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## *What really is Christmas?*

Many of us love and celebrate Christmas. The Advent Season leading up to Christmas, Christmas Day, and the feasts flowing from the Christmas Season, are so special in our Christian journey. These past four weeks, we have been reflecting on modalities to receive Christ at Christmas. A lot has been echoed to us from the prophets and from John the Baptist.

But to be honest, it's really the run-up to Christmas that makes the fuss. And despite the commercialization of Christmas, we can't ignore the carols in the shops, the streetlights, the Father Christmases and their *Ho Ho Ho*'s, and all the general Christmas silliness on the High Street. We love the overdecorated houses with their multi-coloured lights, the feel-good Christmas movies on television, and listening to different renditions of all the Christmas songs on the radio. Putting up the tree and decorating while listening to carols, the Christmas shopping and the variety of baked goods and turkeys and hams in the shops. We love all of it and look forward to Christmas every year. Yet we know that these are the very things that, as Christians, they detract from the true Christmas reality, because Christmas ought to be about Christ before about us.

Now, let us face some hard truths. There is something different and magical in the air around Christmas, people feel it and give expression to it in all sorts of ways. Their longing for something other than the ordinary, for something to let them know that despite the drudgery and tedium of many of their days, there is something alive and vibrant and mysterious in the world which expresses itself in the overdone glamour and over-the-top celebrating at Christmas time. We all long to

escape the often-barren shabbiness and pale sterility of so much in our world, and at Christmas we are given free rein to let our imaginations soar and our spirits celebrate. Even for those who do not believe in Christ, Christmas is a time of goodwill, and in the midst of all the Christmas sparkle and the expectant hope of the season, our hearts are softened towards each other and our spirits warmed by the goodness of those around us. **So even if many people do not celebrate Christmas in the 'true spirit' nor acknowledge that 'Jesus is the reason for the season' they nevertheless gain a glimpse of and share an experience of the love and joy that He brings into our lives.**

"The Lord makes the sun to shine on the good and the bad alike" and His mercy and kindness shown in the birth of the Christ-child is for all people whether they know Him or not. The gift of love is offered to all of us at this time, and its power to change hearts and help us find our way back to each other is not limited to a few but is open to all. The Christmas spirit and the fun and silliness, the songs and carols, the gift giving and gift receiving, despite being commercialized, is a sign and a reminder that something special has happened and is happening. It lets us know, even if we do not acknowledge it, that our world is alive with the presence of He who has come, He who is with us, and He who comes anew in our hearts every Christmas, Christ the Lord.

**I wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year 2025**

*Fr. Elijah*

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent (22<sup>nd</sup> December 2024)**

9.15am **Our Lady of the Assumption** (Hedge End)  
*For the people*  
11.00am **Christ the King & St Colman** (Bitterne)  
*Alan Hood*  
5.30pm **St. Brigid** (West End)  
*For Jason Iro on his 7th birthday*  
6.00pm **Christ the King & St Colman** (Bitterne)  
*Polish Mass*

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Mon 23<sup>rd</sup> 10.00am. **CKSC** *Requiem Mass for Gerald Martin*

**Christmas Eve (Tuesday, 24th December)**

5.30pm **Christ the King & St Colman** (Bitterne)  
*5.30pm Carols followed by Mass at 6pm Family Mass - For the people*  
10.00pm **Our Lady of the Assumption** (Hedge End)  
*10.00pm Carols followed by 10.30pm Vigil Mass - In thanksgiving*  
12.00am **Christ the King & St Colman** (Bitterne)  
*Polish Vigil Mass*

**Christmas Day (Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December)**

9.00am **St. Brigid** (West End)  
*9am Carols followed by Mass at 9:30am Christmas Mass – For Francis and Letitia Dias RIP*  
11.00am **Christ the King & St Colman** (Bitterne)  
*Christmas Mass*

**Christmas Mass Times 26<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

**OLA** – Our Lady of the Assumption (Hedge End)  
**CKSC** – Christ the King & St. Colman (Bitterne)  
**SB** – St Brigid (West End)  
Mon 23<sup>rd</sup> 10.00am. **CKSC** *Requiem Mass for Gerald Martin*  
Thu 26<sup>th</sup> 10.00am **CKSC** *For Margaret Mary Miller, Charles James Miller & David John Miller*  
Fri 27<sup>th</sup> 10.00am **OLA** *Francis Bernard Murphy Catherine Anne Murphy*  
Sat 28<sup>th</sup> 10.00am **CKSC** *Padraig Murphy RIP*

**Exposition & Rosary at 9.30am before Mass (Tue–Fri)**  
**Sacrament of Confession is available on request**  
*Please consider offering Mass Intentions for families and friends (contact Fr. Elijah or Parish Office)*

**Christmas Mass Times in Woolston & Netley**  
**Christmas Eve**

4.00pm Family Mass - St Patrick's Church, Woolston  
8.00pm Vigil Mass - St Patrick's Church, Woolston  
**Christmas Day**  
9.00am Mass - Annunciation Church, Netley  
11.00am Mass - St Patrick's Church, Woolston

**Funeral Mass for GERALD MARTIN**

The funeral Mass for Gerald Martin which is being held at CKSC on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10am.

**Feast of the Holy Family (29<sup>th</sup> December 2024)**

9.15am **OLA** *For the people*  
11.00am **CKSC** *For God's healing on Catherine Kelly*  
5.30pm **SB**  
6.00pm **CKSC** *Polish Mass*

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**Mass Times 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2024 – 5<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025**

Tue 31<sup>st</sup> 10.00am **OLA** *For the intentions of Mr Franciis Reading*  
7.00pm **CKSC**  
Wed 1<sup>st</sup> 10.00am **SB** *In thanksgiving*  
Thu 2<sup>nd</sup> 10.00am **CKSC** *For the people*  
Fri 3<sup>rd</sup> 10.00am **OLA** *In thanksgiving for the life of Kenneth Clarke*  
Sat 4<sup>th</sup> 10.00am **CKSC** *For Dermot Dunleavy & Kate Morris*  
Sun 5<sup>th</sup> 9.15am **OLA** *Callaghan Family Intentions*  
11.00am **CKSC** *For the people*  
5.30pm **SB**  
6.00pm **CKSC** *Polish Mass*

**Exposition & Rosary at 9.30am before Mass (Tue–Fri)**  
**Sacrament of Confession is available on request**  
*Please consider offering Mass Intentions for families and friends (contact Fr. Elijah or Parish Office)*

**New Evening Mass**

It was realised that not everyone can manage to get to a 10am weekday Mass. So Fr Elijah is celebrating a new evening Mass on Tuesdays at 7pm. It is in CKSC church, but as with all our Masses, is opened to everyone. This Mass will be taking place for a trial period only but will continue if it is well supported.

**CKSC Preparing a welcome to our church this Christmas**

Monday afternoon at 2pm on 23rd December we shall be putting up the crib and decorating the church for Christmas. It would be wonderful if you could give some time to come and help us. All are welcome. Thank You

**Kindly Note**

The Parish Office will be closed from Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2024 – 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2025 inclusive. Many thanks

**CKSC Weekday Masses in Chapel**

Weekday Masses will be held in the Eucharistic Chapel until work in the Church is completed. Sunday Masses are unchanged.

## CKSCOLASB Calendar of Events

**OLA** – Our Lady of the Assumption (Hedge End)

**CKSC** – Christ the King & St. Colman (Bitterne)

**SB** – St Brigid (West End)

- Thu 19<sup>th</sup> 10.30am-12pm **Prayer Group** (CKSC)  
10am-12pm **Open Church** (OLA)
- Tue 24<sup>th</sup> 9.30am-12pm **Table Tennis** (OLA Hall)  
No **“Growing in Faith”** today (OLA)
- Thu 26<sup>th</sup> No **“Prayer Group”** today (CKSC)  
No **“Open Church”** today (OLA)
- Sun 29<sup>th</sup> **Tea, Coffee, Cake** after Holy Mass (SB)
- Tue 31<sup>st</sup> 9.30am-12pm **Table Tennis** (OLA Hall)  
7.30-9pm **Growing in Faith** (OLA)
- Thu 2<sup>nd</sup> 10.30am-12pm **Prayer Group** (CKSC)  
10am-12pm **Open Church** (OLA) Fri 13<sup>th</sup>  
7.30pm **Choir Practise** in church hall (CKSC)
- Sun 5<sup>th</sup> **Tea, Coffee, Biscuits & friendly chat**  
every 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month after  
Mass (CKSC Hall)
- Tue 7<sup>th</sup> 9.30am-12pm **Table Tennis** (OLA Hall)  
7.30-9pm **Growing in Faith** (OLA)
- Thu 2<sup>nd</sup> 10.30am-12pm **Prayer Group** (CKSC)  
10am-12pm **Open Church** (OLA)

## Recurring Events

### **Our Lady of The Assumption** (Hedge End)

- **Tea Coffee, Biscuits, Friendly Chat** (and often cake) in the hall every Sunday after Holy Mass
- **Children's Liturgy** during Mass every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the Month (except November 2024)
- **Carers Group** on third Wednesday of every Month from 7.00pm to 8.30pm
- **Growing in Faith** every Tuesday evening 7:30-9pm
- **Table Tennis** every Tuesday from 9.30am to 12pm
- **Open Church** every Thursday from 10am-12pm

### **Christ the King & St. Colman** (Bitterne)

- **Prayer Group** every Thursday 10.30am-12 noon
- **Children's Liturgy** for 4 to 7-year-olds every Sunday
- **Tea, Coffee, Biscuits & friendly chat** in the hall every 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month
- **Choir practice in hall** - 7:30pm on 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Friday each month. All welcome.

### **St Brigids (West End)**

- **Tea, coffee & cake** every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month after Mass

If you would like a future event to be included in the Calendar of Events, kindly advise the Parish office.

## Continuing Support of the Church

Please consider setting up a **standing order**.

For Christ the King & St Colman:

**Account Name:** CDP Christ the King & St Colman

**Sort code:** 30-93-04

**Account Number:** 00887553

For Our Lady of the Assumption and St Brigid:

**Account Name:** CDP Hedge End Our Lady

**Sort code:** 30-93-04

**Account Number:** 00879747

Please use your surname as a reference.

Make out cheques for Fr Elijah to Rev Fru N Elijah

Thank you for your support.

## Christmas Collection for Fr Elijah

The Christmas and Easter collections are a good way for parishioners to thank Fr Elijah for his ministry in our Parishes. These collections form a significant part of his income. There are two easy ways you can make your Christmas offering.

### **The collection at Christmas Mass**

Envelopes are available at all three churches.

Alternatively you can give online...

### **Online at Give as you Live**

**For Christ the King & St Colman**

<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/southampton-christ-the-king-and-st-colman-catholic-parish-christmas-collection-2024>



**Our Lady of the Assumption & St Brigids**

<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/hedge-end-our-lady-of-the-assumption-and-st-brigid-catholic-parish-christmas-collection-2024>



**If you are a tax payer you can  
Gift Aid your offering to Fr Elijah**

### **Further use for lectionaries**

This last weekend, the First Sunday of Advent 2024, the new edition of the Lectionary for Mass (*Ordo Lectionum Missae*) came into force in England, Wales and Scotland. By decree of the Bishops' Conference, "From that date forward, no other English language edition of the Lectionary for Mass may be used in the dioceses of England and Wales." However, what should we now do with the old ones? Hallowed by use, they are part of the parish patrimony and so should be kept accordingly. However, some places may have excess copies. If so, they might wish to send them to:

**Fr. Paschal Omono, St. Augustine's Catholic Church, Crescent Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2LY.**

Email: [paschalomono@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:paschalomono@rcaos.org.uk).

Nigeria continues to use the Jerusalem Bible version of the Lectionary and Fr. Paschal suggests that redundant books, in good condition, would be much appreciated. He has storage space and does not need funds for the packaging and transportation costs. Email him for more details.

### **OPEN CHURCH**

Our Lady of the Assumption Church in Hedge End is open for private prayer on Thursdays from 10am until midday. To join the rota, please contact Pauline or Jane.

### **CKSC Weekday Masses in Chapel**

Weekday Masses will be held in the Eucharistic Chapel until work in the Church is completed. Sunday Masses are unchanged.

### **Sunday's Readings:**

#### **Daily Readings**

<https://universalis.com/europe.England/20241222/mass.htm>

#### **Reflections**

<http://www.mycatholic.com/>

#### **Diocesan eNews**

<https://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/communications/news/enews/>

#### **UK Catholic Newspapers**

<https://www.churchpaper.co.uk>

### **Keep in touch with Portsmouth Diocese**



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Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth



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<https://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/>

If you have news to share with the Diocese, contact: [communications@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:communications@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)