

# The Little Flower Messenger

Year C – THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH –

26<sup>th</sup> December 2021

*Welcome to our Parish Community of St. Theresa of Lisieux*

The Presbytery, High Lane, Stansted Mountfitchet, CM24 8LQ  
Tel. 01279 814349 • [stansted@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:stansted@dioceseofbrentwood.org) • [www.sttheresastansted.org](http://www.sttheresastansted.org)  
• Twitter: @StStansted • Instagram: sttheresastansted

**Priest-in-Charge:** Fr. Lee Bennett [frlee@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:frlee@dioceseofbrentwood.org) ☎ 01279 814 349

**Parish Deacon:** Rev. Des Connors [desconnors@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:desconnors@dioceseofbrentwood.org) ☎ 07748 464 101

**Parish Administrator:** Clair Rava [stansted@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:stansted@dioceseofbrentwood.org) ☎ 01279 816 889/07734 273 969

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**Gospel: Luke 2:41-52**

*'Jesus is found by his parents sitting among the doctors'*

**Mass book (P. 105)**

**1st Reading:**

*Ecclesiasticus 3:2-6, 12-14*

**Psalm 127:1-5:**

*O blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways!*

**2nd Reading:**

*Colossians 3:12-21*

**Gospel Acclamation:**

*Alleluia, alleluia! May the peace of Christ reign in your hearts;  
let the message of Christ find a home with you. Alleluia!*

**Communion Antiphon: (P. 108)**

*Our God has appeared on the earth, and lived among us.*

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## This Week's Good News

Dear Friends,

The background to today's first reading is that Hannah had been a barren woman. In that culture, it was disgraceful for a married woman not to have children. Hannah longed for a child and went to the place of worship to beg the Lord to grant her a child. There she promised to dedicate her child to the Lord if He would grant her request and when she encountered the priest, Eli, he assured her that her prayer would be answered. Miraculously, God removed her barrenness, and she soon became pregnant with a son. She named her son Samuel because in Hebrew that name means, "God has heard." Hannah had great faith in the Lord, and He rewarded her with a child. In thanksgiving, Hannah entrusted Samuel to the care of the priest, Eli, in order to be raised in the house of God and dedicated to the service of the Lord. Samuel grew up to become one of Israel's greatest prophets, who would eventually anoint David as king of Israel. On today's Feast of the Holy Family, this first reading reminds us of the connection between our families and the family of God. Although our situation may look very different from that of Hannah and her husband, Elkanah, we can learn from them that the purpose of parenting is to entrust our children to the Lord. The ultimate purpose of our families is to connect each member of the family to the family of God, the Church. Let us, therefore, emulate the faith of Hannah in entrusting her family to the service of God.

Today's second reading from the first letter of the Apostle John focuses our attention on the love of God. God's love for us is perfect and unconditional. He loves us even when we do not love Him in return. In fact, God created us out of love but then we rejected Him through sin and, thus, broke off our family relationship with Him. But, although we may have rejected God, He has never turned away His loving gaze from us. God's love is so great that He has chosen to adopt us back into His family. He made this possible through becoming one of us in Jesus Christ. As today's reading expresses, "we should believe in



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the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us.” We learn from this passage and other parts of Scripture that we become sons and daughters of God through faith in Jesus and being baptized (by which we receive “the Spirit he gave us”). We also learn how to act in the family of God, which is the Church. We are to “love one another” and “keep [God’s] commandments.” The beautiful thing about the family of God is that we have a perfect Father. Therefore, His commands are not burdensome or arbitrary. They are, rather, what is best for us. And God gives us the grace we need to love Him and love one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. Let us, therefore, seek to be faithful “children of God.

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. This feast takes place on the Sunday immediately following Christmas, falling within the season of Christmas fittingly to continue to call our attention to the profound reality of God becoming man. On this feast we are reminded of the humanity of Jesus as the son of Mary and Joseph. Jesus grew up in their home and spent His childhood as a rather typical Israelite boy. In fact, the only thing we know about Jesus’ childhood, apart from His infancy, is the account we hear in today’s Gospel. But we learn quite a few things about the Holy Family from this short account. First, we see that they are a faithful Jewish family by their observance of traveling to Jerusalem once a year for the feast of Passover. Second, we learn that they travelled in a “caravan” that probably included many, many relatives, and friends. There were enough, at least, for it to take a day of traveling before Mary and Joseph realized that Jesus was not with the group. It would have been typical for a twelve-year-old boy, who was coming of age, to be with the men of the group, rather than his parents. Third, we see that Mary and Joseph had typical parental concerns. Not being able to find Jesus for three days caused them “great anxiety.” In fact, this three days of sorrow foreshadows the three days of sorrow that Mary would experience at the time of Jesus’ death, when He would be in the tomb for three days. The finding in the Temple, therefore, foreshadows the great joy of the Resurrection. Fourth, Jesus’ response to Mary and Joseph when they find Him reveals that their role, although essential, was to be subordinate to the will of Jesus’ Father in Heaven. The passage does tell us that Jesus “was obedient to them,” but this obedience was always connected to His perfect obedience to God. Likewise, our families are to be reflections of our relationship with God.

Loving and obedient to each other but with our eyes fixed firmly on the Lord and in total love and trust of our heavenly Father who cares for us all.

Deacon Des

### **Making an Act of Spiritual Communion**

**My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.**

### **Parish News**

**COVID19 - Bishops’ Conference Guidance:** Following the statement by the Prime Minister on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December, further restrictions have been imposed to mitigate against viral transmission, especially in the light of the new Omicron variant. The following guidance has been issued by the Bishops of England and Wales:

- **Face Coverings** - The wearing of face covering is now mandatory in Places of Worship. However, there will be exemptions for those leading worship, public proclamation of scriptural readings or prayers, and those who are unable to wear face coverings and are exempt for medical reasons.



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- **Singing** - The current Church guidance states that congregational singing should take place with face coverings in place and choirs and soloists may sing without such coverings. As the Church moves towards Christmas celebrations which often involves carol services and other singing events, it is strongly recommended that congregational singing within church buildings continues with the applied face coverings.
- **Practical Guidance for Churches** - With respect to the current situation with the Omicron variant it is important to ensure the following points are followed in our churches:
  - ♦ That people displaying any symptoms of Covid-19 should stay at home and not travel to church or participate in person.
  - ♦ That hand sanitiser is available to those attending the Church.
  - ♦ Face coverings must be worn by those attending public acts of worship unless there is a genuine exemption or the person is leading worship or participating in a role that requires the mask to be removed for a period of time.
  - ♦ That there is good ventilation and air throughput in the building; in this case, because of climatic conditions, it would be important to remind people to wrap up well in church.
  - ♦ There is now very strong evidence to support that the main mode of this variant's viral transmission is through aerosols, and that the risk from surface and touch transmission is very small indeed. As such, the strict regimes of church cleaning that were recommended at the beginning of the opening of churches for public worship are no longer necessary. General church cleaning is sufficient.
  - ♦ That people who are engaged in a form of pastoral ministry which involves ministry to the housebound, sick and vulnerable, should take regular lateral flow tests to ensure they are safe to do so. These are free from the NHS.

**Thank you:** Both Deacon Des and I would like to say thank for all of the cards, gifts, love and generosity shown this Christmas. From our families to yours we wish you a very Happy and Holy Christmas and a blessed New year. Fr Lee.

**Brentwood Diocesan Directory 2022:** Copies of this this year's directories are now available to purchase. Should you wish to purchase one please contact Clair. Ringbound copies are £4.00 and Paperback copies are £2.80. Thank you

**Private Prayer:** The church will not be open for private prayer during the week of 27<sup>th</sup> December. We will reopen on the week commencing 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2022 every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. All are welcome.

**Rosary, Exposition of the Sacrament & Benediction:** The Friday evening sessions are now postponed over the winter months. A new date will be published as soon as it is known. Thank you.

**Baptism Course:** The next course will take place on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022, all at 7:00 p.m. To enrol on the course, please email the Parish Office [stansted@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:stansted@dioceseofbrentwood.org) Thank you.

**Sacrament of Marriage:** People who wish to be married in the Catholic Church must approach Fr. Lee / Deacon Des, at least 6 months prior to the intended date of their wedding, and before setting a wedding date.

**Visions Group:** The Group will be taking a Christmas break and will return on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2022.

**The Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage:** Led by Bishop Alan, the pilgrimage will take place from Sunday 24 – Friday 29 July 2022 in Lourdes. It will be the first time in three years that the diocese has returned to Lourdes. Brochures for the pilgrimage, which will include costs, will be available soon. If you would like further information now, please contact Cathy O'Connor, the Administrative Director via email [cathy@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:cathy@dioceseofbrentwood.org) or by calling 07813 710070.



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## Mass Times and Intentions

<b>THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH - Year C</b>		
<b>Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Mass: <b>8:30 a.m.</b> <i>Livestreamed</i>  Confessions: <b>9:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.</b> Mass: <b>10:00 a.m.</b> <i>Livestreamed</i>	<b>People of the Parish</b>  <b>Miss Margaret Aldridge</b> <b>R.I.P.</b> (T. Aldridge)
<b>Monday 27<sup>th</sup> December</b>	No Mass	
<b>Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> December</b>	No Mass	
<b>Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> December</b>	No Mass	
<b>Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> December</b>	No Mass	
<b>Friday 31<sup>st</sup> December</b>	No Mass	
<b>MARY MOTHER OF GOD</b>		
<b>Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> January</b>	Mass: <b>12:00 p.m.</b> <i>Livestreamed</i>  Confessions: <b>5:15 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.</b> Mass: <b>6:00 p.m.</b> <i>Livestreamed</i>	<b>Blessing for NewYear 2022</b>  <b>Austin Gibbons R.I.P.</b> (M&T Rhead)
<b>SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY – YEAR C</b>		
<b>Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January</b>	Mass: <b>8:30 a.m.</b> <i>Livestreamed</i>  Confessions: <b>9:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.</b> Mass: <b>10:00 a.m.</b> <i>Livestreamed</i>  Mass: <b>12:00 p.m.</b> <i>Livestreamed</i>	<b>People of the Parish</b>  <b>Holy Souls</b>  <b>Departed members of the</b> <b>Barker &amp; Connor Families</b> (L. Barker)



**PLEASE TAKE THIS NEWSLETTER HOME WITH YOU AND DISPOSE OF IT RESPONSIBLY. THANK YOU.**



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