



Church Website

## NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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11 January 2026 - THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD



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

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*We are a Fairtrade parish*

*Fr John writes...*

Pope Leo XIV on the first day of 2026 called on the world to pray for peace. This peace is not only in respect of 'nations bloodied by conflict and suffering' but also 'within our homes, in families wounded by violence or pain. In an ever-changing world, this message is timely because it is only with Christ's grace that we can start to build this peace. As we begin this new year, let every day be for us the beginning of a new life, thanks to God's generous love and mercy.

This time last year we were preparing for the pairing of St Alban and St Stephen and St Bartholomew parishes. Fr Michael called for the parishes to pull together which has proven to be a success on many levels. However, we can never rest on our laurels. Our community functions due to the hard work and support of many volunteers behind the scenes. Now that we have the responsibility for the whole of St Albans, it is clear that many more volunteers are needed, especially in our mission to assist the sick and the poor.

Our Churches require many people to make sure that they are safe, conform to legislation, and are welcoming places for all who attend or visit. Perhaps this year you might consider offering some of your valuable time to assist in the multitude of different ways that you could serve this community, and in so doing, give of your service to others. As the new year unfolds, those seeking a fresh commitment, new purpose, or a way to serve others may find that their parish offers just such an opportunity to put their time, talents and gifts at the service of God in our local communities.

I would like to acknowledge, on behalf of the parish team, all who helped to make the Christmas Celebrations go so well. Sincere thanks go to those who prepared the churches and sacristies, the musicians and servers, the readers and extraordinary ministers, the collectors, fire marshals, and cleaners, and those involved in hospitality including Welcomers.

May I also take this opportunity on behalf of Fr Michael, myself, Deacon Brendan and Deacon Michael, to thank you for your cards, gifts and generosity over Christmas. It is much appreciated. They are all signs of great kindness on your part and we are most grateful. We promise to remember you all in our prayers.

On behalf of Fr Michael, Deacon Brendan and Deacon Michael and the parish team, may I wish you and your families every blessing in 2026. May your days be filled with hope, health and happiness, and more so, at times when the going is tough that you may be graced with a sense of the abiding love and presence of Christ.

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**2026 - 'In a Year'** <https://media.ascensionpress.com> has links to 'Bible in a 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.

**Peace Sunday 18 January** The Bishops' Conference encourages us all to use the day to reflect on the Pope's message for the World Day of Peace on the 1 January. Pope Leo has said that the theme for his message is 'Peace be with you all: towards an 'unarmed and disarming' peace'. Pax Christi promote Peace Sunday with the support of the Bishop's Conference and have produced a number of resources to help us reflect including a liturgy and activities for children. You can download these from the Peace Sunday 2026 page on their website [www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk). Pax Christi prayer cards will be available to take home after all masses this weekend.

**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 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.

**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.

**Youth Mass dates 2025/26** Our Parish Youth Masses take place at 6pm on Sunday evening on the following dates: 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. If you are willing to volunteer please email the parish office with your name, email address and contact number.

**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 meet 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](mailto: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.

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

**Fair trade** Many thanks to everyone who supported the parish fair trade stall in 2025 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 Mass at Marshalswick Mass centre on 11 January.

**Mothers' Prayers** We will meet on Monday 12 January at 8pm in the Meeting Room. 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 13 January 2-3.30pm. All are welcome. Contact Helen Bassill 07860 830340.

**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

**Annual Churches Together in St Albans Service of Prayer for Christian Unity** This year it is at St Barts 3:30pm on Sunday 18 January with Fr Robert Plourde. Please see our website [www.ctstalbans.org.uk](http://www.ctstalbans.org.uk) May they be one (Jn 17:21)

**Migrants' Meals** Many thanks to all the parishioners who have helped us to arrange cooking days for local migrants who do not have access to a kitchen or to home cooking. Our next cooking day will be held on Thursday 29 January. If you can volunteer to be present (not to cook) for a couple of hours between about midday and 6pm that would be a great help. Please call Mary on 07976 277 059.

**Men's Breakfast** Our first Men's Breakfast for 2026 is on Saturday 30 January, from 8.15am to 10am in the Parish Centre. We will start with conversation over coffee and pastries, followed by a 20 minute video on the christian living by Dr Edward Siri of the Augustian Institute. We will conclude with a discussion and finish by 10am. No pre-booking required and for more details please message Richard on 07976 252309S.

**St Columba's College Prep School Open Morning Friday 6 February 9-11am** This is a wonderful opportunity to have a tour of the Prep School by our current students and to hear from the Prep Leadership Team. Please register using the following link: [Visit Us - St Columba's College](#). If you have any questions, please contact Mary Masters at [masters.m@stcolumbascollege.org](mailto:masters.m@stcolumbascollege.org).

**Nicholas Breakspear School Careers Fair** At Nicholas Breakspear School, we are hosting our annual Careers Fair on Tuesday 10 March 9am-3.15pm, which aims to expose our students to multiple professions from various industries. Our aim is to inform and inspire our students, and demonstrate how they could contribute and help 'Build a Better World' through their future career. If you are willing to participate, or would like some further information regarding the fair, please contact our Careers Lead, Elizabeth Obada: [obadae@nbs.herts.sch.uk](mailto:obadae@nbs.herts.sch.uk)

**Have you considered joining the Catenians?** The Catenian Association was established over 100 years ago and is an

international Catholic organisation fostering the values of faith, family and friendship and it is hoped that men from our parish will consider joining the Catenians and encourage each other in our shared faith and charitable works and activities. The local group meet every month at Harpenden Golf Club at 7.00 pm for an informal meeting and supper and you will be assured of a warm welcome. More information is available on their [website](#) or from [simon-davies9@sky.com](mailto:simon-davies9@sky.com) or [George.jarzab@gmail.com](mailto:George.jarzab@gmail.com).

## 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.

**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 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.

**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 hire charges and the range of facilities available.



## MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

### 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

### Monday 12 January - feria

10am Mass Maureen Rowland (Ann)

12 Noon \* Funeral Mass for Teresa Anderson (at St Barts)

Reading 1, 1 Samuel 1:1-8, Psalm 115(116)

Gospel, Mark 1:14-20

### Tuesday 13 January - feria

10am Mass \* Lourdes Pons (Ann) (at St Barts)

Reading 1, 1 Samuel 1:9-20, 1 Samuel 2

Gospel, Mark 1:21-28

### Wednesday 14 January - feria

7pm Mass Gerald Treacy (RIP)

Reading 1, 1 Samuel 3:1-10, 19-20, Psalm 39(40)

Gospel, Mark 1:29-39

### Thursday 15 January - feria

10am Mass \* Mary Lyons (RIP)

Reading 1, 1 Samuel 4:1-11, Psalm 43(44)

Gospel, Mark 1:40-45

### Friday 16 January - feria

7pm Mass Annie Coakley (RIP)

Reading 1, 1 Samuel 8:4-7, 10-22, Psalm 88(89)

Gospel, Mark 2:1-12

*On Fridays Mass is celebrated in St Albans Cathedral at Noon*

### Saturday 17 January - St Anthony

*10am Confessions and Exposition only, no Mass*

### Saturday 17 January - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

5pm Mass Ray Ingman (Ann)

### Sunday 18 January - SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

8am Mass John Joseph Kilbane (First anniversary)

8.30am Mass Ken and Mary Neal (Ann)

(St John Fisher School, Marshalswick)

10am Mass Vito La Monica (RIP)

12 Noon Mass Mary Curran (RIP)

6pm Mass Peggy & Terry Rankin (Ann)

Reading 1, Isaiah 49:3, 5-6, Psalm 39(40)

Reading 2, 1 Corinthians 1:1-3, Gospel, John 1:29-34

## PLEASE PRAY

United with Churches together in St Albans we pray for the Ecumenical Chaplaincy at the Cathedral and Abbey 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 Teresa Anderson, Peter Beeson, John Christoforou, Mary (Jo) Comer and John Doran.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Fr Tom Hewitt MSC, Ray Ingman, John Joseph Kilbane Bryan McDonagh, Thomas and Gretta McGovern, Marion Miller, Ken & Mary Neal, Lourdes Pons, Peggy & Terry Rankin, Maureen Rowland, Des Stack and Harry Vasey.

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

**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 [stalbens@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:stalbens@rcdow.org.uk) with your child's name, date of birth and home address and 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.

**St Bartholomew's Parish Information** Please see the St Bartholomew's website at [St Bartholomew - Roman Catholic Parish of St Albans South](http://StBartholomew-RomanCatholicParishofStAlbansSouth) for details of mass times and events or to read a copy of the St Bartholomew's weekly newsletter.

**Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation Prayer** We pray for the leaders of the world, that they may have the wisdom to seek the common good and to fulfil their duties and obligations with honesty, humility and integrity. Guide their decision making so that people may live safely in peace and harmony.

**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](mailto:cantonmassesea@gmail.com).

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

**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](mailto: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.