/>

The days before Christmas

Sunday afternoon – Our choir sing in Romford Market

Sunday 22nd December, 1.30 – 2.15pm (approx.) – come and support local businesses and traders in the Market, while our choir sing Christmas favourites.

Monday morning - Help with the Big Clean

Monday 23rd December, 10am – 12noon. Fuelled by festive snacks, become part of the parish cleaning team, so the church is sparkling for the Christmas Masses.

Monday afternoon – Rehearsal for Altar Servers

Monday 23rd December, 2pm – 3pm. For **all** our Altar Servers, a chance to brush up on skills, and learn some new aspects of serving.
New servers welcome (aged 8+ and have made your First Holy Communion).

Tuesday afternoon – Join the Petals

Tuesday 24th December, 12noon – 3pm. Get in touch in advance with Julie Smith, via the parish office. Never arranged flowers before? Do not worry.
Come and help the Petals as they create their phenomenal festive flora!

Christmas Mass Times

CHRISTMAS EVE TUESDAY 24TH DECEMBER

5.00pm Mass especially for young children (Primary School age) and families.
7.00pm Mass for all – an additional Mass for Christmas Eve
10.00pm (9.30pm Carols) Mass for all, in the beautiful stillness of Christmas Eve

CHRISTMAS DAY WEDNESDAY 25TH DECEMBER

9.30am Mass for all in the radiant joy of Christmas morning
11.30am Mass for all in the radiant joy of Christmas morning