

East Warrington Family of Parishes
PARISH OF BLESSED JAMES BELL

*Serving St Benedict's, St Mary's & St Oswald's,
Warrington*



Newsletter

3rd Sunday of Advent (A)

14 December 2025

My dear sisters and brothers,

'Gaudete' Sunday

The schools held their Nativity's last week. The children were excited, and their parents and grandparents were excited to see them take part. There is a beautiful simplicity about it all which perhaps gets lost 'outside' where driving is a nightmare, the shops are so busy, and the pressure is on in our places of work.

In one of his first Pastoral Letters in the 1990's, Archbishop Patrick Kelly said something that struck a chord with me. He said: "Jesus doesn't want his birthday to be a burden for us." I have no doubt that's true. So, if we're in danger of being burdened by stress, tiredness and too much to do in the next ten days, perhaps we need to summon the courage to simplify things, make space, do what needs to be done and leave the rest, so that we too can capture some of the wonder of the great feast of Christ's birth. "Easier said than done", I hear you say. Yes, it is. But we can try.

Today, the 3rd Sunday of Advent, is known as 'Gaudete' Sunday. 'Gaudete' is the Latin word for 'Rejoice'. We rejoice because God is coming to save us in his Son, Jesus. We light the rose-coloured candle on the Advent Wreath which symbolises joy. It's meant to reawaken in us the longing we have for a Saviour. Our Saviour, Jesus, has come. He walks with us in all the moments of each day. At Mass last Thursday, we heard these words in the First Reading: "I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, 'Fear not, I am the one who helps you'." (Isaiah 41: 13).

Advent Penance Service

Please join me at St Oswald's this coming Wednesday at 7.30 pm for our annual Advent Penance Service. This service, which is a simple Service of Reconciliation,

always lifts our hearts and puts us in the right frame of mind for the coming feasts.

Candlelit Carol Service

Next Sunday, 21 December, our Family of Parishes will gather at St Benedict's for a Candlelit Carol Service at 4.00 pm. This short service of readings and carols will be followed by mince pies and mulled wine.

Christmas Mass Times

Christmas Eve

4.30 pm Christmas Vigil Mass at St Oswald's

11.30 pm Christmas Midnight Mass at St Benedict's

Christmas Day

8.30 am Christmas Dawn Mass at St Oswald's

10.30 am Christmas Day Mass at St Benedict's

Can you help with the Christmas Masses?

If you can help with the Christmas Masses as a Greeter, Reader, Eucharistic Minister or Altar Server, please sign the sheet at the back of church TODAY. Many thanks.

Christmas Dinner at St Benedict's

A small group of teenagers are preparing a Christmas Dinner for those who will be on their own on Christmas Day. They will serve the dinner in the Sacristy Meeting Room at St Benedict's on Christmas Day, 12.00 noon – 2.00 pm. They will also deliver meals to those at home who don't feel able to come out. However, they need some help with the cooking! So, if you could prepare a dish of something for about ten people and deliver it on Christmas Day, there's a sign up at the back of church. Dishes can be delivered to St Benedict's before or after the 10.30 am Mass on Christmas Day.

*With my prayers,
Fr Dave*

General Information

1) **Parish Priest:** Canon Dave Heywood. Tel: 01925 630127. Email: frdave@rcaol.org.uk Address: St Benedict's Priory, Rhodes Street, Warrington WA2 7QE.
Deacons: Rev Tony Kerrigan & Rev David Boyle.

2) **Parish Office:** Miss Bernie Griffin. Tuesday to Friday, 9.30 am – 2.30 pm. Tel: 01925 630127. Email address: blessedjamesbell@rcaol.org.uk

3) **Parish Website:** www.blessedjamesbell.co.uk

4) **St Benedict's Church** is open for private prayer: Tuesday to Friday, 9.30 am – 2.30 pm.

5) Sacrament of Reconciliation

Wednesdays: 10.15 – 10.45 am at St Benedict's

Saturdays: After the 4.30 pm Mass at St Oswald's
Confession is also available on request.

MASS TIMES & INTENTIONS

	St Benedict's	St Oswald's
Sunday 14 December 3rd Sunday of Advent (A) <i>Gaudete Sunday</i>	10.30 am Mass Paul Ryan	(Sat) 4.30 pm Vigil Mass Johnnie McCarthy 8.30 am Mass The Parishioners
Monday 15 December		
Tuesday 16 December	<i>Advent Mass at St Gregory's Catholic High School</i>	11.00 am Mass Special Intention (Baby C) 6.00 – 9.00 pm Prayer Vigil
Wednesday 17 December	10.15 am Exposition 11.00 am Mass Len Gannon	7.30 pm Advent Penance Service <i>(Service of Reconciliation)</i>
Thursday 18 December	6.00 pm School Carol Service	11.00 am School Christmas Mass Frank Berry
Friday 19 December	<i>9.15 am Christmas Mass in School</i> 11.00 am Mass Derrick Roberts	
Saturday 20 December		4.30 pm Vigil Mass The Parishioners
Sunday 21 December 4th Sunday of Advent (A) <i>Day of Prayer for Expectant Parents</i>	10.30 am Mass Marion Williams 4.00 pm Candlelit Carol Service	8.30 am Mass Cathy Spencer

OFFERTORY COLLECTION

07.12.25	£716.19	(£244.35 Gift Aid)
Standing Orders	£152.50	(£123.75 Gift Aid)
Digital Giving	£292.00	(£221.00 Gift Aid)
Total	£1160.69	
People of Gaza	£1369.57	
Red Boxes (St B)	£468.81	(Missio)
Donation	£100.00	(In mem. Kath McQuillan)
Christmas Dinner	£50.00	

Thank you so much for your generosity.

OFFERTORY ENVELOPES

If the number on your Offertory Envelopes is 56, could you please contact Bernie in the Parish Office? Thanks.

SUPPORT AT CHRISTMAS

The mental health charity, 'Mind', has put together some resources to support people who may be struggling this Christmas. Here's the link:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/christmas-and-mental-health/why-christmas-is-hard/>

CONFIRMATION 2026

If you are in Year 8 (or older) and would like to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in July 2026, please pick up an application form from the back of church or download it from the Parish website. Please complete the form and return it to Fr Dave by 31 January. Many thanks.

PARISH SAFEGUARDING REPS

Clara Chan, Doreane Child and Clare Lancaster.

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

(Divine Office – Psalter Week 3)

Today **3rd Sunday of Advent (A)**

Readings Isaiah 35: 1-6, 10
James 5: 7-10
Matthew 11: 2-11

Weekdays Monday: Advent – Week 3
From Wednesday: 17-24 December

LET US HOLD IN PRAYER

(Names can only be included with the person's consent)

Those who are sick or homebound, especially:

St Benedict's & St Mary's

Teresa Barnsley, Kath Bradshaw, Jean Hendricks, Anne Hill, Mary Hinchliffe, Ged Hughes, Gail Hyamson, Jim Hyland, Vin Jackson, Susan Keating, Trina Mouldsdales, Christine Murphy, Ann Pearson, Vincent Pinnock, Sandra Richardson, Kate Rigby, Pembolina Smith, Matilde Valentine, Dolores Woodall.

St Oswald's

Keith Bate, Brenda Brathing, Catherine Carne, Peter Cox, Dave Ferris, Marguerite Jones, Jo Roberts, Claire Taylor, Margaret Watts, Wilf Whelan.

Other Parishes

Mary Davies, Catherine Donaldson, June Fallon, James Hutchinson, Archbishop Patrick Kelly, Margaret Mobbs, Elizabeth Nash, Margaret Smith, Pamela Watson, Carol Whitehouse.

Those who have died recently, especially:

Malcolm Hackwell (*Funeral Mass at St Benedict's on 23 December at 12.30 pm*), Pat Cassidy.