

WELCOME NEW PARISHIONERS! We welcome all who wish to join our parish family. You may register by calling or visiting the parish office. You can also pick up a registration form from the welcome table in the Gathering Space. We're glad you are here!

MARRIAGE: Diocesan guidelines require that you contact the office at least six months before the ceremony. Please call the parish office and make an appointment so that your date may be placed on the parish calendar. Please email: saji.mathew@cliftondiocese.com to begin your personal, spiritual and liturgical preparation.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK AND COMMUNION TO THOSE IN THE HOSPITAL OR HOMEBOUND: Please call the parish office to arrange a visit. If you are entering the hospital and wish to have a priest visit you, please call the parish office before your stay. If you wish to receive the Sacrament of Communion during your stay you must inform the hospital that you are Catholic and a member of Christ the King. (Due to privacy laws the hospital can no longer inform us).

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS: Are you or someone you know interested in becoming Catholic? Please contact the parish office or email Father Saji on saji.mathew@cliftondiocese.com

FOOD BANK: In the run up to Christmas, people might like to donate one item each day for twenty four days to help those who are most in need this year. Our Parish has always been particularly generous and if we start collecting on Monday 15th November we would finish on Tuesday 8th December, a very fitting feast day! If you are able to join in there are suggestions as to what you could donate each day and of course the food bank collection point at Christ the King church is open each day of the week. If you have any queries please contact Father Saji.

CHRISTMAS RAFFLES- HAMPERS: We have some luxurious Christmas hampers to raffle off, for a draw hopefully in mid-December. Raffle tickets are available from the church. All ticket sales in support of the church TV Live-streaming Fund. These raffles along with prizes are very kindly donated by Sacha Haywood. Thank you very much for your arduous efforts and magnanimity. God bless you Sacha!

MARY'S MEALS "DOUBLE THE LOVE" CAMPAIGN: All public donations will be doubled by the UK government, up to £2 million, bringing new hope to families in Liberia, where hunger prevents children from going to school, and more than half of children drop out, before they finish primary education. www.marysmeals.org.uk/doublethelove We have some items to go on sale once after the lock down is lifted to raise some fund for this worthy cause including some beautiful Christmas cards printed and provided by Carol Drennan. Thank you very much Carol for your love and concern for the needy. More details to follow. God bless you Carol!

ADVENT GIVING PROJECT: Within our parish community and in our vicinity there are families going through challenging times that could use our help. As a part of the Advent Giving Project, you are invited to contribute towards the purchase of an item or two, or gift cards purchased through the parish, to help parish and school "families in need" during the winter months. Beginning Sunday, November 29th, Advent Giving Project is an initiative to support those families within our parish communities who are struggling because of the pandemic. If you would like to send

an extra check with your regular offertory envelope, please note "Advent Giving Project"

1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT - YEAR B: I would like to wish you all a happy New Year! Today is the first day of a new liturgical year in the Catholic Church, and in today's Gospel, Jesus speaks about His second coming, when He will judge the works of man. There are many movies, books, articles, and shows that talk about the end times or guess when the world will end. Yet, for we who believe in Jesus Christ, knowing the precise day or year or way in which the world will end is not important. For us the most important is to prepare our hearts for Jesus' coming. What does this mean? First, it means that we should not be afraid. We should be at peace because our encounter with Jesus is an encounter with Someone Who loves us. Second, it means that we should strive to perceive God's Love in our lives and respond to His Love by living in a state of grace, following the Commandments, and performing good works. We must strive to participate regularly in the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, which are sources of unfathomable grace that will help us remain faithful to our resolutions, grow in a deeper relationship with Christ, and foster a firmer commitment to charitable works. On this Sunday and throughout this Advent, I would like to invite you to take some time each day to spend with Jesus in prayer, in performing small sacrifices, and in loving others, particularly your loved ones. It is winter now. The days are shorter and the nights are longer. Many of you find yourselves at home in the evening with your families even more now due to the restrictions on socializing. This is a wonderful opportunity to seek the face of Jesus in your children, your spouse, or your parents. This is an opportunity to grow in stillness and silence. Such is the sense of awaiting Christ's coming with trust and in simplicity and peace.

2020 SEASON OF ADVENT CONFESSION SCHEDULE: In order to help you spiritually prepare for the joyous celebration of our Lord's birth, Christ the King will be offering these additional Confession times during the Season of Advent: Monday, December 21, 10:30am-11.30am. Tuesday, December 22: 6:00pm-7:00pm Wednesday, December 23: 6:00pm-7:00pm. Of course, we will still offer our normal Confession schedule of Saturdays from 5.00-5-45pm throughout the Advent season. "Confession heals, confession justifies, confession grants pardon of sin, all hope consists in confession; in confession there is a chance for mercy." St. Isidore of Seville.

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK: If you or a loved one are ill in any way and would like to have your name included on the Prayer Chain, the Sunday Prayers of the Faithful and/or the bulletin contact the Parish office. Permission from the individual must be given before we can list their name in the Prayers of the Faithful or the bulletin. Prayer, at its heart, is an act of faith, asking God to step in and believing that He is both willing and able to listen to us. There is no prayer intention too large or too small — you can ask for God's help with every need. Almighty God, we lift up all those who are facing illness today. We ask that you would bring healing, comfort and peace to their bodies. Calm their fears and let them experience the healing power of Your love. Amen.

MASS SCHEDULE COMMENCING FROM 2nd DECEMBER, 2020

Wednesday 2nd December Mass 10.00am

Thursday 3rd December Mass 10.00am

Friday 4th December 5.00pm Adoration

Friday 4th December Mass at 6.00pm

Saturday 5th December 6.00pm Mass (Vigil)

Sunday 6th December 11.00am Mass



THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF CHRIST THE KING

THE PRESBYTERY, 4 LORDS CROFT, AMESBURY, WILTS., SP47EP

PARISH PRIEST: Rev Saji Mathew
saji.mathew@cliftondiocese.com

Parish Office Telephone: 01980 622177

Website: Amesbury.cliftondiocese.com

WELCOME TO CHRIST THE KING

We welcome visitors, family and friends to our Mass today.

We are glad you are joining us today.

May the Lord continue to bless you all!

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT-YEAR-B-2020

FROM THE DESK OF FATHER SAJI: ADVENT- A SEASON OF HOPE: Once upon a time there was a man who wanted to search for deep wells. Before he set out to seek them, he thought it would first be wise to consult all the great books that had been written on the subject of deep wells. The man read many books on the location of wells, the various shapes they came in and the differences in depth they possessed. One day, while strolling casually along, engrossed in his reading about wells, he failed to notice a large, deep well right in front of him. When he bumped into the ruin of the deep well, his book flew from his hands and fell quite far into the deep recesses of the well. The man, quite upset at the loss, frantically lowered a nearby bucket to retrieve his book but his attempt was in vain. The man went away very sad that he had lost his book because he thought, without the book, how would he ever be able to find a deep well.

This weekend marks the start of a new liturgical year with the Season of Advent as the church moves into Cycle B of the Sunday readings and puts focus on the Gospel of Mark, who ushers in the coming of the Lord. Like the man who gave up upon losing his book, Advent directs us to put away the book and use the wisdom we've gained through this past year in combating the pandemic for implementation upon the particular activities which have importance in life that may be experienced during this festive time of year. Wise Christians must not feel a loss within Advent without many of the spiritual and social gatherings that most of us are accustomed to in that there are sufficient opportunities to recognise the coming of the Lord in the mystery of his love that we never completely understand.

The scriptures throughout Advent remind us never to give up; especially if our treasure falls into the well. The Gospel for the First Sunday in Advent makes it known that God is nudging us to take time during Advent to plant seeds of hope into our lives while the prophet Isaiah reminds us that "No ear has ever heard, no eye ever seen, any God doing such deeds for those who wait for him" even if something precious to us is at the bottom of the well. We are challenged to live with expectations of all that we may be if we let God cultivate the fruits of our goodness, which elevate the presence of Christ during hard times.

Advent is a season of joyful waiting to celebrate the birth of Jesus, and live with anticipation for his second coming. Pope Francis has called this liturgical year a "Year of Grace" which manufactures good intentions that refrain from negative thinking. The Season does not call us into isolation from Christ even while we continue to spar with Covid-19 in that there are abundant ways to keep our hopes alive within the uncertainty that this year continues to bring to us. This inspires us to think and behave differently rather than give in to fear or anxiety since hope engenders the power to prevail over obstacles that await us, which is the reason that today's Gospel from Mark calls us to "watch" with intelligent optimism to focus on all that may be done to fine tune our lives in striving to build a better world during these troublesome days saturated with perplexing choices.

Advent bids us to erect a home for the saviour. This requires effort and hard work, yet navigates us on a path that is only journeyed during this Season. Although we know that historically Jesus can never be born again, building a home for the Christ-child makes us the clay used by the potter to be the work of the Lord's hands. This sparks our lives to subdue anything that chains us against the wall during this present crisis of the coronavirus. Openness to the will of God renders opportunities to display the presence of Christ in our lives, which leads to a happier and fuller life rather than one immersed with tension and anxiety. May Advent be for you a heart-warming excursion filled with hope that pilots you to a joyful Christmas.

CHRISTMAS MASSES – Email or PHONE BOOKING: Due to Covid-19 regulations, numbers attending this year's Christmas Masses will be limited at Christ the King Church. You must email or phone to reserve places. Once the restricted capacity of the church has been reached, you will be turned away. Booking is available from this week onwards. Christmas Eve Masses: 4.00pm, 5.30pm 7.00pm and 12.00am. Christmas Day Masses: 9.30am and 10.30am and 11.30. December 26 Mass, 11.00am Sunday December 27 Mass at 6.00pm (Vigil) and 11.00am at CTK Church. There are lists available in the Narthex for Christmas Mass bookings too.

LET YOUR FAITH BE BIGGER THAN YOUR FEAR:

These are difficult and changing times indeed. It's easy to become afraid and stop seeking the joy in our lives when our lives have become impacted by loved ones becoming ill and the uncertainty of when we will see the light at the end of the tunnel. But fear not...if you have your faith! Fear and Faith are very different, yet they both have something in common. They both do not know what the future holds. How are they different? One causes a negative reaction and the other a positive reaction. When we are afraid, our stress levels rise, there are numerous questions racing through our minds and we tend to lash out as a way to protective ourselves. Fear makes us feel like our world around us is out of control. When we cannot believe anything good will come of our situation, and we worry needlessly, we allow fear to take control of our lives and our emotions. But remember, we have a choice. Joshua 1:9 states "Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go". We can choose faith. Faith is the opposite of not believing. Faith is an awareness. We cannot see God, however we are aware he is present and working in our lives. Faith is a gift, given to us by God, one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. God gives us free will. God uses the trials in our lives, not as a punishment, but as an opportunity to help our faith relationship with him deepen, encouraged by our own free will. How can we work toward becoming more faithful and pushing away our fear? Well, it takes work. For instance, when we are hungry, we feed our bodies with food. When we are thirsty, we consume something to drink. When we want to get in shape, we incorporate exercise into our lives. This same principal applies if we want to take our fear away. We must feed our faith. This can be done with prayer, attending church (or on-line Mass), participating in a bible study, reading or watching things with positive messages and just being kind and loving towards one another. We must choose to fill our souls up with the goodness of faith in order to make little or no room for fear to enter. Fear can cause division and allow us to judge others. God doesn't want us to separate and judge one another. God is the only judge, therefore if we are casting judgement, creating doubt in others, gossiping negative thoughts to others, can we truly call ourselves Christian? Our lives were not designed to make us choose winning and being successful as the basis of reaching our eternal lives in heaven. Our lives were designed to live as a disciple of Christ. Then, and only then, will goodness, peace, love and joy flow from our hearts leading us to the best gift of all...our faith! Now, more than ever before, we need to come together as families, as communities, as a nation and as a world. Will you join me and look at your future positively, by choosing faith? With steadfast prayers for healing and good choices,

CHRISTMAS TOY APPEAL: If you would like to donate a gift, please wrap your gift and mark clearly on it whether it is suitable for a girl/boy/either and also what age group it would be appropriate for, e.g. Girl Age 6. Donated gifts may be dropped off at the Presbytery or the parish office. Toy Appeal and deadlines will be 15th December to allow time for collection, quarantine, disinfecting and distributing the toys.

APPEAL FOR HELP FOR CHRISTMAS MASSES – STEWARDING AND CLEANING:

Due to the coronavirus restrictions in place for celebrating Mass, our Christmas celebrations will need to be a little different this year. I would like to give you the opportunity to celebrate Christmas at one of the five Masses but in order to do this we need more help to steward and clean the church. Christmas is a time for giving and this is a perfect way to give not just to your family but to the whole parish. If you are not away this Christmas and would be willing to give a little time to help make this happen, please could you contact me as soon as possible at saji.mathew@cliftondiocese.com. Many thanks and God bless you!

ALTAR FLOWER DEDICATIONS: Worship in our church is an experience of beauty. The flowers in the sanctuary are an important and beautiful symbol of what we offer to God in our worship. Every member of the parish is invited to contribute to the beauty of our worship by giving the altar flowers on a particular Sunday in memory, thanksgiving or celebration for people or events that are important to that donor. There will be one dedication per Weekend. The cost for the flowers is £25 and a Mass will be offered for their intentions as well. Payments can be made via cheque payable to the Church of Christ the King or in cash. Please note the payment is designated for Altar Flowers. If you would like to make such a gift, please contact Father Saji to designate the weekend you want to dedicate the flowers. This week, the flowers on the Sanctuary are from a kind donor who didn't want to be identified. We thank her for the generosity and love. A Mass will be offered for the intentions of the donor and her family. God bless you always!

RECOGNISE GOD IN YOUR ORDINARY MOMENTS:

In the Unexpected "What could happen next?" How many times have you asked yourself that question in the past year? Though we most often use that expression when things don't seem to be going our way, this year it has been an expression of the constant changes to our world which the COVID-19 pandemic has wrought. But we might use the same expression to explain our feelings of being overwhelmed by blessings and good things, when the stars seem to align just right. No matter what, we can say with certainty that tomorrow will not go exactly as we envisioned. Our lives are influenced by so many factors and the world around us is increasingly complex. Rather than be surprised by the unexpected, maybe we should expect the unexpected. Living in this manner causes us to cherish more deeply the gifts we have been given. It helps us to live in the present and become mindful of those around us. Our relationships deepen. Our sense of responsibility builds. Our stewardship way of life finds new meaning and purpose. This Advent will not be the same experience as last Advent. It remains to be seen what the coming days and weeks have in store for each of us. However, no matter what happens, Jesus Christ is there to welcome us to the unexpected. He will celebrate with us in joy and he will even feel our pain. You can count on the unexpected, but you can also count on Him to be there with you. He is now and forever, Emmanuel, "God with us." He is the expected in all things unexpected.

BREAK NEGATIVE THOUGHTS TO GAIN STABILITY:

Irrational thoughts occasionally occur in the minds of all people. Intelligence does not make someone immune to irrational thought. These thoughts typically clutter our minds with feelings of resentment and distaste. Sometimes they are based on internal defence mechanisms we develop to mitigate personal anger in an attempt to avoid facing the truth about ourselves or our immediate circumstances. If someone imposes stringent expectations related to a stressful issue on themselves or their close companions, irrational thought is likely to set in, and all parties involved will probably experience need-less emotional grief. Passionate perceptions of an event made by someone in distress can seem crazy from a third party perspective. This craziness is simply the sum of stress and irrational thought. These thoughts allow the distressed party to remain the victim while avoiding all situational responsibility. One must learn to break this momentary negative thought process in order to achieve continuous stability in their life and in their relationships.

BE BLESSED AND BE A BLESSING**ON THE WAY- FIGURES OF ADVENT-ZECHARIAH:**

The best way to prepare for our Lord's birth is to draw close to those who prepared for his first coming, to those figures who occupy the infancy narratives in the Gospels. Their reception of and response to the news of Christ's birth help us understand how we should respond and how we shouldn't. The first such figure is Zechariah, the husband of Elizabeth and the father of John the Baptist. Indeed, his is the first name mentioned in Saint Luke's narrative (Lk 1:525). Unfortunately, what he provides is mainly a negative example. We first encounter Zechariah when he is fulfilling his priestly duty in the Temple in Jerusalem. He has gone into the sanctuary to offer incense for the people when the angel Gabriel appears and announces the birth of a son to him and Elizabeth. Of course, this is great news, the answer to their prayers. The angel makes this explicit: "your prayer has been heard." But it's too good to be true and Zechariah refuses to believe. "How am I to know this?" he retorts. That phrase has the sense of "Oh, yeah? Prove it." In a bitter irony, Zechariah, whose name means "The Lord has remembered," has not remembered the Lord and his promises. "How am I to know this?" Of course, the angel the messenger of God standing right before him should be proof enough. As a devout Jew, Zechariah also knew the story of Abraham and Sarah (Gen 18), of how God gave them the child of the promise in their old age. That also should have provided context and a motive for belief. Still, the news is too incredible for him: he fails to believe. In response, the archangel removes his faculty of speech: "you will be speechless and unable to talk until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled at their proper time." The punishment is apt: if we do not have faith in God, then we really have nothing to say. Zechariah's story is a cautionary tale. He is a figure of doubt, of giving up on God and refusing to wait for the Lord. To a degree he resembles Abraham, who also tired of the Lord's seeming delay and, taking things into his own hands, created even greater troubles for himself. Nevertheless, Zechariah's negative example helps us insofar as it emphasizes the importance of waiting on the Lord. We live in a culture incapable of waiting. Our way of life is rushed, and our technology accustoms us to immediate results. Not so many years ago we had to wait for a letter to arrive, for food to be prepared, and so on. Now we expect such things instantaneously. It is the devil who promises immediate results. He never delivers, of course. But he knows our discomfort with waiting and our desire for control. From the first he made the false promise of immediate control: "When you eat of it... you will be like God..." God makes us wait. It seems cruel, but it is a great kindness. Faith grows by waiting. We know this in our own relationships: if we trust have faith in a person, then we're willing to wait. So also with God: our waiting for him reveals our trust in him. And the more we wait on God, the stronger our faith becomes.

CHRISTMAS APPEAL: We are urgently appealing for treats for Christmas food parcels which this year will be distributed to those families who are most in need in our area. Items such as chocolate selection boxes, boxes of biscuits, tinned ham, tinned salmon, packets of stuffing, cranberry sauce and Christmas puddings etc. would be very welcome. Items may be dropped off at the parish office each day between 8:00am and 1:00noon or here at the presbytery. Thank you for your support.

GIFT AID: I would like to thank all our parishioners who have signed up to Gift Aid. With your help and generosity we are able to continue our ministry. It is never too late to join. If you are a tax payer and currently make your donations either by Standing Order or weekly donation envelopes please complete a Gift Aid declaration which is available from the parish office. You can also backdate your Gift Aid by completing the relevant section on the form.

CYCLES OF FAITH: 1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT: You are at the eye doctor and it's time for the peripheral vision test. You know the one. It's where you put your head up to a contraption and have to click a switch every time you see a squiggly line. If you don't concentrate and maintain optimal focus, you will miss them and skew the outcome of the test. You can easily find yourself with a diagnosis that really isn't accurate! Concentration and focus are key to succeeding with this evaluation. They are also key to developing a healthy, vibrant spiritual life. If we do not bring our full consciousness to the task, concentrate with all our might, be watchful and vigilant, we are not going to see God's loving presence flashing before our eyes! That's why we need Advent. Let's face it. We can easily get distracted, focus on nonessential and superficial things and lose touch with what really matters. Our attentions wander. We daydream and even become a bit overwhelmed and tired. All of the stresses and demands of life consume us and we find ourselves constantly trying to play catch up rather than relishing the moment of the now. "Now" moments are so fleeting. They flash before us like those squiggly lines on a screen. Present moments go as quickly as they come but it is important to discover them and rest in them as often as we can. Though gone in a flash, these now moments of encounter with God teach powerful lessons and offer a grounding in truth that can be found nowhere else. It's the grace of Advent to become watchful and attentive because we are never sure when God will surprise us. God loves surprises and love thrives on them! God's now moments of surprises come as tender instants of intimate connection where I find profound peace, experience joy, and rest in love. These are Advent times reflective of the now moments when Christ first was born, when God surprises us during every time we care to watch and when the great surprise of Christ's second coming dawns upon us all. But, to discover the grandeur and experience the awe of these now times, we have to be ready. We have to want to be there. We have to believe. And, we have to have the desire to soak in as much as we can in the time we have before us.

SOCIAL OUTREACH CHRISTMAS GIFT CARD DONATIONS:

As we approach the Christmas season, several of the special projects that we have supported over time have needed to be reformatted given the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Among the activities on pause for this year are the December Christmas raffles, hampers and initiatives for homeless shelters including Christmas gifts for children. The "Adopt A Family" program will continue as will the "Gift Cards for Catholic Charities" drive. For safety reasons, homeless shelters and less fortunate people request ONLY gift cards so that residents can shop for their families. The amount given will depend upon the family member size. We have been told that £25 gift cards are the most requested. Starting in November, the Social Outreach Committee will collect gift cards to support BOTH the homeless shelter residents and other needy people around. The options for contributing to our Social Outreach Gift Card Project are: Donate £25 gift cards. Send a check so gift cards can be purchased by the Social Outreach Committee, on your behalf. Please place a card or check in an envelope marked Social Outreach Gift Card Project. Please bring envelope and hand it over to Father Saji or deliver to the parish office or Presbytery. Thank you for sponsoring a family, child, or senior citizen this Christmas season. Sponsorship entails providing the gifts of Christmas which include food and presents (ie: gifts and/or gift cards) for our brothers and sisters in need. The need is greater than ever and your help is deeply appreciated. Thank you for your generosity in bringing joy to families during this difficult Pandemic period. Our grateful thanks to all those who have already contributed generously towards our parish mission projects. God bless you all

MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS, HEAL AND STRENGTHEN YOUR FAMILIES!