

A Christmas Celebration 2025

Westminster Cathedral presents '*A Christmas Celebration*', festive music and readings pondering the Incarnation of Christ, with much-loved celebrity readers and the world-famous Westminster Cathedral Choir and Orchestra, under the direction of Simon Johnson.

Wednesday 17 and Thursday 18 December, 7.30pm (doors open 6.45pm)



St. James's Young Adults Group (Ages 18-35)
Looking to grow your faith and connect with people your age? Join our vibrant young adults community!

Whether you are into faith talks, social events or just making new friends, there is a place for you here.

A 12 day pilgrimage to Ireland 8-19 May 2026
Theme: "**Purification with the help of the Saints**"
Cost: minimum 30 pilgrims - £2295, 40 pilgrims - £2215
this includes hotel accommodation, flights, coach hire, entry fees, etc. For further information, please contact 07733 223903.

Lough Derg Sanctuary,
Our Lady of Knock Shrine,
Croagh Patrick, Dublin,
Skellig Michael and more

To book, please contact Tangney Tours: clare@tangney-tours.com, 01732 886666. Please book early.

Parish Repository

(located in the Memorial Chapel)

Weekdays 11.00 - 12.30
Saturday 15.45 - 16.45
Sunday 09.45 - 10.30 11.30
- 13.00 & 15.00 - 16.00

Reminder: The crypt is best accessed via the Blandford Street staircase, which leads directly to the Accessible toilet, where there are baby changing facilities, and to the corridor on which the other cloakrooms are located.

If you can help the parish by making a donation or by a commitment to regular giving, it would be greatly appreciated. More information from the parish office or use the details set out below:-
HSBC Sort code: 40-05-20 Acc no: 91094394
WRCDT St James Spanish Place

We have '**one-off**' **Gift Aid envelopes** at various locations in church for cash offerings at Sunday Mass. Please complete all sections before ticking '**This**' or '**all subsequent**' donations.

Donations of any amount, for specific categories, using Contactless or Chip and PIN can be made AT FOUR STATIONS WITHIN THE CHURCH, online at [Give a Little](#) or by using the QR code.



GIFT AID enables the Parish to claim from HMRC an additional 25% of a donor's gift (offertory, candles, mass intentions) and costs you **NOTHING** (apart from a signature).

If you are a UK taxpayer please ask for a form (if we are able to identify your earlier gifts we can backdate the claim up to 4 years).

St James's Roman Catholic Church

- *Spanish Place* - 22 George Street, W1U 3QY



ARE YOU HE WHO IS
TO COME * MT 11:3

THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT - GAUDETE - 14th December 2025

Live-streamed on [YouTube](#) Readings available on [Universalis](#) Foreign language sheets are available at the back of the church.

The LATIN responses for the Solemn Mass pages 77/78 in the [orange] Mass Book.

TODAY'S LITURGY

Parish Mass Book page 88

Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10

'God himself will come and save you.'

Come, Lord, and save us.

James 5:7-10

'Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.'

Matthew 11:2-11

'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'

The Week Ahead

Sunday Year A Weekday Cycle II
Mass at 12.30pm and 6.00pm

M 15th Advent feria
T 16th Advent feria
W 17th Advent feria
T 18th Advent feria
F 19th Advent feria
S 20th Advent feria 10am

Vigil Mass of Sunday 6pm

21st December 2025

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8am and 9am[1962]
10.30am Solemn Latin,
12pm, 4pm & 7pm

The Reverend Monsignor Philip Whitmore (*Rector*)

The Reverend John Njorteah

The Reverend Mark Elliott-Smith (*in residence, Ordinariate*)

Telephone: **020 7935 0943** [Parish Office: 020 3475 9097]

Email: spanishplace@rcdow.org.uk

Web: www.sjrcc.org.uk

Church opens at 8am on weekdays and 9am on Saturdays.

Confession between 12 noon and 1pm on weekdays.

On Saturday a priest is available from 4.45pm - 5.30pm

The Rector writes

Gaudete in Domino semper - Rejoice in the Lord always. Advent is a remarkably short season, and we are now more than halfway through it. The third Sunday of Advent takes its name from the first word of the introit chanted on that day. As on mid-lent Sunday, we permit ourselves a certain lightening of the penitential tone. Rose vestments and altar coverings are used in place of purple, and flowers may make a further appearance. The eagle-eyed have probably noticed that the third candle on the Advent wreath is rose-coloured, in contrast to the three purple candles.

It is true that the great feast of Christmas is drawing closer. The outdoor crib on the George Street side of the church is now in place. The flyers advertising the times of our Christmas services are now available at the back of the church. Please note that the **Parish Carol Service is imminent, as it occurs on Wednesday of this coming week, 17 December, at 7pm.** We hope to see many of you there, especially if you plan to be away over Christmas itself. The service will be followed by a reception downstairs in the Social Centre.

Another landmark in the coming week will be the start of the solemn “*countdown*” to Christmas, which begins on 17 December. Each day in that final week before the feast we have one of the so-called “*O antiphons*” - heard as the Gospel acclamation at Mass and the Magnificat antiphon at Vespers. The texts of these seven antiphons piece together many Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah whose coming is awaited so eagerly. The text of the well-known Advent hymn, “*O come, O come, Emmanuel*” is woven from the texts of the O antiphons. We began the season focused on the second coming of the Lord, but once we arrive at 17 December, we will shift our focus decisively onto the first coming, to be celebrated on 25 December.

Tradition has it that it was cold in Bethlehem that night. “*See amid the winter’s snow*”, we sing. It is also rather cold in the church. At first, we had been led to expect that the heating would be restored by 5 December, then we were told that it would take until 12 December, and the latest news is that it may take until 17 December. Apparently there have been complications caused by the limited space in the boiler room. So we face another cold weekend. Do please come prepared. The good news, though, is that by the time of the parish carol service on Wednesday evening we should have our new heating in place. If this deadline is met, there will be an extra cause for us to rejoice on that day.

Many thanks once again to all those who supported the Appeal, which has helped us to afford the boiler replacement and the organ refurbishment. Thanks also to those who supported the “*Growing in Faith*” Appeal some years ago, and for the consent that has been expressed for the proceeds of that Appeal to be redirected to the boiler replacement project. This will certainly help to offset what we have lost through the significant reduction of the funds available to us through the Government’s Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme.

Work on the organ is progressing well, but sadly there have been delays in this area as well. Originally our magnificent Hunter organ was to have been returned to the church before the start of December, but now it seems that it will be after Christmas. Graciously, the organ builders have installed a digital instrument with sufficient versatility to cope with the demands that our celebration of Christmas will place upon it. But it will be good to have our main organ back in the church once more.

I mentioned a few months ago that every event taking place in the four-month period from September to Christmas seems urgent as soon as September begins. Psychologically, though, Christmas and New Year are significant watershed moments, such that January’s events hardly claim our attention until Christmas is behind us, if then. Let us not fall into this trap. We do have some events in January to look forward to. First of all, please note the date of our **Epiphany Carol Service**, to be held on the afternoon of **Saturday 10 January**. This will be a good moment to gather once again as a parish with the families who have been away over Christmas itself. It will be followed by a reception in the Social Centre.

New Year’s Day is kept as the **World Day of Prayer for Peace**. The numerous conflicts in the world provide us with plenty of opportunity to pray for this noble intention. The birth of the Prince of Peace at Christmas should inspire us to redouble our efforts in this area. We look forward to the publication of Pope Leo’s first World Day of Peace Message, remembering how the theme of peace featured in his first greeting to the world on the day of his election last May.

Later in January some of our **adult confirmation candidates** will be receiving the sacrament at **Westminster Cathedral** from Bishop Jim Curry. Many thanks to Joshua Dolphin for working with them in preparation for this great moment. In the new year, too, the First Holy Communion classes will be starting, as well as the Confirmation classes for the teenagers. Many thanks to all the catechists involved in these activities. It is good to see so many people preparing to deepen their sacramental relationship with the Lord.

Philip Whitmore

PLEASE TAKE (and distribute to neighbours and friends)
the Flyer available at the back of the church which details
service times over the Christmas period.

A special welcome to our visitors. Refreshments are served in the Social Centre (in the crypt) after the 9.00am and 10.30am Masses. Do please join us.

The **SVP** are distributing over 10,000 **Vinnie Packs containing cold weather essentials to the homeless this winter**. Please could you consider sponsoring packs at a suggested donation of £4.10 per pack? Donations can be sent to Vinnie Packs, PO Box 72264, London SW1P 9EZ with cheques made out to SVP or by bank transfer to Nat West sort code 60-60-04, account no. 46088237. **Thank you so much for your support.**
