



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT - 28 November 2021



Contactless Giving

Parish Team: Fr Michael O'Boy (Parish Priest) Fr Jonathan Stogdon

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

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We are a Fairtrade parish

Fr Michael Writes...

Retiring Collection for Parish SVP

For nearly ten years, as a teenager and student, I spent a couple of weeks each summer working on a children's camp run by the Society of St Vincent De Paul. The aim of the camp was to give young children a holiday they might never have had. Many of the children who holidayed on the camp were recommended by a local or parish SVP. It is these local or parish groups that are the backbone of the SVP, reaching out in parish after parish to needy families and individuals, helping them with ordinary everyday needs; food, furniture and the like. Covid has hit our parish SVP quite hard. Partly, because regular meetings have been impossible, but also because the regular collections taken to support their work have not happened. Next weekend we will have a retiring collection to support the work of our parish SVP. I know people have already been very generous in their support of our You Can Be Santa initiative. Due to your generosity we will be able to reach out to over 200 children in our parish and the immediate area. Please help make that generosity live through the year by supporting next week's retiring collection.

Communications Group

The welcome we afford people, especially newcomers, was one of the key questions raised and challenges acknowledged during the recent Parish Assembly. In response we are actively considering how the church forecourt and porch might be refurbished so as to improve the sense of welcome. However, the look and feel of the church forecourt and porch as well as important presence of welcomers are not the only touchstones of welcome. For example, knowing what is going on is an integral part of feeling welcome. To this end the Parish Assembly endorsed the establishment of a communications group whose principal aim is to communicate what we are doing, what we hope to do, and to celebrate what has been achieved. I have already written to those who have expressed an interest in this project, but in case you have expressed an interest and not heard from me, or in case, having read this current piece, you would be interested in joining a Parish Communications Team please note there is to be an exploratory meeting on Tuesday 7 December at 7.30pm in the Sacred Heart Centre, next to the church.

Drainage Works

Those of you who attend Mass in the week or have passed by may well have noticed the drainage works being undertaken in front of the Sacred Heart Centre. For some while, during heavy rainfall, water has been leaking, at times pouring, into the church basement/boiler room. The downpipes and drains that serve this part of the complex take all the rain water from the church roof and are too small for the volumes of water involved. As a result, the water is overflowing, drenching the ground, and finding its way into the basement. I understand from those doing the work that the flow of water has been strong enough to create a cavity, washing away the earth beneath the tarmac and its hard core foundation. My hope, by time you read this newsletter, is that the works will have been completed. These have been costed at £8,136.

Synodal Journey Thanks to all who have already participated in our Synod process. This is a final reminder that the deadline for completed surveys (group and individual) to be returned is Tuesday 30 November and that the face-to face meeting will take place in the Sacred Heart Parish Hall on Wednesday 1 December at 7.45pm; everyone is welcome to attend whether or not you have already completed a survey.

Preparing for the Synod May we continue to be open to listening and respecting the views of others in our Synod journey and allow the Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts on how the church may grow.

Area Listening Event As part of the Westminster Synodal Pathway, we are invited to join Bishop Paul McAleenan at an Area Listening Event on Monday 29 November from 7-9pm at Garston Parish, Crown Rose, Garson, Watford WD25 0NE. All are welcome, and places can be booked by emailing catadmin@rcdow.org.uk.

SACRAMENTS AND LITURGY

Sacrament of Baptism The next baptism preparation course is to be held on Saturday 4 December at 11.30am. Please email Fr Jonathan at jonstogdon@rcdow.org.uk.

First Holy Communion 2022 Parents and guardians of children currently in Year 3 or above are invited to register their child online before 31 December via the parish [website](#).

Confirmation 2022 Parents and guardians of those due to celebrate their confirmation next summer (currently year 10 or above) are invited to register online before 31 December via the parish website. Please go to the 'Sacraments' tab and click on 'Confirmation'.

Marriage Preparation If you are intending to get married, please note the Diocese requires at least six months' notice and couples are expected to complete a preparation course. Please email Fr Michael on michaeloboy@rcdow.org.uk.

Prayers for the Sick If you would like to include someone in the prayers for the sick, please contact the presbytery.

PARISH NEWS

Fr Jimmy Golden Jubilee Fr Jimmy Stubbs MSC who served in our parish from 2012 until 2019 will be celebrating his Golden Jubilee of his ordination on the 18 December and a Mass for his intentions will be said at our 11.30am Mass on Sunday 12 December. The Lay Associates of the MSCs invite you to send him messages of congratulations and good wishes by posting cards or letters into the Presbytery clearly marked Fr Jimmy, or by sending electronic messages to hearttoheartstalbins@gmail.com. Please send any messages in by 5 December so we have time to collate them and post to Cork in good time.

Coffee and Tea After Weekday Mass Refreshments will be served in the Sacred Heart Centre after 10am mass next Wednesday 30 November. Everyone welcome.

Christmas Day Lunch We hope to be able to offer lunch on Christmas Day to any parishioner who may otherwise be alone that day. Assuming pandemic conditions do not worsen, the meal will be served at 1pm in the parish hall as in previous years. We already have volunteer cooks, but volunteers are needed to help set up the room on Christmas Eve, give lifts on the day, and clear up afterwards. If you are able to help, please email the parish office stalbins@rcdow.or.uk headed 'Christmas Day Lunch'.

Traidcraft Fair traded goods will be available after all Masses on 4/5 December. All proceeds go to Cafod. We are now able to accept credit/debit card payments. Please come and look at our range of foods, beverages, confectionery and Christmas cards/gifts; all support is greatly appreciated. For more details, or to place and order - contact Maureen 765549, grabecki@hotmail.com.

BINGO - by The Knights of St. Columba, at 8.00pm in the Parish Hall on Friday 10 December in aid of "LIFE" Admission is 50p, to include refreshments. Everyone welcome.

C.W.L. Tuesday 7 December after 10am mass. Come and enjoy mince pies and sherry for a pre-Christmas get together also a Christmas quiz. Cost £5

Knit and Natter The next meetings for the knit and natter group will be held on 7 & 21 December. Everyone welcome.

Coffee and Tea After Weekend Mass Coffee and tea will be available in the Parish Centre coffee bar after 11.30am Mass on the first Sunday of the month. Coffee and tea is also available after the 6pm Saturday evening Mass. Can you help make and serve the refreshments, once a month? If so, please contact the parish office.

Praying together over Advent. You are invited to join a small group of parishioners who meet in the Cafe area of the Hall at 7.45pm: our next meetings are on Tuesday 30 November and 14 December. We will be looking at the life of the Holy Family at the time of the birth of Jesus, what life is like today in the Holy Land and examining our own lives. Our starting point is the Annunciation and we will be using the beautiful Friends of the Holy Land Advent & Christmastide booklet. Our group is confidential, you can come when you are able and there are no expectations on anyone. More details from Stan grabecki@hotmail.com, 765549. If you wish to order a copy of the book, please use the link - [Friends of the Holy Land booklet](#).

Advent Reflection for Women Ladies, you are invited to a shared Advent liturgy and reflection on Saturday 11 December at 10:30am in the Church Hall. Tea/Coffee, Soup and bread rolls will be served, finish at 12:30pm.

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation Group The next gathering of the Justice, Peace & Integrity team (JPIC) will be in the Sacred Heart Centre on 20 January 2022.

Developing Our Faith as Adults Our Parish Assembly highlighted the need to promote and facilitate ongoing faith formation for adults beyond sacramental preparation. A key aspect of formation is the need to deepen our understanding of the Mass. The Adult Faith Formation group will investigate ways to address this, in addition to organising parish retreats and pilgrimages, coordinating Lent and Advent courses, and promoting the small prayer communities in our parish. Could you help? The AFF group will meet for just one and a half hours each month either via Zoom or by face to face meeting in the Parish Centre. If you are interested in planning adult faith formation in our parish, please email the parish office on stalbins@rcdow.or.uk heading the email 'AFF'.

North Wales Retreat at Holywell, Flintshire. Friday 3 to Monday 6 December. Leader Sr Seraphim. Weekend

includes pilgrimages to St Winefride's and St Pio's shrines. Full Board accommodation at the Bridgettine Guest House £250. Details David Edwards 765216.

SCHOOLS & NURSERIES

St. Alban & St. Stephen Catholic Primary School & Nursery The application process for Reception & Nursery admissions in 2022-23 is now open. Please join us at our Open Morning on 15 December from 9.30-11.00am to find out more. Please email admin@ssaas.herts.sch.uk if you wish to book a place. Full details on how to apply can be found on our [website](#).

St John Fisher School Consultation The Governors of St John Fisher Catholic Primary School have recently taken the decision to initiate the consultation process regarding the acquisition of academy status and joining the existing All Saints Catholic Academy Trust. The governors have produced a booklet on the implications of becoming an academy which is available on the school's [website](#). The closing date for consultation is 10 December 2021.

St Columba's College application deadlines and entrance assessments for September 2022 entry The application deadline for 11+ and 13+ entry in September 2022 is Friday 3 December. The 11+ assessments will take place on Saturday 11 December and Saturday 8 January. The 13+ assessments will be held on Friday 14 January. The deadline for Sixth Form applications is Monday 13 December. Interviews will be arranged by appointment. Prep School assessments for September 2022 entry will be held on Saturday 8 January. We offer Academic and Music Scholarships at ages 11+, 13+ and 16+, and Sports Scholarships at 16+. A number of means-tested Bursaries are also available to Senior School students. Parents and guardians who wish to apply for a Bursary should request a Bursary Application Pack when they apply. Application forms can be found on our [website](#) or by contacting the Admissions Registrar by [email](#) or 01727 892040).

OUR WIDER COMMUNITY

Five Bible Studies on the Advent Sunday Gospels Mauro Iannicelli will break-open the forthcoming Advent Sunday Gospels with in-depth teaching and stimulating questions. As a result, you will experience Sunday Mass in a new way! Five Wednesdays: 24 Nov, 1 Dec, 8 Dec, 15 Dec, 22 Dec (7-8pm UK Time). Free of Charge. Live sessions on YouTube. Info and registration [here](#).

Westminster Diocese's Agency for Evangelisation - online sessions with Fr Richard Nesbitt over Advent and Christmastide. The dates are Tuesday 30 November, Thursday 9, 16 & 23 December, Tuesday 4 January, at 8.00pm. Please register [here](#) beforehand. You will then receive the Zoom link details. The book is available at £9.99 including UK p&p, by emailing [here](#). Also available as an e-

book at a price of £7.99, using Issuu. Browse the first chapter of the book [here](#) before you buy.

Caritas Advent Giving Calendar - Back due to popular demand! Our Advent Giving Calendar is an advent calendar with a difference. Each day a different item is suggested for donation to a local food bank or food project. Please leave any donations at the back of the church and they will be distributed to local foodbanks. The calendar can also be accessed by clicking [here](#).

CAFOD World Gifts Like many women around the world, Garmah in Liberia had no legal rights to her home when her husband died. CAFOD worked with local experts to help her and now Garmah and her children live rightfully and happily together in their family home. "I feel safe, my children have a place to rest their head and I can make a garden to feed them and myself. God sent redeemers to fight for my land rights. I am overfilled with joy." Thank you for your support which enables hundreds of women like Garmah remain in their homes during times of struggle. Other examples of our work can be found in our World Gift catalogues or website worldgifts.cafod.org.uk

Advent Retreat for Young Adults (18-30s) with the Assumption Sisters on Saturday 4 December in Kensington. Young people are invited for a day retreat (10am-5pm) to prepare for Christmas, with teaching, workshops, prayer, confessions and mass. Venue: Milleret House, 23 Kensington Square W8 5HN. Donations only. Register [here](#). tramy@assumptionreligious.org.

PARISH ADMINISTRATION

Second collection - SVP There will be a second collection next weekend to support the work of SVP.

Parish Centre Please email the parish office with booking requests or queries and visit the [Parish Centre Hire](#) page of our website for more details of facilities available.

Gift Aid If you have previously gift aided your standing order or envelope donations but no longer pay tax or are unable to gift aid your contributions, please contact the parish office so that we can amend our records.

Donating to our Parish Please consider making your offertory contribution by standing order and gift aiding your donations, if you do not already do so. Please see our [website](#) or click [here](#) for a standing order, gift aid form and our bank details. Thank you for your generosity.

Virgin Media Giving Please be aware that VMG, the online donation platform used throughout the diocese, is to close at the end of November. From then monthly donations will be cancelled automatically by VMG. The diocese will be setting up new online giving tools but the best way to support the parish is by standing order.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 27 November VIGIL FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

6pm Mass Winifred Sudell (RIP)

Sunday 28 November FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8am Mass People of the parish

9am Mass Richard Field (RIP)

(*St John Fisher School, Marshalswick*)

9.30am Mass Paddy Chronnell (RIP)

11.30am Mass Helena Cuneen (Ann)

6pm Mass Mary Malik (Ann)

Reading 1 Jeremiah 33:14-16, Responsorial Psalm, 25

Reading 2, 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2

Gospel, Luke 21:25-28,34-36

Monday 29 November - Advent feria

10am Mass Francis Peter Hughes (Ann)

7pm Mass Vito La Monica (RIP)

Reading 1, Isaiah 2:1-5

Responsorial Psalm, 122, Gospel, Matthew 8:5-11

Tuesday 30 November - ST ANDREW

10am Mass Patrick Doran (RIP)

Reading 1, Romans 10:9-18

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

Wednesday 1 December - Advent feria

10am Funeral Mass for Ellen Mary Small

7pm Mass Mary Jones (RIP)

Reading 1, Isaiah 25:6-10

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

Thursday 2 December - Advent feria

10am Mass Tom Wallis (RIP)

Reading 1, Isaiah 26:1-6

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

Friday 3 December - St Francis Xavier

10am Mass Josephine Gleeson (Ann)

7pm Mass Fr. Jimmy Stubbs MSC (Ints.)

Reading 1, Isaiah 29:17-24

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

Saturday 4 December - Advent feria

10am Mass Maura Egan (RIP)

10.30-11.30am Exposition with opportunity for Confession

Reading 1, Isaiah 30:19-21,23-26

Responsorial Psalm, Daniel 147

Gospel, Matthew 9:35-10:1,5-8

Saturday 4 December VIGIL 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

6pm Mass Andrew Burke (RIP)

Sunday 5 December SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8am Mass Holy Souls

9am Mass Fintan Bergin (Ints)

(*St John Fisher School, Marshalswick*)

9.30am Mass People of the parish

11.30am Mass Anna and John Cronin (Ann)

6pm Mass Pat and Caroline Judge (Ann)

PLEASE PRAY

Together with Churches Together in St Albans, we pray for the St. Albans Pentecostal Assembly of God.

For those suffering with Coronavirus and for all the Sick including

The names of those we have been asked to pray for are not included in the web version of the parish bulletin for reasons of data protection

For those who have died recently, including Diana Klein, Patrick Mannion, Ellen Mary Small.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Laurie Blythman, Anna and John Cronin, Helena Cuneen, Nora Doran, Josephine Gleeson, Francis Peter Hughes, Pat and Caroline Judge and Mary Malik.

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

CHILDREN'S LITURGY

Please click [here](#) for this week's 'Liturgy of the Word' for Children leaflet and the latest worksheet from the Diocese of Westminster.

Virtual Children's Liturgy from CAFOD in addition to their downloadable weekly children's liturgy resources, CAFOD are currently also offering a virtual Children's Liturgy of the Word at 10am on Sunday as a webinar. Parents and children are encouraged to join online for prayers and reflection on Sunday's Gospel. The liturgy is led by catechists who usually lead children's liturgy in their parish and will be based on CAFOD children's liturgy resources. Click [here](#) for the link to register.

Welcoming all new parishioners!

Please see the new [page](#) on our website with useful information for those who are new to our parish. An online **New Parishioner Registration Form** can be found on the webpage. Please complete this form if you have not already registered as a new parishioner so that we can add you to our parish records and welcome you to our parish community. Thank you to all those who have registered as new parishioners since the start of the pandemic. As soon as we are able, we look forward to being able to have an event to welcome you and your families properly into our parish community.

Justice, Peace & the Integrity of Creation Team (JPIC)

As we mark World Aids day, let us remember those afflicted with this disease and all the people who know and love them.