

# Parishes of St John XXIII & St Joseph, Birtley



Incorporating: **Our Blessed Lady Immaculate**, Washington;  
**Our Lady Queen of Peace**, Penshaw; **St Bede**, Usworth;  
**St John Boste**, Oxclose; **St Joseph**, Birtley  
 Fr Martin Morris, Parish Priest, Tel: 0191 4163583  
 Administrator: Audrey Huntley tel: 0191 4163583  
 (Tuesday & Wednesday 8am—1pm, Thursday 11am—4pm & Friday 12– 5pm)  
 Email: [StJohn23rd@diocesohn.org.uk](mailto:StJohn23rd@diocesohn.org.uk)  
 Parish Website: <https://www.washingtoncatholic.org.uk>



## In the Partnership of Benedict

Birtley, Chester-le-Street, Penshaw, Sacriston, Washington

### SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT - 6TH - 7TH DECEMBER 2025 Year A

Saturday 6th December	St Joseph	5pm	<b>Sarah &amp; Cornelius Bartley &amp; Terence McGee</b>
<b>Vigil</b>	St Bede	5pm	<b>People of the Parish</b>
Sunday 7th December	St John Boste	9:30am	<b>Ian McIntyre</b>
<b>Second Sunday of Advent</b>	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	<b>Margaret Logan RIP</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am*	<b>Norah &amp; Owen Hagen</b>

#### First reading: A shoot from the stock of Jesse. Isaiah 11:1-10

On that day: There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples of him shall the nations enquire, and his resting-place shall be glorious.

**Response to the Psalm: In his days shall justice flourish, and great peace for ever.**

#### Second Reading: The Generosity of Christ. Romans 15:4-9

Brothers and sisters: Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, 'Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name.'

**Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia. Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight; all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia.**

#### The Gospel: John the Baptist's Call to Repentance. Matthew 3:1-12

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight."' Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father", for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 'I baptise you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

Fr Martin Morris	0191 416 3583	Deacon Frank O'Neill	0779 115 5845
Fr Martin Wheaton	0770 996 1040	Deacon Tony Joy	0779 989 3419
Fr Luke Wilkinson	0191 649 8257		

## Mass Times & Intentions - Week Beginning Monday 8th December 2025 (Streamed Mass \*)

Day	Church	Time	
Monday 8th December <b>The Immaculate Conception of the BVM</b>	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	9.30am	<b>People of the Parish</b>
	St Bede	10am	<b>Matthew Downey RIP First Anniversary</b>
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm*	<b>The Forgotten Souls in Purgatory</b>
Tuesday 9th December <b>St Juan Diego Cuahtlatotzin</b>	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	<b>Patrick Larkin RIP</b>
	St Joseph	7pm	<b>Teresa Burn RIP</b>
Wednesday 10th December <b>Our Lady of Loreto</b>	St Bede	10am	<b>Thomas Robinson RIP</b>
	St John Boste	7pm	<b>Vera and John Frazer RIP</b>
Thursday 11th December <b>St Damasus I</b>	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	<b>In thanksgiving - Friends of Sunderland Seamen's Mission</b>
	St Joseph	12 Noon	<b>Tom and Isabel 60th Wedding Anniversary</b>
Friday 12th December <b>Our Lady of Guadalupe</b>	St John Boste	10am*	<b>Sheila and William Pattison RIP</b>
	St Joseph	10am	<b>Michael L Robinson RIP</b>
Saturday 13th December <b>St Lucy</b>  <b>Vigil</b>	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	<b>John and Kathleen Pearson and Deceased Relatives</b>
	St Joseph	5pm	<b>The Hogan Families</b>
	St Bede	5pm	<b>Anne McDonagh RIP Sixth Anniversary</b>
Sunday 14th December <b>Third Sunday of Advent</b>	St John Boste	9:30am	<b>People of the Parish</b>
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	<b>In Loving Memory Andrew Bell RIP</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	<b>Joseph and Ellen Jordon and their Daughter Mary</b>

### Reflection

What lesson can we take from this familiar Gospel this weekend? There are many to choose from; repentance, the simple life of a hermit, baptism, the behaviour of the Pharisees and Sadducees, the coming of the Messiah and His judgement of the people. But, the humility of John the Baptist is what struck me.

John lived a very humble lifestyle in the wilderness and yet his preaching of repentance and his baptism with water was attracting many followers, 'Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going to him,' He could have established a movement of his own, but he was always very clear that he was not the centre of attention but he was simply the one Isaiah spoke of as, 'The voice of the one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord: make his paths straight."'.

When Jesus came to John to be baptised, John said it should be the other way round – Jesus should be baptising John. But Jesus insisted and so left us with an example so we would baptise the nations. We carry on this example of Jesus today every weekend when we welcome new members of our church through baptism.

The greatest illustration of John's humility is in John 3:30 where, when asked about Jesus by his own followers, he said, 'He must grow greater, I must grow less'. He truly prepared the people of Judea for the coming of Jesus and that is all he was interested in. Many of John's followers became disciples of Jesus. All of John's passion, his abilities as a preacher, his followers were not used for his own benefit, they were totally focussed selflessly on Jesus.

As we wait and prepare to celebrate the birth of our Saviour we can strive to embrace some of the humility demonstrated by John the Baptist. How can we become less, so that Jesus grows greater within us and other people see Jesus in our humility?

**Deacon Tony Joy**

**Masses are generally live-streamed daily at 10am every day, except Monday, streamed at 7pm, and alternate Sundays when Mass is live-streamed at either 10am or 11am. An \* on the Mass table indicates streamed Masses.**

Please [click here](#) to view from one of our Churches

### What's On in the Parish

#### Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

Our Lady Queen of Peace each Friday 2pm - 3pm.

St Joseph's each Thursday evening 6.30pm - 7.30pm

I do encourage as many of you as possible to spend some time in quiet prayer with Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration. Fr Martin Morris.

**Sacrament of Reconciliation** - The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available in all of our Churches:

Our Lady Queen of Peace - Thursday morning after Mass.

St Joseph - Thursday after Mass.

St John Boste - Friday morning after Mass.

Our Blessed Lady Immaculate - Saturday morning, after Mass.

St Bede's - Saturday after Vigil Mass.

**OLOF (Our Lady's Over 50's club)** meet in the Lindisfarne Room at St Bede's Church on Tuesdays at 1pm. All welcome.

**St John Boste - Red Mission Boxes** - Please return monies collected by 14 December.

**Our Blessed Lady Immaculate - Missio Red Box Donations** - Your Red Boxes can be taken to Mass at Our Lady's on Sundays to be emptied until 14 December. Alternatively you can collect a Missio brown envelope from the rear of the church to take home to hold your Red Box contents. You can return the envelope with your donation to church on Sundays until 14 December. A Free Missio 2026 Calendar is available now for all donors. Many thanks for your continued generosity.

**Safeguarding** - Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and is a priority in every parish and diocesan organisation. The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle is fully committed in the church and operates a zero-tolerance approach. The safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults is at the heart of the Church's mission. We adopt and implement fully the policies and procedures of the Catholic Church of England and Wales, which is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and ministry of the Church. To discuss any safeguarding concerns please contact a safeguarding officer in any of our churches - their details are on the noticeboard in the porch, or follow the contact details on our Parish Website under '[Safeguarding](#)'. Details of our Diocesan policy can be found by [clicking here](#).

#### A Weekly Reflection and Daily Readings for Advent 2025.

Advent is a time of preparation and to reflect, and hold onto, the messages of hope, peace, joy and love which God promised to us in the birth of Christ Jesus. Members of our Diocesan Writing Team offer this Advent resource to help guide a daily space for reading of the Scripture, reflection and prayer. In it you will find a reflection based on the theme of each week of Advent and an easy-to-follow reference to the readings for each day. The reflections will be available to view and download on the homepage of the Diocesan website from Friday 28 November [www.diocesehn.org.uk](http://www.diocesehn.org.uk). In amongst the busyness of the days and weeks ahead, set aside a little time of quiet and calm daily, or as often as you can, to prepare for the coming of the Lord by reading, praying with and reflecting on the daily readings of Advent.

**Advent Spiritual devotions.** On the four Sundays of Advent there

will be the opportunity of sharing in a special time of prayer in preparation for the Nativity of Our Lord.

Sunday 7 December 4pm, St. John Boste - Advent Evening Prayer and Benediction.

Sunday 21 December 4pm, Our Blessed Lady Immaculate - Advent Eucharistic Adoration and Rosary.

**Advent Penitential Services.** Tuesday 9 December 6 - 7pm St Joseph's Birtley. Thursday 11 December 6 - 7pm St. Bede's.

**Advent Candlelit Vigil.** You are warmly invited to share in a quiet time of prayer and reflection in preparation for Christmas. The candlelit vigil will take place on Friday 12 December from 6pm-9pm in Our Blessed Lady Immaculate Church. There will be tea/coffee and mince pies in the Emmaus Room afterwards, so please come for all or part of this quiet time in the run up to Christmas.

**The annual Blue Christmas Service** will take place on Saturday 13 December at 11.15am also in Our Blessed Lady Immaculate Church. In this service we remember our loved ones who have passed away and whom we miss especially at this time of year. Christmas can be a difficult time for many people for all sorts of reasons. A Blue Christmas Liturgy looks to acknowledge this while offering hope and support for the season ahead.

**This Monday 8 December is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception**, whilst it is not a Holyday of Obligation it is the Feast Day of Our Blessed Lady Immaculate. We will have an extra Mass that day at 9.30am in Our Lady's, which will be offered for the people of the Parish. All welcome.

**Mini Vinnies Food Bank.** The Mini Vinnies of Our Lady Queen of Peace Primary School will be collecting food items at Our Lady Queen of Peace Church on Sunday 14 December at the 10am Mass. All donations are for their local Food Bank.

**Advent Alms.** We fundraise for [St Cuthbert's Care](#), our social care charity. This year's collection will help fund a new service supporting women experiencing homelessness, leaving prison or at risk of re-offending. Many of these women have faced trauma, abuse or addiction and some have had few safe spaces in their lives. [Donate here](#).

**Last weekend Bishop Stephen wrote a Pastoral Letter to the Diocese.** It was a message of Advent Hope, amidst the challenges we face as a Diocese. If you missed the letter it can be viewed on the [Diocesan website](#), or you can collect a paper copy from the back of Church. Some of the challenges Bishop Stephen referred to, the increasing age profile of our Priests, Vocations promotion - praying together as a community, the present offer of Sunday Masses and the condition of some of our churches and buildings. Bishop Stephen asked us always to remember the Mission of the Church is to Evangelise - to form one another as Missionary disciples. "Decisions must be shaped by local prayer, reflection and dialogue." Throughout 2026 there will be the opportunity in our parishes to come together in prayerful reflective gatherings to share the issues raised in the letter, and see how we as Parishes will respond to the changing situation. All parishioners are invited to these sessions, which will be held in each of our Churches. As Bishop Stephen concluded his letter, "Christ is our hope, and the challenge is to be ready to meet him in the years ahead. Please pray for our clergy, please pray for vocations, and please be generous as we discern our readiness to meet the Lord in the years ahead."

**The December Draw for the SVP 200 Club** has now been made and congratulations to Pauline Lavery of St Joseph's, Birtley who has won a prize.

**Churches Together Christmas Carol Service.** Everyone is warmly welcomed to the annual Ecumenical Christmas Carol Service on Wednesday 10 December 7pm at Our Lady Queen of Peace Church, followed by refreshments.

**New Song.** Thank you everyone for a wonderful 2025 full of praise, worship, fellowship and prayer. We are taking a break for Christmas so we look forward to seeing you in the New Year! Next session: 11 Jan 2026 4pm in the Emmaus Room at Our Blessed Lady Immaculate Church with Fr Shaun O'Neill. We can't wait! Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**St Robert of Newminster Christmas Coffee Morning.** It's that time of year again when we invite you lovely parishioners to join us for our Christmas coffee morning here in St Robert's. Monday 15 December, 9.30am - 11am. Join us for Christmas cheer, fun, bingo and songs! If you would like to attend, please contact Anne Marie at St Robert's on 01917161700, email: [amckenna@str.bwcet.com](mailto:amckenna@str.bwcet.com) or complete this online [form](#). Please could we have final numbers no later than Thursday 11 December.

**Spreading the Joys of Christmas from My House to Yours, Sunday 14 December.** The Christmas tree is so symbolic. The tree itself symbolising God's creation, the wood represents the manger and the cross. The evergreen branches, God's everlasting love. The lights, the coming of Christ, the Light of the World. The baubles, the fruits of God's love for us all, Peace, Joy, Love to name just three!

This year, at Our Lady Queen of Peace on Sunday 14 December, we would love you to bring in a bauble from your own tree, representing the fruits of God's Love, Peace and Joy. You can then place your bauble on our Church tree, spreading peace, love and joy between our homes. The love, given through the baubles, become prayers. After Christmas simply take your own bauble home together with all the blessings received over the Christmas period. Remember to put a little label on your bauble so it can be identified. You might even decide to do this in place of sending cards to others in Church this year.

**Festive Coffee morning at Our Lady Queen of Peace Church** after 10am Mass Sunday 14 December. All most welcome. Any donations of mince pies, Christmas bakes will also be welcome. Just drop them off in the kitchen before Mass. Please feel free to wear a Christmas jumper or something festive!

**Appeal for Lourdes Medical team, 2026.** The diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes mark's its centenary in 2026. The pilgrimage relies on the generosity of nurses, student nurses, healthcare assistants, and other volunteers. If anyone would like further information in helping with the pilgrimage, please contact the lead nurse Michelle Hall via e-mail at [Lourdes@diocesehn.org.uk](mailto:Lourdes@diocesehn.org.uk).

**Pilgrimage to Medjugorje, 7 - 14 June 2026.** Flying from Newcastle to Dubrovnik. Further info at '[Medjugorje North East](#)'. Led by Fr Martin Morris.

### MASS TIMES AND VENUES OVER CHRISTMAS

Please note the changes from the usual Mass times

#### WEDNESDAY 24 DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS EVE

##### Christmas Vigil:

5pm St Bede, Washington

6pm Our Blessed Lady Immaculate, Washington\*

7pm St Joseph, Birtley (Carols from 6.30pm)

7.30pm Our Lady Queen of Peace, Penshaw (Carols from 7pm)

8pm St John Boste, Washington

##### Mass through Midnight:

11.30pm Our Blessed Lady Immaculate, Washington\*

#### THURSDAY 25 DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS DAY

10am Our Blessed Lady Immaculate, Washington

10am Our Lady Queen of Peace\*, Penshaw

10am St Joseph Birtley

#### FRIDAY 26 DECEMBER – BOXING DAY

10am St John Boste\*, Washington

10am St Joseph's, Birtley

\* Indicates a streamed Mass.

## Reflections

**Diocesan Weekly reflections** can be found by [clicking here](#).

**Examen** - Please follow the links to go to [Pray as You Go](#)

## Catholic Social Teaching

For the Newsletter, [click here](#).

**Prayers** - If you would like to request prayers from the parish community for someone who is sick, or recently deceased, please click on the links below and complete the necessary forms. This will enable their names to be included in private prayer and during various Masses.

[For Prayers for the Sick](#)  
[For Prayers for the Deceased](#)

or ring 0191 4163583

To view the sick and recently deceased list [please click here](#). To amend the information on the list [click here](#).

**Finance** - Standing Order forms and Gift Aid forms are available by clicking on the following links:

[For St John XXIII](#) [For St Joseph's](#)  
or ring 0191 4163583.

**Parish Newsletter** If you have any comments you wish to make about the Parish Newsletter, [please click here](#).

For the latest information, please go to any of the following Websites:

[Parish of St John XXIII](#)  
[Parish of St Joseph's](#)  
[Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle](#)

## All the Links you will ever need!

Please [click here](#) or Scan the QR Code with your mobile phone to go to a site containing All the Links You'll Ever Need.



To post a notice on this Newsletter, please click [stjohn23bulletin@gmail.com](mailto:stjohn23bulletin@gmail.com)