

**THE FRONT PAGE**

**Using Advent and Christmas well**

These weeks, in the run up to Christmas Day itself, are a great time for **reaching out** with the good news of the Christmas message – *for us and for our salvation he came down from heaven.* At this time of year, people in our community are much more willing to come to church than any other. Many will only need a “little nudge” to bring them back to church, or even into church for the first time.

So, a big thank you to everyone who has been delivering lots of our **Christmas leaflets** to streets across our parish. And thank you, as well, to those who have been praying for these cards to do their job. We set the target of getting them all delivered by the end of the first week in December – and we are well on the way to this! More than half the cards have gone out, and already some people from the community are mentioning that they have received one. So, if you are able to deliver some (more) cards over the coming week, that would be wonderful – please have a word with me. And do keep praying for those delivering and for those receiving them.

Of course, a personal invite to a service is often most effective, so maybe we can also think of some who would like that “little nudge”.

However, we also want Advent and Christmas to be a special time for ourselves as well – a time for **reaching in**, we might say - a time to wonder again at the love of God the Father, seen in the birth of Jesus, his one and only Son – *for us and for our salvation he came down from heaven.* We can take time ourselves to come to some of the special Christmas services and wonder anew. We may also like to pick up a copy of this year's **Advent book, *The Radiant Dawn***. It has 25 short, daily reflections on parts of Luke chs.1&2, helping us to grasp the full meaning of the Christmas story. As Advent starts this Sunday, I hope that it is something that we can rejoice in again this year, as we start to sing our favourite carols once more. *Mark.*

**Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November**  
**Advent Sunday**

Theme: **We believe - *Of one being with the Father***

John Ch.10 vs. 22-42

(*Church Bibles - St. John's pg.1076; St. Mark's pg.1077*)

9.00 am	Morning Prayer - St John's Church ( <i>Preacher: Mark M</i> ) <i>Prayer after Church</i>
10.30 am	Morning Worship - St Mark's Church ( <i>Preacher: Mark M</i> )
11.00 am (Premiere)	Online Service on YouTube ( <i>Preacher: Mark M</i> ) (And also available at any time after this.)
4.00 pm	<b>Lego Church @Advent</b> in St John's Church

Activities this week

Mon 1 <sup>st</sup> December	8.30 am	Morning Prayers in St John's Church
	10 - 11.30 am	Little Fishes in St John's Church
Weds 3 <sup>rd</sup>	8.00 am	Morning Prayers on WhatsApp <i>please ask Mark, if you would like to join</i>
	11.00 am	Wednesday Worshippers First Wednesday Special <i>Advent Reflection - St Mark's Church</i>
	7.00 pm	Ignite youth group - St. Paul's Church
Thurs 4th	10.30 am - 12.00 noon	<b>Bethany Again</b> in St. John's Church Hall
	7.30 pm	<b>Thursday Evening Group Special</b> <i>Hymns we Love at Christmas -</i> <i>"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"</i> at St Mark's Church <b>ALL WELCOME</b>
Fri 5th	8.30 am	Morning Prayers in St John's Church
	2.30pm	<b>Carol Singing in Holly Court</b>
	5.00 pm	Prayers for our Mission Links in St John's Church

***Please consider joining one of our prayer meetings – see above***

## Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December

Advent 2

Theme: **Through Him all things were made**

Colossians Ch.1 vs.15-20

(Church Bibles - St. John's pg.1182; St. Mark's pg.1182)

9.00 am	Morning Prayer in St John's Church (Preacher: Mark G)      Prayer after Church
10.30am	Holy Communion in St Mark's Church (Preacher: Mark G)
11.00 am (Premiere)	Online Service on YouTube (Preacher: Mark M) (And also available at any time after this.)
4.00 pm	<b>Christingle Service</b> in St John's Church

### Activities this week

Mon 8 <sup>th</sup>	8.30 am	Morning Prayers in St John's Church
	10 – 11.30 am	Little Fishes in St John's Church
	2.00 – 3.00 pm	<b>Bethany</b> in St. John's Church Hall
Tues 9 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Cann Hall KS2 Christmas Service in St. John's Church
Weds 10 <sup>th</sup>	8.00 am	Morning Prayers on WhatsApp
	11.00 am	<b>Mid-week Carol Service</b> in St. Mark's Church
	7.00 pm	Ignite youth group - St Paul's Church
Thurs 11 <sup>th</sup>	9.30 am	Persecuted Church Prayers in SJC
		<b>NO</b> Together service today (NEXT WEEK)
	1.45 pm	Gt Clacton Jnrs Christmas Service in St John's Church
	6.00 pm - 7.00 pm	<b>CCA's Carol Concert</b> in St John's ALL WELCOME
Fri 12 <sup>th</sup>	8.30 am	Morning Prayers – St. John's Church
	1.45 pm	Gt Clacton Jnrs Christmas Service in St John's Church
	5.00 pm	Prayers for our Mission Links in SJC
	6.00 pm	<b>Carol Singing</b> outside The Ship Pub

## Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December

Advent 3

Theme: **For us and for our salvation he came down**

Philippians ch.2 vs.5-11

(Church Bibles - St. John's pg.1179; St. Mark's pg.1179)

9.00 am	Holy Communion in St John's Church (Preacher: Christine Sanders)      Prayer after Church
10.30 am	<b>Family Carol Service</b> in St Mark's Church
11.00 am (Premiere)	Online Service on YouTube (Preacher: Mark M) (And also available at any time after this.)

### **Prayer after our Morning Services**

*There are people available to pray with anyone who asks.  
You can ask for prayer for yourself or for someone else*

St. Mark's – 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month

St. John's – we now offer this every Sunday

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**HEATED CUSHIONS AT ST JOHN'S:** This is something that some other older churches are using in the winter months. They are powered by a rechargeable battery pack and cost about £20. I'd like a few people to try them at St John's, to see if it's worth getting more. If you are willing to take part in this trial, please let me know. *Thank you, Mark.*

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### **Toilet painting at St Mark's!**

The redecoration of toilets at St Mark's is now completed – and we had an “official reopening” of the toilets during last Sunday's service! A very big thank you to Mark Galliers, who did the work, with the help of Sue. These rooms hadn't been painted for a long time – and so they are now looking much better.

We want to try to keep all of our buildings in as good condition as possible. So, hopefully, we'll be able to plan some more refurbishment and refreshing of different areas next year. There will be some more Work Mornings coming up. Look out for the dates. *Thanks, Mark M.*

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

### **Stewsdays**

(LAST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH)

**Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> December at St Mark's Church**

Please choose: Roast Turkey OR Nut Roast

**Doors open at 11.45am**, lunch served at 12.15pm

Booking is **essential**: 01255 475704 (Church Office)

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### **Craft Group**

(USUALLY ON THE LAST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH)

The Craft Group will be taking a Christmas break in December

Next one:-

**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026 - 4pm at St Mark's**

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### **Coffee Morning**

(USUALLY ON THE LAST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH)

The Coffee Morning will be taking a Christmas break in December

Next one:-

**Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026, 9.30-11.30am**

in St. John's Church Hall

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## **BEFORE ALL OF THESE...**

### **Hymns we Love – Christmas Special**

Hosted by the

### **Thursday Evening Group**

**THIS WEEK – Thurs 4<sup>th</sup> December - 7.30pm at St Mark's**

For part of this term we used the "Hymns we Love" course at the group.

It consists of the chance to listen to a favourite, well-known, Christian hymn

(and you can join in singing, if you want to!)

and then there's a short talk about the history and the meaning of the song.

It's all in a beautifully produced video.

There's a special Christmas one looking at "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

**ALL WELCOME – BRING A FRIEND, IF YOU WANT**

*Festive refreshments will be served.*

## Church Family Christmas Card

We would love to have greetings from as many members of the church family as possible in this year's Christmas Card. So, if you haven't sent in a message already, please jot one down and pop it in one of the boxes at the back of St John's or St Mark's – or get it to the Church Office directly.

***The deadline is the end of this week – Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December*** – which gives time to put it all together and get the cards out.

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## New Hall Update

Thank to all who have been praying for the meeting with the DAC (Diocesan Advisory Committee) about our plans for our new church hall. This meeting has been postponed several times, but we now have a new date – ***Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December at 2pm.***

Please continue to pray for this meeting. The architects will present the plans to the DAC members and they will be able to make comments and give suggestions. Please pray that there will be a positive response and any ideas they have will be helpful.

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## Using the Ephesian Fund

The PCC has taken the decision to pay our Parish Share through the Ephesian Fund. This change has just gone through.

The *Parish Share* is the contribution that each parish is asked to make towards the Diocese of Chelmsford, to support the stipends and housing of the clergy and the central diocesan costs.

The *Ephesian Fund* has been set up by the CEEC to help churches that no longer feel able to support their dioceses directly, especially because of decisions around the LLF process. Money for the Parish Share is instead given to the Ephesian Fund, which passes it on to the diocese, with the stipulation that it can only be used to support orthodox, evangelical ministry. This way people can continue to give in good conscience, knowing that their gifts will be used in a way that they agree with.

If you would like to know more, have a word with me. *Mark*

**.Please continue to pray for** all those families, who we have had contact with, as they mourn the loss of their loved ones.

**Please continue to pray for** those we know who are not well or are undergoing or waiting for treatment at the moment.

**Please pray for** Darren, who has had a long stay in hospital. He's feeling a lot better, but needs to continue to build up his strength, as he returns home.

**Please continue to pray for** the persecuted churches around the world. *Don't forget our regular Thursday Prayer Meetings.*

**Please pray for** our local schools – Hannah is helping to organise Christmas events and services for them – including a Carol Concert for CCA in St John's – a new venture this year.

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Thank you to everyone who came to hear John Dunnett speak about what's happening in the wider Church of England at this time. John encouraged us to keep on praying for our national church and those who make decisions for it.

So let's keep praying...

- for John and others who are working hard to keep the C of E true to its biblical foundations;
- for C of E bishops as they meet together in December, that they will make decisions in line with the Bible's teaching;
- for Bishop Rob, with his special responsibility for churches in the Ebbsfleet Network;
- for evangelical churches and organisations within the C of E to continue to partner closely together, to make a difference;
- for evangelical ministers to be encouraged to keep going.

## **Afternoon Services in St. John's at 4pm**

### **Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November**

Lego Church @ Advent

### **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December**

Christingle Service

### **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December**

Prayer & Praise

*we'll be praying for our Christmas services*

### **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December**

Quiet Christmas

### **Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

Tea Time Church

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#### **Normal Church Office** opening times are

Monday 10.00 am - 1.30 pm - *Ann-Marie*

Tuesday 10.00 am - 1.00 pm - *Anita*

Wednesday 10.00 am - 1.00 pm - *Anita*

Thursday 9.00 am - 1.30 pm - *Ann-Marie*

Friday 9.00 am - 3.30 pm - *Ann-Marie*

Saturday 9.00 am - 11.00 am - *Anita*

*(On Fridays 9–10 am we have a Staff Meeting.)*

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#### **Clergy day off**

Mark – day off: Tuesday

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