

## ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.**

## THE COLLECT

O God, who see how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity, enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

## FIRST READING

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

61:1-2.10-11

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me for the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken;

to proclaim liberty to captives, freedom to those in prison; to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord.

'I exult for joy in the Lord, my soul rejoices in my God, for he has clothed me in garments of salvation, he has wrapped me in a cloak of integrity, like a bridegroom wearing his wreath, like a bride adorned in her jewels.

'For as the earth makes fresh things grow, as a garden makes seeds spring up, so will the Lord make both integrity and praise spring up in the sight of all nations.'

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM

Lk 1:46-50. 53-54. R. Is 61:10

**R) My soul rejoices in my God.**

My soul glorifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour. He looks on his servant in her nothingness; henceforth all ages will call me blessed. **(R)**

The Almighty works marvels for me. Holy is his name!

His mercy is from age to age, on those who fear him. **(R)**

He has filled the starving with good things, sends the rich away empty. He protects Israel, his servant, remembering his mercy. **(R)**

## SECOND READING

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians

5:16-24

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus.

Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything—hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil.

Phil 4:4-5

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and he will not fail you.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!**

Is 61:1 (Lk 4:18)

**The spirit of the Lord has been given to me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor. Alleluia!**

## GOSPEL

John 1:6-8. 19-28

The Lord be with you.

**And with your spirit.**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

A man came, sent by God.

His name was John.

He came as a witness,

as a witness to speak for the light,

so that everyone might believe through him.

He was not the light,

only a witness to speak for the light.

This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' he not only declared, but he declared quite openly, 'I am not the Christ.' 'Well then,' they asked 'are you Elijah?' 'I am not' he said. 'Are you the Prophet?' He answered, 'No.' So they said to him, 'Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?' So he said, 'I am, as Isaiah prophesied:

a voice that cries in the wilderness:  
Make a straight way for the Lord'

Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, 'Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the Prophet?' John replied, 'I baptise with water; but there stands among you – unknown to you – the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal- strap.' This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May the sacrifice of our worship, Lord, we pray, be offered to you unceasingly, to complete what was begun in sacred mystery and powerfully accomplish for us your saving work. Through Christ our Lord.

## COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Cf. Is 35:4

**Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear.**

**Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.**

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We implore your mercy, Lord, that this divine sustenance may cleanse us of our faults and prepare us for the coming feasts. Through Christ our Lord

## Our Faith on Sunday

## GOSPEL REFLECTION



This Sunday we continue the theme of John the Baptist. The people can see that he is a special person. Perhaps he is the long-awaited Messiah, the Christ, or at the very least, a prophet. This time

the priests and the Levites were sent to investigate. Once again, John denies that is the Christ, or Elijah the prophet. So, if he isn't either of these, who exactly is he? He is not the light, only a witness to speak for the light. He is simply a messenger, he says, who is coming to prepare the way

of the real Messiah. One always tends to suspect the motives of the priests and the Levites. Were they really coming to understand who John was, or were they afraid that their own positions were being

threatened by this wild man who had become so popular and who was taking the attention away from them. And did they believe John's answer? People who tell the truth are not always regarded in a positive light and in fact, John was soon to pay the price for his honesty and openness.

EVANGELII GAUDIUM  
(JOY OF THE GOSPEL)POPULAR VS.  
POPULIST

160. Closed populist groups distort the word "people", since they are not talking about a true people. The concept of "people" is in fact open-ended. A living and dynamic people, a people with a future, is one constantly open to a new synthesis through its ability to welcome differences. In this way, it does not deny its proper identity, but is open to being mobilized, challenged, broadened and enriched by others, and thus to further growth and development.

The Fire of Love\*  
HOW THE LOVERS OF GOD AND  
THE LOVERS OF THE WORLD DIFFER

We cannot know the love of God unless we are seriously intent on longing continually for this love. Others are intent upon worldly pleasures which are passing and so do not know the reality of what is divine.

Loving the Trinity is loving God for Godself, and all else in relation to God.

The sinner who purports to love God has no scruples about sin; but real lovers of God are free people, not slaves to what is sinful.

Those who love God never return evil for evil but accept whatever life brings with equanimity, rejoicing only in Christ. If they do this, they are gradually transformed into the divine likeness.

The love of God sets our hearts on fire so that they glow and burn and purge away all the foulness of sin. But while we are alive there is the possibility of sinning, so we must cheerfully put up with hardship and try to keep an appetite for spiritual food.

Thus, with Christ's consent, let us find consolation in songs of love which alone bring true inward joy.

\*The Fire of Love by Richard Rolle Published by Aeterna Press



# PARISH COMMUNITIES OF



## ST GEORGE

Eastbourne Road  
Polegate



Parish Priest: Fr. Rory Kelly  
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(Answerphone service available)  
Email: [ssgeorge.wilfrid@btinternet.com](mailto:ssgeorge.wilfrid@btinternet.com)  
Website: [www.saintsgeorgeandwilfrid.co.uk](http://www.saintsgeorgeandwilfrid.co.uk)

The Arundel & Brighton Diocesan Trust is a Registered Charity No. 252878

## ST WILFRID

South Road  
Hailsham



### WEEKLY SERVICES

#### Third 'Gaudete' Sunday of Advent, 'O Sapientia'

Sat 16th	10am	St Wilfrid's—	Church Open for Prayers & Confessions
Sun 17th	9am	St George's —	Parish Communities' Intention
	10.30am	St Wilfrid's —	James & Margaret Westcar RIP
Mon 18th	2.30pm	St George's —	Rosary Group —All welcome
Tues 19th	10am	St George's—	Repose of the Soul of Anne Kennedy
Wed 20th	10am	St Wilfrid's—	Joan Covey's Intention
Thur 21st	10am	St George's —	Margaret Nevill's Intention
Fri 22nd	10am	St Wilfrid's —	Michael Copper RIP
	11.30am	St Wilfrid's—	Requiem Mass for Mary O'Donoghue

#### Fourth Sunday of Advent, Christmas Eve (Crib Collection - The Catholic Children's Society A&B Crisis Fund)

Sat 23rd	10am	St Wilfrid's—	Church Open for Prayers & Confessions
Sun 24th	9am	St George's —	Parish Communities' Intention
	10.30am	St Wilfrid's —	Fr Rory's Intention
	5.30pm	St Wilfrid's -	Nativity Mime

Confession on request before and after Mass or at other times by arrangement with Father Rory.

Unable to attend mass? The 10.30am St Wilfrid's mass is livestreamed when possible and can be accessed via the Parish Website or via the following: <https://saintsgeorgeandwilfrid.co.uk/online-masses-and-recordings/>

Facebook: [https://m.facebook.com/gary.westcar#\\_=\\_](https://m.facebook.com/gary.westcar#_=_)

**Newsletter items:** Please send to Jackie at [ssgeorge.wilfrid@btinternet.com](mailto:ssgeorge.wilfrid@btinternet.com), tel.841504  
or by hand marked NEWSLETTER, to Fr. Rory's House by 9am Wednesday.

Local Catholic Education Contacts: St Thomas a Becket Nursery School: Tel 01323 725977

St Thomas a Becket Primary School: Tel 01323 737221 St Richard's Catholic College, Bexhill: Tel 01424 731070

### USEFUL PARISH INFORMATION

St Wilfrid's Planned Giving Contact (01323) 832577

St George's Planned Giving Contact (01323) 487212

St George's & St. Wilfrid's

Finance Committee Treasurer Monika Beaver

Chairperson of the Finance Committee Gerry Palmer

**ALL CORRESPONDENCE VIA THE PRIEST'S HOUSE PLEASE**

Polegate Hall Hire (01323) 504753

Hailsham Hall Hire: (01323) 841504/Email at above address

Prayer Line Jean Barham-Wyatt(01323) 842824

**IMPORTANT GIFT AID:** If any parishioner wishes to join the scheme please contact - Gerry on 01323 832577, Email: [gpalmer2703@gmail.com](mailto:gpalmer2703@gmail.com).  
By signing up, the parish can benefit by claiming back from HMRC a further 25% on all your donations at no additional cost to you.

#### Parish Safeguarding Reps:

St George's: Kelly - 07967562110

St Wilfrid's: Maria - 07873759962

**CROSSLINK CHURCHES TOGETHER, HAILSHAM:** Volunteer needed contact Father Rory

**POLEGATE CHURCHES TOGETHER Contact:** Anne Bowe Tel: 07808 175455

#### PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS those who are unwell

Lily May, Joshua Hardy, Peter & Teresa Zurenkas, Anne Holt, Margaret, Rosie Tuson, Lilian Summers, Letty Booth, Tom Woodrow-Spencer, Chris Neyenhuizen, Laurey & Richard Stimpson, Nicole McCutchan, Len Brotherhood, Nellie Oakshott, Jean Molloy, Alan Smith, Julie Martin, Peter Andrews, Holly Leone, Deborah Osbourne Walker, Gill Standen and Richard Streeter.

**PLEASE ALSO REMEMBER THOSE NAMED IN THE BOOKS IN OUR CHURCHES**

**A WARM WELCOME:** to all who join us for Mass, especially to any visitors.

**New to the Parish/would like to get back in touch but not sure how?** Please complete the welcome form in the porch and/or make yourself known to Fr. Rory. It would be great to get to know you and offer any help.

Fr Rory Writes:

**“The Third Candle - The Candle of Joy for Gaudete Sunday”**

**Reader 1: Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord,**

**hope must go on.**

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**Reader 1:** Last Sunday we lit the Candle of Peace. We light it and the Candle of Hope again as we remember that Jesus, born in Bethlehem, will come again to fulfil all of God’s promises and bring us everlasting peace and joy.

The candles of Hope and Peace are lit and we had a meeting of our parish council. Again it is early days but very promising. In the background a lot of work is being done and as part of the discussion at the council, its implications are very challenging. The development of our ministries is like when we receive a small sapling, it needs proper care and attention. Because the body of the church that assembles is made up of many parts, so that these parts work in harmony, is a long term project. Discussion arose concerning the prayers of the faithful, which is a good work in progress. The experience of the lack of guidance and support that was given, focuses Fr Rory’s attention and he will need to respond as with everyone else. This is why a body working together must be the outcome.

Today we light the Third Candle of Advent, the Candle of Joy. When the angel Gabriel told Mary that a special child would be born to her, she was filled with joy. Just as the birth of Jesus gave great joy to his mother, so his presence in the world gives joy to those who had none before. **From hope, and peace, grows joy.**

Our contributions to the joy that surrounds us, for the likes of me, calls for a change of heart. Being over anxious in most circumstances does not help. So it would be good if I gave a better lead and appreciate our parish communities. It is clear that there is good will, and with this opportunities will arise and we will respond to the challenges of this New Year. A New Year of grace 2024 which will speedily pass by but with Spring, Easter, Pentecost and Summer, the life of the church will go on. With the help of God true gratitude will be our response at the end of the year.

*Fr Rory*

7. People really need help but may attack you if you help them. HELP PEOPLE ANYWAY .

**A huge thank you** to Helen and Sally from the South Downs Singers for spending hours at St George's Wednesday morning creating beautiful Christmas displays of seasonal greenery for the window ledges in readiness for the concert. The church looks absolutely stunning and we are so grateful to them for giving of their time and talent to prepare our church for the Christmas celebrations.

**Christmas Collection for the Support of Clergy;** just a reminder that Gift Aid is applicable on Christmas Offerings and this extra amount claimed will go directly to Father Rory. If you are not part of a planned giving scheme but are a UK taxpayer then please use the one off gift aid envelopes located in the porch in order for us to claim an extra 25% on your donation. You can also contribute via the digital plate at St Wilfrid's.

**Parish Charity Breakfast:** Next Breakfast 28th Jan after St G's 9am mass - fundraising for Children's Respite Trust. All Welcome invite friends and family, they are welcome just to attend breakfast or join for mass also.

**Dates for your Diary:**

Sun 17th Dec - Bambinelli Sunday, St W's & St G's Church.  
Sat 23rd Dec, 10am - Rehearsal Nativity Mime, St W's Church  
Sun 24th Dec, 5.30pm - Nativity Mime, St W's Church.  
Thur 28th Dec, 2-4pm - Parish Over 50's Club, St W's Hall.  
Fri 29th Dec, 2-4pm - Parish Christmas Party, St W's Hall.  
Tue 16th Jan, 6pm, - 1st Communion Lesson, St W's Hall.  
Thur 25th Jan, 2-4pm - Parish Over 50's Club, St W's Hall.  
Fri 26th Jan, 11-12pm - Parish Bereavement Gp, St W's Hall.  
Sun 28th Jan, 10am - Parish Charity Breakfast, St G's Hall.  
Tue 20th Feb, 6pm - 1st Communion Lesson, St W's Hall.

**St Wilfrid's Nativity Mime:** Sunday 24th December, 5.30pm in St Wilfrid's Church. All welcome.

**Rehearsal for the Nativity Mime** will be on Saturday 23rd December at 10am in St Wilfrid's Church.

**Parish Christmas Party:** 29th December, 2-4pm. Tickets - Adults £5, Children Free (still require a ticket).

**Parish Over 50's Club:** Thurs 28th Dec, 2-4pm. Party Time; crackers, homemade Christmas cake, plus all the usual bingo and quizzes. If you are able to put a little extra than the £5, that will help towards expenses. Christmas Jumpers can be worn!

**Your church needs cleaning;** at St Wilfrid's we are looking for volunteers to be part of a rota to clean the church and hall. Ideally this would be for a couple of hours every 4-6 weeks. There will be an opportunity to sign up for this in the New Year, but in the meantime please speak to Maria Hills if you are able to put yourself forward to be part of this important team.

**Celebrate The Rorate Candlelit Mass** at Our Lady of Ransom in Eastbourne, Friday's in Advent at 6.30am followed by breakfast.

**Parish Bereavement Gp:** There will be no bereavement group in December, we will recommence in January.

**Sunday 10th December - Mass Attendance:**  
St Wilfrid's TBC St George's TBC