



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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7 December 2025 – SECOND 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 John writes... This Sunday, the second Sunday of Advent, marks two important Rites in respect of our RCIA Group at the 12 Noon mass. Since September a number of people have been enquiring about the Catholic Faith, whilst others have been deciding about seeking full communion with the Church. Today they declare publicly for the first time their intention to the Church, and the Church in turn, carrying out its apostolic mission, accepts them as persons who intend to become its members. The Rite of acceptance marks the change from enquirer to Catechumen and the Rite of welcome for those already baptised to Candidate, seeking full communion with the Catholic Church.

The Rite of Acceptance is the first public declaration for six adults, signifying a change of identity for those who have enquired about the Catholic Faith, and is a formal welcome by the Church as Catechumens. It is important that we recognise the importance of our prayers as a community, in supporting the catechumens' spiritual journey, towards the reception of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation at the Easter Vigil.

The Rite of Welcome recognises five adults already baptised in another Christian Tradition, but who now seek full communion with the Catholic Church. During the ceremony, they will be marked by the sign of the cross claiming them for Christ and the community. This Rite symbolises their commitment to the Catholic faith and we welcome them as members of this Church community.

The journey then for our new Catechumens and Candidates involves the whole parish and during the forthcoming months as we lead up to Easter, other Rites will take place. These Rites today, help to foster a sense of belonging and community within the Church and I ask you to keep these 11 adults in your prayers.

FIRE MARSHALS If you are observant you will 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.

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.

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

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 7 Dec, 25 Jan, 8 Feb, 22 Mar, 10 May, 14 June and 5 July.

OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

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.

St Alban & St Stephen Parish Advent Talks 2025 This year's Advent Talks will focus on The Holy Land. Fr Paul McDermott, Parish Priest, St Edward the Confessor, Golders Green and Director of the Diocesan Holy Land Pilgrimage will reflect with us on the holy places Jesus visited in 'The Word was Made Flesh Here', at 7.45pm on Monday 8 December. Refreshments available and everyone is welcome to join us in the parish hall.

South St Albans Churches Ecumenical Advent Talks 2025 Wednesday evenings 7.30-9pm, 10 and 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 all Masses this weekend and after Mass at Marshalswick Mass centre on 14 December. We have a wide range of charity Christmas cards, chocolates and goods from Palestine.

Churches Together Food Bank Collection Sunday 7 December 10am-noon outside Budgens at The Quadrant. Volunteers most welcome to hand out flyers and accept food donations from shoppers. All donations are distributed via the Vineyard Verso programme. Contact: Christine 07900260190 or Maureen 07788 968654.

Carol Singing at Hixberry Lane Care Home AL4 0TZ. A group of parishioners will sing carols at 2 pm on Tuesday 9 December. We need more volunteers to attend for up to an hour; you do not need to be a good singer! If you can help or need lifts please call Mary on 07976 277 059.

Mothers' Prayers We will meet on Tuesday 9 December at 8pm in the Parish Centre.

BINGO - Friday 12 December, at 8pm in the Parish Hall in aid of "LIFE". Admission is 50p and includes refreshments. Everyone is most welcome.

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 before 20 November on 07462 586773 or email: mrsaggiedodd@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.

St Albans Foodbank Once again the St Albans Foodbank are running their Reverse Advent Calendar. Their main goal is to ensure that no one in the community goes hungry due to lack of access to food. This year alone, they have distributed over 10,000 three-day emergency food parcels to individuals and families in crisis, across the St Albans District via their 9 hubs. The Reverse Advent Calendar is a simple way to give back:

- For 25 days, add an item from the [attached](#) list
- Bring your collection to our Foodbank Warehouse in Redbourn, (Unit 3, Redbourn Industrial Park, High Street, Redbourn, AL3 7LG) ready to be distributed to local families in time for the holidays. Please see [here](#) for details of Foodbank opening hours over Christmas.

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.

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 one of our tours taking place on 11 December and 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.

Alban Arena pantomime tickets for sale £29.50 each for Saturday 13 December 6pm show. All sales help towards SSAS school PTA. Contact ssaspta@gmail.com to order!

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 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.

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

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 6 December - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY
5pm Mass Mickie Clancy (Ann)

Sunday 7 December - SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8am Mass Martin Brosnan (RIP)
8.30am Mass Sr Catherine McGovern (RIP)
(*St John Fisher School, Marshalswick*)
10am Mass Lydia Centala (Ann)
12 Noon Mass Josephine Egan (RIP)
6pm Mass Peter Celestine Okoro (RIP)
Reading 1, Isaiah 11:1-10, Psalm 71(72)
Reading 2, Romans 15:4-9, Gospel, Matthew 3:1-12

Monday 8 December - THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

10am Mass Anne Smet (RIP)
Reading 1, Genesis 3:9-15,20, Psalm 97(98)
Reading 2, Ephesians 1:3-6,11-12, Gospel, Luke 1:26-38

Tuesday 9 December - Advent feria

10am Mass * Geraldine Little (Ints) (*at St Barts*)
Reading 1, Isaiah 40:1-11, Psalm 95(96)
Gospel, Matthew 18:12-14

Wednesday 10 December - Advent feria

7pm Mass Anne Smet (RIP)
Reading 1, Isaiah 40:25-31, Psalm 102(103)
Gospel, Matthew 11:28-30

Thursday 11 December - Advent feria

10am Mass * Anne Hyland (RIP) (*at St Bart's*)
Reading 1, Isaiah 41:13-20, Psalm 144(145)
Gospel, Matthew 11:11-15

Friday 12 December - Advent feria

7pm Mass John Cronin (Ann)
Reading 1, Isaiah 48:17-19, Psalm 1
Gospel, Matthew 11:16-29
(*On Fridays Mass is celebrated in St Albans Cathedral at Noon*)

Saturday 13 December - St Lucy

10am Exposition, Confessions and Benediction

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

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

Cards for Good Causes Christmas Charity Christmas Card and Gift Shop St Peter's Church, St Peter's St. Monday-Saturday 10am-4pm, Sunday 11am-4pm.

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 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)
12 Noon Mass Brendan Hollywood (RIP)
6pm Mass Sheila Chitnis (RIP)
Reading 1, Isaiah 35:1-6,10, Psalm 145(146)
Reading 2, James 5:7-10, Gospel, Matthew 11:2-11

PLEASE PRAY

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

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, Erika Notova and Aderemi Williams.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Lydia Centala, Mickie Clancy, John Cronin, Elizabeth Gaffney, Michael Robins and Efigenia Virrueta.

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

Justice, Peace & the Integrity of Creation Group Loving God, give us your peace. Comfort and strengthen all those who suffer injustice and give them hope. Guide all world leaders to follow the way of peace and to bring the light of justice, peace and joy to all.

School Applications & Certificates of Catholic Practice

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.