



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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18 January 2026 - SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



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 / stalbanssg3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk / 07976 277059

We are a Fairtrade parish

Fr Michael writes... Proximity, closeness, contact is no guarantee of absolute knowledge. It is possible to know someone for years, but still not know them fully, to be amazed by what you didn't know, notice or take on board. And what is true for us is true for John. It's difficult to believe that the affinity and warmth spoken of in Mary's haste to see her cousin Elizabeth, did not manifest itself in other ways; in these cousins, Jesus and John, knowing or knowing of one another in some way, but still, as the Gospel makes clear, there is a vital sense in which John did not know his cousin Jesus.

Being known, understood and recognised for who we are is, I suspect, one of the most precious of gifts. Yet our being known, our being understood, is something for which you and I must take responsibility; it's not enough to stand idly by, lamenting the fact that we are not known or understood if we do not desire or seek to be known and understood.

God speaks of himself through his creation, in the love he manifests for his chosen people Israel, and ultimately in the person of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of his Holy Spirit. In this sense, God is not a mystery too far, but a God who is happy to be known, encountered. 'I waited, I waited for the Lord' says the psalmist 'and he stooped down to me ... he put a new song into my mouth'.

Retiring Collection for Mary's Meals after all Masses this weekend Mary's Meals is with us this weekend. The charity, based in Scotland, serves nutritious school meals to children living in some of the world's poorest countries. The promise of a good meal attracts these hungry children into the classroom, giving them the energy to learn and hope for a better future.

Peace Sunday 18 January This Sunday is Peace Sunday. 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. The theme for Pope Leo's message was 'Peace be with you all: towards an 'unarmed and disarming' peace'. Pax Christi promotes Peace Sunday with the support of the Bishop's Conference and has 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 the Pax Christi website www.paxchristi.org.uk.

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.

CAFOD soup and film event Saturday 21 February Everyone is invited to the Hall to have a simple lunch [from noon] and watch The Penguin Lessons [12] from 1pm - a comedy based on the story of a disillusioned Englishman going to work in Argentina in 1976. Donations will be taken in support of the Lent CAFOD family fast day.

The Creed A film series exploring the Nicene Creed to reveal the intellectual and spiritual depths of Christian faith will be shown in lent. Come and understand our core Catholic doctrine, beyond just facts, to a personal, transformative belief. All welcome. When: 12 and 26 Feb; 5, 12, 19 and 26 March at 7.30- 9pm in the hall.

Mass for the Sick at the Cathedral 2pm Saturday 7 February On Saturday 7 February the Diocese will be holding its Mass for the Sick at the Cathedral at 2pm, celebrated by the H.E. Cardinal Vincent Nichols, during which Anointing of the Sick will be offered. To help with planning for the Mass and the anointing, tickets need to be booked in advance. If you would like to attend the mass, please contact the parish office.

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 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

Parish Friends Turkey and Tinsel Lunch 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 over 80 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. Finally thank you to Saints Alive who provided wonderful music and entertainment and had everyone on their feet dancing. A great afternoon enjoyed by all with over £200 from the raffle which will go to the Friends of the Holy Land.

FIRE MARSHALS We are looking for parishioners to volunteer as Fire Marshals in the rare event of our needing to evacuate the building. Full training will be given. 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 St John Fisher

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. 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.

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.

Vinnie Packs The SVP are distributing over 10,000 Vinnie Packs containing cold weather essentials to the homeless this winter. 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.

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. The talk will take place at 11am on Saturday 17 January. 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.

Churches Together in Westminster AGM followed by refreshments and Talk 'From Strangers to Neighbours: Christian Hospitality in a Changing Asylum Landscape' Drawing on Theos's recent report From Strangers to

Neighbours: The Church and the Integration of Refugees, George Lapshynov explores how UK churches are quietly but powerfully helping asylum seekers become neighbours. 6pm Monday 19 January. At Hinde Street Methodist Church, 19 Thayer Street, W1U 2QJ

The Parish Friends Knit & Natter Group We will be meeting in the Parish Centre on 27 January 2.15-3.45pm. Please note change of time, All are welcome. Contact Helen Bassill 07860 830340.

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 31 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 Augustinian 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.

IGNITE Open to 14-18 years old who want to grow in faith is being held at St Michael's Church, Garston. Starting on 31 January with 6pm vigil Mass and followed by activities 7-8.30pm in the hall. Come and meet fellow young enthusiastic Catholics from St Albans, Watford and Hemel and have fun. Please let parish office know if you can come, for safeguarding purposes.

BINGO A big thank you for the support and donations for our recent Bingo, that raised £215.00 for the Catholic Children's Society. Our next Bingo evening will be on Friday 13 February.

Alzheimer's Society We run local activity groups in your area for people living with dementia and their carers and we are currently looking for group support volunteers. Our groups are fun and a chance for people to meet others in their local community in a similar circumstance. We do activities like adapted sports, arts and crafts, welcome singers, guest speakers and more. Any commitment of volunteering is welcomed. Our groups are typically 2 hours long and run on a weekly basis, all of the group's information and areas can be found [here](#).

Retrouvaille Retrouvaille helps marriages. It can bring hope and healing to relationships. Next date 12 February. www.retrouvaille.org.uk Tel: 07887 296983

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 / May 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.

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 and a contact telephone 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 INTENTIONS & READINGS

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

Monday 19 January - feria

10am Mass Rosemary Lyon (RIP)

Reading 1, 1 Samuel 15:16-23, Psalm 49(50)

Gospel, Mark 2:18-22

Tuesday 20 January - feria

10am Mass * Funeral Mass for John Christoforou

Reading 1, 1 Samuel 16:1-13, Psalm 88(89)

Gospel, Mark 2:23-28

Wednesday 21 January - feria

7pm Mass Zbigniew Frosztega (Ann)

Reading 1, 1 Samuel 17:32-33,37-51, Psalm 143(144)

Gospel, Mark 3:1-6

Thursday 22 January - feria

10am Mass * Pam Fitzpatrick (RIP)

Reading 1, 1 Samuel 18:6-9,19:1-7, Psalm 55(56)

Gospel, Mark 3:7-12

Friday 23 January - feria

7pm Mass Des and Adrian Stack (Ann)

Reading 1, 1 Samuel 24:3-21, Psalm 56(57)

Gospel, Mark 3:13-19

On Fridays Mass is celebrated in St Albans Cathedral at Noon

Saturday 23 January - St Francis de Sales

10am Confessions and Exposition only, no Mass

Saturday 24 January - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

5pm Mass Peggy Hough (RIP)

Sunday 25 January - THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

8am Mass Damien Mearns (RIP)

8.30am Mass Stan Phillips (Ann)

(*St John Fisher School, Marshalswick*)

10am Mass William Murphy (RIP)

12 Noon Mass Rosalia Vetere (Ann)

6pm Mass Pierce Hackett (RIP)

Reading 1, Isaiah 8:23-9:3, Psalm 26(27), Reading 2, 1 Corinthians 1:10-13,17, Gospel, Matthew 4:12-23

* Mass takes place at St Bartholomew's Church, Vesta Avenue

PLEASE PRAY

United with Churches together in St Albans we pray for all member of St Stephen's 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 Peter Beeson, John Christoforou, Mary (Jo) Comer, John Doran and Jack Geldard.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Zbigniew Frosztega, Ray Ingman, John Joseph Kilbane, Bryan McDonagh, Roy McGoohan, Ken & Mary Neal, Stan Phillips, Francesco & Immacolata Picciuto, Peggy & Terry Rankin, Des & Adrian Stack and Rosalia Vetere.

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

St Bartholomew's Parish Information Please see the St Bartholomew's website at [St Bartholomew - Roman Catholic Parish of St Albans South](http://www.stbart.org.uk) 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
Almighty God, we thank you for your gift of peace. Your peace is 'unarmed and disarming', not victory or defeat, but fraternity and dialogue, the fruit of justice and forgiveness. Open our eyes to see the world, not from the viewpoint of the mighty but from that of the widow, the orphan, the stranger, the wounded child, the exile and the fugitive. We pray for change; may we be the bringers of change.

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 cantonmassessea@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. 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.