

PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE SICK

Ann Berry, Christine Rogers, David Noble, Patrick Hullinson, Florence Ward, Barbara Murphy, Della McKernan, Dale Broom, Jackie Berry, Bernard Holt, Patricia Greene, Bernadette Greene, Eileen Butt, Frank Colgan, Marian Whyte, Stephen King, William Lyons, Beth Anistead-Cargan, Sue Zimny, Tom Cutler, Rosemary Keyes, Anne Holland, Caroline Hoad, Kevin McCormick, Ellen Sumaya and Sean Galvin.

PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE DEAD

Recently Deceased: Anna Martini, Rosalie Dodson, Anne Brown, Vincent O'Brien, Jack Reilly, Bob Cohen, Mary Walker.
Anniversaries: Jack Heavey and Richard Cavey.



A PRAYER FOR A NEW YEAR

God and Father of Our Lord, Jesus Christ,
 whose years never fail and whose mercies are new each morning,
 let the radiance of your Spirit renew our lives,
 warming our hearts and giving light to our minds,
 that we may pass the coming year in joyful obedience to your Word, firm in faith.
 we ask this through Him who is the beginning and the end,
 Your Son, Christ our Lord,
 who is alive and reigns with You
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit
 God now and for ever. Amen.

Christmas Collection

Sincere thanks for your generosity the collection raised £3,009.95

	Last week's collection was £922.03	£££	The monthly figure for Standing Orders: £1380.00
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	This week the Sacred Heart Lamp will burn for blessings on a New Year.		This week, the lamp at the crib burns for members of our family who are sick.
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WEEKLY NEWSLETTER 4TH DECEMBER 2026



OUR LADY OF GRACE PARISH, PRESTWICH

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SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Sunday 4th January	Holy Masses 9am & 11am
Monday 5th January	Holy Mass 12 noon
Tuesday 6th January Epiphany of the Lord	Holy Mass 12 noon Holy Mass 7pm
Wednesday 7th January	Holy Mass 12 noon
Thursday 8th January	Requiem Anna Martini 11.30am
Friday 9th January	Holy Mass 12 noon
Saturday 10th January	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament Confessions 11.40am-12.50pm, 4-4.40pm Holy Mass 11am Vigil 5pm

Epiphany of the Lord

The Epiphany of the Lord, a Holy Day of Obligation, is on Tuesday 6th January. There will be the usual Mass at 12noon and a Mass at 7pm in the evening for those who are working. If you are “chalking the door” to invite God’s blessing on your house then the formula this year is 20+C+M+B+26 This combines the names of the Magi: Caspar, Melchior, Balthasar with the Latin blessing *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*—May Christ bless this house. This is an ancient practice done on Twelfth Night (the evening of the 5th January) or Twelfth Day (6th January), the Epiphany.

Car Park

As work resumes on the construction site next door and the road is closed again, please be careful when parking. Traffic wardens are particularly vigilant in this area, even on Sundays and you must comply with the usual restrictions in adjacent streets. At this time, please only use the church car park when attending services or on church business.

Quiz and Bingo Night

To beat the January blues, The Parish Social Committee would like to announce a Quiz and Bingo Night on Friday January 30th at 7.30pm. Tickets only £2.

Food Bank

The SVP are now taking care of food bank donations for our parish. They can be placed in the basket at the foot of the choir-loft steps or in a basket near the side-door. Please **do not remove the basket**. This will be emptied most days and stuff stored in the house. **Any donations of dry and tinned food** will be gratefully received.

Crib Offerings

Different organizations make contact almost every week requesting to make an appeal in the parish. I do my best to limit these. For over two years, Laurice Jarman at Lepra has been pleading for help. Since this cause is so specific and close to the Gospel and since Sunday 25th January marks World Leprosy Day 2026, I have agreed. So as not to burden you with yet another collection at this time, I propose that this year’s Crib Offering—monies collected from the votives while the crib is in place—be sent to Lepra. If you’d like to make a particular donation then please place that in the crib-side votive wall box too.

Asleep on the Hay

It used to be a popular practice in days gone by, to pray at the crib and then to take home a few stalks of straw . It was said that if you did this you’d have a prosperous New Year. As a result, people used to put a wisp of straw in their wallets or purses as a keepsake or reminder. This might seem a bit daft to us now but in fact it wasn’t a silly thing but a pious practice rooted in the word of God.

In both Testaments, human existence is compared to straw and our short and insecure lives to grass blown by the wind. The prophet Isaiah instructs the people to cry, “All flesh is grass and its glory like the plants of the field - the grass withers and the plants fade.” Job says that, “Man who is born of woman is short of days and full of trouble - like grass he comes forth and withers away,” and the Apostle James reminds us that “You do not even know what will happen tomorrow! What is your life? You are grass that appears and withers”! And we can feel like this—can’t we?—especially at the start of another year. So, the wisps of straw in our wallets are, in fact, a reminder of our vulnerability and frailty. But they’re the reminder of something else too - this straw from the crib has another meaning.

We sing in the carols of Christmas that, “He came amid beasts of the stall who is Creator and Lord of us all,” - “the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.” Christ showed his glory amidst the animals in the crib and the bible’s word for glory means weight: the gravity of God. He lies on the straw - as a sign that he holds down our frail nature with his glory. Gives it weight so it isn’t blown away by the wind but can prosper to eternal life. Those believers before us didn’t put a whisp of straw in their purses in the hope that their money would multiply but to be a daily reminder that their security was in God, in eternal life with Jesus and not in worldly goods.

Today’s readings speak of the security that we people of faith enjoy - though another year has passed and our lives might seem to wither like the grass: - “The one who created me has given me a resting place - a dwelling place in which to receive my inheritance” of eternal life. In Jesus our nature has entered the heavenly places and we have received an inheritance of glory that belongs to the Son of God. Now, we have a gravity that allows us to pass through life with security and strength, unaffected by the winds of change.

This is why at Christmastime we hear our Gospel so often, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father.” The weight of this glory is upon us through baptism, so no longer do we cry ‘all flesh is grass’, no longer do we need coppers for our purses - Satan has fallen now and our names are written in heaven!