

Welcome to our weekly newsletter. We hope you enjoy your time at St James' and we look forward to seeing you again next week.

Thank you for your offerings last week of £1,775
Mass attendance 697.

8th December (Saturday Vigil)	Second Sunday of Advent 6pm Elisabeth Pottiers (Mrs MacArthur)
Sunday 9th December	9.15am Relatives and Friends of the Fyson Family (Foundation) 11am People of the Parish
Monday 10th December	Feria 9.30am Anthony Olivelle RIP (M Olivelle)
Tuesday 11th December	Feria 9.30am Amanda Mulroy RIP (L O'Sullivan)
Wednesday 12th December	Feria 9.30am David Everitt RIP (M Kelly) 10.45 Eucharist Adoration
Thursday 13th December	St Lucy, Virgin & Martyr 9.30am Jean Rawlings RIP (Foundation)
Friday 14th December	St John of the Cross 9.30am Lydia Jagger RIP (S Jagger)
15th December (Saturday Vigil)	Third Sunday of Advent 6pm Eileen & Donald McArthur (E McArthur)
Sunday 16th December	9.15am People of the Parish 11am Margaret Walsh RIP (Benson family)

Confessions are heard on Saturday, 5.00-5.45pm, or by appointment.

Morning Prayer takes place Monday – Friday at 9.10am. All are welcome to attend.

Pondering the Word (*Lectio Divina*) - A quiet reflective look at the following Sunday's Gospel. Mondays 11am-12 noon, except for Bank Holidays, here in the Church. All are welcome.

Rosary – Every day after Mass there is rosary. All are welcome.

Second Collection

This weekend, the second collection will be for our Parish Overseas Project supporting the parish of St Catherine's in the Philippines. We support the educational projects in the parish and the work done to assist those in particular need in the area.

Next weekend, the second collection will be the parish maintenance fund.

Fr David writes...

We know from experience that insight does not necessarily lead us to change. Recognizing the truth does not compel us to alter our ways. Particularly when our self-esteem is injured, the truth can have the effect of paralysing us instead of energising us into action. On the other hand, some people are gifted with self-insight. They have the ability to reflect upon themselves and their actions. They also have the courage to change some aspects of their personality because they are open to the pursuit for growth and wisdom. They might not always succeed in changing, however they don't have any illusions about their true self, warts and all. It is a delight to get to know them. They are definitely not perfect, but they are imbued by a genuine sense of inner freedom. You can always find these people flocking to go to different kinds of self-awareness workshops and also trying to read anything that they get hold of in helping them to understand what makes them tick. On the other hand we all have met people who have no clue about how they come across to people – no self-interest. They might think that they are in touch with their true self but what they are in touch with is their "Ideal Self", the self that they would wish to be, and they are certainly not aware of their "Actual self". To change you need to own and acknowledge your "True Self". Otherwise you cannot even start to dream of change. It is very difficult to have a conversation with these people because they find it very difficult to be in touch with their own truth.

To change is difficult for everyone anyway. We are all complicated human beings. Our actions and behaviours and feelings have been learnt from early childhood. They are determined by the attachments or lack of them, that we had experienced in our infancy. They are also learnt through our lives as they would have been adopted because they suited us. They say that the younger the person is whom you might be helping to form, the more likely change could happen. The older we get, the more we are stuck in our ways. And change becomes more difficult. What helps us to change? What doesn't help us? How many times do parents try to change an aspect of their children's behaviour or else their own partner's behaviour? How many times do they feel that their cry is falling on deaf ears. There might be promises of changing but, most of the time, it does not occur. Nagging does not help. It is sometimes counter-productive.

All the readings today share a marvellous insight: people begin to change when they are encouraged to see the best in themselves not when they are asked to dwell with the worst in themselves. Simply to tell people what is wrong with them and leave it at that can be to leave them a wreck. It is like leaving a scene of an accident. And people rarely change when they are left to themselves, enclosed in their own weakness, staring at their own mistakes. That is a lonely project because there is no one to care whether change takes place or not. We all need help and encouragement to leave behind familiar ways which have become destructive. We need help in imagining ourselves differently and imagining the good effect that will have on others. We need faith in the future to see the power of God working in the change.

Sometimes we cannot change on our own especially when our behaviour is so ingrained in our psyche. I am referring here to addictions for example. Sometimes, as the AA twelve steps confirms. It is when our lives are unmanageable that we finally realise we need to change. Sometimes unfortunately, it is when people lose everything – their own families, jobs, house and dignity, is when they seek out help in order to change. They realise that they cannot change on their own. They need the support of the community/group and also help from a higher being. It is a great insight to own your own total vulnerability and ask for help. Change in this way is not for the faint hearted. It is a very hard commitment that people take on board. People commit themselves to more than one weekly meetings in the AA movement. The feeling of being freed from any addiction is so enticing that they would do anything to pursue transformation.

In the gospel today we find that the word of God comes to John the Baptist in the desert. We are not told what this word is, but we see the result: John leaves his life of solitude and prayer to proclaim a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As the forerunner of Jesus, John's work is to prepare the people to receive the One who is coming, the One who is the salvation of God. John has been prepared for his mission by his life in the desert. Advent is another season apart from Lent, of preparation in the Church's year to provide annual opportunities for us to enter into the desert or retreat. We are given time to follow in

the footsteps of Jesus and John in the desert to listen to God away from the distractions. We are all invited during Advent for some time of personal reflection. Cardinal Newman used to say "To be human is to change. To be perfect is to have changed often". Let us reflect upon these readings of today and see which are the areas that we are being invited by God to change.

"Drop-In" Evening Surgeries – The next drop in surgery with Fr David will be on **Tuesday 11th December between 5pm-7pm**. No appointment needed. This will be the last drop in for 2018.

Advent – Prepare ye the way of the Lord

Advent Reconciliation Service – Thursday 13th December 8pm

Advent Carol Service – Sunday 16th December 4pm

Advent Reflection Service - Led by Fr David Camilleri, Thursday 20th December 8pm

Volunteers Are Needed to Help Prepare Christmas Lunch with Fr David on Tuesday 25th December!

Would you like to help organise, prepare, cook and share, Christmas lunch for Fr David and his parish guests in the Community Centre this year? And maybe plan a Christmas game (charades, bingo?) and a film to watch after lunch too – not forgetting to allow time for the Queen's speech! If you have ideas and would like to help please email the Parish Office: parish.office@stjamespettswood.org

Christmas

The Christmas cards for Petts Wood Churches Together are here. Please take a bundle and deliver them to the houses in your road, if you safely can. Thank you.

Christmas Crib – Poinsettias Needed

If you would like to donate some poinsettias for the crib this Christmas, they would be gratefully received. Please drop them off at the Church on the weekend of 15th and 16th December.

Religious Advent calendars, Christmas cards and the like are now on sale in the repository and from the stall in the church porch after all Sunday Masses.

Decorating the Church for Christmas

We are meeting to decorate the church for Christmas **on Saturday the 15th at 10.00am**. Anyone who has an hour to spare to help us decorate the church is more than welcome.

Gifts on Christmas Day

At all Christmas Masses you are invited to bring a gift of a brand-new toy to put around the Christmas tree. This year we are supporting Great Ormond Street Hospital, who are looking forward to receiving toys/gifts for boys and girls aged 0 - 16. They have asked that we do not donate stuffed animals/teddies but are in special need of sensory toys for children aged 0-1 years old and toys for children ages 14-16 years. We know you will be generous as always.

Evangelisation Pillar

Confirmation 2019

The second preparation session is on Monday 17th December from 7.00pm-8.30pm.

A DATE FOR YOUR 2019 DIARY

From **10th to 16th March** next year we are holding another **Week of Accompanied Prayer**. Previously, such Weeks have been really appreciated.

Details of the Week will be published in the New Year, but in the meantime, you are invited to **note the Week in your 2019 diary.**

Eucharist Adoration – Be Still in the Presence of the Lord. Your time set aside in your hectic life – wasting time in silence with God. Takes place for an hour **each Wednesday** shortly after the Morning Mass and the Wednesday Café starting at 10.45am and finishing with Benediction at 11.45am.

First Friday of the Month. A time of silent meditation in an evocative atmosphere created by soft background music and candles. From 7.30pm till 9.00pm. The **next will be on Friday 7th December.** ***All are welcome for all or part of this time of Adoration ending with Benediction.***

Social Pillar

Film Night

Many thanks to all for their generous donations at the November Film Night. We raised a fantastic £100 which has been converted into Tesco gift cards for the Foodbank to distribute to people in greatest need.

Our film this month on Saturday 15 December is the 1946 classic “It’s a Wonderful Life” starring James Stewart & Donna Reed. The synopsis reads

“George Bailey has so many problems he is thinking about ending it all - and it's Christmas! As the angels discuss George, we see his life in flashback. As George is about to jump from a bridge, he ends up rescuing his guardian angel, Clarence – who then shows George what his town would have looked like if it hadn't been for all his good deeds over the years.”

As usual it will be lights down at 7.30pm. Everyone (over 18) welcome! A sign-up sheet is in the porch purely to give an indication of numbers, otherwise please just turn up.’

New Year’s Eve Party, 31st December

Save the date - and welcome the new year as a parish community. We would appreciate expressions of interest, so please sign the sheet at the back of the church.

New Year’s Eve Party’ Meeting!

There will be a meeting **on Wednesday 12th December at 8.00pm** in the Community Centre to finalise arrangements for the New Year’s Eve Party. All who came to the first meeting are most welcome plus anyone else that is interested in helping in any way.

Many thanks.

Parent and Toddler Group

The St James’ parent and toddler group has reopened on Friday afternoons between 1.30pm-3.30pm. £2.50 per family.

Monday Craft Club

The next Craft club will be on Monday 14th January 2019.

Liturgy Pillar

Children’s Mass

We are looking for someone to co-ordinate the children’s readers’ rota for the children’s mass once a month. Please contact the parish office for more information.

Music Workshop

We invite all music lovers to our next workshop which is being held in the Community Centre on 26th January, led by Meg Shepherd. Please put this date in your diaries.

Children's Liturgy

Please note Children's Liturgy will NOT be on when there is a Church Parade Mass. There will be no Liturgy this Sunday, 9th December as we do not have enough leaders. If you would like to lead or help please contact Hannah via email: childrens.liturgy@stjamespettswood.org

Children's Choir, Christmas Day 9:15 Mass.

Calling all kids year 2 and up to help sing for the Christmas 9:15 Mass. We need your voices to get into the Christmas Spirit!

There will be several practice sessions where we will sing through the songs. We are singing songs which will be familiar to the children. To make this as convenient as possible, sessions are 10:20am - 10:50am (between the two Masses) in the side room of the Parish Hall. Parents could have a coffee/tea while we sing through the hymns.

Sessions:

10:20am - 10:50am December 9th and 16th

Please come to as many of the sessions as you can. Ideally at least 2.

If you are interested, please give your names to youthchoir.stjames@gmail.com so we have an idea of numbers.

Christmas Choir

Our Advent service will be held on Sunday 16th December at 4pm, and on Christmas Eve, we will start with carols at 11.30pm followed by Midnight Mass.

We are inviting singers to join our Christmas choir which sings in four-part harmony. **Rehearsals** will be held on Thursdays from 7.30 - 9pm, on December 6th and 13th, (with possibly another rehearsal just before Christmas if needed). This is a lovely way to participate in our parish' festivities so if you enjoy singing, please come along.

Thank You

To all those you bought lavender bags, aprons or gave donations for Learning for e Uganda. Sister Mona, headmistress of the school has sent a thank you for the £200 raised for the school Coloma in Umbabara. Thank you- Audrey Ward

Pre-School

The Pre-School would like to invite the parishioners to the dress rehearsal of their Christmas nativity play on the morning of the 11th December at 10.30am. All welcome.

Justice & Peace

Foodbank Christmas hampers

The organisers are now preparing for Christmas and have sent a list of items they try to provide for those in need at this time. Ideally, they would like to receive these items by the first week in December, but earlier is fine. So if you can help by donating any of the following items, we should be very grateful: mince pies, various sized Christmas puddings, tinned salmon, pickles/chutneys, Christmas biscuits, Christmas cake/fruit cake, Christmas sweets/chocolates, biscuits for cheese, Christmas savoury assortments (crisps, pretzels, nuts, etc.), large tinned hams, any other Christmas items. £5 supermarket vouchers are also very useful additions to a hamper.

Pastoral Pillar

St James The Great 'Memory Café'

Here at St James' we run a Dementia Café on the first two Tuesdays of each month from 2pm to 3.30pm in the Community Centre. This is a time for guests with dementia and their carers to come for refreshments and a chat in a comfortable and safe environment and if they wish, join in with activities such as quizzes, games and music. If you would like to know more, please contact: pastoral.care@stjamespettswood.org or telephone the Parish Office: 01689 827100. **We look forward to welcoming you.**

Helplines and Counselling Services.

A list of helplines and counselling services is available on our website, and in the church porch, for anyone

who might need this.

Finance Pillar

Fundraising by shopping online

Several parishioners over the last few years have helped the parish by raising donations through **easyfundraising.org.uk**. Recently we reached the milestone of £3,000, for which we thank everyone who has made purchases that way. Over 3,400 retailers including Amazon, eBay, M&S, John Lewis, Argos, Booking.com, tour operators, now make donations on every purchase (from 0.5% to 5% of cost). The top supporter parishioner has raised £388 (all transactions are completely anonymous), so why not embrace the idea and help St James'? To get started, follow the item on the left menu bar of the parish website. Once you've registered, you have the option to install an automatic donation reminder in your browser to make sure no purchase misses its reward.

Any questions, please contact roger.wright@stjamespettswood.org. Thank you.

Polite Reminders

Parking

- The Parish disabled parking spaces are for Blue Badge holders only.
- Please be aware of our neighbours in the surrounding roads, please do not block driveways or double-park your car.

In Church

Please refrain from eating and drinking while you are in church.

Seeing a Chaplain if You Are Admitted to Hospital

- **Protecting personal information** (data protection) is really important when you become an inpatient in hospital.
- **So please specifically ask hospital staff to pass on your details** to the hospital's Roman Catholic chaplain as soon as you are admitted if you would like a Chaplain to visit you.
- **Fr David would always be very happy** to visit you too, so please ask a relative or friend to let him know about your admission. You, or they, can email Fr David on: father.david@stjamespettswood.org, or phone the parish office on 01689 827100.

Rotas for this week: *Thank you for helping*

Weekend 15th/16th December

Cleaning the Church

O Clutton, M Mathews, R Blanco, R Mwansa, D Delf

Wednesday Coffee

S. Barradell, M. Howell, B. D'Arcy

16th December 2018

Mass	Saturday 6pm (Vigil)	Sunday 9.15am	Sunday 11am
Welcomers	M Gallagher	D & C Hairs	G Whitley M Ingledew
Readers	C Kiely J Johnson	B Cotta C D'Souza	R Rowan H Marvell

Ministers of Holy Communion	H Rotheron M Cahill C Cahill C Wakefield J Callinan	S Cotta A Ward T Blythe D Hairs B Cotta	K Evans A Evans P May S Ingle Z Bajorek
Bar			A Barradell M Horner
Coffee		L Lynch S Barradell	C D'Arcy T Lowe
Altar Servers	Dom Annie Pauline Roisin Fintan Peter	Zoe	Valentino Emily
Tellers	M Shea, T Wrafter, K Evans		