



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN
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FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - 30 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 Andrew writes...

For many people In North America, this coming Wednesday, 2 February, is Groundhog Day, a popular a tradition stemming from the superstition that if a Groundhog, emerging from its burrow on this day, sees its shadow due to clear weather, it will retreat to its den and winter will persist for six more weeks; if it does not see its shadow because of cloudiness, spring will arrive early.

But for Catholics, 2 February has a greater significance because it is the feast of the Presentation of the Lord or Candlemass. It seems likely in fact that Groundhog Day is connected, in some way, to the Christian feast of Candlemass because it too speaks to that desire that we all have at this time of year for some light in the winter darkness.

I said here a few weeks ago that, even after the end of Christmastide, our liturgy would provide us with some echoes of Christmas as the year progressed and Candlemass is the first of these echoes. On this feast we mark the day when, forty days after the birth of their child, the parents of Jesus, were required by the Jewish law to present the child in the temple. This ceremony combined two things; the ritual purification of the mother following child birth and the presentation of sacrificial gifts to the temple so as to redeem or buy back the first-born, who were otherwise regarded, since the Exodus, as the property of God. Of course, the Blessed Virgin Mary, needed no purification herself and Our Lord, who was already the eternal Son of God the Father, was not so much bought back as given over wholly to God in his mission for our salvation. However, Mary and Joseph as obedient Jews fulfil the requirements of the law and in so doing demonstrate that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament law and prophets.

And it is the element of the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy that lends to this feast the association with candles and light in winter darkness. When Simeon, in the evening of his days, sees the child Jesus, he recognizes him as the one whom God had promised to send and for whom he had spent his life longing and waiting. His life now complete, Simeon sings of how this child will be "a light to enlighten the pagans". And so it is that we bless candles and light them and call this feast Candlemass.

Unlike the superstition of Groundhog day, however, according to which the coming light is dependent upon the shadow cast by a burrowing animal, at Candlemass we are celebrating the fact that the light of Christ has already dawned. Through our baptism, we are already illumined by the light of Christ. Just as God in Jesus Christ suddenly appeared in the Temple, so He has appeared in our hearts. In a world that so needs that light, we called to let it shine in our lives, not to keep it under a bushel, or to burrow underground like the Groundhog.

Also next week we are invited to take part in the Scripture Festival entitled 'The God Who Speaks', which take place at St Albans Cathedral from the 3 to 5 February. The Word of God in sacred scripture is one of the ways in which we encounter the light of Christ and allow it to illumine our path through life. Deepening our knowledge of and love for sacred scripture is an important way in which to ensure that we let that light shine in our lives. So why not get involved.

God bless,

Fr Andrew

Justice, Peace & the Integrity of Creation Team (JPIC) We pray for the people of Ethiopia and Tigray suffering violence, fear, hunger and displacement. We pray for an end to the fighting and for humanitarian aid to be allowed to reach all who desperately need it.

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 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 stephenrpickard@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 if you have not yet collected your Parent and Child books, please do so from the presbytery. An email has been sent to all parents/guardians about choices for First Reconciliation times on 19 March.

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.

Traidcraft Traidcraft goods will be available after all Masses next weekend [5/6 February] and at St John Fisher Mass Centre on Sunday 13 February. Please try to support this fair-trade venture if you are able to. All proceeds go to CAFOD. More details from Maureen on 765549 or grabecki@hotmail.com.

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 On Friday 11 February, at 8.00pm, by the Knights of St. Columba, in the Parish Hall in aid of Mary's Meals. Admission is 50p including refreshments. All are welcome.

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.

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.org.uk heading the email 'AFF'.

Retiring Collections Thank you for your generous support for Mary's Meals last weekend. £1,916.86 was raised from the retiring collections held at all masses. The recent retiring collection for Pax Christi raised £444.63.

OUR WIDER COMMUNITY

St Michael's Catholic Grammar School - Applications for Sixth Form Entry in September 2022 open until 28 February St Michael's is a place of intellectual exploration and achievement and every year our students achieve outstanding A Level results which enable them to open doors to the most prestigious universities and courses. St Michael's has a large and vibrant Sixth Form which welcomes significant numbers of new students who have studied their GCSEs elsewhere. It is an academic school which offers A Level courses only in the Sixth Form. If you are interested in applying for a Sixth Form place at St Michael's please take a look at the virtual open evening on our [website](#). Applications can be made online through the Apply NOW button.

Petition to Install a Pedestrian Crossing at Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School - We need your support! We are petitioning the County Council to urgently install a pedestrian crossing and other traffic calming measures outside our school - and we need your help. Please sign the e-petition at [NBS e-petition Pedestrian Crossing](#).

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.

Have Fun Helping Others Luton Catenians are organising 'Masquerade - a fun evening of opera' on Saturday 26 February at Holy Ghost Parish Centre, 33 Westbourne Rd, Luton LU4 8JD in aid of NOAH, the Luton-based charity working across Bedfordshire offering hope and support to people struggling against homelessness and exclusion. Whether you are an opera lover or not you will be enraptured by the singing and the joyous occasion, so come along to this light but professionally sung gala evening, at the same time supporting a great cause. Bid in advance to have your favourite song performed in front of you. Win the prize for the best masquerade mask. Make up a group, bring your friends and book tickets at £32 per head (a price kept as low as possible even though the event is being staged to generate funds for NOAH) via this [link](#). See the poster on the notice board in the porch.

St Albans Cathedral Adult Learning Programme St Albans Cathedral is pleased to be able to offer a rich and varied Adult Learning Programme which explores topics related to faith, history and culture. Our programme consists of talks, courses and reading groups and, whether participating in-

person or online, we provide a stimulating and welcoming learning environment which is open to anyone. For more information about what we have on offer, please visit our [website](#) at or call our Box Office team on 01727 890290.

St Albans Cathedral Library Located above the Welcome Centre at St Albans Cathedral is a modern theological lending library which boasts a diverse collection of theological works. Our collection also includes some works on local history and fiction and anyone is welcome to come and browse or use the space for private study. Membership is required to borrow books and costs £20 a year (local clergy are able to join for free). For more information, please [email](#) our friendly library team. Where to find us: St Albans Cathedral Library | 2nd Floor Chapter House | St Albans Cathedral. Opening times: 10am-2pm Mon to Fri | 10am-1pm every first and third Saturday.

New Year's Resolution - Volunteer for CAFOD A vital aspect of church is people being willing to share their talents, experience and energy. Could your New Year's resolution be volunteering for CAFOD? We have lots of different ways you can get involved. If you'd like to know more, please get in touch with Tony at tsheen@cafod.org.uk

PARISH ADMINISTRATION

Hiring the 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.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

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)

Reading 1, Jeremiah 1:4-5,17-19, Responsorial Psalm, 71

Reading 2, 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13, Gospel, Luke 4:21-30

Monday 31 January – St John Bosco

10am Mass Funeral Mass for Ruth O’Gorman

7pm Mass Edward Sumner and family (Ints)

Reading 1, 2 Samuel 15:13-14,30,16:5-13

Responsorial Psalm, 3:2-8, Gospel, Mark 5:1-20

Tuesday 1 February – feria

10am Mass Funeral Mass for Edward 'Ted' Pearce

Reading 1, 2 Samuel 18:9-10,14,24-25, 30-19:3

Responsorial Psalm, 86, Gospel, Mark 5:21-43

Wednesday 2 February – THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

10am Mass People of the Parish

7pm Mass Sr Mary Dominic (Ints)

Reading 1, Malachi 3:1-4

Responsorial Psalm, 24 Gospel, Luke 2:22-32

Thursday 3 February – Ss Laurence, Dunstan and Theodore

10am Mass Funeral Mass for Ursula Graddon

Reading 1, 1 Kings 2:1-4,10-12

Responsorial Psalm, 1 Chronicles 29, Gospel Mark 6:7-13

Friday 4 February – feria

10am Mass Tony Boyle (RIP) and Annie Doherty (RIP)

7pm Deceased members of the Watters family (RIP)

Reading 1, Ecclesiasticus 47:2-13

Responsorial Psalm, 18, Gospel, Mark 6:14-29

(On Fridays Mass is celebrated at St Albans Cathedral at 12 Noon)

Saturday 5 February – St Agatha

10am Mass David and the Furlong family (Ints)

10.30-11.30am Exposition with opportunity for Confession

Reading 1, 1 Kings 3:4-13

Responsorial Psalm, 119, Gospel, Mark 6:30-34

Saturday 5 February VIGIL 5TH SUNDAY IN ORD TIME

6pm Adrian McFadden (RIP)

Sunday 6 February 5TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

8am Mass Anne Slater (RIP)

9am Mass Frank Phelan (RIP)

(St John Fisher School, Marshalswick)

9.30am Mass Giuseppe Campanella (Ann)

11.30am Mass People of the Parish

6pm Mass James Stack (RIP)

PLEASE PRAY

Together with Churches Together in St Albans we remember all those who died or suffered during the Holocaust.

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, John Kentleton, Paul Liversidge, Marion Miller, Ruth O’Gorman, Monica Parker and Edward ‘Ted’ Pearce.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Giuseppe Campanella, John Loughlin, Lewis and Frances Lumber, Lily Nickolson, 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.