

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A)

Saturday 20th	Monkwick	5.00 pm	George Farrell RIP
Sunday 21st	Church	8.00 am	All the deceased of the Hong Kong fire
	Church	10.30 am	Thanksgiving: Solomon Kevin
	Church	2.00 pm	Polish Mass
	Church	6.30 pm	Private Intention
	West Mersea	8.30 am	Parishioners
	Mile End	9.30 am	Yadi Khodaverdi RIP
Monday 22nd	Church	9.30 am	Monday of Advent Rev. Fr Matthew Thalanany RIP
Tuesday 23rd	Church	6.30 am	Tuesday of Advent Polish Advent Mass (Rorate)
	Church	9.30 am	Int:: Mary Egeolu
Wednesday 24th	Monkwick	5.00 pm	THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD Ints: Anne Kemp
	Church	6.30 pm	Des Fuller RIP
	Monkwick	10.00 pm	Polish Midnight Mass
	Church	12.00 am	Ints: For all Volunteers in the Parish
Thursday 25th	Church	8.00 am	CHRISTMAS DAY HOLYDAY OF OBLIGATION Canon Thomas Clarke
	Church	10.30 am	Anniversary: Luke Brennan RIP
	Church	2.00 pm	Polish Mass
	West Mersea	8.30 am	Int: Joe + Ray Canty + Family
	Mile End	9.30 am	Int: Una Nagle + Family
Friday 26th	Church	10.00 am	ST STEPHEN, First Martyr Deceased Relatives of Farrell Family
	Church	2.00 pm	Polish Mass
Saturday 27th	Church	9.30 am	ST JOHN, Ap, Ev Patricia Pearce RIP
Sunday 28th	Monkwick	5.00 pm	THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH (A) Beatrice Kinsella RIP
	Church	8.00 am	Mrs P. Wilkey RIP
	Church	10.30 am	David & Sue Kelly RIP
	Church	2.00 pm	Polish Mass
	Church	6.30 pm	Private Intention
	West Mersea	8.30 am	Parishioners
	Mile End	9.30 am	Private Intention
* PLEASE NOTE THAT ON 24 TH DECEMBER 2025 THERE WILL BE NO 9.30AM MORNING MASS / ROSARY OR MORNING PRAYERS			
➤ Cardinal Bourne Hall Enquiries/Bookings: colchester@brcdt.org			
➤ SVP (St Vincent de Paul Society): Tel: 07493 439427/email: colchestersvp@gmail.com			
Fr Philip will be attending his father- John Okoli RIP Funeral on 10 th January 2026 in Nigeria. Please keep John, Fr Philip + Family in your thoughts and prayers. Please note that Fr Philip will be away from 28/12/25-until 31/01/26.			
Please check out our Facebook page for all the latest Parish/Diocese/Vatican News/ Clergy + Church photos/videos. Please remember to like and follow our page!			



ST. JAMES THE LESS AND ST. HELEN

CATHOLIC CHURCH, COLCHESTER

WITH MERSEA, MILE END AND MONKWICK

1 PARISH, 4 CHURCHES, 1 COMMUNITY



St James the Less & St Helen

Parish Priest: Fr. Philip Okoli
Assistant Priest: Fr Gervase K. Moo CSSp

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St James the Less and St Helen RC Church, Colchester



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A)

Week Commencing 21st December 2025

Christmas is here. Let us pause together and look beyond the familiar lights and carols. These beautiful traditions point to something far deeper: God choosing to come very close to us. The crib reminds us that he did not arrive with power or display, but as one of us, entering fully into our human experience, even its messiness, to bring hope. This is not simply about remembering something from the past. Christmas is a living reality here and now. God continues to come to us today, in our families, in our real struggles, and in our moments of joy. The child in the manger reassures us that nothing in our lives is too small or unimportant for God. As we celebrate in our homes and as a parish family, let us make room for Christ in simple and practical ways, opening our hearts and allowing his love to shape our daily lives. May the peace announced by the angels take root within us and flow out into our community. I wish you and your families a joyful and richly blessed Christmas. May Christ's presence fill your homes with peace in the year ahead. Merry Christmas!

Fr Philip

PLEASE SEE MASS SCHEDULE FOR ALL CHANGES

DAILY (Mon-Fri)	Rosary/Divine Mercy	at 8.40 am
DAILY	Morning Prayer	at 9.15 am
CHRISTIAN MEDITATION	Wednesdays (Cardinal Bourne Hall)	at 8.00 pm
LEGION OF MARY	Fridays (Cardinal Bourne Hall)	at 7.30 pm



THE POPE'S INTENTIONS FOR DECEMBER: *For Christians in areas of conflict.* Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation and hope.

PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE We pray for the people of all war-torn countries, for all those suffering or afraid, that you will be close to them and protect them. We pray for world leaders, for compassion, strength, and wisdom to guide their choices and for the laying down of all weapons.



PRAYERS FOR THE SICK: We continue to pray for those parishioners we know who are sick and housebound especially Jimmy Clarin, Edwina Pastor, J Brian Critchley, Ron & Margaret Griffin, Margaret Hawkins, Valerie Thurston, Grace McCartney, Diana Irven, Mrs. Maureen McKenna, Peter Wyatt, Hilda Morah, Nicollas and Adam Campbell-Vencarto. We also pray for all people who are ill or are in need.

MARRIAGE MATTERS: (Isaiah 7:10-14 Romans 1:1-7 Matthew 1:18-25) ***Taking courage from love.*** The Gospel relates how Joseph overcame his serious doubts about Mary – and married her! She too had faced her own fears about the future – and said “Yes!” We too can have doubts and lack confidence in the future, but like Mary and Joseph we can take courage from our love for each other and God’s love for us too.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING: The Offertory Collection at all the Christmas Masses is, by tradition, the parishioners’ personal gift to the Clergy. In this Parish, Fr Philip and Fr Gervase are the beneficiaries, since this collection forms the main part of their personal annual income.

CHRISTMAS NATIVITY MASS: Unfortunately, this has been cancelled due to not having enough children volunteering to take part. We thank those parents who have put forward their children’s names and apologise to them because this event will not be happening this year. We hope that there will be better interest next year. Thank you.



CHRISTMAS PRAYER TREE: Please collect a red Christmas prayer tag from the box situated at the entrance of Church to decorate the tree. On one side please write your prayer request for a loved one, situation, our community, etc ... for Christmas; the other side of the tag is to remain blank. Please return your tag to the other section of box this weekend at the latest. *Just as your tree lights shine in the darkness, so your prayers are like a candle that lights up the lives of those in need.* Thank you

BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN DIRECTORY 2026: Copies are now available from the back of the Church at £3.20 per copy. Please leave money in Repository box on wall in Church Porch. Thank you.

THANK YOU to all our wonderful volunteers in this year’s Countdown to Christmas, for all the preparations, flower arrangements + church decorations, church cleaning, Victoria for the washing of all Altar linen, Jane Hopgood for setting up the crib in the Church Forecourt, all the volunteer who have helped in the preparations for Christmas.

CHRISTMAS MASS SERVICES

Christmas Eve, Wednesday 24th December 2025

Monkwick	5.00 pm	Vigil Mass
Priory Street	6.30 pm	Vigil Mass especially for families
Priory Street	12.00 am	Midnight Mass
Monkwick	12.00 am	Polish Midnight Mass

Christmas Day, Thursday 25th December 2025

Priory Street	8.00 am	Christmas Dawn Mass
Priory Street	10.30 am	Christmas Day Mass
Priory Street	2.00 pm	Polish Christmas Day Mass
Mersea	8.30 am	Christmas Dawn Mass
Mile End	9.30 am	Christmas Day Mass

St Stephens Day (Boxing Day), Friday 26th December 2025

Priory Street	10.00 am	Mass
Priory Street	2.00 pm	Polish Mass

MAY YOUR CHRISTMAS BE FILLED WITH HIS PEACE AND YOUR HEART WITH HIS JOY!

MESSAGE FROM JOSIE (*Josie's Kitchen*): On behalf of all my people, homeless and those in need. I want to thank Fr Philip and all the parishioners & congregation of St James the Less and St Helen for the wonderful donations received towards their Christmas presents, food, toiletries and warm clothes which will see them through Christmas and part of the winter. I am so overwhelmed and full of gratitude to you all for your great generosity. Merry Christmas & a Happy, healthy 2026 to you and your families, God bless Josie

THANK YOU: To Paul and Anna Horwood for setting up and beautifully decorating the Christmas crib in the Church. Please note that the Crib donations go to Brentwood Catholic Children’s Society.

THANK YOU TO OUR FILIPINO COMMUNITY: We would like to extend a heartfelt *thank you* to our Filipino Community who decorated our amazing Christmas Prayer Tree so beautifully this year – The tree truly looks magnificent!

CHRISTMAS CRIB COLLECTION IN AID OF THE BRENTWOOD CATHOLIC CHILDREN'S SOCIETY: In accordance with Diocesan policy, our Crib will remain in place until the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord [February 2nd] and these offerings will go to the (BCCS) Brentwood Catholic Children’s Society.



SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION AND FIRST HOLY COMMUNION: All completed Registration forms must be received **before the closing date of 31st December 2025.** Please drop completed application forms through Presbytery door (Red door) as soon as possible.

DONATIONS WINTER COATS / JACKETS (JOSIE'S KITCHEN): If anyone has a Winter coat, they no longer wear but is in good condition, please consider donating it. Items will be given to the homeless and those in need this Winter. Please drop into the Presbytery.

CHURCH CLEANING TEAM: Monday 22/12/25: **Team 1 with any volunteers welcome to come in and help them.** 29/12/25: **Team 2**

COFFEE MORNING ROTA: 21/12/25: SVP / 28/12/25: Matthew + Mariamma