



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

E-mail: stalbens@rcdow.org.uk Website: www.albanstephen.org

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

22 December 2024 - FOURTH 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 / stalbensg3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk / 07976 277059

We are a Fairtrade parish

Fr Michael writes... This weekend's bulletin is accompanied by a letter from me to yourselves and the parishioners of St Bartholomew's. It details changes in the Mass Schedule for the Catholic parishes of St Albans due to come into operation on Monday 13 January when myself and Fr John take up our responsibilities at St Bartholomew's alongside our responsibilities here at St Alban & St Stephen. Please make sure to take a copy of the new Mass Schedule. As I say in that letter, the immediacy of the forthcoming pairing with St Bartholomew's has curtailed the consultation I would have liked to undertake, but there will be an opportunity in July for each parish to review the changes being made.

One area of concern not addressed in the letter is the question of mass intentions, in particular those already booked for next year. For the most part masses intentions for the masses impacted by the change in mass times will be transferred to its new time i.e. those booked for 9.30pm on a Sunday morning will be moved to the new 10am mass, those booked for the 6pm Saturday evening mass here at St Alban & St Stephen will be moved to the 5pm mass on Saturday evening. The masses where there is no new equivalent, that is the 10am on Wednesday mornings, the 10am on First Fridays and the Marshalswick masses in August, will need to be transferred to another time or place. I am really sorry for this, but as you will appreciate they were booked at a time when the impact of the forthcoming changes on mass times here and at St Bartholomew's was not clear. Early in the New Year Angela, our parish administrator, will contact those whose mass intentions are impacted in this way to arrange a new time for them to be celebrated.

This will be the last bulletin for 2024. The next will be available on 4/5 January. On behalf of Fr John, Deacon Brendan, myself and the entire Parish Team I would like to wish you and yours a very happy Christmas & every blessing in 2025.

Christmas Offering - what is it for? Fr Michael and Fr John, like most catholic priests in England and Wales, do not receive a monthly salary from either the diocese or the state. Instead they receive a monthly allowance from the parish which is funded from what people give on Christmas Day, Easter Sunday, for funerals and by way of donations for weddings, baptisms and mass intentions. In this diocese the recommended allowance for priests is set at £10,900 a year. If more comes in by way of Christmas Offering, Easter Offering and stole fees the parish priest can request an uplift in the priests' monthly allowance. Priests in the diocese of Westminster are expected to purchase and run their own cars, but can claim for any parish related mileage. In addition to this allowance, the parish provides the priests of the parish with food, accommodation and utilities. There is no private pension scheme for Westminster Priests but the parish does cover the priests' National Insurance Contributions and will, if wanted, cover membership of a basic diocesan health scheme. Food, accommodation, utilities, National Insurance and the Health Scheme are all treated as benefits in kind and subject to tax.

Carols by Candlelight at 7.30pm on Monday 23 December Everyone welcome! Bring family, friends and neighbours. Join in with traditional and new carols; hear a few readings and eat some mince pies! Could you help serve mulled wine and mince pies? Please let the priests know at mass on 22 December.

Christmas Masses Details of our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day masses can be found on our website or via this [link](#). The Parish Christmas Card also contains details of all the masses and times for confessions over Christmas. Please take one home with you.

Winter Beds Project Final volunteer training session 8-9.30pm on Wednesday 8 January at Marlborough Road Church Hall. Please just turn up or email cchandco@btconnect.com for more details.

2025 - 'In a Year' Catholic Podcasts and YouTube Channels <https://media.ascensionpress.com> has links to 'Bible in Year', 'Catechism in a Year' and (new for 2025) 'Rosary in a Year' Podcasts and [YouTube Channels](#) including a reading/prayer plan. You can follow at your own pace and be part of a global community of Catholics looking to understand and deepen their faith. Additionally, there are lots of videos, podcasts and resources on the Catholic faith.

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 stalbanscc@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.

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 Thank you everyone for your tremendous generosity and support in making the YCBS 2024 scheme such a success once again. The Santa Team is currently delivering gift vouchers to over 185 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, Ardmore House, Home Start and the Intensive Family Support Team. In addition, several adults with either special needs or living in a refuge will also receive a Christmas voucher.

Christmas card distribution Many thanks to all parishioners who supported the distribution of our parish Christmas cards in St Peter's Street on Tuesday 17 December whether by attending or by your prayers and moral support. 300 cards were distributed as invitations to local people to attend our services. We had several good conversations with passers-by.

St Albans Food Bank - Christmas Donations Please bring Christmas donations for the local foodbanks to the Church and mass centre on 14/15 December as this means that they can be passed on to the foodbanks and will reach the people who need them before Christmas. Donations should be non-perishable food and can be left in the box in the porch. 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 at Marshalswick Mass Centre on the first Sunday of the month.

OUR PARISH GROUPS AND EVENTS

St Albans Winter Beds Project From Monday 9 December and 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 contact Colin Hull on cchandco@btconnect.com.

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)

SVP Vinnie Packs The SVP are distributing over 10,000 homeless packs (Vinnie Packs) during the extreme cold weather. Please could you consider sponsoring packs at a

suggested donation of £4.10 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 Friends Turkey and Tinsel New Year lunch on Sunday 5 January 2025 12.30-3pm All senior parishioners are invited. Please let Helen know if you would like to attend or if you can offer a lift 07860 830340. If you can offer help by preparing vegetables for us to cook on the day or if you can make a dessert please contact Joanna 07960 519789. Help on the day either in the kitchen or setting up the hall would also be appreciated.

BINGO Many, many thanks for the support for our recent Bingo evening. A total of £20.00 was raised to help the Catholic Children's Society. Our next Bingo evening will be on Friday 10 January at 8pm in the Parish Hall.

Fair trade Our parish fair trade stall will be open at all Masses at church over the weekend of 11/12 January and after Mass at Marshalswick Mass Centre on 19 January. Many thanks to everyone who supported this venture during 2024. £1,500 has been donated to Cafod.

The Parish Friends Knit & Natter Group We will be meeting in the Parish Centre on 14 January 1.30-3.30pm. All are welcome. Contact Helen Bassill 07860 830340.

Save the Date! Jubilee Pilgrimage to Walsingham for the Feast of the Annunciation 25 March 2025 Coach leaving from St Bart's. Please contact Rosemary Roscoe 07723 546642 or Margaret Leahy margleahy@gmail.com for details.

Word on Fire UK Bible Conference 21 – 22 February 2025 Join Bishop Robert Barron and thousands of other Catholics from across the UK for Evangelisation & Culture: The Bible to gain a deeper appreciation of the Bible and its relevance to the Church's mission today. Excel Centre, East London. Speakers Include: Bishop Robert Barron, N.T. Wright, Prof. Tracey Rowland and more. For information please see here.

Consultation on the Admission Arrangements 2026/27 of Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School Please see [here](#) or view the notice in porch for more information.

St Alban and St Stephen Catholic Primary School and Nursery Please click [here](#) for admissions information or to book a tour. The application deadline for Reception is Wednesday 15 January 2025 and we warmly welcome application from all families. Families with a child born between 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022 are warmly invited to apply for a Nursery place for admission in

September 2025. The application window closes on 25 February 2025. We offer a combination of 15 and 30 hour provision depending on your child's needs. Please complete the Nursery Application and Options Forms which can be requested by emailing the School Office at admin@ssas.herts.sch.uk.

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](#)

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 April 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.

PLEASE PRAY

This weekend, united with Churches together in St Albans we pray for all members of the City Centre Churches St Albans. During the week of 29 December we pray for all the members of St Stephen's Church.

For all the sick

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 Thomasz Barzdo, Christopher Letandrine, Michael Robins and Anna-Marie Wilson.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Pascale Al-Basri, Therese Bardouillet, , Conway and Marylee Berners-Lee Mary and Laurie Blythman, Carol Cahill, Mickie Clancy, Francisco Diaz, Thomas Doyle, Nesta Gooder, Fr Tom Hewitt MSC, Vito La Monica, Marion Miller, Agnes O'Boy, Maureen Rowland, Denis Ryan, Molly Screene, Carmela Sellecchia, Francisco Trigueros and Alexander Vengler.

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

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.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 21 December – VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

5pm *Confessions*

6pm Mass Pat and Caroline Judge (RIP)

Sunday 22 December – FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8am Mass Graham Smith (RIP)

9am Mass Kathleen Fahy (RIP) (*John Fisher School, M'wick*)

9.30am Phyllis McNicholas (RIP)

10.30am – 1pm *Confessions*

11.30am Pascale Al-Basri (Ann)

5.30pm *Confessions*

6pm Mass People of the parish

Reading 1, Micah 5:1-4, Psalm 79(80)

Reading 2, Hebrews 10:5-10, Gospel, Luke 1:39-45

Monday 23 December – Advent feria

10am Mass Therese Bardouillet (Ann)

10.30am *Confessions. No evening Mass.*

7.30pm **CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT**

Reading 1, Malachi 3:1-4,23-24, Psalm 24(25)

Gospel, Luke 1:57-66

Tuesday 24 December–VIGIL MASSES OF CHRISTMAS

No morning Mass, Confessions 10.30am

5pm Mass Priests' Intention

7pm Mass Priests' Intention

Reading 1, Isaiah 62:1-5, Psalm 88

Reading 2, Acts 13:16-17,22-25,Gospel,Matthew 1:1-25

10pm Mass People of the Parish

Reading 1, Isaiah 9:1-7, Psalm 95

Reading 2, Titus 2:11-14, Gospel, Luke 2:1-14

Wednesday 25 December – NATIVITY OF THE LORD

8am Mass Nicholas Breakspear School Community

9am Mass St John Fisher School Community

(*St John Fisher School, Marshalswick*)

9.30am Mass St Alban & St Stephen School Community

Reading 1, Isaiah 62:11-12, Psalm 96

Reading 2, Titus 3: 4-7, Gospel, Luke 2:15-20

11.30am Mass Loreto College School Community

Reading 1, Isaiah 52:7-10, Psalm 97

Reading 2, Hebrews 1:1-6, Gospel, John 1:1-18

No evening mass

Thursday 26 December – ST STEPHEN

11am Mass Carmela Sellecchia (Ann)

Reading 1, Acts 6:8-10,7:54-59, Psalm 30(31)

Gospel, Matthew 10:17-22

Friday 27 December – ST JOHN

7pm Mass Chris Sumner (Ints)

Reading 1, 1 John1:1-4, Psalm 96(97)

Gospel, John 20:2-8

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

Saturday 28 December – THE HOLY INNOCENTS

10am Mass Paddy Neary (RIP)

10.30am *Confessions (No Holy Hour)*

Reading 1, 1 John 1:5-2:2, Psalm 123(124)

Gospel, Matthew 2:13-18

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 28 December – VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

6pm Deceased members of the Moore family

Sunday 29 December – THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

8am Mass Margaret Sweeney (RIP)

9am Mass People of the parish (*John Fisher School, Mw'ick*)

9.30am Mass Vito La Monica (Ann)

11.30am Mass Alexander Vengler (Ann)

6pm Mass Molly Screene (Ann) and Thomas Doyle (Ann)

Reading 1, 1 Samuel 1:20-28, Psalm 83(84)

Reading 2, 1 John 3:1-2,21-24, Gospel, Luke 2:41-52

Monday 30 December – 6TH DAY IN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

10am Mass Conway and Marylee Berners- Lee (Ann)

No evening mass

Reading 1, Reading 1, 1 John 2:12-17, Psalm 95(96)

Gospel, Luke 2:36-40

Tuesday 31 December – 7TH DAY IN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

10am Mass Maureen Rowland (Ann)

Reading 1, 1 John 2:18-21, Psalm 95(96)

Gospel, John 1:1-18

Wednesday 1 January – SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD

11am Mass Ghislein De Cruz (Ints)

No evening mass

Reading 1, Numbers 6:22-27, Psalm 66(67)

Reading 2, Galatians 4:4-7, Gospel, Luke 2:16-21

Thursday 2 January– St Basil the Great & St Gregory Nazianzen

10am Mass Christy Small (RIP)

Reading 1, 1 John 2:22-28, Psalm 97(98)

Gospel, John 1:19-28

Friday 3 January – Christmas feria

10am Mass Andrea Avvinti (RIP)

7pm Mass Declan O'Flynn (RIP)

Reading 1, 1 John 2:29-3:6, Psalm 97(98)

Gospel, John 1:29-34

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

Saturday 4 January – Christmas feria

10am Mass Anna Jones (RIP)

10.30am *Confessions (No Holy Hour)*

Reading 1, 1 John 3:7-10, Psalm 97(98)

Gospel, John 1:35-42

Saturday 4 January – VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

6pm Mass Thomas Walsh (RIP)

Sunday 5 January – THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

8am Mass Kathy Fahy (RIP)

9am Mass Carol Cahill (Ann) (*John Fisher School*)

9.30am Peter Celestine Okoro (RIP)

11.30am People of the Parish

6pm Mass Marion Miller (Ann)

Reading 1, Isaiah 60:1-6, Psalm 71(72)

Reading 2, Ephesians 3:2-6, Gospel, Matthew 2:1-12