

**St  
John's  
Pevensey Road**



*Welcome to  
Mass this  
morning*

**Pews News  
and Service Sheet  
for 28<sup>th</sup> December 2025  
The Feast of the Holy  
Innocents**

**During the week:**

Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> –

10am Mass in St Peter's Chapel;

10am – on line zoom worship -

link available from

[pewsnewsstjohns@gmail.com](mailto:pewsnewsstjohns@gmail.com)

No coffee in church on Friday  
this week.

**Next Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> – the  
Feast of the Epiphany:  
10.30am Sung Mass  
(NO 8am Mass)**

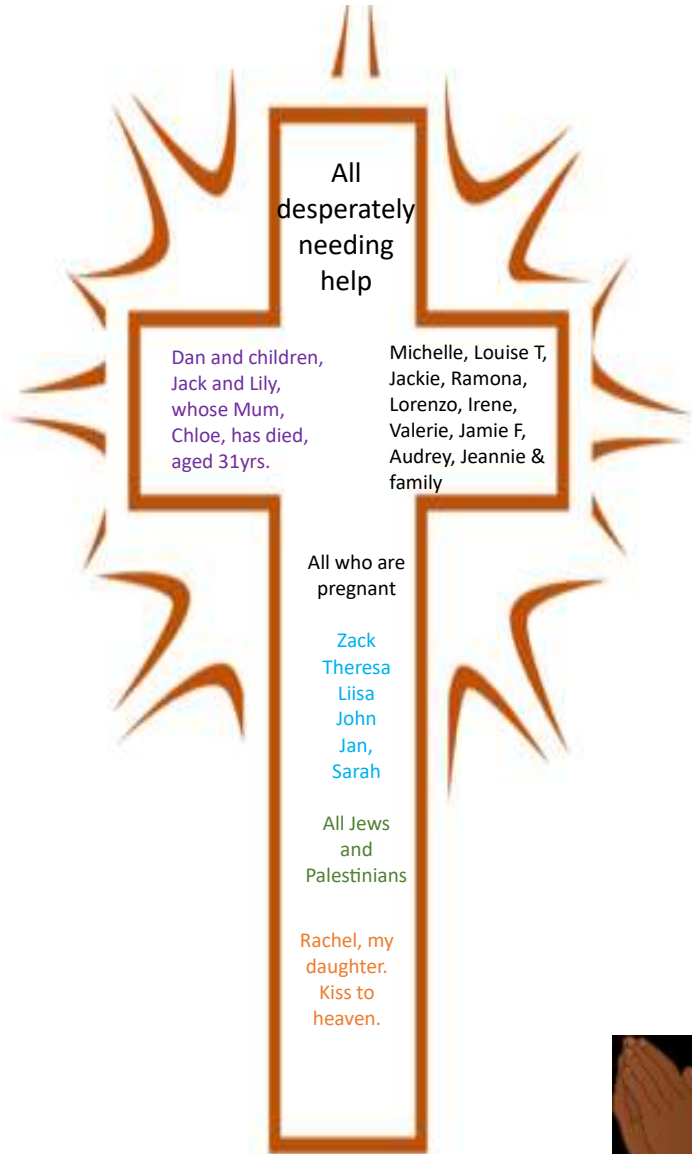


**Our prayers are asked especially for:** Michael, Jenny, Nigel; Gillian; Sue;  
**Please pray also for** the repose of the souls of the recently departed, ...and  
those whose Years Minds fall around this time, especially David Spice, and  
all who mourn.

## *St John's Prayer Cross*

All are  
regularly  
prayed  
for by  
name

Please let  
us know of  
those who  
require this  
longer-term  
prayer  
support.  
Or pin their  
names, via  
the slips of  
paper  
provided,  
on the  
wooden  
Prayers  
Cross at  
the back of  
the Church.  
Thank you.



*Prayer said by the choir:* ...grant that what we sing with our lips we may believe in our hearts and what we believe in our hearts we may show forth in our lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Opening Hymn**

**What Child is this, who,  
laid to rest,  
On Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet  
with anthems sweet,  
while shepherds watch  
are keeping?  
This, this is Christ, the King,  
whom shepherds worship  
and angels sing:  
Haste, haste to bring Him praise,  
the Babe, the son of Mary!**

**Why lies He  
in such mean estate,  
Where ox and ass are feeding?  
Come, have no fear,  
God's son is here,  
His love all loves exceeding:  
Nails, spear,  
shall pierce him through,  
The cross be borne for me,  
for you:  
Hail, hail, the Saviour comes,  
the Babe, the son of Mary.**

**So bring Him incense,  
gold, and myrrh,  
All tongues and peoples  
own him.  
The King of kings  
salvation brings;  
Let every heart enthrone him.  
Raise, raise your song on high  
while Mary sings a lullaby,  
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,  
the Babe, the son of Mary.**

*W. Chatterton Dix (1837-98) and editors*

### **The Welcoming of the People**

*Priest* In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and of the Holy  
Spirit. **All Amen.**

*Priest* We meet to celebrate the  
coming of Christ into the world.  
The Word was made flesh, and  
dwelt among us

**All and we beheld his glory.**

*Priest* We meet in the presence of  
God, **All who knows our needs  
hears our cries, feels our pain,  
and heals our wounds.**

The Lord be with you.

**All and also with you.**

### **Prayers of Penitence**

*Deacon* On this day when we recall  
the murder of innocent lives,  
let us stand before our just and  
holy God, and remembering the  
violence and injustice of our world,  
confess our sins in penitence and  
faith.

**Silence is kept**

*Deacon* You are the God of the  
weak and the vulnerable.  
Lord, have mercy.

**All Lord, have mercy.**

You judge the tyrant and the cruel.  
Christ, have mercy.

**All Christ, have mercy.**

You wipe away the tears of the  
broken-hearted.

Lord, have mercy.

**All Lord, have mercy.**

*Priest* May the God of all healing  
and forgiveness draw you to  
himself and cleanse you from all  
your sins, that you may behold the  
glory of his Son, the Word made  
flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord..

**All Amen.**

*The Gloria in Excelsis is sung*

**Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people  
on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you,  
we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ,  
only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away  
the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated  
at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High,  
Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.**

**The Collect**

*Priest* Heavenly Father,  
whose children suffered at the  
hands of Herod,  
though they had done no wrong:  
by the suffering of your Son  
and by the innocence of our lives  
frustrate all evil designs  
and establish your reign of justice  
and peace; through Jesus Christ  
your Son our Lord, who is alive  
and reigns with you, in the unity of  
the Holy Spirit, one God, now and  
for ever. *All. Amen*

**The Liturgy of the Word *all sit*  
A reading from the prophet**

**Jeremiah**

*Jeremiah 31. 15 - 17*

Thus says the LORD: A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more. Thus says the LORD: Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for there is a reward for your work, says the LORD: they shall come back from the land of the enemy; there is hope for your future, says the LORD: your children shall come back to their own country.

For the Word of the Lord.

*All Thanks be to God.*

**A Reading from the first letter to  
the Corinthians**

*1 Corinthians 1. 26 - 29*

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God.

For the Word of the Lord.

*All Thanks be to God.*

**Hymn during which the Gospel is  
brought amongst us.**

**Unto us a boy is born!  
King of all creation,  
came he to a world forlorn,  
the Lord of every nation.**

**Cradled in a stall was he  
with sleepy cows and asses;  
but the very beasts could see  
that he all folk surpasses.**

**Herod then with fear was filled:  
'A prince', he said, 'in Jewry!'  
and all the little boys he killed  
at Bethlem in his fury.**

**Now may Mary's son, who came  
so long ago to love us,  
lead us all with hearts aflame  
unto the joys above us.**

**Omega and Alpha he!  
Let the organ thunder,  
while the choir  
with peals of glee  
doth rend the air asunder.**

*Latin, 15<sup>th</sup> century. Tr Percy  
Dearmer (1867-1936)*

**Gospel Reading** *When the Gospel is  
announced the Deacon says*

Alleluia, alleluia. Never despise  
these little ones; their guardian  
angels in heaven look continuously  
on the face of my heavenly Father.

**All Alleluia.**

The Lord be with you

**All And also with you.**

**Deacon** Hear the Gospel of our  
Lord Jesus Christ according to  
Matthew

**All Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Matthew 2.13-18*

Now after the wise men had left,  
an angel of the Lord appeared to

Joseph in a dream and said, "Get  
up, take the child and his mother,  
and flee to Egypt, and remain  
there until I tell you; for Herod is  
about to search for the child, to  
destroy him." Then Joseph got up,  
took the child and his mother by  
night, and went to Egypt, and  
remained there until the death of  
Herod. This was to fulfil what had  
been spoken by the Lord through  
the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have  
called my son."

When Herod saw that he had  
been tricked by the wise men, he  
was infuriated, and he sent and  
killed all the children in and around  
Bethlehem who were two years old  
or under, according to the time that  
he had learned from the wise men.  
Then was fulfilled what had been  
spoken through the prophet  
Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in  
Ramah, wailing and loud  
lamentation, Rachel weeping for  
her children; she refused to be  
consoled, because they are no  
more."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**All Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon**

**The Creed**

**Deacon** We proclaim the  
Church's faith in Jesus Christ.

**All We believe and declare that  
our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Son of God,  
is both divine and human.**

**Dcn** God, of the being of the  
Father, the only Son from before  
time began;  
human from the being of his  
mother, born in the world;

**All** fully God and fully human;  
human in both mind and body.

**Dcn** As God he is equal to the  
Father,  
as human he is less than the  
Father.

**All** Although he is both divine  
and human, he is not two beings  
but one Christ.

**Dcn** One, not by turning God into  
flesh,  
but by taking humanity into God;

**All** truly one, not by mixing  
humanity with Godhead,  
but by being one person.

**Dcn** For as mind and body form  
one human being so the one Christ  
is both divine and human.

**All** The Word became flesh and  
lived among us; we have seen  
his glory, the glory of the only  
Son from the Father, full of  
grace and truth.

*(from the Athanasian Creed)*

## Prayers of Intercession

### The Peace

**Priest** 'I will comfort you,' says the  
Lord, 'as a mother comforts her  
child, and you shall be comforted.'  
The peace of the Lord be always  
with you **All and also with you.**

**Deacon** Let us offer one another a  
sign of God's peace

**All may exchange a sign of peace.**

**Offertory hymn** *during which the  
altar is prepared, and bread and wine  
are placed upon it.*

**Who are these who ride  
by starlight  
from the corners of the earth,**

leaving home,  
forsaking comfort,  
drawn to one mysterious birth?  
These are wise men  
seeking wisdom,  
disciplined to watch and pray;  
we will read the signs  
and follow,  
see where Christ is born today.

Who is this who hears  
the wise men,  
trembling while their tale is told,  
sending troops  
to slaughter blindly,  
crush what cannot be  
controlled?  
This is Herod, every Herod  
building power by others' pain;  
we will mourn  
the murdered children  
while their blood is shed again.

Who is this, a homeless exile,  
destined from his earliest hour  
for rejection, conflict, danger,  
marked for death  
by worldly power?  
Jesus, born to show God's glory  
shining through despair  
and loss,  
we will know you  
when we meet you  
by the shadow of your cross.

*Marnie Barrell*

## Prayer at the Preparation of the Altar

Pour upon the poverty of our love,  
and the weakness of our praise,  
the transforming fire of your  
presence. **All Amen.**

## The Eucharistic Prayer (B)

The Lord is here.

**All** His Spirit is with us.  
Lift up your hearts.

**All We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **All It is right to give thanks and praise.**

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty creator, ever-living God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. In love for our fallen human race, you sent your Son into the world to lighten our darkness.

In his life he rejoiced in the innocence and beauty of children; in his death he carried in his body the violence and cruelty of our world; in his resurrection he brought life and salvation to his people and began the new creation.

As our ascended and merciful high priest, he hears our cries and knows our grief; and will come as universal Lord to whom all must give account.

Therefore with all the angels of heaven we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth  
are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes  
in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness; grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit, and according to your holy will, these gifts of bread and wine may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; who, in the same night that he was betrayed,

took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;

do this in remembrance of me. 🛎

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying:  
Drink this, all of you;  
this is my blood of the new covenant,  
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it,  
in remembrance of me. 🛎

**Deacon** Great is the mystery of faith

**All Christ has died:  
Christ is risen:  
Christ will come again.**

And so, Father, calling to mind his death on the cross, his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of the whole world; rejoicing in his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking for his coming in glory, we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.

As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, we bring before you this bread and this cup and we thank you for counting us worthy to be in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people and gather into one in your kingdom all who share this one bread and one cup, so that we, in the company of St John the Evangelist, The Holy Innocents, St Peter, Mary the Mother of God,

and all the saints, may praise and glorify you for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever. **All Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Deacon** Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

**All** Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

### **Breaking of the Bread**

*The priest breaks the consecrated bread.*

We break the bread of life, and that life is the light of the world.

**All** God here among us light in the midst of us, bring us to light and life.

*We sit as Agnus Dei is sung by all.*

Jesus, Lamb of God: have mercy upon us.  
Jesus, bearer of our sins: have mercy upon us.  
Jesus, Redeemer of the world: give us your peace.

### **Giving of Communion**

*The priest says the invitation.*

Christ is the true bread which has come down from heaven.

**All** Lord give us this bread always.

*Communion is received. Please bow your head if you prefer to receive a blessing.*

The Body of Christ. **Amen.**

The Blood of Christ. **Amen.**

### **Anthem The Coventry Carol**

#### **Hymn**

O Thou who camest from above,  
The pure celestial fire to impart,  
Kindle a flame of sacred love  
On the mean altar of my heart.

There let it for thy glory burn  
With inextinguishable blaze,  
And trembling  
to its source return  
In humble prayer,  
and fervent praise.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire  
To work, and speak,  
and think for thee;  
Still let me guard the holy fire,  
And still stir up the gift in me.

Ready for all thy perfect will,  
My acts of faith and love repeat,  
Till death  
thy endless mercies seal,  
And make my sacrifice  
complete.

*Charles Wesley (1707 -88)*

### **Prayers after Communion**

**Priest** Lord Jesus Christ, in your humility you have stooped to share our human life with the most defenceless of your children:

may we who have received these gifts of your passion rejoice in celebrating the witness of the Holy Innocents to the purity of your sacrifice made once for all upon the cross; for you are alive and reign, now and for ever. *All* Amen.

*All* Father of all, we give you thanks and praise, that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home. Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory. May we who share Christ's body live his risen life; we who drink his cup bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world. Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us, so we and all your children shall be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Notices

### Blessing of the Congregation

*Priest* The Lord be with you.

*All* And also with you

*Priest* God, who gives life to the dead and comfort to the desolate, sustain you, keep you and console you, and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

*All* Amen.

### Final hymn

God is Love,  
let heav'n adore him;

God is Love, let earth rejoice;  
Let creation sing before him  
And exalt him with one voice.  
God who laid  
the earth's foundation,  
God who spread  
the heav'ns above,  
God who breathes  
through all creation:  
God is Love, eternal Love.

God is Love; and love enfoldeth,  
All the world in one embrace:  
With unfailing grasp  
God holdeth,  
Every child of every race.  
And when human hearts  
are breaking  
Under sorrow's iron rod,  
Then they find  
that selfsame aching  
Deep within the heart of God.

God is Love;  
and though with blindness  
Sin afflicts all human life,  
God's eternal loving kindness  
holds and guides through  
earthly strife.  
Sin and death  
and hell shall never  
O'er us final triumph gain;  
God is Love, so Love for ever  
O'er the universe must reign.

*Timothy Rees (1874-1939) adapted*

### The Dismissal

*Priest* The Lord be with you.

*All* And also with you

*All* May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, evermore. Amen.

*Priest* May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of

God, rest in peace...

**All** and rise in glory. Amen.

**Deacon** Go in peace.

Proclaim the Word made flesh.

**All** Glory, thanks and praise to God.

*Concluding Voluntary*



*Do stay for  
coffee!*



**UNKNOWN ARTIST** *Massacre of the Innocents*, mosaic on the triumphal arch of the nave, 5th century, Mosaic, Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome; Ivan Vdovin / Alamy Stock Photo



**Nicolas Poussin** *The Massacre of the Innocents*, c.1628–29, Oil on canvas



Unknown Byzantine artist [Rome or Milan]  
Relief panel with scenes from the life of Christ  
(Massacre of the Innocents; Baptism of Christ;  
Marriage at Cana), First third of 5th century CE,  
Ivory

[Commentary by Robin Jensen](#)

*One of the oldest surviving depictions of the Massacre of the Innocents appears at the top of this early fifth-century carved ivory relief panel. The panel was one of a hinged pair (diptych) whose other half now resides in Paris's Musée du Louvre.*

*The Berlin panel is divided into three sections. Below the massacre scene are images of Christ's baptism by John and the Cana miracle in which Jesus transforms water to wine (John 2:1–11). .....*

*In the Massacre, the unknown artist has depicted King Herod at the right—slightly larger than life. He is enthroned in a high-backed chair with his feet resting upon a footstool. Herod's gesture indicates that the violent act we witness is by his order.*

*At the centre, an unarmed Roman soldier grasps a naked baby by the leg and swings it over his head in order to hurl the child to the ground. Another child lies dead at Herod's feet. Behind the soldier, two distraught mothers express their horror and grief; one raises her hands in lament. The work is exquisitely executed. The violent scene seems almost to be redeemed by the beauty of the figures' modelling and the artist's skilful composition. Yet, the choice of this particular scene here may puzzle those who expect to see the more commonly depicted and uplifting images of Christ's Nativity or the Adoration of the Magi in place of this distressing episode. In fact, scenes of violence and torture are highly unusual in early Christian art. Extant representations even of Christ's crucifixion are extremely rare before the sixth century. However, the baby about to be slaughtered looks much like the childlike, nude Jesus being baptized in the scene just below and the similarity may be intentional. Perhaps the artist intended the image to allude to Christ's execution—an event in which another King Herod is complicit. This little child is perhaps the first Christian martyr. His death will soon be followed by John the Baptist's and then, of course, by Christ's.*

Commentary on the other two pictures can be found at Robin Jensen. 2020. 'The Massacre of the Innocents', in *The Visual Commentary on Scripture* ed. by Ben Quash. (London: The Visual Commentary on Scripture Foundation). [Accessed 16.12.2025]  
<https://thevcs.org/massacre-innocents>



### **Urgently needed items for the foodbank include:**

Toilet Rolls, UHT Milk, Coffee, Tinned Fruit, Tinned Vegetables.

Other needed items include: Tinned fish, tinned potatoes, tinned rice pudding, toiletries.

If you are able to donate, please leave items in the container at the back of church and they will be collected by the Food Bank rep. Thank you.

\*Please request a link to the Wednesday Zoom service by emailing [pewsnewsstjohns@gmail.com](mailto:pewsnewsstjohns@gmail.com) Also to this email address please send any updates for prayer lists or pews news sheet. Thank you.  
 The pew sheet is printed on 100% recycled paper.

**STEP INTO THE BIBLE at Ashburnham Place 10-13 February 2026**

Do you find the Bible a bit of a puzzle, a bit of a closed book? Then this short course is for you. It will help you get under the skin of the Bible and understand its world. It explains when and how the different books were written and how the Old and New Testaments relate to one another. It shows how the Biblical message developed over the many centuries of its writing, and explores the different levels of biblical truth, from the literal to the poetic.

Ashburnham Place is a Christian Retreat & Study Centre, close to Battle, ([www.ashburnham.org.uk](http://www.ashburnham.org.uk)). The retreat is led by Canon Dr Peter Sills, and is based on his book, *Six Steps Into The Bible*. Those who have stepped into the Bible have found the experience fulfilling: "It was a joyful, sometimes serious, at other times very moving, experience. I feel quietly closer to God."

For further information about the course and to make a booking: [www.peter-sills.co.uk/retreats](http://www.peter-sills.co.uk/retreats).

**St John's Personnel**

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Pictures on front page: Photo of baby held by hands by Isaac Quesada on Unsplash,; **Master of Death**, Scenes from the Infancy of Jesus From the *Histoire de la Bible et de l'Assomption de Notre-Dame* French (Paris), c. 1390-1400 New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS M 526, fol. 31r, from <https://imaginemdei.blogspot.com/>