

THE WEEKLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE COMMUNITIES OF
The Immaculate Conception, Stroud; Our Lady & St Therese, Painswick,
St Joseph's, Stonehouse; and The Annunciation, Woodchester.

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Diocesan Safeguarding Tel. 0117 954 0993 The Diocese of Clifton undertakes to ensure that any allegations of a safeguarding issue are responded to promptly and to liaise openly with statutory authorities to support investigations, responding sensitively and compassionately to those in need, and ensuring perpetrators are held to account. We affirm our undertaking for the Diocese of Clifton to be a place where all can come in confidence, and that they will be cared for and loved by their Christian Community.

4th Sunday of Advent ~ This newsletter covers the next 4 weeks

Date	Mass Times	Celebrations	Intentions
SAT. 20 th Dec 11:00am to 12:00 SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION & EXPOSITION – WOODCHESTER			
SUNDAY 21 st Dec.	6:30pm (Saturday) Stroud FE	FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT A	Michael & Theresa Finneran RIP
	8:30am (Painswick) FE		People of the Parishes
	9:00am (Stonehouse) FB		Jeff Ross Int.
	10:00am (Stroud) FE		Pat Stephens Int.
	11:00am (Woodchester) FB		Private Intention.
Psalm Response: Let the Lord enter; He is the King of Glory Gospel Acclamation: Behold. The Virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emanuel – which means. God with us.			
Tues. 23 rd Dec.	9:30am Stonehouse	Weekday of Advent	Julian Canning RIP
	2:00pm Woodchester	Requiem Mass for Emilda Bint RIP	
	7:00pm Stroud	Advent Penitential Service	
Wed 24 th Dec.	Christmas Eve		
	4:30pm Painswick	Christmas Mass	People of the Parishes
	6:30pm Stroud	Christmas Family Mass	
	11:30pm Woodchester	Hymns & Readings to welcome Christmas	
Thurs. 25 th Dec.	Christmas Day		
	12:00am Woodchester	Christmas Mass at Midnight	People of the Parishes
	9:00am Stonehouse	Christmas Mass	
	11:00am Stroud	Christmas Mass	Thanksgiving
Fri. 26 th Dec	9:30am **Stroud**	St Stephen	Nancy Hyland RIP
Sat 27 th Dec.	6:30pm Stroud FE	Feast of the Holy Family	Nuntiata Nappi Int
Sunday 28 th Dec.	8:30am Painswick FB	Feast of the Holy Family	
	9:00am Stonehouse FE		Mary & Michael Nolan Int
	10am Stroud FB		Kathleen Ryan RIP
	11am Woodchester FE		People of the Parishes
Psalm Response: Blessed are all who fear the Lord and walk in his ways. Gospel Acclamation: May the peace of Christ reign in your hearts; let the message of Christ find a home in you.			
Tues. 30 th Dec.	9:30am Stonehouse	6 th Day Octave of Christmas	Murray Dolan RIP
Wed. 31 st Dec.	9:30am Stroud	7 th Day Octave of Christmas	Michael and Anne Gibbons Int
Thurs. 1 st January	10:00am Stroud	Mary the Mother of God	Margaret Heaney RIP

Date	Mass Times	Celebrations	Intentions
SATURDAY 3 rd Jan. 11am to 11:30am RECONCILIATION - STROUD			
Sun. 4 th Jan 2 nd Sunday after the Nativity of the Lord	Sat 6:30pm Stroud FE	2 nd Sunday after the Nativity of the Lord	McDermott Family Int
	8:30am Painswick FE		People of the Parishes
	9:00am Stonehouse FB		
	10:00am Stroud FE		Candy Bingham Int
	11:00am Woodchester FB		Patrick Hanley RIP
Psalm Response: The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Gospel Acclamation: Glory to you, O Christ, proclaimed among the nations. Glory to you, O Christ, believed in throughout the world.			
Mon 5 th Jan	7:00pm Stonehouse FB	Vigil Mass of Epiphany	People of the Parishes
Tues 6 th Jan Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord	9:30am Woodchester FB	Epiphany of the Lord Holy Day of Obligation	
	9:30am Stroud FE		Joseph McLaughlin RIP
	7:00pm Stroud FE		People of the Parishes
Psalm Response: All the nations on earth shall fall prostrate before you, O Lord. Gospel Acclamation: We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship the Lord.			
Wed 7 th Jan	7:00pm Stroud	Weekday of Christmas	Elizabeth Cavanagh Int
Thurs 8 th Jan	9:30am Stroud	Weekday of Christmas	Harrington Family Int
Friday 9 th Jan	9:30am Woodchester	Weekday of Christmas	Holy Souls
SATURDAY 10 th January 11:00am to 11:30am RECONCILIATION St Joseph's, Stonehouse			
Sunday 11 th Jan Feast of The Baptism of the Lord	Sat: 6:30pm Stroud FE	Feast of The Baptism of the Lord	People of the Parishes
	8:30am Painswick FB		
	9:00am Stonehouse FE		
	10:00am Stroud FB		Brian Hannon & Family Int
	11:00am Woodchester FE		
Psalm Response: The Lord will bless his people with peace. Gospel Acclamation: The heavens were opened and the voice of the Father thundered: "This is my beloved Son; listen to him".			

Monday is Fr Eugene's day off ~ Mass is available at 8:15am at More Hall every weekday morning.

Diocesan Prayer Links: 21st Dec: We pray for the Parishes of Sacred Hearts, Chew Magna and St Pius X Withywood.
28th Dec: We pray for the Parishes of St Catharine, Chipping Campden; Our Lady & St Kenelm, Stow-on-the Wold with Bourton-on-the-Water.

4th Jan: We pray for the Parishes of St Peter, Cirencester; St Aldhelm. Malmesbury and St Michael, Tetbury.

Pope's Prayer Intention for December: For Christians in areas of conflict.

Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be
 Seeds of peace, reconciliation and hope.

Pope Leo's Prayer Intention for JANUARY 2026 - Prayer With The Word Of God

Let us pray that praying with the Word of God be nourishment for our lives and a source of hope in our communities helping us build a more fraternal and missionary Church.

We continue to pray for peace in the world, including the situations in the Middle East and Ukraine.

For your attention. As you can see the newsletter this week covers the 4th Sunday of Advent, Christmas, Sunday 28th December ~ The Holy Family. The 1st January ~ Mary the Mother of God. 2nd Sunday of Christmas and The Holy Day of Obligation Tuesday 6th January ~ The Epiphany of the Lord (a day when Catholic's must attend Mass). This is due to both Parish Offices being closed. Please keep the newsletter to hand, so you know the times of the Masses over this period.

If you require a Priest in an 'Emergency' over the Christmas period, please ring Immaculate Conception Presbytery 01453 762 442. During this period, this number will be for emergency calls only. Any other office / parish business can be dealt with via email stroud.immaculateconception@cliftondiocese.com or eugene.campbell@cliftondiocese.com Fr E

REST IN PEACE: We pray for those who have died recently, especially Avril Taylor RIP, Marilyn Anderson RIP, those whose anniversaries occur about this time, those who have died alone with no one to mourn them, and those who have died because of violence and aggression. *Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.*

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS: THOSE WHO ARE SICK in hospitals or nursing and care homes, those awaiting test results, undergoing treatment, those suffering physically or mentally. We pray Our Lord will send his healing love upon them.

TREE OF MEMORIES: There are trees outside Immaculate Conception, St Joseph's and the Annunciation, for you to decorate! The decorations are provided for you to write the names of those who have died, those you will not see over Christmas and your intentions on, then place them on the tree. I will remember those intentions at all my Masses over the Christmas period. There is no charge for the decorations.

CHRISTMAS MASSES 0The Offertory Collection taken at the Christmas Masses is your Christmas Offering to the Parish Priest.

GOING AWAY FOR CHRISTMAS?

If you are away for Christmas, I hope you have a wonderful time. Remember that Christmas Day is a **HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION**, a day when Catholics must attend Mass. Please try to find a local Catholic Church, so you can fulfil your obligation.

ST. JOSEPH'S CHILDREN'S LITURGY: Our sessions will resume on the 11th of January.

COMMUNITY LUNCHESES at St Joseph's will resume on **THURSDAY 8th January 12:30**

Donations for the Post Christmas Gift & Clothes Sale – Stonehouse ITEMS to be received by 9th January 2026 please at St Joseph's Church Stonehouse. Thank you.

Local Catholic Communities Newsletter: Please, to help us we are asking that items for publication are submitted as soon as possible. The 'cut-off' for submission of items for the following Sunday will be **MIDDAY ON WEDNESDAY**. *Please note the best item gives clear information Date – Time – Place – Reason – who to contact for more information – any costs.* Please email items to stroud.immaculateconception@cliftondiocese.com

SHARING THE WORD

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT 'A'

First Reading: Is 7:10-14 Here the prophet is counselling king Ahaz at a moment when the dynasty of David was in jeopardy. The king refuses a sign from God. He has no confidence in the help of the Lord, and has already made up his mind to seek the help of Assyria. But he will have a sign whether he wills it or not. The queen is, at this moment of crisis, pregnant with the one who will continue the threatened line.

Second Reading: Rom. 1:1-7 In these opening lines of his Letter to the Romans, Paul designates himself 'servant' and 'apostle', called by God to preach the Good News that God's ancient promises have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He stresses the twofold identity of Jesus. Through human origin Jesus is son of David; through his resurrection from the dead he is Son of God.

Gospel: Mt 1:8-25 Matthew seized on Isaiah's prophecy and refers it to Jesus. Born of a virgin, he will embody God's promise to be with us, and continue David's line for ever. The Gospel stresses the twofold identity of Jesus. He is the son of David because Joseph, his legal father, was descended from the line of David. But he is more than that. He is also the Son of God. All three readings deal with the identity of 'the One who was to come'. The identity of the child was vaguely glimpsed in the Old Testament. The New Testament reveals the true identity of this special Child (Jesus).

CHRISTMAS 'A'

First Reading: Is 9:1-7 This is a prophecy about coming of a Saviour-child, who will rescue his people from the darkness of oppression. The child who is to be born will be the complete ruler and will inaugurate a reign of justice and peace. Christians see the prophecy as fulfilled in Jesus, the 'Prince of Peace' and the 'Light of the world.'

Second Reading: Titus 2:11-14 Even as we recall the first coming of Christ in Bethlehem, we are still waiting for his second coming at the end of time. St Paul tells us how to we should live in the meantime.

Gospel: Lk 2:1-14 Luke's account of the birth of Jesus forms the Gospel for Christmas. The story reflects the faith of the post resurrection Church. The same titles that Peter attributes to the risen Jesus, 'Lord and Messiah' (Acts 2:36), are now applied to the new-born child by the angel: he is 'Christ the Lord'. Luke's chief concern is theological. Every detail in the story serves this purpose. This is not to say that there is no historical basis for what he recounts. The birth of a child appears to us to be a very private and family event. But St Luke does not think that way about the nativity. He sets the birth of Jesus (the Messiah) was born in the town of David. His rejection at the inn anticipates his rejection by the Jewish people as a whole. Mary is shown to be a caring mother, wrapping the child in swaddling clothes and laying him in a manger-cradle. Her loving care reflects God's care. Since Jesus was born in poverty,

it is fitting that the news of his birth was first announced to simple shepherds. This also reflects Luke's concern for the poor and the lowly.

THE HOLY FAMILY

"Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you"

"It's all about family", cried the character Peggy Mitchell on a regular basis in BBC's *Eastenders*. The comment was usually made when all the members of the family were eating their Christmas dinner, slinging insults at each other and planning someone's downfall! However, family is only really life-giving if it is not self-serving and inward looking but oriented towards the love and service of the whole Church and the world. In the Holy Family we see that devotion between Jesus, Mary, and Joseph reflected to the world. In their intimacy, all people are drawn in to the heart of God's love. In their intimacy, all people hear their call to imitate that love!

THE SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

First Reading: Is. 60:1-6 The exiles returned to Jerusalem to find the city in ruins. Here the prophet cheers them with a vision of a restored city that will become a beacon of light for all the nations. The nations will come from afar to pay tribute to and worship the Lord in Jerusalem. Though addressed to Israel as God's chosen people, the prophecy will be fulfilled in Christ ('the light of the world'), and in the new Israel, the Church.

Second Reading: Eph 3:2-3,5-6 This reading expresses the theological meaning of today's feast: God invites Jew and Gentile to share on an equal footing the benefits of the salvation brought by Christ. This is the mystery, hidden in the past, now revealed in Christ. It is difficult for us to appreciate the sense of shock that the Jews felt at the fact that the pagans were to be accepted into the Church on equal terms with themselves. This is the aspect that is highlighted in the reading.

Gospel Reading: Mt 2:1-12 For Matthew, the story of the Magi becomes an anticipation of the fate of the good news of salvation, a fate that he knew in the aftermath of the resurrection. God revealed himself to the Jews through the Scriptures, and to the Gentiles through nature. Hence, Matthew shows the Magi (who were Gentiles) receiving a revelation through astrology. The story highlights the paradox: the Jews who have the Scriptures reject Jesus, while Gentiles come and, with the help of the Scriptures, find and adore him. There is nothing to be gained by speculating where the Magi came from and what exactly the star was. The star was merely the means by which a great mystery was revealed - the revelation of Christ as the Saviour of the Gentiles too. The theme of light dominates the feast of the Epiphany as it does the feast of Christmas.

CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES 24th DEC.

4:30pm Painswick

Christmas Mass

6:30pm Stroud

Christmas Family Mass

11:00pm Woodchester

Hymns & Readings to welcome Christmas

CHRISTMAS DAY MASSES 25th DEC.

12:00am Woodchester

Christmas Mass at Midnight

9:00am Stonehouse

Christmas Mass

11:00am Stroud

Christmas Mass

THANK YOU to everyone who generously donated to the Giving Tree and Hamper Collections. Twelve hampers were distributed this week to families around our parishes - we pray this will bring smiles to them over Christmas.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE

CHRISTMAS PARISH OFFICE HOURS:

Please Note: Parish Offices (Stroud and Stonehouse) will close on Tuesday 23rd December and reopen on Wednesday 7th January 2026

PARISH OFFICE OPENING HOURS: (From 7th January 2026)

The Immaculate Conception, Stroud: Tuesday to Friday 10am to 3pm

St Joseph's, Stonehouse: Monday, Wednesday to Friday 9am to 2pm

. Newsletter: stroudnewsletter@catholicweb.org.uk

Parish Twitter: @stroudRCchurch

Pastoral Area St Wulstan Website: www.saintwulstan.org.uk

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