



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - 23 JANUARY 2022



Contactless Giving

Parish Team: Fr Michael O'Boy (Parish Priest) Fr Andrew Bowden (Assistant Priest)
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...

As I write, there is still need for caution, in and around all our activities. We continue to wear masks in church, ask people to sanitise their hands on entering and leaving the church, and to maintain social distancing. Singing during Mass has made a limited return, but we have not yet returned to hymn books. In other words, we are trying to live sensibly with the corona virus. So, last weekend 'Little Lights' our Children's Liturgy for 0-5 year olds made a welcome return to the 9.30am Mass. It was marked by a palpable crescendo. A sign, a very welcome sign, of life! I never imagined I would write a front piece to the newsletter welcoming or rejoicing in the noise level at a Sunday Mass, but then I have never lived with or through the times we have gone through.

Looking forward to the time when we can gather more easily, when for example our sacramental programmes can make a full hearted return, I want to pick up the thread of our recent Parish Assembly; putting the various parish groups in place and reconvening our Parish Pastoral Council. I am sorry not to be further on with this.

Belong & Believe Central to the Parish Assembly were the themes of Welcome, Worship and Witness all of which, it seems to me, are key to our being vibrant community. From Monday of this coming week (Monday 23 January) there is an open invitation to all members of the parish to reflect on what makes for a vibrant parish community. Drawing on the most recent Café resource 'Belong & Believe' we will reflect on Celtic Christianity and the building up of the Christian community in these islands, asking ourselves what their experience says to us today and what we might usefully learn or appropriate for today. There will be three groups. A Monday morning group (10.45am) and a Monday evening group (7.45pm), both of which will meet in the Sacred Heart Parish Centre next to the church, and a Monday evening Zoom group also at 7.45pm. Please register with the parish office by emailing stalbens@rcdow.org.uk.

Update on Church Buildings Development One of the outcomes of this year's Parish Assembly was to consider opportunities to create a more welcoming and inclusive church frontage and porch, and to redevelop the presbytery to reflect the needs of our parish going forward. It would also seem an opportune time to reduce the carbon footprint of the church buildings. I would like to update you on progress with the project: Three diocesan-approved architects have provided very initial responses to the brief specifications and confirmed the need for a full site survey in order that more detailed designs and cost estimates can be prepared. Discussions have been held with diocesan-approved surveyors and we hope to issue a contract for the full site survey in the near future. It is estimated that the survey will take 4-6 weeks to complete.

It is likely that we will need to form a working party to review the detailed design options, and I am grateful to those of you who attended the Parish Assembly and have already expressed an interest in helping with this. I will continue to engage the parish throughout the process.

Journeying in Faith Finally, Covid conditions permitting we hope, in the not too distant future, to re-launch our Journeying in Faith for adults. This group, which is led by Deacon Steve and usually meets on a Thursday evening, may be for you, a friend or relative if they or you:

- Are curious about the Christian way of life
- Want to become a Christian e.g. Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation
- Are the spouse / partner of a Catholic and would like to know more about joining the Catholic community
- Want to complete your Catholic initiation e.g. to be Confirmed in your faith
- Want to share and know more about your faith as a Catholic

Please contact Deacon Steve Pickard on 863925 or e-mail stephenpickard@gmail.com or any of our priests on 853585 or e-mail stalbens@rcdow.org.uk.

LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS

Marion Miller (RIP) The funeral Mass for Marion Miller will be held on Friday 11 February at 11am. Her son, Fr Philip Miller, will preside. Marion was a lifelong parishioner, being baptised, receiving first communion as well as being confirmed and married here at St Alban & St Stephen. Marion played an active part in so many aspects of parish life and was the parish secretary/administrator for seven years between 1986 - 1993. Her remains will be received into the church on Thursday 10 February at 4.30pm. As we commend her to God, praying for the repose of her soul, as well as for Geoff and the family at this time, we give thanks to God for the ways in which we as a community have been blessed by her friendship, faith and witness.

Ministers of the Word wanted Would you like to help the congregation to hear the word of God and take part in active ministry? Then please consider reading at Mass. You do need to be able to speak clearly with reverence and conviction - training will be given to anyone interested. Perhaps you used to read and now feel able to recommence your ministry? If you could commit to reading approximately once a month, please send your details and the time of the Mass you normally attend to the parish office.

RCIA Catechists We need to build up a small group of committed adult volunteer catechists for our RCIA program to be able to successfully run our 'Journey In Faith' program. With that in mind, I would welcome you contacting me, Deacon Steve, for an initial discussion on 01727 863925 or on stephenpickard@gmail.com. It is a ministry of love and joy that will build upon your own faith experiences. You do not need a degree or diploma, just an open heart. So please contact me and I will outline how we propose to start this 'journey' together.

Mass Attendance As is our current practice, those attending services at St Alban and St Stephen and at St John Fisher, Marshalswick are asked to wear a face mask (unless medically exempt), to sanitise their hands on entering and leaving the building, to socially distance and to receive communion on the hand. Those who do not wish to receive on the hand should come up to Holy Communion last.

Sacrament of Baptism The next baptism preparation course is to be held on Saturday 26 February at 11.30am. Please email andrewbowden@rcdow.org.uk with any enquiries.

First Holy Communion 2022 All who have registered children on the course should have received an email link to last Friday's parent meeting. Initially the programme will run at home, with parents and guardians working through the early chapters with their child. The exception is the group of older children who will commence meetings in the Main Hall on Saturday 22 January at 4pm.

Confirmation 2022 We hope to commence the Confirmation classes for 2022 on Sunday 27 February and to continue them on a fortnightly basis. Further details will be emailed to those who have registered for 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. The next preparation course is in February. Please email Fr Michael on michaeloboy@rcdow.org.uk for details.

Prayers for the Sick If you would like to include someone in the prayers for the sick, please contact the presbytery. Permission from the person being prayed for, or their next of kin, must be obtained before we are able to include their name in the bulletin.

PARISH NEWS

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.

Men's Breakfast 22 January Following on from our breakfast gatherings in the autumn, we are restarting these post-Christmas, with the first one planned for Saturday 22 January. We will meet in the parish centre from 8.15am for coffee, croissants and banter. We will use the main hall, rather than the rooms downstairs as this is better ventilated. At about 9am we will watch a video on the Nicene Creed, part of a series narrated by Bishop Robert Barron, and aim to finish at 10am. This is a great opportunity to learn more about this prayer which is central to the Sunday mass and to the key parts of our catholic beliefs.

BELONG & BELIEVE Course News This course has been funded by the Cardinal's Appeal. Registering via stalbans@rcdow.org.uk does not mean you are committed to all 5 sessions starting on Monday 24 January, but it helps us with refreshment needs for the live sessions, and the break out groups on the 7.45pm Zoom call. Tea/coffee/cake will be served at the 10.45am session in the parish centre and at the 7.45pm dinner will be served in the hall for those who want it.

CWL The CWL will be meeting after 10am Mass on Tuesday 1 February. Stephen Poxon will talk to us about the work of the Salvation Army. All are welcome to join us. Everyone is asked to wear a mask please. You may like to add to the CWL donation towards their work with the homeless and others. NB CWL members' subs are now due (£26) to Mieke.

BINGO Many thanks to everyone that supported our recent Bingo. £260.00 was raised for CAFOD - Afghanistan Crisis Appeal. Our next Bingo evening will be on Friday, 11 February at 8.00pm in the Parish Hall in aid of Mary's Meals.

Knit and Natter The Knit and Natter group will meet between 2-4pm on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month starting from Tuesday 8th February. Please do a lateral flow test before you come. Everyone is welcome to join us.

Developing Our Faith as Adults Our Parish Assembly highlighted the need to promote and facilitate ongoing faith formation for adults beyond sacramental preparation. The Adult Faith Formation group will meet for 1.5 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'.

Mary's Meals This weekend there will be a retiring collection to support the work of Mary's Meals and a representative from Mary's Meals will be speaking about the work of the charity at all masses.

OUR WIDER COMMUNITY

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Each year from 18 to 25 January is a week (or octave) of prayer for Christian unity. It's a response to Jesus' prayer that we may be one. As part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, you are warmly invited to join with Christians from other churches for a short service of prayer for Christian Unity at 4pm on Sunday 23 January via Zoom. The theme is, 'We saw his star in the East' and we shall be sharing with each other on such questions as:

- Have we seen anything new on the horizon?
- Can we journey together?
- How do we feel about asking others for direction?

We hope you can join us using the Zoom link below, with Meeting ID: 814 1314 8838, Passcode: CTSA

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81413148838?pwd=ekMwV0JiMXRUOGI2VGJSUk5M28rZz09>

St Columba's College Prep School Open Morning - Friday 28 January St Columba's College and Preparatory School is an independent Catholic day school for pupils aged 4 - 18 in St Albans, Hertfordshire. Last year, we welcomed our first girls into Lower Prep (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) and the Sixth Form, and this September we will also welcome girls into Year 3 and Year 4 in Upper Prep, and Year 7 in the Senior School. Prospective families are warmly invited to St Columba's Prep School Open Morning on Friday 28 January from 9:15-11:30am. There will be an opportunity to take a tour and attend a presentation by the head of Prep Mr Richard McCann, and other members of staff. Families can register for this event by [email](#) or through the 'Visit Us' page

on our website, clicking on 'Prep School Open Morning' and completing the online registration form.

Scripture Festival 3 - 5 February The God Who Speaks You are invited to our God Who Speaks Festival at St Albans Cathedral from 3 to 5 February. From 10am to 4:00pm we be offering different ways of exploring the Word of God in prayer, through activities and our intellect. A variety of content providers will join us over the three days and help us to engage with Scripture using your mind, heart, and soul. Following on from the Synodal Pathway, this could be the perfect opportunity to consider what is on offer for people who want to know more about the Bible in their local area. Please see [here](#) for information.

PARISH ADMINISTRATION

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 now 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 VMG, the online donation platform used by the diocese, closed at the end of November. The diocese will be setting up new online giving tools but the best way to support the parish is by standing order. A standing order form can be downloaded [here](#).

Mass Intentions The best way to book mass intentions at the moment is to do so by phoning or emailing the parish office between 9am and 1pm any weekday. Donations can be made by posting an envelope through the presbytery door or by making a payment via bank transfer. Our bank account details can be accessed [here](#).

Please note that we are currently booking intentions for masses from May 2022 and that intentions may have to be moved with little notice, if a funeral needs to take place on that date. The suggested diocesan donation is currently £10 per mass.

Justice, Peace & the Integrity of Creation Team (JPIC) In these difficult times when many are suffering and isolated from society, may we extend the hand of friendship and embrace them with loving kindness.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY - 27 January God our Father, we pray for all the victims of the Holocaust, living and dead. Comfort and strengthen those who mourn. Help us to follow your way of love and non-violence.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 22 January VIGIL 3RD SUNDAY IN ORD TIME
6pm Mass Mary Jones (RIP)

Sunday 23 January 3RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
8am Mass People of the Parish
9am Mass Kathleen McKiernan (RIP)
(*St John Fisher School, Marshalswick*)
9.30am Mass Zbigniew Frosztega (Ann)
11.30am Mass Pedro and Bolivia de Lasso and Joseph Chunga (Ann)
6pm Mass Christina Conefrey and all deceased members of the Conefrey family (RIP)

Monday 24 January - St Francis de Sales
10am Mass Michael Rayment (RIP)
7pm Mass Peter Byrne (RIP)
Reading 1, 2 Samuel 15:1-7, 10
Responsorial Psalm, 89, Gospel, Mark 3:22-30

Tuesday 25 January - THE CONVERSION OF ST PAUL THE APOSTLE
10am Mass Peter Celestine Okoro (RIP)
Reading 1, Acts 22:3-16
Responsorial Psalm, 117, Gospel, Mark 16:15-18

Wednesday 26 January - Ss Timothy and Titus
10am Mass Mel Jacques (RIP)
7pm Mass Patrick Joseph Moran and Kathleen Moran (RIP)
Reading 1, 2 Timothy 1:1-8
Responsorial Psalm, 96, Gospel, Mark 4:1-20

Thursday 27 January -feria
10am Mass Patrick Togher (RIP)
Reading 1, 2 Samuel 7:18-19, 24-29
Responsorial Psalm 132, Gospel Mark 4:21-25

Friday 28 January - St Thomas Aquinas*
7pm Mass Bernadette Roache (RIP)
Reading 1, 2 Samuel 11:1-4, 5-10, 13-17
Responsorial Psalm, 51, Gospel, Mark 4:26-34
* *On Fridays Mass is celebrated at St Albans Cathedral at 12 Noon*

Saturday 29 January - Memoria of Blessed Virgin Mary
10am Mass Joan Edwards (Ann)
10.30-11.30am Exposition with opportunity for Confession
Reading 1, 2 Samuel 12:1-7, 10-17
Responsorial Psalm, 51, Gospel, Mark 4:35-41

Saturday 29 January VIGIL 4TH SUNDAY IN ORD TIME
6pm Mass Seamus Neary (RIP)

Sunday 30 January 4TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
8am Mass Ann Purcell (RIP)
9am Mass Stan Phillips (Ann)
(*St John Fisher School, Marshalswick*)
9.30am Mass People of the parish
11.30am Mass George Brennan (RIP)
6pm Mass Noreen Carolan (RIP)

PLEASE PRAY

Together with Churches Together in St Albans we pray for the Ecumenical Chaplaincy at the Cathedral and Abbey Church. We also give thanks for the ministry of Cardinal Vincent Nichols on the 10th Anniversary of his Episcopal Ordination.

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 Margaret Fitzsimons, Ursula Graddon, Marion Miller, Ruth O'Gorman, Edward 'Ted' Pearce.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Joseph Chunga, Pedro and Bolivia de Lasso, Joan Edwards, Zbigniew Frosztega, Lewis and Frances Lumber, John Loughlin, Roy McGoohan, Stan Phillips.

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 [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.