



**Oratory of St. Francis de Sales**  
 Roman Catholic Parish  
 Archdiocese of Southwark

**Parish Newsletter 17th December 2023**  
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 Web: <http://saintfrancisdesales.org.uk>

StFrancisDeSalesHartley  
 sfdhartley sfdhartley

<https://tinyurl.com/vc7w838m>



This parish is served by the Spiritans

**St. Francis de Sales Live Stream: [www.churchservices.tvhartley](http://www.churchservices.tvhartley)**

**THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT** Gaudete Sunday Mass Book Year B Vol 1 page 87

Considered together, the readings for the 3rd Sunday in Advent Year B intertwine to create a rich tapestry of anticipation and illumination.

In Isaiah, we hear the jubilant proclamation of good news, liberty, and divine favour, a vivid depiction of the joyous fulfilment that comes with the Messiah's arrival. This joy, as echoed in Thessalonians, is not a fleeting emotion but a state of being, sustained by continuous prayer and gratitude, deeply rooted in the promise of Christ's transformative presence.

Just as Isaiah speaks of being clothed in the garments of salvation and righteousness, so too are we invited to clothe ourselves in the joy and thanksgiving that come from God.

In John's Gospel, we encounter John the Baptist, the herald of the Light, embodying the role of a witness to the one true Light, Jesus Christ. This Light, which John testifies to, is the same Light that Isaiah foretells will bring freedom and renewal. The call in Thessalonians to rejoice always and give thanks in all circumstances is a response to this Light that illuminates our path, revealing the way to truth and salvation.

As we journey through Advent, we are reminded that our preparation for Christ's coming is not only a remembrance of a historical event but an active participation in the unfolding of God's redemptive plan. The convergence of joy from Isaiah, the testimony of John the Baptist, and Paul's exhortation to continual prayer and thanksgiving, shapes our Advent season as a time of deep spiritual renewal and expectant waiting for the fullness of God's salvation.

*Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

**THE CHURCH IS OPEN:**

**Tue-Fri 8:45am-4:00pm**

**Sat 10:00am-6:30pm**

**Sun 7:45am-12noon**

**SUNDAY MASS**

**Sat 16th December**

**5:30pm Vigil Mass**

Int. People of the Parish

**Sunday 17th December**

**8:30am**

**10.15am**

**WEEKDAY MASS**

**Tues 19th December**

**9.30am** Int. R.I.P. Wilfred Goodfellow, Anniversary

**Wed 20th December**

**9.30am**

**Thurs 21st December**

**9.30am** Terry Halpin R.I.P

**Friday 22nd December**

**9.30am**

**CONFESSIONS**

**Tues-Fri 8:40-9:20am**

**Saturday 4:30-5:20pm**

or by appointment

**MASS OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD 2023**

**Sunday 24th December at 5:30pm:** Vigil Mass. Seating at this Mass will be strictly reserved for families with infants & school aged children. Respectfully, anyone otherwise be asked to wait in the tv room until all families with children have first been seated. Thankyou for your consideration in this matter.

**Sunday 24th December at 8:00pm:** Mass during the Night with Choir singing.

**Monday 25th December at 9:30am:** Mass during the Day.

**Please note, we will not have a 10.15am Mass next Sunday 24th December, 4th Sunday of Advent.**

**PARISH OFFICE HOURS: TUES, THURS, FRI 10.00am-2.00pm - Tel 01474705361**

**Parish Priest: Fr Alphonsus Beni CSSp**  
**Email: [alphonsusbeni@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:alphonsusbeni@rcaos.org.uk) (Day off: Mon)**

**PLEASE CALL OR EMAIL THE PRIEST  
 DIRECTLY FOR AN APPOINTMENT  
 Tel: 07500262446**

**Parish Secretary: Jane Pemberton**  
**Parish Council Chair: Chris Pieroni**  
**Email: [hartleypcc@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:hartleypcc@rcaos.org.uk)**

**Safeguarding representative: Judith Stephens**  
**Email: [hartleysg2@safeguardrcaos.org.uk](mailto:hartleysg2@safeguardrcaos.org.uk)**

## TEXTS FOR THIS WEEK— 3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT

**Isaiah 61: 1-2, 10-11** I exult for joy in the Lord.

**Res Psalm: My soul rejoices in my God**

**1 Thessalonians 5: 16-24** May you all be kept safe, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of the Lord.

**John 1: 6-8, 19-28** There stands among you- unknown to you- the one who is coming after me.

**Communion Antiphon:** *Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear. Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.*

**For Daily Prayers and Mass Readings online, visit <https://www.universalis.com>**

## VISITING THE SICK AND HOUSEBOUND

If you or someone in your family is housebound and would like a priest to visit, please contact Fr Alphonsus or the parish office to arrange a visit.

### PRAYER FOR THE SICK & HOUSEBOUND

*Father, we thank you for the gift of your Son in the Eucharist. We now place before you all the sick and housebound of our parish. As they share in this Eucharist with us, we pray that they may come to know the depth of your love for them and, the joy, the peace, and healing of your presence. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord Amen*

## PARISH NOTICES

### ADVENT AND THE JESSE TREE

The Jesse Tree helps us unite the tradition of decorating Christmas trees with the biblical events that led to Jesus' birth. For each day of Advent, there is a symbol to match the biblical events from Creation to Christmas. If you would like to make your own Jesse Tree and 'ornaments' this Advent, you are very welcome to take the sheets with the templates for the symbols etc, on the porch table.

**THANKYOU** to everyone who came along on Tuesday to help decorate the church for Christmas.

### ST FRANCIS DE SALES 200 CLUB

**Our Christmas Draw will take place on Sunday 24th December after the 8.30am Mass. There will be 3 prizes of £100, £70, and £50.** Membership for the 200 Club is open to anyone over 16yrs and costs £24 annually per draw number for the chance to win a prize each month. All necessary information and forms etc can be found in the church porch or on the parish website.

**CHURCH CLEANING ROTA - URGENTLY SEEKING VOLUNTEERS.** If you/your family can spare 1-2 hours to help on a rota basis with light cleaning, dusting & vacuuming, please contact the parish office. Any help will be very much appreciated.

## ST FRANCIS DE SALES PARISH CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

We have pleasure in announcing that the Annual Parish Christmas Raffle will take place on the 24th December 2023.

Tickets will be on Sale from this Weekend and all through Advent: £5.00 for a Strip of Tickets or a £1.00 a Ticket. All Proceeds will go to our Church.

The Prizes are Fantastic Hampers full of Goodies to suit all Ages.

If you are unable to attend Mass and would like to take part, please contact the Parish Office on 01474 705361 or by e-mail at [hartley@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:hartley@rcaos.org.uk) and Tickets will be arranged.

The Draw is open to everyone and all can enter. We are currently taking Cash or Online Payments.

**Please give Generously  
and Good Luck.**

### CAROL SERVICE SUNDAY 17th DECEMBER AT 3pm

Please come to our lovely parish family Carol Service. Our church choir will be singing. The children will present a Nativity Scene. You can join in the carols and enjoy a mince pie after the service organised by the Mini Vinnies. The event is organised by the Saint Vincent de Paul Society to raise funds for local families in need. We look forward to seeing you there!

### MASS TIMES FOR 4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

With Christmas Day being on Monday this year, and with our Vigil Mass for Christmas being at 5:30pm on Sunday 24th December, Masses for the weekend of 23rd/24th will be: Saturday 5:30pm and Sunday 8:30am. **Therefore please note, there will be NO 10.15am Mass on Sunday 24th December.** Thankyou

### CHILDREN'S LITURGY AND YOUTH GROUP TEAMS- ADULT VOLUNTEERS ARE URGENTLY NEEDED.

If you would be interested in joining the Leaders' Team for Children's Liturgy or the Youth Group, please speak with Fr Alphonsus who will then pass your details to the parish Safeguarding Rep and put you in touch with Victoria or Laura to explain more about these ministries. Anyone wishing to volunteer must first have completed a DBS Check for Ministry with Children/Youth Group in the Catholic Church. You will be guided through any necessary training.

## REGULAR NOTICES

### **PARISH REGISTRATION**

We welcome all new parishioners to St Francis de Sales, Hartley. We want you to feel at home in the parish. **The first thing to do is to introduce yourself to the parish priest and then register on the Parish Database.** Registration Forms are available in the porch, or on the parish website. Please consider how you can support the parish with your talents, skills and resources and submit a **'Sharing my Time & Talents'** leaflet, also found in the porch area.

### **MASS INTENTIONS**

If you would like to have a Mass offered for an intention, please fill in a brown Mass Offering envelope the porch, and return it to Fr Alphonsus.

### **SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL (SVP)**

'We are a small group who offer confidential support through phone calls, house visits, accompanying to local medical, dental appointments. We also offer confidential financial support. Contact us via the parish office.'

#### **SVP FUNDRAISING - NO CASH INVOLVED.**

*We would like your used computer printer ink cartridges, as we can turn them into money. Please put used cartridges into a collection box either in the meeting room or (via a pupil at Our Lady of Hartley) at the school. Thankyou. SVP & Mini Vinnies*

### **OUR LADY OF HARTLEY RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

For the latest information and school news, visit us at [www.ourladyhartley.kent.sch.uk](http://www.ourladyhartley.kent.sch.uk)

### **DONATION BOX FOR GRAVESEND FOODBANK**

Non perishable items can be left in the Food Bank Box in the Meeting Room or in the porch. Thankyou

### **'SEEKING SANCTUARY' - support for migrants**

Donations of warm clothing and toiletries can be placed into the blue box in the Meeting Room. Please visit <https://seekingsanctuary.weebly.com/>

## CATECHETICAL PROGRAMMES

Parishioners are asked to first check the **SACRAMENTS** section on the parish website for general information on the programmes. Please speak with Fr Alphonsus for any further advice. Those wishing to enrol for Sacramental programs should be registered parishioners, attending Mass.

### **BAPTISM FOR BABIES AND INFANTS**

Parents of infants and those seeking Baptism, please attend weekend Mass and speak with Fr. Alphonsus afterwards to register for the Baptism Course.

## **CHILDREN'S LITURGY – FOR CHILDREN IN YR-Y2**

On Sundays at the 10.15am Mass. Bring your child into the Meeting Room before Mass begins and **please remain with your child until both leaders have arrived.** In compliance with Diocesan Safeguarding Guidelines, no other adults can remain in the Meeting Room during the session. Thankyou.

### **SACRAMENTS OF RECONCILIATION and EUCHARIST**

There will not be a class on Friday 15th December. Class will resume on Friday 5th January 2024.

### **SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION 2024**

Any young person in school Yr8 or above who would like to be confirmed next year, please speak to Fr Alphonsus for an application form, thankyou. We hope to begin preparation classes in January 2024, if there is a sufficient number of candidates.

### **RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) 2024.**

**Journey in Faith: Are You Interested in Becoming a Catholic?** If you have never been baptized, if you were baptized in another Christian denomination and would like to become Catholic, or if you were baptized Catholic but never received the Sacraments of Eucharist or Confirmation, you are welcome to join the RCIA program, the process by which adults become Catholic. Please speak with Fr Alphonsus to discuss the program or anything about RCIA process.

## DIOCESAN NOTICES

**'ADVENT GIVING CALENDAR'** supporting those in need this Christmas. Please pick up a copy of the resource sheet from the church or visit the website [rcsouthwark.co.uk/mission/caritas-southwark/](http://rcsouthwark.co.uk/mission/caritas-southwark/)

### **SOUTHWARK SPIRITUALITY ADVENT REFLECTIONS**

To help us in our Advent 2023 preparation, the Southwark Spirituality Commission is offering daily Advent Reflections to subscribers. Participants will receive the suggestion of a Bible passage, followed by a short reflection and prayer suggestion. Visit <https://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/mission/southwark-spirituality-commission/> to subscribe.

### **KENT CATHOLIC SCHOOLS' PARTNERSHIP**

The Trust is currently recruiting for three new Headteachers for: St Gregory's Secondary in Tunbridge Wells, St Joseph's Primary in Broadstairs, and St Edward's Primary in Sheerness, each with a stating date of September 2024.

Visit The Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership (KCSP) website at <http://www.kcsp.org.uk/> for further information and job application details. Thankyou.

## OFFERTORY COLLECTIONS 10th December 2023

Envelopes: £88.70 Loose Plate: £21.70

Contactless: £70.00 Online banking: £470.50

2nd Collection: £41.00 Thatch Fund: £176.00

*Thank you for your contributions to support the parish.*

*Please check that your GA Envelope number & the correct date are written clearly on your envelope. Thankyou*

**This week's 2nd Collection: Christmas Wreath**

### **CHRISTMAS OFFERING TO THE PARISH PRIEST**

Please use the Christmas Offering envelopes that are in the porch and note your Gift Aid number on the envelope. If you donate by Bank Standing Order, please mark your donation 'Christmas Offering.' You may also use the Cashless Machine in the porch or via *Givealittle* on the parish website Donate options.

### THATCH FUND

**Funding raised: £40,385.05 of our Target £55,000.00**

Thankyou for your continued support! Please keep depositing your £1 weekly donation in the Thatch Fund Box at the back of the church OR use the Contactless machine in the porch. You can also set up a £4 monthly/£52 annual, Bank Standing Order at:

**Nat West Bank. Account name St Francis. Account number 34363181 Sort code 60-06-33.**

If you are a UK tax payer, please submit a Gift Aid declaration form - **online** (follow directions below ) or **hard copy** (on the shelf in the church porch) If you already use the parish Gift Aid scheme, *please* note your GA number against any donation. If you do not know your GA number, please contact the parish office for assistance.

You can also donate via our parish *Justgiving* page at [www.justgiving.com/St-Francis-de-Sales-Hartley](http://www.justgiving.com/St-Francis-de-Sales-Hartley) OR via *Givealittle* on the parish website front page by clicking on the 'Donate' button. Thankyou for all your support.

**Are you a UK Taxpayer?  
Please consider joining the  
Parish Gift-Aid Scheme.**

Simply scan the QR code with your phone and fill in the form or visit the web link. Please contact the parish office for any assistance. Your support is greatly appreciated. Thankyou



## FUNDRAISING THROUGH SHOPPING ONLINE

**Do you shop online? If you do, you can raise donations for the parish at no extra cost to you! Please visit [www.easyfundraising.co.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.co.uk)**

### **'PLANNED GIVING' and GIFT-AIDED DONATIONS**

The parish relies on contributions to maintain the church building and presbytery, supporting the priest in his ministry, which is the Church's Mission. Please consider setting up a Monthly Bank Standing Order. This is most helpful to the parish for budgeting and planning projects.

**Other ways to support the parish financially are:**

- (i) Weekly Gift Aid Envelopes (via Parish office)
- (ii) Through *Givealittle* on the parish website
- (iii) Using the Contactless Machine in the church
- (iv) Cash, or Cheque payable to **RCAS Hartley**
- (v) Using the One-off Donation white envelope
- (vi) Online transaction to Nat West Bank Account St Francis de Sales Acc: 34143580 S.C. 60-06-33.

### PARISH GROUP MEETINGS

#### **YOUTH GROUP**

All young parishioners are welcome members. Contact: Laura Bourne via [hartley@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:hartley@rcaos.org.uk)

#### **ADULT CHOIR**

Thursdays at 7:30pm. New members are welcome Contact: Yvonne at [yhegarty@talktalk.net](mailto:yhegarty@talktalk.net)

#### **KNIGHTS OF ST. COLUMBA**

Third Wednesday each month at 7:00pm in the meeting Room. New members very welcome. Contact: William Rons [williamrons@hotmail.com](mailto:williamrons@hotmail.com)

#### **CATHOLIC WELCOME CIRCLE (CWC)**

Second Wednesday of the month in the Meeting Room 2:00pm. Contact: Margaret Walsh.

#### **BEREAVEMENT GROUP**

Please contact the parish priest to arrange a visit.

#### **ST VINCENT DE PAUL (SVP)**

Monthly meetings arranged by the SVP group. Contact can be made through the parish office.

#### **CATENIANS (Meopham Circle)**

First Wednesday each month at 7.30pm at Hartley Country Club. Contact Les Bober on 07811 407386 or Steve Lewis, on 07305 360305 if you would like to learn more about us.

For a newsletter emailed weekly, or to suggest articles/additions, contact the parish secretary: [hartley@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:hartley@rcaos.org.uk). **Newsletter items received after 11.00am Thursday may not be included that week.**

Editor reserves the right to edit articles. A parish of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark.

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