



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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14 December 2025 – THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Contactless Giving

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

Permanent Deacons: Rev. Brendan Day & Rev. Michael Larmer

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

Safeguarding Lead: Mary Harber / stalbands3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk / 07976 277059

We are a Fairtrade parish

Fr Michael writes...

The ongoing works to the porch have reduced the amount of seating and space available at the back of the church. With Christmas and the large numbers on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, space in the church will be at a premium. To this end, we will be using the main hall as an overflow. Moreover, much as we do for the Family Masses at the end of each month, I am proposing to move the altar up so that it is on the same level as the Tabernacle and to invite the children forward to sit on the carpeted platform during the Christmas Masses. The ambo, from which the scripture readings are proclaimed, will remain where it is, while the priest's chair will be positioned on the carpeted platform. I appreciate that the altar itself may feel further away, but I hope that having a space for the children to come and sit in front of both the altar and the crib will make for a more uplifting and dignified celebration over the Christmas period.

Volunteers Stewards needed for Christmas Masses The Christmas Eve Masses at 5pm & 7pm are usually very busy. We need VOLUNTEER STEWARDS to assist at all of the Masses – welcoming, handing mass books and service sheets, directing people to available seating, showing 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 (stalbands@rcdow.org.uk) indicating which Mass you can attend and help out with.

Family Christmas Mass The 5pm Mass on Christmas Eve will be a 'family' Mass and our younger parishioners are welcome to come dressed as Shepherds and Angels.

Parish Christmas Card Thank you to all the children in Years 5 & 6 at St John Fisher School who took part in our annual Illustrating Christmas Competition. The overall winner's entry has been used for this year's Parish [Christmas Card](#) now available in the Church. More can be seen on the parish [website](#). The card includes the times of Masses over the Christmas and New Year period as well as the times for confessions. As you will see there are a number of additional times for Confessions in the run up to Christmas. Please make every effort to use one of these scheduled times.

Christmas posters These are available in the Parish Centre Foyer. Please help to spread the true meaning of Christmas and take one to put in a window.

Carols by Candlelight at 7.30pm on Tuesday 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 20/21 December.

FIRE MARSHALS You may have noticed the appearance of Fire Marshal Instructions on some of the pillars around the church. This is because in order to hold larger services in church we are required to have Fire Marshals and an evacuation procedure in place. Simply put, we have the instructions, but we do not have all the Fire Marshals that we need. Beyond the very occasional training session, all we are asking is that those willing to volunteer as Fire Marshals would act as Fire Marshals in the rare event of our needing to evacuate the building. Christmas is approaching and we will have larger numbers than usual, and the need to have Fire Marshals in place is all the more pressing. If you are willing to volunteer please email the parish office with your name, email address and contact number.

Practice Fire Drill Over the weekend of 20/21 December there will be a practice fire drill to ensure that people are familiar with the revised evacuation procedures. We would like to do this before Christmas because over Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, with larger numbers than usual, it will be important for a crucial mass to know if an evacuation of the building becomes necessary. This coming Christmas, because of the more restricted space in the church, we will stream the busier masses to the hall upstairs and distribute Holy Communion in the hall.

LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS

Sacrament of Baptism The next baptism preparation course is Saturday 7 February 2026 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 10am 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 for everyone after mass.

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.

Youth Mass dates 2025/26 Sunday 6pm Mass on 25 Jan, 8 Feb, 22 Mar, 10 May, 14 June and 5 July.

OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

Christmas Day Dinners Christmas at St Alban & St Stephen is quite something with a wonderful array of activities and initiatives for young and old in addition to the Christmas Masses. The Christmas Day dinner is one of these. It used to be served in the hall, but has been delivered directly to people at home for the last 5 years. This year, because of the building works and reduced capacity in the Church, we will be streaming Masses to the hall upstairs. This will put the hall kitchen out of use. This being so, and particularly conscious of the 'Tinsel and Turkey Lunch' offered in early January, I am proposing that we do not offer Christmas Dinner on Christmas Day. I appreciate that this will be a disappointment, but with the running and busyness of two parishes at Christmas, as well as the pressure placed on the Parish Centre by the current building works, I think stepping back from the Christmas Day Dinner for this year is the most realistic thing to do. If anyone has a particular concern as a result of this please do come back to me.

Monday Office Volunteers We currently have a group of five volunteers who come into the presbytery on Monday mornings between 9am and 1pm on a rota basis to answer the door and phone, and to undertake some light office duties. If you would be interested in joining this group, or for more information, please speak with Fr Michael.

Parish Christmas card market stall Every year we distribute Parish Christmas cards at the market as a reminder about the meaning of Christmas and an invitation to join us in our celebrations. This year, could we please have a volunteer to head it up? Please contact Mary at 07976 277 059 for more information about this and the Easter stall.

YOU CAN BE SANTA 2025 Thank you everyone for your tremendous generosity and support in making the YCBS 2025 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, 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. Thank you once again, your donations really make a huge difference to so many children within our community at this time of year.

Migrants' toiletries and clothing collections We currently need donations of sanitary towels (not tampons), shower gel, toothpaste, shampoo, baby wipes, adult toothbrushes, deodorant, bars of soap, baby shower gel and shampoo. Donations of men's clothing are also needed for local migrants. Please only donate items which you would be happy to give to a family member or friend. While the building works are taking place, there will be a collecting point for these items on the third Sunday of each month.

St Albans Food Bank We currently have a food collection point at all masses, including the Marshalswick Mass centre on the first Sunday of each month. The principal demand remains for long life milk, long life juice and tinned fruit. More details of the St Albans Food bank can be found [here](#).

Coffee and Tea After Mass Refreshments are available in the Parish Centre after 10am Sunday Mass during school term time, after 12 noon Mass on the first Sunday of the month and after 5pm Saturday evening Mass. Coffee and tea are also available after the 10am Mass each Monday. All are welcome so please do come along.

OUR PARISH GROUPS AND EVENTS

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

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.

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation group We meet on the third Thursday of each month in the Parish Centre, starting at 7.30pm. All welcome. See [here](#) for future events. There is no meeting in December.

St Bart's Baby and Toddler Group The St Barts baby and toddler group meets every Thursday morning in St Barts hall 11am-12.30pm. Lizzie Lizzio (efkelly88@gmail.com)

Phillips Grief Café Phillips the undertakers are running a **Grief Café** 10am-Noon on the first Thursday of the month in the parish centre foyer. A place for people to come together to share and discuss their experiences of grief and loss, and connect with others who understand.

St Albans URC Memory Café Sociable afternoon for those with dementia [however mild/severe] and accompanied by their live-in carers - Chiswell Green URC Hall, Watford Road, Chiswell Green on the first Thursday of the month - 1.30-3.30pm. Email [here](#) for information.

South St Albans Churches Ecumenical Advent Talks 2025 Wednesday evenings 7.30-9pm, last session 17 December, at St Bartholomew's. A series of ecumenical Advent Talks with the theme of "Hope, Peace, Joy and Love in our Time." A bible may be useful for some of the talks but is not essential. Please contact cmjldl@aol.com.

Fair trade The last fair trade stall of the year will be available after Mass at Marshalswick Mass centre on 14 December. We have a wide range of charity Christmas cards, chocolates and goods from Palestine.

Bring Joy and Sing in a Short Carol Service in a Care Home Monday 15 December at 10.30 and 11am in Tara's Retreat, Sandridge, AL4 9DQ and Wednesday 17 December at 10.30am in Alban Manor, 2 Chene Drive, Waverley Rd. AL3 5QP. Please contact Maggie Dodd on 07462 586773 or email: mrsmaggiedodd@gmail.com.

The Parish Friends Knit & Natter Group We will be meeting in the Parish Centre on 16 December 2-3.30pm. All are welcome. Contact Helen Bassill 07860 830340.

Winter Beds Project We provide accommodation for people who are rough sleeping and not accommodated in The Open Door Night Shelter. We are looking for people to help run the project this winter. Volunteers are needed every evening and morning to perform a variety of roles, including setting up, greeting guests, setting out breakfast and checking out guests, laundry. Volunteers will receive comprehensive training and support. We offer volunteering opportunities with no minimum time commitment. For more information, please email winterbedsproject@opendoorstalbans.org.

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 £4.10 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.

Date for your Diary The Parish Friends Turkey and Tinsel lunch is from 12 - 4pm on Sunday 11 January. Further details to follow.

Talk: Living as a Human in an AI World A talk to be given by Canon Tim Bull from St Albans' Cathedral at Ss Alban and Stephen Church Hall Saturday 17 January 11am. All welcome. Organised by The Herts Circle of the Newman Association.

PARISH SCHOOLS

St Alban & St Stephen Catholic Primary School and Nursery Admissions For nursery and primary admissions please contact the school office to book a place on our tour

on 8 January. More information can be found [here](#). Deadline is 15 January 2026.

St Adrian's Catholic Primary School Admissions For nursery and reception admissions please contact the school office to book a place on one of our tours. More information can be found [here](#). The application deadline is 15 January.

Loreto College Foundation Governors required For more information please email swilliams@loreto.herts.sch.uk.

PARISH ADMINISTRATION

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 one year in advance and the first masses we now have free for booking are in March / April 2026.** Please also be aware that weekday morning masses (excluding Mondays) will be held at St Barts for the duration of the building works. 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.

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 normally be included for eight weeks, unless the request to have their name included is renewed.

Weekly bulletin Please note that the last bulletin of this year will be the one for the weekend of 20/21 December. There will be no bulletins the weekend of 27/28 December or 3/4 January. Bulletins will resume again from 10/11 January.

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 charges and facilities.

SVP Retiring Collection The parish SVP Conference gratefully acknowledge the very generous donations, totalling £1,175.00, received in response to the recent appeal. This is being used to support local people in need of financial assistance with their food and fuel costs

Friends of the Holy Land Retiring Collection The recent collection for FHL raised a total of £1,943.34. This collection was held in conjunction with our two very well supported and received advent talks on the Holy Land, organised by the parish AFF group. Thanks very much to everyone who attended or donated.

Retiring Collection for the Sick and Retired Priests Fund The recent retiring collection for the sick and retired priests of the Diocese raised a total of £1,616.40. Thank you for your generosity.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 13 December – VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY
5pm Mass Kitty Sheehan (RIP)

Sunday 14 December – THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8am Mass Efigenia Virrueta (Ann)

8.30am Mass Geoff Linzell (RIP)

(St John Fisher School, Marshalswick)

10am Mass Evelio Azcona (RIP)

10am and 11.30am Confessions

12 Noon Mass Brendan Hollywood (RIP)

6pm Mass Holy Souls

Reading 1, Isaiah 35:1-6,10, Psalm 145(146)

Reading 2, James 5:7-10, Gospel, Matthew 11:2-11

Monday 15 December – Advent feria

10am Mass Koomi Sullivan (RIP)

10.30am Confessions

Reading 1, Numbers 24:2-7,15-17, Psalm 24(25)

Gospel, Matthew 21:23-27

Tuesday 16 December – Advent feria

10am Mass * Donald De Cruz (Ann) *(at St Barts)*

*10.30am * Confessions (at St Barts)*

Reading 1, Zephaniah 3:1-2,9-13, Psalm 33(34)

Gospel, Matthew 21:28-32

Wednesday 17 December – Advent feria

10am * Funeral Mass for Aderemi Williams *(at St Barts)*

6.30pm Confessions

7pm Mass Josephine Egan (RIP)

Reading 1, Genesis 49:2,8-10, Psalm 71(72)

Gospel, Matthew 1:1-17

Thursday 18 December – Advent feria

10am Mass * Agnes O'Boy (Ann) *(at St Bart's)*

*10.30am * Confessions (at St Barts)*

Reading 1, Jeremiah 23:5-8, Psalm 71(72)

Gospel, Matthew 1:18-24

Friday 19 December – Advent feria

7pm Mass Reza Tanha (Ann)

7.30pm Confessions

Reading 1, Judges 13:2-7,24-25, Psalm 70(71)

Gospel, Luke 1:5-25

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

Justice, Peace & the Integrity of Creation Group Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict may be seeds of peace, reconciliation and hope and that we may support them with our informed understanding and with prayer.

St Bartholomew's Parish Please see the St Bartholomew's website at [St Bartholomew – Roman Catholic Parish of St Albans South](#) for details of mass times and events or to read a copy of the St Bartholomew's weekly newsletter.

Family Resources Please join us at Little Lights (under sevens) and Children's Liturgy (seven and above) during 10am 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 20 December – Advent feria

10am Exposition and Confessions

Saturday 20 December – VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

4pm Confessions

5pm Mass Jay and Sheila Chitnis (RIP)

Sunday 21 December – FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8am Mass Graham Smith (RIP)

8.30am Mass Jim Dalley (RIP)

(St John Fisher School, Marshalswick)

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

12 Noon Mass People of the parish

6pm Mass Therese Bardouillet (Ann)

Reading 1, Isaiah 7:10-14, Psalm 23(24)

Reading 2, Romans 1:1-7, Gospel, Matthew 1:18-24

PLEASE PRAY

United with Churches together in St Albans we pray for the members of the City Centre Churches.

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 Sue Assorto, Aleksandr Baziuk, Danny McDermott, Winnie McDermott, Erika Notova and Aderemi Williams.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Therese Bardouillet, Conway and Marylee Berners- Lee, Donald De Cruz, Elizabeth Gaffney, Nesta Gooder, Agnes O'Boy, Michael Robins, Reza Tanha and Efigenia Virrueta.

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

Mass in Polish Mass in Polish takes place here at 4pm on the second and fourth Sundays of each month.

School Applications If you are a parent, guardian or carer who needs a Certificate of Catholic Practice to accompany your child's application for a primary, secondary or nursery school place, please email the parish office on stalbans@rcdow.org.uk with your child's name, date of birth and home address together with a contact telephone phone number for yourself. Please indicate which school(s) you are applying for as not all catholic schools require the Certificate of Catholic Practice. Fr Michael will then arrange an appointment to meet you.

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 cantonmassesea@gmail.com.