

St Mary and St Michael's Catholic Church
GARSTANG AND CALDER VALE

A Parish of the Lancaster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trustees Registered Charity, no.234331

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13th / 14th DECEMBER 2014

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (YEAR B)

Gaudete Sunday

"Rejoice, the Lord is near"



Today used to be called "Gaudete Sunday" – Rejoice Sunday – named after the first Latin word of the opening antiphon of today's Mass– "Rejoice in the Lord always". The liturgical colour is Rose (or pink) – but few parishes have rose-coloured vestments, so we continue to use purple.

Today the Church rejoices. Jesus, our Saviour, was born all those centuries ago to bring hope and joy to a dark and despairing world. Our world is still influenced by darkness, by the darkness of sin and evil. But when Jesus was born, our world, at last, saw that there was real hope – God had not abandoned his people.

Today we remind ourselves of that hope and joy that Jesus brings to us. There is no need to let the darkness overwhelm us – Jesus lives among us in the darkness we experience. It is easy to allow all the worries of money and sickness, especially mental illness, get us down so that life seems pointless. "What's the point of all this expense and 'false' excitement over Christmas," we ask. "It will soon be over and the darkness and coldness of January and February will take over," we say.

We, the Church, refuse to allow the negativity of our world to dominate and run our lives. We have a Saviour! We are soon to celebrate the time that he burst in on our world, bringing New Life and Light into the darkness of our world!

Yes, there is great reason to rejoice! God would not abandon his people. When we turn to the Lord, our hearts are lifted, our hearts have hope again, we lift our voices and sing "Rejoice in the Lord always!" This is Rejoice Sunday – God is with us – we need to prepare our lives, our world, to receive him; we need to prepare the way; we need to remind ourselves, and others, that the Lord lives among us. He has made this world his home; he has come to dwell among us. He has come to take our worries and pain and suffering on his shoulders. We are not alone! Never alone!

New items and information

This Sunday, during the 10.30 am Mass, we will have the Rite of Acceptance –

This is the first of the Rites of Initiation of Christian Adults (RCIA). The people of the parish will be asked if they will accept her as a firm candidate to become a member of the Church. **Yvonne Thomson** has requested that she become a Catholic. It is very important that Yvonne knows that she has the prayers and support of the people of our parish.

St Vincent de Paul Society –

- **Our next meeting is on Thursday, 18th December, *not* on Tuesday.** As usual it will be held in the Plessington Chapel at 7.30 pm.
- Last week's special collection raised an **amazing £373!** Thank you very, very much to you all for your generosity.
- **Appeal for warm clothing** – now that winter is here we have replaced the box at the back of church, so any unwanted jumpers, jackets, trousers, gloves, socks, duvets, etc will once more be gratefully received, and they will be taken to Caritas Care who work with ex-offenders and homeless people in Preston. *Thank you very much – your help is very much appreciated. SVP Conference.*

Stars at Christmas – For some years our parishioners have had the opportunity to offer prayers for their loved ones over the Christmas period by hanging stars in church with our prayer on the back. Garstang Friends of Chivuna are making the stars available again this year when they will be offered for dedication after weekend Masses before Christmas. No charge is involved, but any voluntary donation (say 50p) will go to support Chivuna Health Centre in Zambia.

Once again, we have the Large Christmas Card at the back of church – a really good and inexpensive way to wish one another a happy Christmas, even without sending individual cards to everyone. Donations will be gratefully received, and this year these will go towards funding much-needed resources for our Youth Group who made the card. One of the wall boxes in the Narthex has been labelled for the purpose. *Thank you.*

Decorating the Church for Christmas – On Christmas Eve at 9 am you are invited to help to make the flower arrangements. At 2 pm, families are invited to come to decorate the church. Any greenery would be very welcome; please leave at the back door of the Presbytery by Tuesday, 23rd December. *Thank you.*

A Musical Celebration of Christmas by the June Baker Singers will take place here in church next Friday 19th December at 7.30 pm. Please book the date, for a very enjoyable evening. All proceeds to the L'Arche Community in Preston for their new development. Tickets on sale after all Masses this weekend.

You are invited to join in with Lancashire Sings Christmas at 7 pm on Thursday, 18th December, at Garstang Methodist Church and The Wheatsheaf. This is linking live to the broadcast on BBC Radio Lancashire. See poster at back of church.

Advent Preparation with Fr Joe Smith (on Saturday 29th November) – this event was attended by 20 parishioners and was a great start to Advent. Thanks to Fiona

Brooks, Philippa Catterall, Joan Fishwick, Anne Miller, Margaret Rigby and Nancy Walbank who provided the lunch – much appreciated.

Did you know...at the current UN climate talks in Lima, the Catholic Church has highlighted how climate change is hitting the world's poorest people? The Peruvian Bishops' Conference held a high-level event with governments from around the world to engage them with the Church's concerns. With Bishops from around the globe too, it was a major step in the Church laying out its position on climate change. Join thousands of people worldwide by taking action today with CAFOD to stop climate change pushing people deeper into poverty
www.cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Take-action-today

Previously Published Items

Christmas Cards – these are on sale in the church shop along with Advent calendars, cribs and many more gifts and cards, including Christmas Mass Bouquet cards; all at very reasonable prices.

Wednesday Word – To help us prepare for Mass on 21st December, the new copy of the Wednesday Word can be found at the back of church, on yellow paper.

Please remember in your prayers Margo Emmanuelle Garces Navarro, Sophie Alice Livingstone and Ewan Mark Livingstone who were baptised last weekend.

Please pray for those whose anniversaries occur at about this time: Ethel Carroll, Dennis Regan, Arthur J Nickson, Charles Taylor, Joe Brown, Lucy Cahill Joan Norcross, Josephine Black, Helena Hodgson, Ann Nugent and Jack Singleton. *May they rest in peace.*

We ask the Lord to encourage and give health to our sick and disabled parishioners, families and friends, including: Joan Fishwick, Richard (aged 14) (needs a bone marrow transplant), Gerald Vandome, Sheila Murphy, Elaine Lamoury (Henry's sister-in-law), Rosemary Davies, Brian Hargreaves, Ellen, Brendan McGlone (14 year old with leukaemia), Anne Brockbank, Teresa Bonnar (Bowerswood), Rachael Flood (née Mears), Michael McCarthy (living in France), Dorothy Evans, Sheila Carrol, Lucy and Family, Kathryn, Susanne, Jessica Holmes, Molly and family, Ruth Fairey, Mark Noblet, Christopher Lawson, Antonio Dilao, Bernadette O'Neill, Tom Horn, John Ashcroft, Margaret Shepherd, Tony Moran, Sharon Hodgson, Christine, Peter Holland, Ian Moran, Tony Winstanley, Wilf Rainford, Alyson, Michael Hendry, Christopher Simpson, Auntie Sophie, Christopher Brown, Simon Thompson, Michael Ryan, Sheila Cookson, Francisca Rainford, Alison Green and Tim Park. *(When people whose names are placed on this sick list have recovered their health, please let us know.)*

Response to the Psalm at the 10.30 am Mass :

Mass Times & Intentions, Saturday 13th – Sunday 21st December 2014

Sat	13 th	6.00 pm (Vigil)	Dennis Vincent Wilkes
Sun	14 th	8.30 am	All Our Parishioners
		10.30 am	Eve Graham (Anniversary)
Mon	15 th	No Mass	
Tues	16 th	7.00 pm	Joan Fishwick – Get Well Soon
Wed	17 th	7.00 pm	Private Intention
Thurs	18 th	9.30 am	Henry Boyle
Fri	19 th	9.30 am (in School)	Helena Holland Hodgson
Sat	20 th	9.30 am	LISCF
		6.00 pm (Vigil)	Ann Elizabeth Nugent
Sun	21 st	8.30 am	All Our Parishioners
		10.30 am	Cathie Cadden

Devotions and Celebrations this week:

Sun	14 th	10.30 am	Rite of Acceptance during the 10.30 am Mass
Wed	17 th	6.45 pm	Rosary
Thurs	18 th	10.00 am	Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)

Special Days this Week:

None.

Meetings this Week:

Wed	17 th	7.30 pm	Choir Practice
Thurs	18 th	7.15 pm	Journey In Faith
		7.30 pm	St Vincent de Paul Society (Plessington Chapel)

(Please note change of date)

Last Week's Attendance:

Sat	22 nd	6.30 pm (Vigil)	Adults: 126	Children : 5
Sun	23 rd	8.30 am	Adults: 54	Children: 11
		10.30 am	Adults: 109	Children: 23 Total: 328

Monies Received: Offertory: £1,191.38; Votive Lights: £48.50; Shop: £46; Donation: £30; Funeral Donation: £600. *Many thanks to you all.*

Churches Together in Garstang & District

Ecumenical Morning Prayer will be held at 07.45 am each Tuesday in December here at Sts Mary & Michael's. Shopper's Service (Pause for Thought) is at 12.15 pm every Thursday, at Garstang Methodist Church.