

**ARCH Group's aim: "To show our love for God and You"**

**Weekly Notices**  
**29<sup>th</sup> December 2024**  
**First Sunday of Christmas**

**Today's Collect**

God in Trinity, eternal unity of perfect love: gather the nations to be one family, and draw us into your holy life through the birth of Emmanuel, our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Today's Post Communion Prayer**

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home: help your Church to live as one family, united in love and obedience, and bring us all at last to our home in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Next Week's Services**  
**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2025: Epiphany**

8.30 am	Rous Lench Village Hall	Holy Communion
9.30 am	Harvington	Holy Communion+
11.00 am	Church Lench	Holy Communion+
6.30 pm	Harvington	Holy Communion*

## **For Prayer**

Heavenly Father, as we continue the festive season and New Year looms before us, we remember those who find this time difficult. We pray for those feeling the ache of bittersweet memories, as we think about the story of Jesus as a boy staying behind in the Temple; how it must have pierced Mary's heart to recall this in later years, to realise that this was the turning point of her boy growing up to fulfill his destiny.

**Be with us, O Lord, in the passing of the years.**

We pray for all those who have suffered bereavement this year, for whom the pain is still raw; and we pray for all of us who remember loved ones gone from us in past years, as we mark yet another year from their passing. Help us to be grateful for the good times we shared, and to rejoice in the knowledge that we will meet again.

**Be with us, O Lord, in the passing of the years.**

Father, we pray for all who enter 2025 with health issues, physical or mental. New Year is a time when worries become concentrated and overwhelming in the darkness of midwinter. May the light of Christ and the warmth of God's love surround them at the threshold of the new year.

**Be with us, O Lord, in the passing of the years.**

Lord, we pray for your Church in challenging times. May leaders discern the way forward, the best way to present and live our faith in the year to come; and may we all discern how we might do our best, however humble, to help and support the Church's efforts. We pray that this will stem from our own spiritual seeking, as we continue to learn and grow in knowledge of you in 2025. We pray for the community that surrounds us, for people of all faiths and none; that we might live in peace, Lord, loving our neighbours and mindful of one another's needs.

**Be with us, O Lord, in the passing of the years.**

## **For Prayer (continued)**

Heavenly Father, we pray for a world which seems to face greater uncertainties than ever before. We hold in our hearts the victims of conflicts and climate change; those who have lost loved ones in fighting or floods, wildfires or droughts. We pray for the dispossessed, who have lost homes and livelihoods to missiles or storms. We pray for all who travel in search of refuge and a new beginning, as the Holy Family did to keep Jesus safe.

**Be with us, O Lord, in the passing of the years.**

Last but not least, Father, we pray for visitations of happy memories at this time. May the faces of those who uplift and inspire us make us smile and give us hope for the future. May the lengthening of days increase our energy so that we enter the new year with plans and projects. May the joy of this season of our Lord's birth stir in us a desire for spiritual renewal and rebirth, and growing strength to face the future in faith and hopefulness.

**Be with us, O Lord, in the passing of the years. Amen**

## **This Week's First Reading: *1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26***

<sup>18</sup>Samuel was ministering before the LORD, a boy wearing a linen ephod. <sup>19</sup>His mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year, when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. <sup>20</sup>Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, 'May the LORD repay you with children by this woman for the gift that she made to the LORD'; and then they would return to their home.

<sup>26</sup>Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favour with the LORD and with the people.

## **This Week's Psalm: *Psalm 148:7-14***

- 1 Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps;
- 2 Fire and hail, snow and mist, tempestuous wind, fulfilling his word;
- 3 Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars;
- 4 Wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things and birds on the wing;
- 5 Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the world;
- 6 Young men and women, old and young together; let them praise the name of the Lord.
- 7 For his name only is exalted, his splendour above earth and heaven.
- 8 He has raised up the horn of his people and praise for all his faithful servants, the children of Israel, a people who are near him. Alleluia.

## **This Week's Second Reading: *Colossians 3:12-17***

<sup>12</sup>As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. <sup>13</sup>Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup>Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup>And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup>Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms,

## *Colossians 3:12-17 continued*

hymns, and spiritual songs to God. <sup>17</sup>And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

### **This Week's Gospel Reading: *Luke 2:41-52***

<sup>41</sup>Every year the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. <sup>42</sup>And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. <sup>43</sup>When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. <sup>44</sup>Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. <sup>45</sup>When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. <sup>46</sup>After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup>And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. <sup>48</sup>When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.' <sup>49</sup>He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' <sup>50</sup>But they did not understand what he said to them. <sup>51</sup>Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

<sup>52</sup>And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.

## **Next Week's First Reading: *Isaiah 60:1-6***

<sup>1</sup>Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. <sup>2</sup>For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. <sup>3</sup>Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

<sup>4</sup>Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. <sup>5</sup>Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. <sup>6</sup>A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

## **Next Week's Psalm: *Psalms 72:10-15***

- 10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall pay tribute; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall bring gifts.
- 11 All kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall do him service.
- 12 For he shall deliver the poor that cry out, the needy and those who have no helper.
- 13 He shall have pity on the weak and poor; he shall preserve the lives of the needy.
- 14 He shall redeem their lives from oppression and violence, and dear shall their blood be in his sight.
- 15 Long may he live; unto him may be given gold from Sheba; may prayer be made for him continually and may they bless him all the day long.

## **Next Week's Second Reading: *Ephesians 3:1-12***

<sup>1</sup>I, Paul, am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles - <sup>2</sup>for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, <sup>3</sup>and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, <sup>4</sup>a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. <sup>5</sup>In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: <sup>6</sup>that is, the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. <sup>7</sup>Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. <sup>8</sup>Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, <sup>9</sup>and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; <sup>10</sup>so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. <sup>11</sup>This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, <sup>12</sup>in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

## **Next Week's Gospel Reading: *Matthew 2:1-12***

<sup>1</sup>In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, <sup>2</sup>'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' <sup>3</sup>When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup>and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup>They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: <sup>6</sup>"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" <sup>7</sup>Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>Then he

## *Matthew 2:1-12 continued*

sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' <sup>9</sup>When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup>On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.