



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

14 Beaconsfield Road, St Albans, AL1 3RB

Office Hours Monday-Friday 9am-1pm Tel: 01727 853 585

E-mail: stalbans@rcdow.org.uk Website: www.albanstephen.org

YouTube: [youtube.com/c/SsAlbanandStephenCatholicChurch](https://www.youtube.com/c/SsAlbanandStephenCatholicChurch)

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT - 29 NOVEMBER 2020



VirginMoneyGiving

Parish Team: Fr Michael O'Boy (Parish Priest) Fr Julian Davies (Assistant Priest)

Rev. Steve Pickard (Deacon) Mrs Angela Gray (Parish Administrator)

Safeguarding Lead: Mary Harber / stalbanssg3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk / 07976 277059

We are a Fairtrade parish

Fr Julian writes...

For most people going on an adventure evokes the idea of exploring new ground, stepping out into the unknown, leaving things as if by chance. It can often mean doing something untested by reason or experience, and often alone. It has the whiff of defiance, wanting to paintbrush the future or at least trying to mould it around oneself.

Adventure through Christian spectacles looks very different. Christians can be authentically adventurous because they are advent people. Stepping out adventurously in the adventure of life is no blind chance for the followers of Jesus Christ but an act of faith which knows that the future is in God's. It means doing things which in the eyes of the world may be foolhardy or reckless. In as much as we act in accordance with God's will, and with a clear conscience, God loves our good intentions and underwrites what we do. We can be bold and resolute. He wants us to have a confidence, born of faith and the experience of his love. For us advent people the future is not the outcome of blind chance, some kind of lottery but predetermined. The landscape is not unknown. We know the broad brushstrokes of what is going to happen, even some of the finer details. We have heard it for two thousand years.

The season of Advent lasts only four weeks, a poignant time when we remember Jesus' first coming among us but also that he will one day come again. In reality however for us every season is advent because in the Christian life everything inclines towards the coming of Christ. And coming for us is a better word than his return because he has never entirely left us. When he comes again, our experience of him to date will be totally eclipsed by the glory of his presence. So let's be Adventurous... in Christ, with Christ and for Christ. Be adventurous in the advent way!

Arrangements for booking weekend and weekday Masses - From Friday 4th December we will once again be celebrating public masses in church. Advance booking is not necessary for weekday masses, other than the mass on Friday evening. Booking in advance will still be needed for Friday evening and for weekend masses as there are high numbers of attendees and a limited number of spaces in church. Stewards will still need to take the names and contact details of those attending weekday masses for contact tracing purposes. To reserve a place for Friday evening or weekend masses, please contact the parish office during office hours, 9am-1pm on weekdays, on 01727 853585 or at stalbans@rcdow.org.uk. Please note that bookings can only be made one week in advance.

If you are able to help with stewarding for any of our masses, and you are under 70, please consider giving up an hour a week to volunteer. For further information, please contact Melanie O'Neill at mjoneill5@btinternet.com.

Statements from the Bishops' Conference and the Cardinal This week, following their autumn Plenary Meeting, the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales have issued a statement on safeguarding. Please [click here](#) for a copy of the statement and [click here](#) for a personal statement from Cardinal Vincent Nicols.

SACRAMENTS AND LITURGY

Baptisms Please contact Fr Julian for baptism enquiries at juliandavies@rcdow.org.uk.

First Holy Communion & Confirmation 2021 Parents and guardians for those due to celebrate their First Holy Communion (Year 3 and above) and Confirmation (Year 10 and above) next year are invited to register. This year we are asking people to register online. Please go to the 'Sacraments' tab of the parish [website](#) and click on either 'First Communion' or 'Confirmation' where you will find the relevant registration point. *Please note that if your son or daughter was a part of last year's programme but has yet to receive Holy Communion or be Confirmed, there is no need to register again.*

Sacrament of Reconciliation If you are in need of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, please contact the Presbytery. Confessions will be held in the open air and will observe social distancing.

Anointing of the Sick The current restrictions allow for end of life care, so it is possible for those who are dangerously ill to be anointed at home or while in residential care (should the care or nursing home permit this). Currently we are not allowed into Watford General Hospital. If somebody is admitted into Watford General, or any hospital, and they wish to be visited or anointed please contact the hospital chaplaincy. Where the person is incapacitated, the request will need to come from their next of kin. The hospital number for Watford General is 01923 244 366.

November Masses for the Holy Souls

Sunday 29 November 11.30 am

Deceased Spouses

Monday 30 November 10.00 am

Deceased Brothers and Sisters

Family Advent and Christmas Activities Advent is a time of preparation for our hearts and minds for the anniversary of the Jesus' birth. There are many activities online to help families prepare for Christmas: see [this newsletter](#) from the Diocese of Westminster and CAFOD's [Family Advent Calendar 2020](#). The Advent wreath and candles form part of our spiritual preparation for Christmas. The wreath can be a simple drawing to colour, or something more elaborate. To make your own, [click here](#) for an example or search google images for 'advent wreath craft - printables'). In our church, the wreath is made of various evergreens to signify continuous life. The circle of the wreath, which has no beginning nor end, symbolises the everlasting life we find in Christ. The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent, and one candle is lit each Sunday. Three of the candles are purple as this is a liturgical colour that signifies a time of prayer, penance and sacrifice.

The first purple candle symbolises hope; the second purple candle represents faith; the third pink candle symbolises joy and is lit on the third Sunday of Advent reminding us of the joy the world experienced at the birth of Jesus. The fourth purple candle symbolises peace and marks the final week of prayer and penance as we wait for the birth of Jesus. A white candle symbolising the purity of Jesus is placed in the middle of the wreath and is lit on Christmas Day.

Children's Liturgy online You can download this week's 'Liturgy of the Word with Children' from the Diocese of Westminster [here](#) or from our website, under [Groups - Liturgy](#).

The Mark 10 Mission is a brand-new project created by a team of young lay people to share the Gospel with children. The episodes are completely free and have been used in many primary schools across the country each week since September. Please click on [this link](#) to see those episodes available. A new episode is added each Friday.

Resources added to our website Please see the Liturgy Group section of our website (via Groups tab on top bar) for some new resources we have added to help and support parishioners during the current period.

These include:

- A 'Guide to Prayer' containing practical hints that parishioners have found helpful.
- A list of prayer and other resources that parishioners may find useful in supporting their daily prayer life as suggested in the recent parish questionnaire.
- A weekly 'Liturgy of the Word for Children' information sheet for those families following mass online.

Private Prayer The church is open for Private Prayer, during which the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed, as follows:

- Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday 11am - 12 Noon
- Thursday 7 - 8 pm

PARISH LIFE

Parish Council Meeting 11 November 2020 The PPC has continued to meet monthly during the lockdown using Zoom. For a summary of its November meeting please [click here](#). In particular, please note that discussion on preparing a **virtual liturgy for children** is ongoing and that plans are underway to offer a **takeaway Christmas Day lunch** to those who would usually have attended the Christmas Day lunch in the Parish Centre. There will be a **Penitential Service** on Saturday 12th December involving a liturgy of the Word, Homily and Examination of Conscience. This will be followed by a time of Adoration. The Sacrament of Reconciliation itself will be offered by appointment. There is a desire to form a communications group to work with Fr Michael to develop a **communications strategy**. An appeal will be made for interested parties. The **next PPC meeting** will be held on Wednesday, 9th December at 5pm.

Advent Talks: Towards Christmas and Beyond This year's Advent talks will be given by Fr Michael and Fr Julian. The immediate aim of the series is to reflect on our current situation, through the lens of the Christmas story, but it is also hoped that they will stimulate our preparation for next year's Parish Assembly and the formation of our pastoral priorities. They will be streamed at 8pm as follows:

Wednesday 2nd December - Walking in Hope
Monday 7th December - Worship and Charity
Monday 14th December - Windows: Within and Without

Please [click here](#) for a link to the livestream page which you can also access via the website homepage.

Following each talk there will be an opportunity for questions, but in addition, after the first three talks, there will be a series of Zoom discussion groups on the following Friday afternoon at 1pm, Friday evening at 8pm, and Sunday afternoon at 12.30pm. To join the discussion group meetings on Zoom, please [click here](#) and join the meeting using meeting ID: 963 0384 6300 and passcode: 210940.

Christmas day takeaway lunch invitation If you, or someone you know, wishes to receive a Christmas day lunch delivered to your home, please contact David on 07543 400650 or email dave_markham@yahoo.co.uk by 7th December.

Christmas day lunch - call for help! We have a cook, but help would be appreciated to plate up food, to wash up afterwards and for drivers to deliver the meals please. Drivers must be DBS checked. If you would like to help, or offer lifts, please contact David on 07543 400650 or email dave_markham@yahoo.co.uk.

Communications Do you have an interest in how we as a parish community communicate, not only among ourselves, but with the world at large? Do you have skills and experience that may help? Would you like to be part of a Parish Communications Group? Would you be willing to join a communication strategy group? If so, please email Fr Michael at michaeloboy@rcdow.org.uk

You Can Be Santa 'Voucher' Scheme 2020 Thank you to everyone who donated so generously to this year's scheme. We are now in the process of allocating and distributing all the vouchers. We are delighted that we can give every child identified by the YCBS team this year the gift of a voucher. Thank you also for all your support and good wishes for the YCBS scheme, it is very much appreciated.

Job Opportunities at SPEC Retreat Centre We are currently recruiting a Programmes Senior Retreat Leader. This is live-out job role which will be crucial to restarting our retreat programmes once we start emerging from the current pandemic restrictions. Closing date 7th December. More information and an application form can be found [here](#).

Join a virtual on-line prayer group Several parish groups have continued to meet on-line using Zoom, since the start of the pandemic. All would welcome new members. These include several of the 'Small Groups' which will be sharing on scripture/other faith topics, typically every two weeks. Details of groups currently meeting:

- Mondays 8pm (2 x per month) Richard Exact 07976 252309
- Alternate Tuesdays 2-3.30pm Mike and Sylvia White (01727 854596; whitemw@talktalk.net)
- Alternate Tuesdays 7.30pm Stan Grabecki (01727 765549; grabecki@hotmail.com;))
- Wednesdays 7.30pm Brendan Roche - A new group set up at the start of the pandemic (contact parish office stalbins@rcdow.org.uk).
- Saturday 9am Parish Men's Group currently sharing on the lives of the Saints. (Richard Exact - 07976 252309; D4dstalbins@gmail.com)

Certificates of Catholic Practice for Primary and Secondary School Admissions Fr Michael will be available at the Presbytery on Wednesday 9 December 4-6pm. No appointment is required and forms will be provided by Fr Michael. It is not necessary for your child to be present.

St. John Fisher School wishes to appoint a Midday Supervisory Assistant to start in January to help with the supervision of the children during the lunch break from 12:00 to 1:30pm. The position is for 5 days a week, term time only, but can be flexible. If you enjoy working with children, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Rosemary Miles SBM for an application form at sbm@sjfisher.herts.sch.uk. The closing date is 4 December.

Virgin Money Giving If you would like to donate to the parish using Virgin Money Giving, please click [here](#) or use the QR code at the top of the newsletter.

Contactless Giving Point A contactless giving point is now located in the Church porch. To make an offering using contactless giving select the amount you wish to donate and tap the top of the machine with your mobile phone or card.

Standing Orders In view of the current lockdown we would ask you to consider making your offertory contribution by standing order if you do not already do so. If you would like to gift aid your donations, but have not yet completed a gift aid form, please consider doing so. To find details of how to set up a standing order or complete a gift aid form, please click on the 'Donate to the Parish' button on the home page of the [website](#) or by emailing or phoning the Parish Office. In 2019 we received on average £6,788.05 a month in standing orders. Between January and March 2020, the average total was £6,724.25 a month. By June 2020 this had increased to £7,765.14 a month and, in October, it stood at £9,044.80. Thank you to those who have traditionally given via standing order and to those who have set them up.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Sunday 29 November - 1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

6pm Vigil Mass Marg & Brian Battles, Bridie & Jimmy Brady

9.30am Mass Francis Peter Hughes

11.30am Mass People of the Parish

7pm Mass William Tunney (RIP)

Reading 1, Isaiah 63:16-17,19, 64:1,3-8

Responsorial Psalm, 80

Reading 2, 1 Corinthians 1:3-9, Gospel, Mark: 13:33-37

Monday 30 November - St Andrew

10 am Mass Holy Souls

7 pm Mass Sean McDonagh (Ints)

Reading 1, Romans 10:9-18

Responsorial Psalm, 19, Gospel, Matthew 4:18-22

Tuesday 1 December Advent feria

10 am Mass Funeral Mass for Pat Pearce

Reading 1, Isaiah 11:1-10

Responsorial Psalm, 72, Gospel, Luke 10:21-24

Wednesday 2 December Advent feria

10 am Mass Berti family (Ints)

7 pm Mass Martin McDonagh (Ints)

Reading 1, Isaiah 25:6-10

Responsorial Psalm, 23, Gospel, Matthew 15:29-37

Thursday 3 December - St Francis Xavier

10 am Funeral Mass for Angelo Castaldo

Reading 1, Isaiah 26:1-6

Responsorial Psalm, 118, Gospel, Matthew 7:21, 24-27

Friday 4 December Advent Feria

10 am Mass Karen Brennan (RIP)

7 pm Mass Peter Blessing (RIP)

Reading 1, Isaiah 29:17-24

Responsorial Psalm, 27, Gospel, Matthew 9:27-31

Saturday 5 December Advent Feria

Reading 1, Isaiah 30:19-26

Responsorial Psalm, 147, Gospel, Matthew 9:35-10:1, 6-8

Sunday 6 December - 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

6pm Vigil Mass Linda Peters (Ann)

9.30am Mass Anna Awinti (Ann)

11.30am Mass Peter Okoro (RIP)

7pm Mass Conway and Mary Lee Berners-Lee (Ann)

PLEASE PRAY

Together with Churches together in St Albans, this week we pray for the leaders and members of the Hatfield Road Methodist Church.

For those suffering with Coronavirus and for all the Sick including

For those who have died recently including Pat Pearce, Angelo Castaldo and Eric Gosling.

Attendance at the funeral masses for Pat Pearce and Angelo Castaldo is limited to 30 invited mourners.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Linda Peters, Anna Awinti, Jim Lewis, Helena Cuneen, Conway and Mary Lee Berners-Lee.

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace

St Francis Xavier (1506 - 1552) - 3 December Francis was born in the Basque country of Spain in 1506. He met Ignatius Loyola when he was a student in Paris, and was ordained priest in 1537. In 1541 the Pope sent him as a missionary to India, and he spent the rest of his life in the East, preaching the Gospel in Goa and Malacca. He made many converts and fought against the exploitation of the native population by the Europeans. He spent two years on a successful mission to Japan, laying the foundations of many Christian communities; and in 1552, after entering China secretly to preach the Gospel there, he died of fever and exhaustion on the Chinese island of Shangchwan. Initially buried on the island, his body was moved to Goa where he remains interred in a silver casket. Several of his bones have been removed. His right arm, used to bless converts, is on display in Rome. Another arm bone is kept on Coloane island, in Macau, now part of China. Xavier was canonised at the same ceremony as Ignatius of Loyola. He is a patron of Catholic missions.

St Andrew the Apostle - 30 November Andrew was born in Bethsaida, in Galilee, and worked as a fisherman. He is thought to have been a disciple of St John the Baptist. He was one of the first to follow Jesus and introduced his brother, Simon Peter, to him. As one of the 12 Apostles he was widely venerated in ancient times, and became patron saint of Scotland because according to legend, some of his bones were brought there and buried at the place where the town of St Andrew's now stands. It is also said that Scotland adopted him as their patron because being the brother of Saint Peter, it gave the Scots considerable political leverage with the Pope in pleading for help against the belligerent English! Andrew was martyred by crucifixion in Patras. He was bound, rather than nailed, to an X-shaped cross or a "saltire." It is believed Andrew requested to be crucified this way, because he deemed himself "unworthy to be crucified on the same type of cross as Jesus. He is also the patron saint of fishermen and singers.