



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

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YouTube: <https://youtube.com/c/SsAlbanandStephenCatholicChurch>

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT - 10 DECEMBER 2023



Contactless Giving

Parish Priest: Fr Michael O'Boy - Assistant Priest: Fr John Casey

Deacons: Rev. Brendan Day and Rev. Steve Pickard (*Retired*)

Parish Administrator: Mrs Angela Gray - Catechetical Coordinator: Mrs Joan Egenes

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

We are a Fairtrade parish

Fr Michael writes ... Our Christmas and New Year's Masses are detailed in this year's Christmas card which is available in the porch. Please take a couple of cards and invite others to join us. If you could spare half an hour this coming **Wednesday 13 December** between 9am and 2pm to distribute these at the **PARISH MARKET STALL** please speak with Mary on 07976 277 059 or to the volunteer gathering names after Mass.

As you will see from the card there is no communal Penitential Service this year. However, there are a number of additional times for **CONFESSIONS**, including next Sunday between 10.30am & 1pm, and from 5.30pm.

Our Christmas Masses, especially the 5pm & 7pm on Christmas Eve, are very busy and we need **VOLUNTEER STEWARDS** to assist at all of the Masses - welcoming, handing out booklets, showing people to available seating, directing people to the hall if an overflow is needed, taking up the collection, ushering at the time of communion and, should we need to evacuate the church, pointing people to the nearest available exit. If you can volunteer please email the parish office (stalbans@rcdow.org.uk) indicating which Mass you can attend and help out with. There will be a short briefing meeting at 7.30pm on Monday 18 December in the downstairs meeting rooms. It would be very helpful if volunteer stewards could make this briefing, but please do not let this prevent you from volunteering if you cannot. We will put together a briefing pack for those who cannot make it.

The 5pm Mass on Christmas Eve will be a 'family' Mass geared towards the participation of our younger parishioners. Children are welcome to come dressed as Mary, Joseph, Shepherds or Angels.

Christmas Foodbank Donations Christmas is a time of joy, but also struggle for many people. One way we can help is by supporting our local foodbanks, particularly at Christmas. As a parish we are holding a special foodbank collection at both the main church and Marshalswick this weekend, 9 & 10 December. The items collected will be delivered to local foodbanks for them to hand out before Christmas. The most suitable donations are tins of soup, vegetables or fruit; packets of pasta, rice or noodles; and packet of biscuits, tea and coffee. There will be areas to leave the groceries at the back of the church and in the mass centre. The foodbanks are experiencing increased demand but fewer donations. Your donations will be much appreciated. Last year we contributed two full car loads and made a real difference to many families. Thanks in advance for your generosity.

Advent Talk Fr Philip Miller, Catholic Chaplain to the Universities and other institutes of Higher Education in the Diocese of Westminster, will talk on 'The Relevance of Isaiah to Advent' on Monday 11 December at 7.45pm in the church. All welcome.

Carols by Candlelight - 7.30pm Friday 22 December Everyone is welcome at our service. Bring your visiting relatives and friends! We would also love to welcome our families with young children (year 2 and above) and encourage them to bring a large star made from tin foil on both sides (30cm diameter) ☆ and sit near the front of the church. During the service they will be asked to stand up in their places and, following one of the members of the choir, wave their star.

Free CAFOD folding Advent prayer card Please take a copy from the porch and join in the prayers for unity, peace and forgiveness with other people during this season of reflection and preparation.

Christmas Posters These are now available in the Porch. Please take one to put in a window or on a notice board.

Welcoming all new parishioners! Please see the [page](#) on our website with useful information for those who are new to our parish. Please complete our online [New Parishioner Registration 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.

LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS

Enquiry A group for those who wish to explore the Catholic faith further with the possibility of being baptised/received into the church or, for those of you who are already baptised Catholic, with a view to being confirmed. Meetings will take place most Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm in the presbytery conference room. Please [email](#) or speak with Fr Michael.

Family in Faith 17 December FIF Youth invite you all to tea/coffee in the cafe area after 6pm Sunday mass. Please come along and support them in this act of service to their community, and to meet your fellow parishioners so that you might feel more a part of the body of Christ, especially just before Christmas.

Monthly Youth Mass, first Sunday of the month at 6pm Calling all young people year 7 to year 12 who would like to participate in any capacity (musicians, singers, readers, collecting, welcoming, offertory) at the monthly youth mass. Please email stalbanscc@rcdow.org.uk with your name and parents' email address to contact going forward.

Monthly 9.30am Family Mass on the last Sunday of the month. There is no Children's Liturgy on the last Sunday of each month. Instead, the children are invited to sit on the carpet at the front of the church while the Mass itself is geared towards their participation. There is a short social afterwards and we need volunteers to help. If you can help please speak with Deacon Brendan.

Sacrament of Baptism The next baptism preparation course is Saturday 13 January at 11.30am. To register or to arrange a date for baptism please collect a form from Fr Michael or Fr John after any of the weekend masses.

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 being added to the bulletin.

OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

St Albans Food Bank Donations of non-perishable food items (cans and dried goods) can be left in the box in the porch. There will also be a food collection box at Marshalswick Mass Centre the first Sunday of the month.

Building Fund Appeal Please see the new page of our website for more information, including:

- Details of the three phases of work and their rationale
- Architectural plans and visuals of the enlarged Church Porch and refurbished forecourt
- 360 degree visualisations of the lobby & forecourt areas
- A frequently asked questions section, including the answers to questions raised about parking
- Details of how you can support the project, including bank details and a standing order / gift aid form.

Christmas Day Takeaway Lunch Provided we can get enough volunteers to help, we hope to offer a takeaway lunch to anyone who is in need on Christmas Day. The lunch will be available in the Parish Hall to be taken to people who have requested one at around 1pm on Christmas Day. If you would like a takeaway lunch, or you know someone who would, please give your/their name, address and contact details to the parish office by Monday 11 December. We have a volunteer chef, but will need people to wash up after the cooking and DBS-certificated drivers to deliver the meals. If you can help, please give your name and contact details to the parish office.

You Can Be Santa 2023 Thank you everyone for your tremendous generosity and support in making the YCBS 2023 scheme such a success once again. The Santa Team is currently delivering gift vouchers to over 150 children. The children are all known to us through our Parish schools, the SVP, the Life House and individual parishioners. We are also supporting children from the St Albans Refuge, Home Start, the Intensive Family Support Team and local Ukrainian refugees. In addition, several adults with either special needs or living in a refuge will also receive a Christmas voucher.

Thank you once again, your donations really make a difference, as this message from one of our families demonstrates: *'just wanted to say a huge thank you to youThe children have always known that it's the church that have given them this gift and whilst its lovely and exciting for them to be able to spend their gift voucher, I think the biggest benefit for the children is that it is a symbol that they are part of a loving, caring community who have thought about them ...'*

Warm clothes and sleeping bags needed for Centre 33 visitors Some of our Centre 33 visitors are in desperate need of warm coats, jackets, jumpers and sleeping bags during the cold weather. If you have good quality clean items that you could spare, please leave them in the labelled box in the porch. Thank you.

CAFOD The World Gifts Catalogue is available at the back of the church, or via the world gifts website. Gifts start at under £5. There is a winter survival kit which can support communities experiencing the terrible impact of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. CAFOD have also created an inspiring online Advent calendar of daily reflections. If you would like to sign up, please click the [link](#).

St Albans Salvation Army's Toy Appeal for Christmas Christmas is fast approaching. We will prepare toy/food hampers for those in need. Please donate (new) toys to us, so we can deliver them to those families in need with children. Please give us a call before you come to donate. We are at 16-18 Victoria Street, St Albans, AL1 3JB, 01727 855 395. God bless you!

PARISH GROUPS AND EVENTS

Parish Groups and Events Please see our the [‘Parish News’](#) webpage for details of parish groups and events.

Coffee and Tea After Mass Coffee and tea are available in the Parish Centre coffee bar after 9.30am Sunday Mass during school term time, after 11.30am Mass on the first Sunday of the month and after 6pm Saturday evening Mass. Coffee and tea is also available after 10am Mass each Monday. All are welcome.

Faith and Family Group The ‘Faith & Family group’ meets in the parish hall on the first Tuesday of each month (not August) at 10.45am. Activities for under 5s. All welcome.

Toddlers’ Playgroup Monday 10.30am - midday For pre-school age children and their carers, termtime only. Join us in the hall for toys, books, games, singing, drinks & snacks. To help, contact David Markham on 07543 400650.

Knit and Natter Group Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 19 December. We meet in the Parish Centre from 2.15-4pm and all are welcome to come.

Olive Wood Goods from Bethlehem 9/10 December Help to keep woodworkers in Bethlehem. Olive wood goods from Bethlehem (sourced by Pax Christi) will be available to buy at a stall at the back of the church.

Mothers’ Prayers Monday 11 December in Room 2. Anyone wishing to pray for children is welcome. Information from: office@mothersprayers.org.

Christmas Decorations Needed If you have any spare Christmas Decorations, please would you be kind enough to put them in the boxes provided in the church porch and Mass Centre at St John Fisher School not later than Sunday 17 December. Thank you - they will be much appreciated.

Primary, Secondary and Nursery School Applications For those parents and guardians who need to obtain a Certificate of Catholic Practice to accompany their child’s application for a school or nursery place, Fr Michael will be available at the presbytery on Wednesday 13 December and Tuesday 9 January at 3.30 - 6pm. No appointment is necessary and children need not attend.

Harpenden, Luton & District (including St Albans) Catenian Christmas dinner 13 December Harpenden Golf Club 6.15pm for 7pm sit down. Tickets £35 a head for two course Christmas fare including wine. Tables of eight or tens can be reserved, or any number of places booked. Entertainment by Our Lady of Lourdes ‘Sing for’ Group directed by Katie Metcalfe who will sing a selection of seasonal favourites and lead us in carol singing. The Sing For project runs three times a year with money raised going to Keystage Housing and Noah. Please email john.williams58@btinternet.com to book tickets. Dress is smart casual preferably with a Christmas theme. The

booking deadline is 6 December. Raffle takings and a donation will be given to the charities for Christmas.

A Christmas Celebration in Westminster Cathedral Tickets are now on sale for our annual Christmas concerts which celebrate the mystery of Christ’s Incarnation in carols and readings performed by the world-famous Westminster Cathedral Choir, orchestra, and celebrity readers, on 19 and 20 December at 7.30pm. We encourage everybody to purchase tickets quickly before these popular events are sold out. Tickets can be purchased from the Cathedral Gift Shop or directly from Ticketmaster; go to www.ticketmaster.co.uk and type in Westminster Cathedral when prompted.

Parish Friends Annual Turkey and Tinsel lunch Sunday 7 January 2024 from 12:30 to 3pm All senior parishioners welcome. If you wish to attend contact Helen on Helenbassill1@gmail.com or 07860 830340. We need people to help on the day with lifts, setting up, serving, washing up etc. Please let Helen know if you can help, even if it’s only an hour you can spare. We normally serve about 100 people on the day - could you donate a dessert, or prepare vegetables e.g., peel carrots or potatoes (we will cook these on the day in the hall)? Please contact Joanna on Joanna.roche1@gmail.com or 07960 519789.

Loreto Admissions The Governors of Loreto College (St Albans) have recently agreed to propose some changes to their admissions criteria for 2025/2026. The full detail is available on the [website](#). Written comments are welcomed by email to swilliams@loreto.herts.sch.uk before the closing date of the formal consultation at 9am on 31 January 2024.

Vinnie Packs The SVP are distributing **over 10,000 Vinnie Packs** containing cold weather essentials to the homeless this winter. Please could you consider sponsoring packs at a suggested donation of £4.20 per pack? Donations can be sent to **Vinnie Packs, PO Box 72264, London SW1P 9EZ** with cheques made out to SVP or by bank transfer to Nat West **sort code 60-60-04, account no. 4608 8237**. Thank you so much for your support

PARISH ADMINISTRATION

Mass Intentions The best way to book mass intentions is to email the parish office or by phoning /visiting the parish office from 9am to 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 masses can be booked a year in advance and the next masses available for booking are in May 2024** Intentions may have to be moved with little notice to accommodate funerals. The suggested diocesan donation, which contributes to the stipends of the priests of our parish, is currently £10 per mass.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 9 December - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

6pm Mass Mickie Clancy (Ann)

Sunday 10 December - SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8am Mass Graham Smith (RIP)

9am Mass Joyce Eastham (RIP)

9.30am Mass People of the Parish

11.30am Mass Rita Carter (RIP)

6pm Mass Jean and David Eldred (RIP)

Reading 1, Isaiah 63:16-17, 64:1,3-8, Psalm 79(80)

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

Monday 11 December - Advent Feria

10am Mass Linda Tank (Ints)

7pm Mass Teresa, Bogdan, Lukasz & Tomasz Moller (RIP)

Reading 1, Isaiah 35:1-10

Psalm 84(85), Gospel, Luke 5:17-26

Tuesday 12 December - Advent Feria

10am John and Anna Cronin (Ann)

Reading 1, Isaiah 40:1-11

Psalm 95(96), Gospel, Matthew 18:12-14

Wednesday 13 December - St Lucy

10am Mass Holy Souls

7pm Mass Holy Souls

Reading 1, 2 Corinthians 10:17-11:2

Psalm 30(31), Gospel, Matthew 25:1-13

Thursday 14 December - St John of the Cross

10am Mass Rita Carter (RIP)

Reading 1, 1 Corinthians 2:1-10

Psalm 36(37), Gospel, Luke 14:25-33

Friday 15 December - Advent Feria

7pm Mass John and Nora Doran (Ann)

Reading 1, Isaiah 48:17-19, Psalm 1,

Gospel, Matthew 11:16-19

On Fridays Mass is celebrated at St Albans Cathedral at Noon

Saturday 16 December - Advent Feria

10am Mass Marie Noella Amadis (Ann) & Roger Moore Ranganasamy (Ann)

10.30am - 11.30am Confession

Reading 1, 1Ecclesiasticus 48:1-4,9-12

Psalm 79(80), Gospel, Matthew 17:10-13

Saturday 16 December - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

6pm Mass Donald de Cruz (Ann)

Sunday 17 December - THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Gaudete Sunday)

8am Mass Evelio Azcona (RIP)

9am Mass Patricia Higgins(RIP)

9.30am Mass Lou Monte (RIP)

11.30am Mass Mary Curran (RIP)

6pm Mass People of the Parish

PLEASE PRAY

With Churches Together in St Albans this week we pray for all members of the St Saviours Church.

For all the Sick including Joan Bennett, Frances Boak, Pat Brennan, Patrick Clifford, PJ Conefrey, Vincent Cosimini, Des Coyle, Jan Dedi (Hollywood), Johnny Doran, Kelly Ellis, Kathleen Fahy, Nancy Falloon, Lisa Farnese, Tom Farran, Fr Michael Fitzgibbon, William Furlong, Sue Gavin, Henry Green, Kathleen Griffin, Steven James, Niall Keegan, Rose Kendrick, Monica King, Simon King, Shelagh Lee, Mary Malloney, Tricia Manners, Maureen Martin, Jimmy Moloney, John Moloney, Margaret Moloney, Tommy Moloney, Pauline Mort, David Napper, Helen O'Reilly, Ena Phelan, Des Stack, Fr Jimmy Stubbs MSC, Linda Tank, Dee Vianna, Ann Volborth, Mary Watkins, Stephen Whitehead and Florence.

For those who have died recently including Joseph Dwyer, Jane Malyon, Sarah Murphy, Sr Joanna O'Brien & Sheila Taylor.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Marie Noella Amadis, John and Anna Cronin, Mickie Clancy, Donald de Cruz, John and Nora Doran, Roger Moore Ranganasamy.

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

Forthcoming Funerals

Joseph Dwyer - 10am Tuesday 19 December

Jane Malyon - 10am Wednesday 20 December

Sarah Murphy - 10am Thursday 21 December

Sheila Taylor - 10am Friday 29 December

FAMILY RESOURCES

Please join us at Little Lights (under sevens) and Children's Liturgy (seven and above) during 9.30am Mass on Sundays (term time only). If you can help with Little Lights please get in touch with Laura via laura.cox.london@gmail.com.

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

The [Wednesday Word](#) is another excellent resource that can be used by families to reflect on the issues and messages present in Sunday Liturgy each week. Cardinal Vincent Nichols recommends using these materials saying they bring "remarkable graces to many."

Mass in Cantonese Once a month at 2pm (16 Dec) at Our Lady of Lourdes in Sawston, Cambridge, CB22 3HJ. All welcome. For more details, please see the flyer at the back of the church or email cantonmassea@gmail.com.