

ARCH Group's aim: "To show love for God and You"

Sunday 21st December Fourth Sunday of Advent

Today's Collect

God our redeemer, who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son: grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour, so we may be ready to greet him when he comes again as our judge; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Today's Post Communion

Heavenly Father, who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of the promised saviour: fill us your servants with your grace, that in all things we may embrace your holy will and with her rejoice in your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

24th December: Christmas Eve

3:30pm	Harvington	Carol & Crib Service
4:30pm	Church Lench	Carol & Crib Service
9:00pm	Abbots Morton	Christmas Communion
11:00pm	Harvington	Midnight Mass

25th December: Christmas Day

9:30am	Harvington	Christmas Communion
11:00am	Church Lench	Christmas Communion

Next Week: Sunday 28th December

10:00am	Harvington	Benefice Communion
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Please don't forget to donate to 'Helping Hands' trust.
This charity provides care packages and services to individuals facing homelessness and hardship in the Warwickshire area.

Prayer of Intercession

Light in our darkness, come to us we pray when daylight is far off at the darkest and coldest time of the year, come when hope is low. Give us, your church, courage to challenge unjust structures, to tend and welcome all in need, and to offer what often seem limited resources of faith and love, to further the wellbeing and sustenance of all your children. Restore us O God, let your face shine.

Come into our midst: come and give us life.

We pray for all who work in the NHS, and for GPs, paramedics, care home staff and ambulance drivers; for their constant care under pressure for the sick, the injured and the dying. Help us to give priority to the work of caring for the sick, to the daily acts of love that bring healing. We pray for all in leadership in our country at a time when so much is troubled. Restore us O God, let your face shine.

Come into our midst: come and give us life.

We pray for hungry children struggling with the impacts of poverty on their daily lives; for schools who are often doing the work of feeding and clothing and for churches, libraries and other spaces in our communities that are welcoming people in for warmth and company in freezing temperatures. In a system that sometimes seems deaf to basic needs for food, shelter and warmth, may we, your church, be responsive and generous with what we have, Restore us O God, let your face shine.

Come into our midst: come and give us life.

We pray for all who find this time of the year hard and for all who are struggling with seemingly overwhelming problems. We pray for all we know who are sick in mind or body and all who need to know the light of your healing presence today. Disperse the long shadows that surround us. Lighten our pathway, show us the way to go and lead us onwards to the light of your coming. Restore us O God, let your face shine.

Come into our midst: come and give us life. Amen.

This Week's First Reading: *Isaiah 7.10-16.*

¹⁰ Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. ¹² But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. ¹³ Then Isaiah said: 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

This weeks Psalm: *Psalms 80.1-8, 18-20.*

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth
2 before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might,
and come to save us!
3 Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.
4 O LORD God of hosts,
how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?
5 You have fed them with the bread of tears,
and given them tears to drink in full measure.
6 You make us the scorn of our neighbours;
our enemies laugh among themselves.
7 Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.
8 You brought a vine out of Egypt;
you drove out the nations and planted it.

Continued: *Psalm 80.1-8, 18-20.*

18 Then we will never turn back from you;
give us life, and we will call on your name.
19 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.

This Week's Second Reading: *Romans 1.1-7,*

¹ Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶ including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, ⁷ To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This Week's Gospel Reading: *Matthew 1.18-end*

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this,

an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' ²² All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³ 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, 'God is with us.' ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had birthed a son; and he named him Jesus.

Next Week's First Reading: *Isaiah 63.7-9.*

I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD, because of all that the LORD has done for us, and the great favour to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

⁸ For he said, 'Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely'; and he became their saviour ⁹ in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Next Week's Psalm: *Psalm 148.*

Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!

2 Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!

3 Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars!

4 Praise him, you highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens!

5 Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for he commanded and they were created.

6 He established them for ever and ever;
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

7 Praise the LORD from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps,

8 fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling his command!

9 Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!

10 Wild animals and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds!

11 Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!

12 Young men and women alike,
old and young together!

13 Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.

14 He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to him.
Praise the LORD!

Next Week's Second Reading: *Hebrews 2.10-end.*

¹⁰ It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹² saying, 'I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.'¹³ And again, 'I will put my trust in him.' And again, 'Here am I and the children whom God has given me.'

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Next Week's Gospel Reading: *Matthew 2.13-end.*

¹³ Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.'¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod.

This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.'

Next Week's Gospel Reading Continued: *Matthew 2.13-end.*

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸ 'A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.'

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead.' ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, 'He will be called a Nazorean.'

