



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

21st December 2025 · Year A · Weekday II · Psalter IV

Cathedral House, Unthank Road, Norwich, NR2 2PA

www.sjbcathedral.org.uk
parish@sjbcathedral.org.uk

Cathedral Office: 01603 624615

Cathy Casey [weekdays 9am-1pm]

TIMES OF CEREMONIES

Sunday 21st Dec	FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT – <i>O Oriens</i>		
	9am	Mass (music group)	<i>Kate Chapman +</i>
	11am	Solemn Mass (choir)	<i>Holy Souls in Purgatory</i>
	3pm	Cathedral Carol Service	
	5.30pm	Mass (cantor)	<i>Pro Populo</i>
Monday 22nd	<i>Advent Feria – O Rex Gentium</i>		
	10am	Mass	<i>Roger & Sally Pearson (F)</i>
Tuesday 23rd	<i>Advent Feria – O Emmanuel</i>		
	10am	Mass	<i>Tommy McGhee +</i>
	5pm	Vespers (said)	
	5.30pm	Mass (said)	<i>Rosaria Ferraro +</i>
Wednesday 24th	EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD – Christmas Octave		
	7.30am	Mass	<i>Holy Souls</i>
	10am	Mass	<i>Patrick Kelly +</i>
	3pm	Mass [1962 Rite Latin]	<i>Holy Souls</i>
	4.30pm	First Vespers of Christmas	
	6pm	Family Vigil Mass	<i>Elizabeth Waters +</i>
	11.30pm	Carol Service & the Christmas Proclamation	
	12am	Midnight Mass and Blessing of the Crib	<i>Pro Populo</i>
Thursday 25th	CHRISTMAS DAY		
	9am	Mass of the Dawn	<i>Miracle Chidiebele Ekene</i>
	11am	Solemn Mass of the Day	<i>T.V. Mathew</i>
Friday 26th	S Stephen, The First Martyr		
	10am	Mass	<i>Chiderah Okolocha (wedding in Nigeria)</i>
Saturday 27th	S John, Apostle & Evangelist		
	10am	Mass & Adoration	<i>Walstan Fulcher (F) +</i>
	6pm	Mass [Anticipatory]	<i>Victims of Hong Kong fire</i>
Sunday 28th	The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph		
	9am	Mass (music group)	<i>Romeo Manching Snr +</i>
	11am	Solemn Mass (choir)	<i>Ann Kutay (recovery)</i>
	4pm	Vespers & Benediction (said)	
	5.30pm	Mass (said)	<i>Pro Populo</i>

Very Revd Alan Hodgson KHS

Dean of the Cathedral Church

alan.hodgson@rcdea.org.uk

Rev Jonathan Callejo

Deacon

Jonathan.callejo@rcdea.org.uk

Charley Purves

Cathedral Manager

gm@sjbcathedral.org.uk

Sarah Miller

Bookings Coordinator

bookings@sjbcathedral.org.uk

Revd Anthony Asomugha

Assistant Priest

anthony.asomugha@rcdea.org.uk

David Greal

Director of Music

music@sjbcathedral.org.uk

Richard Maguire

Learning & Heritage Officer

heritage@sjbcathedral.org.uk

Becci Roberts

Catering Manager

cateringmanager@sjbcathedral.org.uk

Cathedral Collection

£5,001.71

Loose Plate = £1,474.21

Dona = £1,452.50

Envelopes = £131.00

Standing Orders = c £1,500.00 *

Window Appeal = £30.00 + £414.00

Dependent Priests' Fund £849.72



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Thank you for your regular support and ongoing generosity.

Thank you for your continued support of the parish. If you would like to set up a standing order with your bank you will need these details: Account name: St John's Cathedral Parish Offertory Account, Sort Code 60-15-31, Account Number 04911881

For any guidance on Gift Aid please contact giving.sjbcathedral@rcdea.org.uk

Confessions

Tuesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10.30am
Saturday: 5.15pm
Sunday: 4.45pm

Rosary

The Rosary is prayed in the
Lady Chapel.
Monday to Friday after the
10am Mass.

Divine Office

Lauds is prayed in the
Precious Blood Chapel.
Monday to Friday at 9:40am.

HOLY APOSTLES CHURCH

Scarnell Road, Norwich NR5 8HT

parish@sjbcathedral.org.uk

Christmas Masses: Christmas Eve at 8pm – Christmas Day at 10am

<i>Saturday</i>	5pm	Holy Qurbana
<i>Sunday</i>	8am	Holy Qurbana
	10am	Mass & Confessions
	4pm	Holy Qurbana

From 25th December to 5th January the Church will be open from 9am – 5pm (except weekends)

A message from Fr Alan...

Our Lady of Perpetual Help [OLPH]: It was with great joy that we were able to move the beautiful icon of OLPH to her new position in the North Transept of the cathedral this week (See Dr Richard Maguire's thoughts further on in the newsletter]. The moving of this icon is, I believe, an important event in the life of the cathedral. Not only is the icon incredibly beautiful and a faithful reproduction of the original, it also has a very historical value in the life of this cathedral.

Now is not the place to go into just how difficult it has been to get the necessary permissions to move the icon but rather to celebrate the successful move and to enjoy seeing her in such a prominent position in the cathedral. I am hoping that, by placing her so centrally in the Lady Chapel, people will be drawn into the chapel and appreciate her more than when she was simply on the side of the nave. I hope, in the new year, to fit lighting to the alcove in which she resides and ensure that she is easy to see and illuminated in a wonderful way. My thanks to all who worked with me to move this icon.

Thank you, Rachel: Please see further on in the newsletter about the excellent work that Rachel [our wonderful gardener] has done in supporting the cathedral and the work that she does in the garden. Not only has Rachel raised a significant amount of money through sales of plants and seeds, but our gardens look magnificent and loved throughout the year. Thank you, Rachel.

Window Appeal: Thank you for your ongoing support. This week we had a £30 cash donation, £414 on Dona - bringing our running total up to **£28,777.10**. Thank you for your generosity.

Finally: On behalf of all the clergy that regularly celebrate Mass at the cathedral, all the staff and volunteers and everyone who makes this cathedral a place of welcome, joy and Christ-centred, I extend a very warm and sincere greeting of joy and goodwill to everyone who passes through the doors this week and who contributes to the life of the cathedral through prayer, talent and time. **Merry Christmas.**



READINGS AT MASS

Sunday 21st December 2025

First reading

Isaiah 7:10-14

‘Behold, the virgin shall conceive.’

In those days: The LORD spoke to Ahaz: ‘Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.’ But Ahaz said, ‘I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.’ And Isaiah said, ‘Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel.’

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 24(23):1-2. 3-4b. 5-6. R cf. 6

Let the LORD enter; he is the king of glory.

Second reading

Romans 1:1-7

Jesus Christ, descended from David, Son of God.

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an Apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 1:23

Alleluia, alleluia.

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Emmanuel — which means, God with us.
Alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 1:18-24

Jesus was born of Mary, who was betrothed to Joseph, son of David.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'

All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

'Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Emmanuel' —
which means, God with us.

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife.

HYMN NUMBERS FOR 9AM MASS:

107, 113, 83, 112

Prayers for the Sick

Cathy Adams, Dr Michael Anibueze, Philippa Barnes, Ian Beyts, Jennifer Boland, Eleanor Bray, Amanda Caistor, Brenda Devany, Jonathon Fitzimmons, Mary Gledhill, Sophia Gough-Solar, Mary Hatcher, Joe Heaney, Gill Horan, Paul Horan, Joel McDonough, Anne O'Leary, Maria Osorio, Mary Newby, Gary Newton, Isobel O'Connor, Christopher Parish, Canon David Paul, Anthony Preston, Nicholle Sales, Reece Sales, Linda Sheppard, Christine Taylor, Peter Thorn, Lord Adrian Tremayne, Mary Ward, Fr John Warrington, Peter Willets, Adrian Woods, the Wood Family, Patricia Woolley, Isobel Woolner, the Watson Family, Charmanee Wissner, Shane Wissner and Karen Yallop *[GDPR compliant]*

Going into hospital? Please inform the hospital ward itself that the Catholic Chaplain is needed.

NEWS AND EVENTS

Christmas Masses at Holy Apostles - Christmas Eve Mass will be at 8pm and Christmas Day Mass will be at 10am.

Friday Abstinence – is dispensed during the Christmas Octave.

Crib appeal: This year, as a diocese, our crib appeal will once again be for the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem. His Beatitude, the Patriarch, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa has tirelessly worked with the whole peoples of the Middle East, petitioning for peace, compromise and goodwill amongst the region. He is a recognised figure in the negotiations and brings about a serenity and neutrality to the proceedings. Donations can be made via the Dona machine in and around the cathedral.

Christmas Flowers - there will be a collection towards Christmas flowers after all Masses on 20th/21st December. This will also help to fund Cathedral flowers throughout the year.

Christmas Parish Lunch Sunday 21st December – after the 11am Mass there will be a 3-course parish lunch and a raffle. Come join us for some lovely food and fellowship. Please sign up on the sheet at the back of the Cathedral to book a place (suggested donation £7 per person). A lovely way to pass the afternoon before joining in the Carols by Candlelight at 3pm. All are welcome.

Children's Guided Nativity Tour – Tuesday 23rd December at 11am. Join us for a fun and exciting Christmas adventure! Explore the Cathedral with a special guided tour where we'll uncover the Nativity story hidden in the beautiful stained-glass windows and stone carvings. Bring your curiosity and discover the meaning of Christmas in every corner!

Hospital Mass - Mass is celebrated at 12 noon on the 1st and 3rd Monday of every month in the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital Chapel (Centre Block, Level 1). Our next Mass will be on **Monday 5th January** and then on **Monday 19th 2026**.

The Duckett Library is now closed for the Christmas break and will reopen on Sunday 4 January after the 9am Mass. If you have any queries or need to borrow books during closure, email duckettlibrary@sjbcathedral.org.uk – books can be returned via the box outside the library.

The Garden Café will be closed for Christmas from Monday 22nd December until Friday 2nd January 2026. The cleaning of the whole Narthex floor will take place on Monday 29th December with no access to the Narthex on that day.

Grateful thanks to everyone who supported the Justice and Peace Group stall at The St Nicholas Fair. We raised £400 for our twinned project in Tambogrande Peru. Thank you for your continued support.

NEWS AND EVENTS

The Icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour has moved - The Icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour has been moved from the North Aisle to the Walsingham Chapel. The Cathedral is fortunate to be the home of an outstanding copy of this famous Byzantine icon, which depicts the Virgin Mary, under the title “Mother of God,” (Greek: *Theotokos*). Our Lady is holding the Child Jesus. The original is displayed at the Church of St. Alphonsus Liguori in Rome.

This copy of the icon was made in Rome by the Redemptorist Order and was blessed on 2 May 1894 by Pope Leo XIII.

Originally, the icon was displayed above the altar in the Walsingham Chapel, and was moved from there around 1936, when the current reredos was installed.

The icon also has a Papal Indulgence associated with it, issued by Pope Benedict XV on 13 July 1920.

We have obtained permission (through a process that has taken over a year) to move the icon. We have done so because we feel it is appropriate for the icon to be located near the Walsingham Chapel, where it was placed originally. Moreover, it is now situated below the Queen’s Window, which focuses on the Blessed Virgin Mary, and underneath a row of ceiling bosses which all concern Our Lady (specifically, the Nativity, the Flight to Egypt, and the Assumption). The icon enhances, therefore, the Marian theology of the entire North Transept and, we hope, will help us deepen our devotion to Our Lady, the Mother of God.

We have placed a copy of the Papal Indulgence alongside the icon and there is a display explaining the concept of indulgences. By placing the icon in this location and by celebrating the days when we can obtain the indulgence associated with it, we hope that the icon will become an even greater point of focus for prayer and veneration.

We feel that this return of the Icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour to the North Transept is especially appropriate as we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Diocese. We hope that you will agree that this move is a beautiful expression of our Catholic Faith and our devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

A Huge Thank You from Our Gardener - thanks to the wonderful generosity of parishioners and visitors to the Cathedral and Café, an amazing £1,045.00 has been raised since May 2025 through the sale of garden produce, plants, and seeds. This includes 93 packets of seeds and 76 bags of lavender; all harvested from our very own garden. Rachel is deeply grateful for this support, which has enabled her to purchase essential equipment, lawn-care supplies, seeds, and plenty of new greenery, including new fruit trees. We’re delighted to share that all produce, seeds, and plants will be available for sale again in 2026.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR REGULAR SACRAMENTS

With all sacraments, we do try to accommodate the needs of the individual or couple seeking to celebrate in our Cathedral. However, we are bound by the Rite of the Catholic Church in terms of liturgy and music. The priest or deacon assigned to work with you will guide you as much as possible. In general, eulogies are NOT part of the Catholic rite of Funerals and, as such should be deferred to the crematorium or a suitable gathering of loved ones after the funeral.

Our Director of Music will assist you with appropriate music that matches the dignity of the service and is appropriate to the Cathedral - this will be from a choice of sacred music generally played on the cathedral organ (no pre-recorded music).

All readings in the Cathedral must come from Sacred Scripture - poems and prose that do not comply with this should be used at the reception after the service.

BAPTISMS

Infant Baptisms - baptism is the joy-filled initiation into the Christian life and is celebrated as a public event within the community. The Sacrament of Baptism takes place on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month at 11:30am. This is a joint celebration with up to three other families. Baptism preparation classes are held on the last Saturday of every month from 4.30pm - 5.15pm. This needs to be booked, in advance, through the parish office.

Adult Baptisms - generally take place at the Easter Vigil and conferred by the Bishop in his Cathedral. Candidates will need to undergo adult instruction classes for at least five months (usually starting in late September). Classes take place every Friday evening from 7pm - commencing in September.

Baptisms do not take place during the seasons of Advent and Lent. For all Baptism enquiries, please contact the parish office.

WEDDINGS

A minimum of 6 months' notice is required of any marriage taking place in the cathedral. Wedding couples should be resident within the parish boundaries or have some strong link to the cathedral. Please **do not** make any arrangements nor book any venue or make any concrete plans until you have secured a wedding date.

There is a three-fold requirement for marriage preparation; Catechetical and Liturgical preparation (a marriage instruction course at the cathedral toward the middle of January as well as a one-day course in Newmarket), Civil paperwork (through the townhall) as well as documentation required by the Catholic Church for the chancery and parish registers. This applies whether you are planning to be married in the Cathedral or if you plan to marry in a different location.

FUNERALS

At St John's Cathedral, funerals take place during the weekday 10am Mass. The Cathedral is generally booked through your funeral director - so please speak to them first about your needs and they will contact the Cathedral on your behalf.