

# NEWS BULLETIN FROM THE PARISH OF SS ALBAN & STEPHEN



This Parish is served by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.  
 Parish Priest: Rev. TJ Plower MSC, Rev. Jimmy Stubbs MSC, Rev. Alan Neville MSC, Deacon Steve Pickard.  
 Tel: 01727 853 585 Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 9am - 1pm  
 14 Beaconsfield Road, St Albans, AL1 3RB. Parish Website: [www.albanstephen.org](http://www.albanstephen.org)  
 Items for the bulletin - e-mail: [stalbens@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:stalbens@rcdow.org.uk) by 12noon on Wednesdays  
 Youth Co-ordinator Sr. Anita O'Leary SSJG, e-mail: [anitaoleary@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:anitaoleary@rcdow.org.uk)  
 Safeguarding Lead Nicky Vellacott: [stalbenssg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk](mailto:stalbenssg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk) / 07882 566 020  
 Youth Website: [www.sasyouth.com](http://www.sasyouth.com). We are a Fairtrade Parish. Parish Secretary: Ivana Mearns

**23<sup>rd</sup> December 2018**



*The Parish Team and Leadership  
 wish you and your loved ones  
 all the blessings and joy  
 of the Christmas Season  
 and a peaceful and prosperous New Year*

Have you ever wondered why Mary travelled to visit Elizabeth? At first it is the excitement that comes through. Caught up in her wonderment at being pregnant and the news that her cousin is also expecting, Mary hurries off as quickly as she can. Perhaps the journey gives her time to reflect on everything that is happening.

The precious moment when Elizabeth greets her in a lovely glimpse of the close friendship between the two women. We know that Elizabeth is advanced in years, and that she and her husband Zechariah had not expected to ever have a child.



After this encounter, we are told that Mary stays on with Elizabeth for three months; as a younger woman, it is fair to assume that she is there to help and support her cousin.

Pope Francis has described the visit as a lesson in service and joy, as well as demonstrating great courage. 'Being of service and reaching out to others both require going out from themselves: going out to serve and meet others, to embrace another person. Through Mary's service towards others, through that encounter, our Lord's promise is renewed and makes it happen now, just as did then.'

With just two days to go until Christmas it is a busy time. But it is also a time that offers many opportunities to reach out, whether it is to build bridges with family members, offer out time to someone who is lonely, or support a friend or neighbour who find this time of year difficult.

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

## **Children's Nativity Liturgy** **Christmas Eve, 2pm in the Church**

Children are invited to come dressed in costumes reflecting the Christmas Story such as angels, shepherds, kings etc.

## **Christmas Cards**

Please take a few Christmas Cards and deliver to your neighbours, help spread the good news of Christmas!

## **Christmas Posters**

Available at the back of the Church.  
 Please take one to put in a window.

## **Christmas Market - Thank you!**

Thank you to all volunteers and visitors who came to the Market Stall on Saturday from where Christmas Card Invitations to attend the Services at Christmas were distributed.

## **Schools - Priests Form Signing**

Our priests will be available for form signing in the Parish centre on **Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> January, 4.30 - 6.30pm**

## **Christmas Day Lunch Invitation**

Lunch will be served in the parish hall from 12:30 - 2:30pm. If you or someone you know wishes to attend please contact David on 07543 400 650 or email [dave\\_markham@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dave_markham@yahoo.co.uk).

Everyone welcome from babies to pensioners.  
 Let's make it a fun, warm, happy Christmas for all!

Please pray for the repose of the souls of all those who have died recently including John Finnegan, Zenaida Enriquez, Shirley Hennessy, Josephine Gleeson, and May Flavin and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time, including Denis Ryan, Laurie Blythman and Nora Doran.

Please pray for all those who are ill at this time including Joe Smalls, Margaret Norris, Catherine Mayes, Betty Nicklin, Joe Spatafora, Magdalena Pedroz, Callum Gathard, Patrick Doran, Adrian Stack, Patricia McCarthy, Philomena Lines, Francisco Diaz, Catherine Elkin, John Moloney, Liz Smith, Carmen Mincu, Teresa Virrueta, Bernadette Marron, Mark Norris, Margaret Moloney, Alice Daly, Patrick Foley, Jim O'Neill, Mike Smith, Jack O'Mahoney, Carmaline Xavier, Margaret Malloney, Ruth O'Gorman, John Baxter, Jim O'Connor, Ida Daswa, Kathleen Murphy, Sr. Annie Bromham IBVM, Jim Moss, Geraldine McBride, Becki Vousden, Edie Hale, Vertina Fernandes, John Rowland, Veronica Hamilton, Claire Whitehead, Catrin Rees-Doherty, Sheila Doohan, Noah Gregorio, Gerry Smith, Edmond Mansfield & Teresa Hill may the Lord comfort them.

## Mass Intentions for the Week

23.12.2018

6pm Kate Kelly RIP  
8am Peggy and Alban Brampton RIP  
9am M'wick People of the Parish  
9.30am James Smith Anniv.  
11.30am Laurie and Mary Blythman Anniv.  
4pm Polish Mass  
7pm Pauline, Bella and John Taites RIP

### Monday – CHRISTMAS EVE

10am Mass  
2pm Children's Nativity Liturgy  
5pm First Mass of Christmas  
7pm Family Mass  
9pm Italian Mass  
11.30pm Carols & Midnight Mass

### Tuesday – CHRISTMAS DAY

8am Mass  
9am M'wick Mass  
9.30am Mass  
11.30am Mass  
4pm Polish Mass

### Wednesday – FEAST OF ST STEPHEN

11am Carmela Sellecchia Anniv.  
No evening Mass

### Thursday – St. John

10am Priests' Intentions  
No evening Mass

### Friday – The Holy Innocents

10am Marie Cuffe RIP  
7pm Raymond Bagge RIP

### Saturday – St. Thomas Becket

10am Bridie Orchard Anniv & Eric Orchard RIP  
6pm Alec Anderson RIP

### Next Sunday

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

8am Shaun Crowley RIP  
9am M'wick Anne Murphy Ints.  
9.30am People of the Parish  
11.30am William Pickard RIP  
7pm Tommy Staunton RIP

*Mass Intentions are subject to change  
if there is a funeral.*

### New Parish Website

Our new parish website is now available.

Please update your bookmarks to:

[www.albanstephen.org](http://www.albanstephen.org)

### Welcoming at Christmas

Please help to make our church a place of welcome to everyone this Christmas, particularly those who are visitors to our parish. A warm greeting, a friendly smile and a willingness to hand out missalettes are the only requisites. Please contact Sara on [sara.nash1@ntlworld.com](mailto:sara.nash1@ntlworld.com) if you can assist, giving the time of the Mass you are planning to attend. We especially need extra help at the 5pm and 7 pm Masses on Christmas.

### MSC Emergency Appeal Thank You

Many thanks to all Parishioners who donated to the MSC Emergency fund, helping people affected by disasters in India and Indonesia.

### Congratulations to Brendan Day!

Earlier this year, Cardinal Vincent Nichols accepted Brendan Day into the 3 year training program for the Permanent Diaconate. Priests and parishioners from our parish joined Brendan and his family at St Joseph's Church, Highgate on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> December as Brendan and three other men from the Westminster Diocese took another step along their journey at the Candidacy mass led by Bishop Paul McAleenan. This service saw Brendan and the other men move from the status of Aspirant to Candidate, for ordination to the Diaconate. Our prayers and good wishes are with Brendan on his journey towards ordination in the summer of 2021.

### Confirmations

Next Meeting for Parents

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> January, 8pm, in the Parish Hall

### First Holy Communions

Next Meeting for Parents

Monday 28<sup>th</sup> January, 8pm, in the Parish Hall

### Goodbye

*You may have heard that we are moving to Dubai for a few years at the end of the year. We may not get around to saying 'goodbye' to everyone, so from our hearts, thank you for your love and friendship. God bless you all. Wishing you a happy Christmas, from Stephen Nosowski, Diana van der Merwe, Ariane & Durant*

### First Reading:

Micah 5:1-4

God's majesty works through humble channels. It is the humble town of Bethlehem that will first see the Saviour.

### Second Reading:

Hebrew 10:5-10

This extract from Hebrews comprises a quote from Psalm 40 and a short commentary on it.

### Gospel Reading:

Luke 1:39-44

The gospel encounter known as the 'Visitation' sees Mary and Elizabeth exchange reactions to the wondrous happening in their lives.



## Dates for January

### Marriage Preparation Programme The Last Call!

A Marriage Preparation programme will be running in the Parish in January. If you are planning to get married in the next 12 months, please contact Fr. Jimmy as soon as possible, if you have not already done so.



### CHRISTMAS BREAK

#### English Conversation Classes

The sessions for ladies whose first language is not English will begin again on **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January** 1 - 2.30pm, in the Parish hall

#### Toddlers Group

Back after the Christmas Break on **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January** at 10.30am, in the Parish Hall

#### Children's Liturgy

Next session: **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> January**, 9.30am in the Parish Hall

#### Baptism Course

The pre-baptism session will be held on **Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2019, 10.30am, in Room 1 of the Parish Centre**. Parents who wish to baptise their **FIRST** child need to attend.

To book a place on this course, please call the presbytery on 01727 853 585.

Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 9am - 1pm. If you would like to baptise your **FIRST** child you will be unable to secure a baptism date before attending this session. Baptisms are held on Sundays at 1pm. If you live outside our Parish it is necessary to have a letter from your Parish Priest giving permission to baptise here.



### New Year Turkey and Tinsel Lunch

Parish Friends are arranging a New Year Turkey and Tinsel lunch for our senior parishioners from 12.45-3pm on **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> January**. Entertainment will be provided by our parish group "Saints Alive". If you would like to attend please put your name on the **Guest List** stating any dietary requirements and if you will need a lift. If you can provide help in the way of food, transport or help on the day please put your name the **Helpers List**. It is vital that you give your contact details if you can help - especially if you are offering food- so that we can get in touch with you to arrange what we would like you to bring. Both



Lists will be found in the Church Porch and Marshalswick Mass Centre. For further details contact Helen on [helen.bassill@ntlworld.com](mailto:helen.bassill@ntlworld.com) or tel: 07860 830 340

## Schools

### Loreto College

Loreto College are consulting on proposed changes to the criteria for admission in September 2020.

The main change is a proposal to remove the priority given to Practising Catholics over Baptised Catholics. The proposed criteria can be found on the school's website or a copy can be obtained from the school. Any comments on the proposed change should be made in writing to Mrs Williams (PA to the Head) at the school, or by email to [swilliams@loreto.herts.sch.uk](mailto:swilliams@loreto.herts.sch.uk) by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019.

### St. John Fisher Catholic School Starting Reception 2019

Families with a child born between 1 September 2014 and 31 August 2015 can now apply for a Reception place for September 2019. The Herts Online system for Reception applications <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/edlearn/admissions/> closes on 15<sup>th</sup> January. Additional forms will be needed, details can be found on [www.sjfisher.herts.sch.uk](http://www.sjfisher.herts.sch.uk) or are available from the school office.

### Ss Alban & Stephen Catholic Infant & Nursery School

**Starting Reception 2019:** Families with a child born between 1 September 2014 and 31 August 2015 are now able to apply for a Reception place for September 2019. The Herts Online system for applications <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/edlearn/admissions/> closes on Tuesday 15 January. Additional forms will be needed, details can be found on [www.ssasinfants.herts.sch.uk](http://www.ssasinfants.herts.sch.uk) or are available from the school office.

**Starting Nursery 2019:** Families with a child born between 1 September 2015 and 31 August 2016 are now able to apply for a Nursery place for September 2019. The application window for Nursery applications closes on Thursday 14 February. Applicants must complete our Application and Options Forms. These can be downloaded from [www.ssasinfants.herts.sch.uk](http://www.ssasinfants.herts.sch.uk) or are available from the school office. Parents are welcome to visit the school and a list of dates and times for Foundation Stage tours can be viewed on the school website - please call 01727 854643 to book your appointment.

**Admissions Policy:** Governors at Ss Alban & Stephen Catholic Infant & Nursery School are consulting on the 2020-21 Admissions policy. They would be pleased to receive any comments on this. Please follow this link for further info: <http://ssasinfants.herts.sch.uk/admissions/>

### Ss Alban and Stephen Catholic Junior School - Year 3 - 2019

Families with a child born between 1 September 2012 and 31 August 2013 can now apply for a Year 3 place for September 2019. The Herts Online system <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/edlearn/admissions/> closes on 15<sup>th</sup> January. Applicants must complete our school form and provide current proof of address and evidence of baptism (if applicable). Full details can be found on [www.ssasjm.herts.sch.uk](http://www.ssasjm.herts.sch.uk) or from the school office.

# NEWS BULLETIN

## The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Like others throughout the history given the title 'Emperor', Caesar Augustus must have felt himself master of all he surveyed. The supposed census, which provides the backdrop to the Christian story, conveys something of the influence of the empire he oversaw: 'the whole world' was to be included in the exercise.

The contrast with the circumstances into which Jesus was born couldn't have been more striking: A man and woman of already modest background, even less sure of their future now, in light of this unborn child of mysterious origin. Their inner uncertainty reinforced, perhaps, by the inhospitable city they encounter at the end of their journey.

Yet each had been encouraged, by an angel, not to be afraid.

Mary and Joseph kept their faith with the angel's message and, in time, a Saviour is born into the world. Few, even then, could see glory in a stable birth and it was given to still more marginal figures, those hill-country shepherds, to understand and acknowledge his coming.

Millions throughout the world, this Christmas night, will hear again of Caesar Augustus and may momentarily recall the great empire he once ruled. But it will probably end there. It is the figure - on the other hand - of the helpless child in the manger to whom most will seek to draw near, and it is within his gaze they will want to linger. Empires come and go, but Christ remains.

This is worth pondering. And maybe we can learn anew, this Christmas time, from the simple, yet steadfast faith which once sustained a humble couple on the road to Bethlehem.



## St Stephen

Saint Stephen was one of the first deacons of the Christian Church. He was the first Christian martyr. Stephen is believed to have been a Greek Jew who converted to Christianity. When the number of disciples increased, there was much confusion over the distribution of alms and the serving of the poor. Stephen's trustworthy character marked him out, and he was chosen as one of the seven deacons who would perform this task.

An excellent and well trusted orator, his preaching style was so effective that many Jews became worried about his success. They accused him of blasphemy and he was made to stand trial. At the supreme Jewish law court, the Sanhedrin, Stephen recounted the many mercies that God had given the children of Israel, and the ungrateful way in which they had repaid Him. He accused them of murdering Jesus, whose coming, he said, had been foretold by Moses. This angered the crowd and he was dragged out onto the streets. He was then stoned to death according to the law at that time. As he was dying, Stephen prayed that the Lord would receive his spirit and that his killers would be forgiven. This event was witnessed by St Paul. It is believed Stephen died around the year 34CE. He is believed to have been initially buried in a grave to the north of Jerusalem, but this body was exhumed and moved to a new grave outside the Damascus Gate. This is where the stoning is believed to have taken place. Stephen is the patron saint of altar servers, deacons, headaches, horses, coffin makers, and masons. He is often represented carrying a pile of rocks or with rocks on his head. St Stephen's Feast Day is **26<sup>th</sup> December** and is referenced in the Christmas carol *Good King Wenceslas*. As one of our patron saints, the 11am Mass on the 26th will be a special celebration of Stephen's life.



## St Albans Sleep Out Thank you!

Centre 33, Open Door, Emmaus, Herts Young Homeless and The Living Room would like to thank everyone who participated in any way to ensure the charity Sleep Out on 7<sup>th</sup> December was successful. Some 124 brave people slept out in the cold under the stars and raised over £15,000 to date in sponsorship to help fund the work of the charities in supporting homeless people and in addressing some of the causes of homelessness.

### Sponsor our Youngest Rough Sleeper

If you wish to support Centre 33, we would be most grateful if you would sponsor Alice, who just turned five, who slept out in her unicorn onesie. Search for 'Alice Markham Centre 33 Virgin giving'.

### Old Car Wanted - £400

A parishioner needs to buy a cheap car for an older single lady in urgent need. Generous parishioners now allow him to spend £400. If you are trading in or have an unwanted car please call or text Tim Stevens 07875 848 138

### Parish of Ss Alban & Stephen

Baptisms:  
by appointment

## You Can Be Santa

The Santa team would like to thank everyone for another magnificent response to this year's appeal. All gifts have now been received enabling Santa to deliver to more than 150 recipients this week. A special word of thanks to the visitors who have helped so much in this process. We have received many grateful responses from those whom Santa has already visited. Once again you have helped to spread the real joy and true message of Christmas!