

Parishes of St John XXIII & St Joseph, Birtley



Incorporating: **Our Blessed Lady Immaculate**, Washington;
Our Lady Queen of Peace, Penshaw; **St Bede**, Usworth;
St John Boste, Oxclose; **St Joseph**, Birtley
 Fr Martin Morris, Parish Priest, Tel: 01916498257
 Administrator: Audrey Huntley tel: 0191 4163583
 (Tuesday & Wednesday 8am—1pm, Thursday 11am—4pm & Friday 12– 5pm)
 Email: StJohn23rd@diocesehn.org.uk
 Parish Website: <https://www.washingtoncatholic.org.uk>



In the Partnership of Benedict

Birtley, Chester-le-Street, Penshaw, Sacriston, Washington

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT, 7TH - 8TH DECEMBER 2024, Year C

Saturday 7th December	St Joseph	5pm	Jean Greenwood RIP
Vigil	St Bede	5pm	People of the Parish
Sunday 8th December	St John Boste	9:30am	Winifred Baulch RIP
2nd Sunday of Advent	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	Andrew Bell RIP
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	Joseph, Ellen Jordan & their Daughter Mary

First Reading: High Mountains Laid Flat

Baruch 5:1-96

Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem, and put on for ever the beauty of the glory from God. Put on the robe of the righteousness from God; put on your head the crown of the glory of the Everlasting. For God will show your splendour everywhere under heaven. For your name will for ever be called by God: 'Peace of righteousness and glory of godliness'. Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height and look towards the east and see your children gathered from west and east, at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing that God has remembered them. For they went forth from you on foot, led away by their enemies; but God will bring them back to you, carried in glory, as on a royal throne. For God has ordered that every high mountain and the everlasting hills be made low and the valleys filled up to make level ground, so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God. The woods and every fragrant tree have shaded Israel at God's command. For God will lead Israel with joy in the light of his glory, with the mercy and righteousness that come from him.

Response to the Psalm: What great deeds the Lord worked for us! Indeed, we were glad.

Second Reading: Filled with the fruits of uprightness

Philippians 1:3-6, 8-11

Brothers and sisters: I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, Alleluia! Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight; all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!

The Gospel: The Baptists Message

Luke 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."'

Fr Martin Morris	0191 649 8257	Deacon Frank O'Neill	0779 115 5845
Fr Martin Wheaton	0770 996 1040	Deacon Tony Joy	0779 989 3419
Fr Luke Wilkinson	0191 649 8257		

Mass Times & Intentions - Week Beginning Monday 9th December 2024

Day	Church	Time	Intention
Monday 9th December The Immaculate Conception	St Bede	10am	Stella Wyatt RIP
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm	Audrey McIntyre
Tuesday 10th December Our Lady of Loreto & St John Roberts	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	Patrick Larkin
	St Joseph	7pm	Laurence & Margaret Reed RIP
Wednesday 11th December St Damasus	St Bede	10am	Thomas Robinson & Deceased Clark Family
	St John Boste	7pm	Vera Frazer RIP
Thursday 12th December Our Lady of Guadalupe	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	Cosgrove & Doherty Families
	St Joseph	12 Noon	Gary Caufield RIP
Friday 13th December St Lucy	St John Boste	10am	Sheila & William Pattison RIP
	St Joseph (in St Benet's School)	9.15am	People of the Parish
Saturday 14th December St John of the Cross	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	Patrick Larkin
	St Joseph	5pm	Harriet & John Hogan RIP
	St Bede	5pm	Bill Duncan RIP
Sunday 15th December 3rd Sunday of Advent	St John Boste	9:30am	Andrew Bell RIP
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	People of the Parish
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	Clare Madden RIP (Birthday Memory)

Gospel Reflection

Advent is a season of preparation, and in today's Gospel reading, we see John the Baptist doing exactly that – going into the region and quoting the prophet Isaiah to prepare those around him for Christ. The final weeks before Christmas for us are filled with frantic preparations – last minute Christmas shopping, Christmas gatherings with family and friends, and preparing presents to give to our loved ones. Preparation is important, it helps us get ready for something special. This is exactly what John the Baptist was doing here – preparing the way for something (or someone) special.

As a modern world, we aren't fond of waiting. When we have to wait longer for a bus, we are disgruntled. The people of Israel had been waiting generations for the Messiah, but were they prepared? I think there is a difference between waiting and preparation. Waiting feels more passive, like time is passing you by, and you're eager to get to the next thing. Preparation, on the other hand, is more active, making use of the time you have to consciously and intentionally get ready. This doesn't mean becoming too busy you miss what is around you, but instead intentionally preparing your hearts. Are you more prepared for Santa, or the Saviour? Are you more prepared for Christmas, or for Christ? Are we waiting for Christmas, or preparing for it?

Ponder on these questions over the next week. How can you better prepare your hearts for Christ to dwell? Perhaps it's forgiving a grudge, perhaps it's doing something active like talking about faith with your friends or family, or perhaps it's simply finding two minutes to be still and asking the Spirit to enter your heart and make it a worthy dwelling place. If the Lord can do it for a manger in a stable two thousand years ago, He can do it for you too.

Hannah Bartlett

Masses are live-streamed daily at 10am everyday, except Monday when Mass is live-streamed at 7pm

Please click the link <https://www.churchservices.tv/penshaw> to view from one of our Churches.

In addition, we live-stream Mass from St Joseph's, Birtley on: Tuesday at 7pm; Thursday at 12 Noon; Saturday at 5pm.

To access live streaming from St Joseph's Birtley, please click the link <https://www.churchservices.tv/birtley>.

What's On in the Parish

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

Our Lady Queen of Peace each Friday 2-3pm;

St Bede's each Wednesday 9.15am - 9.50am;

St. Joseph's each Thursday evening 6.30pm - 7.30pm, held in the front room of the Presbytery (main door will be open, first room on left). I do encourage as many of you as possible to spend some time in quiet prayer with Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation:

Our Lady Queen of Peace - Thursday morning, after Mass and Saturday morning from 10am-11am.

St Joseph -Thursday after noon Mass.

St John Boste - Friday morning, after Mass.

Our Blessed Lady Immaculate - Saturday morning, after Mass.

St Bede's - Saturday after Vigil Mass.

OLOF (Our Lady's Over 50's Club) -Tuesday at 1pm in the Emmaus Room, at Our Lady's in the Village! All most welcome!

NOTE: There will be no meeting on 10th December.

Advent Rosary - The Rosary will be prayed each Saturday morning at 9.35am at Our Blessed Lady Immaculate, particularly for the Intention of World Peace. We will gather at the Lady Chapel. All welcome.

Advent Holy Hours. On the first three Sundays of Advent there will be a Holy Hour with Evening Prayer and Benediction, please come along and prepare for Christmas with prayer!

8 December at Our Lady Queen of Peace, 4pm - 5.30pm (with Medjugorje devotions)

15 December at St John Boste, 4pm - 5pm.

Our Lady Queen of Peace, Penshaw, Catholic Women's Guild.

Our annual collection of toys for the poor children in the area is on Sunday 8 December after 10am Mass. Please label any gifts 'Boy'/'Girl' with an age or 'Family'. Gifts can be left in the Church porch - all donations very much appreciated.

NEW SONG! - Join us on 8 December 4.00 pm for our festive New Song event! There will be live Christmas music, hot chocolate, mince pies and lots of festive fun - all are welcome! **Where:** Our Blessed Lady Immaculate Parish Room NE38 7HS. **When:** 8 December @ 4.00 pm **Email:** newsongne@gmail.com

Instagram: @newsongne

Monday is the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception - From the first moment of her existence, Mary was preserved from original sin. Original sin is the lack of sanctifying grace in our souls, giving us a share in God's own life. With Our Lady's Immaculate Conception God's work of complete restoration begins for the whole human race. She is the first of the Redeemed, the one whom St. Luke tells us is "Full of Grace." (LK 1.28) We have two Masses on Monday, let us try and keep this day holy by attending Mass and celebrating the victory over sin and death first begun in Our Lady.

Advent Penitential Services - Tuesday 10th December at Our Blessed Lady Immaculate & Wednesday 18th December at St. Joseph's, starting at 7pm. An opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Churches Together Advent Carol Service at Our Lady Queen of Peace, Wednesday, 11th December, 7pm. All welcome.

St Robert's Carol Service: St Robert's Community Carol Service takes place at OLQP at 6.30pm on Tuesday 17th December. It will be a collaboration between St Robert's, the parish and OLQP primary school and our other primaries. All families and parishioners are welcome to join us for such a lovely celebration of music and readings to help us reflect and prepare for Christmas.

St Robert's Christmas Coffee Morning: On Wednesday 18th December we have our annual Christmas Coffee Morning for parishioners from 9.15 - 11.00am. There will be music, seasonal refreshments, a raffle, bingo and Christmas related things to buy which will be made by students. The coffee morning has become a great success over the last few years and if you would like to come, please contact Anne Marie McKenna at St Robert's to book your place as spaces are limited. amckenna@str.bwcet.com or 01917161700. All proceeds go to our nominated house charities this year. Christmas jumpers and accessories are encouraged!

Christmas Candlelight Vigil and Blue Christmas Service (from 6.30pm) at Our Blessed Lady Immaculate; Friday 20th December 6-9pm. All Welcome.

Herrington Park Carols; Saturday 21st December , 2.30pm. All welcome with the Salvation Army Band.

Shoebox Appeal - The Social Justice and Environment Group would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who donated toiletries, clothing, toys, books, sweets etc to the appeal. Your response was incredible and you will have brightened Christmas for many who struggle at this time of year. We donated- 63 drawstring gift bags to the West End Refugee Service, Newcastle. 35 shoeboxes/large bags to St Vincents Refugee/Asylum Seeker Project, Newcastle. 30 shoeboxes/large bags to St Mary's Refugee/Asylum Seeker Drop In, Sunderland. 16 Shoeboxes/bags to a local women's refuge and 6 large bags to Love Amelia charity, Sunderland. All were gratefully received with many thanks sent to all who contributed.

MASSES OVER CHRISTMAS

The following shows the Mass times and venues for Christmas. Please note the changes from the usual Mass times.

TUESDAY 24th DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS EVE

Christmas Vigil:

5.00pm St Bede, Washington

5.30pm Our Blessed Lady Immaculate, Washington

6.00pm St Joseph, Birtley (Carols from 5.30pm)

7.00pm St John Boste, Washington (Carols from 6.30pm)*

7.30pm Our Lady Queen of Peace (Carols from 7pm)

11.30pm Our Blessed Lady Immaculate (Carols from 11pm)*

WEDNESDAY 25th DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS DAY

9.30am St John Boste, Washington

10.00am Our Lady Queen of Peace*

10.00am St Joseph Birtley

THURSDAY 26th DECEMBER – BOXING DAY

10.00am Our Lady Queen of Peace*

12 Noon St Joseph's, Birtley

* Indicates streamed Masses.

St John Boste, Christmas Memorial Candles. From this week envelopes will be available for your intentions for the Christmas candles. Please return by Sunday 15 December.

Missio Red Boxes - St John Boste. It is some time since we have asked for your Red Boxes to be returned for counting. For those of you who have been Agents, collecting and counting boxes, Missio would prefer that we don't go to people's houses and empty them there. Instead, could you contact the people you collected from and ask them to bring the boxes to you or hand them in at church. If that is not practical, we would ask that you go and collect the boxes and bring them to church to be counted. Please make sure that each box has a label with the name and address on it. Could you please bring the boxes to church by 15th December. If you need any assistance, please contact Liz Joy Tel 07917 322890

Missio Red Box Envelopes - Our Blessed Lady Immaculate. As we are nearing the end of Missio's financial year please collect an A5 Missio envelope from the rear of Our Blessed Lady Immaculate for your Red Box contents/donation. Could you please return it to church by mid December. If you need any assistance please contact Winifred Waite Tel 07903565306.

Food for Thought: Sustainable Living this Christmas - With Christmas fast approaching, it's hard to avoid the constant stream of festive food adverts on TV, in newspapers, and magazines. While no-one is saying we shouldn't enjoy our favourite treats, we can still make more sustainable choices when it comes to what we eat. Agriculture accounts for around 30% of global emissions. This means we all have a role to play in reducing our environmental impact. Here are some simple ways you can eat more sustainably this festive season:

Choose organic: Buy organic food, including meat, whenever possible. **Avoid food waste:** Plan your meals ahead to reduce excess food. **Eat seasonally:** Try to buy foods that are in season and locally produced. **Reduce meat consumption:** Consider cutting down on meat, which has a higher environmental impact. Diocesan Justice and Peace Group.

The Year of Jubilee 2025 is a beacon of hope. We're all invited into an encounter with Jesus Christ, as his disciples of mercy, forgiveness, and social action, and to celebrate our communities. It's a chance to envision a better future, a future of hope and faith where mercy guides our actions. It's a time for forgiveness and reconciliation within our communities. We can take action to address injustices, support the vulnerable, and work towards a more equitable society. Let's embrace the spirit of the Jubilee and unite to create a world of compassion and justice, where everyone and our whole community can grow and flourish. Please visit the Diocesan Year of Jubilee page by [clicking here](#). There will be two Holy Doors in our Diocese, one at St. Mary's Cathedral and one at St. Joseph's Church, Hartlepool. Bishop Stephen Wright (Hexham & Newcastle) is very grateful to Canon Paul Douthwaite for his welcome to pilgrims at St. Joseph's. The Holy Father has decreed that the **Holy Doors are opened on Sunday 29th December**. It is the Bishop's intention to celebrate both openings that day. **The Holy Doors will be closed on 6th January 2026**. Pope Francis has written an Encyclical Letter on 'The Sacred Heart of Jesus' and suggested the traditional practice of the 'Nine First Friday' devotion throughout 2025. We will offer this devotional practice throughout next year, with an evening Mass on the First Friday of each month in one of our churches, from February to October. Do you have any further ideas how we can make the Holy Year special in our Parish? Please let us know! Fr Martin Morris.

Other News

Advent Reflections from the Diocese: We hope that this year's edition of the Advent reflections will help guide us through the season of Advent, a time of preparation and waiting for the birth of Jesus. The reflections have been produced by a great number of people to express the richness of our diocesan community. They are available to download [here](#).

CAFOD Advent Reflections - Advent is here, and we'd like to invite you to join us in reflection and prayer during this season of anticipation and expectation. Daily Bible reflections, stories of our global family, prayers and practical ideas for action, are now available. [Click here](#) for more information.

"Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come.'" Might God be calling you to discern a life of service as a priest within the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle? For more information, Speak to your Parish Priest or contact the Vocations Promoter: 01207 299 012 or [click here](#)

On Wednesday 11 December, an Advent Day of Reflection takes place at Ushaw. At the start of Advent, Ushaw is providing a day of reflection with an Advent theme. The Advent Day of Reflection is a day for quiet and prayer, a welcome escape from the busy period leading up to Christmas, and a chance to focus on the message of Christmas. The day starts at 10.45am and finishes by 3.30pm. Bring your own lunch, or you can buy lunch in Ushaw's café. Tickets for the day cost £10, refreshments will be provided on arrival. Please [click here](#)

Reflections

Diocesan Weekly reflections can be found by [clicking here](#).

Examen -Please follow the links to go to Pray as You Go

[Saturday Examen 2nd Sunday of Advent](#)

Catholic Social Teaching

For the Newsletter, [click here](#).

Prayers - If you would like to request prayers from the parish community for someone who is sick, or recently deceased, please click on the links below and complete the necessary forms. This will enable their names to be included in private prayer and during various Masses.

[For Prayers for the Sick](#)

[For Prayers for the Deceased](#)

or ring 0191 4163583

Finance - Standing Order forms and Gift Aid forms are available by clicking on the following links:

[For St John XXIII](#) [For St Joseph's](#)

or ring 0191 4163583.

Sick and Recently Deceased -

To view the sick and recently deceased list [please click here](#). To amend the information on the list [click here](#).

Parish Newsletter If you have any comments you wish to make about the Parish Newsletter, [please click here](#).

For the latest information, please go to any of the following Websites:

[Parish of St John XXIII](#)

[Parish of St Joseph's](#)

[Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle](#)

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