



St. Raphael's Church

Catholic Parish Church - Parish Priest - Fr. Michael Lovell

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Parish Office - (Monday - Thursday 9.00am - 4.00pm)

St. Raphael's Church, Portsmouth Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey, KT1 - 2NA

Church Manager Tel 020 8541 - 4999

Email surbiton@rcaos.org.uk Web. www.straphaelsurbiton.org.uk

St. Joseph's Our Catholic Primary and Nursery School

The Fairfield, Kingston Upon Thames, KT1 2UP.

Tel. 020 8546 7178 E. mail office@stjosephs.rbksch.org Web. www.stjosephs.kingston.sch.uk

Head Teacher Mrs Lorraine Flower

Sunday 21st December 2025 4th Sunday of Advent (A)
9.30am Mary Cook
11.30am Amelia Law RIP
5.00pm Missa Pro Populo
6.15pm Parish Carol Service (No Rosary and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament today)

Monday 22nd December Advent Feria
 10.00am Stan & May Conley RIP

Tuesday 23rd December Advent Feria
 10.00am Thomas Gomes RIP

Wednesday 24th December Christmas Eve (No 10.00am Mass)

4.00pm (Children's Mass) Ivan Flanagan RIP
6.00pm (Sung Mass) The Holy Souls
12midnight (Sung Mass) Alexander Raphael RIP

Thursday 25th December Christmas Day

9.30am (Mass with carols) Donald D'Souza RIP
11.30am (Mass with Carols) Missa Pro Populo



Friday 26th December St. Stephen
 12noon Peggy Lovell RIP

Saturday 27th December St. John the Apostle and Evangelist
 10.00pm The deceased members of the Ling Family

Sunday 28th December 2025 The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph (A)
9.30am Victor Donaldson RIP
11.30am Missa Pro Populo
5.00pm Kathleen McGlynn RIP
(No Rosary and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament today)

Monday 29th December St. Thomas of Canterbury
 10.00am Ethel & Bill Larkin RIP

Tuesday 30th December Sixth Day in the Octave of Christmas
 10.00am Sandra Coombs RIP

Wednesday 31st December Seventh Day in the Octave of Christmas
 12noon Tim Hayes RIP

Thursday 1st January Mary Mother Of God
 10.00am Sandra Coombs RIP

Friday 2nd January SS. Basil The Great and Gregory Nazianzen.
 10.00am Marian Turner RIP

Saturday 3rd January Feria in Christmastide
 10.00am The Victims of the Hong Kong Fire

Sunday 4th January 2026 The Second Sunday after Christmas (A)
9.30am All unborn children and expectant mothers
11.30am Flordeliza Subade Abello RIP
5.00pm Missa Pro Populo
(No Rosary and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament today)



Today, we light the forth candle on our Advent Wreath.
 "The Angel's Candle" symbolizing peace - reminding us of the message of the angels: "Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men."

As we await in the stillness and darkness for Christmas, we hear words we know by heart: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." Yet we also know that darkness does not politely disappear at Christmas.

This year, a story from Shotton Colliery caught people's attention. A Christmas tree, planted years ago, loved by the community, lit and blessed, was cut down just hours after the lights were switched on. What should have been a sign of hope became a source of shock and sadness. People spoke of mindless vandalism, of anger, of behaviour that seems to say, nothing is sacred anymore. If we are honest, that story feels uncomfortably close to home. Christmas is full of lights and yet our world still knows darkness. Homes are decorated while families are fractured. Carols are sung while wars rage. A tree is blessed and then destroyed.

But this is exactly why Christmas happens at night. God does not wait for the world to be tidy, peaceful, or well-behaved. God is born into mess, vulnerability and risk. The first Christmas was not a cosy card scene. It was a frightened couple, a cold stable and a child laid not in a cot but in a feeding trough. And within days, violence would stalk that child's life. The world tried to cut down hope even then. Yet hope returned.

That felled tree in Shotton Colliery speaks more deeply than we might first realise. A tree, planted in love, cut down in the night yet remembered, mourned, and talked about. And here is the deeper truth of Christmas: God knows what it is to have his love rejected. The child of Bethlehem will grow up and be nailed to a tree himself. The cross, like that Christmas tree, will look like the end of hope. But it won't be. Because Christmas is not the story of light that cannot be attacked. It is the story of light that cannot be extinguished. Saint John tells us, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." You can cut down a tree, but you cannot kill what it stands for. You can mock goodness, but you cannot erase it. You can wound a community, but you cannot stop God from being born again in human hearts.

There is a quiet line in the Christmas story that often goes unnoticed: "Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart." While others misunderstood, while danger grew, she held on to hope quietly. That is how God works—patiently, persistently, through ordinary people who refuse to give up.

Christ is born again at Christmas not because the world deserves him, but because the world needs him. So if you are carrying sadness, anger, disappointment, or fear for the future - know this: Christmas is for you. If you look at the world and wonder what kind of place it is becoming—Christmas is God's answer. Not a shout, but a child. Not force, but love. Not despair, but hope reborn.

And maybe that tree in Shotton Colliery will be replanted. Maybe another light will be switched on. But even if it isn't, something stronger has already taken root. Tonight, in the darkness, a child is born. And no one—no act of violence, no bitterness, no night—can cut him down forever.

Unto us a child is born. Unto us hope is given. And the light still shines.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY - There will be Children's Liturgy during the 9.30am Mass today. They will then take a break until the 4th January

THE LITTLE CHERUBS - Our parent and child group will meet on 7th January from 1.30pm – 3.00pm in the Hall.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION CLASS – resume Saturday, 10th January

RCIA – Saturday 3rd January at 10.30 in the Library.

CONFESSIONS

Sundays - 9.00am. – 9.20am. & 4.30pm. – 4.50pm.
Saturdays - 10.30am - 11.00am.

FAITH FORMATION GROUP – Will meet after the 9.30am Mass on the 18th January

CRIB OFFERINGS – This year our Crib collection will once again be donated to the 'The Catholic Children's Society'
Each year they help hundreds of families facing a crisis in their lives. By providing immediate emergency support via their Crisis Funds, they ensure families can access the practical help they need when they have nowhere else to turn. This has only been possible thanks to the generosity of their supporters. By leaving a donation at the crib, you can help us reach many more families in urgent need.

Christmas Offerings

Your offerings made at the Masses on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are your personal gift to the Parish Priest. There are Christmas Offering envelopes available at the back of the church. Thank you for your generosity. If you are a member of the Gift Aid scheme and use weekly envelopes, please use the special envelope in your pack.

PARISH CAROL SERVICE - Our Parish Carol Service will take place this evening at 6.15pm. Our special guest this year is the Deputy Mayor of Kingston.

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT - Sunday - Rosary and Benediction will resume on Sunday 25th January
Thursday - Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament will resume on the 8th January

THE ROSARY - Children are invited to gather in front of Our Lady's Altar after the 9.30am Sunday Mass for a decade of the Rosary.

TEA AND COFFEE – Sunday tea and coffee will resume on the 11th January. The Wednesday tea and coffee after the 12noon Mass resumes on the 31st December.

THANKYOU - to those who put up our crib and helped with the Christmas Trees in the Church.

Of Your Charity, please pray for the repose of the Soul of Tim Hayes.

His Requiem Mass will be on the 30th December at the Sacred Heart Church, Wimbledon at 11.45am

May He Rest in Peace.