

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR A

"O Rising Sun, you are the splendour of eternal light and the sun of justice.
O come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death."

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We have almost arrived at the Great and Solemn Feast of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. In other words, the Feast of Christmas. Above is the title given to the Christ Child for Sunday, someone who is greatly honoured and is our salvation. Each day during the eight days prior to Christmas Day we honour one of his titles. He is not only the child in the manger he is also the Son of God. Let us never forget how heavenly and divine this time is. We are celebrating God entering our very being.

This Sunday is also a day for prayer for all expectant mothers, something very appropriate as we look to Mary who longs to hold her Son in her arms. Let us give thanks for the support mothers have today compared to the time Our Lady gave birth to Jesus.

Last Sunday evening, our Ashley parish was delighted to enjoy a Christmas concert by Ashley Music School. The group of 14 choristers and musicians performed an entertaining range of Carols, ancient and modern and varied musical items. The event was rounded off by mulled wines and accompaniments. The event raised £80 towards parish funds. A vote of thanks was given!

Please pray for the repose of the souls of Marion Thompson and Pauline Capper whose funeral services take place in the New Year. Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord. May they rest in peace! Remember also all our parishioners who find themselves ill in hospital. May the comfort and presence of the Lord bring them healing and contentment.

May I now wish you very Happy Christmas Celebration and Happy New Year when it arrives. May the blessings of God's presence be with you now and always.

If you have not yet picked up a Parish Christmas card they are available at the back of church for both Clayton and Ashley. May I remind children that they are welcome to dress as a character in the nativity for the 5 p.m. Christmas Eve Family Mass. It should make a very pleasant and happy occasion for us all.

Once again, Happy and Blessed Christmas!

Father Anton s.c.j.

**Our Lady & Saint John the Baptist, Ashley
and**

Our Lady & Saint Werburgh, Clayton

The parishes are part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham: Registered Charity No 234216

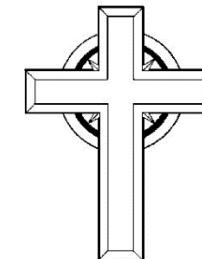
Parish Priest: Father Anton Madej, SCJ

Clayton and Ashley: 01782 613023

Email: olstwerburgh.clayton@rcaob.org.uk

[Parishes Office Hours: Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat 10.00 am – 1 pm]

Chaplain's Office for inpatients at the Royal Stoke: 01782 67640



**Sunday 21st December 2025
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Sunday Readings Year A
Weekday Readings Year 1**

**Christ is Coming
The heavens proclaim the glory of God
and the firmament shows forth the work of his hands.
Day unto day takes up the story
and night unto night makes known the message**

| | Ashley | Clayton | |
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| Saturday 20th December Vigil Mass 4th Sunday of Advent | 6.00 pm | | People of the Parishes |
| Sunday 21st December 4th Sunday of Advent | | 8.15 am 10.00 am | Christine McKenna Brigid Hulse |
| Tuesday 23rd December | | 7.15 pm | Kevin Birchall RIP |
| Wednesday 24th December Christmas Eve | 7.30 pm 8.00 pm | 5.00 pm 11.30 pm 12 Midnight | Ellen & Bernard Tierney Carols Nicholas Barnett Heath Carols People of the Parishes |
| Thursday 25th December Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord | | 10.00 am | Enid & Eddie Edwards |
| Friday 26th December St Stephen | | 12 Noon | Benefactors of the Sacred Heart Fathers and Brothers |
| Saturday 27th December Vigil Mass Holy Family | 6. 00 pm | | People of the Parishes |
| Sunday 28th December Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph | | 8.15 am 10.00 am | Phillippa Darby Christine Harding |
| Thursday 1st January Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God | 7.15 pm | 10.00am 7.15 pm | Holy Souls Holy Souls |
| Friday 2nd January | | 10.00am | Marion Thompson RIP |
| Saturday 3rd January | | 10.00am | Holy Souls, followed by Adoration |
| Vigil Mass 2nd Sunday | 6.00 pm | | The Bester and Skelton families |
| Sunday 4th January 2nd Sunday | | 8.15 am 10.00 am | People of the Parishes John Goodwin |
| Tuesday 6th January Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord | 7.15 pm | 9.15 am | Phil Regan & John Thorley (Mass with the School) Holy Souls |

Confessions on Saturdays: At Clayton – 10.30 – 11.30 am. At Ashley before 6 pm Mass.
No Confession Saturday 27th December at Clayton.

Please pray for the sick and elderly of our parishes and all those who have asked for prayers. May the healing touch of the Lord be with them all.

Our Lady and St Werburgh New Year's Eve Party: Unfortunately we have had to cancel the party due to lack of interest.

Samaritan's Purse Shoebox Appeal: Thank you to all who donated a box 58 were sent between the school and parish.

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| Readers Saturday | 6.00pm | 20.12.25 J. Bester | 27.12.25 B. Bromfield | 03.01.26 S. McKenna |
| Readers | Sunday 8.15 am | 21.12.25 K. Lycett | 28.12.25 J. Mason | 04.01.26 M. O'Hagan |
| Readers | Sunday 10 am | 21.12.25 A. Hagan/ M. Hughes | 28.12.25 B. Walker/J. Somers | 04.01.26 B. Tierney/R. Gallimore |
| Counting | Clayton | 21.12.25 Hughes | 28.12.25 Walker | 04.01.26 Thompson/Carter |
| Cleaning | Clayton | 21.12.25 Group 4 | 28.12.25 Group 5 | 04.01.26 Group 6 |
| Cleaning Ashley | Ashley | January: A. Wilson & S. Urquhart | | |
| Offertory Collections – thank you | | | The collections at all Christmas Masses are for your Parish Priest (envelopes available in the porch) | |
| Gift Aid | Clayton | £97.00 | Ashley | £85.00 |
| Cash | Clayton | £222.26 | Ashley | £90.71 |
| Standing Orders | Clayton | £430.00 | Ashley | £92.00 |
| Total | Clayton | £749.26 | Ashley | £267.71 |
| | | | Ashley Building Fund | £318.50 |

Safeguarding: The Parish operates in accordance with Statutory Safeguarding Guidance and the National and Archdioceses policies & procedures at all times. Our Parish Safeguarding Representative is Kate Hagan. She can be contacted at: sg.olstwerburgh.clayton@rcaob.org.uk or 01782 613023 or alternatively the Diocesan Safeguarding team can be contacted on 0121 230 6240/ safeguarding@rcaob.org.uk if you have any concerns.

Walsingham Pilgrimage 2026: From Saturday 29th – Monday 31st August (Bank Holiday Weekend) please see poster on noticeboard with further details or contact Mary Shirley to book a place on 07910 605984 or maryroseshirley@gmail.com.

Christmas Appeal for Asylum Seekers: Thank you so much for the very generous donations to the appeal to buy selection boxes for the asylum seeker children. Over £400.00 was donated which will ensure each child will receive a gift and a few extra party treats can be bought. Thank you for giving the message of love and welcome this Christmas. Sr. Geraldine.

Clayton Cleaning and Counting Rotas 2026: Please can all teams collect a rota.

Prayer Life Workshop: Starting on Thursday 15th January 10.15 am – 12.15 pm in the upper room at Clayton. All welcome. Further details will be available in the New Year.