

ST HILDA'S ASHFORD



THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

17 DECEMBER 2023

<https://www.facebook.com/StHildaAshford/>

Welcome to St Hilda's. We are delighted that you are able to share in our morning worship today,

If you are new to the church please do take time to introduce yourself to the people at the back of the church and to the ministry team at the end of the service. We would be delighted to meet you.

If you are able please join us for tea or coffee after the service so we can get to know one another.

Should you need any help during the service please do not hesitate to ask those around you and we are sure they will be able to support you.

For children, Junior Church meets in the Church Hall during the first part of the service, and there is a children's corner in the north aisle which they are very welcome to use.

Gaudete Sunday

The third Sunday of Advent is known as “Gaudete Sunday.”

Its name is taken from the entrance antiphon of the Mass, which is:

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice.
Indeed, the Lord is near.

This is a quotation from Philippians 4:4-5, and in Latin, the first word of the antiphon is gaudete (Latin, “rejoice”; it's also pronounced with three syllables: gau-de-te)

Advent is the season of preparing for the arrival of the Lord Jesus, and by the third Sunday of Advent, we are most of the way through the season. Thus it is appropriate to rejoice as we see the goal of the season approaching: “The Lord is near.”

THE GATHERING

Introit Hymn

Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set thy people free,
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth thou art,
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a king,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit,
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all-sufficient merit
Raise us to thy glorious throne

[Charles Wesley]

The Greeting

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

All Amen

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Words of welcome or introduction are said; we pray with Junior Church.

The Lighting of the Advent Candle

The Third Candle

The third candle is pink and symbolizes joy. It is called the “Shepherd’s Candle,” and is pink because rose is a liturgical colour for joy. The third Sunday of Advent is Gaudete Sunday and is meant to remind us of the joy that the world experienced at the birth of Jesus, as well as the joy that the faithful have reached the midpoint of Advent.

We light the first three candles

Prayer of Preparation

All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Prayers of Penitence

Let us hear our Lord's blessing on those who follow him.

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn,
for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,
for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are those who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

When the Lord comes,
he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness,
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.

(Silent reflection)

In the light of Christ let us confess our sins.

All O King enthroned on high,
filling the earth with your glory:
holy is your name,
Lord God almighty.
In our sinfulness we cry to you
to take our guilt away,
and to cleanse our lips to speak your word,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
who in his great mercy
has promised forgiveness of sins
to all those who with heartfelt repentance and true faith
turn to him: have mercy on you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and bring you to everlasting life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Collect - *The Collect for the week is said after a moment of silence*

O Lord Jesus Christ,
who at your first coming sent your messenger
to prepare your way before you:
grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries
may likewise so prepare and make ready your way
by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of
the just,
that at your second coming to judge the world
we may be found an acceptable people in your sight;
for you are alive and reign with the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Old Testament Reading – Isaiah 61 vv 1 – 4, 8 – 11

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
 to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
 and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour,
 and the day of vengeance of our God;
 to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
 to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
 the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
 the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.
They shall build up the ancient ruins,
 they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
 the devastations of many generations.

For I the Lord love justice,
 I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
 and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
 and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
 that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.
I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
 my whole being shall exult in my God;

for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
 he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
 and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
 and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
 to spring up before all the nations.

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

New Testament Reading – 1 Thessalonians 5 vv 16 – 24

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading – John 1 v 6 – 8, 19 – 28

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, ‘I am not the Messiah.’ And they asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the prophet?’ He answered, ‘No.’ Then they said to him, ‘Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?’ He said,

‘I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,
“Make straight the way of the Lord”’,
as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, ‘Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?’ John answered them, ‘I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.’ This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

The Sermon

The Creed

Let us declare our faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**All I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

In joyful expectation of his coming to our aid we pray to Jesus.

The prayers end with the following:

Merciful Father

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.**

Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

The Peace

In the tender mercy of our God,
the dayspring from on high shall break upon us,
to give light to those who dwell in darkness
and in the shadow of death
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you
All and also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

All may exchange a sign of peace.

Offertory Hymn

During this hymn a collection will be taken

Lo! he comes with clouds descending,
Once for favoured sinners slain;
Thousand thousand saints attending
Swell the triumph of his train:
Alleluia! (x3)
God appears on earth to reign.

Every eye shall now behold him
Robed in glorious majesty;
Those who set at naught and sold him,
Pierced and nailed him to the tree,
Deeply wailing (x3)
Shall their true Messiah see.

Those dear tokens of his passion
 Still his dazzling body bears,
Cause of endless exultation
 To his ransomed worshippers:
 With what rapture (x3)
Gaze we on those glorious scars!

Yea, Amen! let all adore thee,
 High on thine eternal throne;
Saviour, take the power and glory:
 Claim the kingdom for thine own:
 O come quickly! (x3)
Alleluya! Come, Lord, come!

[Charles Wesley]

The table is prepared, and bread and wine are placed upon it.

As this bread was scattered
and then gathered and made one,
so may your Church be gathered into your Kingdom.

All **Glory to you, O God, for ever.**

Wisdom has built her a house;
she has mixed her wine; she has set her table.
Glory to you, O God, for ever.

All **Amen.**

Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you

All and also with you

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, it is our duty and our joy,
at all times and in all places to give you thanks and praise,
holy Father, heavenly King, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

For he is our great high priest,
who has loosed us from our sins
and has made us to be a royal priesthood to you,
our God and Father.

Therefore with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever praising you and singing:

Holy, holy, holy Lord,

All God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord;
Hosanna in the Highest.

All glory be to you, our heavenly Father,
who, in your tender mercy,
gave your only Son our Saviour Jesus Christ
to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption;
who made there by his one oblation of himself once offered

a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice,
oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world;
he instituted,
and in his holy gospel commanded us to continue,
a perpetual memory of his precious death
until he comes again.

Hear us, merciful Father, we humbly pray,
and grant that, by the power of your Holy Spirit ☸,
we receiving these gifts of your creation,
this bread and this wine,
according to your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy
institution,
in remembrance of his death and passion,
may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood;
who, in the same night that he was betrayed,
took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:
*Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.*

In the same way, after supper
he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.

Christ is the bread of life:
All **When we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus,
until you come in glory.**

Therefore, Lord and heavenly Father,
in remembrance of the precious death and passion,
the mighty resurrection and glorious ascension
of your dear Son Jesus Christ,
we offer you through him
this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

Grant that by his merits and death,
and through faith in his blood,
we and all your Church may receive forgiveness of our sins
and all other benefits of his passion.

Although we are unworthy, through our manifold sins,
to offer you any sacrifice,
yet we pray that you will accept this
the duty and service that we owe.

Do not weigh our merits, but pardon our offences,
and fill us all who share in this holy communion
with your grace and heavenly blessing;

through Jesus Christ our Lord,
by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,
for ever and ever.

All **Amen.**

(Silent reflection)

The Lord's Prayer

Awaiting his coming in glory,
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

All **Our Father, who art in heaven,**
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

The president breaks the consecrated bread.

We break this bread
to share in the body of Christ.

All **Though we are many, we are one body,**
because we all share in one bread.

Agnus Dei

Lamb of God,
All you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.

Giving of Communion

Jesus is the Lamb of God
who takes away the sin of the world.
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

All Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word, and I shall be healed.

The president and people receive communion.

Communion Hymns

Anthem: Ave verum corpus

[Mozart]

Bread of heaven, on thee we feed,
For thy flesh is meat indeed:
Ever may our souls be fed
With this true and living bread,
Day by day with strength supplied
Through the life of him who died.

Vine of heaven, thy blood supplies
This blest cup of sacrifice;
'Tis thy wounds our healing give;
To thy cross we look and live.
Thou our life! O let us be
Rooted, grafted, built on thee.

[Josiah Conder]

Light of the world
You stepped down into darkness
Opened my eyes
Let me see
Beauty that made this heart adore you
Hope of a life spent with you
And here I am to worship
Here I am to bow down
Here I am to say that you're my God
You're altogether lovely
Altogether worthy
Altogether wonderful to me

King of all days
Oh, so highly exalted
Glorious in heaven above
Humbly you came
To the earth you created
All for love's sake became poor

*And here I am to worship
Here I am to bow down
Here I am to say that you're my God
You're altogether lovely
Altogether worthy
Altogether wonderful to me*

**I'll never know how much it cost
To see my sin upon that cross
I'll never know how much it cost
To see my sin upon that cross**

Chorus

[Tim Hughes © 2000 Thankyou Music]

Prayers after Communion

Silence is kept after which the Post-Communion prayer is said.

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts;
kindle in us the fire of your Spirit
that when your Christ comes again
we may shine as lights before his face;
who is alive and reigns now and for ever.

All Amen.

Father of all,
we give you thanks and praise,
that when we were still far off
you met us in your Son and brought us home.
Dying and living, he declared your love,
gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.

All May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;
we who drink his cup bring life to others;
we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,
so we and all your children shall be free,
and the whole earth live to praise your name;
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Notices

THE DISMISSAL

Blessing

May God the Father, judge all-merciful,
make us worthy of a place in his kingdom.

All Amen.

May God the Son, coming among us in power,
reveal in our midst the promise of his glory.

All Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit make us steadfast in faith,
joyful in hope and constant in love.

All Amen.

and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

Our Lord says, 'I am coming soon.'

All Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

May the Lord, when he comes,

All find us watching and waiting. Amen

Recessional Hymn

Long ago, prophets knew
Christ would come, born a Jew
Come to make all things new;
Bear his people's burden,
Freely love and pardon.

*Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!*

*When he comes, when he comes,
Who will make him welcome?*

God in time, God in man,
This is God's timeless plan:
He will come, as a man,
Born himself of woman,
God divinely human.

Chorus

Mary, hail! Though afraid,
She believed, she obeyed.
In her womb God is laid;
Till the time expected
Nurtured and protected.

Chorus

Journey ends! Where afar
Bethlem shines, like a star,
Stable door stands ajar.
Unborn Son of Mary,
Saviour, do not tarry!

*Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!*

*Jesus comes! Jesus comes!
We will make him welcome!*

[F. Pratt Green © 1971 Stainer & Bell Ltd]

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SERVICE TIMES

Sunday 17th December (today) 6pm - Carol Service

Wednesday 20th December 11am

Sunday 24th December 10am - Crib Service

11pm - Midnight Mass

Christmas Day 10am - Christmas Eucharist

The Sunday morning service is livestreamed and can be viewed later our Facebook page

Please remember in your prayers this week:

THE SICK:

Michael Brown	Melvyn Jansen	David
Lizio Cassar	Pat Kyle	Elaine
Ros Clifton	Finley Makriel	Rachel
Saffi Cobham	Ray Nation	Solange
Joan Davies	Lena Richardson	

If you would like a name added to or removed from the prayer list, please contact the Parish Office. If you know of someone ill or in hospital in need of prayer and support please tell our LLM Rosalyn Young (contact details on back cover).

THE RECENTLY DEPARTED

THOSE IN OUR MEMORIAL BOOK THIS WEEK

Lionel Eldred Fulton	Norman Alfred Why	Betty May Purvis
Thomas John Taverner	Flo Dobbie	Joseph W Lovell
Nan Purvey	Florence Louisa Fox	Doreen Ann Beaver
Yerolemos G Pouffou	Frederick Bleckwen	Eric Leonard Hine
Cyril Holliday	Lucy Danielle Rose Rouse	Phoebe Eleanor Spence
Verna Rose Bembridge	Phyllis Martin	

Please pray for our ALMA twin Parish, Holy Cross Murrupula

NOTICES

***** No Community Lunch this week *****

Please note that there will be no Community Lunch this week or next week. They will resume at noon on Wednesday 3rd January 2024.

Crib Service Appeal - Sunday 24th December at 10am

This is a service of the word aimed at young people and children. To enter into the spirit of the occasion please could everyone (big and little, young and old) **wear a head-dress** representing a character from the Nativity Story?

Be brave and join me – I've given you plenty of warning !

Can EVERYONE help us with January's Messy Church?

At the back of church is a small Jar and a box of small strips of coloured paper. Could you sign your CHRISTIAN name on one slip of paper and put it in the jar. Ideally we would like every member of the congregation including little people to take part.

Food Bank at Christmas

We are continuing to collect donations for the Food Bank in the chest at the back of church. Please consider giving something special as a Christmas treat for someone who is struggling to make ends meet - but make sure that any food is well within its Best Before date.

Bible Study Group – Wednesday at 7.30pm

We meet in Church on most Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm.

We are currently using an Advent-to Epiphany course: you are very welcome to come and join us even if for just one session.

Ambling through Acts course –Thursday 4th January

(7:30pm on the first Thursday of each month)

Everyone is very welcome to attend. There will be refreshments at the end. We finish by saying Compline (Night Prayer) together round about 9pm. I hope to see you there. Please bring a bible – ideally the NRSV, but any version will do.

Mothers' Union Lunch - Tuesday 9th January at 12.15pm

St Hilda's Newsletter

The latest issue of the Newsletter is available via the St. Hilda's web site (under "About Us"). We put a few printed copies at the back of church: please leave these for people without internet access and for visitors.

Contributions have been so few that we will be producing this every two months instead of monthly, and unless more people provide material the Newsletter will end.

This is your magazine -if you want it to continue, start writing!

The deadline for items for the **February/March** issue is **Sunday 7th January 2024**. Please send your contributions to: editor@sthilda.org

Help Wanted

The team serving refreshments after Sunday services would appreciate more help. If you can volunteer please speak to Valerie Scott or Paula.

The cleaning team would also appreciate more help: they usually work on Thursday mornings at 10.30am. If you can spare about an hour every week or two, or occasionally, please speak to Rosemary Greenwood or Chris Holliday.

The Parish Office is available by phone or email.

Any appointments in person must be booked.

Our parish administrator is Laura Goodman. Her office hours are:

Monday: 3.30-5pm

Wednesday: 3.30-6.30pm

Thursday 6.30-9.30pm

Saturday: 9.45-11.15am

Covid Precautions

As Covid infections are increasing again, the PCC would like to remind you that masks and bottles of hand sanitizer are available at the back of church if you wish to use them.

During the Peace, please be considerate to those who feel vulnerable and only shake hands with people who are happy with the contact.

Following the teaching of 'Loving thy Neighbour' - If you feel unwell, we ask that you do not attend church in person so that we can maintain the health and safety of all who attend the services: the Sunday morning service is livestreamed and can also be viewed later our Facebook page.

Praying for peace in Israel and Gaza

Bishop Sarah encourages us to join in with Archbishop Hosam Naoum of Jerusalem, who has offered the following prayer:

O God of all justice and peace, we cry out to you in the midst of the pain and trauma of violence and fear which prevails in the Holy Land.

Be with those who need you in these days of suffering; we pray for people of all faiths – Jews, Muslims and Christians and for all people of the land.

While we pray to you, O Lord, for an end to violence and the establishment of peace, we also call for you to bring justice and equity to the peoples. Guide us into your kingdom where all people are treated with dignity and honour as your children – for to all of us you are our Heavenly Father.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen

Contact Information

Vicar

Vacant

Licensed Lay Minister

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Paula Gething

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Liz Brian

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PCC Treasurer

Vicky Palmer

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