



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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12 January 2025 - THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD



Contactless Giving

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Deacon: Rev. Brendan Day

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We are a Fairtrade parish

Fr John writes... As we begin 2025, greetings from Fr Michael, myself and the Parish Team. This year promises to be a very eventful and exciting year, with the emphasis on building in more ways than one.

The Universal Church has designated this year as a Jubilee Year, with its main focus on our being 'Pilgrims of Hope.' A Jubilee Year is an opportunity to 're-establish a proper relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation.' To this end the Jubilee Prayer Card, now available in the porch, encourages each of us to be 'tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.' This transformation in each of us will help us build a stronger community as well as personally reawakening in us, as 'pilgrims of Hope', a yearning for the treasures of heaven. The Bishops Conference website has many references, documents and prayers which can assist us during this year as we journey together as 'Pilgrims of Hope.' <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/jubilee-in-the-catholic-church/>

This Jubilee Year has a particular significance for us as a parish as we are paired with St Bartholomew's. Yes, there will be challenges, but if we strive to hear the invitation to be a hope filled people, those same challenges can just as easily be moments of growth, moments to build. I have been reflecting recently on the words of one of my favourite hymns. 'Abba Father, you are the potter we are the clay, the works of your hands.' The building that our pairing with St Bartholomew's calls for begins with each of us personally; first and foremost it is allowing God to transform us, allowing him to shape and mould us - through Word and Sacrament - so that we can be links in the chain fostering community and bringing others to a knowledge of the riches of God's glory.

Going forward is not an abandonment of the past, neither is it a constant comparison with the past, rather it is the acceptance of ourselves individually and as a community as pilgrims, people who are called to journey, not to stay where we are, but to draw closer to the Kingdom of God by growing in Hope, Trust and most of all Love. Of course its impossible to be a community of 'one'. To be a community of pilgrims we must minister to one another, serve one another, and so embody the baptismal calling and priesthood common to us all. As Fr Michael mentioned in the bulletin of the 5 January, a new year's resolution, might be, to offer your time and talents to the parish. Cleaning, setting up, welcoming and greeting people as they arrive for mass, and tidying up afterwards. These are all necessary, but they are important ways of building community which will also alleviate some of the pressures that both Fr Michael and myself will have to contend with. I have been struck by the concern and generous words from parishioners asking 'how are you priests going to cope' well clearly, we can only do that with your assistance.

As we begin this year, building again, not just building a new porch and forecourt, but building community, the Gospel points out some of the parallels between Christ's baptism and our own. At His baptism Christ was proclaimed 'my beloved Son' at our Baptism we become the adopted children of God. At Christ's baptism the heavens were opened; at our Baptism heaven was opened to us.

Our Family in Faith, Family in Youth, RCIA and Adult confirmation programmes are all helping to renew this community of faith, so as we begin this new year, we cannot help but look towards Easter, when the baptismal font and waters will be blessed, and new adult believers will rise with Christ to share with us new life.

Please note that weekday and weekend mass times will change from Monday 13 January 2025. Please visit the parish website for details, take a copy of the revised mass times from the porch or see last week's bulletin for details.

Welcome to 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

Sacrament of Baptism The next baptism preparation course is Saturday 8 February 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.

Sunday sung Masses From when the Mass schedule changes on the weekend 18/19 January, musicians who currently serve the 11.30 Mass will serve the 12 noon Mass on Sundays, with choir and organ on 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, and cantor and organ on 2nd, 4th and, when applicable, 5th Sundays, as previously.

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.

St Albans Food Bank 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.

Thank you from the Parish Friends Group Parish Friends would like to thank all those who worked so hard to ensure that the Turkey and Tinsel lunch last Sunday was so successful. We had about 75 guests who were treated to a wonderful lunch and brilliant entertainment. Thank you to those who drove parishioners to the lunch. We thank Joanna Roche and her team who worked so hard in the kitchen to produce our delicious lunch. We also thank those parishioners who provided the food. A big thank you to the Confirmation candidates and their mums who welcomed guests, sold raffle tickets and served the food. Finally thank you to Saints Alive who provided wonderful music and entertainment and had everyone on their feet dancing. They were amazing and were joined towards the end by Fr John who not only sang with the band but also started a conga that had everyone - including Fr Peter - dancing around the hall. A great afternoon enjoyed by all.

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)

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.

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.

Mothers' Prayers We will meet in room 2 on Monday 13 January in room 2. Anyone wishing to pray for children is welcome. Information from, Office @mothersprayers.org

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.

Jumble Sale - 10am Saturday 18 January - proceeds to St Bart's HCPT Group for Easter 2025 pilgrimage - good quality jumble, lots of bargains, donations most welcome [but no large or electrical items, thank you] - please leave in St Bart's Parish Centre entrance hall, Vesta Avenue, St Albans, between 9am and 8pm on Friday 17 January - queries to Barbara Bliss (01727 873672).

A Year of Hope: An Introduction to the Jubilee Year with the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development 2025 is a Jubilee year, but what does that mean? Catholic talk show host and author Nana Churcher, and CAFOD's Simon Giarchi will be hosting Fr Jan Nowotnik (Director of Mission for the Bishop's Conference), Christine Allen (CAFOD's Director) and Kayode Akintola (CAFOD's Head of Africa) and more for a lively start to the Jubilee. With a special appearance by Catholic band Ooberfuse. Saturday 18 Jan, 10:30am-midday, online. All welcome. Register here for free: cafod.org.uk/jubilee.

Migrants' Meals Volunteers needed on Thursday 30 January from 11.30am. The parish will be hosting four 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 more information.

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.

Jubilee Pilgrimage to Walsingham for the Feast of the Annunciation 25 March Join us on a coach leaving from St Bartholomew's, St Albans, for a beautiful pilgrimage experience. Holy Mass will be celebrated in Walsingham at 12 noon in the Basilica, followed by Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction. We will walk or ride (if preferred) the Holy Mile and visit the site of the original Holy House and pray the Prayer for England. The cost is £25 for adults and it is free for children. Please contact Rosemary Roscoe 07723 546642 or Margaret Leahy margleahy@gmail.com for further details.

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

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.

Mass intentions affected by the change in mass times 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. Early in the New Year we will contact those whose mass intentions are impacted in this way to arrange a new time for them to be celebrated.

Gift Aid If you are a UK taxpayer and have previously signed a gift aid declaration, but no longer pay UK tax, please contact the parish office and let us know. If you have stopped paying tax, we can no longer claim gift (25p in every pound). If you do not pay sufficient UK tax and gift aid is claimed on what you give, then HMRC may seek reimbursement from the parish. If you have signed a gift aid form, your offertory donations need to come from a bank account in your name only or a joint bank account on which you are also named.

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. If you register as a gift aiding donor on one of our two contactless devices, please ensure you add both your first and surname, in full, and your full address, including road name, so that your gift aid declaration meets the standards for gift aid reclaim required by HMRC.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 11 January – VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

6pm Mass Harry Vasey (Ann)

Sunday 12 January – THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

8am Mass Kathy Fahy (RIP)

9am Mass People of the parish

(John Fisher School, Marshalswick)

9.30am Mass Joan Hogan (RIP)

11.30am Mass Joanna and David Napper (Ints)

6pm Mass Thomas and Gretta McGovern (Ann)

Reading 1, Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11, Psalm 103(104)

Reading 2, Titus 2:11-14,3:4-7, Gospel, Luke 3:15-16,21-22

Monday 13 January – feria

10am Mass Ghislein De Cruz (Ints)

7pm Mass Derek Benifer (RIP)

Reading 1, Hebrews 1:1-6, Psalm 96(97)

Gospel, Mark 1:14-20

Tuesday 14 January – feria

10am Mass Maureen Brennan (RIP)

Reading 1, Hebrews 2:5-12, Psalm 8

Gospel, Mark 1:21-28

Wednesday 15 January – feria

10am No Morning Mass

7pm Mass Elsie Buckingham (RIP)

Reading 1, Hebrews 2:14-18, Psalm 104(105)

Gospel, Mark 1:29-39

Thursday 16 January – feria

10am Mass Annabel Bradley (RIP)

Reading 1, Hebrews 3:7-14, Psalm 94(95)

Gospel, Mark 1:40-45

Friday 17 January – St Anthony

10am Funeral Mass for Anna-Marie Wilson

7pm Mass Margaret Mathews (RIP)

Reading 1, Hebrews 4:1-5,11, Psalm 77(78)

Gospel, Mark 2:1-12 (On Fridays Mass is celebrated at St Albans Cathedral at Noon)

Saturday 18 January – Blessed Virgin Mary on a Saturday

10am Mass Michael Cronin (RIP)

10.30am Confessions and Exposition

Reading 1, Hebrews 4:12-16, Psalm 18(19)

Gospel, Mark 2:13-17

Mass in Cantonese Once a month at 2pm at Our Lady of Lourdes in Sawston, Cambridge, CB22 3HJ. All welcome. For more details, please see the porch flyer 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.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 18 January – VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

5pm Mass Terry and Peggy Rankin (Ann)

Sunday 19 January – SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

8am Mass Brenda Smyth (RIP)

8.30am Mass Ken and Mary Neal (Ann)

(John Fisher School, Marshalswick)

10.00am Mass Vito La Monica (RIP)

12 Noon Mass Rosalea Vetere (RIP)

6pm Mass People of the parish

Reading 1, Isaiah 62:1-5, Psalm 95(96))

Reading 2, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, Gospel, John 2:1-11

PLEASE PRAY

United with Churches together in St Alban we pray for the Ecumenical Chaplaincy at the Cathedral and Abbey Church of 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 Irene Bryant, Inacio Da Fonseca, David Goncalves, Christopher L'etandrine, Antonia Lamonaca, Gerard O'Neill, Veronica Smith and Anna-Marie Wilson.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Thomas and Gretta McGovern, Ray Ingman, Bryan McDonagh, Ken and Mary Neal, Terry and Peggy Rankin and Harry Vasey.

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

Veronica Smith (RIP) The family of Veronica Smith have written to inform us that she died in Torquay, Devon on 17 December. Veronica taught at St John Fisher, Marshalswick from 1966-1981, being deputy head from 1979. The Crematorium Service on Monday 13 January at 11:30am is being live streamed with user Name: famo5745 and Password: 145118 at <https://watch.obitus.com>.

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation Prayer Father, in this Year of Jubilee, Pope Francis reminds us that everything we claim as our own is, in fact, a gift from God and that therefore the resources of the earth are intended for the benefit of all humanity, "not just a privileged few." May we reflect on and be guided by this truth in the decisions which we make this year.