

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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5th / 6th December 2015

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



The Hebrew people, who had been taken into exile by the Babylonians in 507 BC, began to be released and allowed home about 538 BC – they had been exiled for some 60 years. Their return to Jerusalem was a time of great joy. The few remaining residents of Jerusalem, who lived in the ruins of the city, are told by God in our first reading to

“Arise, Jerusalem, stand on the heights
and turn your eyes to the east;
see your sons re-assembled from east to west
at the command of the Holy One,
jubilant that God has remembered them.”

The prophet, Baruch, continues to tell the remnant of the people in the city, that the mountains will be flattened and the valleys filled in so that the people can return on level ground, “walking in safety under the glory of God”.

John the Baptist, the last prophet, spoke in the same way: the ground will be levelled and the rough road made smooth so that “all mankind will see *the salvation of God*.” At last, the people will not just experience *the glory of God*, but they will know God as the one *who saves them* from all that drags them down, from their own sin.

We are getting ready to celebrate, once again, the birth of the one who saves us. We remember that we have a God who has never abandoned us, who has never left us in the dark. We have a God who happily wants to walk the ways we walk and wishes to accompany us as he envelops us in his love.

The Lord is reminding us in Advent of something we know well, yet something we so easily let slip lightly from our consciousness. The immanent and the immediate become so distracting.

We ask for the grace to take a moment to know that the Lord comes to save us.

Come Lord Jesus!

New items and information

The Jubilee Year of Mercy Pope Francis has proclaimed an Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy to run from 8th December 2015 to 20th November 2016. “It is my burning desire,” says Pope Francis, “during this Jubilee, that the Christian people may reflect of the works of mercy;” the corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to welcome the stranger, to heal the sick, to visit the imprisoned and to bury the dead; the spiritual works of mercy: to counsel the doubtful, to instruct the ignorant, to admonish sinners, to comfort the afflicted, to forgive offences, to bear patiently those who do us ill, and to pray for the living and the dead. We have much to do in this Year of Mercy! May we welcome this year with courage and joy! Lots more to come!

St Vincent de Paul Society – there will be a special collection for the SVP this weekend.

This weekend, during the 10 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 Drew Thompson as a firm candidate to become a member of the Catholic Church, and Hester Platt, who has requested that she be confirmed into the Catholic Church. It is very important that Drew and Hester know that they have the prayers and support of the people of our parish.

This Sunday there will be no tea or coffee in the Plessington Chapel after 10 am Mass, as Hummingbirds annual Christmas Fair is this Sunday, 6th December from 11 am until 1 pm in Castle Lane Community Centre. There will be Cake, Craft and plant stalls, Chocolate Tombola and Adult Tombola, Lucky dip and Christmas Crafts for Children. Father Christmas will make an appearance at 12.30 pm and of course our Christmas raffle with great prizes to be won. £1 entry and receive a free Mulled wine or tea/coffee. ***Please come and support us.***

SVP Christmas Party 12th December – Your gifts of food ready for tea may be left in the old church porch up to 1pm Saturday 12th December – or ring Philippa on 602797 for collection. Anyone willing to help, please ring 602797 or 603944 as soon as possible. **REMEMBER** – all are welcome to attend. *SVP Conference.*

Stars at Christmas – 2015 – As we decorate our church at Christmas, we are reminded of the happy times we have shared with those we love, not only the people we are blessed still to have with us but our dear departed ones too. For many Christmases past, many of our parishioners have symbolised their prayers in the form of a star bearing the names of loved ones no longer with us so that it can be hung in church over Christmas to draw the prayers of us all. If you would like to participate in this custom you are welcome to do so. The stars are free, but should you wish to make a charitable donation, the poor people of Chivuna in Zambia will appreciate your benevolence. *Available after Masses on 13th & 20th December.*

Why not join the Choir? – The choir is an integral part of every Christian church. This is not just convention but has evolved over two thousand years because music, singing in particular, is an important part of worship. When we sing we pray in a way which enables us to savour the words we use, giving glory to God more effectively. The ambience of God's house results from many factors, but none is more powerful than that of liturgical music. This requires a choir dedicated to producing a programme of music consonant with church tradition and liturgy. There is far more to

this than simply plucking popular tunes out of the air! Good churches invariably have good choirs. If our parish is to remain good, it must sustain a good choir. Please think seriously about joining your choir. It is necessary to have some sort of voice, but despite so many claiming total lack of singing ability, there are very few people who honestly cannot sing. No ageism is involved; all ages are welcome and there are no “screen tests”! All we ask is commitment. These days we see so much half-heartedness and apathy in the Christian faith we should treasure; joining the choir could be the first step in remedying this. *Dr. Carter*

2016 Diocesan Directories are on sale in the shop, price £3.00.

Garstang Community Academy Carol Concert will take place here, next Thursday 10th December, beginning at 7 pm. All are welcome. *See poster at back of church.*

Previously Published Items

Society for the Protection of Unborn Children is holding its first-ever SPUC Lune Valley outdoor Christmas Carol Singing event which will take place on Saturday 19th December in Market Square Lancaster.

Wednesday Word – To help us prepare for Mass on 13th December, the new copy of the Wednesday Word can be found at the back of church, on yellow paper.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Veronica ‘Ronnie’ Regan, who died on Thursday. We do not as yet have details of her Funeral. *May she rest in peace.*

Please pray for those whose anniversaries occur at about this time: Richard Noel Bamber, William Norman Nixon, Winifred Storey, John Skillen, Marie McGrath, Thomas Moxham, Catherine Mary Andrews, Aidan Fleming, John Gavin Nixon, George Cowburn, Annie Gregson and Grace Ross Darling. *May they rest in peace.*

We ask the Lord to encourage and give health to our sick and disabled parishioners, families and friends, including: Ann and Jackson Wickes, Thomas Lowe (Bert’s brother), Ewan (an 11 year old boy undergoing treatment for a brain tumour), Judith, Phillip, John Fairey, Pat Hickey, Maurice Iddon, Sheila Murphy, Rosemary Davies, Anne Brockbank, Michael McCarthy (living in France), Dorothy Evans, Lucy and Family, Kathryn, Susanne, Jessica Holmes (4 years old with leukaemia), Mark Noblet, Anthonio Dilao, Bernadette O’Neill, Tom Horn, John Ashcroft, Margaret Shepherd, Sharon Hodgson, Christine, Peter Holland, Ian Moran, Tony Winstanley, Alyson, Michael Hendry, Christopher Simpson, Auntie Sophie, Christopher Brown, Simon Thompson, Sheila Cookson, Francisca Rainford and Alison Green. *(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 am Mass:

Mass Times & Intentions, Saturday 5th – Sunday 13th December 2015

Sat	5 th	6.00 pm (Vigil)	Pat McGinn
Sun	6 th	10.00 am	Gerald Whittaker
Mon	7 th	No Mass	
Tues	8 th	12 noon	Brian Hargreaves
Wed	9 th	8.30 am	(For Vocations to the Priesthood) Dennis Brown
Thurs	10 th	9.30 am	Fintan McManus
Fri	11 th	9.30 am	Bridget Devitt
Sat	12 th	9.30 am	Fr Gerald Muir (LISCF)
		06.00 pm (Vigil)	Eve Graham (Anniversary)
Sun	13 th	10.00 am	Cathie Cadden

Devotions and Celebrations this week:

Tues	8 th	10.00 am	Primary School KS1 Carol Service at St. Thomas’s
		6.30 pm	Prayer Group
Wed	9 th	10.00 am	Primary School KS2 Carol Service here at SS. Mary & Michael’s
		No Rosary	
Fri	11 th	10 - 11 am	Holy Hour for Priestly Vocations
Sat	12 th	10.15 am	Celebration of God’s Forgiveness

Special Days this Week:

Sun	6 th	SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Mon	7 th	St Ambrose
Tues	8 th	The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary – THE OPENING OF THE JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY
Sun	13 th	THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT – Gaudete Sunday

Meetings this Week:

Weds	9 th	7.30 pm	Choir Practice
Thurs	10 th	7.15 pm	Journey in Faith – with enquirers

Last Week’s Attendance:

Sat	14 th	6.00 pm (Vigil)	Adults: 140	Children: 2
Sun	15 th	10.00 am	Adults: 119	Children: 39 Total: 300

Monies Received:

Offertory (including Standing Orders): £1,091.80; Shop: £35; Votive Lights: £62.60; Poor Missions Special Collection: £238. *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 SS Mary & Michael’s. Shopper’s Service (Pause for Thought) is at 12.15 pm every Thursday, at Garstang Methodist Church.