



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

14 Beaconsfield Road, St Albans, AL1 3RB

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21 December 2025 - FOURTH 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... At the beginning of the New Year we will mark the first anniversary of the partnering between St Bartholomew's and St Alban & St Stephen. So much has been achieved in these last twelve months. At St Bartholomew's we have moved the parish office from the presbytery to the Parish Centre, refurbished the presbytery ready for letting and, following a leak, redecorated the sacristy, meeting room and hall toilets. At St Alban and St Stephen we have finally commenced the building and refurbishment works to the church porch and forecourt. And all this alongside the regular round of parish life; Mass, the preparation for and celebration of the sacraments, as well as the pastoral outreach to young and old. As we move towards the end of the year, on behalf of myself, Fr John and the whole Parish Team, I would like to thank both parishes for your support and for the generous way in which you have embraced and engaged with all that our partnering has entailed. With our prayers and all good wishes for Christmas and the New Year ahead.

Volunteers Stewards needed for Christmas Masses The Christmas Eve Masses are usually very busy. We still 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 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 The parish Christmas 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 There are a few still 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 if you can help at mass this weekend.

Carols with HCPT at St Bartholomew's 7.30pm Monday 22 December The service will last for about an hour and then we will head into St Bart's Hall for some refreshments, mulled wine and mince pies. There will be a retiring collection for HCPT so please come along and join us!

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 11,200 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 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. If you are away over Christmas and you would like to contribute to the Christmas Offering for the priests of the parish please use one of the Christmas Offering envelopes now available in the porch.

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

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 January, 8 February, 22 March, 10 May, 14 June and 5 July.

OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

FIRE MARSHALS We are looking for parishioners to volunteer as Fire Marshals in the rare event of our needing to evacuate the building. Christmas is fast 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 this weekend - 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.

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 items (milk and fruit juice), tinned items (fruit, veg, meat, fish and puddings), cooking sauces, coffee, teabags, cereals and jam. 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 & EVENTS

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

Faith and Family Group We meets in the parish hall on the first Tuesday of the 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)

St Albans URC Memory Café Sociable afternoon for those with dementia 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.

The Parish Friends Knit & Natter Group We will be meeting in the Parish Centre on 30 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.

BINGO Many, many thanks for the support, and donations, and help, at our recent Bingo evening. The amount raised for "LIFE" came to £225.00. Our next Bingo evening is on Friday 9 January. The Knights of St. Columba wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

Parish Friends Annual Turkey and Tinsel New Year lunch 1-4pm Sunday 11 January All senior parishioners are very welcome. We are delighted that our Parish band

Saints Alive, will be entertaining us once again. We will be having a raffle but do not require any prizes. If you would like to come to the lunch or know of someone who would like to join us please contact Helen Bassill on 07860 830340 or helenbassill1@gmail.com. We will try to provide transport if required. It is important for us to know numbers of people who are coming so please do not turn up without contacting us first. Please contact Joanna Roche joanna.roche1@gmail.com or 07960 519789 if you can help with preparing vegetables or can make a dessert. We would appreciate help on the day from parishioners of any age. We need volunteers to help set up the hall, serve food and clear up at the end of the party.

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. The Herts Circle of the Newman Association.

2026 - 'In a Year' <https://media.ascensionpress.com> has links to 'Bible in Year', 'Catechism in a Year' and '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, with lots of videos, podcasts and resources on the Catholic faith.

Cards for Prisoners - Thank you! Thank you to all who signed Christmas cards for prisoners - almost every church in St Albans was involved, and we got 1,050 cards done - one for each prisoner in The Mount. Heather Ryan, the managing chaplain, and Fr Neil Scott, the RC chaplain, say a big thank you, as does Churches Together in St Albans. We have been told not to underestimate the importance of these cards to each prisoner. Let's keep them in our thoughts and prayers this Christmas!

Fair trade Many thanks to everyone who supported the parish fair trade stall this year. You bought over £9500 worth of products helping many families around the world. Over £1000 was raised for Cafod as well. The stall will be open again after all Masses at church over the weekend of 3/4 January and after Mass at Marshalswick Mass centre on 11 January.

PARISH ADMINISTRATION

Mass Intentions Mass intentions can be booked by phoning or visiting the parish office from 9am to 1pm any weekday. Outside these times, please email the 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 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.

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation Prayer Thank you, Jesus, for coming into our world and for embracing our mortality, fragility and helplessness. Let us pray that we can be an instrument of peace in our families and communities in a world of increasing disparity.

PLEASE PRAY

United with Churches together in St Albans we pray for all the members of Churches Together in 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.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Therese Bardouillet, Conway and Marylee Berners-Lee, John Darby, Francisco Diaz, Tom Doyle, Nesta Gooder, Chris Hull, Vito La Monica, Thomas and Gretta McGovern, Marion Miller, Sandra Moseley, Robert O'Sullivan, Molly & Tommy Screene, Carmela Sellecchia, Francisco Trigueros and Harry Vasey.

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

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 20 December - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

4pm Confessions

5pm Mass Jay and Sheila Chitnis (RIP)

Sunday 21 December - 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8am Mass Graham Smith (RIP)

8.30am Mass Jim Dalley (RIP) (*St John Fisher Sch, M'wick*)

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

Monday 22 December - Advent feria

10am Mass Anne Smet (RIP)

10.30am Confessions

Reading 1, 1 Samuel 1:24-28, Psalm 1 Samuel 2

Gospel, Luke 1:46-56

Tuesday 23 December - Advent feria

10am Mass Patsy Courtney (RIP) * (*at St Barts*)

10.30am Confessions * (*at St Barts*)

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

Gospel, Luke 1:57-66

7.30pm CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

* *at St Bartholomew Church, Vesta Avenue, AL1 2PE*

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Wednesday 24 December -VIGIL MASSES OF CHRISTMAS

No morning mass

5pm Mass Priests' Intention

7pm Mass Priests' Intention

10pm Mass People of the Parish

Reading 1, 2 Samuel 7:1-5,8-16, Psalm 88(89)

Gospel, Luke 1:67-79

Thursday 25 December – NATIVITY OF THE LORD

8am Mass Nicholas Breakspear School Community

8.30am Mass St John Fisher School Community

(St John Fisher School, Marshalswick)

10am Mass St Alban & St Stephen School Community

12 Noon Mass Loreto College School Community

No evening mass

Reading 1, Isaiah 52:7-10, Psalm 97(98)

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

Friday 26 December – ST STEPHEN

11am Mass Carmela Sellecchia (Ann)

No evening mass – Bank Holiday

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

Gospel, Matthew 10:17-22

On Fridays Mass is celebrated in St Albans Cathedral at Noon

Saturday 27 December – ST JOHN

10am Confessions only, no Mass

Saturday 27 December – VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

5pm Mass Jim Dalley (RIP)

Sunday 28 December – THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

8am Mass Margaret Sweeney (RIP)

8.30am Mass People of the parish *(St John Fisher School)*

10am Mass Vito La Monica (Ann)

12 Noon Mass Sandra Moseley (Ann)

6pm Mass Kathleen and Norman Suckley (RIP)

Reading 1, Ecclesiasticus 3:2-6, 12-14, Psalm 127(128),

Reading 2, Colossians 3:12-21, Gospel, Matthew 2:13-15,19-23

Monday 29 December – ST THOMAS BECKET

10am Mass Marie Noella Amadis (RIP) and Roger Moore

Ragasamy (RIP)

Reading 1, Colossians 1:24-29, Psalm 22(23)

Gospel, Matthew 10:28-33

Tuesday 30 December – Sixth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord

No Masses today

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

Gospel, Luke 2:36-40

Wednesday 31 December – Seventh Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord

10am Mass * St Barts parish intention (at St Barts)

*10.30am Confessions * (at St Barts)*

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

Gospel, John 1:1-18

Thursday 1 January – SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

11am Mass People of the parish

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

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

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Friday 2 January – St Basil the Great and St Gregory Nazianzen

7pm Mass Tom Birkin (RIP)

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

Gospel, John 1:19-28

On Fridays Mass is celebrated in St Albans Cathedral at Noon

Saturday 3 January – Christmas feria

10am Confessions only, no Mass

Saturday 3 January – VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

5pm Mass Alfred (Allie) Ashton (RIP)

Sunday 4 January – SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY

8am Mass Francisco Diaz (Ann)

8.30am Mass Jim Dalley (RIP)

(St John Fisher School, Marshalswick)

10am Mass Ana Feliciano (RIP)

12 Noon Mass Arminda Domingos (RIP)

6pm Mass Molly & Tommy Screene & Tom Doyle (Ann)

Reading 1, Sirach 24:1-2,8-12, Psalm 147

Reading 2, Ephesians 1:3-6,15-18, Gospel, John 1:1-18

Monday 5 January – Christmas feria

7pm Mass Evelio Azcona (RIP)

Reading 1, 1 John 3:11-21, Psalm 99(100)

Gospel, John 1: 43-51

Tuesday 6 January – THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

10am Mass * People of the Parish *(at St Barts)*

7pm John Rowland (RIP)

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

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

Wednesday 7 January – Christmas feria

10am Mass * St Barts parish intention (at St Barts)

10.30am Confessions (at St Barts)*

7pm Mass John Darby (Ann)

Reading 1, 1 John 3:22-4:6, Psalm 2

Gospel, Matthew 4:12-17,23-25

Thursday 8 January – Christmas feria

10am Mass * Ghislein de Cruz (Ints) *(at St Barts)*

Reading 1, 1 John 4:7-10, Psalm 71(72)

Gospel, Mark 6:34-44

Friday 9 January – Christmas feria

7pm Mass Savine Lobo (Ints)

Reading 1, 1 John 4:11-18, Psalm 71(72)

Gospel, Mark 6:45-52

On Fridays Mass is celebrated in St Albans Cathedral at Noon

Saturday 10 January – Christmas feria

10am Exposition, Confessions and Benediction

Saturday 10 January – VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

5pm Mass Marion Miller (Ann)

Sunday 11 January – THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

8am Mass Anne Smet (RIP)

8.30am Mass Harry Vasey (Ann)

(St John Fisher School, Marshalswick)

10am Mass People of the parish

12 Noon Mass Sheila Hansen (RIP)

6pm Mass Thomas and Gretta McGovern (Ann)

Reading 1, Isaiah 42:1-7, Psalm 28(29)

Reading 2, Acts 10:34-38, Gospel, Matthew 3:13-17