

 **Christmas Masses and Services** 

Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> December	5pm- 7pm	Confessions
Christmas Eve 24 <sup>th</sup> December	3pm	Syro-Malabar rite Holy Mass
	6pm	English Mass
	9pm	Syro-Malabar Mass
25 <sup>th</sup> December - Christmas Day	8.30am	Syro- Malabar rite Holy Mass
	10.30am	Holy Mass



**Wednesday 25th December - The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)**  
The shepherds found Mary and Joseph and the infant in the manger.

The fourth candle represents peace and is called the "Angel's Candle." The angels announced that Jesus came to bring peace--He came to bring people close to God and to each other again. This colour is also purple to represent the culmination of love through the Messiah.

**A Prayer to Prepare My Heart for Christ's Coming**

Father, just as You sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus, help me to clear the path in my heart, too.  
Show me the distractions in my life that block me from all-out worship of You this Advent.  
Lord, I await Your coming! As I celebrate the first Advent --the first coming--I look toward the day where I will see You face to face. I imagine what it will be like.  
Give me a heart, Lord, that looks for Your coming on a daily basis.  
Help me to live my life where I'm constantly seeking Your presence. My offering to You today is my righteous life for I know I am only clean because of Jesus.  
Show me today how I need to be refined, purified, forgiven.  
Give me the strength to ask for forgiveness and to then change my way  
~Sarah Martin, from "The Awe & Wonder of Advent: Day 18"

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 **Christmas Bazaar:** The total amount we raised was £2,964.  
Thank you to all for your hard work and support. 

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**Cycle of prayer:** during Advent and Christmastide we pray for these intentions: Migrants and Refugees, Expectant Mothers.

**Crib Offerings:** There will be a basket for your offerings at the Nativity. The money raised will go to Rainbow, a hospice for young children. Thank you.

	<p><i>Mother of God</i> Greencoat Road Leicester LE3 6NZ</p> <p><b>(0116) 287 5232</b> <a href="mailto:mogparish@gmail.com">mogparish@gmail.com</a> <a href="http://www.motherofgodleicester.co.uk">www.motherofgodleicester.co.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Parish Priest: Fr Hans Puthiakulangara</b> e-mail: <a href="mailto:hansps83@gmail.com">hansps83@gmail.com</a> mob: 07428658756</p> <p align="center"> NRCDT- Registered Charity</p>
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Our Schools: Christ the King Primary - 0116 2857261 - [www.ctlkeicester.co.uk/](http://www.ctlkeicester.co.uk/)  
English Martyrs' Secondary - 0116 2428880 - [www.emschool.co.uk/](http://www.emschool.co.uk/)

MOG Safeguarding Officer: Michelle Dempster - 07718279920 - [michelleadempster@gmail.com](mailto:michelleadempster@gmail.com)  
Parish Hall Bookings: please contact 07586700914

	<p><i>Happy 4<sup>th</sup> week of Advent!</i></p> <p><b>Fourth week of Advent</b> <b>22<sup>nd</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> December 2024</b> <b>The Nativity of Our Lord</b></p>	
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Sunday 22.12	8.30am 10.30am 4pm	Holy Mass Syro-Malabar rite Holy Mass - David Collins RIP Holy Mass Syro-Malabar rite	<p><b>The Pope's prayer intentions for December 2024</b></p> <p><b>For Pilgrims Of Hope</b> Let us pray that the coming Church Jubilee Year 2025 strengthens us in our faith; helping us to recognize the Risen Christ in the midst of our lives, transforming us into pilgrims of Christian hope.</p>
Monday 23.12	5-7pm	Confessions	
Tuesday 24.12	3pm 6pm 9pm	The Nativity of the Lord (Solemnity) Syro-Malabar rite Mass Christmas Carols followed by English Mass Syro-Malabar rite Mass	
Wednesday 25.12	8.30am 10.30am	The Nativity of the Lord (Solemnity) Syro-Malabar rite Mass English Mass	
Thursday 26.12	9.30am 10am	Silent Adoration Holy Mass - St Stephen (Feast)	
Friday 27.12	9.30am 10am	Silent Adoration Holy Mass - St John, Apostle and Evangelist (Feast)	
Saturday 28.12	9.30am 10am	Silent Adoration Holy Mass - The Holy Innocents, martyrs (Feast)	
Sunday 29.12	8.30am 10.30am 4pm	Holy Mass Syro-Malabar rite Holy Mass - The Holy Family (Feast) Holy Mass Syro-Malabar rite	



To all Parishioners and our Supporters, a wish of a very joyful and peaceful Christmas with God's Blessings from Fr. Hans.



 **Christmas Offerings**

This year, Father Hans is asking for the Christmas Offerings to go towards paying for the maintenance of the Hall. Please be generous. Thank you 

### **Background on the Gospel Reading Luke 1:39-45.**

Mary visits Elizabeth, who sings praise to Mary and her child.

On this the last Sunday before Christmas, our Gospel reading prepares us to witness Christ's birth by showing us how Jesus was recognized as Israel's long-awaited Messiah even before his birth. The Gospel turns our attention from the ministry of John the Baptist to the events that preceded John the Baptist's birth. The story of John the Baptist and his parents, Elizabeth and Zechariah, are reported only in Luke's Gospel. Luke pairs the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus, establishing John's early connection to the Messiah.

Our Gospel reading recalls Mary's actions after the announcement of Jesus' birth by the angel Gabriel. Mary goes to visit Elizabeth, her cousin, who is also with child. Elizabeth greets Mary with full recognition of the roles that they and their unborn children will play in God's plan for salvation. If we were to continue to read the verses that follow in Luke's Gospel, we would hear Mary respond to Elizabeth's greeting with her song of praise, the Magnificat. Both women recall and echo God's history of showing favour upon the people of Israel.

In Luke's Gospel the Holy Spirit helps reveal Jesus' identity as God to those who believe. Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and sings Mary's praise because she bears the Lord. We sing these words of praise to Mary in the Hail Mary. Even John the Baptist, the unborn child in Elizabeth's womb, is said to recognize the presence of the Lord and leaps for joy.

It is appropriate in this season of Advent that we consider the role of Mary in God's plan of salvation. Elizabeth describes Mary as the first disciple, as the one who believed that God's word to her would be fulfilled. Mary's faith enabled her to recognize the work of God in her people's history and in her own life. Her openness to God allowed God to work through her so that salvation might come to everyone. Because of this, Mary is a model and symbol of the Church. May we be like Mary, open and cooperative in God's plan for salvation.

### **Christmas Day Mass Gospel Reflection: John 1:1-18**

John announces that in Jesus, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

There are four Masses that are celebrated for the Feast of Christmas and each is given its own set of readings to help us contemplate Christ's birth. The Gospel for the Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve is taken from the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew. The Mass at midnight proclaims the birth of Jesus through the Gospel of Luke. The Mass at dawn on Christmas morning continues the story of the birth of Jesus as found in Luke's Gospel, ending with the shepherds' visit to the infant Jesus. In each of these Gospel readings, we hear portions of the infancy narratives with which we are familiar.

The Gospel for the Christmas Mass during the day is taken from the beginning of John's Gospel, but this part of John's Gospel is not an infancy narrative like those found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Instead, John's Gospel starts at the very beginning and presents the Creation story as the framework for announcing the Incarnation. John's opening words echo the first verse in the Book of Genesis. This framework invites us to view Jesus' birth from God's perspective. Each of the Gospels makes clear that Jesus' birth was the result of God's initiative. John's Gospel, however, emphasizes that Jesus' birth was the divine intention from the moment of Creation.

As we observe in today's reading, the Gospel of John includes highly philosophical and theological language. One example that particularly stands out in this Gospel is John's repeated references to "the Word" in the opening verse. This expression (logos in the Greek) borrows from a concept found in both Jewish and Greek thought. Jews used this phrase to describe God's action in the Creation story, for example, and in the Wisdom literature. In Greek thought, the logos was understood as an intermediary between God and humanity. John and others in the early Church adopted this language to describe God's incarnation in Jesus. As the term was used to express the Trinitarian faith of Christians, the Word came to be equated with the Second Person of the Trinity. In this prologue to the Gospel of John, we also hear the main themes that will be developed in his Gospel. These are often presented as dualities: light and dark, truth and falsehood, life and death, and belief and unbelief. We also hear in this prologue a unique aspect of John's Gospel, the theme of testimony. John the Baptist was sent by God to testify to

Jesus, the light. Others in this Gospel will also offer testimony about Jesus. The reader is invited to accept this testimony, which bears witness to Jesus, the Son of God. But even more directly, Jesus' action and words will testify to Jesus' identity as God's Incarnate Word.

Thinking about Jesus' birth in these theological and cosmological terms is particularly appropriate as we celebrate the Feast of Christmas in the darkness of winter. At this time, nature itself seems to remind us of the darkness of sin. Into this darkness, in the midst of our sinfulness, God comes to dwell among us. John's Gospel reminds us that through the Incarnation, God saves us from the darkness of sin and makes us his children.

**300 Club Results 15<sup>th</sup> December 2024:** £50 M S (282). £25 R F (218), T F (4).

**ACN (UK) has launched an Open Letter Campaign** calling on Foreign Secretary David Lammy to make persecuted religious communities priority recipients of UK Overseas Development Aid (ODA). They need your help to reach their goal of 10,000 signatures, which will trigger a response from the Government. Please sign their open letter today: <https://acnuk.org/our-campaigns/red-Wednesday-advocacy-letter>. Together, we can help Christians and other religious minorities trapped in modern slavery, extreme poverty and worse.

**Please keep in your prayers all the sick and housebound people of the parish.  
We continue to pray for Ukraine and its people, for the people of Israel and Palestine, Lebanon and Syria and for all the war-torn countries in the world.  
Let's also pray for all the people that have been affected by climate change and have lost their home and livelihood.**

The Year of Jubilee, 'Pilgrims of Hope', is almost upon us. It is a special year of forgiveness and reconciliation, in which people are invited to return to a right relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation. We have lots of resources and opportunities for people to enter into the Jubilee which can be found on our [Jubilee webpage](#) but I wanted to draw your attention to a couple of things: **Introducing Jubilee - online session - 18<sup>th</sup> January 2025**. All are welcome to join us for [A general introduction to the Jubilee Year](#) with special guests including Fr Jan Nowotnik, Director of Mission for the Catholic Bishop's Conference, Christine Allen, CAFOD Director, and Kayode Akintola, CAFOD's Head of Africa Programmes. Hear what Jubilee years are about, how we're celebrating as a global and national Church and how we can be tangible signs of hope and build a better world together throughout this holy year. **Resources for parishioners:** This Jubilee Year is a great opportunity to bring together and foster a sense of unity among the diverse cultures and communities that make up our vibrant Church family. [Our Jubilee 2025: Pilgrims of hope reflection guide](#) is ideal for groups and individuals looking to deepen their faith and renew their hope in the special Jubilee Year. There are four reflection sessions to help us to explore the Jubilee which could be run at any point of the year or even as a single one-off session. Guides can be ordered for free from the above webpage where you can also find an accompanying Leaders' Guide. These may be helpful for people who visit those who are housebound, in hospital or prisons etc.

**The need for food banks in the UK is higher than ever before.  
Please help if you can. Thank you.**