



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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1 December 2024 - FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Contactless Giving

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

Deacon: Rev. Brendan Day

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

A message from the Vicar General of the Diocese of Westminster, Monsignor Martin Hayes

In recent years the 'pairing' of some neighbouring parishes in the Diocese of Westminster has been both necessary and advantageous. Necessary because of changing demographics and new realities concerning the numbers and the composition of local communities in London and Hertfordshire, the need to rationalise resources and the declining number of men offering themselves for priesthood in the Diocese, with more lay men and women becoming more actively involved in the life and work of the Church in parishes and more widely, supporting the clergy and fellow parishioners. There is scope to increase such involvement. Advantageous because of the beneficial sharing of resources, human and material, and because the sustainability and viability of parishes are more secure going forward. Across the Diocese there are some twenty such 'pairings', involving forty-plus parishes. Pairings are in all four pastoral areas of the Diocese. 'Paired' parishes have one Parish Priest serving both parishes and churches. Some also have an Assistant Priest if the size of the parishes and the presence of a school or hospital, etc. make this possible, taking into account the availability of priests. Some also have the benefit of the ministry of a permanent deacon, usually a parishioner of one of the parishes, trained and ordained for this ministry.

From 1 January 2025 the parishes of St Alban and St Stephen, St Albans and St Bartholomew, St Albans South will be 'paired', with Fr Michael O'Boy as Parish Priest of both parishes and continuing to reside at St Alban & St Stephen. Inevitably there will need to be some adjustments to the present schedule of Masses in both parishes. Both parishes will continue to have a Finance Committee to assist and advise the Parish Priest. Both parishes will continue to have their distinctive identities while being open to parishioners of, and visitors to, both parishes. Parish boundaries will be maintained while being more porous than rigid. 'Less walls, more bridges' is the way forward for parishes. Please do give the support Fr Michael will need as he takes on additional responsibilities assisted by Fr John Casey. He has responded generously to what has been asked of him and he will rely on the prayers and goodwill of the communities of St Albans and St Albans South.

St Alban, St Stephen, St John Fisher and St Bartholomew, pray for us.

Fr Michael writes... As Mgr. Hayes says the pairing of parishes is not new to the Diocese or indeed the Deanery to which we belong. Moreover, there is a sense in which the pairing of St Alban and St Stephen with St Bartholomew's is a natural one, grouping together the Catholic parishes of the City of St Albans. Even so, I am conscious that the pairing of parishes may feel like a loss - calling on each parish to share its parish clergy. Undoubtedly, the pairing will involve a division of time and labour, but I hope and believe that this pairing of St Alban and St Stephen with St Bartholomew's will open up a new and exciting chapter for the Catholic community here in St Albans. Where there is need, opportunity or advantage in our working closely with St Bartholomew's it will make collaboration, and therefore the best use of all the resources at our disposal, much easier. It will also enable the common witness of the Catholic community here in St Albans.

This coming Monday evening I will be meeting with our Parish Pastoral Council to reflect on what this pairing will mean for us here at St Alban and St Stephen and in the first instance, as it is the most pressing practical question, what the pairing of parishes might mean for the Sunday and weekday Mass schedule at St Alban & St Stephen. I hope to do the same with St Bartholomew's Parish Council in the very near future. In the coming weeks and months there will be much to consider, but as that process begins, I want to reassure you that I am committed to maintaining the Catholic presence across St Albans - in St Bartholomew's, Marshalswick and the City Centre - and to delivering the plans that have been made, and are in the making, for the refurbishment of the parish complex here on Beaconsfield Road. Please pray for our parish, for the whole Parish Team, the parishioners of St Barts as well as for myself and Fr John, and Fr Francis as he moves on to new pastures, as we, the Catholic Parishes of St Albans, look to renew our mission.

Details of our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day masses can be found on our website or via this [link](#).

LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS

Sacrament of Baptism The next baptism preparation course is Saturday 11 January at 11.30am. To register or to arrange a date for baptism please speak to Fr Michael or Fr John after any of the weekend masses.

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, children are invited to sit on the carpet at the front of the church and the Mass itself is geared towards their participation. There is then a short social. If you can help please speak with Deacon Brendan.

RCIA Group 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. Please [email](#) or speak with Fr John

Monthly Youth Mass, third Sunday of the month at 6pm Calling all musicians who would like to be involved in the monthly Youth Masses. We would like to build a band of regular singers and musicians. The commitment is playing at Sunday 6pm Mass most third Sundays of the month and attending an 8pm practice in the church the Thursday evening before. Please email stalbandscc@rcdow.org.uk if interested or if you would like more information.

Marriage Preparation If you are intending to get married, please note the Diocese requires at least six months' notice. Couples are expected to complete a marriage preparation course. Please [email](#) Fr Michael for details.

Prayers for the Sick If you would like to include someone in the prayers for the sick, please contact the [parish office](#). Permission from the person being prayed for, or their next of kin, must be obtained before being added to the list. Names will be included for eight weeks, unless the request to have their name included is renewed.

Altar Server Training 2-3.15pm Saturday 14 December in the Church This session is for current altar servers only. If you would like to become an altar server, there will be a training session for new servers in the New Year. Please approach Fr John for details.

OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

Migrants' toiletries collection We currently need donations of toiletries, shampoos and baby wipes, adult toothbrushes, deodorants for women, bars of soap, baby shower gel and shampoo. Please only donate requested items.

You Can Be Santa Voucher Scheme If you would still like to donate by voucher or cash, please post your cash or voucher/s through the Presbytery door in an envelope marked 'YCBS'. For information please email [YCBS](#).

St Albans Food Bank Donations of non-perishable food items (cans and dried goods) can be left in the box in the porch. All donations are very welcome, but there is a particular need for long life milk, long life juice and tinned fruit. More details of the St Albans Food bank can be found using this [link](#). There is also a food collection box at Marshalswick Mass Centre on the first Sunday of the month.

Christmas Day Takeaway Lunch 2024 As in recent years, 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 to have a takeaway lunch or you know someone who would like one, please give your name, address and contact details to the parish office (email: stalbands@rcdow.org.uk) by Monday 16 December. We already have a volunteer chef, but we will need people to help wash up after the cooking and drivers to deliver the meals. If you can help, please give your name and contact details to the parish office.

Advent prayer cards from CAFOD Available in the porch offering a weekly prayer and a Christmas Day reflection. Please take one. Cafod have also produced an interactive online Advent Calendar - you can sign up to it [here](#).

St Albans Winter Beds Project Commences Monday 9 December and will be located at Marlborough Rd Methodist Church. This Project depends on volunteers and helps keep people off the streets overnight during the coldest months. Volunteers are needed to cover either morning or evening shifts and each shift is usually up to 2 hours long. Even one shift a month would be a help. Help with laundry also required. For more details there is an information/training session available on Thursday 5 December or Wednesday 11 December (8pm to 9.30pm) at the Methodist Church (or contact Colin Hull on cchandco@btconnect.com).

St Alban and St Stephen School KS1 Class Teacher - Fixed term maternity cover. Required for Summer Term 2025 and we anticipate that this will be for two terms, with potential to extend further. Closing date midday 11 December, interview date 16 December. See porch for information.

OUR PARISH GROUPS AND EVENTS

Parish Groups and Events Please see our ['Parish News'](#) webpage for more 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 are also available after the 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, term time only. Join us in the hall for toys, books, games, singing, drinks & snacks. To help, contact David Markham on 07543 400650.

Prayer Group on Wednesday evenings A number of parishioners meet on Wednesday evenings via Zoom to reflect on the scripture readings for mass the following weekend and to say the evening prayers of the church. If you would like to join our friendly and informal group, please email the parish office or call Melanie (07900 051956)

Fair trade Stall This weekend at Marshalswick Mass Centre and 7/8 December in Church. We have a wide range of Advent calendars, Christmas chocolate, cards and several items supporting people in Palestine. All profits go to CAFOD. We are able to accept card payments.

Sunday 1 December 4pm St Saviour's Church Sandpit Lane. An ecumenical gathering welcoming local Churches for a service of traditional choral music looking forward to Christmas. Followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

Gentle, reflective Taize chants, silence and prayer Wednesday 4 December, 7.30 - 8pm at St Mary's Church, 1, Sherwood Avenue, AL4 9QA

The Parish Friends Knit & Natter Group We will be meeting in the Parish Centre on 3 and 17 December from 2.15 to 4pm. All are welcome to join us. Contact Helen Bassill 07860 830340.

Mercy Associates Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 4 December after the 10am Mass. We will be in Room 1 of the Parish centre and Sr Margaret will be joining us.

C.W.L. Thursday 5 December Come to 10am mass followed by sherry and mince pies, quiz and raffle, All welcome cost £5. Please note change of time.

Advent Talks 7.30pm 5 and 12 December in the Parish Hall "A Scriptural Way to prepare for Christmas" with Fr John.

Senior Citizens Annual Afternoon Tea The Sixth Formers at Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School will be hosting its Senior Citizens Annual Afternoon Tea on Friday 6 December 12.15-2.30pm. If you would like to attend or need help with transport please contact Helen Bassill by Tuesday 3 December on 07860 830340.

Saturday 7 December 9.30-11.30am Churches Together In Marshalswick Christmas collection of food for distribution via Vineyard Church outside Budgens at The Quadrant. Volunteers very welcome, call or text Christine and Maureen 07900260190.

Mothers' Prayers We will meet in room 2 on Monday 9 December at 8pm. Anyone wishing to pray for children is welcome. Information from; office@mothersprayers.org.

Migrants' Meals Volunteers needed on Thursday 12 December from 11.30am. The parish will be hosting 4 local

migrants while they use our kitchen. Parish volunteers provide welcome and support but do not cook. This is a friendly and interesting event. If you can help at all during the day please call Mary on 07976277059 for information.

BINGO Friday 13 December at 8pm in the Parish Hall. by the Knights of St. Columba, to raise funds for the Catholic Children's Society. Admission is 50p and includes refreshments. Everyone Welcome.

School and Nursery Applications and Certificates of Catholic Practice Fr Michael will be available on Wednesday 11 December 3.30 - 6.00pm and Friday 13 December 6.00 - 7.30pm to sign certificates of catholic practice for parents, guardians and carers. No appointment is necessary and children need not attend.

Herts Newman Circle Advent Day of Reflection - 14 December. Bishop John Crowley has had to stand down on health grounds from leading the Circle Quiet Day. But we are pleased that Sister Regina (a Dominican sister, living in Harpenden and well known to many) has agreed to lead the conference on Advent themes instead. Same time 10am - 4pm, Focolare Centre Welwyn Garden City, Cost £15. Spaces are very limited and booking in advance is required by calling Anthony Baker (07939 287600) or Mary Harber (079762 77059) by Thursday 5 December.

Carols by Candlelight at 7.30pm on Monday 23 December Calling readers, musicians and singers, especially male voices. If you'd like to be involved, please email stalbanscbc@rcdow.org.uk or text 07840 367555. Practices:
- 14 & 21 December, singers and musicians 2pm
- 23 December 5.45pm all in preparation for the service

PARISH ADMINISTRATION

Diocese of Westminster Annual Report and Accounts 2023
A copy of the Diocesan annual report accounts is available to view in the parish office. Copies can also be viewed [online](#)

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 hire charges and the range of facilities available.

Mass Intentions Mass intentions can be booked by phoning or visiting the parish office from 9am to 1pm any weekday. Outside of these times, please email the parish office to request a mass intention. 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 up to a year in advance and the next masses available for booking are in March 2025.** 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 £10 per mass.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 30 November - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY
6pm Mass Deceased members of the Sheehan & Guinnelly families

Sunday 1 December - FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
8am Mass People of the parish
9am Mass Des Stack (RIP)
(John Fisher School Marshalswick)
9.30am Mass Mary Stella Kivali (RIP)
11.30am Mass Teresa Buckler (First Anniversary) and Delia Daly (Ints)
6pm Mass Agnes Cloherty (RIP)
Reading 1, Jeremiah 33:14-16, Psalm 24(25)
Reading 2, 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2,
Gospel, Luke 21:25-28,34-36

Monday 2 December - Advent feria
10am Mass Jo Gleeson (Ann)
7pm Mass Evelio Azcona (RIP)
Reading 1, Isaiah 2:1-5, Psalm 121(122)
Gospel, Matthew 8:5-11

Tuesday 3 December - St Francis Xavier
10am Mass Bruno O'Gorman (RIP)
Reading 1, Isaiah 11:1-10, Psalm 71(72)
Gospel, Luke 10:21-24

Wednesday 4 December - Advent feria
10am Funeral Mass for John Connolly
7pm Mass John Berry (RIP)
Reading 1, Isaiah 25:6-10, Psalm 22(23)
Gospel, Matthew 15:29-37

Thursday 5 December - Advent feria
10am Mass John and Anna Cronin (Ann)
Reading 1, Isaiah 26:1-6, Psalm 117(118)
Gospel, Matthew 7:21,24-27

Friday 6 December - Advent feria
10am Mass Peter Celestine Okoro (RIP)
7pm Mass John Keane (RIP)
Reading 1, Isaiah 29:17-24, Psalm 26(27)
Gospel, Matthew 9:27-31
(On Fridays Mass is celebrated at St Albans Cathedral at Noon)

Saturday 7 December - St Ambrose
10am Mass Noel Kevane (RIP)
10.30-11.30am Exposition & Confessions
Reading 1, Isaiah 30:19-21,23-26, Psalm 146(147)
Gospel, Matthew 9:35-10:1,5,6-8

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 7 December - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY
6pm Mass Mickie Clancy (Ann)

Sunday 8 December - SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
8am Mass Marion Weldon (RIP)
9am Mass John Edward Taylor (RIP)
(John Fisher School Marshalswick)
9.30am Mass People of the parish
11.30am Mass Marcos Montoya (RIP) and Alan Wood (RIP)
6pm Mass Agnes Cloherty (RIP)
Reading 1, Baruch 5:1-9, Psalm 125(126)
Reading 2, Philippians 1:4-6,8-11, Gospel, Luke 3:1-6

PLEASE PRAY

United with Churches together in St Albans we pray for the members of Christ Church, St Albans.

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 all those who have died recently including Joseph Bagge, John Connolly and Madeleine Griffin.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Teresa Buckler, Mickie Clancy, John and Anna Cronin, Jo Gleeson and Jim Lewis.

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

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation Prayer As we try to follow Jesus, help us to put aside our perceived certainties and loyalties. Let us listen and learn from others, especially those we find difficult to be with or who's message we find troubling. Help us to reach out to those on the margins and try to find out why they are there.

Mass in Cantonese Once a month at 2pm at Our Lady of Lourdes in Sawston, Cambridge, CB22 3HJ. Next mass 21 December. All welcome. For more details, please see the flyer at the back of the church or email cantonmassea@gmail.com.

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 by emailing her on 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 these materials saying they bring "remarkable graces to many."