



A Christmas Message from The Bishop of Southwark, the Rt. Revd. Christopher Chessun.

On that first Christmas, over two thousand years ago the air was full of the voices of a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!' How we need to hear those words as we look around all the conflicts and so much innocent suffering in so many nations, not least the land of Jesus's birth.

The birth of Christ assures us that goodness is the fundamental truth, that love is stronger than hate, life goes beyond death, hope is deeper than fear. Indeed through the eyes of Faith we know that the light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overcome it.

When we hear the words of the angels and speak the truth we have receive, we help bring them into being in our daily world. For there is much good in this world. There is so much to be thankful for and speaking of these things should always be the first words on our lips.

We must never cease striving for justice having the courage to speak out against injustice whenever and wherever we see it. We should be compassionate in all our dealings, mindful of the need to reach out to those experiencing hardship and adversity. Our presence and engagement is and will be a blessing to others.

The Angels announce their message of joy, and this makes the world more joyful. And what do the Shepherds do? They go with haste and make known what they have been told. Others are then told what they heard.

Our Christmas greetings have this depth about them too: that they are true. When we see Christ in our neighbour, when we speak well of each other and of what we have in common, when we point with our words to the best in one another, when we choose the language of Faith, Hope and Love: then we are speaking the truth. And though we know this at all seasons, we know it in all its fullness and richness what the Angels sing to the Glory of God in Heaven and on Earth, Peace and Goodwill. Let this become our reality and let our words and actions this Christmas - and indeed through the coming year - be those of Peace and Goodwill.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tomorrow, **25th December, Christmas Day**, we meet at **St Mark at 8am** for BCP Mass; then we meet at **10am at Holy Innocents** for the Parish Mass; and from **12.30pm, in St. Mark's Hall, we host Christmas Dinner** for those in our community who do not wish to spend Christmas on their own.

Thursday, 28th December, 10am at Holy Innocents, we commemorate the Festival of the Holy Innocents.

Sunday, 31st December, 11pm, Watch Night Mass at Holy Innocents. The Eucharist will be followed by drinks and nibbles in the Church – as we say Farewell to Mother Roxanne as she prepares to leave the United Benefice to take up the new Diocesan role of Dean of Cultural Diversity and Canon Librarian at Southwark Cathedral, in the New Year.

Welcome to the United Benefice of South Norwood, Holy Innocents and St. Mark

Sharing God's grace and love in our community



24th December 2023

Vicar: The Revd. Canon Roxanne F. Eversley
Priest (PTO): Mtr. Susan Wheeler-Kiley TSSF
Reader (PTO): Mrs. Cicelyn Hinds

CHRISTMAS EVE

11pm Joint Midnight Mass

*Isaiah 62.6-12 * Psalm 97 * Titus 3.4-7 * Luke 2.[1-7] 8-20*

Access online worship via

www.youtube.com/c/StMarksSouthNorwood

CHURCH NOTICES

Pastoral Care: Mother Roxanne is usually available on Tel. 020 8916 1830 or 07723 038215 or at mtrroxanne@gmail.com but N/A on Mondays. Mother Susan is contactable on 07890 780572; and she's not available on Fridays.

We pray: for Archbishops Justin and Stephen; for the Bishops in this diocese, Christopher, Rosemarie and Martin; for the Bishops, priests, deacons and people in our link Dioceses of Zimbabwe and of The Episcopal Church in the Philippines.

For all who cannot share the joy of Christmas and for all those facing their first Christmas alone.

For the sick – Richard, Jennifer & Reuben, Rose, Caroline, Susan, Sigi, Marie-Gabrielle, Colin (Castle), Carmen, Marina, Linda, Fred, Peter, Kay, Simon, Alec, Naomi, Michael, Rudolph, Malik, Dionne, Roy, Mick, Norman and Sacha.

The bereaved – the Appiah, Gaisey, Robinson, Powell, Dempster and Brown families.

The recently departed – George Kojo Appiah; Ruth Robinson; Lee Powell, Ron Dempster and Donna Brown (whose Funeral takes place at St Mark's Church on Friday, 29th December at 11.30am). **Years Mind.**

A huge Thank You to all those who have provided sandwiches (or assisted in the provision thereof) to Night Watch during November and December 2023, our last provision being next Friday – very grateful to Norma, Ann, Sylvina and Evro, Margarets (Zebedee and Hall), Curlette, Marlene, Maureen, Marcia Knight, Patricia and Theresa; and to Marina.

Who knows, perhaps next year, the Croydon Churches Floating Shelter may return to hosting the homeless in Church Halls during the Winter months. Should this happen, one or two people will be required to take the lead and co-ordinate the Shelter usually held at Holy Innocents Church Hall.

BEST WISHES FOR A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU AND YOURS!